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# MYSTICS AND MOTHERS, PART II\*

## MARIAN DEVOTION OF THE DOMINICAN FOUNDRESSES (ENGLAND AND THE USA)

*Sr. Donna Maria Moses, O.P.\*\**

### I. Introduction

The pragmatic spirituality of the women who founded Dominican congregations in England and the United States grew out of the penitential spirituality of the Dominican mystics of central Europe. Devotion to Mary took on new meaning in the lives of women who were pioneers and missionaries in lands where the Catholic faith was held in suspicion. Following the spiritual practices of the great saints of the Order, Dominican foundresses in England and the United States prayed, fasted and practiced penance, but over time they came to realize that they could offer up the very real sufferings and humiliations of their daily lives and unite these to the Passion of Christ and Sorrows of the Blessed Mother, rather than inflicting suffering upon themselves.

\*Part I of this study on the spirituality of Dominican women was subtitled "Devotion to Mary among Dominican Women through the Centuries [1250-1850]"; it appeared in *Marian Studies* 60 (2009). Here in Part II, Sr. Donna is focused on the Marian devotion of Dominican foundresses in England and the United States, 1850-1950. Sr. Donna plans to continue her research on this topic and present her findings on how Mary appears to Dominican women, 1950 to the present, at a future MSA meeting.

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Through sickness, poverty, humiliation, persecution, mockery and abandonment, Dominican pioneers discovered that the religious way of life gave them the strength to persevere in spreading the Gospel and building the kingdom in new lands where the Catholic faith was not entirely welcome. The Blessed Virgin Mary was a model for them of humility, love, and courage. Mother Benedicta Bauer, foundress of the Racine Dominicans [Wisconsin], wrote in her conference on the Feast of the Purification, 1846:

Though she was the purest of virgins as well as Mother of God, love for God made her unwilling to exempt herself from the prescription of purification which the Law of Moses obligated women to obey. Humility, therefore, is the greatest ornament of Christ's women disciples . . . But we attain true humility only through daily and courageous self-denial, through self-abnegation, through forgetting about our own ego. The characteristics of humility are simplicity, innocence, gentleness, love, patience, sincerity, and peace with God and one's neighbors.<sup>1</sup>

Love of the Blessed Mother helped them to be gentle, compassionate, and wise as they brought forth countless institutions and placed them under Mary's protection. Dominican women helped to replant the Catholic faith in England after the dissolution of the monasteries and centuries of oppression had driven it away. Dominican women were sent to the United States as missionaries to teach the faith to natives and immigrants from many countries. The slowness of communication eventually made it necessary for these women to break away from their Motherhouses and establish new foundations, leaving them cut off from their own beginnings. Their lives were spent in the practical work of building and administering convents, schools and hospitals, sustained by Dominican prayer and community as they negotiated with parish priests, local bishops, and community leaders to purchase land and recruit women to join them in their mission.

<sup>1</sup> Mother Benedicta Bauer, *Maria Benedicta Bauer, OSD Primary Documents, Vol. I*, trans. Sr. Suzanne Noffke, O.P. (Racine, WI: The Racine Dominicans, 2007), Chapter Conference No.55.

To be recognized as an institute belonging to the Dominican Order, a new foundation needed Rules and Constitutions approved by a local bishop or the Pope. All previous Constitutions for women in the Dominican Order had been written for the monastic life of the Second Order nuns and called for silence and strict enclosure. Therefore, after purchasing land and building institutions, the foundresses spent the better part of their later years researching and writing Rules and Constitutions that would allow them to live an apostolic life. In order for women to serve as teachers, nurses and social workers, some practical modifications were needed. The first three congregations of apostolic Dominican women in the United States with Constitutions approved by a local bishop were founded in 1822, in Springfield, Kentucky, by Father Edward Fenwick; in 1844, in Sinsinawa, Wisconsin, by Father Samuel Mazzuchelli; and in 1846, in Memphis, Tennessee, by Mother Angela Sansbury. Later founders negotiated with the Church hierarchy and collaborated with each other to devise Constitutions that would allow their members to live an authentic Dominican life while serving in an active apostolic ministry. In *Other Waters: A History of the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, New York*, Sr. Cecilia Murray wrote, "From 1894 on, at least the senior nuns were aware that their days as Second Order were numbered."<sup>2</sup>

## II. Dominican Foundations in England and America

The first apostolic congregation founded in England after the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 emancipated Catholics and allowed the open practice of the Catholic faith in England was the foundation made in Stone by Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan. The Rules and Constitutions written by Mother Margaret and approved by the Holy See in 1877 were for the Third Order. The Holy See encouraged subsequent foundations in England and the United States seeking a modified Rule to take them as their model. For this reason, Mother Margaret

<sup>2</sup> Sr. Cecilia Murray, O.P., *Other Waters: A History of the Dominican Sisters of Newburgh, New York* (Old Brookville, NY: Brookville Books, 1993), 116.



was well known by Dominican foundresses in the United States. Her biography, along with the *Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Dominican Order* and *The Spirit of the Dominican Order*, was promoted by the Master General of the Order and read aloud in many Dominican seminaries, novitiates and convents. Sr. Pauline Bürling, O.P., Prioress General of the English Dominican Sisters, and their archivist in Stone, England, Sr. Cecily Boulding, O.P., contributed archival materials and a copy of their history, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission: The English Dominican Sisters, 1845-2010*, to this study. This history traces the amalgamation of the five congregations of Dominican Sisters founded in England during the nineteenth century. These five communities, whose motherhouses had been established at Stone, Stroud, Leicester, Harrow, and London, were amalgamated into one Congregation with Stone as their motherhouse in 1929. Since the amalgamation, the congregation has been known simply as the English Dominican Sisters. The amalgamation, forced by the Master General of the Order in Rome rather than being freely chosen by the Sisters, resulted in bitterness and division that lasted well into the twentieth century.

The Dominican Sisters in the United States were also encouraged by the Master of the Order to take one rule and join as one Congregation, but as a result of the negative impact of the amalgamation in England, the hierarchy relented in forcing the decision and the Sisters chose to remain as separate Congregations. Several American Congregations trace their roots to Ratisbon, Bavaria, now called Regensburg. In 1233, Saint Dominic's successor, Blessed Jordan of Saxony, founded the Holy Cross Monastery in Ratisbon and five Dominican nuns were sent from Italy to make a new foundation. In the nineteenth century, nuns from Holy Cross in Bavaria were sent to New York; they established a new monastery, also called Holy Cross, in Brooklyn. Subsequently, the monastery of Holy Cross, New York, in turn sent nuns to other parts of the United States resulting in a dozen new congregations, collectively referred to as the Regensburg Tree. In addition to the Regensburg Tree, many other Dominican congregations were founded in the United States in the nineteenth century, each with its own

history and beginnings. The following list from the McGreal Center for Dominican Historical Studies shows all the Dominican congregations founded in the United States from 1850 to 1950. Some congregations were founded by groups of sisters rather than by an individual woman, but, where applicable, the name of the foundress is given in parentheses. Three congregations mentioned previously (Kentucky, Sinsinawa, and Tennessee) were founded prior to 1850, and another (Ann Arbor) was founded after 1950. In recent years, some American congregations have merged or formed collaborative unions. The unions, called Dominican Sisters of Hope and Dominican Sisters of Peace, are indicated below by asterisks.

- 1850 San Rafael, California—(Mother Mary Goemare)
- 1855 Brooklyn, New York—(Mother Josepha Witzlhofer)
- 1860 Nashville, Tennessee—(Mother Frances Walsh)
- 1860 New Orleans, Louisiana—(Mother Mary John Flanagan)\*\*
- 1862 Racine, Wisconsin—(Mother Benedicta Bauer)
- 1868 Columbus, Ohio\*\*
- 1876 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—(Mother Marie de la Roche)
- 1876 Sparkill, New York—(Mother Catherine Antoninus Thorpe)
- 1880 Albany, New York—(Mother Lucy Eaton Smith)
- 1881 Caldwell, New Jersey—(Mother Catharine Muth)
- 1882 Galveston, Texas—(Mother Mary Agnes Magevny)
- 1888 Mission San Jose, California—(Mother Pia Backes)
- 1888 Tacoma, Washington
- 1890 Newburgh, New York—(Mother Augustine Neuhierl)\*
- 1891 Blauvelt, New York—(Mother Mary Ann Sammon)
- 1892 Fall River, Massachusetts—(Mother Mary Bertrand Sheridan)\*
- 1894 Grand Rapids, Michigan
- 1894 Newburgh, Michigan—(Mother Aquinata Fiegler)
- 1896 Hawthorn, New York—(Mother Rose Hawthorne Lathrop)
- 1902 Great Bend, Kansas—(Mother Antonina Fischer)
- 1902 Houston, Texas—(Mother Pauline Gannon)

1906 Fall River, Massachusetts

1910 Ossining, New York—(Mother Mary Walsh)\*

1920 Hawthorn, New York—(Mother Mary Joseph Rogers)

1923 Adrian, Michigan

1923 Everett, Washington—(Mother Guillemina Stafford)

1929 Akron, Ohio\*\*

1950 Oxford, Michigan—(Mother Mary Joseph Gazda)\*\*

\*Dominican Sisters of Hope founded in 1995

\*\*Dominican Sisters of Peace founded in 2009

In 1989, Sister Mary Nona McGreal, O.P., began acquiring over 5,000 documents, resources and publications germane to the history of the Dominican Family in the United States. Her goal was to research, write, and publish a two-volume series called *The Order of Preachers in the United States: A Family History*. The first volume, *Dominicans at Home in a Young Nation: 1786-1865*, was published in 2000. The second volume, *Dominicans on Mission: 1865-1910*, is now in preparation. Since Sister McGreal's retirement in 2006, Sister Janet Welsh, O.P., has directed the research center now located at Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois. The center, known as the McGreal Center for Dominican Historical Studies, is a collaborative organization responsible for promoting the research and writing of the history of the Order of Preachers in the United States. At the annual Dominican Archivists' and Historians' Conference held at the McGreal Center in July of 2010, the archivists and historians agreed to contribute materials pertaining to devotion to Mary practiced by their founders and foundresses to this study. Archivists from Dominican congregations in Washington, California, Missouri, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania and New York, as well as Dominican laity and associates from the eastern, western and central provinces, agreed to contribute materials.

