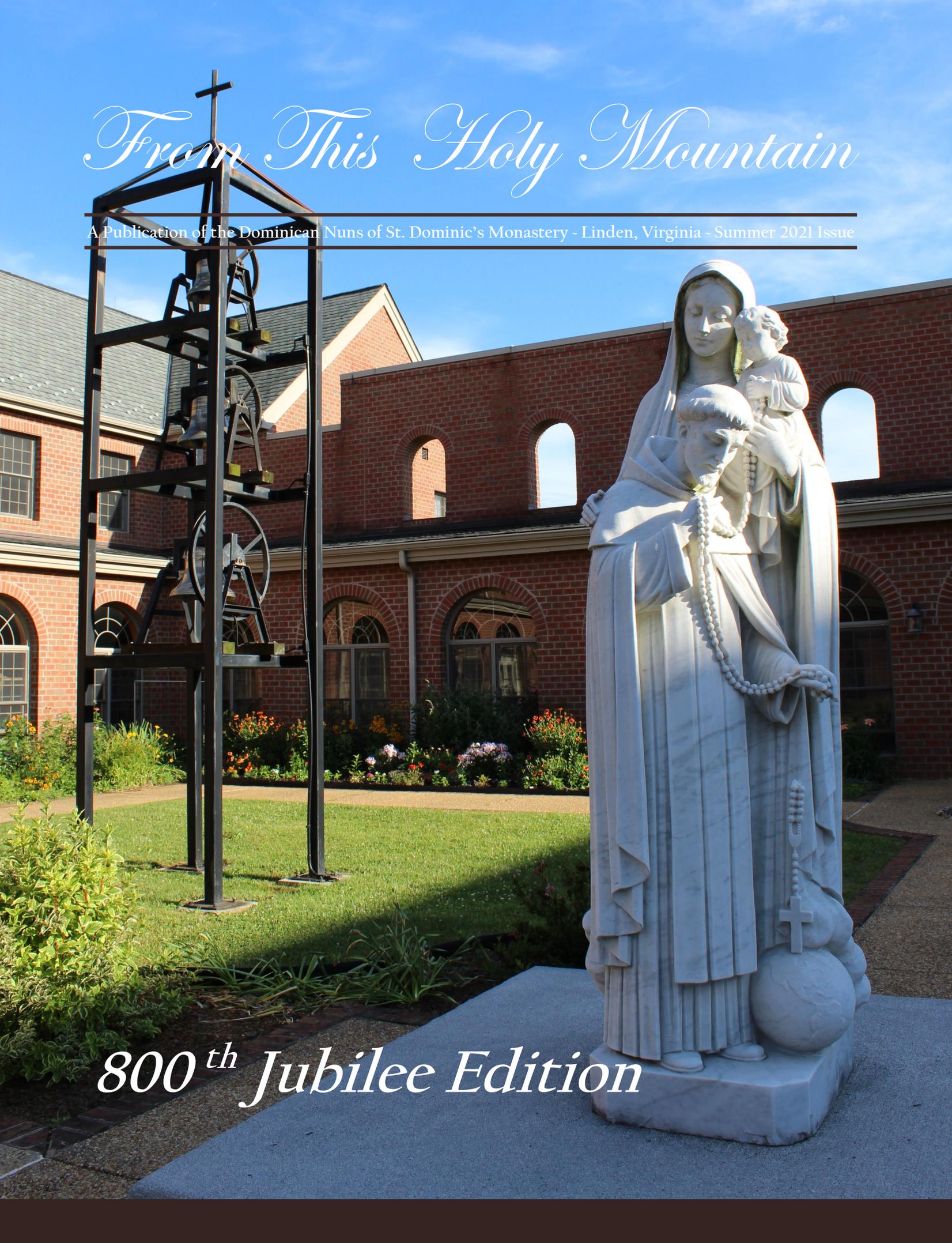


From This Holy Mountain

A Publication of the Dominican Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery - Linden, Virginia - Summer 2021 Issue

800th Jubilee Edition





*D*ear Friends,

“Eight-hundred years ago, on a hot August night in 1221 a saint whom the Church has designated as a ‘holy athlete of Christ’ finished his course and gave up his soul to the God whom he had served, consistently and at great speed, for fifty-one years. Around him were grouped his sons, men of half a dozen nations, who ten years before had hardly heard of Dominic Guzmán and now were willing to die for him. Like any father of any family, he spoke to them of their inheritance; not wealth, for he had not even a room in which to die nor a habit in which to be buried. But he left an immortal legacy, a blazing enthusiasm for God which the Christian world had not seen since the day of Pentecost. His testament was as simple and as potent as the Sermon on the Mount, and dealt with the same basic truths:

‘Have charity one for another;

Guard humility;

Possess voluntary poverty.’”

