

CHAPTER THREE

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION AT BOLOGNA

INTRODUCTION

The process of St. Dominic's canonization involved two boards of inquiry, one at Bologna and the other at Toulouse. Both sets of texts represent authentic, eyewitness reports on his holiness. In fact, these accounts are the chief sources of the world's knowledge about Dominic's holiness.

Certain principles and facts must be noted in order that a twentieth-century reader understand and appreciate what a thirteenth-century witness is relating. The chief principle to remember is that these persons did not record their memories of Brother Dominic so that someone might use the information to construct a biography. Their primary purpose was to present the remembered facts and experiences concerning Dominic which would establish proof of his holiness. The depositions were presented upon their solemn oath before an ecclesiastical board of inquiry, somewhat similar to the modern grand jury. The first board of commissioners heard the witness of the Bologna area at Bologna in August, 1233, exactly twelve years after Dominic's death.

The Bishop and Podesth (similar to a mayor) of Bologna had sent a delegation to Pope Gregory IX, asking him to institute an investigation into the life of Brother Dominic to determine whether it was possible for the Church to canonize him. In discussing the canonization with the cardinals, the Pope said that he no more doubted the sanctity of Dominic than he did that of SS. Peter and Paul. Gregory had known Dominic well and (as Cardinal Ugolino) had presided at his funeral. At the request of the Bolognese, he appointed three commissioners to open and preside over the process of investigation. This mandate is the first document offered below.

In Bologna, the Dominicans appointed Philip of Vercelli as the promoter of the cause. He assembled the witnesses who had known Master Dominic (as the founder was also called), and instructed them regarding the precise information the board required. To decide whether or not Dominic was a saint, the commissioners, the Pope, and the Roman Curia had to know whether, in his life, he had given evidence of heroic sanctity. The witnesses were to report the existence of the effects of great holiness-if they remembered having seen such effects. This determined the scope and character of their reports. Hence, the modern reader must not expect to find more "complete" information than such a special purpose demanded.

Both at Bologna and at Toulouse, the depositions were gathered and recorded according to the method which is still followed, though with greater precision, in our own day. The advocate for the cause of canonization, Philip of Vercelli, apparently drew up a list of headings under which the witnesses should give their testimony regarding the holiness and virtues of St. Dominic. While this procedure reduced variety in the testimonies, it also prevented wandering of the witness' imagination and focused his attention on essentials.

It is easy to reconstruct the list of headings utilized by the investigators at Toulouse (14). This list apparently contained twenty-five items: (1) zeal for souls, (2) fervor in prayer, (3) fervor in preaching, (4) attitude towards heretics, (5) love for poverty, (6) self-abnegation, (7) generosity towards others, (8) chastity, (9) humility, (10) patience, (11) fearlessness under persecution, (12) joy during tribulation, (13) piety, (14) self-contempt, (15) consolation of the sick, (16) encouragement of those undergoing temptations, (17) love of the religious observances, (18) good example to the brethren, (19) flight from worldly glory, (20) generosity, (21) hospitality, (22) friendship with religious, (23) type of bedding, (24) type of clothing, (25) zeal for the faith and for peace.

The depositions of Toulouse, following a pattern, are more restrained than those of Bologna. Frequently the Bolognese witnesses were allowed to extend their answers to illustrate a point. Thereby they often cited examples *which* were not mentioned by others. The story begins, then, with the translation of the Pope's order of inquiry.(15)

TEXT

THE DECREE OF GREGORY IX, INSTITUTING THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY

Rome, July 13, 1233.

Gregory, bishop, servant of the servants of God, wishes to give his apostolic greeting to his dear sons Tancred, Archdeacon of Bologna, Thomas Ubaldino, Prior of St. Mary's on the Reno, and Brother Palmerio, Canon of the Church of Campagnola, of the Order of St. Augustine, of the dioceses of Bologna and Reggio.

The Omnipotent and Eternal Creator of all things visible and invisible takes good care of the people Whom He has created by the perpetual gift of many goods. Yet He goes beyond this to endow man with a new life by the successive creation of new gifts, which are the signs of his concern for the condition of man and the effects of his desire for man's salvation. This is shown by the welcome sight of recent flowerings and the free grant of new fruits.

Therefore, in order to show the faithful the way to everlasting joys, to increase the faith, hope, and love of all people, to direct into the way of peace and eternal light those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, the Wonderful Creator of the sun and moon, from his heavenly throne, produces other lights which shine in inextinguishable brilliance. These confer an infinite variety of benefits and infuse a tremendous joy into devout hearts seeking the glorious mansions of ineffable light.

Now there are many people today who rejoice upon seeing even a single daystar, although they may remember seeing a great number of stars during the night. The Magi also used to enjoy examining the constellations of the stars, which the Wisdom of God had created from the beginning, yet when they saw a new star in the East, the harbinger of the King's birth, they were filled with an inexplicable joy. And although there already shines out in her firmament the

splendor of the diverse glories of her saints, Holy Mother Church is most happy when a new star appears, clearly exhibiting a unique and excelling light. Through this light, the darkness of those who do not know the Lord is dissipated, the perverse teaching of heretics is confounded, the blessed belief of the faithful is made strong.

We rejoice in the belief that Brother Dominic, the founder and Master of the Order of Preachers, whom We knew well, has already, by God's mercy, been united to the assembly of the blessed. Marvelous signs show that he has been given a glorious beatitude. For the truly Magnificent Lord has worked a great number of various types of miracles for many persons around his tomb and in other places, through the invocation of his name in sincerely devout prayer. Therefore, the Celestial Spouse should certainly speak out and proclaim that he is numbered among the saints. This action is necessary because of the extraordinary virtues which We remember having seen variously exhibited in Brother Dominic's life, and because of the famous miracles reported to have illumined his holy tomb. But the truth of things is not immediately evident to doubtful minds, and the character of some persons does not easily exult over the sudden report of miracles; not all that glitters really deserves the name of gold, nor does every whiteness manifest true ivory.

A prudent foresight, then, which makes Us eager to affirm certainties and slow to credit doubtful matters, urges Us to send these apostolic letters for your prudent action, which We fully trust in the Lord. We act according to the example of the True Light of the Saints, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who strengthened the fearful hearts of His disciples by public signs and manifest wonders, thereby illumining their dark minds so that they might possess the firm support of certitude about the wonderful glory of His Resurrection.

You are to examine the public and private life of this brother to learn whether he is truly acceptable to God and men. The miracles which have come from the sanctity of his body investigate through cautious diligence and vigilant solicitude, keeping before your eyes reverence for the Divine Majesty alone. Draw up all the information in writing, carefully guard it with your seal, and then send it to Us after you have received our apostolic decree. This will be sent to you through reliable and official messengers. If all of you cannot participate together in this inquiry, then at least two of you should carry it through to a successful end.

Given at the Lateran, July 3, the seventh year of Our pontificate.

TEXT

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION — BOLOGNA

THESE ARE THE DEPOSITIONS THAT HAVE BEEN RECEIVED CONCERNING THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LIFE AND THE DEATH OF BLESSED DOMINIC, THE FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS.

1. By the authority of the Lord Pope, Gregory IX, through Master Tancred, Archdeacon of Bologna, Thomas, Prior of St. Mary's on the Reno, and Brother Palmerio, of the church of

Campagnola, of the dioceses of Bologna and Reggio, these witnesses have been heard concerning the public and private life and death of Brother Dominic, the creator, founder and first Master of the Order of Friars Preachers. They were introduced by Brother Philip of Vercelli, a canon of the same Order. He was appointed promoter of the cause by Brother Bonaventure, Prior of the monastery and church of St. Nicholas of the Order of Friars Preachers in Bologna, and by the chapter of the same church, gathered in the accustomed manner in the chapter hall at the sound of the bell. The witnesses were heard also concerning the miracles which God has worked through the merits of Brother Dominic, both before and after his death. The testimony was given under oath in the presence of the three commissioners in the year of the Lord, 1233, in the sixth of the indiction.