In the published diary of Mother Pia Backes, the foundress of the Mission San Jose Dominicans, entitled *Her Days Unfolded*, Mother Pia wrote that she had read the *Life of Margaret Mary Hallahan* and was very impressed with her prayer



life and spirituality. Sister Mary Paul Mehegan, O.P, former Dean of the Queen of the Holy Rosary College, reported that *The Spirit of the Dominican Order* and the *Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Dominican Order* and the *Life of Mother Margaret Hallahan* were read aloud in the refectory at every feast. Brother Raymond Bertheaux, O.P., archivist of the Dominicans of the Western Province, sent a copy of the *Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Dominican Order* in answer to a request for anything that Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany might have written that could have influenced devotion to the Blessed Mother in those days. He reported that both of these books were read aloud in the men's novitiate. These discoveries indicated that the author of these works, Mother Francis Raphael Drane, had a great influence on the Marian spirituality of the foundresses of Dominican Sisters in the United States.

Dominican archivists and historians confirmed that these books were available in their libraries and their foundresses were familiar with the writings of Mother Francis Raphael Drane. Unfortunately, no records were kept of what was read aloud in the refectories, but it is likely that the Sisters read these works; very few other books were available to them. Therefore the legends Mother Francis Raphael wrote about provide an insight into what Dominican devotion to Mary was like in the time of foundresses. The legends from the *Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Order*, constitute the basis for Dominican devotion to Mary. Stories from the life of Mother Margaret Hallahan show how one Dominican foundress employed her devotion to Mary as an instrument of conversion.

### **III. The Marian Devotion and the Influence of Dominican Foundresses**

#### **A. Mother Francis Raphael Drane (1823-1894)**

Mother Francis Raphael Drane (Augusta Theodosia Drane) was born in Bromley, near London, England. She was originally a member of the Church of England and became a Catholic in 1850. She entered the Dominicans Sisters of Stone at Clifton in



1852, and was professed the following year. She remained in Stone for forty years, devoting most of her time to writing. Some of her works include: *Christian Schools and Scholars*, *The Morality of Tractarianism*, *Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Order*, *Catholic Legends and Stories*, *Knights of Saint John*, *History of Saint Catherine of Siena*, *Three Chancellors: Wykeham, Waynflete, and More*, and *The Life of Margaret Mary Hallaban*. Mother Drane served as Prioress General of the Congregation from 1872-1894.

Mother Francis Raphael Drane published *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Dominican Order* anonymously in 1867. It was read aloud in Dominican convents and seminaries in England and the United States up until the early 1970s. Bishop William Ullathorne wrote the introduction of the edition published in England, and Archbishop Joseph Sadoc Alemany wrote the introduction for the American edition. Archbishop Alemany hoped that Mother Drane's profile of Saint Dominic would heal divisions between Protestants and Catholics in America; he wrote that "American non-Catholics earnestly searching after truth will see in Saint Dominic the unflinching lover of truth, the gentle yet powerful advocate of truth, and the undying martyr of charity to his fellow man."<sup>3</sup> He recommended that if non-Catholics would benefit from it, even more so should Catholics familiarize themselves with it. In the introduction of the book, he proposed that every Dominican community in California read aloud from it during meals.

## **B. Dominican Tradition/Legends<sup>4</sup> That Formed Mother Drane**

### **1. *The Rosary***

People of many religions prayed with beads and used them to keep track of prayers, but Saint Dominic developed the sequence of joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries that

<sup>3</sup> Mother Francis Raphael Drane (Augusta Theodosia), *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Dominican Order, with an Introduction to the American edition by Rev Joseph Sadoc Alemany, D.D.* (New York, NY: P. O'Shea Publisher, 1867), iv.

<sup>4</sup> Dominicans use the word "legend" to refer to a story or incident connected with a particular Sister, Friar, or Saint. It does not have the negative connotation of questionable veracity that some might ascribe to it.

depict and preach of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, employing them as a way of preaching the faith and correcting misinterpretations. The first mention of the Rosary in Saint Dominic's life was when he was on a mission to visit Queen Blanche of Castile in the French court:

Finding Queen Blanche in much affliction on account of her being without children, Saint Dominic recommended to her the use of the Rosary. The Queen not only adopted the devotion herself, but propagated it among her people and distributed Rosaries amongst them, engaging them to join their prayers to hers, that her desire might be granted.<sup>5</sup>

This event occurred prior to 1214 when Queen Blanche finally gave birth to the Louis IX, the only canonized king of France, the saint from whom the city of Saint Louis, Missouri, takes its name. Dominicans have been praying the rosary ever since, and for eight hundred years it has been closely associated with the Order. Many Dominicans wear a rosary as part of their habit or carry one with them daily.

Mother Francis Raphael Drane observed that the political upheaval and religious battles of the twelfth century resulted in the impoverishment of many noble families who were forced to conceal their faith in order to survive. Consequently, their children were educated by men and women who placed more worldly interests ahead of religious conviction. In her opinion, this was especially detrimental to the proper upbringing of girls who devoted themselves to child-bearing at such an early age they lacked the opportunity for spiritual guidance later in life:

This evil was very soon perceived by the quick eye of Dominic, and so deplorably did he feel the cruelty which exposed these souls to the certain ruin of their religious principles, that he determined on a very strenuous effort to oppose it, and to provide some means for the education of the daughters of Catholics in the true faith. For this purpose he resolved to found a monastery, where, within the protection of strict enclosure, and under the charge of a few holy women whom he gathered together out of the suffering provinces, these children might be nurtured under the Church's shadow. . . The spot chosen for this purpose was Prouille.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 19.

The monastery founded by Saint Dominic at Prouille in 1207 was situated in a small village at the foot of the Pyrenees and dedicated to Our Lady. Notre Dame de Prouille is the first of numerous monasteries, convents and schools placed under Our Lady's patronage by the Dominican Order. Count Simon de Montfort joined Saint Dominic in crusading against the Albigensian heresy and offered his financial support and military protection of Prouille. The little community consisted at first of nine women of distinction converted by the preaching and miracles of Saint Dominic, but in time it flourished to over a hundred members and gave rise to at least twelve other Dominican foundations. Although popular legend says that the Blessed Virgin appeared to Saint Dominic at Prouille, Mother Francis Raphael points out that this event more likely occurred at the sanctuary of Notre Dame de La Drèche near Albi. Notre Dame de Prouille is still noteworthy as the first of thousands of religious institutions dedicated to Our Lady founded by the Dominican Order.

## ***2. The Battle of Muret***

The Rosary was already in use before the year 1213, but its use was made famous because of the miraculous victory attained in that year at the Battle of Muret. Its fame spread and people soon were divided into those who were fanatical about its adoption and those who despised and ridiculed it as a childish devotion:

One of the bishops of the country of Toulouse, who, hearing the Rosary preached by S. Dominic, spoke of it afterwards with contempt, saying it was only fit for women and children. He was soon convinced of his error; for shortly afterwards, falling into great persecution and calumnies, he seemed in a vision to see himself plunged into thick mire from which there was no way of escape. Raising his eyes, he saw above him the forms of our Lady and Saint Dominic who let down to him a chain made of a hundred and fifty rings, fifteen of which were gold; and laying hold of this he found himself safely drawn to dry land. By this he understood, that it was by means of the devotion of the Rosary he should be delivered from his enemies, which shortly took place after he had devoutly commenced its use.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 43.



In a similar story, a noble woman opposed to the confraternities that had sprung up around this devotion had a vision in which a large number of men and women surrounded by a great blaze of light were praying the Rosary. For every Hail Mary they sang a beautiful star emerged from their mouths. Our Lady said to the woman, "In this book are written the names of the brethren and sisters of my Rosary, but thy name is not written; and because thou hast persuaded many not to enter it, there shall befall thee a sickness for a time, which yet shall turn to thy salvation."<sup>8</sup> Upon waking, the woman was paralyzed until she had her name added to the roster of the confraternity. As soon as she did so, she was healed. Miracles like these caused the propagation of the Rosary all over France. With it, the doctrine of the Incarnation was quickly spread throughout the land and the Albigensian heresy was defeated. It came to be believed that invoking the name of Mary in prayer would stamp out heresy wherever it arose and increase the fervor of the faithful.

