

The Dominican Influence in the Philippines in Terms of Marian Piety: Yesterday, Today and Beyond the 500 Years of Christianity

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Abstract: This research paper revolves around the influence of the Dominicans in the Philippines in terms of Marian devotions. It discusses the rich Marian pious exercises that originated from the Dominican Order also known as the Order of Preachers. These practices were handed down by the Dominican missionaries since 1587. One of the charisms of the Dominicans is the propagation of the Holy Rosary. This pious exercise was highlighted through its history and connectedness to the Friars Preachers and how it helped in the evangelization of the missionaries.

The establishment of Marian shrines has been one of the legacies of the Dominican missionaries specially in the northern part of the archipelago which up to now are still in existence. The shrines of Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila and the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary Manaog, Pangasinan, are two notable sanctuaries dedicated to the promotion of the Holy Rosary.

These Marian liturgical and devotional practices followed the principles of Vatican II's Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium* and the *Marialis Cultus* of St. Pope Paul VI. Finally in the last part of the article, it discusses how the Dominicans adopted to the "new normal" of promoting Marian devotions through online means and the use of social media platforms. While at the same time remaining faithful and rooted in the principles set by the Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy.

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Introduction

Dominican tradition attributes the Marian character of the Order of Preachers to St. Dominic. The Constitution of the Order of Preachers states that “The brothers ought to cherish the Order’s traditional devotion to the Virgin Mother of God, Queen of Apostles. She is the example of the meditation on the words of Christ and of acceptance of one’s mission.”¹

This article explores the Dominican influence in terms of Marian piety in the Philippines through the study of its various Marian practices, establishment of the shrines and parishes by the Dominican community, the promotion of the Holy Rosary, the role of the Dominicans on its propagation, and finally the present practices of devotions based on the teachings of the Second Vatican Council in *Marialis Cultus*, and the Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy.

The Marian Character of the Order

The book, *Lives of the Brethren*,² has its first chapter, “How our Lady obtained from her Son the Order of Preachers?” depicts the connectedness of the Dominicans to Mary’s intercession. The Virgin of Mercy through her watchful intercession would raise up the Order of Preachers for the salvation of humanity. Blessed Jordan of Saxony in his book, *The Beginnings*, states that “the Virgin could not abandon an Order she had called into existence: she helped it, protected it and presided even the smallest details. When she cured Reginald of Orleans, she showed him the entire habit of the Order.” Dominican tradition has always held that the Mother of God herself deigned to design the habit composed of light and shadow, having the brethren given up the canon regular’s surplice, which they had worn until then, and replacing it with the scapular.

Moreover, the chanting of *Salve Regina* by the early friars of the Order can be traced in the *Lives of the Brethren*: “Even when they addressed her directly, she

¹ The Constitution of the Order of Preachers, # 67, Paragraph II (Dublin, 2001), p. 46.

² Bede Jarrett, ed., *Lives of the Brethren of the Order of Preachers* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1959).

prayed with them, especially during the solemn *Salve Regina* which brought a day to a close after Compline (Night Prayer) and had first been sung at Bologna in a time of trial. As a result, this custom of singing this antiphon grew when the brethren entered into their last agony.”

Singing or chanting her Litany at the end of Compline on Saturdays was a devotion the brethren transmitted to the lay confraternities of the Rosary in the sixteenth century. During the first half of the 17th century, Dominicans added to it the invocation “Queen of Preachers, pray for us.”

It is not surprising to find Dominic’s personal devotion to Mary related to his preaching ministry. In order to preach, Dominic walked incessantly. As he was walking, he prayed. One of the witnesses relates during his canonization, that, “when drenching rain and overflowing rivers made Dominic’s walking difficult, he praised and blessed God, sang in a loud voice, *Ave Maria Stella*.”³ Constantine of Orvieto in his *Legenda*, asserts that Dominic entrusted the care of the Order to Mary as its patron. This can be seen in the way the formula of profession is manifested which Dominic had a decisive hand in its creation. From a Marian perspective, what is striking is the formula which the friar states “I... make profession and obedience to God and the Blessed Mother and to you Master of the Order of Preachers...” The profession of obedience to Mary is so natural to the Dominican spirit.

Mary’s special patronage over the Order can be found in the narration of Blessed Cecilia, the first of the nuns to receive the habit from Dominic and make vows into his hands. According to Blessed Cecilia, Dominic was praying in the dormitory of Santa Sabina (headquarters of the Dominicans in Rome) late one evening, when three women entered. The woman in the center began sprinkling holy water on the sleeping friars. She (the woman sprinkling holy water) explained to Dominic that each evening when they invoke her as the most gracious advocate, she prostrates herself before her Son, asking Him to preserve the Order. The two women who accompanied her were St. Cecilia and St. Catherine of Alexandria. As Dominic continued praying, he saw the Lord with Mary and other religious orders except the Order of Friars Preachers. When the Lord asked him why he was weeping, Dominic explained that none of the members of his Order appeared to be in heaven. The Lord placed his hands on Mary’s shoulders and said, “I have entrusted your Order to my Mother.” Then at Jesus’ request, Mary opened her cloak and Dominic saw many members of the Dominican Order. While the symbolism may be found in

³ Francis C. Labner OP, ed., *St. Dominic Biographical Documents* (Washington, DC: Thomist Press, 1964).

other traditions, what is significant is the conviction of Blessed Cecilia that the Order was personally protected by Mary. Blessed Humbert of Romans declares that “the Blessed Virgin Mary was of great help in the beginning of the Order ... and it is to be hoped that she will bring it to the good end.” From its foundation, the Dominican Order has not hesitated to acknowledge the patronage of the Blessed Mother, to continuously experience it and to commend it to the hearts of the brothers and sisters so that encouraged by the maternal help they might adhere more closely to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