THE TESTIMONY OF BONAVENTURE OF VERONA (15)

INTRODUCTION

Of the nine witnesses to the life, conversation and passing of St. Dominic heard by the Inquisitors at Bologna, in 1233, Bonaventure of Verona was the first. This friar had been admitted to the Order by our Holy Founder himself early in 1220.(16) At the general chapter of the following year, he was made prior of the convent of St. Nicholas at Bologna.(17) His position placed him in such intimate contact with the Saint during Dominic's final year on earth that his testimony is invaluable. Bonaventure was one of the last with whom Dominic discussed the affairs of the Order. Moreover, he had the great privilege of hearing his spiritual father's general confession in the course of his final illness.

TEXT

2. On the sixth of August Brother Bonaventure of Verona, a priest and prior of the Dominican priory at Bologna, was sworn as the first witness. He testified that he entered the Order of Preachers more than thirteen years before at the urging and counsel of the blessed brother Dominic, founder and first Master of the Order, received the habit from him and made profession into his hands. At that time the blessed brother Dominic himself, under the pope, had full power as to the regulation, management and discipline of the entire Order of Friars Preachers. In the same year the witness himself was present in Bologna at the first general chapter. At that time Dominic desired that diffinitors, who would have full power over the whole Order and above the master and the diffinitors individually, should be appointed in the chapter. They would have the capacity to legislate, regulate, assign and punish, with due respect for the authority of the general. The witness accompanied brother Dominic in the city of Bologna and was also with him in his travels outside the city through the province of Lombardy, being his intimate companion in his journeys and sojourns, at table and at prayer.

3. He stated likewise that in going along the road Dominic wished that the Word of God be proposed by himself or others to nearly all who accompanied him. The witness knows this because he frequently saw it happen. Moreover, Dominic always wished to dispute, talk or read about God or to pray while journeying. When traveling he celebrated Mass almost every day if he found a church. When he sang Mass, he shed many tears, as the witness himself saw it

happen. If there was a church at the lodging, he always went to pray there. Almost always while he was outside the priory, when he heard the first stroke of the matins bell from the monasteries, he used to arise and arouse the friars; with great devotion he celebrated the whole night and day Office at the prescribed hours so that he omitted nothing. When traveling after compline, he himself kept silence and made his companions be silent as if they were in a convent. Also, as they went along in the morning, the brethren had to observe silence almost to the hour of tierce. And while journeying, he took time to rest during the day, clothed and shod, but, as the witness believed, with his hose removed.

4. He stated also that in going along the way the founder of the Order observed a continual fast from the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross to the feast of the Resurrection, and kept also all fasts determined by the Church for the summer and Fridays. On his journeys he uncomplainingly ate what was given to him, with the exception that he did not knowingly partake of meat or other food prepared with meat or fat. If at any time on these journeys food and drink were poorly provided for, he then seemed to rejoice. This is known from the actual experience of the witness. Moreover, when he came to a place where the brothers had a convent, having gathered them together, he preached, explained the word of God and offered great consolation to them.

5. He also stated that when Brother Dominic was in a priory where he should stay for a while, he conformed to the custom of the monastery in food and at table and observed the rule wholly and fully and labored to the extent of his ability that his brothers should follow it. This, too, is known from actual observation. There was no recollection that he had seen or heard him doing or saying anything to the contrary. Nor had the witness ever heard or seen that he said a harmful word or that he detracted from anyone. He said, too, that the same holy brother Dominic was wise, prudent, patient, benign, just, and plenteous in mercy and friendliness; in the whole course of his own life he did not believe he had seen any man, all things considered, who flourished more in virtue, although he had known and seen many good religious men in various parts of the world. He stated also that, in the presence of many priests and others, during the course of the illness which sent [Dominic] to God, he heard his general confession concerning all his deeds. Because of this general confession he believed that [Dominic] never sinned mortally and that he preserved Virginité. Afterwards Dominic said to the witness in secret: "Brother, I have sinned in publicly speaking about my virginité before my brethren. I ought not to have mentioned this."

6. He further stated that, when he was on the road, [Dominic] visited the religious places, no matter of what order they happened to be, preached to the community and encouraged them to good. He himself saw this very frequently. If any of the brothers of his own or another order suffered temptation or trouble and went to Dominic to speak about this, he greatly encouraged them so that almost all were deeply consoled when they left him. He often saw this throughout the province of Lombardy, namely, at Milan, at the [Cistercian] monastery of Columba, and in many other places. He said also that, unless impeded by great necessity, he gathered the brothers and preached to them almost every day. Moreover, the holy man wept much and brought others to tears. Too, he was an ardent lover of the rule and rigorously punished the faults of the brothers; but he imposed the penalties with such sweetness and kind words that the brethren patiently sustained them. He was also assiduous at office. [Bonaventure] testified that Dominic

passed the greater part and frequently the whole of the night in prayer while weeping freely. When asked how he knew this, the witness answered that he very often found him in the church weeping and praying, and sometimes dozing after having been overcome by sleepiness. On account of the many vigils he frequently nodded at table.

7. Likewise he testified that, according to his recollection of the time, [Dominic] returned around the end of July from the curia of the Lord Ugolino, at that time bishop of Ostia and apostolic legate to Venice.⁽¹⁸⁾ He was certain that Venice was the place; and brother Dominic came back greatly fatigued because of the excessive heat. Although he was very tired, he spoke with the witness, who was then a new prior, and brother Ralph for a great part of the night concerning affairs of the Order. Since the prior wanted him to sleep, he asked brother Dominic to go and rest and not rise for matins during the night. The holy man did not acquiesce to the suggestion but entered the church and prayed throughout the night. Moreover, he was present at matins. Bonaventure heard this from the brethren, as well as from Dominic himself. After office the prior learned from the brethren that the master's head ached. It was obvious that he then began to weaken in the illness which sent him to the Lord. He went on to state that when Dominic fell sick he did not want to lie on a bed, but on a woolen sack. He had the novices called to him and, with the sweetest words and a lively zeal, encouraged them and exhorted them to good. He so patiently sustained this illness and others that he always seemed to be cheerful and agreeable.

8. While Dominic was seriously ill, they carried him to a healthier place, St. Mary of the Hills. When he believed he was dying, he called the prior and brothers. About twenty brothers went there with the said prior. After they assembled about him, lying a full length, he began to preach and delivered a very good and moving sermon. He believed that they then anointed him. He then heard from some that the monk who was rector of the Church said that if [Dominic] died there he would not permit him to be carried away but would have him buried in the same church. When the witness himself reported this to the said brother, Blessed Dominic, he replied: "God forbid that I be buried except under the feet of my brethren. Carry me outside to die on the road so that you may bury me in our own church." Then he was taken up and carried back to the church of St. Nicholas in Bologna, although it was feared that he might die on the way. After an hour there, he had this witness called and said to him: "Prepare yourselves." And when the prior and the other brothers had solemnly prepared themselves for the commendation of a soul and had gathered about him, Dominic said to the prior and brothers: "Wait a little while." While waiting, the prior said to him: "Father, you know how you leave us desolate and sad. Remember to pray for us to God." The blessed friar Dominic with hands raised to heaven, prayed: "Holy Father, Thou knowest how I have freely remained steadfast in Thy will, and have guarded and kept those whom Thou hast given me. I recommend them to Thee. Keep and guard them." And the witness said that he had heard from the brothers that when they asked him concerning themselves he answered them: "I will be more useful and fruitful to you after death than I was in life." Then, after a short interval, Dominic commanded the prior and brothers: "Begin." And they solemnly began the office for the commendation of a soul. And, as he believes, the brother, Blessed Dominic himself said the office with them, because he moved his lips. While the office was being said, he gave up the ghost. They firmly believed that the spirit left him when these words were said: "Come to his assistance, ye Saints of God, come forth to meet him, ye Angels of the Lord: receiving his soul: offering it in the sight of the most High." And he believed that it was part of the benignity and providence of God that the lord Ugolino, bishop of Ostia, now the Pope,

and the Lord patriarch of Aquileia, with many venerable bishops and abbots were present at his burial. The bishop of Ostia himself, the now reigning pontiff, celebrated the Mass, commended the soul and performed the exequies. And he stated that on the feast of St. Sixtus, just passed, it was twelve years since [Dominic] passed to the Lord.