At Muret, the position of the crusaders seemed gloomy as they were greatly outnumbered. Fearing the worst, the Cistercians at the monastery in Toulouse, where Saint Dominic was praying the Rosary with a group of soldiers, asked him how he thought it would turn out. After a lengthy silence Saint Dominic replied, "There will be a time when the malice of the men of Toulouse will have its end; but it is far away; and there will be much bloodshed first, and a king will die in battle."<sup>9</sup> At first they thought his prediction referred to Prince Louis of France, who had joined the army of the crusaders the previous February, but Saint Dominic said it would not touch him, but another king. Soon afterwards Saint Dominic left to join the crusaders where his prophecy was fulfilled. On September 13, 1213, the king of Aragon appeared with an army of 100,000 men. Fortified by the Rosary and receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, the soldiers rode out to battle, while the priests went back into the church to pray:

Nothing more heroic is to be found in the whole history of chivalry, than this battle of Muret. It was a single charge. They rode through the open

<sup>8</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 43.

<sup>9</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 45.



gates, and after a feigned movement of retreat, they suddenly turned rein and dashed right on the ranks of their opponents with the impetuosity of a mountain-torrent. Swift as lightning, they broke through the troops that opposed their onward course, scattering them before their horses' hoofs with something of supernatural energy, nor did they draw bridle till they reached the centre of the army where the king himself was stationed, surrounded by the flower of his nobles and followers. A moment's fierce struggle ensued; but the fall of the king decided the fortune of the day. Terrified by the shock of that tremendous charge, as it hurled itself upon them, the whole army fled in panic. The voice and example of their chief might again have rallied them, but that was wanting; Peter of Aragon lay dead on the field, and Dominic's prophecy was fulfilled.<sup>10</sup>

A painting dating from 1213 was seen in the church of St. James at Muret. The painting depicted Our Lady giving the Rosary to St. Dominic. St. Dominic is kneeling at Our Lady's right side holding a crucifix pierced with three arrows while Count Simon de Montfort and Fulk of Toulouse kneel opposite. "A facsimile of this painting, and of the same date, was long kept in the Dominican church at Toulouse."<sup>11</sup> A long-forgotten tradition holds that Saint Dominic ascended one of the towers at the Battle of Muret in order to display the crucifix for the encouragement of the Christian troops. This crucifix was shot through with arrows by the heretics who despised it. For many centuries a crucifix pierced with arrows, supposed to have been the identical one used by Saint Dominic at Muret, was on display at the church in Toulouse.

The cross pierced by arrows was subsequently adopted by the Counts of Toulouse and eventually became the symbol of the whole Occitan region. Cathars who recanted were forced to wear the cross shot through with arrows on their clothing as a sign of penitence. Thus the Toulouse Cross came to be known as the Cathar Cross, while the cross known as the Dominican Cross is a black and white Toulouse Cross with arms ending in fleur-de-lis rather than arrows.

<sup>10</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 48.

<sup>11</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 50.

### **3. Our Lady in Rome**

Many houses of religious women that existed before the founding of the Dominican Order were affiliated with the Order later. Pope Innocent III appropriated the church of Saint Sixtus for a number of religious women who were then living in Rome without the protection of a convent:

The design of collecting them together under regular discipline had been found fraught with difficulty and had failed even the papal authority, aided by the power and genius of such a man as Innocent, had been unable to overcome the willfulness and prejudice which opposed so wise a project. Honorius, who no less than his predecessor ardently desired to see it carried out, resolved to commit the management of the whole affair to Dominic.<sup>12</sup>

There was in Rome an image of Our Lady known as the *Salus Populi Romani*, believed to have been painted by Saint Luke. According to tradition, this image had been brought to Rome many centuries before from Constantinople. Saint Dominic's plan was to move this image to Saint Sixtus, and the women who were devoted to it would follow it. To do this, he gave up his own convent at Saint Sixtus and moved to Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill:

Dominic waited until nightfall before he ventured to remove the picture so often named; he feared lest some excitement and disturbance might be caused by this being done in broad day, for the people of the city felt a jealous unwillingness to suffer it to depart. However at midnight, accompanied by the two cardinals Nicholas and Stephen and many other persons, all barefoot and carrying torches, he conducted it in solemn procession to Saint Sixtus, where the nuns awaited its approach with similar marks of respect. It did not return, and its quiet domestication in the new house completed the settlement of the nuns. They were soon after joined by twenty-one others from various other houses, and thus was formed the second house of religious women living under the rule of Saint Dominic.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 102.

<sup>13</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 108.

Centuries later, Pope Paul V arranged that a magnificent chapel be built for the veneration of this image of the Blessed Mother in the Basilica of Saint Mary Major. In 1613, it was removed from the high altar and placed in the new chapel where it remains to this day.

#### ***4. The White Scapular***

Blessed Reginald of Orléans was a professor of canon law at the University of Paris. Master Reginald was a brilliant man, but he desired something more than what the world could give him and chose to give up all things for Christ in service of others. In 1218, he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land where a local cardinal encouraged him to find Saint Dominic, take the vow of poverty and become a member of his Order of Preachers. Master Reginald followed through on this advice. After meeting Saint Dominic, he resolved to enter the Order but within days he became so sick the doctors feared he would not survive. Saint Dominic begged Divine Mercy to restore Reginald's health so he could fulfill his vocation to the preaching mission. During this time, Master Reginald had a vision in which Our Lady appeared to him accompanied by two beautiful maidens. The Queen of Heaven instructed him to ask for what he desired and she would grant it to him. Our Lady anointed his eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, reins, and feet and showed him a white scapular that she would bestow on the Order as sign of her special love for their service. She promised Reginald she soon would appear to him again in the presence of others.

Three days later, Dominic returned to visit Reginald with a member of the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. Our Lady appeared to all three showing them the white scapular that she wished to become part of the habit of the Order. The three men agreed to keep the whole of the circumstances secret until after Reginald's death. Saint Dominic did change the form of the habit in keeping with Our Lady's instruction, but did not give the reason for the change until after Reginald's death. The white scapular has been the distinctive sign of the Dominican Order ever since.



The words spoken in the reception of the habit ceremony mark its origin and the reverence with which it is regarded by the Order. "Receive the holy scapular of our order, the most distinguished part of our Dominican habit, and the maternal pledge from heaven of the love of the Blessed Virgin Mary towards us."<sup>14</sup>

### **5. *The Dominican Blessing***

Dominicans everywhere share the tradition of singing the *Salve Regina* and receiving a blessing with holy water at the words before they go to bed:

One night, Dominic having remained in the church to pray, left it at the hour of midnight, and entered the corridor where the cells of the brethren were. When he had finished what he had come to do, he again began to pray at one end of the dormitory, and looking by chance towards the other end, he saw three ladies coming along, of whom the one in the middle appeared the most beautiful and venerable. One of her companions carried a magnificent vessel of water, and the other a sprinkler, which she presented to her mistress, and she sprinkled the brethren, and made over them the sign of the cross. But when she had come to one of the friars, she passed him over without blessing him; and Dominic, having observed who this one was, went before the lady, who was in the middle of the dormitory, near to where the lamp was hanging. He fell at her feet, and though he had already recognized her, yet he besought her to tell him who she was. At that time the beautiful and devout anthem of the *Salve Regina* was not sung in the convents of the friars or of the sisters at Rome; it was only recited kneeling after Compline. The lady who had given the blessing said therefore to Dominic, "I am she whom you invoke every evening, and when you say, '*Eia ergo advocata nostra*,' I prostrate before my Son for the preservation of this order."<sup>15</sup>

### **6. *Mary's Protection of the Order***

Saint Dominic had a vision of his deceased brothers and sisters under the protection of the Queen of Heaven. For this reason and many others, the Friars Preachers have a special

<sup>14</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 124-125.

<sup>15</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 137.



love for Mary and acknowledge her special protection and patronage of the Order:

Now the blessed Dominic returned to pray in the place where he was before, and scarcely had he begun to pray when he was wrapped in spirit unto God. And he saw the Lord, with the Blessed Virgin standing on His right hand, and it seemed to him that our Lady was dressed in a robe of sapphire blue. And, looking about him, he saw religious of every order standing before God; but of his own he did not see one. Then he began to weep bitterly, and he dared not draw nigh to our Lord, or to His Mother; but our Lady beckoned him with her hand to approach. Nevertheless, he did not dare to come until our Lord also in His turn had made him a sign to do so. He came, therefore, and fell prostrate before them, weeping bitterly and the Lord said to him, "Wouldst thou see thine own?" And he trembling replied, "Yes, Lord." Then the Lord placed His hand on the shoulder of the Blessed Virgin, and said to the blessed Dominic, "I have given thine order to my Mother." Then the Blessed Virgin opened the mantle in which she seemed to be dressed, and extending it before the eyes of Dominic so that its immensity covered all the space of the heavenly country, he saw under its folds a vast multitude of his friars. The blessed Dominic fell down to thank God and the Blessed Mary, His Mother.<sup>16</sup>

### **7. The Dominican Praise**

Saint Dominic never spoke in public without first prostrating in prayer before a little image of Our Lady and repeating the versicle, "*Dignare me laudare te Virgo sacrata . . .*" This is the origin of the custom among Dominicans even today of introducing their preaching with an *Ave Maria*. In many convents, where the *Salve Regina* is sung, whether in procession or in choir sides, this versicle rendered in English immediately follows, "Permit me to sing your praises, Holy Virgin. Strengthen me against your enemies."<sup>17</sup>

Prostration before an image of the Blessed Virgin or the Crucifix is one of the "nine ways of prayer" of Saint Dominic. The other ways are bowing, kneeling, genuflecting, standing with hands open, standing with hands outstretched in the form of a cross, standing with arms stretched forward with hands

<sup>16</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 138.

