

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION AT TOULOUSE

INTRODUCTION

As noted in the previous chapter, the cause and process leading to St. Dominic's canonization were begun on July 13, 1233 by a papal mandate naming three commissioners for the board of inquiry at Bologna. When these men had completed their task at Bologna, on August 19th, they appointed a subcommittee for inquiry at Toulouse, namely, Peter, Abbot of St. Saturninus, Raymond Donat, Archdeacon of St. Stephen's, and Pons, archdeacon of St. Saturninus.

The auxiliary board of inquiry at Toulouse carried out its process of inquiry through intermediaries, namely, the Dominican prior of Prouille, a second Dominican, and two monks from the monastery at Pamiers. The first thirteen depositions were obtained at Pamiers from the people in that vicinity. Possibly other depositions, more varied in origin, were taken at Prouille. The Toulouse process was, therefore, essentially local in character, despite the more than three hundred witnesses who testified. The testimony of only a few was recorded in detail. The Latin text will be found in *Monumenta Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum Historica*, XVI, 176-87.

TEXT

MANDATE SENT BY THE COMMISSION OF BOLOGNA TO THE DELEGATES AT TOULOUSE (26)

To the venerable and prudent abbot of the Church of St. Saturninus at Toulouse, to Raymond Donat, archdeacon of the Church of St. Stephen at Toulouse, and to Pons, archdeacon of the Church of St. Saturninus at Toulouse; we, Master Tancred, archdeacon of the Church of Bologna, Thomas, prior of the Church of St. Mary of Reno, and Brother Palmerio, canon of the Church of the Holy Trinity of Campagnola, of the Order of Saint Augustine, judges delegated by the Supreme Pontiff. Greetings in the Lord.

Recently the venerable Father Henry, Bishop of Bologna, and all the clergy of that city together with the Podestà and the commune of the same city, as well as the "university scholars living in Bologna," have sent letters and personal messengers, both clerical and lay, to His Holiness the Pope and to the entire Roman Curia, expressing their devotion and urgently requesting that he canonize and approve the bodily remains of Brother Dominic, the founder and first master of the Order of Friars Preachers and that he enroll him in the calendar of saints. Whereupon His Holiness, by means of letters to us, has ordered that the same Brother Dominic's life and activities, whereby he found favor with God and men, as well as the miracles which through God's power proceed from his holy body, be thoroughly investigated according to the form of the Church by obtaining testimony under oath from suitable witnesses carefully questioned with all diligence in order to determine the truth. Their statements are to be enclosed under our seal and forwarded to His Holiness and the Curia by ordinary and trustworthy messengers when orders to do so are received. We have received abundant testimony about his life and activities in

Italy as well as about certain miracles. But since we have learned that a great deal can be proved in your region about his life, activities, sanctity, and miracles about which we have no information here, we entreat and admonish you in the Lord. By the authority entrusted to us we direct that you receive and carefully examine according to the form of the Church and under oath all suitable witnesses presented to you by a member of that Order for questioning about Brother Dominic's life and activities by which he is known to have found favor with God and men and about any miracles which God may have worked in your region through his sanctity. These witnesses are to be questioned as to the source of their knowledge of anything they declare, i.e., how they came to know of it; and with regard to miracles, in which season, month and day, in what place, and in whose presence they were worked; who was invoked, what words were used, and what were the names of persons upon whom the miracles are alleged to have been wrought; whether they had seen those persons before the miracles or know them, how long they had been ill, what was the nature of their illness, and to what extent were they restored to health. These facts and all the circumstances are to be carefully investigated and the testimony, both questions and responses, are to be recorded in writing and enclosed under your seal and to be forwarded to us by reliable messenger so that together with the statements received from our witnesses they can be forwarded to the Supreme Pontiff. The tenor of the Lord Pope's letter to us is the following: "Gregory, Bishop, Servant of the servants of God, to his beloved sons ... in the 7th year of our Pontificate." Finally, to take care of any eventuality, we direct you, in virtue of the authority we enjoy, that, in case all of you cannot be present at these proceedings, two of you shall at all times take part. In testimony whereof we have caused our seal to be affixed to this page. Given at Bologna on the -13th day before the end of August.