9. In the winter of the same year in which he died, a strong aroma was perceived in the old church in which he was buried, through the entire church and especially about the sepulcher. The witness himself smelled it. Moreover, he heard many yet living brothers of the convent say they perceived it. This lasted for many days, but they, although firmly believing that it came from the tomb, did not know what scent it was. He said also that he heard and firmly believed that God worked many miracles through the blessed Dominic in his death and after his demise in this and following years. He believed and said this because many men and women came to the sepulcher with candles, images, and votive offerings, saying that God had performed miracles for them or their relatives through the merits of the holy Dominic. Some wished to close the tomb of our brother and father and to cover it with silk cloths, but the fearful brethren forbade this so that the Order might not be troubled by the multitude and lest some might say that the friars did this or permitted it to be done because of cupidity or ostentation.

10. He gave further testimony that when the body of Blessed Dominic had to be transferred from the place where it was to the place where it is now, by command of the ruler of Bologna, many honored citizens, fearing lest it be secretly taken away from them, guarded the coffin for many days. Hence, when the brothers came at night to open the casket in the presence of the ruler, many citizens of Bologna, other honored men, religious, bishops and laymen, they found the sepulcher tightly closed and the cement so hard and strong that they could scarcely lift the top stone. When this stone had been removed, a very sweet and wonderful aroma came forth. It was unfamiliar to all who were there and of such a nature that it seemed to surpass all odors while not having the scent of any human things. After lifting the stone, they found a wooden chest, tightly closed and fastened with iron bolts. The body of brother Dominic rested in this. The brethren likewise opened the casket and immediately noticed a much greater fragrance. The bones of the body which were in the old chest were placed in a new one well locked with a key, which the ruler always held and holds. Later, at break of day, on the arrival of the archbishops and many bishops, it was opened and gave forth the same odor. The chest with the bones was interred in a new sepulcher by the archbishop and the other bishops. The same sepulcher was opened on the eighth day in the presence of the ruler of Bologna, many other citizens, master Jordan, the prior provincial, and many other priors and brothers. Then master Jordan held in his hands the head of the saintly Dominic as three hundred brethren of the Order of Preachers and others kissed it. Moreover, they all sensed the same indescribable scent. This wonderful aroma, surpassing description, remained on the hands of master Jordan and the witness and all who touched the bones.

Asked how he knew all these things, he replied that he was present at the events related above. He noticed the odor not only on the bones, vestments, casket and dust, but also on his own hands and those of the other friars who touched any of the above-mentioned. He said also that often, to the present day, he smells this unidentified aroma.

11. He testified that Dominic was so zealous for souls that he extended his charity and compassion, not only to the faithful, but also to infidels and gentiles and the damned in hell. He wept freely for them and was very fervent in preaching and in sending preachers, so much so that he wanted to go and preach to the gentiles. Again asked how he knew this, he replied that he heard it from him and from other brethren. And he was often present for these conversations and conferences.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER WILLIAM OF MONTFERRAT (19)

12. On August the seventh, Brother William of Montferrat, a priest of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that about sixteen years ago he went to Rome to be there for Lent. The Lord Pope, who was then bishop of Ostia, received him into his house. During that time, Brother Dominic, the originator and first master of the Order of Preachers, was at the Roman Curia, and often came to the house of the Lord Bishop of Ostia. This is how the witness came to know him. He found the company of Brother Dominic congenial and began to like him very much. Many times they talked about the means of salvation — for themselves and for others. It seemed to the witness that Brother Dominic was much more of a religious than any man he had ever seen, although he had spoken with many; nor had he met anyone more filled with zeal for the salvation of all.

In the same year the witness went to Paris to study theology. But they first agreed and promised that after he had studied theology for two years and Brother Dominic had organized his friars, they would go together to convert the pagans in the North.

While he himself was studying at Paris, Brother Dominic arrived from Spain. Then he entered the Order, receiving the habit of the Friars Preachers from [Brother Dominic]. From then on they lived together for long periods of time in various places. He accompanied Dominic to the Roman Curia and other places, traveling back and forth. He observed him while eating, drinking, sleeping and praying; he saw him both sick and in good health.

In all the time they were together, he saw him [Brother Dominic] observing the rule and regulations of the Friars Preachers with great strictness. Although he

would easily give dispensations to his brothers, he would not dispense himself. He kept all the facts prescribed in the Rule, both when he was well and when he was sick. Once when they were going to Rome, he noticed that [Brother Dominic] was suffering from a serious attack of dysentery. Yet this did not cause him to break the fast, nor eat meat, nor order any specially prepared food, except for some occasional fruit or vegetables. [The witness] knows this to be fact since he was always with him at meals. In all the other illnesses which he observed, [Brother Dominic] acted in the same way. When asked where else he saw him sick, the witness answered: At Viterbo — but did not remember what the sickness was.

13. In all the time [William] was with him, it often happened that he was accompanied with weeping and tears. Frequently he awakened the witness and the others with the vigorous sound

of his sighs and groans. He firmly believes that Dominic spent more time in prayer than in sleep. All the time they were together he always slept clothed, keeping on his cloak, belt and shoes. He never slept on a featherbed, but on the ground, a bench, some chaff or other straw.

He always observed silence at the accustomed and appointed times according to the regulations. He avoided useless conversations and always spoke either with or about God.

When asked how he knew all this, he answered that he was his principal companion, and so lived with him day and night, between trips and while traveling. He saw and heard all the cited facts as they have been related.

14. He firmly believes that Brother Dominic always preserved his virginity. He thinks this true because of the good life he saw him lead. He also heard this from many religious men and others deserving credence who had lived with him for a longer time. Asked who told him this, he answered: The Bishop of Osma whose canon [Brother Dominic] was, the canons who lived with him in the world, and others whose names the witness did not remember.

15. He was present at the translation of Brother Dominic, when his body was transferred from its former tomb to the church and put in the place where it is now. The Provincial Prior and the brethren of the church of St. Nicholas were afraid that there would be a stench in the tomb where the body lay, because it was a very low place and much rain water ran down into the grave. On this account, they did not want any outsiders or laymen to be present when the tomb was opened, but they could not avoid it. The Podestà and twenty-four noble and respected citizens of Bologna were present at the opening of the tomb; some of these had been guarding the grave for many nights before it was opened.

When they raised the stone which had been placed over the grave and saw the wooden coffin which contained the body of Brother Dominic, a pleasant and delightful aroma arose from the grave. He was never able to decide on the identity of this scent. He and all the others sensed the fragrance. He leaned over and kissed the coffin, and perceived the odor more strongly. The others who were there, both the brethren and the laymen, did the same thing, sensed the same aroma, and wept much out of joy and devotion. Finally, the body was moved to the place where it now lies.

16. Afterwards he saw many persons who related how they had suffered from various illnesses, and had been cured through the merits of Blessed Dominic; but he did not remember who they were or their names. He had not known them previously, because he was there only on official business of the Order and could not delay.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER AMIZIO OF MILAN (20)

17. On August the eighth, Brother Amizio of Milan, priest, prior at Padua, stated under oath that Master Dominic was a humble and meek man, patient and kind, quiet, peaceful and modest.