<sup>17</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 148.

together pointing toward heaven, sitting with a book, and walking. The nine ways of prayer were first recorded by an anonymous author sometime between 1260 and 1288. The most likely source of this information was Saint Cecilia at the Monastery of St. Agnes, who was received into the habit and directed in prayer by Saint Dominic himself.

### **8. *The Confraternity***

Many miracles are associated with stories of the propagation of the Rosary. The Confraternity of the Rosary seems to have begun in France where Saint Dominic used it as a means of teaching the truth of the Incarnation to people who were being led astray by the false doctrine of the Cathars and Albigensians. Saint Dominic gathered men about him for the preaching mission and set out through the north of Italy and parts of Spain:

It seems certain that he made some stay at the Palencia, the scene of his early university life. There is an interesting memorial of this visit in the will of Anthony Sersus, who leaves a certain sum for candles for the confraternity of the Holy Rosary founded in that place by "the good Dominic of Guzman," as he terms him.<sup>18</sup>

### **9. *The Seven Sorrows***

The Seven Sorrows refer to the seven events in Scripture in which the suffering of Our Lady is mentioned: Hearing the Prophecy of Simeon (Luke 2:34-35); Fleeing into Egypt with Joseph (Matthew 2:13); Losing the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:43-45); Meeting Jesus on the Way to Calvary; Standing by the Cross (John 19:25); Receiving the Body of Jesus (Matthew 27:57-59); Placing the Body of Jesus in the Tomb (John 19:40-42). The purpose of the devotion was to promote union with the sufferings of Christ through union with the special suffering that Our Lady endured. Mother Margaret Hallahan wrote about the devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows in a letter to her Sisters in 1866, "It is one of the most efficacious

<sup>18</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 150.

of all devotions, and for those amongst you who have relations out of the Church or in sin, I can recommend nothing better than that you should have recourse to Our Lady through Her dolours.”<sup>19</sup> The Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows was first celebrated on September 15th in honor of the miraculous picture which depicts the Seven Sorrows of our Lady and St. Dominic:

An obscurity rests over the origin of this picture, or perhaps we should rather say that the Church, whilst granting the festival and bearing her willing testimony to the extraordinary Divine favors shown to the devotion of the pilgrims of Suriano, has been silent as to the history of the painting itself. This picture first appeared in the convent of Suriano in Calabria in the year 1530, and did not attract much popular regard until the beginning of the following century, when the miracles and conversions wrought at Suriano made it a place of pilgrimage to the whole world. After a number of briefs, granted by successive pontiffs, and a severe examination of the facts, Benedict XIII, at length, appointed the 15th of September to be observed through the whole order in commemoration of the graces received before this remarkable picture.<sup>20</sup>

The devotion has a long history, but was not officially promulgated by the Church until the early nineteenth century. Before its formal approval, both the Servite Order and the Dominicans had permission to celebrate it because they were so instrumental in popularizing the devotion. Connection between Saint Dominic and this feast later became obscure, although we know Saint Dominic practiced this devotion and promoted it among his followers. The Dominican Saint Peter the Martyr, then the Inquisitor-General of Italy, helped to popularize the devotion and recommended the foundation of the Servite Order in 1243. The painting referred to by Mother Francis Raphael Drane has been lost to antiquity. The seven sorrows are now popularly depicted by an image of the Blessed Mother with seven swords piercing her heart. The fifth

<sup>19</sup> Margaret Mary Hallahan, Letter no. 10, March 21, 1866. Letters of Mother Margaret are located in the archival collection of the Dominican Sisters of Stone (England).

<sup>20</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 217.



sorrow has been memorialized by the hymn *Stabat Mater*, while the sixth sorrow is most famously portrayed as the Pietà by Michelangelo.

### **10. The Lost Text**

Although he was undoubtedly a great teacher and preacher, no writings by Saint Dominic have survived. One book we know he wrote is especially missed. This is the book *On the Flesh of Christ* that was flung into the fire three times, and three times sprang back out uninjured during Saint Dominic's confrontation with the Albigensian heretics. Mother Francis Raphael Drane quotes from a letter of Father Alessandro Santo Canale of the Society of Jesus that was published in a collection of letters on the Immaculate Conception at Palermo in the year 1742:

All the regular orders, following the inclination of the Holy Church their mother, have always shown a courageous zeal in defense of the Immaculate Conception. And I say *all*; because one of the most earnest in favor of the Immaculate Conception has been the most learned and most holy Dominican order, even from its very first beginning. I mean even from the time of the great patriarch Saint Dominic in the dispute which he held with the Albigensians at Toulouse, with so much glory to the Church and to himself. Almost from the time of Saint Dominic down to the present day there has been preserved in the public archives of Barcelona a very ancient tablet, whereon is inscribed the famous dispute of the saint with the Albigensians, and the triumph of the truth, confirmed by the miracle of the fire, into which, at the request of the heretics the saint having thrown his book, when that of the Albigensians was destroyed his remained uninjured.<sup>21</sup>

Against the Albigensian claim that the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin, Dominic wrote a book on the Flesh of Christ. The tablet in Barcelona described by Father Canale stated:

Dominic replied, even as it is contained in his book, that what they said was not true; because the Virgin Mary was she of whom the Holy Ghost

<sup>21</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 219-220.



says by Solomon, "Thou art all fair my beloved and there is no stain in thee." In this book of S. Dominic's on the Flesh of Christ, chap. xvii, there are, among other passages, the following words quoted from the Acts of S. Andrew, "Even as the first Adam was made of virgin earth, which had never been cursed, so also was it fitting for the second Adam to be made in like manner." It would seem, therefore, that the book was still extant at the time of the inscription, and the above passages were quoted from it.<sup>22</sup>

### **C. Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan (1803-1868)**

Mother Margaret Hallahan was born in London in 1803 of very poor Irish parents who both died when she was still a girl. She became a domestic servant for families in England and eventually moved with them to Bruges, Belgium. She received the Dominican habit in 1834 and made profession at Bruges the following year. In 1842, she returned to England and, in 1844, founded a small community in Coventry. In 1848, the community moved to Clifton, near Bristol, where a convent was erected. Later in 1853, the whole community there was transferred to Stone. Mother Margaret proved to be a capable administrator and founded five convents, with poor schools attached to each, two middle schools, four churches, several orphanages, and a hospital at Stone. She was especially remarkable in her zealous evangelization and promotion of Marian devotion as a means of conversion. After a long and painful illness, she died at Stone in 1868.

The foundation made in Stone by Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan was the first apostolic congregation founded in England after the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829 allowed the open practice of the Catholic faith. The Rules and Constitutions written by Mother Margaret were approved by the Pope and all subsequent foundations in England and the United States were encouraged to take them as their model. In 1929, five English congregations were amalgamated and renamed Dominican Sisters of England with Stone as their Motherhouse. This amalgamation forced by the Master General in Rome, rather than freely chosen by the Sisters, caused bitterness and division. Although the Pope and the Master General of the Order

<sup>22</sup> Drane, *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch*, 220.

sought to amalgamate the American congregations with those in England, the Americans successfully resisted and remained independent entities. Recently, however, diminishing numbers have caused several groups of American congregations to merge and restructure.

## **D. Dominican Stories/Legends from the Life of Mother Hallihan**

### **1. *The Weightier Argument***

Margaret Mary's Irish mother encouraged a warm devotion to the Blessed Mother in her as a child, but her home life was soon disrupted by misfortune and sickness. When she was four-years-old, she lost her father to consumption and her mother died soon after. Margaret Mary was sent to an orphanage where she was taught to read and write. By the time she was nine-years-old, having lost both parents, Margaret began a life of service.<sup>23</sup>

Margaret Mary fulfilled her daily duties as a servant with religious obedience, invoking her guardian angel and the Blessed Mother to help her, especially when she was asked to cook. When she was about thirteen, she encountered a man who stunned her by blaspheming and calling upon God to strike him dead if he really existed. But when she heard him speak disrespectfully of the Blessed Virgin, she was shocked. "Having no words ready at the moment with which to reply, she used a weightier argument, and seizing a large plate, broke it over the scoffer's head."<sup>24</sup>

### **2. *The Miraculous Image***

The family that employed Margaret Mary moved to Bruges, Belgium, and she went with them. Here she found a community of beguines dedicated to corporal works of mercy, serving the sick poor in hospitals. Bishop Ullathorne arrived shortly after to recruit Catholic women to help rekindle the faith in England. Later he wrote:

<sup>23</sup> Mother Francis Raphael Drane (Augusta Theodosia), *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban: Foundress of the English Congregation of St. Catherine of Siena of the Third Order of St. Dominic* (New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1929), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 11.

