

Dominic, preacher, friar, and missionary (1170-1221)

Observed 8 August



When people speak of the greatness of the 13th century, called by some the greatest in the history of the Western Church, Saint Dominic stands beside Saint Francis as a major figure. The two of them led a major transformation of church and culture. Francis' followers became the Grey Friars and Dominic's the Black Friars (because of the short black capes traditionally worn over their white habits. Both brotherhoods focused on preaching to the people, Dominic's order being named the Order of Preachers (OP), popularly referred to as Dominicans. A native of Spain, Dominic completed his university studies and entered a Benedictine order in diplomatic service. As he traveled through southern France, he encountered the much maligned Albigensian heretics. He saw the failures of the papal crusade against them and began to emphatically proclaim that the way to win people to the true faith was not by pomp and authority and force, but by simple apostolic living and sincere, truthful preaching. Not many were able to sustain the rigors of the absolute poverty and intellectual intensity, but those who did formed a powerful brigade of 'Dogs of God' (their nickname derived from the appellation 'Dominicans' [*Domini canes* = dogs of God in Latin]). The new order was officially authorized in 1215 with the motto "to praise, to bless, to preach" which they have faithfully sought to do ever since. The Dominicans are mendicant friars, like the Franciscans, avowing total personal property, dependent upon the generosity of others, traveling widely to spread the Gospel.

Lessons II Samuel 22:22-29; Psalm 112:4-9; Romans 10:13-17; John 7:16-18

Collect Almighty God, whose servant Dominic grew in knowledge of your truth and formed an order of preachers to proclaim the good news of Christ: Give to all your people a hunger for your Word and an urgent longing to share the Gospel, that the whole world may come to know you as you are revealed in your Son Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.