There was a solid maturity in all his actions and words; he was a sympathetic consoler of others, but especially of his own brethren. He had an

ardent zeal for regular observance. His great love for poverty showed itself, not only in his own food and clothing and that of the brethren of his Order, but even in the buildings and churches of the brethren, the liturgy and the ornamentation of ecclesiastical vestments. He was most diligent about this, and took great care all his life to prevent the brethren from using rich and silken vestments in the churches, either for themselves or for the altars. Except for the chalices, he allowed them to have no gold or silver utensils.

18. During the night, and whenever he was free during the day, he was unremitting in his prayer. Frequently he prayed all night, so that he was found to be in bed little or not at all. He observed all his regulations in every matter and did not dispense himself in the slightest detail. He followed completely the common monastic observance in choir, in the refectory and in other places.

Zealous for souls and glowing with fervor in preaching, he urged his brethren to have the same ardor. He very much loved and praised his brethren and religious Orders.

When asked how he knew all this, he answered that he had lived with him for a time. He had seen many of these things and so knew them from personal experience; many others have been told him and he firmly believed them to be true.

19. He heard and believed that Brother Dominic had preserved his virginity all his life. This was also the common opinion among the brethren.

On a certain night shortly after the recent transference of Brother Dominic, in the presence of the Podestà of Bologna and many of his soldiers, the Master of the Order, the Provincial Prior and a great number of the brethren and priors (all of whom insisted on this), the coffin and reliquary were opened. The relics were then shown to the brethren, including himself. When he saw and kissed the bones, he inhaled and sensed the sweetness of a powerful aroma. He never remembers having experienced this kind of fragrance.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER BONVISUS (21)

20. On August the ninth, Brother Bonvisus, a priest of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that he had entered the Order of Friars Preachers a little over fourteen years ago. He lived with the blessed Brother Dominic for about ten months in the monastery of St. Nicholas in Bologna; then at Rome and Milan. Together they traveled to Rome. He also took care of him when he was sick.

In order that he might pray after Compline the blessed Brother Dominic had the custom of hiding himself in the church when his brethren had left to go to bed. Since the witness wanted to know

what the blessed Brother Dominic was doing in the church, he often hid himself there, and so heard him praying to the Lord with great vociferation and tears, as well as with heavy sighing. When asked how he knew that it was the blessed Brother Dominic, he answered that he saw him, since there was a light in the church. He also recognized him by his voice and so is quite certain that it was Brother Dominic. That the blessed brother often devoted the entire night to prayer was a fact well known to the brethren and firmly believed by himself.

Although he wanted to know where he slept, he could not find that he had any place of his own, as had the other brothers. Sometimes he was found to have slept on a bench, sometimes on the ground, and sometimes on a chair or bed without any mattress. At night, he slept dressed just as he went about during the day. When asked how he knew all this, he answered that he saw it and it was common knowledge among the brethren.

21. In traveling to Rome, whenever they got outside the city, town or village, the blessed brother Dominic would take off his shoes, throw them over his shoulder and walk barefoot. He would not let the witness carry them, although he wanted to do this. When they approached another city, town or village, he again put them on. On leaving, he took them off and thus walked barefoot until they reached their destination.

Once, when they got to a place where the stones were extremely sharp, he said to the witness: "What a wretch I am! Here I was once forced to put my shoes on." The witness asked why. Because it had rained, Master Dominic answered. Interrogated as to how he knew this, the witness stated that he knew this because he was there and saw it.

Walking along the same route, they once got caught in a heavy rainstorm, a downpour. The streams and rivers were all swollen, but, since he rejoiced in difficulties, the blessed Brother Dominic praised and blessed God by singing the "Ave Maris Stella" in a strong voice. When he finished that hymn, he began another, the "Veni Creator Spiritus." He sang it all in a clear voice.

When they came to a land which was flooded as a result of all the rain and drainage, the blessed Brother Dominic made the Sign of the Cross over the water and told the witness, who was very much afraid of water, that he should enter in the name of the Lord. Confiding in the Sign of the Cross made by [Brother Dominic] and secure in his obedience, he entered the water which seemed so perilous and got through safely.

Sometimes the witness served his Mass. He would then watch his expression, and he used to see so many tears running down his face that the drops ran in a stream. He saw the same thing happen when he sang the Psalms.

22. When they had to stop for a meal or for the night, he did not insist on his will, but followed the wishes of his brothers who were with him. And if he were badly treated, he showed greater signs of joy than if he were served well. Asked how he knew this, the witness answered that he saw it since he was present.

Once, in Milan, the blessed Brother Dominic was sick and the witness took care of him. When the violence of the fever attacked him, he did not complain about his illness; rather, it seemed to the witness that he was in prayer and contemplation. This seemed so from certain signs on his face, which when well, he was accustomed to show whenever he was in prayer and contemplation — as [the witness] well knew. When the fever diminished, he spoke of God with the brethren, or read a book, or had someone read to him. Since his custom was always to rejoice in trials rather than in good fortune, he praised God and was happy about his sickness.

At one time the witness was procurator of the monastery at Bologna and so had to supply the refectory. On a certain feast day the bread in the refectory ran out. Brother Dominic then gave the signal that bread should be brought for the brethren. The witness told him there was none left. With a cheerful look, Brother Dominic raised his hands, and praised and blessed the Lord. Immediately, two persons entered carrying baskets, one of bread and the other of dried figs, so that the brethren had plenty. The witness knows all this to be true, for he was there.

He stated that he was truly humble, kind, pious, merciful, patient and sober. He embraced poverty, was zealous for souls, and was friendly towards all religious Orders and their members. As regards himself, he observed the Rule rigidly. He never returned evil for evil, nor abuse for abuse, but blessed those who cursed him. Asked how he knew the things he related, the witness answered that he lived with him during journeys and rests, saw him well and sick, observed him eating and sleeping.

23. After the removal of blessed Brother Dominic's body from the former grave to its present tomb, the Master of the Order showed the relics to the brethren who were not present at the transference, because they were very eager to see them. The witness was there when the relics were displayed in the presence of the Podestà and certain other citizens of Bologna, the Provincial Prior and all the other brethren. He detected a remarkable and very sweet odor coming from the bones, but he could not identify it. It seemed to him that it exceeded every aromatic fragrance. He does not believe that so wonderful and striking a marvel could have been produced, if it were not due to a miracle from the Lord in heaven. The witness was not alone in clearly sensing this fragrance, for many others, even those standing at some distance, told him they perceived it.

24. When the witness was a novice and had no skill in preaching, since he had not yet studied Sacred Scriptures, Brother Dominic ordered him to leave Bologna and go to Piacenza to preach. He tried to excuse himself because of his inexperience. But with great gentleness he convinced him he should go, and said to him: "Go confidently for the Lord will be with you, and He will put the words in your mouth." The witness obeyed, went to Piacenza and preached there. God blessed his words with so much grace that three brothers entered the Order of Preachers when he spoke.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER JOHN OF SPAIN (22)

25. On the tenth of August, Brother John of Spain, a priest of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that he had entered the Order of Friars Preachers in the year of its approval in a consistory of the Lord Pope, Innocent III. The witness is quite certain that the next feast of St. Augustine will mark the eighteenth anniversary of his reception of the habit from Brother Dominic's hands. And it was on that very day that he made his profession in the hands of the founder and first Master of the Order, in the church of St. Romanus at Toulouse. From that time he lived with Brother Dominic day and night; in various places and through different countries he traveled and rested with him.

Both night and day, Brother Dominic was constant in his prayer. He prayed more than the other brothers who lived with him, kept longer vigils; he used the discipline on his body with greater severity and frequency than the others. [The witness] knows these facts inasmuch as he very often saw [Dominic] doing these things. Some of the brethren also told him that Master Dominic used the discipline on himself and had others administer it; it was an iron chain with three branches. All this was common knowledge among the brethren, but [the witness] heard it from the brothers who had actually used this discipline on [Brother Dominic].

