

News from Fanjeaux

+ 33 468788760

shop.fanjeaux@orange.fr

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S.H.O.P.

3 rue du Bourguet Nau

11270 FANJEAUX

France

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**SPRING
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S.H.O.P. LINK WITH DOMUNI—THE DOMINICAN ON-LINE UNIVERSITY

Collaboration between Dominican institutions is generally perceived of as a good thing, and it is sincerely hoped that the recently established arrangements between SHOP and DOMUNI will prove to be just that.

DOMUNI, originally an initiative of the French Dominicans, has been in existence for thirteen years, and has now achieved the status of university, having three faculties—theology, philosophy and social science. It is able to offer a wide range of courses, which can lead to the award of university-level diplomas validated by the University of Metz (France) or the Pontifical University of St Thomas (Angelicum, Rome).

Fr Michel Van Aerde op, Director of DOMUNI, together with Sr Claire-Marie Monnet op, visited SHOP headquarters in Fanjeaux in November and Sr Barbara has since reciprocated with a visit to Brussels. As a result of these negotiations, the first two SHOP Modules on Dominican history are now being offered by DOMUNI as part of their Dominican formation programme, but accessible to other students as well. This means that SHOP courses can now reach a wider public, and benefit from the greater range of back-up services that a larger institution can provide.



Michel Van Aerde

op

As before, the courses are available either simply for private study, or with written work which can lead to a validation. For those students already registered for a SHOP distance learning module, nothing changes; they continue with their studies and complete the course with SHOP, Fanjeaux. However for new students, and continuing students who wish to enrol for either Module I or Module II should now do so via DOMUNI (<http://www.domuni.eu>), which now handles all enrolments for these.

Module III, *Catherine of Siena*, continues to be managed by SHOP until October 1st.

This news does not mean that SHOP is giving up on preparing history courses, far from it—there are still firm plans for modules devoted to the beginnings of Dominican women in Latin America and the restoration of Dominican religious life in Europe in the 19th century. The main difference is that registration and all the administrative side will in future be handled by DOMUNI and that students will be able to access fully recognized diplomas if they so desire.



Don't hesitate to contact SHOP for further details about these new arrangements.

**Visit the DOMUNI website on www.domuni.eu to see the wide range
of courses and study opportunities available!**

**STUDY THE HISTORY OF DOMINICAN WOMEN
FOLLOW S.H.O.P. DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES**

SHOP ASSOCIATION CHALKS UP FIVE YEARS IN FANJEAUX

Yes, time flies, but it really is five years since the Association of Sister Historians of the Order of Preachers was established in the village of Fanjeaux. After two years in rented accommodation a permanent home was found with adequate facilities for the library and accommodation for sisters. Just a few statistics concerning activities during this time:

- 20 + Dominican sisters or laity have made stays of varying duration (1 week to 6 months).
- A library of some 3,000 books plus other printed materials has been created. In library terms, this is very small, but the collection is intentionally limited to Dominican women, their histories, biographies and writings, plus Dominican and Church history for background and reference.
- 3 distance learning modules on the history of Dominican women have been distributed to 200+ students in 5 continents.

Most of this was unforeseeable five years ago; as the Gospel says, it is necessary to move out into deep water and "take your foot off the bottom" to realise the potential of any situation.

Welcome to SHOP hq!



A new venture is scheduled to begin this summer : a very modest exhibition facility to be called "St Dominic's Annexe" in the outbuilding adjacent to SHOP headquarters, where display panels will aim to provide just a minimum of information about "Who was St Dominic?" and the beginnings of his Order in this part of the world. This is aimed at the many tourists passing through Fanjeaux in the summer months who, on occasion, find the House of St Dominic closed, the tourist office idem, or no one available at Prouilhe, and so leave none the wiser as to why this village is listed as a "Dominican holy place". Look out for photos in the next issue of SHOP Newsletter!