A variation on the account of the sprinkling appears in the book, *Lives of the Brethren*. These anecdotes were edited by Gerard de Fréchet, which was completed before the General Chapter in 1260 at Strasbourg. In the *Lives of the Brethren*, an unnamed Dominican sees the Blessed Virgin sprinkling holy water on the sleeping brethren; he is told that Mary has a special love for the Order because in everything that the friars do or say, all begin and conclude with her praise. While other religious orders had the custom of singing the *Salve Regina* in procession after the Chapter meeting, the Dominicans placed its singing at the close of the Night Prayer, with a procession from the choir (a place where the fathers and brothers pray in common) to the altar of the Blessed Mother. The community then kneels at the words “Turn then most gracious advocate, thy eyes of mercy upon us,” and they are sprinkled with Holy Water by the prayer leader. This account indicates not only an assurance of Mary’s protection for the members of the Order but informs that the Dominicans’ prayer life was pervaded by the awareness of the Blessed Mother. The theme of Mary’s care for the Order has been narrated by Dominic’s successor, Jordan of Saxony: “Dominic was as devout as conceivable to the Blessed Mary, since he knew how watchful she was concerning the development and care of the Order, over which she was in charge with her assistance.”

The Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Rosary

In the Middle Ages, there were brothers and sisters in the monasteries who could not read the Latin text, thus they substituted the recitation of 150 Psalms with the recitation of 150 *Pater Noster*. To count the *Pater Noster*, they used cords with either knots or beads which they called as “Jesus Psalter.” Such were the conditions when St. Dominic was born.

St. Dominic and the first brethren were accustomed reciting the Hail Mary on their knees. At that time only the Angel’s greeting at the Annunciation was recited “Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with you.”- Luke 1:28. In the following century,

Elizabeth's greeting was added, "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb," - Luke 1:42. These verses were accompanied by practices of devotion, Blessed Jordan followed them up with the *Magnificat* and four Psalms, the initial letters forming the word, Maria.

In the whole life of St. Dominic there is nothing, perhaps, that so endears him to the great number of the faithful as the beautiful devotion to the Rosary. According to pious tradition, this prayer originated in the following manner: One night as Dominic was sweetly complaining to the Mother of God of what, to his ardent soul, appeared the poor fruits of his labors, she graciously deigned to answer him making known to him what we now call the Rosary. She bade him go forth among the heretics and preach and teach its use everywhere. She promised him that under its sweet influence heresy would yield, and that love for her Divine Son would once again burn brightly in the souls of those who at that time despised Him.

In 1208, Saint Dominic retreated into the Prouille forest near the town of Fanjeaux, France, to pray begging heaven to come to his aid and to give him what he needed to overcome the Albigensian heresy. According to ancient accounts, on the third day, a ball of fire and three angels appeared in the sky, after which the Blessed Mother spoke to Dominic "Wonder not that until now you have obtained so little fruit by your labors, you have spent them on a barren soil, not yet watered with the dew of divine grace. When God willed to renew the face of the earth, he began by sending down on it the fertilizing rain of the Angelic Salutation, therefore, preach my Psalter."⁴ This was the founding moment of the Holy Rosary. Saint Dominic was not the founder of the monastic Marian Psalter. He was rather the founder of a new way of praying, an evangelical way infused with the meditation on the sacred mysteries. Through Saint Dominic, the Marian Psalter took on apostolic and meditative dimension.

The text of the General Chapters since 1266 ruled out that the lay brothers should add *Hail Mary* to each *Our Father*; this replaced a choral office for them. Thus, Rosaries began to be used, called *Pater Nosters*: 150 Our Fathers were prescribed, like in the Book of Psalms. Thus, those who could not read entered the actual prayer of Christ.

In the same way there sprung up in the 13th century the Psalter of Mary, composed of 150 Hail Marys. This devotion through its continual repetition, took

⁴ Augusta T. Drane, OP, *The History of Saint Dominic: Founder of the Friars Preachers* (London Longman, 1891), 122 as quoted by Donald Calloway, MIC, *Champions of the Rosary* (MA: Marian Press, 2016).

on the rhythm of breathing and recalled the ancient Jesus' Prayer, which has become the Hesychast tradition. Blessed Romee of Livia, prior of the convent in Lyons in 1223 and later Provincial of Provence, was said to have died with a knotted cord on which he counted his Aves, which he recited by the thousands. Historians regarded this anecdote as one of the earliest texts describing the Rosary in its embryonic form.

The present-day Rosary was popularized by Blessed Allan de la Roche (1428-1475), a Breton Dominican. It was in 1464 that Blessed Allan began his ardent preaching on the Psalter of the Virgin Mary. Fifteen decades of Hail Marys were to be recited every day. He himself attributed the origin of the Rosary to Saint Dominic, who had received it from the hands of the Blessed Mother as an instrument of evangelization. He propagated this devotion in Northern France and in Flanders, organizing Rosary confraternities. To him is owed the present structure of Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, to the foundational mysteries of Christ's Incarnation, Passion, and Resurrection. Its popularity spread rapidly due to its Confraternities. The first confraternity of the Holy Rosary was in Cologne, Germany in 1475.