TEXT

THE PROCESS OF CANONIZATION-TOULOUSE

1. Copy of the letter which an abbot and two archdeacons of Toulouse sent to the judges delegated by the Apostolic See regarding their examination of the life of Blessed Dominic, touching what they found and heard from persons acquainted with this man of God as contained herein.

2. To the venerable and prudent Master Tancred, archdeacon of the church at Bologna, to Thomas, prior of St. Mary of Reno, and to Brother Palmerio, Canon of the Holy Trinity, judges and investigators delegated by the Apostolic See; we, Peter, abbot of St. Saturninus of Toulouse, Raymond Donat, archdeacon of St. Stephen's of Toulouse, and Pons, archdeacon of the Church of St. Saturninus at Toulouse, respectfully send greetings.

Pursuant to the command given us by apostolic authority in your letters we have carefully investigated the truth concerning the life and activities of Blessed Dominic. In this we have been aided by the Reverend Prior of Prouille, and P. of Agen, friars of the Order of Preachers, as well by R. of Aura, Prior of St. Anthony, and R. of Villar, cellarer of St. Anthony's.

We forward for your consideration the results of our inquiry certified by affixing our seal.

3. The Lord Pons, abbot of Boulbone of the Cistercian Order, declared under oath that when he was archdeacon at Toulouse, he there heard from Lord Foulques of blessed memory, at the time Bishop of Toulouse, and from Blessed Dominic himself and many other persons, that the archbishop of Auch offered Blessed Dominic the bishopric of Conserans which was under his care and that he would not accept it. When the offer was repeated, he refused again, alleging the newly formed Order of Preachers and the nuns of Prouille under his charge. The same person believes that his election was canonical and unanimous. He knows that he was zealous for souls, fervent in prayer and preaching, and unrelenting in his pursuit of heretics. He loved poverty, was strict with himself, but kind towards others. He was chaste, humble and patient, calm under persecution, and joyful amid tribulations. He was deeply religious and held himself in low regard. To the brethren who were sick and to anyone in difficulty, he was a father and consoler. He favored discipline and in all things showed himself an example to the brethren. He fled the glory of the world, was generous and affable, and included all religious in his charity. His clothing was coarse. His interests were the faith and peace. So deeply did the sins of others affect him that what was said of the Apostle could be applied to him: "Who is weak and I am not weak" (2 Cor 11:29). This witness believes that he remained a virgin.

4. Friar William, sacristan of the same monastery, made the same declarations under oath with the exception of his being elected to the episcopate and of his affability. He testified that during all the time he spent with him, he lived in poverty. He was generous in distributing to the brethren the tunics that were given to him.

5. Friar B. of Claret, a religious of the same monastery, testified under oath to the same things as the sacristan, but added that he had heard of his election as Bishop of Conserans. He also declared that, while a canon at Osma, he did not eat the meat served to the brethren, but, without refusing it, concealed it among the other food.

6. Maurin, abbot of Parniers, agreed under oath with the statements of the Abbot of Boulbone, but added that he personally saw the flow of tears and heard the groans during his prayers and that he wore one tunic.

7. Master Arnold of Crampagna, sacristan of the same monastery, declared under oath that he saw and heard that Lord Dominic was a relentless persecutor of heretics, against whom he argued by word and by the example of a good life, and that he was untiring in promoting peace and the faith, for which he exposed himself to various dangers. He believes, too, that all the previous testimony is true.

8. Raymond Major, a canon, declared under oath that he knows the foregoing testimony is true and believes that he was a virgin. He added that he was healed of a fever by the imposition of [Dominic's] hands.

9. Raymond Gerald declared under oath that he heard an old canon of Prémontré assert that he saw the Lord Dominic place his hands on the eyes of a blind man who instantly gained his sight.