When I visited Bruges, after she first came to Coventry, I found the whole city full of her fame. People of all classes, from the poor to the bankers, came to inquire after her. Her name introduced me to everyone. The clergy and superioresses of convents spoke of her with warm interest.<sup>25</sup>

He learned that Margaret Mary visited the sick in St. John's Hospital and prayed for hours kneeling in front of a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows in the Church of St James. Not only was she a woman of great piety but she was kind, compassionate, and able to give freedom of heart to those who were overly scrupulous. Margaret Mary gathered a group of women nightly in the Church of Saint James where they sang the Litany of the Blessed Virgin for the conversion of England. She made pilgrimages to recommend her petition for the conversion of England to the Blessed Mother at a small church on the outskirts of Bruges and began to pray for a vocation to the Dominican Order:

The parish church of Assebroeck stands in a sort of sandy desert about five miles out of Bruges. The small marble image of Our Lady of Assebroeck was brought there in the year 1720, . . . by a pious Fleming, whose devotions to the holy image during his homeward voyage so excited the Calvinist bile of the Dutch sailors, that at last they contemptuously tossed it overboard. The marble image, however, floated on the waves; and when, in their fury, the sailors sought, by the aid of poles and weights, to force it to the bottom, it continued to elude their violence, and followed the vessel, still floating on the surface of the water. . . ., and after passing through many hands, found its way at length to Assebroeck, where many honours were paid to it, and an annual Novena was ordered to be celebrated by a decree of the Bishop of Bruges. It was probably this public Novena which Margaret determined on attending. But in order to reach Assebroeck in time to hear Mass and communicate, and then return home before the hour when her domestic services would be required, she had to rise at two o'clock in the morning, and to make a painful foot journey through the sandy roads, in the dark. She persevered in this devotion for nine days, at the end of which time her confessor, without any solicitation on her part, announced to her that he withdrew all his objections to her joining the Dominican order, and that she might do so with his full consent.

<sup>25</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 28.



Her joy was great indeed, enhanced by the feeling that she owed this grace to the intercession of Our Lady.<sup>26</sup>

Bishop Ullathorne invited Margaret Mary and three others to Coventry to begin a new foundation in England. Before Margaret Mary left Bruges for England, her confessor, Father Versaval, gave her a small statue of the Blessed Virgin which he had received as a gift from a Dutch woman who insisted it only be given to someone with a deep devotion. Margaret Mary's religious life began as a Third Order Secular Dominican, with vows made to the Bishop. The little group she joined moved from Coventry to Stone. Wherever she went, Margaret Mary brought with her the image of the Blessed Virgin.

For a time Margaret had been very sick and close to death. Her only consolation was the image of the Blessed Virgin placed at the foot of her bed. The image, now called *Our Lady Refuge of Sinners*, is now kept in the heritage room at Stone. Bishop Ullathorne hoped that the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and other devotional practices would be reintroduced. He proposed the establishment of Confraternities of the Rosary in England, saying "It is the prayer of the simple, and therefore the best prayer we can use to overcome the predominant national vice of pride."<sup>27</sup> Margaret Mary collaborated enthusiastically with the Bishop and others to carry out this proposal.

### **3. *The Miraculous Conversions***

Catholics in England had long since given up public displays of devotion, and Margaret prayed for their courageous return to public worship. While the Bishop longed for the return of a public faith, he hoped for a peaceful reintroduction and this sometimes placed him at odds with Mother Margaret. He confided in friends that he did not know what to do about her at times and yet he admired the strength of her resolve. Margaret exclaimed, "How many passions I have been in about the Blessed Virgin! I hope she will rub them all off!" When Margaret asked him for permission to distribute miraculous medals,

<sup>26</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 33-34.

<sup>27</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 52.

Bishop Ullathorne was so moved by the childlike sincerity of her faith that he gave in despite his concerns about what prejudices that could invite in Coventry. Sister Margaret claimed that every person who received one of those medals was afterwards converted.<sup>28</sup>

The Rosary was in disuse when Sister Margaret arrived in England. Even her closest companions secretly admitted they thought it was a childish sort of devotion, but Margaret was able to win people over. The regular prayer meetings she held for scholars in the night school became so popular that even many Protestants came to hear her prayer, singing, and spiritual reading. She ended these meetings with the Rosary:

One afternoon, having assisted her in preparing the schoolroom for the evening Rosary, her friend, Miss G. [Goode], was astonished to see her, after surveying the altar with simple glee, take hold of her dress in both hands, and execute a little dance before Our Lady. . . . [Sister Margaret] often expressed her love of Our Lady by saying she should like to dance before her; words which reminded her hearers of the act recorded of the Royal Psalmist, to the character of whose devotion her own bore so remarkable a resemblance.

The schoolroom Rosary evenings had many important results, and the devotion begun at Coventry was taken up at other missions. The Protestants, who came at first out of curiosity, were often induced by their Catholic friends to stay and talk with Sister Margaret, and these interviews led in many cases to conversions.<sup>29</sup>

The Rosary was the main means used to increase devotion to Our Blessed Lady, but it was not the only instrument Margaret used to demonstrate her zealous faith:

When she first came to Bristol no image of Our Lady was to be seen in any of the Catholic churches or chapels, nor had the exercises of the month of Mary as yet been introduced. They were first performed in the Church of Saint Mary's on the Quay, in the May of 1847, by the Rev. P. O'Farrell, O.S.E., at Mother Margaret's petition. She lent him the French *Mois de Marie*, from which the meditations were taken, and sent over to Ireland for an image of Our Lady to be publicly exposed during the month.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 72.

<sup>29</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 73-74.

<sup>30</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 147.

#### **4. *The Devotional Processions***

Margaret was also the first to bring back the May crowning and other exercises in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She took care to address the Protestants present so that they would not take scandal by the special devotion their Catholic friends had for the Blessed Virgin. She was overjoyed when as many people came for the exercises as there were on a very full Sunday, nearly a hundred people. She thought such an outpouring would surely please the Divine Mother and bring about the salvation of England. Through donations collected, the success of both Convent and Hospital was ensured, and the school enrollment increased.<sup>31</sup>

Religious images were rare in England in 1845, but Father Gentili and Mother Margaret were determined to bring back devotion to the Blessed Virgin through all means available to them. They prepared a bier adorned with lights and flowers and placed the image of the Blessed Virgin decked with gala wreaths on top of it:

On that and two successive evenings, a solemn and beautiful procession was made round the church; the crowds who came to see the sight, filled not only the church and churchyard, but even the adjoining streets.<sup>32</sup>

Mother Margaret delighted in knowing that the beloved image she brought with her from Belgium was the first to be publicly carried in England after the reformation. Mother Margaret said this public act of reparation offered to the Mother of God was truly a “cause of joy” to her for the rest of her life. Mother Margaret commissioned an artist in Bristol to make a mold from Ernst Deger’s image of the Madonna and Child, and a vast number of small statues were cast from this model until they became very common throughout the area.

#### **5. *Opposition Without and Within***

Mother Margaret prayed for Our Lady to help her in any situation of need and placed all her institutions under Mary’s

<sup>31</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 80.

<sup>32</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 113-114.



protection and care. When times were tough financially, she asked her sisters to put a light before Our Lady, and soon a donation would come in answer to their prayers. Although many locals, including Protestants, came to her prayer services, Mother Margaret's devotions had their detractors as well. On Whit-Tuesday, the Tuesday after Pentecost, Mother Margaret arranged a group of two hundred school children to process up Park Street with a banner of Our Blessed Lady. This procession was not well received by the local populace and gave rise to gossip, "'Mother Margaret and *her doll*' were spoken of in severe terms; and even good Dr. Hendren could not resist telling her that she was 'a very daring woman.'"<sup>33</sup>

Mother Margaret took it as a compliment and assumed everyone must be as pleased as she was to see Our Lady honored in such a festive way. Mother Margaret wrote in a letter to her sisters in August of 1863:

You must each of you keep today as your feast, for you all bear the sweet and blessed name of Mary. Think today of all that that name implies; think of our dear Lady's virtues, and especially those three which shone forth in her so conspicuously: humility, purity and love. In these, she is not beyond our imitation; we can all of us aim at humility, and ask it of God; we can all of us be pure, if we desire it; we can all of us love God if only we are in earnest about it. Remember too, this day, how much we owe to our dear Blessed Lady in this house. It is not mere imaginary benefits, or such as are invisible; her favors to us are visible solid favors; she has shown Her maternal hand in a very marked and special manner in all that concerns us; to Her we are indebted for everything from the beginning until now. Now if she has thus chosen us to be the object of her maternal love and favor, should not we be distinguished by a filial love and devotion to her, and this in a more than ordinary degree.<sup>34</sup>

After the procession, Margaret returned to Belgium to solicit alms and procure some religious items not available in England for the convent at Stone. While she was away she received word that members of her own Congregation, swayed by local

<sup>33</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 157.