FANJEAUX SCHOOLCHILDREN TO VISIT CALERUEGA

One can only think that St Dominic would be delighted to learn of the forthcoming school exchange between his two villages, on either side of the Pyrenees, Fanjeaux and Caleruega. Indeed these two locations have been officially "twinning" for a number of years, but for the first time a whole class of children from the Fanjeaux primary school are scheduled to visit their Spanish counterparts between 11th and 15th June 2012. The French nine year olds have already been taking Spanish classes as part of their regular school curriculum.

They will travel by bus and be accompanied by their teachers. Accommodation will be provided with Spanish families in the village of Caleruega, and so the experience is likely to be one of "total immersion" for these young inhabitants of Fanjeaux as they prepare to be "citizens of Europe".

The primary school at Fanjeaux



BOOK NEWS

It is difficult in such a short space to do justice to these two remarkable contributions to the history of Dominican women—they are both highly recommended.

Anselm NYE, *A Peculiar Kind of Mission—the English Dominican Sisters 1845-2010*, Gracewing, 2011, 338 pp.

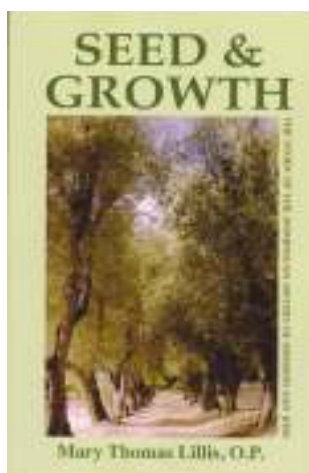
This is a scholarly and most informative study of the five groups of Dominican sisters in England, who became the English Dominican Congregation of St Catherine of Siena, the result of an amalgamation made in 1929 at the instigation of the Vatican.

Generally nowadays associated with the large neo-Gothic motherhouse at Stone, this branch of the congregation was founded in the 1840's by that remarkable woman Margaret Hallahan. Her early sisters were pioneers in the field of education for women, but the amalgamation brought with it a diversity of ministry.

This is a history that brings us right up to the present day, with an admirable realism as to future prospects: "There is no question that this particular expression of Dominican life deserves to survive, but no certainty that it will" (p.312).

The book is well documented by a highly competent academic historian, and is copiously illustrated. A valuable Appendix II lists all the houses of the various congregations and their ultimate fate.





Mary Thomas LILLIS op, *Seed and Growth—the story of the Dominican Sisters of Mission San José*, Congregation of the Queen of the Holy Rosary, 2012, 663 pp.

Like a number of others in North America, this now essentially Californian congregation can trace its history back to the Dominican monastery of the Holy Cross at Regensburg, Bavaria. Solidly researched by a former prioress general, this hefty tome traces the move westwards from New York to establish Dominican life for women in San Francisco in 1876. Essentially a teaching congregation, the sisters spread rapidly up and down the West Coast, and into Mexico by 1910.

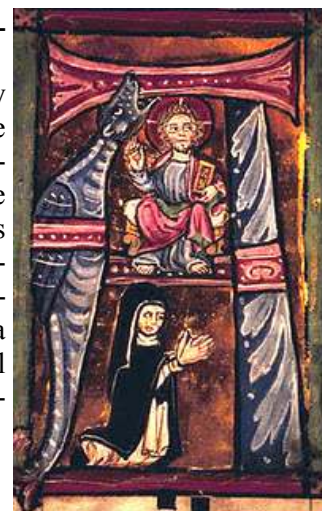
By a fascinating combination of circumstances, a return to the German roots established sisters at the restored medieval Dominican monastery of Altenhohenau in the Bavarian Alps in the 1920's—this community still

exists.