From January 6, 2021 through January 6, 2022, the Dominican Family will be celebrating the 800th

anniversary of the death of St. Dominic. Thus, with this issue of *From This Holy Mountain*, we wish to draw you, our dear friends, into our celebration.

As Blessed Dominic lay dying he prayed, “Holy Father, you know that I have freely remained in Your will and those You have given me, I have guarded and kept safe. I commend them to You. Save and protect them.” Through his powerful intercession, St. Dominic continues to show us a father’s love. For this, we are deeply grateful.

We are grateful, too, for you our faithful benefactors, who are a constant reminder to us of God’s loving providence. Be assured that we hold you and your families in our prayers. May God bless you abundantly, now and in eternity.

With our grateful prayer,

Sr. Mary Fidelis, OP

Prioress



*Dominic consoled his sons, saying,
"Do not weep, beloved ones;
do not sorrow that
this frail body goes.
I am going where I can
serve you better."*



ST. DOMINIC

died on August 6, 1221

800 YEARS SINCE HIS DEATH

*A*t the end of July in 2021 St. Dominic returned to Bologna from a difficult journey and fell very ill. An eye-witness testified, "He accepted this illness, as he had accepted all the others, with immense patience; he never complained or moaned, but always smiled and was full of joy." Gracious and cheerful, he received the brethren who came to see him. He even had the young novices summoned to his bedside so he could give them his final words of encouragement.

As the fever mounted, the brethren transferred him to the hilltop church of the Benedictines, hoping the better air would give the sick man some relief. Nevertheless, by August 6th, he was sinking rapidly. Someone then relayed how the Benedictine monk in charge of the church said, if Dominic died there, he would not let the friars move the body for burial. Dominic insisted on being taken outside immediately. "God forbid," he said,

"that I should be buried anywhere except under the feet of my brethren. Let me die in that vineyard over there, so that you can bury me in our own church." So they carried Dominic back to their priory, fearing the whole time he would die on the way.

Finally, with the community gathered around his bed weeping, Dominic consoled his sons, saying, "Do not weep, beloved ones; do not sorrow that this frail body goes. I am going where I can serve you better." Soon after that he told them to begin the prayers for the solemn commendation of his soul. It seemed to those present that, from the movement of his lips, Dominic was saying the prayers with them. The brethren firmly believe that he breathed his last while they were saying the words: "Come to his assistance, all ye Saints of God; meet him, ye Angels of the Lord; receive his soul and present it to the Most High."



Sr. Mary Dominic, (St. Dominic's Monastery Archives: 1964)

Following the Way

The following is an excerpt from the homily given by Fr. Joseph Barranger, O.P. at the funeral Mass for Sr. Mary Dominic, August 2, 2014

*W*hat is the way for a Christian? Of course, it is Jesus. He himself is the Way, and our union with Him enfolds us, and carries us home to the Father's House. And so, the Way for Sr. Mary Dominic was marked by Christ with many different sign posts. It was painted in the bright colors of the joy of Gospel living, and of monastic life, and of hope. It was the Way of monastic consecration and contemplation of the beauty and wonder of God. It was the Way of the spouse of Christ, who enjoyed a long, faithful and beautiful life with her Bridegroom. But also, as it is for every Christian, it was the Way of the Cross. On the Christian journey, there is no round-about way, no more direct route to the Father's House.

Despite all the joyful memories that the Sisters share of Sr. Mary Dominic's life, from her quiet, prayerful presence, to her slow way of doing everything, to her sense of humor, to her love for the beauty of nature, Sister's life and death can only remind us of *Christ's* suffering and death. Think of Jesus in the Gospel being systematically stripped of everything: clothes, friends, blood, dignity, consolation, life itself. You, Sisters, can understand what that's like, because you have seen it with your own eyes, touched it with your hands, lived it through the passion—the long time dying—of a Sister whom you loved.

For Sr. Mary Dominic, so much was stripped away, too. For more than ten years there has been a stripping away—of movement, memory, independence, and control. And for all these years you, Sister's religious family, watched and suffered, comforted and bathed,

tended to her with prayer and tender care, until Monday morning, when in the depths of her heart Sister whispered Jesus' words to the Father, "It is finished."

Despite all the joyful memories the Sisters share of Sr. Mary Dominic's life... Sister's life and death can only remind us of Christ's suffering and death.

It is finished. But not quite, any more than it was on Calvary. We have hope, because in Jesus' story, something else happened: the Resurrection. And it is the same for Sr. Mary Dominic. There is still more! Life without illness or pain—a life where, in the presence of God, she will remember **everything**—especially you, her Sisters.