<sup>34</sup> Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan, Letter no. 55, Feast of the Assumption, August 15, 1863.

sentiment, had removed the image of Our Lady from the chapel. The image was replaced in the chapel as soon as Mother Margaret returned, but the fact that her own sisters gave into public opinion and removed the image caused her great anxiety. "When they turned her out of the chapel, I told some of them *they* might stay away if they liked, but that Our Lady should never be turned out."<sup>35</sup> Writing to her sisters on the Feast of the Assumption a year later, she wrote:

Now our Lady's life was throughout a life of suffering and sacrifice, and we must not expect to get to heaven without suffering and sacrifice too. These things are most painful to nature, we must not expect not to feel them; there would be no merit in them if we did not feel them. We shall always feel humiliation and suffering and mortification most deeply, but then it is something to offer to God. Some try to put a kind of soft salve over humiliations and sufferings and to make them pleasant to themselves, but it is a mistake; such as these will make no progress. It is not a sign of a soul being in a state of grace if, to use such an expression, she shirks humiliations and sufferings. There is no getting to heaven without them. So let us ask of Our Lady to obtain for us these graces of humility, and love of suffering, and the spirit of sacrifice, and a complete detachment from all that is not God. Let us ask her too to obtain for us the virtue of silence. I repeat to you again those words of St. John of the Cross, "Labor and suffer and be silent." There can be no interior spirit without the virtue of silence; we cannot be speaking to God and to creatures at the same time.<sup>36</sup>

Despite opposition both from within as well as outside the convent, Mother Margaret kept the hope of rekindling devotion to the Blessed Mother foremost in her plans. At the end of the year 1856, she had plans to open an orphanage and a hospital the following year for which she would count on the Blessed Mother to provide the necessary funds. "We are going to make a great fuss with Our Blessed Mother," she wrote in her diary as the Feast of the Immaculate Conception drew near:

Humiliations and crosses, however, were mingled with these hopes. . . . What most perplexed the curious public was her lavish expenditure on

<sup>35</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 158.

<sup>36</sup> Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan, Letter no. 93, The Assumption, August 15, 1864.

all that concerned the service of God, at a time when they had good reasons for believing that the Community was enduring many of the straits of poverty. They argued, that if Mother Margaret were really in want of money, it was strange that she should burn so many candles in the chapel; and they never dreamt that at the very time when remarks of this kind were in circulation she was writing to her Sisters on the subject of their money difficulties, "Do not burn one candle less in honor of Our Lord, or His Blessed Mother; we must be sparing to ourselves, but not to God." Yet she was far from being indifferent to hostile criticism; we might even say that she was at all times keenly sensitive to unfriendly strictures which betrayed a less generous standard of principles than her own.<sup>37</sup>

### **6. *Discerning a Call to Religious Life***

In discerning whether a young woman had a true vocation to religious life, Mother Margaret above all looked for a practical sense of self-sacrifice:

It is no use persons coming to us who are not willing to suffer everything for the salvation of souls. They must have a heroic spirit, and be ready to bear heat, cold, fatigue, and every other inconvenience. It is easier to *say* that we delight in mean and abject employments, than it is to do them. We have had experience of this, and all would prefer to wear a hair shirt or a chain, than to clean the kitchen, wash, iron, or cook; though God has commanded all to earn their bread in the sweat of their brow. This is quite lost sight of, and is almost looked upon as a disgrace. Yet it is certain that Our Lord, in working as a carpenter, must have fulfilled the command, and Our Blessed Lady had no servants to wait on her. The more I see of human nature, the more I feel certain that humble and laborious employments are the best mortification, the shortest way to obtain true humility, and to make us have a proper feeling of charity towards the laborious and the poor. We can ill give lessons to others of things we have not ourselves experienced.<sup>38</sup>

Mother Margaret believed that the Congregation at Stone owed all that it was able to acquire in the way of virtue and property to the Blessed Mother. She repaid Our Lady with constant devotion and celebrated all the feasts of Our Lady

<sup>37</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 178-179.

<sup>38</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 177.



by giving her a present. On the occasion of the definition of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, Margaret was overjoyed. She ordered that the great bell of the convent be rung for two hours in thanksgiving and arranged for the congregation to celebrate the pronouncement. The quadrangle was illuminated for the occasion at considerable expense. These extravagant gestures were simply incomprehensible to non-Catholic minds, but Margaret saw them as a way of expressing gratitude to the Blessed Virgin for all they had received from her. Receiving a visit once from a Catholic of high rank, whose devotion to the Blessed Virgin was well known not to be of the warmest kind, this lady expressed her surprise at all that Mother Margaret had done, and, as was not uncommon in such cases, inquired whence she could obtain the means for accomplishing such undertakings. Mother Margaret replied emphatically, "Every stone you see here . . . has been laid by the Blessed Virgin."<sup>39</sup> But, Mother Margaret continued to encounter hostility as a result of her zealous devotion and felt great anguish about it:

Cars containing effigies of the Pope, Cardinal Wiseman, and the great enemy of souls were paraded through the metropolis as in the days of Shaftesbury, and the effigies were afterwards committed all together to the flames. In the city of Exeter, the emblem of our Redemption itself was added to the bonfire which was lighted before the gates of the Bishop's palace. But it was reserved for the Protestants of Bristol to conceive the idea of a yet more horrible exhibition. The proposal was made to dress up an effigy of the Blessed Virgin *and flog it* through the streets of the city. It is indeed difficult to imagine how a thought so utterly revolting could have suggested itself to any, even nominally, Christian mind, were it not evident that these outbreaks of popular fury often bear the signs of an infernal inspiration. But when the tidings of what was contemplated reached Mother Margaret, it nearly killed her. She wrung her hands as in agony, and turning her face to the wall, exclaimed repeatedly, "I shall die, I shall die; oh, my Mother, I shall die!" In a letter written at the time she expresses her anguish, and adds, "I must go out and rescue her, I fear I shall not be able to restrain myself."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 317.

<sup>40</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 318-319.

### **7. *Our Lady of Stone***

During her last illness, suffering from excruciating back pain, Mother Margaret said, "I am almost ready to fall out with the Blessed Virgin. *I tell her that if she had a bad back I would soon cure her if I could.*"<sup>41</sup> Others might think she took liberties, but Margaret Mary loved the Blessed Mother with a childlike simplicity. Sr. Mary Henry Diamond, O.P., story-teller in residence at Stone, related the story that, once on a visit to Belgium, Mother Margaret was drawn to a magnificent carved oak statue of Our Lady of Victories exhibited in the town square in Bruges and invited her to come to Stone. Some years later, when this very statue was purchased by a grateful benefactor and presented to her, Mother Margaret was delighted that Our Lady had accepted her invitation. This image, now called Our Lady of Stone, resides inside a great lantern on a small hill in the garden at Stone. Pilgrimages in honor of Our Lady are still made to it by local school children, especially in May.

### **8. *Influence on American Congregations***

Margaret first learned about the Dominican Rule for the Third Order from Père C. B. Moulaert, a Belgian Friar with whom she had become acquainted during the time of her stay and association in Bruges. Père Moulaert was the author of a "Manual of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order." Margaret drew upon Moulaert's manual to write the Rules and Constitutions for her Congregation:

The little document, drawn up by Mother Margaret, and still preserved, in her own handwriting, bears the title, "Rules and Constitutions, or Customs for the present regulation of the Third Order of our Holy Father St. Dominic: under the special protection of the Ever-Blessed Virgin and St. Catherine of Siena."<sup>42</sup>

Archivists of Dominican Congregations in the United States answered a three-question survey confirming that their founders and foundresses consulted the Dominican Sisters at Stone

<sup>41</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 325.

<sup>42</sup> Drane, *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallaban*, 99.

when writing Constitutions for their own Congregations. Sr. Lois Hoh, O.P., of Sinsinawa wrote that their foundress, Mother Emily Power, traveled to Stone, England, on several occasions, staying with the Sisters there and collecting their wisdom regarding a Constitution to replace the one prepared by their founder, Father Samuel Mazzuchelli in 1847. She reported that the Sinsinawa Constitutions, approved by the Holy See in 1888, were based intentionally and largely on the wisdom of the Stone Sisters. Sr. Rose Marie Martin, O.P., archivist for the Grand Rapids Dominicans, reported that her Sisters read *The Spirit of the Dominican Order*, by Mother Francis Raphael Drane, in the early days and based their Constitutions on those of the Sinsinawa Dominicans (which in turn were based on the Stone Constitutions).

Sr. Patricia Corr, O.P., of San Rafael, wrote that Father Vilarasa guided the foundress of the San Rafael Dominicans, Mother Mary Goemare, to the Constitutions of the English Dominican Sisters which were "brought over" and adopted on February 2, 1859. Sr. Mary Erica Burkhardt, O.P., of the Amityville Dominicans, wrote that, when Mother Antonine Fischer was elected in 1895, they were under the Rule of the Second Order, but, when the Holy Cross Congregation changed to the Third Order in 1888, they used Constitutions modeled on the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of Stone. Sr. Marian Sartain, O.P., reported that the Nashville Dominicans adopted the unabridged Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of Stone from 1886-1889. Later a version was published, for use of Third Order Dominican Sisters in the diocese of Nashville, which was identical in its first part to the Stone Constitutions, but the second part clarified the status of the community as a diocesan institute. According to Sr. Suzanne Noffke, O.P., it was Father Jodocus Birkhaeuser who wrote Constitutions for the Dominican Sisters of Racine in 1892, but he did so after consulting the Constitutions approved for Stone in 1877. In 1893, he wrote that he hoped to go there before returning from a trip to Europe.