When the brethren were guilty of violations, he punished them according to the Rule. Yet he suffered deeply with the offenders, and was very sorrowful whenever he had to penance anyone for a transgression.

26. Filled with compassion, he most ardently desired his neighbor's salvation. He himself preached constantly and frequently, and, in every way he could, exhorted the brethren to preach. He sent them out to preach, begging and urging them to be solicitous for the salvation of souls. Confiding greatly in God, he sent even the ungifted ones to preach, saying: "Go confidently, for the Lord will give you the word of preaching and be with you, and nothing shall be wanting to you." They went out and it happened to them just as he had said.

And he testified that, when he was with the said Brother Dominic at the monastery of the Church of St. Romanus in Toulouse, Brother Dominic, acting against the admonitions of the Count of Montfort, the Archbishop of Narbonne, the Bishop of Toulouse and certain other prelates, sent the reluctant witness to Paris with five clerical brethren and one laybrother. They were to study, preach and found a priory there. They should not fear, since everything would prosper for them. To the prelates, the Count, and the brethren, he said, "Do not oppose me, since I know very well what I am doing." Then he sent others to Spain, giving them a similar reply and set of instructions.

While the witness and his companions were studying at Paris, Master John (a dean at St. Quentin and Regent of Theology at the University) and the College of Masters and

Parisian students gave him and the brethren the church of St. James. This church was located at the Orleans gate. They established themselves there, built a priory and accepted many good clerics who entered the Order of Friars Preachers. Many gifts and revenues were given them, so they flourished, just as Brother Dominic had predicted.

During this same period, many buildings and much property were given to the Order in the country around Toulouse and Albi. Since the Order of Preachers had all this property and wealth in that area, the brethren used to carry money on their journeys, go by horse, and wear surplices. For this reason Brother Dominic worked hard to convince them of the need for relinquishing and contemning all temporal goods — they should embrace poverty, live on alms, not carry money with them nor ride horses. Thus the property in France was given to Cistercian nuns and, in other countries, to nuns there.

In order that the brethren might be more completely intent upon study and preaching, Dominic wanted the unlettered laybrothers of his Order to be over the learned brethren in the administration and care of temporal affairs. But the clerical brethren did not want the laybrothers over them, lest the same situation result as happened in the Order of Grandmont. Asked how he knew all this, he answered that he lived with Brother Dominic for a long time. He had seen everything related, except the disciplines exercised with the iron chain. But he knows the other facts because he was there and observed these things along with his companions.

27. Brother Dominic was friendly to all, rich and poor, Jews and pagans (who are very numerous in Spain). As [the witness] noted, he was also loved by all men, with the exception of heretics and enemies of the Church. He used to pursue these persons and refute them in debates and sermons. However, when he argued with them, he lovingly exhorted them to repent and return to the faith — as [the witness] saw and heard.

He often noticed that Dominic slept at night as he was dressed during the day, except that he took off his shoes. When he traveled from one place to another, he also took off his shoes and walked barefoot until he reached his destination. Whenever he got into the country, he again took off his shoes and carried them; he would not let anyone else carry them for him. Asked how he knew, he replied that he heard it from the brethren and had often seen it himself. If he stumbled on a rock, Dominic bore it cheerfully. As a man who always rejoiced in his troubles, he was not disturbed, but used to say: “This is penance.” He loved poverty very much, and zealously incited the brethren to have a similar love. Asked how he knew this, he answered that Brother Dominic gloried in the poorest clothing, and that, having given up all temporal things, he often exhorted the brethren to love poverty, and this in the presence of the witness.

28. He was also frugal in eating and drinking, but particularly as regards any special dish. He readily dispensed others, but never himself; rather, he strictly observed the entire Rule. Asked how he knew this, he stated that he had seen it.

When they walked through cities and villages together, the witness noticed that Dominic hardly raised his eyes from the ground.

He did not have a bed of his own, like the other brethren. Asked how he knew this, he replied that if he had possessed his own bed, he certainly would have known about it, for he had gone to great trouble searching for it.

Two or three times he was selected for the episcopacy, but always refused; he preferred living with his brethren in poverty to being a bishop. Asked about the source of his information, he replied that this was common knowledge at that time, not only among the brethren, but also among others, both clerics and laymen. The bishoprics were those of Béziers and Comminges. The witness added that this had happened before he had entered the Order.

29. [Dominic] rarely spoke, except with God, that is, in prayer, or of God; further, he urged the brethren to act similarly. [The witness] also said that he was always joyful with others, but he frequently wept while praying and he knew this because he saw and heard his weeping. During and after Brother Dominic's lifetime, the witness heard that he persevered in virginity till his death—a fact well known among the brethren. He once heard Dominic say that he desired to be tortured, cut to pieces and die for the faith of Christ.

Both by word and letter, he often instructed and urged the brethren of the Order to make a constant study of the Old and New Testament. The witness heard him say this and saw the letters. He always carried Matthew's Gospel and Paul's Epistles with him. From studying them so much, he almost knew them from memory.

The canons of Brother Dominic and many other trustworthy men told the witness the following incident. When Dominic was in the world studying at Palencia, a famine harassed that region; the poor fell victim to the plague and many died. Moved to compassion and love, Dominic sold his books and all his possessions to buy food for the poor. At his example, many others contributed much to relieve the distress.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER RALPH (23)

30. On the eleventh day of August, Brother Ralph of Faenza, a priest of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that he was the rector and chaplain of the church of St. Nicholas in Bologna, when that church was given to the Friars Preachers. It was given by the Lord Bishop of Bologna at the request of the venerable father, the Lord Bishop Ugolino of Ostia, the Apostolic Legate, who is now the Supreme Pontiff. This was over fourteen years ago. During the same year, Brother Dominic, the founder and first master of the Order of Preachers, came to Bologna. From the time he arrived until his death, he generally lived in that city, except when he visited the Roman Curia, certain regions of Lombardy, and the city of Venice.

In all the time Dominic was in the city, the witness lived near him, since he was a member of the Order, having made his profession before Dominic arrived in Bologna. Because he was procurator for the house and the brethren, the witness was able to observe Brother Dominic in church, at the Divine Office, in the dormitory and refectory, night and day. For this reason he was very well acquainted with the person and life of Dominic.

31. He frequently used to spend the entire night in church; he prayed much, and in his prayer often wept and groaned. Asked how he knew this, he answered that he had frequently followed him into church and seen him. He used to stay there with him at night, and thereby saw and

heard him praying and weeping. Frequently in his prayer, he would stand on tiptoe raising his hands, as one would in prayer. Asked how he saw all this at night, the witness answered that a light was always kept burning in the church. Since the witness was his close friend, he used to stand near him to pray. He is most certain that he was much more devout and constant in prayer than any other man he has ever seen.

He always wore an iron chain next to his body, wrapped around his waist; and he kept it there till his death. The witness knows this, for when he died, he found the chain wrapped around him. He took it and kept it, but afterwards gave it to the master of the Order, Jordan.

Dominic always slept at night dressed just as he was during the day, except that he took off his shoes. Sometimes he slept on the floor, sometimes on a board (which the witness himself would first cover with some cloth), but very often he slept sitting. Because of his many vigils and nights spent in prayer, he oftentimes fell asleep at the table.

Devoted to the Divine Office, he always attended choir with the community. He also ate at the common table, taking the same food as the brethren. The witness, who

was the procurator, once put out a special dish for the brethren. Brother Dominic called him over, and, observing the silence, whispered to him: "You are destroying the brethren by giving them these delicacies."

Whenever the house ran short of bread, wine or any item of food, the witness used to go to Dominic and say: "We have no bread — or wine." He would answer: "Go and pray, for the Lord will provide." So the witness would go to the church to pray, often followed by Brother Dominic. God heard them, for they always had enough to eat. Sometimes, at Dominic's command, the witness took the little bit of bread they still had and put it on the tables, and the Lord supplied the lack.