But in our day the spirit of captious criticism abounds, and there are some historians who reject this universally accepted tradition because it is not corroborated by the saint's contemporaries and by them reduced to the form of duly authenticated historical documents. It is certainly strange to hear tradition discounted as a witness to the truth by those who claim familiarity with the sources of Catholic doctrine. When this doubt was proposed to Benedict XIV, one of the most learned among the successors of St. Peter, his answer was that the opinion that St. Dominic was the author of the Rosary rested on "a most solid foundation." Again, he writes: "You ask if St. Dominic was really the institutor of the Rosary; you declare yourself perplexed and full of doubt upon the subject. But what account do you make of the decisions of so many sovereign Pontiffs - of Leo X, of Pius V, of Gregory XIII, of Sixtus V, or Clement VIII, of Alexander VII, of Innocent XI, of Clement XI, of Innocent XIII, of Benedict XIII and of so many others who are unanimous in declaring the Rosary to have been instituted by St. Dominic himself?" Leo XIII of our own day, one of the most learned men of his age, speaking of the origin of the Rosary, says: "Enlightened from on high, he (St. Dominic) understood that this prayer (the Rosary) would be the most powerful weapon for overcoming the enemies of the Church and defeating their impiety. The event proved that he was right; for, in fact, the use of this prayer, having been spread and practiced according to the instruction and institution of St. Dominic, piety, faith, and concord once more flourished. The enterprise of the heretics failed and their power gradually decayed." With the citation

of these illustrious witnesses, and without entering a more technical defense of the truth of the Rosary tradition, we may dismiss this unwarranted criticism and unite with the universal Church in acclaiming St. Dominic as the distinguished author and propagator of this beautiful devotion. Pope Paul VI,⁵ in his *Marialis Cultus* # 43, states that “among these people special mention should be made of the Sons of St. Dominic, by tradition the guardians and promoters of the praying of the Holy Rosary.”⁶

In the same apostolic letter, Pope Paul VI recommends the continuous recitation of the Rosary and encourages its propagation. There are recent developments in studies that have been done in relation to the pastoral dimension of the rosary in modern times. The rhythm of this prayer appeals to the modern society. It helps or disposes one to contemplation where body and spirit are harmonized through the regularity of breathing and quiet repetition of the words from Scriptures.

The Rosary of twenty decades link Mary to Jesus Christ’s salvific mission: from the Annunciation and the joyous events of the hidden life of Jesus, to the Wedding at Cana through the mysteries of light, through the sorrowful mysteries of the Passion and Death, to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles at the upper room and concluding with the reunion with her Son at the Assumption and Coronation. The new mysteries of light authored by St. John Paul II is to complete and to perfect the devotion in which Christ’s life is much more complete and He is presented to us in His public life. Through these additional five mysteries of Light, the Christological character of the Holy Rosary which Blessed Allan had already promoted and had taught us, is once more highlighted and renewed.

The scriptural riches of the Rosary are of lasting value. Its basic prayers are the “Our Father,” the “Hail Mary,” and the “Doxology.” The words of the first half of the Hail Mary are taken from the Gospel of St. Luke. The second half: “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death,” is in the mainstream of prayers that go back to the early centuries of Christian devotion.⁷

This prayer is called the Gospel prayer because the very essence of the Rosary lies on the meditation of the Paschal Mystery of Christ and the life of Mary based on the Gospel. As a Gospel prayer it is focused on the salvific events of the life of Christ. Thus, it is a prayer with a Christological dimension.

⁵ The pope who continued the Second Vatican Council and called Mary as Mother of the Church.

⁶ Paul VI, *Marialis Cultus, Acta Apostolicae Sedis, LXVI* (Romae: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1974), 43.

⁷ Donald Attwater, ed., *A Dictionary of Mariology* (New York: Kennedy and Sons, 1956), 279.

There are congresses, conventions, and meetings organized by associations, societies, promoters, and individuals that deal with the Rosary. The establishment of Rosary confraternities helped in the promotion of this pious devotion. Blessed Allan de la Roche realized that confraternities would be a way of promoting the Dominican Rosary. He initiated the renewal of Confraternity of the Rosary in Douai, France in the 15th century. He even wrote an instructional booklet that became the first manual for the renewed confraternity and was widely promoted.

The Dominicans and the Establishment of Marian Shrines and Devotion in the Philippines

The widespread devotion to the Blessed Mother goes back to the origins of Christianity in the Philippines. As early as 1571, there are ancient images of Mary, like *Nuestra Señora de Guia*, now venerated in the Ermita Church and whose origin is somewhat lost in the folkloric details of legend.

Our Lady of the Holy Rosary is another image venerated through the centuries in Manila since as early as July 22, 1587, the arrival of the Dominican missionaries in the Philippines. These Dominicans, composed of thirteen priests and two lay brothers, established the Province of the Most Holy Rosary. They resided in Manila where they had their first convent named as “Convento de Santo Domingo.” Afterwards they went to their respective mission areas in the provinces of Bataan, Pangasinan, Cagayan Valley, Mountain Province, Batanes, and Babuyanes.⁸

Among the titles of Mary, “The Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary” are particularly prominent.

The invocation of the Filipino Catholics to the Immaculate Conception goes back to the year 1578, when Pope Gregory XIII in a Bull issued on February 6 decreed that the Manila Cathedral should be erected under the invocation of *Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary*.⁹ Clement VIII decreed on August 13, 1595 that cathedrals of *Nueva Segovia* and *Caceres* also be erected under the same title of the Immaculate Conception. Moreover, one of the three ships that arrived in the Philippines on the first voyage of Magellan in 1521 was named Conception.

The veneration of Mary under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary goes back to 1587, then a confraternity was established in 1588. There are two shrines of

⁸ Pablo Fernandez OP, *History of the Church in the Philippines* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1979), 23.