The archivist for the Columbus Dominicans, Sr. Rosalie Graham, O.P., reported that the St. Mary of the Springs Congregation used the Rule of the Congregation of St. Catherine of



Sienna of Stone, England for some years. Sr. Esther Aherne, O.P., wrote that their Mother Thomasina, one of a group of women who founded the Tacoma Dominicans, read the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of Stone and also consulted with Mother Pia in San Francisco when preparing to write the Tacoma Constitutions. Sr. Carolyn Crebs, O.P., of the Elkins Park Dominicans, said that, at the beginning of their foundation in 1882, the Dominican Rule according to the Constitutions of the Dominican Sisters of the Order of Penance of Langres, France, was used, but, when their Constitutions were adapted for the Third Order in 1889, they consulted those of Stone. The final Constitutions borrowed parts from the Constitutions of Langres and Stone. The governance section was taken entirely from the Stone England Constitutions.

Sr. Evangela Balde, O.P., archivist for the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, reported that the Mission San Jose Dominicans followed the Constitutions of the Holy Cross Congregation in Brooklyn from the time they arrived in California in 1876. These were the Constitutions of the Second Order Dominicans, written by Humbert of the Romans, fifth Master General of the Order (1254-1263), and updated in 1847 for the Dominican Sisters in Ratisbon, Germany. After separation from Brooklyn, the foundress of the Mission San Jose Dominicans, Mother Maria Pia Backes, set about to write Constitutions for a Third Order Congregation.

In preparation for her task, Mother Pia devoted whatever time she could spare from her other duties to a study of the spirit of the Dominican Third Order and wrote to other Dominican communities of women, e.g., Racine, Wisconsin; Speyer, Germany; Benicia (San Rafael), California; and Stone, England, requesting copies of their *Constitutions* for study.<sup>43</sup>

In November of 1894, Mother Pia typed the first draft comprised of two parts. The first part was an English translation of the Constitutions approved by the Holy See, August 14, 1874,

<sup>43</sup> Mother Mary Thomas Lillis, *Seed and Growth: The Story of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose* (Fremont, CA: Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose, 2012), 191.

for the Sisters at Speyer, Germany. The second part, primarily on governance, was from the Constitutions approved by the Holy See for the Sisters at Stone in 1877. Archbishop Riordan approved the Constitutions for Sisters at Mission San Jose in 1895, and Mother Pia sent them to the Most Reverend Andrew Fruehwirth, Master General of the Dominican Order. At the same time, she asked the advice of the Master General regarding convents in Europe she should visit to find examples of authentic Dominican life. The Master General sent word back recommending Speyer, Nancy, and Stone as the best examples of Dominican observance in Europe.<sup>44</sup>

In September of 1904, Mother Pia followed up on the Master General's recommendation and visited the Dominican Motherhouse in Stone, England. The community seems to have made a positive impression on her:

September 16—Stone, England. Attended noon and evening recreation here. A very good spirit reigns in this community. Very quiet measured demeanor, but not cold; rather plain, mild, friendly. The Mothers understand different languages; are prudent and sensible. Very monastic; very sisterly. Towards superiors, the Sisters are not shy . . .<sup>45</sup>

In Mother Provincial Philomena Dormer, Mother Pia found a kindred spirit with whom she could speak freely. She joined the Sisters for three Holy Masses and was very touched by their prayer for the conversion of England. She was elated to find that Mother Philomena agreed with her regarding the Breviary, domestic sisters, and enclosure. She thanked God for the relief afforded her by this interview. Mother Philomena encouraged her to seek papal approbation for the Congregation, rather than rely on Bishops. Mother Pia visited their schools and was impressed with the training in domestic economy and the singing of the children. From there she went back to Bow, London:

I profited by this trip to England. There I found truly genuine religious, uncontaminated by the Zeitgeist. Educated but simple. Nothing of the butterfly spirit.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Lillis, *Seed and Growth*, 197.

<sup>45</sup> Mother Pia Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, trans. Mother Bernardina Michel (St. Benedict, OR: Benedictine Press, 1953), 255.

<sup>46</sup> Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, 256.

Father Dominicus Scheer, Mother Pia's spiritual director, encouraged her to remain in Europe until October and make a retreat under his direction in Venlo, Holland. Discussing her thoughts on the new Constitutions with him, she found he agreed with her and Mother Provincial Philomena about keeping the Breviary:

It would be better, he agreed, to pray one nocturn of the Breviary than to abandon it entirely, and he recommended the *Constitutions* of the Dominican Sisters of Stone, England, as her model.<sup>47</sup>

Following Fr. Scheer's recommendations, Mother Pia consulted with the Dominican Sisters at Stone regarding questions related to revising the Constitutions to allow the Sisters to lead a more apostolic life and be of greater service to the people. On July 9, 1897, she wrote in her diary: "Interviewed Father Dominicus concerning matters pertaining to the Order. We looked through the Sisters of Stone's Constitutions. Father desires that we accept this rule as a foundation. . . ."<sup>48</sup>

Mother Pia also consulted Fr. Scheer on another issue that was a growing concern to the Dominican Sisters in the United States. Sisters in the monasteries of Europe were divided into two classes: Lay Sisters and Choir Sisters. They were clothed differently and treated differently. The Lay Sisters, sometimes referred to as "house Sisters," were given fewer opportunities, essentially treated as domestic servants, and placed last in line for meals. This class distinction became increasingly repugnant to Sisters in America. On July 13, 1897, Mother Pia wrote in her diary that Fr. Scheer recommended that she consult with the Dominican Sisters in Columbus, Ohio, on this question: "With regard to the Lay Sisters' problem, he advised that we follow the Constitutions of Saint Mary of the Springs, Columbus, Ohio. . . ."<sup>49</sup>

The "Lay Sisters' problem" was the cause of great tension in community. At the Chapter of 1903, it was finally resolved

<sup>47</sup> Lillis, *Seed and Growth*, 201.

<sup>48</sup> Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, 175 (July 13, 1897).

<sup>49</sup> Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, 175.



and laid to rest. Mother Pia wrote: "I wish to announce that the chapter, held July 1903, decided that the Lay Sisters be clothed the same as the Choir Sisters. As soon as the habits are finished, the Superiors will give them to those Sisters. Meanwhile, it is forbidden to discuss this change, and the Superiors will impose a severe penance for its infraction. We hope this alteration will bring peace and contentment to the house Sisters."<sup>50</sup>

On the advice of Mother Philomena that she seek papal approval rather than rely on the local bishop, in November 1906, Mother Pia sent a petition to the Holy Father requesting papal approval of the Constitutions that had already been approved the year before by Archbishop Riordan:

The *Constitutions* according to which we now live, are those which were approved by the Holy See on April 18, 1877, for the Sisters in Stone, England—and for us, by our Archbishop, the Most Reverend P.W. Riordan, on May 1, 1895.<sup>51</sup>

On May 1, 1907, Mother Pia wrote in her diary that she had received the approval of the Holy See in the form of a Decree of Praise for the *Constitutions* from the Congregation of Religious. The Stone Dominicans clearly were held in high regard by the Master General in Rome and therefore had some influence on many Congregations in the United States. However, there is no indication any of the other foundresses shared the zeal for evangelizing through Marian devotions exhibited by Mother Margaret. Archivists reported that *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Order* and *The Spirit of the Order* by Mother Francis Raphael Drane were in their libraries in the early years, and, although there is no record of what was read aloud in the refectories, this book was one of few available readily. The Stone Constitutions were promoted as the premier model by several bishops in the United States and the

<sup>50</sup> Mother Pia Backes, letter to the Sisters, August 21, 1903. Letters of Mother Pia are located in the archival collection of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose in Fremont, CA.

<sup>51</sup> Lillis, *Seed and Growth*, 344.

Master of the Order, but the foundresses seem to have been interested primarily in the sections having to do with governance of a Third Order congregation. The Dominican Sisters of Ossining have no recollection of their founders being influenced by the Stone Dominicans. However, Sr. Elizabeth Menard, O.P., formerly of the Fall River Dominicans, reported that their first Constitution was based largely on the Stone Constitution, adapted for the active lifestyle of their early Sisters in the States. The foundress of the Newburgh Dominicans, Mother Hyacinth, was favorably influenced by the Stone Constitutions:

She found the energy to study several Third Order Dominican constitutions with an eye towards major change in the future. . . . In consultation with their ecclesiastical superior, Monsignor John Edwards, she decided to circulate copies of the Rule of St. Catherine Siena Congregation from Stone, England. Both Mother Hyacinth and Monsignor thought it the most acceptable of the alternatives that would face the community at the next election.<sup>52</sup>

Sr. Agnes Boyle, O.P., served on the Constitution Committee for the Dominican Sisters of Hope, a new Congregation formed in 1995 by the members of the Fall River Dominicans, the Newburgh Dominicans, and the Dominican Sisters of the Sick Poor in Ossining, New York. She reported that, although she visited Stone on sabbatical, the Constitutions of the English Dominicans had no influence on those drawn up for the new Congregation of Hope in 1995.