10. B. Othon declared under oath that he knows and believes all the testimony as true and added that, during his journeys with him and others through the forests, he would lag behind and when a search was made, he was often found on his knees, even though there was real danger from swift packs of wolves that often attacked.

11. William de Verniolle, speaking of what he personally saw and heard, declared under oath that he knew him to be fervent in prayer and preaching, profoundly religious, contemptuous of self, chaste, humble and fond of poverty. His bed was usually a church. He was relentless in pursuing heretics. As for the testimony which the others gave, he believes that it is true.

12. Gerald de Oleix declared under oath that he knows the above testimony is true, that he believes he was a virgin and that, although he knew him intimately, he never knew or heard anything suspect or evil about him.

13. Master Bernard of Baulhanis declared under oath that Blessed Dominic was zealous for souls, fervent in prayer and preaching, an assiduous hunter of heretics, a lover of poverty, strict with himself but indulgent with others, patient, humble, religious, contemptuous of self, fond of discipline. He shrank from worldly glory, wore coarse clothing, and busied himself with affairs pertaining to the faith and to peace. He believes that all the other testimony is true.

14. Peter Bruneti, a priest, declared under oath that he knows and believes all the foregoing to be true. He added that, one day, when the blessed had crossed the water on a boat, the sailors requested a coin of him in payment. Since he had no money with which to pay, they threatened to detain him until he produced a coin or some security. Then fixing his eyes on the ground, he pointed to a coin and said: "Take from the ground what you claim of me." They took the coin and let him go.

15. Wilma, the wife of Elias Martin, declared under oath that she wove the material for a hairshirt that was to be made for him. She knows and believes that the previous testimony is true and that he was a virgin. She further testified that, on more than twenty occasions, he ate in her presence, but not once during a meal did she see him eat a fourth of the fish or more than two egg-yolks or drink more than one cup of wine mixed with three parts of water. Furthermore, she never saw him eat more than one piece of bread. When he was suffering from the severe pains which frequently attacked him, she saw his companions put him to bed, but he immediately arose and prostrated himself on the ground, because he was not used to lying in a bed.

16. Noguera of Toulouse, under oath, confirmed all the foregoing testimony and believed that he was a virgin. She also declared that she made a shirt from the hair of horses and goats for his use.

17. Beceda, a nun of Saint Croix, declared under oath that she knows all the foregoing testimony is true, that he was a virgin, and that she collected cow-tails to make a hairshirt for him and for Lord Foulques, the bishop of Toulouse. She never heard him speak an idle word although they were close friends. And when she prepared his bed, he did not use it; indeed, in the morning she found it in the same condition as she had left it. Even when he was sick, he did this. Moreover,

she frequently found him sleeping without blankets on the ground and would cover him. When she returned, she found him, either standing or prostrate on the ground, praying. She took great pains on his behalf. She declared, too, that on the more than twenty occasions that he ate in the house where she lived, he took at most two eggs, even though much more food had been set out for him. From all the testimony so far given, it was generally known throughout the diocese of Toulouse and Conserans and elsewhere that, if he encountered a delay, he spent his time with religious persons who knew him, clerical and lay, men and women.

18. Lord William Peyre, abbot of the monastery of St. Paul, testified under oath that Blessed Dominic thirsted ardently for the salvation of souls with a zeal that was unparalleled. His devotion to preaching was such that he desired and exhorted the brethren to preach the word of the Lord and to speak only about God by day and by night in the church or in the house, in the fields or on the roads, in fact, everywhere. He also said that he sought out heretics and opposed them by preaching, by disputing with them, and by any other means he could use. He testified, moreover, that so strong was his love for poverty that he renounced the possessions, villas, fields and revenues with which the Order had been enriched in certain regions. He also declared that he was extremely sparing with food and took nothing but bread and wine except on those occasions when, for the sake of the brethren or other company, he would take a small portion of dessert. Yet he always wanted others to have as much as the means of the house would permit. He testified also that he remained a virgin, as he learned from many persons. Moreover, he refused the bishopric of Conserans and had no desire to govern that church, even though he had been elected its pastor and prelate. He declared further that he never saw a man so humble in all things or so contemptuous of worldly glory and the things that accompany it. He testified that he bore abuses and curses and insults most patiently and with as much joy as one would have concerning a gift or a great service.

