

August 8

Dominic of Guzman (ca. 1170-1221) priest

Dominic of Guzman, the founder of the Order of Preachers, is commemorated today in Western calendars.

Born around the year 1170 in Caleruega, Spain, Dominic decided at a young age to become a canon regular of the cathedral of Osma. During a diplomatic mission with his bishop, he felt the desire to announce the Gospel to the pagan peoples who lived at the eastern fringes of the Christian world. But the Pope of Rome forbade Dominic and his bishop to undertake this mission, and Dominic obediently turned to missionary work among the Albigensian people of southern France.

Dominic was conscious that the heretical movements of his time were drawing many uninformed Christians away from the faith, but he was also aware that missionaries, in their desire to lead heretics back to communion with the Church, sometimes used approaches that were not faithful to the Gospel. He himself chose a poor, itinerant approach for his own missionary activity.

He arrived in the city of Toulouse, and with the support of the local bishop he founded a community modeled on that of the apostles. This first community, called Praedicatorio by Dominic, was the nucleus of the future Dominican Order. The Preachers' goal, as Dominic saw it, was to devote themselves in small groups to a poor, itinerant lifestyle. They were to care for souls - their own and those of others - through prayer, study, the preaching of the Word, and gentleness.

A serene and compassionate man, Dominic was both extraordinarily active and intensely prayerful. His biographers wrote that his only desire was to "talk with God and about God." Before his death he wrote the Constitutions, which convey much more of the true spirit of the Dominican Order than does the Rule of St. Augustine, which Dominic adopted in order to meet Church regulations. Dominic died in Bologna, Italy on August 6, 1221, and was buried next to his brothers, as he had wished.

PRAYER

O God of tenderness and kindness,
we bless you for giving us Dominic,
a poor preacher of your Gospel among men and women
and an ardent contemplative
at the heart of your Church:
grant that we may carry out your word,
and we will be faithful witnesses
of Jesus Christ, our only Lord.

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Cor 2:1-10a; Mt 5:13-16

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Dominic, priest, founder of the Order of Preachers

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Dominic, priest (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (2 misra/nahasse):

Baisa of Menuf (4th cent.; Coptic Orthodox Church)

LUTHERANS:

Jean Vallière (d. 1523), witness to the point of bloodshed in France

MARONITES:

Sistus II (d. 258), pope and martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Emilian the Confessor (9th cent.), bishop of Cyzicus

Sava III (d. 1316), archbishop of the Serbs (Serbian Church)

WEST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Rabbulah of Edessa (4th-5th cent.), bishop