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## WHOM ALL AGES HAVE CALLED "GREAT"

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VERY biography of the new Saint and Doctor of the Church mentions the fact that veneration of Albertus Magnus dates back to the very hour of his death. It was hardly more than fifty years after that date when petitions for his canonization found their way to the Holy See.

St. Albert's native Germany was most enthusiastic for his cult. It remained a private devotion, however, until the saint's venerated relics were translated to the richly decorated shrine built in Cologne. This took place in 1483. The next year, the Dominican Priors of Cologne and Ratisbon were given permission by Pope Innocent VIII to celebrate the Office and Mass of Blessed Albert. In 1622 this privilege was accorded to the Cathedral of Ratisbon, where Albert had once been bishop. From that time devotion to Albertus Magnus grew and spread throughout the Catholic world.

Merely to mention the places where shrines in his honor have been erected would be to name every city of much importance in central Europe. Cologne and Ratisbon, especially, have lived in reflected glory from the aureola of a native German saint and scholar. The celebrations in Cologne following upon St. Albert's canonization were spontaneous expressions of joy. Both civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries took part in the three days of celebration. About thirty thousand people assembled at the Cologne Cathedral on the closing day.

Devotion to Albert was brought to America by the founders of the Order of Preachers in the United States. The Dominicans alone had the privilege of celebrating his feast day with the Divine Office and Mass. As American institutions of learning grew in number and importance, as students of the *philosophia perennis* and the natural sciences delved more deeply into their subjects, a cult to Albertus Magnus arose in America. It found its expression in the letters of petition for his canonization. The only institution of learning in the world to be called "Albertus Magnus College" exists, not in Germany, but in America, at New Haven, Conn. It was founded in 1925, six years before his canonization.

The prayers of the universal Church were answered on December 16, 1931. Almost spontaneously the Church in America raised its voice in unison with the rest of the world in thanksgiving for this much sought favor. The Catholic press from time to time included in its publication articles, editorials and news items about the canonization of Albertus Magnus and his life of gigantic intellectual and spiritual achievements. Special Albertine issues of some of the periodicals appeared. The first full length biography to be written originally in English came from an American press. The presence in this country of the Reverend Angelus Walz, O.P., who had done much of the routine work in furthering the cause of Albert's canonization, and who lectured everywhere he went, served to heighten the interest in and the devotion to St. Albert. Here and there throughout the country special celebrations were held. But in most places the festivities were reserved for the feast, the first feast of St. Albert.

On November 15, 1932, the whole American Church expressed its feelings in joyful demonstrations and religious festivities. In more than one hundred cities the Hierarchy and members of other Religious Orders and Congregations of this country joined the Dominicans in celebrating the feast with special solemnity. The first pilgrimage ever to be made to the Dominican House of Studies in Washington took place during the triduum in honor of St. Albert. Forty-six lay members of the Third Order of St. Dominic journeyed from New York and New Jersey to the House of Studies to visit the shrine of St. Albert set up in the conventual chapel there.

The literary and scholastic exercises throughout the country extolled Albert as: Friar, Priest, Teacher, Preacher, Theologian,

Exegete, Philosopher, Scientist, Provincial, Bishop, Papal Delegate, Peacemaker, Saint. In one place papers on seven different aspects of the new saint's life and work, as well as two special hymns in his honor, entertained an audience made up of a bishop, the secular clergy and representatives of more than twenty religious Orders and Congregations. In another place the exercises were conducted in tableaux, depicting events in the life of Albert. In another, three languages were used—English, Spanish and Latin. In a seminary for the secular clergy all the addresses were in German.

From coast to coast and from border to border the American Church honored St. Albert on his first feast day. Men of all nations, in every walk of life, offered praise to God in admiration of one of His creatures who defies adequate description.

"As one who stands astounded in some grand cathedral and marvels at the myriad wonders of its construction, its ever varying architecture, its stately columns, its windows blazing with forms of saints, is mute when he would tell its glories and is bewildered, not knowing where to begin, so must he be who would tell in eulogy the monumental work of Albert the Great. If we dig down in the earth and see the hidden metals and minerals we find St. Albert there to tell their origin and their structure; were we to go about the woods and gardens and behold tree and flower, St. Albert tells of their organism and physiology; and with an excellent sense of floral beauty he descants upon the form and variety of plants. Laboratories of physics and chemistry repeat today St. Albert's applications of sciences he knew so well. Even geographers and explorers find him an unfailling guide. He can tell of the action of the sea and the rivers, of mountains and volcanoes; while many of his ethnological hypotheses have since become facts through the experience of ages. We look above and see the heavens and the firmament and the sun, the moon and the stars; there too has St. Albert cast his unaided eye and has revealed to the world of his day astronomical things undreamt of in their philosophy. Greater still, he guides the human intellect to reason aright. In our libraries he unfolds his learned treatises in Psychology, Ethics and Theology. The universality of his genius has made him the epitome of many men. The sacred books, ever his familiar companions, were expounded with an erudition that astounded scriptural scholars of his day, with a practical piety that exposed the loveliness of his zealous and devout life. What

wonder then that his contemporaries hailed him *Doctor Universalis!* What wonder then that all ages have called him 'Great'."<sup>1</sup>

To pay their devout tribute to him whom "all ages have called 'Great,'" the Dominican Theological Students have written and compiled this issue of DOMINICANA. They present it to their readers with the hope that he being better known will be better loved.

"Time was when attacks against the Church were in the open. . . . Today the attack is more insidious. Our enemies ignore God and the things of God. . . . We need men . . . fashioned and formed after the pattern of Albertus Magnus,—men of tireless energy and indefatigable industry, men whose skill can take the visible things of this world and draw men to know therefrom the invisible Creator of all, men of solid learning and sound philosophy, men humble enough to be guided by the past and unselfish enough to prepare for the future, men of fearless zeal and spiritualized activity, men of prayer, whose contact with exterior things in nowise lessens their interior piety—in a word, men of Albertian zeal. And may we not claim that it is our good fortune today to have as Supreme Pontiff one who in a modern way embraces most strikingly the virtues of the medieval Saint of Cologne. The Catholic Action of Pius XI does indeed resemble the Catholic Action of Albertus Magnus and it is the wish of our Holy Father that all, all his children, be active today. With such an example of Catholic Action among the sainted, with such an example of Catholic Action among the living, we are not in darkness—we are in light. We surely cannot be inactive. A brilliant patron stands before the throne of God to intercede for us in our efforts to give testimony of the light."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from the sermon of the Rev. W. Coleman Nevils, S.J., President of Georgetown University, delivered at the Dominican House of Studies, Washington, D. C., November 15, 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Fr. Nevils' sermon.