Sisters, it is finished for you, too, this labor of love—but not quite, because the years of helping to care for Sr. Mary Dominic have changed you. They have helped to make you the community that you are and that you will become. This is perhaps especially true of the Sisters in formation who have learned through this experience one of the most important lessons in religious life. You will never be the same, and thank God for that! Because He has shown all of you the way—the way back to the Father's House. Because of Sr. Mary Dominic's passion God has called you to be disciples of Jesus who are patient and kind, compassionate and forgiving; disciples who spend themselves in the service of others without asking anything in return. In you, Sr. Mary Dominic touched the merciful love of Christ, and then you were touched by it as well. You have to continue to touch it in one another. And so, it is not quite finished for you, and I hope that it never will be.



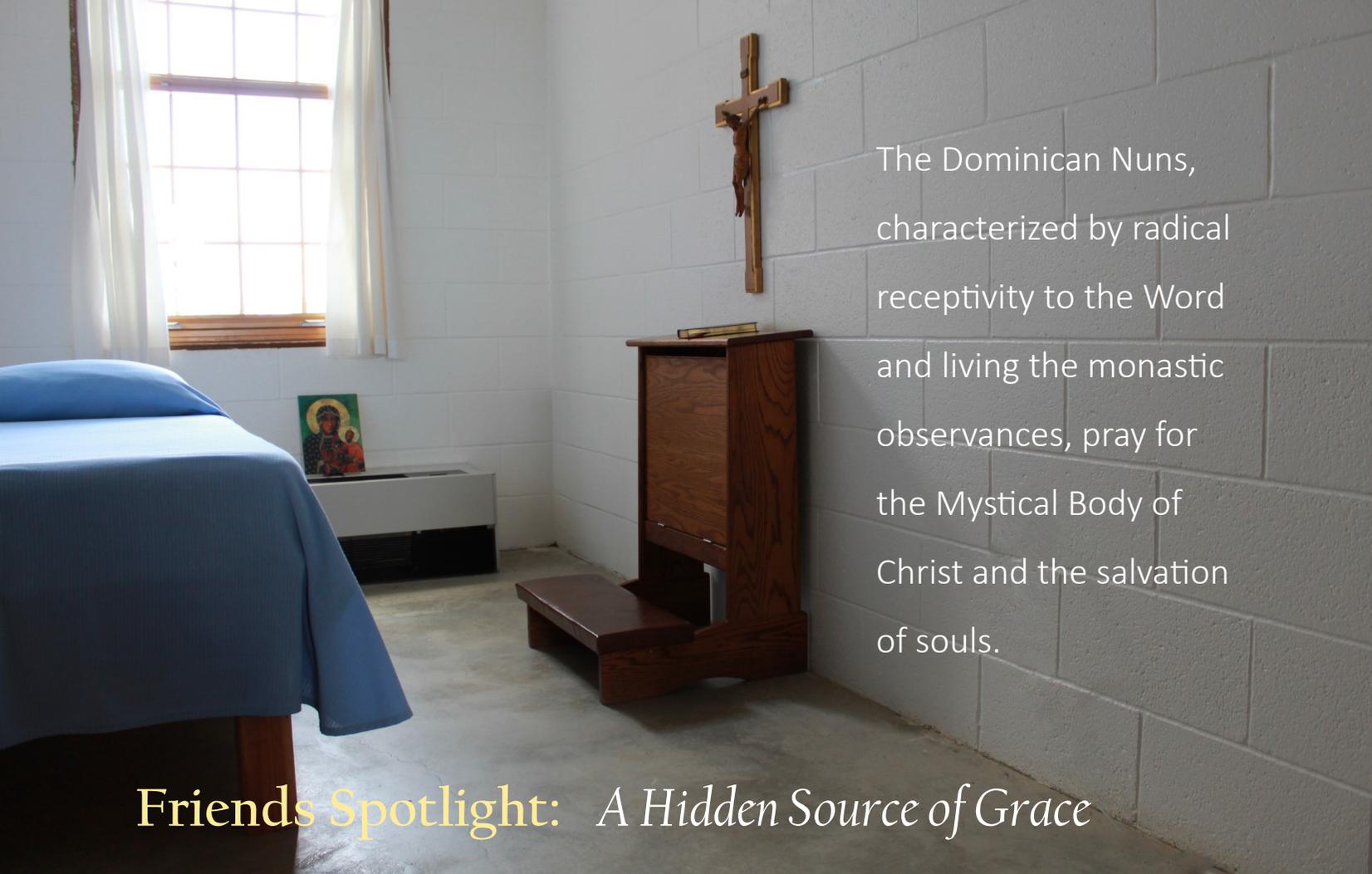
*Please consider joining our
St. Catherine
de Ricci Guild
to help support the nuns
on a monthly basis.*



Benefits of membership:

- A perpetual membership in the Monastery's Eucharistic Adoration Association, which includes a weekly Mass for your intentions and a daily remembrance in the prayers and good works of the nuns
- An invitation to join the nuns for Vespers on a Sunday evening in the fall, an opportunity to meet and greet the nuns, followed by a wine and cheese reception at a nearby winery.