⁹ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Ang Mahal na Birhen: A Pastoral Letter on the Blessed Virgin Mary*, 1975, 4.

“Our Lady of the Holy Rosary” under the administration of the Dominicans in the Philippines, one of which is in Quezon City and the other in Manaoag, Pangasinan, to which people especially flock during the months of May and October. Historically, the Spaniards brought the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary to the Philippines during the period of evangelization in the 16th century. There were churches established by the Dominican missionaries under the patronage of the Blessed Mother: Our Lady of Piat in Cagayan, Our Lady of the Rosary in Orani, Bataan.

Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila

Nuestra Señora de La Naval de Manila occupies a place of honor among the national shrines dedicated to Mary in the Philippines. The image of *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary of La Naval* is a priceless religious heirloom of our nation donated to the Dominican Fathers by Governor Luiz Perez Dasmariñas in 1593. Since then, it has been part of the Philippine church history.

The annals of history attest to the veracity of Mary’s miraculous intervention, famous of which are the five naval battles in 1646 against the invading Dutch fleet.¹⁰ The naval captain sought the aid of *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary* to help them against the invaders with a vow that all the defenders will walk barefoot in procession towards her shrine in the old Santo Domingo Church in Intramuros if their prayers were answered. Mustering only two old ill-equipped galleons to defend the islands, the Spanish and Filipino defenders successively defeated the bigger and powerful Dutch ships in five consecutive battles in the waters of Manila. Hence, the Blessed Mother was referred to as the “*Señora Grande de Filipinas*” on account of the many favors attributed to her. The image of Our Lady of La Naval was canonically crowned on October 5, 1907.

In the present, for the devotees to actively participate in its commemoration, the Liturgical Commission of the Dominican Province of the Philippines published a novena to Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval in two languages, English and Filipino. This Novena is used during the La Naval festivities every October.

To continue its devotion even after the October festivities, the Convent of Santo Domingo published a Perpetual Novena in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary, to be recited every Saturday at 5:30 in the afternoon. The novena is usually followed by the anticipated Mass at 6:00 in the evening.

¹⁰ Regino Cortes, *The Story of La Naval* (Quezon City: Santo Domingo Convent, 1998), 46.

Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag Pangasinan

The evangelization of Manaoag¹¹ (around 205 kilometers North of Manila) in Pangasinan was originally established by the Augustinian fathers in the year 1600 and dedicated it to Santa Monica, mother of St. Augustine. Here, they built a chapel and dedicated it to Saint Monica. It was formally accepted as a visita of Lingayen on October 31, 1600. Because of lack of personnel and the difficulty in traveling from Lingayen (3 days by river or 2 days by land), the mission was handed over in 1605 to the Dominicans, who by then had established a thriving mission in Mangaldan, just nine kilometers away from the visita. The first Dominican missionary sent was Fr. Juan de San Jacinto, who then resided in Mangaldan. The good friar and his flock chose Our Lady of the Rosary as their protectress and began to transfer their homes to a new site east of the Baloquing gulley. The church was built on a small hill, and from 1605 the place began to be called Manaoag.

The Augustinian scholars Buzeta and Bravo recount in their 19th century *Diccionario* the legend behind the name of Manaoag. One day a fervent Christian native was passing by the foot of the hill where the church now stands, when he heard a voice calling him. When he looked up, he saw, mounted on the branches of a tree, a carved image of the Virgin of the Rosary holding the Child on her left. From this time the place came to be known as Manaoag, from Pangasinan *taoag*, to call. However, it is to be noted that Fr. Aduarte, the historian who wrote closest to the time of the foundation of the town, remains silent on the origins of the town's name. Aduarte mentions that the consecration of the church was highlighted by the baptism of many adults, and that a few months later everybody had been Christianized. The Dominican historians Ferrando and Fonseca say that the image of the Virgin was made some time after the inauguration of the church. The first favor that Our Lady gave the people of Manaoag was to deliver them from the molestations of the nearby pagans who in fact gave themselves over to be converted.

There are no records as to the origin of the image. The image is Philippine-made, not Mexican, according to art historian Regalado Jose, former archivist of the University of Santo Tomas. This is also attested by Fr. Alex Bautista, architect-priest from the diocese of Tarlac. The image stands at 1 meter and 80 centimeters and is carved of very heavy wood. The heads and hands are carved of ivory although they

¹¹ Mariano Rodríguez, *Historia de Ntra. Sra. del Rosario de Manaoag* (Manila: Tip. del Colegio de Sto. Tomas, 1913). The following data of the history of Manaoag was taken from the book of Fr. Rodríguez in Spanish.

seem to be added later. The face of Our Lady has a most ingratiating aspect and, with its attractive and sympathetic features, it inspires devotion and respect.

In gratitude of her various and innumerable miracles, the people have gifted Our Lady of Manaoag with precious ornaments. But all the treasures accumulated for three hundred years disappeared when revolutionaries burned the sanctuary on May 10, 1898. Only by some miracle was the image of Our Lady saved; it was found in a depression behind the burned church. It was then turned over to Archbishop Nozaleda in Manila, who returned it to the Dominicans. On June 26, 1898, for the first time in three hundred years, the image of Our Lady of Manaoag had to leave its sanctuary due to the unsettled conditions of the time. Fr. Rodriguez was a witness to how the image left the convento of Manaoag—which is where the image had been housed after the fire—borne on an *andas* [small platform; the silver carroza was lost in the fire] on the shoulders of men, and escorted by 8 Dominicans, the voluntary soldiers of Manaoag, Pozorrubio, and Villasis, and thousands of devotees fleeing the pillage of their homes. The image reached Dagupan the next morning, after a tearful, heart-rending journey. The people of Manaoag returned in October to bring their image back home, but little care was given to the journey back such that the image was left behind in a forest, where it was discovered and brought by the American troops who had conquered the town.

