

Dominican Missions in the Vatican Exposition

By BRO. DALMATIUS MARRIN, O. P.



WHEN Pope Innocent III in 1216 gave to St. Dominic and his disciples the title of "Friars Preachers," he seemed to have done so under a divine inspiration. Thirty-five years from the inception of the Order, its missions had extended to all parts of the world, to Eastern Europe, Africa, the Graeco-Schismatic Orient, Armenia, Chaldea and Persia, even as far as India. And today after seven centuries, the same missionary spirit impressed by St. Dominic on his sons is seen most conspicuously in the part taken by Dominicans in the Vatican Exposition, not the least glorious of the observances ordered by Pius XI in connection with the celebration of the Holy Year.

The thought of the Supreme Pontiff, who deservedly is called the "Pope of the Missions," to have an exposition where Catholic missionary endeavor could be vividly set forth, was a most happy one. The Order of Preachers, always to the front in carrying the torch of truth to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, could not but enter whole-heartedly into a project of this kind. The work of those placed in charge of the Dominican exhibit has been wonderfully successful, a brief description of which will undoubtedly prove of interest.

The Order's contributions are disposed throughout the seven sections of the Exposition, namely, of History, the Martyrs, the Library, Statistics, the Native Clergy, the Ethnological and Medical Sections. In the last named Dominican Missions are represented by a wonderful exhibit brought there by Fr. Ansgar Sinigen, O. P., secretary of all the missionary institutions of Germany. This friar collected a magnificent series of instruments, photographs and medicines for diseases prevalent in the tropical regions and brought them from Munich to Rome. He was received in special audience by the Sovereign Pontiff, who expressed keen satisfaction with his work.

The Missions of Tonquin, perhaps the most flourishing of all Dominican Missions, have a very representative collection of objects in the Ethnological Section. Among other things are fishing and kitchen utensils used by the natives, some beautiful flower vases, a number of agricultural implements and instruments for gathering and cleaning rice, many hand-made and richly ornamented garments, various articles used in the superstitious cult of the people, and last but not least a lowly Tonquinese hut. These several objects furnish an excellent idea of the life and conditions of the people of this country.

In the Section of history there are two large geographical charts designed by Fr. Benno Bierman, O. P. They disclose the various parts of the world evangelized by Dominicans during the two great epochs treated by the author in his story of the missions. The first chart gives the regions traversed by the missionaries up to the year 1500, while the second traces the parts visited till the year 1500.

In this same section are twelve pictures featuring some of the more famous Dominican Apostles who lived and labored during the epoch represented by the first chart. Among them are to be found that of St. Dominic, Apostle of the Albigenses; Blessed Jordan of Saxony, who established five missionary provinces and died while returning to Europe from a visit to the Province of the Holy Land; Buoninsegna Cicciporci, martyred in Antioch about the year 1270; St. Hyacinth of Poland, Apostle of the Russians and Tartars; and St. Raymund of Pennafort, who instituted the first school of languages to combat the errors of the Arabs and Jews.

The modern epoch opens with a beautiful picture of the great Bartholomew Las Casas the energetic and untiring defender of the rights of the Indians, who merited the title, "Protector of the Indians of America." Then are to be seen pictures of Pope Pius V, the founder of the Congregation of Propaganda; St. Rose of Lima, first flower of sanctity in the New World; Fr. Dominic Ottoman, son of the Sultan of Constantinople; Fr. Gregory Lopez, O. P., first Chinese Bishop, and Fr. Barnabas Dedele, O. P., Bishop of Ispahan in Persia, who died in 1732. These are only a few champions of that numberless phalanx illustrating a most glorious history.

In the Section of the Martyrs are a number of interesting pictures of Dominican heroes who testified to their preaching by the shedding of their blood. Two of them represent the heroic death in Japan of Blessed Alphonse Navarette and his Companions. Others show Blessed Peter Sanz and those martyred with him in China, and Blessed Ignatius Delgado and Jerome Hermosilla with a great number of their Companions martyred in Tonquin. Another beautiful and attractive picture is the one showing thirteen hundred and fourteen Dominican Martyrs put to death for the faith from 1854 to 1862, whose cause for beatification has already been introduced.

