

## News from Fanjeaux

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France

N°12

PENTECOST

2013

### PLANS TO EXTEND THE SHOP LIBRARY AT FANJEAUX AND MAKE AN EXHIBITION SPACE

This spring a modest beginning is being made on extending the capacity of the SHOP library for housing books and other materials relevant to the history of Dominican women. The first step will be when a builder comes in the next few days to make an opening for a door between the existing library on the ground floor and an outbuilding which is as yet only partly refurbished. This is no small job with the thickness of our stone walls; the builder says there will be two tons of rubble to cart away!

Even with the limited means available, a very simple exhibition was set up in this outbuilding last summer. It seems that there is a need for such a facility, as many visitors to Fanjeaux, outside of the summer months, find themselves increasingly unable to visit either the house of St Dominic or the old convent when they are closed with no-one in residence. The local tourist office has gone part way towards keeping visitors informed with a series of well designed and illustrated panels attached to the outside of the principal monuments of the village.

As a complement to this, it seemed a good idea to provide more information about the person of St Dominic and his preaching mission in these parts. Especially as locally there is much documentation available for tourists on the Cathars, but very little on the Dominicans.

It is difficult to know how many people visited the exhibit in 2012, as the street door was left open and access was free, but each time fresh leaflets were put out, they rapidly disappeared. The idea is to have exhibition materials available in the three languages in which SHOP functions: English, French and Spanish.

*To date we have no proper panels for exhibiting materials on; these need to be purchased; if you can help us with this, do please get in touch.*



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## DOMINICAN SCHOLARS VISIT SHOP

In recent months SHOP has hosted two Dominicans—a friar and a sister—each writing a book, and both wishing to use the resources of the SHOP library, as well as profiting from the special atmosphere which is to be readily absorbed in the Dominican holy places of our region.

In March while chill winds were still blowing off the Pyrenees, **Fr Peter Batts op** from the Eastern Province of the USA spent a few days researching for the biography of Lacordaire which he is in the process of writing. There is certainly a need for a good new biography of Lacordaire in English. Fr Peter is already the author of a doctoral thesis on the restoration of the Dominican Order in the 19th century.

He was thrilled to be able to visit Sorèze and get a sense of Lacordaire the real person by visiting his apartments in the Abbey School and his tomb in the parish church. He was also fortunate enough to get a guided tour of the archives by the most knowledgeable archivist herself, Sr Marie-Odile Munier.

Fr Peter is about to take up a visiting fellowship at Blackfriars, Oxford; we wish him every success in his researches on the parallels between the ecclesiology of Lacordaire and Cardinal John Henry Newman.



**Peter M. BATTIS**, *Henri-Dominique Lacordaire's Re-Establishment of the Dominican Order in Nineteenth-Century France*, The Edwin Mellen Press, 2004

In late April, when the weather should have been spring like, but it wasn't really, **Sr Holkje van der Veer op** from Nijmegen in the Netherlands came in her turn to check a certain number of details before handing her manuscript to her publisher in June. Sr Holkje's book has a dual approach—it is part autobiography, and very interestingly so as Sr Holkje has an unusual story. Born into a Mennonite family in Amsterdam and with a rare genetic syndrome, the way towards life as a Dominican sister with the Congregation of the Holy Family involved overcoming a certain number of obstacles. In a lively way, the book interleaves Sr Holkje's own story with reflections on Dominican life, spirituality and history.

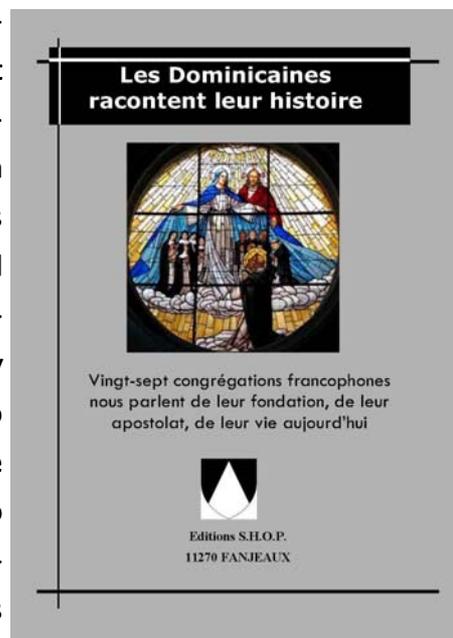


*Sr Holkje with the new Provincial of the Netherlands, Fr René Dinklo op*

Mention must also be made of the shorter visit this spring by **Bruce Drysdale** from New Zealand. He is "promoter of the charism" in a Dominican-run school in Auckland, and was profiting from a bursary granted for the purpose of visiting the Dominican holy places in Europe, including of course Fanjeaux and Prouilhe. It seems admirable that one should travel so far in order to gain a sense of the authentic spirit of the Dominican Order and to be able to communicate it to new generations of young people .