### **9. Amalgamation**

The English Dominican Sisters commissioned Anselm Nye to write their history and prepare it for publication. The resulting book, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission: The English Dominican Sisters (1845-2010)*, was published in 2011. Commenting on preliminary notes from the present study posted on the blog ([www.lifeofanunorsister.blogspot.com](http://www.lifeofanunorsister.blogspot.com)), Anselm Nye indicated that he was most interested in the influence of the Stone

<sup>52</sup> Murray, *Other Waters*, 116.

Constitutions on the U.S. Dominican congregations, particularly Mother Pia's attitude to amalgamation as mentioned in *Seed and Growth: The Story of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose*, by Mary Thomas Lillis, O.P.

On her first trip to Europe in 1897, Mother Pia again pondered the idea of amalgamation, this time with a slightly different twist: the union of the Dominican congregations in the United States under a central Motherhouse in Rome. The more she considered the idea the more enthusiastic she became. Father Dominicus Scheer agreed and thought Rome would approve on a probationary basis, but cautioned her not to move too fast. She seemed to have taken his caution to heart, for the next mention of amalgamation is a Diary entry dated January 24, 1902, when her admiration for the Stone community led her to consider some kind of union with the sisters in England.

Sometime later, Mother Pia must have shared with Father Scheer her concern regarding information she had received about congregations being "forced" by Rome to unite.<sup>53</sup>

Anselm Nye wrote, "The amalgamation of the five small English groups in 1929 was something of a disaster and was handled very badly by Father Louis Nolan. Certainly the Australian Dominicans had heard about the negative effects. It's clear that there was an underlying suspicion on the part of some US Prioresses General that Nolan's establishment of the Conference would bring in 'amalgamation by the back door.' I wonder whether part of their unease was caused by rumours of the unhappy consequences of the English amalgamation. If there are any references in your archives to the English amalgamation I would be most interested to hear."<sup>54</sup>

Mother Pia did consider amalgamation, both with other congregations in the United States and also with the Sisters in England, but later decided against it. In October 27, 1895, she wrote:

It is a pity that we who come from the same Motherhouse are separated. We could constitute a Congregation more than a thousand in number.

<sup>53</sup> Lillis, *Seed and Growth*, 553-554.

<sup>54</sup> Anselm Nye, email to Sr. Donna Maria Moses and Sr. Evangela Balde, April 9, 2012.



If we worked in unity, how much we could do for souls and God's honor. The Superioresses do not seem to understand this advantage.<sup>55</sup>

By 1905 other congregations in the United States had begun to take up the idea of amalgamation, but Mother Pia was no longer in favor. The Tacoma Dominicans tried to move forward with a three-year trial of unification, but the experiment seems to have never got off the ground. On September 11, 1905, Mother Pia wrote:

Visiting with the Dominican Sisters at Tacoma, Washington. Discussed the possibility of amalgamating our communities. I am rather fearful. If God wishes it, I shall be willing to bring any sacrifice.<sup>56</sup>

However, the idea of amalgamation continued to be pressed by the Master General and the Congregation for Religious. They encouraged Mother Pia to propose an amalgamation of the Third Order Congregations under one Rule, and suggested the Stone Constitutions as the model to use. Remarking on this fact in a letter to Father Clement Thuente, O.P., in 1915, she wrote:

You know, Rev. Father, that some years ago I cherished the wish of seeing those Communities united that are off-shoots of the Brooklyn or Regensburg Convent. On my return from Europe, I visited the Convents of Brooklyn, New York, Racine and New Jersey and proposed this union. The project was not welcomed. I returned to California disappointed, and, with the help of V. Rev. Dom. Scheer, O.P., I set to work to shape the little Community which God had given me into a religious body according to the spirit of our Holy Founder.<sup>57</sup>

An attempt at amalgamation was made at the Dominican Conference held at San Rafael, California, in 1935. Father Louis Nolan, O.P., temporary president of the Conference,

<sup>55</sup> Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, 151 (Oct. 27, 1895).

<sup>56</sup> Backes, *Her Days Unfolded*, 268 (Sept. 11, 1905).

<sup>57</sup> Mother Maria Pia Backes, letter to Clement M. Thuente, O.P., February 1, 1915.

representing the Master General of the Order, wrote to all the Major Superiors of Dominican congregations in the United States inviting them to the Conference to discuss amalgamation:

I have been most favorably impressed by all that I have observed and learned everywhere. However, I do feel the various Congregations of Dominican Sisters have not all that unanimity of spirit and action that is desirable, and that would, no doubt, make for greater strength and efficiency.<sup>58</sup>

Father Nolan set an agenda that would include discussing uniformity of Constitutions and Ceremonial as far as possible; uniformity of religious habit, recitation of the Divine Office at least in the Novitiate Houses, uniformity of training in education and Church teaching and the establishment of a Mother-house in Rome where the Sisters could receive "the training and knowledge that only Rome can give."<sup>59</sup>

Only twelve of the twenty-eight major superiors of Dominican congregations in the United States accepted the invitation and there was a good deal of resistance to the topic under discussion. There was no action recommended and Father Nolan reminded the participants that the Conference was only consultative, not deliberative. Mother Samuel Coughlin of the Sinsinawa Dominicans, first president elected at the Dominican Conference, wrote to those who were not present, "Some of us were apprehensive of a movement towards amalgamation of all Dominican Sisters in the United States. Let me assure you the subject was never mentioned, and, we have every reason to believe, was not intended to be."<sup>60</sup> All subsequent discussion of the topic of amalgamation was referred to the individual General Councils of the various congregations.

<sup>58</sup> Louis Nolan, O.P., letter to Prioresses General, December 2, 1934. Letter is located in the archives of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose in Fremont, CA.

<sup>59</sup> Nolan, letter to Prioresses General, December 2, 1934.

<sup>60</sup> Mother Samuel Coughlin, O.P., letter to Prioresses General, January 29, 1935. Letter is located in the archives of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose in Fremont, CA.

#### IV. Conclusion

The founding mothers developed a more pragmatic spirituality as they moved from the penitential life of the Second Order into the apostolic life of the Third Order. They attained a greater degree of autonomy and successfully resisted being amalgamated into one Congregation regulated by the Master General in Rome. Although most of the Rules and Constitutions adopted when the change to the Third Order occurred were based on those approved for the Stone Dominican in 1877, they were apprehensive of amalgamation, particularly given the negative result of that in England. The Stone experience seems to have been instrumental in steeling the resolve of the Prioresses General in the United States to avert a similar attempt later. Anselm Nye concluded:

Mother Margaret Hallahan played a significant role in shaping a Catholic life based on sound instruction in the basic truths of the faith, and nourished by devotional and liturgical prayer. In practical terms this meant not only building a conventual infrastructure, but also providing financial support to struggling local churches. As we have seen, this “peculiar kind of mission” was not always appreciated by members of the hierarchy, who expected women religious to respond to their agendas, rather than set their own.<sup>61</sup>

Although separate in governance, the congregations were united by the spirit of the Order. The Marian legends described in *The Life of St. Dominic and a Sketch of the Order* ensured the continuation of the praying of the Rosary, the singing of the *Salve Regina* and the celebration of the special feasts of Our Lady. The reception of the Dominican scapular was accompanied by special prayers in remembrance of Mary’s special love for the Order. Our Lady was seen as a model of humility, love and courage, particularly in the midst of suffering. The Dominican hierarchy was clearly encouraging congregations founded in England and America to unite as one

<sup>61</sup> Anselm Nye, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission: The English Dominican Sisters (1845-2010)* (Leominster: Gracewing; Herefordshire, Eng.: MPG Books Group, 2011), 307-308.



congregation, but that idea was not well received in America and produced a negative result in England. However, many of the foundresses of congregations in the United States consulted the Stone Constitutions when it came time for them to change from Second Order to Third Order status:

In terms of spiritual patrimony, many congregations of Dominican Sisters were influenced by the particular ethos of the Stone congregation by making use of their constitutions, either adopting them for a time or adapting them to their own particular situations.<sup>62</sup>

There has always been a strong sisterly bond and a spirit of unity among Dominican women throughout the world, even though each congregation cherishes its own individual identity and special place in the ministry of the Church. In the opening decades of the twenty-first century Dominican women, together with other religious women, are discovering a new movement of the Spirit in religious life. There is still a strong sense of the Dominican Order being under Mary's protection among Dominican women. Most consider the praying of the Rosary to be a private devotion, and it is not as common as it once was. Many congregations gave up the Dominican habit after Vatican II in favor of simple practical clothing that is suitable for ministry, so the tradition connected with Mary's bestowal of the habit has been lost to many. Marian processions, if they are held at all, are quieter in tone and not for public display. While devotion to Mary is still a cherished part of the Dominican charism, Dominican women do not seek to convert others through their devotional practices, but rather to preach the truth with love. There is a global consciousness among Dominican women today and a collective desire to rethink religious life and renew the spirit of the Order by drawing upon ideas from the sciences and cosmology. Dominican women throughout the world are collaborating to discover new frontiers for prayer, study, community and ministry. A new mysticism is emerging that offers a cosmological view of salvation history. Further study of the role of the Blessed Mother in the new cosmology is recommended.

<sup>62</sup> Nye, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission*, 310.