Visit our website for more details on how to register to make a monthly donation through Faith Direct: www.lindenopnuns.org.



The Dominican Nuns, characterized by radical receptivity to the Word and living the monastic observances, pray for the Mystical Body of Christ and the salvation of souls.

Friends Spotlight: *A Hidden Source of Grace*

The Dominican Soul writes Fr. M. M. Philipon, O.P., “is a soul of light whose rapt gaze dwells in the inaccessible splendor wherein God conceals Himself, living with Him by faith and in the company of the Three Divine Persons. It pursues its way on earth in intimacy with Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints.” It is a contemplative soul that seeks silence and intimate union with God.

St. Dominic, establishing the Order of Preachers, founded the first monastery at the site of a Marian shrine at Prouille in the year 1206, after the vision from God, the *Signadou*, that he experienced from the hilltop of Fanjeaux. Henceforth, monasteries of nuns of the Dominican Order would spread over the world and be the great source of prayer, grace, affection, and strength for the Friars of the Order of Preachers.

The Dominican Nuns, characterized by radical receptivity to the Word and living the monastic observances, pray for the Mystical Body of Christ and the salvation of souls. “They are to seek, ponder and call upon Him in solitude so that the Word proceeding from the mouth of God may not return to Him empty, but may accomplish those things for which it was sent” (*Fundamental Constitutions of the Nuns*).

Following the example of the nuns, may each of us seek intimacy with Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints—and may we, too, pray for the Mystical Body of Christ and the salvation of souls.

Dr. James Thomas *Dominic Mary* Berkenbaugh and Mrs. Frances *Margaret of Castello* Berkenbaugh, O.P. are members of the Third Order of St. Dominic, a branch of the Dominican Order.

We Die as We Live

By Fr. Dominic M. Langevin, O.P.

*S*t. Dominic died 800 years ago on August 6, 1221, the Feast of the Transfiguration. Just as St. Dominic was spiritually united to Christ, so his death on this Christological feast is revelatory.

The connection is seen in the connection between the mysteries of Christ's life. Since Christ was shown in the Transfiguration to be the master of life, He would also be the master of His approaching death, overcome by His Resurrection.

The same relationship applies to Christians. Typically, we die as we live. We say "typically" because we must depend upon God for the grace of final perseverance in our last trial, death. But generally, a holy life prepares for a holy death, guided by God's grace. "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's." (Rom 14:8)

St. Dominic lived this mystery by attention to the Cross of Christ. If one looks at Blessed Fra Angelico's frescos of St. Dominic or at the medieval paintings of the Nine Ways of Prayer of St. Dominic, our founder is usually in prayer or study before the Cross. In the Cross, there is the fullness of Christ's love and forgiveness for us. In the Cross, there is the wisdom of Christ rather than the wisdom of the world. (1 Cor 1) To study and embrace Christ's Cross is to study and embrace death-defying life. A Cross-centered life gave St. Dominic his characteristic joy among his neighbors.



St. Dominic entrusted a life of holiness to his nuns. The Cross of Christ is a focus of their meditation. And as a reminder of death, the nuns have their deceased Sisters buried on the monastery's grounds. In the model of Christ's transformation of death, St. Dominic and his nuns show the way for us all to live and die well.

*In the model of Christ's
transformation of death, St. Dominic
and his nuns show the way for
us all to live and die well.*



St. Dominic's Monastery
2636 Monastery Road
Linden, VA 22642

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 19

Design and Layout by the Nuns of St. Dominic's Monastery - Printing by St. Martin de Porres Lay Dominican Community; New Hope, Kentucky

St. Dominic's Monastery Archives: 1954



Mass Times:
Friday & Sunday: 11:00 a.m.
Remaining weekdays:
Usually at 7:00 a.m.

St. Dominic's Monastery
2636 Monastery Road
Linden, Virginia 22642
www.lindenopnuns.org

**For Prayer Intentions
and Vocations Inquiries:**
monastery
[@lindenopnuns.org](https://www.instagram.com/lindenopnuns.org)