In 1901 the exemplary priest, Don Mariano L. Pacis, took over the parish of Manaoag. He was to have the satisfaction of seeing the revival of the devotion to Our Lady of Manaoag and the return of the Dominicans that same year. Under the aegis of the Dominican Order, the church began in 1882 was finally completed to a large extent in the years 1911-1912; the central retablo (altar of the Virgin) was completed by the famed Tampinco studio in Manila. The transept (the arms of the church) was completed in 1931-1932.

The Dominicans ceded all their Pangasinan missions to the mitre (i.e., to the diocesan clergy), except for Manaoag. Spiritual administration of the Shrine in perpetuity was given to the Dominican Order by the Holy See in 1925. The image was canonically crowned in 1926. It means that the Church through the Holy See officially recognized and proclaimed that the Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag had granted favors and blessings through her devotees through the centuries.

The old convent now houses the Colegio de San Juan de Letran de Manaoag, formerly Holy Rosary Academy founded in 1947 by Fr. Teodulo Cajigal, O.P., the last Spanish Dominican in Manaoag. Since December 8, 1972, the Shrine of our

Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag has been under the care of the Philippine Dominican Province. Recently, through the pioneering efforts of the archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan, Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., the Shrine of our Lady of the Rosary of Manaoag has been affiliated to Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome on July 22, 2011, then four years later, it became a minor basilica on February 17, 2015.

Santisimo Rosario Parish - UST

On August 26, 1911, the provincial council of the Dominican Province of the Most Holy Rosary approved the establishment of a new university campus in a donated land with 21.5 hectares in Sampaloc, Manila, outside the walls.¹²

The University chapel became the refuge of the religious heritage such as the precious images of Our Lady of La Naval and other Dominican saints, as well as historical documents in the archives, when Santo Domingo church was shattered to the ground on December 30, 1941 during World War II.

On March 21, 1942, Archbishop Michael O'Doherty of Manila issued a decree creating the Santissimo Rosario Parish inside UST with the chapel serving as the parish church. On April 18, the archbishop appointed the first Dominican parish priest of Santissimo Rosario in the person of Fr. Emiliano Serrano, O.P., University professor and editor of *Boletin Eclesiastico de Filipinas*.¹³

Though the erection of the chapel into a parish church was not thought of from the start of the University, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary was already observed by the Dominican community. The devotion to Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, UST has its own novena booklet. This Novena is used during the nine-day preparation for its feast day that falls on the first Sunday of October.

The image of Our Lady of the Rosary, UST has its own enthronement rites and procession with the Dominican saints on the feast day, which is almost like that of Our Lady of La Naval but on a smaller scale. There are also novena masses participated in by the parishioners, students, academic staff, and support staff of the University of Santo Tomas, something unique with the Thomasian community. In this way, the Dominican influence is seen through the observance of various religious and pious exercises found in the campus.

¹² Santissimo Rosario Parish, *Fiat Mihi Secundum Verbum Tuum* (Manila, 2018).

¹³ Santissimo Rosario Parish, *Fiat Mihi Secundum Verbum Tuum*, 5.

Marian Liturgical and Devotional Practices based on *Marialis Cultus*¹⁴

Marialis Cultus is not a document about Mary's person and role as such, but the way the Church celebrates liturgies that commemorate Mary and about Marian devotion. It situates the initial Vatican II reforms in a positive light.

The second part of this document speaks about the renewal of devotion to Mary. This section treats the Trinitarian, Christological, and Ecclesial aspects of the devotion to Mary. Trinitarian, in such a way that prayers to Mary must always be in relation to the Three Persons of the Trinity. Christological, in the sense that in order that our veneration to Mary be considered valid, it must always be related to Christ and dependent on Him. Ecclesiological in the sense that Mary is considered as a member of the pilgrim Church. She has a mission to fulfill as Mother of the Church, that is to dispose us in receiving God's precious gift of grace.

Section two gives the four guidelines for devotion to Mary which have since become the key orientation to the teaching process about Mary. These are the biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, and anthropological elements to be taken into consideration when having a Marian devotion.¹⁵

Biblical, in such a way that devotion and honor to Mary must be based on Scriptures. Liturgical, in the sense that the veneration must be in harmony with the renewed liturgical celebrations. Ecumenical, in the sense that the true devotion to Mary should lead to a unified Church in a common spirit of gratitude. Anthropological, in the sense that Mary is considered as a historical person, a perfect exemplar or model of discipleship, a person with a mission.

Imitation of Mary does not mean keeping women within cultural limitations, which bound the women in Mary's time. The Virgin Mary is proposed to the faithful as an example to be imitated not precisely in the concrete tasks she undertook at Nazareth. She is held up as an exemplar to the faithful, as a woman of faith, who in a particular event of her life fully and responsibly accepted the will of God because she heard the word of God and acted on it. Her charity and spirit of service are the driving force of her actions. This quality of Mary's life will serve as an inspiration for others especially for women, mothers, or wives in the home or anywhere else in our society. Therefore, their femininity will have a deeper meaning and significance.

¹⁴ Pope Paul VI, *Apostolic Exhortation for the Right Ordering and Development of Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, February 2, 1974.

¹⁵ *Marialis Cultus*, 29-39.