He observed the Rule and the customs of the Friars Preachers with perfect exactitude, as to himself and for others, in their clothing, food and drink, the fasts, and in everything else. Since [the witness] lived with him, he often had occasion to notice these things.

32. The witness stated emphatically that he had never seen anyone so happy in his faith and devotion as Dominic. He wanted to save all men, Christian and Saracens, but especially the Cumans and other pagans. He had more zeal for souls than any man [the witness] had ever encountered; often he expressed his desire to go to the Cumans and other infidels.

He was always cheerful and pleasant; a comforter of the brethren, he was patient, merciful and kind. If he saw a brother breaking any rule, he would pass by as if he had not seen it. But afterwards, with a mild expression and kind words, he would say: "Brother, you must confess your fault." With his gentle words, he induced all to confess and repent. He rigorously punished transgressions, but the offenders went away consoled because of his humble attitude.

He was a great lover of poverty and exhorted the brethren to practice this virtue. And he knows because, when Brother Dominic arrived at Bologna, Lord Odoric Galiciani wanted to give the brethren property worth over five hundred Bolognese pounds. The deed had already been drawn up in the presence of the Lord Bishop of Bologna, but Dominic tore up the contract. He did not want to have that property or any other wealth, but to live poorly, wholly dependent on alms. If they had enough in the house to support them for the day, they were not to accept anything else on that day, or send anyone out for alms. He wished them to have modest houses and poor clothing. Even the vestments in church were not to be made of silk; his desire was that they be of buckram or some other cheap cloth.

The brethren were not to involve themselves in temporal affairs, nor to interfere in the management and care of the house, except those who had charge of this. His desire was that all the rest be constantly intent on study, prayer, or preaching. When he found a brother who could preach well, he did not want any other assignment given him. Whether the brethren were out on their journeys or in the house, he wanted them to speak only of God or the salvation of souls. The witness never heard Dominic himself speak an idle or harmful word of detraction. He noted all these things, since he lived with Brother Dominic day and night; thereby he observed him speaking and acting.

33. He was much occupied in his devotion and faithfulness of preaching and hearing confessions. When he preached, he often wept, moving his hearers, also, to tears. At the time of the first chapter of the Friars Preachers in Bologna, Brother Dominic said to the brethren: "I am worthy only to be deposed, for I am useless and remiss." He humbled himself greatly in all things. Although the brethren would not remove him, they satisfied him by selecting certain deputies. While the chapter met, these would have power over him and the entire chapter to institute, define, and impose legislation.

When he was sick with the illness which caused his death, the brethren were standing around him weeping. The witness supported his head with a towel and wiped the

perspiration from his face. Dominic said, "Do not cry, since I shall be more useful to you where I am going than I could ever be here." Asked about those who were then present, he replied that many of the brethren were there, but he could not remember their names.

Then one of the brethren asked Dominic, "Father, where do you want your body buried?" He answered, "Under the feet of the brethren." The witness feels certain that Brother Dominic died when the brothers, who were reciting the prayers for the commendation of a soul, were saying the words: "Oh saints of God, come to help him, oh angels of the Lord, come to meet him; take his soul and offer it in the sight of the Most High." All of this happened in one of the cells at St. Nicholas.

He never saw him sleep on a featherbed or any kind of mattress, except when he died; then he was lying on a mattress. When Brother Dominic was at the point of death, he said to the

brethren: "Prepare yourselves." They went and made ready. Then, while they were saying the prayers for a departing soul, he raised his hands toward heaven and died.

34. The witness himself had the grave dug, procured the stone slab which was placed over the tomb, and had the wooden casket for the body made. He himself put the body into the casket, fastened the top with iron nails, and diligently guarded it until it was buried. No kind of drug or aromatic substance was placed in the coffin or grave. This could not have been done without he himself seeing it, since he was the procurator of the house and everything was carried out according to his orders.

He was among those who opened the former grave of Brother Dominic, when the body was transferred to where it lies now. Using an iron sledge, he loosened the wall of the tomb, which was very strong and constructed with firm and durable cement. He then had to use an iron bar to raise the top stone, since the tomb was enclosed with very large stones sealed together with cement. He himself had deliberately built it this way in the first place, so no one could steal the body. When he raised the stone top with the iron bar, and thereby opened the tomb, a sweet, delightful and strong, or rather very powerful aroma, although unidentifiable to him, rose from the grave. He does not think it was similar to the smell of any aromatic spices. The odor was so powerful that in no drug shop or any other place had he ever experienced anything like the strength and quality of this aroma. The same fact was acknowledged by all those present — the bishops and clerics, the Podestà of Bologna and many distinguished townsmen, who had been guarding the grave.

For many days afterwards, the fragrance lingered in the former grave, on things placed therein, and adhered to the clothing and hands of those who touched it. To this very day, the bones of Brother Dominic retain the aroma. And he knows the above things because he was present, and has handled with his own hands (see I John, 1, 1).

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER STEPHEN (24)

35. On the thirteenth of August, Brother Stephen, Provincial Prior of the Order of Preachers in the Lombardy province, stated under oath that he had known Master Dominic, the initiator, founder and first master of the Order of Friars Preachers, for more than fifteen years. But before he ever saw Dominic or knew him personally, he had heard many good things about him from very important and trustworthy men. When [Dominic] was either Prior or Subprior of the church of Ozma (where he was a canon), he was studying Sacred Scripture at Palencia. At that time a terrible famine began to waste the region so that many of the poor were dying of hunger. Moved by compassion and mercy, Brother Dominic sold his books (which he himself had annotated) and other possessions, gave the money to the poor and said, "I will not study on dead skins when men are dying of hunger." Following his example, some very influential men acted similarly and then began to preach with him. And he understood that shortly afterwards Brother Dominic accompanied the Bishop of Ozma to preach, especially against the heretics, throughout the countryside around Toulouse. It was there that he conceived and organized the Order of Friars Preachers.

36. The witness was studying at Bologna when Master Dominic arrived there and preached to the students and other sincere men. He confessed his sins to him and it seemed that Dominic really loved him. Then one night when the witness and his companions were about to eat supper at their lodgings, Dominic sent two of the brethren to him. "Brother Dominic says you must come to him immediately," they said. "After I have eaten, I shall go to him," the witness answered. But they said, "No, you must come right now." So he got up, left everything, and went to him.

He found Dominic and many of the brethren at the church of St. Nicholas. Brother Dominic said to the brethren, "Show him how to make the *venia*." After making the *venia*, he placed himself in Dominic's hands. Before he left, [Dominic] clothed him in the habit of the Friars Preachers, saying to him, "I want to give you the armor you must use to fight the devil all your life." At the time and afterwards the witness greatly wondered concerning this insight of Brother Dominic. He had called and clothed the witness with the habit of the Friars Preachers before the latter had ever said anything about entering the religious life. But he believed that Dominic must have acted from divine inspiration or revelation.

37. The witness stated that both the brethren and others found Brother Dominic to be the best possible comforter when they were troubled with temptations. He knew this fact, because when he first entered religion and was a novice, he had many different temptations. But he was put completely at ease by the preaching and counseling of Dominic. Many other novices told him that they had the same experience with Dominic.

After entering religion, the witness lived with Brother Dominic in the monastery of St. Nicholas at Bologna for nearly a year, and was very close to him. During the entire time that he lived with Dominic, he said he had never heard an evil, malicious, or idle word from the mouth of Brother Dominic, who carefully prepared himself and was unremitting in his preaching. His words were so moving that most of the time he stirred himself and his listeners to tears. He never heard a man whose words so moved the brethren to compunction and tears. And it was his custom to speak always either of God or with God, whether he was in or outside the house, or on a journey. He strongly urged the brethren to act similarly and had the practice inserted into his Constitutions. He knew all this because he had seen, been present, heard, and lived with him.