## DOMINICAN SISTERS RELATE THEIR HISTORY

Such is the translation of the title of the third publication of "Editions SHOP" which came off the presses at the end of January this year. It was produced in collaboration with the "*Groupement fraternal*" which brings together twenty seven Dominican congregations of sisters of apostolic life in France. Between 2007 and 2011 each congregation had written an article presenting its own history in the *Groupement's* quarterly newsletter *Dominicaines*. It seemed a good idea to present these articles to a wider public and in a more durable form. Hence this small book of 130 pages to which many illustrations have been added. It is available by post directly from SHOP at a cost of 15 € plus 2.50 € postage and packing.



## WORK IN PROGRESS...

### *The Beginnings of Dominican Women in Latin America*

Module IV of the SHOP distance learning history course is in preparation at Fanjeaux. Much of the work consists of translation into French and English of materials in Spanish original. Hopefully by the end of 2013 a launch date will be proposed to prospective students.

### *Historical Directory of Dominican monasteries*

This is a major ongoing project of SHOP. The directory aims to list all currently existing (in 2013) Dominican monasteries. They are arranged alphabetically by continent and by country. Those monasteries that existed in previous times but for one reason or another ceased to exist - through revolution, war or lack of vocations - are not included in the body of the work, however a list of suppressed monasteries is given for each geographical entity where possible, undoubtedly with omissions through lack of detailed available information, particularly for the medieval period in Europe. (For example, there were over a thousand Dominican monasteries in Spain alone by the 18th century!)

*Even now, the number of monasteries in Spain is impressive >*

A page is devoted to each monastery, with its address, a brief résumé of its history and one or more photographs. Wherever possible the historical résumé is compiled from material provided by the monasteries themselves or their federations. Dates of foundation are given, but discrepancies are inevitable as some monasteries count their foundation from the arrival of the first community of sisters, others from the date of canonical erection or incorporation into the Order. Both are given where known. Numbers of sisters are not given, as accurate statistics are hard to obtain, and they are constantly changing. It is rather the existence of the monastery that is the significant factor.





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**The Association of Sister Historians of the Order of Preachers is defined in its statutes as: “a resource for documentation, communication and formation at the service of Dominican women, religious and lay, through the study of their histories.” *Statutes***

## NEW TEAM MEMBER

The preparatory work mentioned on the previous page is being greatly helped by the collaboration of Enrica de Dominguez, who joined the SHOP team as a part-time member in the summer of 2012. A retired professor of medieval history, now spending most of the year locally in the Aude department, Enrica wrote her thesis on the medieval mystic, Marguerite Porete; she has also authored articles on the medieval Dominican nun Yolande of the monastery of Marienthal, in Luxemburg. Besides all this she has great language skills : a native English speaker with excellent Spanish and French. All in all her contribution to the work of SHOP is valuable and most welcome.



*Enrica de Dominguez*

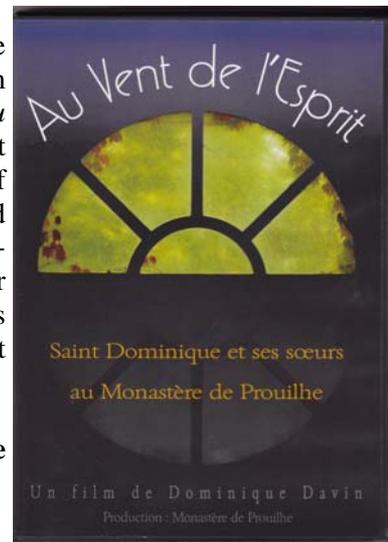
## NEW BOOKS

*Mémoire Dominicaine* n° 30, which is just out, is devoted to Dominican writings of Fr Guy Bedouelle op, who died a year ago this month (May 22nd). These are articles published elsewhere during Fr Guy’s lifetime, but it is appropriate and helpful to have many articles gathered together in one volume. His bibliography is also included. Available from *Les Editions du Cerf*, price 30 €

### *New DVD about Prouilhe*

A new 26-minute film about the life of the monastery at Prouilhe is now available from the bookshop of the monastery. Called “*Au Vent de l’Esprit*” (*As the Spirit Blows*), it consists of a series of fleeting impressions of the buildings and the landscape interleaved with encounters with individual sisters talking about monastic life and the life of prayer that is theirs. Unfortunately the soundtrack is in French only, but the visuals make it worthwhile in any language!

*Au Vent de l’Esprit*, a film by Dominique Davin, a Real Art Films production, 15 €



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