Marian devotions have public and social characters too. They are constant reminder of the social dimension of the Gospel. True devotion to Mary leads to the promotion of the welfare of others specially the welfare of the poor, for whom God shows special concern. The summit of Christian worship, the Eucharist, “commits to the poor, to receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognize Christ in the poorest of the brethren.”¹⁶

Mary’s Magnificat reflects a social character. Balasuriya states that, “Mary’s song shows how she reconciles social radicality with personal service, a revolutionary message with interpersonal love.”¹⁷

The Magnificat is found in the Gospel of Luke, “He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away.” (*Lk. 1: 51-53*). One can see in this passage a combination of practical action, personal concern, and prayer. “It speaks of a cultural, political and economic reform, wherein the proud-hearted and haughty are got rid of in favor of the poor, simple and lowly people; the political power passes from the mighty to the masses of the people and by which the hungry and the starving get the good things instead of their being monopolized by the rich who are sent empty away.”¹⁸

Thus, the challenge to every devotee of Mary is to develop a just and humane society. It means a combat against all forms of injustice, discrimination, racism, and other forms of dehumanization. The song of Mary calls for humility and respect, equality, and dignity for all, above all a metanoia. This is indeed a timeless message, especially for the Philippine society. This brings one’s devotion to Mary on the side of the weak and the poor and serves as an inspiration for a personal and social transformation throughout the whole world.

We rarely associate devotion to Mary with the social dimension of Christian living. This is when devotion to her tends towards pious individualism. But, Mary should be seen as a biblical character who does the will of the heavenly Father. Her song, the Magnificat, is an echo of the utterances of the poor and the lowly. The poor of Israel were blight in the land; they were the manifestations of a sick society. The poor in other words were the visible signs of a deep-rooted sin of injustice in a nation. True devotee of Mary reaches out to the last, the least, and the lost of the society.

¹⁶ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1397.

¹⁷ Tissa Balasuriya, *Mary and Human Liberation* (Colombo: Center for Society and Religion, 1994), 52.

¹⁸ Balasuriya, *Mary and Human Liberation*, 52.

Hence social awareness and outreach programs, such as medical missions and feeding programs, are being done in both shrines of Our Lady of the Rosary in Quezon City and Manaoag, Pangasinan conducted by the Dominican fathers and student-brothers with lay counterpart.

Poverty is encountered in the Philippines. There are more than seventy percent of Filipinos living below the poverty line. The oppression that exists in Philippine society is contrary to the salvation that Jesus and his mother proclaimed by their lives. Filipino Catholic Christians who profess to be followers and devotees of Mary must live according to their belief. Faith and action must go hand in hand. Devotion to Mary should lead to a committed individual who has deep concern for the present plight of most poor Filipinos. These poor and oppressed brethren are sons and daughters of God. They are also devotees of Mary who call out to her as their mother. Surely her maternal care goes out to them. Devotion to Mary shows itself in works. These works are words translated into actions - works of justice to free the poor from oppression. As the Church points her mission to us: "To be present in the heart of the world proclaiming the Good News to the poor, freedom to the oppressed, and joy to the afflicted."¹⁹

Marian Liturgical and Devotional Practices of the Dominicans in the Philippines

Mary's place in the liturgy is to be the model of the Church in her response and openness to the will of the Father from the Annunciation to the Foot of the Cross. Her life is a manifestation of God's greatness, something that the faithful can imitate. The Church has honored Mary in terms of public devotions. Public prayer refers to the official liturgical prayers in the Holy Mass and Liturgy of the Hours on various solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Mary. The "official liturgical prayer" means that the text and rites have been approved by competent authority, local ordinary and the Holy See for use on specific occasions.

On the Dominican Missal and Lectionary²⁰

The Liturgical Commission of the Dominican Province of the Philippines, on December 8, 2011, launched the Missal and Lectionary proper to the Order of Preachers for the use of the Philippine Province. This liturgical book contains the

¹⁹ Synod of Bishops 1971, "Justice in the World," *Second Vatican Council* (New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1995), 696.

²⁰ Dominican Missal and Lectionary for the Order of Preachers in the Philippines, 2011.

complete text for the Eucharistic celebration proper for the Dominican saints and blessed. Every time a Dominican commemoration is celebrated, either memorial, feast or solemnity, this book can be used as it is.

The votive mass section of the Dominican Missal in honor of the Blessed Mother offers several options especially on Saturdays or on a special occasion in the life of the Order. It has its own Entrance Antiphons, Collect, Preface and Prayer Over the Offerings, Communion Antiphons, Prayer After Communion and Solemn Blessings. There are two votive Masses proper to the Philippine Province: Mass for Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila, and Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag. The texts were carefully selected within the context of La Naval de Manila and Manaoag Pangasinan.

- A. Mary, Mother of the Church.
- B. Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila
- C. Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag
- D. Our Lady of the Rosary, October 7

The Dominican Lectionary offers optional readings from the Old Testament, Responsorial Psalm, and even the Gospel from the New Testament, proper for the Dominican Masses in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as the Prayer of the Faithful.

On the Liturgy of the Hours

As a religious order, the Dominicans are required to pray the Divine Office, also known as the Liturgy of the Hours. It is the official public prayer of the Church. It is designed so that the whole course of day and night, will be made holy by praising God. Mary occupies a special place in the Liturgy of the Hours. Mary is featured in some hymns, prayers, and readings. There are times when Mary, as the mother of God, is invoked in the general intercessions at Lauds and Vespers. Every day, the Magnificat is being recited during vespers, also known as the song of Mary.