Dominic was more persevering and devout in his prayer than any other man he had ever seen. He himself saw that, after the brethren had finished Compline and their common prayers, he would then send them to the dormitory and usually remain himself in church to pray. During the night, his prayer affected him so strongly that he would burst into groans and exclamations. Brothers sleeping nearby were awakened and some were moved to tears. Most of the time he would stay up to pray until Matins. He nevertheless remained for the Office, and would walk around each side of the choir, exhorting and encouraging them to sing devoutly and on key. Thus he dedicated the night to prayer, so that he never remembers having seen him sleeping in a bed, although a regular place was prepared for him. There was simply a wooden frame covered with a blanket, but without any mattress or padding. Although he often searched carefully, he could never find him in bed during all the time he lived with him in that monastery.

38. He also said that very frequently he saw him celebrate Mass, and always noticed that his eyes and cheeks were wet with tears during the Canon. It was quite easy for those present to perceive his devotion from his great fervor during Mass and the way that he said the *Pater Noster*. As stated above, he never remembers having seen him say Mass with dry eyes. He related all these facts, having seen and heard them.

He never saw any man who was so zealous to strengthen the Order, preserve the Rule and comfort the brethren. And he can hardly believe that Dominic will ever have a successor like himself in these qualities. Brother Dominic also loved poverty. He very often heard him preach this virtue and exhort the brethren to practice it. When anyone offered property to Dominic or the community, he would not accept it nor allow the brethren to do so. He also wanted them to have cheap and small houses. He himself had the most ragged habit and wore poor clothing. Asked how he knew this, he answered that he had quite often seen him wearing a short and very tattered scapular. And he did not try to hide it with his cloak, even when important persons were around.

At St. Nicholas, the cells of the brethren were quite plain and small. Therefore, Brother Ralph, the procurator, began to heighten some of them the length of an arm (Brother Dominic was away at the time). When Dominic returned and saw the higher cells, he began to weep; he rebuked Ralph and the other brethren many times, saying to them: "So soon you want to abandon poverty and build great palaces!" Hence, he ordered them to stop the work; it remained unfinished while he lived. As he himself loved poverty, so he loved to see it cherished by his brethren. Therefore, he commanded them to wear poor clothing and never carry money while traveling, but to live by begging all the time. He then had this written in his legislation.

The witness stated also that Dominic was sparing in food and drink. Asked how he knew this, he said that he often noticed him in the refectory. When the brethren were given double portions or two courses, he was content with one. Because he was worn out from his lengthy vigils, Dominic nearly always fell asleep at the table while the other brethren were eating. Since he ate and drank so little, he was practically forced to fall asleep at mealtime.

39. The witness firmly believed that Brother Dominic was a virgin in mind and body to the end of his life. Asked why he believed this, he replied that he used to hear Dominic's confession, and a mortal sin could never be found on his conscience. He was also patient and joyful in trials. Asked how he knew this he said he knew it because he had always seen him joyful and happy in his necessities, in the needs for food and clothing which he and the brethren suffered at that time.

Moreover, the witness was convinced that the graces given to the Friars Preachers in Lombardy and the other provinces have been received and increased through the prayers and merits of Brother Dominic. He believed this because from the time that Brother John of Vicenza began to preach the revelation he had divinely received concerning Brother Dominic, and made known to the people his life, manners and sanctity, the witness himself, together with some of the brethren, began to undertake the transfer of Dominic's body. Greater graces were then evident and clearly being poured out, both on the brethren who were preaching his life and holiness, and on the people who heard them, as could be seen from the effect accomplished in the cities of Lombardy,

where a great number of heretics were burned. Also, more than a hundred thousand persons, who did not know whether they should follow the Roman Church or the heretics, were really and sincerely converted to the Catholic Faith through the preaching of the Friars Preachers. He knows this to be true, because the converts now abhor and hunt out the heretics they formerly defended.

Moreover, nearly all the cities of Lombardy and the Marches have taken their affairs and laws which needed ordering and changing and handed them all over to the discretion of the brethren. According to their judgment, they could add or subtract, change or delete. They were able also to stop wars, make peace and settle disputes among the people; goods obtained through usury and fraud were returned, confessions were heard, and many other benefits, which it would take a long time to relate, were achieved.

40. The witness said that it was he who decided on the day for and manner of removing Master Dominic's body. He was also present at the transfer itself, along with many of the brethren, the Podestà of Bologna, many important citizens of the city and many from other cities. In the presence of all these persons, the witness and the other brethren began to dig with iron stakes and picks. They found the ground hard and the tomb sealed with a very strong and durable cement. Raising the stone which covered the top of the tomb, the brethren and all the bystanders inhaled a fragrant perfume. He asserted that he could not describe it, for it did not seem to have the scent of any earthly thing. Because of the fragrance, the brethren and all those standing there prostrated themselves on the floor in tears, praising and blessing the Lord for having shown so wonderfully that his saint should be glorified.

Then they found the wooden casket which held Brother Dominic's body; it was strongly built and sealed with iron nails. They opened it too, and then a fragrance more powerful than the first one came out. With reverence and devotion, the Master of the Order and many of the brethren took the bones from the old casket and put them into the new one. Then, together with Master Jordan and the other brethren, in the presence of the Lord Bishop of Ravenna, many other bishops and clerics, the Podestà and many other citizens of Bologna, the witness took this new coffin and placed it into the marble tomb where it now lies. The witness stated also that, for many days afterwards, he could smell the vestiges of the first fragrance both on his own hands and on those of the others who had handled Brother Dominic's relics. He knew all these facts because he was there and witnessed them himself, touched these things with his own hands and many times afterwards clearly sensed the fragrance on his hands and those of the other brethren who had touched and handled the relics.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER PAUL OF VENICE (25)

41. On the sixteenth of August, Brother Paul of Venice, a priest of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that he had entered the Order at Bologna more than fourteen years ago, making his profession in the hands of Master Reginald. He received the habit on the Sunday when the Gospel of the marriage feast at Cana was sung. Master Dominic arrived in Bologna the following summer. From the very time of Dominic's arrival in the city the witness was very close to him. He lived with him for a long time when the latter stayed at the monastery in Bologna. Then he

traveled with Dominic for nearly two years throughout almost the whole of the march of Trivisano — eating, drinking, traveling and saying the Office with him, night and day.

He never remembers having heard Dominic speak any detraction or flattery, or any idle or malicious word. On the contrary, when they were traveling, he noticed that he either prayed or preached, or devoted himself to mental prayer and meditation on God. Asked how he knew this, he answered that Master Dominic used to say to the witness himself and to the others who were with him, “Go on ahead and let us meditate on Our Saviour.” The witness then used to hear him groaning and sighing. Wherever the Master was, he always spoke either with God or of God, strongly urged his brothers to do this and had the practice written into the legislation of the Friars Preachers. Asked the source of this information, he replied that he had lived with Dominic for a long time and thereby saw and heard these things. He never saw him angry, upset, or troubled, even when tired out by traveling; he never gave way to passion, but was always calm, joyful in tribulations, and patient in adversities.

42. Dominic loved poverty. He desired it for his Order and urged the brethren to [practice] it. When he was at Bologna, certain Bolognese wanted to give some property to the Order, but he would not accept it. He also forbade the brethren to receive it. Dominic even had the Constitutions prohibit the acceptance of property by the Order. The Master himself wore an extremely ragged habit, and when he got outside the villages and towns he used to take off his shoes and travel barefoot. The witness very often saw this when he traveled with him.

He sometimes saw the blessed Dominic himself going from door to door, begging alms and receiving a piece of bread like any pauper. Once when he was begging at Dugliolo, some man gave him a whole loaf of bread. Father Dominic received it on his knees, in great humility and devotion. The witness often heard Dominic express his desire to the brethren that they live by begging.