He asserted also that, in the midst of persecutions, he was never troubled; indeed, on certain occasions he walked into danger calmly and without fear. He never allowed fear to keep him from traveling the public roads. Even when sleep overcame him, he lay down on the roadside and slept. He also said that no one was his equal in religious practice and that he intensely despised himself and considered himself as nothing. He consoled the weak in a fatherly manner and was a remarkable support in their infirmities. Whenever he knew of anyone in affliction, he exhorted him to patience and consoled him as much as he could.

He also testified that he loved discipline and corrected failings as a father. He was an example to the brethren in all things, in word and in work, in food, in clothing, and in good behavior. He declared that he saw no one so frequent in prayer or so easily moved to tears. When he prayed aloud, he could be heard on all sides saying: "O Lord, be merciful to Thy People. What will sinners do?" In this manner he spent sleepless nights weeping and bewailing the sins of others. He further testified that he was generous, affable and always ready to share with the poor whatever he had. Moreover, he loved and paid honor to all religious and to those who supported the religious life. In addition, he never saw or knew him to have any bed but a church, if he could find a church at hand. Where there was no church, he rested either on a bench or in the ropes of the bed from which he had removed the mattress and coverings placed there for him. He never saw him with more than one tunic and that was patched. He always preferred to wear worse

clothing than that of the other brethren. Finally, he devoted himself sincerely to matters of faith and peace and protected and helped the faithful to the limit of his powers.

19. All this was repeated and admitted under oath by A., Chaplain of Villar, who also saw a demoniac freed of a demon at Fanjeaux through the prayers of Blessed Dominic; by A. Pons, a chaplain, by Raymond of Villar, a priest from Fanjeaux and by R., a cleric who believes, also, that he was cured of a fever by Dominic's merits. All these persons and many others from Fanjeaux unanimously asserted that they never saw a living person so holy and virtuous.

20. Brother Michael swore to the truth of all the above which he saw and heard. He said further that it was by a prophetic spirit that Blessed Dominic knew that the brethren should leave Toulouse.

21. Brother R. said the same as the foregoing. But he heard of his virginity from Lord Foulques, bishop of Toulouse, from Brother D. Alvamino and from Brother John of Caleruega, likewise, that he had refused the bishopric of Béziers and that he saw a person freed from a demon by him.

22. Mark, a deacon, declared under oath that he refused the bishopric and that he found the place where he prayed wet with tears.

23. Berengaria declared under oath that she was an eye-witness when Blessed Dominic told the nine women converted from error to behold the thing which possessed them: a demon in the form of a cat with fiery eyes as large as a cow's and with a long tongue that breathed a firelike substance and with a tail as thick as a dog's and more than a foot long. At his command this creature escaped through the opening for the bell-rope in the tower and disappeared from their sight. But before doing all this, he had told them to have no more fears, as he would show them the master they had been serving.

24. Raymond de Sanches declared that a certain woman's daughter was restored to health by his prayers. She had asked him to visit the daughter, but he said: "Go home and I will pray for her." The next day, according to the mother, her daughter was cured.

25. Raymond and Zonzanna declared that they heard him say that he would flee in the dead of night with his wooden staff rather than accept a bishopric or any dignity.

26. At the bottom of this letter we have written the names of over three hundred men and women who testified under oath to the foregoing statements. Among them were many religious, priests, clerics, and nuns, as well as other virtuous persons worthy of belief. But over and above all this, his holiness and virtues were universally recognized and publicly spoken of wherever he had visited during his lifetime, as is evident from the attached signatures of these persons. This concludes the life of our blessed Father Dominic.