To facilitate the liturgical life of the friars regarding the Dominican celebrations, the Liturgical Commission of the Province published in 2009 the Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours for the use of the Philippine Province. Later, the same commission revised it in 2011, and it is now on its third printing this 2021. This liturgical book is significant because it synchronizes the Liturgy of the

Hours at least within the jurisdiction of the Filipino Dominican communities. It also complements the Dominican Missal and Lectionary.

From its beginnings the Order attached a special Marian note to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. The revised liturgy of the memorial of the Blessed Mother on Saturdays allows the full force of dedicating this day contemplating on the life of the Virgin Mary.²¹

Taking into consideration the Marian character of the Order, the Supplement provides a great amount of material. Which have been grouped under five headings and which constitutes ten formularies, when various elements are considered. To facilitate their use and to furnish a better harmony among the texts which come from the Dominican tradition, the following headings are used which are selected in harmony with the rhythm of the Roman Liturgical Year:

- a. Mary, Mother of God
- b. Mary, Queen of Virgins
- c. Mary, Mother of Grace (last Saturday of November)
- d. Mary, Mother of Mercy
- e. Mary, Queen of Apostles (Sunday after Pentecost)

The revised Roman Liturgy of the Hours, together with the Supplement produced by the Dominican Province of the Philippines' liturgical commission typifies Vatican II's objective, that is, to execute reforms in the liturgy in a way that it is made more meaningful to those who worship God every day. The liturgical movement, properly considered the Blessed Mother in the mystery of Christ and in the mystery of the Church and in harmony with the tradition, has recognized the singular place that belongs to her in Christian worship as the holy Mother of God and worthy associate of the Redeemer.²²

On Private Devotions

The Angelus and the Rosary are the two pious exercises of piety which are biblically based and mentioned explicitly by Pope Paul VI in his *Marialis Cultus*.

Indeed, the substantial parts of these devotions came from the Gospels of Saint Luke and Saint John. Therefore, to pray the Angelus and the Rosary is to express

²¹ Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours for the Order of Preachers, Manila: Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2012. Lxxii.

²² *Marialis Cultus*, 15.

admiration and love to the Word of God.²³ The Angelus and the Rosary, though not liturgical prayers, retain their biblical imprint. By contemplating on the mysteries of Christ, they help the faithful to be disposed to the official liturgy of the Church, more importantly, to the Eucharistic celebration. These devotions are practiced in various Dominican institutions and convents and houses of formation. They influence the lay faithful in praying these devotions.

The *Marialis Cultus* of Pope Paul VI recommends the continuous recitation of the Rosary and encourages its propagation. It is a Gospel prayer because its very essence lies on the meditation of the Paschal Mystery and the salvific events in the life of Christ and in the life of the Blessed Mother based on the Gospel. Therefore, it has a Christological dimension.²⁴ It helps someone to be disposed to contemplation where the body and spirit are harmonized through the regularity of the motion of the beads and quiet repetition of the words from the Scriptures.

In the Constitution of the Order, # 67 paragraph II, it is stipulated: “The brothers should recite daily five decades of the Rosary... preserving an appropriate relationship with the Liturgy. This form of prayer leads us to contemplation of the mystery of salvation in which the Virgin Mary is intimately associated with the work of Her Son.”²⁵ The Rosary is really part of their habit.

Since the Rosary is a way to contemplate the mysteries of Christ and the school for developing evangelical life, it should be regarded as a form of preaching appropriate for the Order of Preachers. Through the Rosary, the teaching of faith is conveyed to the friars and the faithful in the light of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s participation in the mystery of Christ and of the Church. Therefore, the friars ought to pray the Rosary fervently; this is considered as a characteristic of the Order of Preachers, and to promote associations and confraternities, according to the circumstance and place,²⁶ so it may be more vital each day.²⁷

Hence, in most of the mission territories of the Dominicans in the Philippines, one can trace the devout practice of praying the Rosary, with some variations according to the context and religious experience of the people entrusted to their pastoral care. For example, in Manaoag, Pangasinan, every first Saturday

²³Olive Treanor, *Mother of the Redeemer, Mother of the Redeemed* (Westminster: Four Courts Press, 1988), 53.

²⁴ Roland Mactal, *Mary Seat of Wisdom: A Contemporary Marian Reflections* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2001), 83.

²⁵ LCO, 50.

²⁶ LCO, 153.

²⁷ LCO, 129.

of the month, the novices lead and join the Dawn Rosary prayer and procession of the image of Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag. It is the Rosary with the inclusion of some biblical passages as the basis of the mysteries. This is sometimes called the German²⁸ way of praying the Rosary.

In the Roman way, the mystery is announced only in the beginning of each decade and afterwards no more. Because of this the mystery is not so much emphasized. This way of praying is customary in the southern countries of Europe like Italy, Spain, and even here in the Philippines.²⁹ Both ways are accepted by the Church.

The contribution of the Dominicans in terms of popular piety, especially of the praying of the Holy Rosary, is its being meditative and evangelical, as a form of evangelization and its continuity with the praying of the Liturgy of the Hours, as stated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2678: “Medieval Piety in the West developed the prayer of the Rosary as a popular substitute for the Liturgy of the Hours.” Thus, one can notice that the praying of the Rosary in the Dominican churches begins with introductory part which is the same with as the introductory part of praying the Divine Office.³⁰ This is one of the influences of the Dominicans in praying the Holy Rosary.

There are also other forms of Marian devotions done like Besamanto³¹ during La Naval novena days, Visitation³² of the replica image of the Blessed Mother, both of Our Lady of La Naval and Manaoag, the first Saturday dawn procession in Manaoag, the Perpetual Novena to Our Lady of La Naval every Saturday at 5:30 p.m. being led by the Dominican student-brothers. These are commendable pious exercises of Marian devotions.