***CROWN* by Nancy Bilyeau—a Tudor detective novel set in a Dominican monastery!**

Nancy Bilyeau's first novel certainly qualifies as a good read—I recently appreciated it as such on a long train journey. The action is set in the 1530's, in the reign of Henry VIII, against the background of the dissolution of the monasteries. The heroine, Sr Joanna Stafford, the last novice admitted to Dartford Priory, finds herself caught up in many adventures including imprisonment in the Tower of London! The supernatural powers attributed to the Athelstan crown are however much more in the domain of fiction than of history. And there are some surprising "slips" for a book that has necessitated a considerable amount of research: several times the author affirms that Dominican nuns follow the Rule of St Benedict!

Published in 2012 by Orion Books, £12.99 (UK price)





3 rue du Bourguet Nau
11270 FANJEAUX
France

Phone + 33 4 68788760
E-mail:
shop.fanjeaux@orange.fr

S.H.O.P. office holders:

PRESIDENT

Sr Mary O'Driscoll op
(Cabra, Dublin, Ireland)

SECRETARY

Sr Patricia Dougherty op
(San Rafael, California, USA)

TREASURER

Sr Barbara Beaumont op
(Herne, Belgium)



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to the history of Dominican
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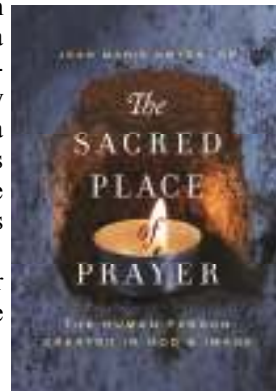
“The Association of Sister Historians of the Order of Preachers is defined in its statutes as: “a resource for documentation, communication and formation at the service of Dominican women, religious and lay, through the study of their histories.” *Statutes*

A DOMINICAN NUN WRITES ON PRAYER

Sr Jean Marie op of Queen of Peace Monastery, Canada, has sent us this presentation of her recently published book (abridged).

“The focus of this book is the human person as the sacred place of prayer. Every person is called to prayer because we belong to God and are created in God’s image. Each of us is the privileged and sacred place of prayer. The source of our prayer is the life of God, the life of the Trinity lived in us. We are to be the place of God’s presence for the world. We meet God and all humanity within the inner room of our heart. The contemplative life does not divorce us from the world or from reality. True contemplative prayer emanating from our inmost center does not separate us from the real needs of God’s people; instead we become the locus of God’s saving action toward the world. An important theme of the book is that prayer is meant to shape our whole life, re-creating us in God’s image. How we live in the world forms us for eternity. The book sketches the broad outline of a spirituality that empowers us through grace to become people of prayer. Perhaps the originality of my approach to prayer is my conviction that prayer, even contemplative prayer, is natural to everyone because we are created for God and reflect God. The spiritual journey is presented as a healing process which restores and frees us to be a reflection of God. An essential part of this healing is coming to know ourselves in the light of the Holy Spirit. Authentic prayer is where a deep integrity exists between who we are in God’s presence, and who we are with one another. Another primary theme is the close connection between contemplation and a living relationship with God and its transforming effects not only in the individual but its power to renew and shape the whole universe. Dwelling in God’s presence creates harmony and peace in our hearts, and in the world. Prayer is not about how well we learn certain methods or exercises but about bringing God into our daily routine; the God in whom we exist and move and have our being.”

Available from Amazon and www.dominicannunsbc.ca



VISITORS TO FANJEAUX

At the end of January, two nuns from Queen of Peace monastery near Vancouver, Canada, spent a week at the SHOP house—a chance to exchange ideas about the study of Dominican history. Fanjeaux turned on unusually wintry weather with large amounts of snow, doubtless so that the visitors would feel at home...

The weather was rather more clement when a group of teachers from Dominican schools in Eastern Australia and the Solomon Islands came during Easter week. It is always moving to meet these people who have travelled so far, and at considerable expense, in order to experience at first hand the places associated with St Dominic and to imbibe something of his spirit.

This last week 25 lay Dominicans from Brazil were visiting, and we are already planning for the visit of a group of 31 members of Swiss op lay fraternities in late June .

**For donations and subscriptions :
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contact us for details.**

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