In various glass cases distributed throughout this section, are many objects of interest relating to Dominican Martyrs already beatified or who have been considered for beatification by the Holy See. A very notable one is an interesting account of the martyrdom of Blessed Antony Neyrot, O. P., who shed his blood at Tunis in 1460. Another is the manuscript life of Blessed Angelo Orsuccio, O. P., which for many years remained intact in the waters of a river and constituted one of the two miracles recognized by the Congregation of Rites for his beatification and that of the Martyrs of Japan. A third object of interest is an Edict of Persecution written on a tablet of wood which emanated from a Japanese tribunal in the sixteenth century.

A very important section of the Exposition is the Library Section. Here Dominicans have seven hundred volumes treating of the actual missions of the Order. Every mission of the Friars Preachers, even the smallest and most remote is here interestingly and graphically described. Other books to the number of many hundreds, not a few of which are valuable for their rarity and antiquity discuss well known phases of Dominican Missionary History. Many of the volumes pertaining to the missions are written in the Tonquinese language, and were printed by the Dominican Mission Press of Tonquin. There is a beautiful collection of works treating of the activities both Dominican and Scientific of the University of St. Thomas of Manila, another giving a vivid and interesting description of the famous Dominican Biblical and Archeological School of St. Stephen in Jerusalem, and a third collection describing the Missions of Mesopotamia. The Dominican printing office of Mosul has furnished

the Missionary Library with valuable volumes for the greater part scientific, and written in the Chaldaic, Arabic and Turkish languages. The missions of Brazil have sent a magnificent work treating of the flowers of that country, the most scientific and complete work of its kind ever written. Besides these volumes there are various collections of periodicals, strictly Missionary and Dominican.

In the Section of Statistics are to be found printed lists containing the names of the Friars Preachers engaged in missionary work. At the present time the Order has five thousand members. Of this number six hundred and eighty-eight are missionaries working in some parts of Europe, Africa, Asia, Central and South America and Australia. To their care is confided a population of forty millions of people, the greater part pagan, the rest Schismatic and Protestant. Among these only a million and a half are Catholic.

In the midst of the Hall of Statistics is an artistic painting of St. Dominic and another of the late Father Louis M. Theissling, seventy-sixth Master General of the Order. Grouped around these are photographs of the greater number of Dominican Bishops and the Superiors of the Missions scattered throughout the world.

In the section devoted to the Native Clergy it is gratifying to note the great flowering of the native priesthood in Dominican Missions. In Tonquin and China especially have the fruits of Dominican zeal and sacrifice manifested evidence of reward a hundredfold. The Vicariate Apostolic and Prefecture of Tonquin show at present a total of five minor seminaries with five hundred and seven students and four major seminaries with a hundred and forty students. Two hundred and fifty-four native priests are working with missionaries from other countries, particularly Spain for the evangelization of the country. The Dominican Missions of China have four seminaries with sixty students and thirty-three native priests. In this section there are several photographs relating to the University of St. Thomas of Manila, which for almost three centuries has educated and trained native priests for the Extreme Orient. There is also a very interesting picture in a Chinese design of the seventeenth century of Fr. Gregory Lopez, O. P., Bishop of Nankin, who was the first Chinese member of the Episcopate.

Much might be said in detail concerning the various exhibits of particular countries evangelized by the Sons of St. Dominic, such as Japan, the countries of South America, Lower Asia, Trinidad and many others, but sufficient has been written to give an idea of the vastness of extent and the truly apostolic zeal demonstrated by the Friars Preachers in missionary lands. The things described render eloquent testimony that the disciples of St. Dominic have at all times in the Order's history carried on the great work of evangelization so dear to the heart of its Holy Founder. That this spirit still lives and quickens the zeal of the Friars laboring in the missions is evident from the Dominican exhibits of the Missionary Exposition of this Holy Year of Grace.

AN AUTUMN VIOLET

By BRO. MAURICE M. O'MOORE, O. P.

Bare branch—gray bough and fallen leaf,
Dear Earth's brown patient bosom—
How like a joy born of a grief
Art thou—brave little blossom!

A wand'rer from a vanished Spring
To this dim—woodland portal—
To teach us—pretty—pleading thing
That Love shall be immortal.