²⁸ In this form the mystery is repeated in each Hail Mary after the name of Jesus. It goes therefore like this “and blessed is the fruit of your womb who was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Holy Mary Mother of God...” this is repeated 10 times. In this way the mystery is recalled again and again and made the object of meditation. This way of praying the Rosary is used also today in the German speaking countries.

²⁹ Bernhard Raas SVD, *Popular Devotions* (Manila: Logos Publication, 1992), 64.

³⁰ This praying of the Rosary begins with “Hail Mary... then followed by Lord Open My Lips, then God come to my assistance.” Somewhat similar to the introductory part of praying the Office. This demonstrates the continuity of praying the Psalter of the Blessed Mother with the praying of the Rosary.

³¹ Beso manto is the kissing of the mantle of the Blessed Mother.

³² To promote further the devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary, the replica image is being invited to visit schools, universities, government offices, parishes, malls and other private companies upon the request of the institutions. In the Santo Domingo Convent, the student-brothers in charge of Marian promotions, usually accompany the image of the Blessed Mother.

Conclusion

Marian piety beyond the 500th Year of Christianity and post-pandemic methodology

The Order of Preachers, also known as the Dominicans, continues to have a distinctive Marian devotion from the early beginnings to the contemporary times, from its foundation in Rome to the Far East. When the Dominican missionaries arrived in the Philippines, aside from their preaching and the establishment of various educational institutions, they popularized a kind of Dominican-Marian spirituality. It can be seen through their various practices: from the religious vows they profess to God and to the Blessed Mother, the singing of *Salve Regina* after Evening Prayer or Night Prayer, the sprinkling of Holy Water while the hymn to the Blessed Mother is sung, the wearing of the scapular and the Rosary as part of their religious habit, the daily recitation of the Rosary in common, the establishment of confraternities of the Holy Rosary in the different parts of the globe, and the liturgical celebration every Saturday for the memorial of the Blessed Mother during Ordinary time & every 8th of May for the Blessed Mother's patronage over the Dominican Order. These pious exercises were handed down from one generation to the present in the different Dominican mission areas. With the publication of the Dominican Missal and Lectionary & the Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours, the Filipino Dominicans participate in the call of Vatican II for the steady promotion of piety, especially to the Blessed Mother, through the sacraments, specifically the Eucharist. The Supplement to the Liturgy of the Hours of the Order of Preachers in the Philippines also manifests the utmost devotion to the Blessed Mother. It offers various options as the faithful celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, especially the Office of Readings whereby the rich well-spring of spiritual writers of the Dominican saints and blessed are accommodated to foster a greater appreciation of the role of Mary in Salvation history.

The Dominican Marian devotions under the titles of Our Lady of the Rosary, La Naval de Manila, Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag, and Santisimo Rosario, UST are in harmony with the guidelines and provisions of Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus*, and the Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy.

What will be the direction of Marian piety after 500 years of Christianity and within the context of the New Normal (Post Pandemic Methodology)?

The principles that will be used remain the same, that is, from Vatican II's Chapter Eight of *Lumen Gentium*, *Marialis Cultus* and Directory on

Popular Piety and the Liturgy. However, the methodology differs under the new normal circumstances. But what is uniquely Dominican? From its being biblical, liturgical, ecumenical, anthropological, social, rooted in the Dominican tradition, up to embracing and utilizing social media platforms to promote the Marian-Dominican devotion.³³ It is also a time to recalibrate some Marian practices like the grand processions during La Naval or Manaoag feast day, Dungaw³⁴ which is a better and nobler alternative, is more solemn and has anthropological dimension. It should have a more socially conscious outreach programs during the feast day of the Blessed Mother, for example, La Naval Community pantry rather than the long grand processions of the Dominican saints. It is high time to simplify and go back to the basics of one's faith and be more practical in one's devotion to the Blessed Mother. Rather donating a vestment for the image of Our Lady of Manaoag, why not have an outreach to clothe those who are in need along the streets and slums of Manila? These are but morsel of suggestions, but the Blessed Mother would be happy and pleased with the help one gives to the least, the last, the lost of the society.

As Pope Paul VI reiterates in his *Marialis Cultus*, that the sons and daughters of Saint Dominic are, by tradition, the promoters of the Rosary. The Dominicans, following this tradition, should unceasingly continue to promote this pious practice through their preaching and as a form of new evangelization. They should be preachers of hope during these challenging times. In this way, they help spread the message of the Rosary, timeless yet timely. That in praying and meditating its mysteries, the Word is continuously incarnated to every pilgrim and devotee of the Blessed Virgin Mary, thus making the Kingdom of God present in our times.

These testify that indeed the sons and daughters of St. Dominic de Guzman have fulfilled what the *Gospel of John 19:27* states "From that hour on the disciple took Mary into his home." The Dominicans not only took Mary into their priories, convents, or communities but into their hearts and minds as well, not for their own good, but more importantly, for sake of the new evangelization. **PS**

³³ The use of social media platforms be utilized in promoting the various Marian liturgical and pious exercises. The online streaming of praying of the Rosary, Liturgy of the Hours, Conventual Masses, processions, and the like should be continued in the social media platforms like Facebook, Tweeter, YouTube, podcast, etc.

³⁴ Pagdungaw ng La Naval or simply Dungaw is the new practice of devotion to Our Lady of La Naval. It is a devotion to Mary that adapts to the present times of pandemic and beyond. The image of Our Lady is placed at the entrance door of the façade of Santo Domingo church for people to venerate during daytime till 8:00 p.m.

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