When they traveled together, he never saw him sleep in a bed, although he sometimes slept on some straw. Once after a long journey the blessed Dominic, the witness, and another companion stayed with the people of Porto Legnago. After Father Dominic had secured a place for his companions to sleep, he himself went to the church and spent the night in prayer. But he was nevertheless present with his companions and the clerics of the church for Matins. While journeying, the blessed Dominic himself fasted, but he used to make his traveling companions eat, because of the fatigue of the trip.

Although he lived with him at the church of St. Nicholas in Bologna, as he already stated, he never remembers having seen that Dominic had a regular place to sleep at night. Sometimes he slept on the floor, sometimes on a wooden bench or board, but most of the time he remained all night in the church praying. And the witness knew that he wept much in his prayer, for he saw Dominic do this many times. Sometimes he had to call him from his prayer, and then he saw that Dominic’s face was covered with tears. Even while traveling he was devout and constant in his prayer. If he could find a suitable church, he wanted to celebrate a High Mass every day.

43. He greatly desired the salvation of all souls, both of the faithful and of infidels. Frequently he said to the witness: "After we have organized and provided for our Order, let us go to the Cumans, preach the faith of Christ to them and win them for the Lord."

He rigidly and perfectly observed the Rule himself, exhorted and commanded the brethren to do likewise and strictly punished offenders. Yet he reprov'd them with such patience and kindness that none was ever upset or rebellious because of the correction.

He was present with the community for meals and the Office. And although he very often devoted the entire night to praying in church, he was always present with the brethren for Matins; he would then walk around on each side of the choir, exhorting the brethren by his words and example to sing well and attentively, and to recite the Psalms devoutly. He himself was so faithfully intent when he prayed that he was never distracted by any tumult or noise.

He was the best possible comforter of the brethren and others in trouble or temptation. He knew this both because he experienced it himself and also heard the same thing from others. He also said he was patient and compassionate, sober, pious, humble, kind, and chaste. He had heard, and himself firmly believed, that he was always a virgin. He possessed these and other virtues to such a degree that the witness did not think any man of his time was more saintly than he, nor has he ever met his equal. And whenever he traveled, he always preached to those who joined his party, exhorting them to practice penance.

44. The witness was present when it was necessary to open the grave where Master Dominic's body was originally buried when he died, and to remove it to its present tomb. Many bishops and clerics, the Podesth and many important citizens of Bologna, too, were there. When they began to dig, they found the ground extremely hard, the sides of the tomb very strong and the cement quite tough and durable; they could just barely break it with mallets and iron stakes. Then they had a difficult job lifting the stone which had been placed on top of the tomb. But when this stone was raised from the sides, thus opening the tomb, a powerful but sweet and delightful fragrance came out of the grave, so that it filled the entire church. When the witness and the bystanders sensed this, they prostrated themselves [on the floor] and wept, giving thanks to the Lord for the fragrance they smelled. He never before experienced such an odor in any apothecary's shop, cluster of flowers, or in any other place. Neither he nor the bystanders (as they admitted) could identify the fragrance; it did not seem like any earthly smell at all. He knew all this because he was present at the opening, saw these things and sensed the fragrance, as he already has stated.

45. He said that he came from Venice to Bologna the previous Sunday to give his testimony. But on Sunday evening a terrible pain, which used to afflict him for many days, seized him in his back and kidneys. Since he was afraid that he would be unable to present his testimony, he went to the tomb of the blessed Dominic and most ardently sought help and relief. He was completely cured almost immediately.

THE TESTIMONY OF BROTHER FRUGERIO OF PENNE

46. On the fifteenth of August, Brother Frugerio of Penne, of the Order of Preachers, stated under oath that he had entered the Order fourteen years ago last Lent. He made his profession in the hands of Master Reginald, from whom he also received the habit. This occurred in the church of Mascarella, where the Order of Preachers was first established in Bologna. During the summer of that year, when the Order was at St. Nicholas, Brother Dominic, the founder and first master of the Order, arrived in Bologna. With Master Reginald's permission, [the witness] had gone to visit his family and returned to Bologna on the first of September. There, at the church of St. Nicholas, he met the said Master Dominic.

The witness then lived with him for four months in the monasteries at Bologna, Florence, and Rome. He also traveled with Dominic to Rome and other cities; he said the Office with him and they ate and spoke together; he used to hear Dominic's confession, he prayed and talked with him of God, night and day. His devotion to prayer was so constant, both in the monastery and while traveling, that the witness was never able to find him sleeping in a bed, neither in the house nor on the road, although sometimes one was prepared for him. Occasionally when he was worn out by his extended vigils, he would sleep for a while, resting on his arms or lying on the floor or on some boards. Asked how he knew this, [the witness] answered that he had seen it.

He saw [Dominic] celebrate Mass many times, both in the monastery and on journeys, and there was not a single time when he did not shed many tears. The witness knew all this because he had seen it.

47. And when [Dominic] spent the night in prayer, his petitions were accompanied with groans and tears. He wept also when he preached to the brethren. Oftentimes they, too, would be moved to tears from his example. The witness never heard him speak an idle or malicious word, or any flattery or detraction; rather, he always spoke of God. Whenever someone joined him on the road, [Dominic] would preach to him of God. He strongly encouraged the brethren to do this also, and had the practice inserted into the legislation of the Friars Preachers. He had a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, not only of Christians, but also of Saracens and other infidels, and exhorted the brethren to be like-minded. This love for souls was so great that he planned to go to the pagans and, if necessary, die for the faith, once his brethren were established. Asked how he knew this, he answered that he heard him speaking of it and making his plans.

He was so strict with himself that when he was traveling he would observe the fasts of the Order perfectly, eating nothing before the prescribed hour, but he would make his companions eat the ordinary two meals.

He used to wear the same habit, summer and winter. He loved poverty and urged the brethren to practice it. Asked how he knew this, he replied that he used to see Dominic wear a ragged habit. He also heard him exhorting his brethren to embrace and love poverty. If he found any brother wearing unbecoming clothes (either because of their value or shape), he immediately corrected him and set him right. He loved poverty so much that he did not want the brethren to accept any property, but to live by begging. He then had this point written down in the Order's legislation.

He also wanted them to have poor houses and plain furniture for studying, since they should thus express their poverty in everything.

48. Brother Dominic strictly and perfectly observed the Rule himself and desired that it be kept by the brethren, too. But when he sometimes found brothers violating the Rule, he would punish them with the greatest meekness, speaking kindly to them. And none ever rebelled, although the penance would be very severe. Asked the source of his information, he replied that he had lived with him for a long time and so saw and heard these things. He also had heard his confession, and from this experience firmly believed that the latter had never committed any mortal sin. He was humble and kind, patient in tribulations and joyful in adversities; he was pious and compassionate, a consoler of both the brethren and outsiders. He was so resplendent with all the virtues, that from those things which [the witness] saw and recognized in him, he firmly believed that he had never seen or known anyone like him.

49. Aldrevando, the son of Theobaldo, a notary by the imperial authority, at the command of the lords Master Tancred, Archdeacon of Bologna, Thomas, Prior of Reno, and Brother Palmerio of Campagnola, the delegated commissioners of the Lord Pope, has heard these witnesses, written down their testimony and drawn it up in the official form. Let us give thanks to God always.

Thus ends the testimony received concerning the public and private life, the death and the miracles of our blessed father, Dominic.

1. [St. Dominic: Biographical Documents](#)
2. [The Libellus of Jordan of Saxony](#)
3. [The Letters of St. Dominic](#)
4. [The Process of Canonization at Bologna](#)
5. [The Process of Cannonization at Toulouse](#)
6. [The Nine Ways of Prayer for St. Dominic](#)
7. [The Miracles of St. Dominic](#)
8. [The Bull of Canonization of GREGORY IX](#)
9. [Prayer to St. Dominic](#)
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