



(Sister Historians of the Order of Preachers)

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News from Fanjeaux

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The 13th century stone cross at Fanjeaux

SHOP is now an Association

The big news is that SHOP is now registered as an Association in French law - this enables us to have our own bank account, to apply for grants, to receive legacies etc. To achieve this we had to write statutes (available on request) and appoint office holders. And so the goals of SHOP, as published in the French *Journal Officiel*, Paris, February 9th 2008, are “to be a resource for documentation, communication and formation, at the service of Dominican women, both lay and religious, through the study of their histories.”

To our great delight, Sr Mary O’Driscoll op (Cabra, Ireland) accepted to be president; Sr Patricia Dougherty, a distinguished Dominican academic historian of San Rafael, California, is secretary; and Sr Barbara Beaumont (being the one most often on the spot to pay the bills!) is treasurer. So we are truly international. Being an Association, SHOP can now admit members. If you would like to join, please let us know, that way you will continue to receive details of our activities. At this stage we are not fixing a subscription rate, but all contributions, however small, are welcome, to help produce the newsletter, etc. Small amounts of cash can be sent reasonably safely in an envelope inside a card – bank charges are so prohibitive otherwise.

Collaborations

One of the most gratifying things over the last few months has been the readiness of other institutions working in the field of women’s religious history to take SHOP on board as a partner with a view to future collaboration. So far we have contacts with the Monasticon/Matrix project at the Department of History, Gender Studies and Religion at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, the Department of Theology at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium (they even mention us on their website www.relins.eu) and, not least, the McGreal Centre for the study of Dominican history at Dominican University, Chicago.

Work in progress



At the beginning of 2008, we made a start on the transcription of the manuscript life of Mère Marguerite de Jésus Senaux, the 17th century foundress of the first Dominican monastery in Paris. In the first SHOP newsletter, an appeal for volunteers was made – and indeed it bore fruit! Katherine Chaperon, sister of Sr Mary Ellen Green of Sinsinawa Dominicans, came all the way from Minneapolis for the whole of January to work long hours on this project. We are immensely grateful for her enthusiasm and dedicated work. We still need more volunteers!

This work on the manuscript is already giving us some interesting insights into the mentality of 17th century religious life. The young Marguerite de Senaux married a certain M. de Garibal, and it was only after losing nine babies before or at birth that Mme de Garibal became the Dominican nun, Mère Marguerite de Jésus. In the mindset of the time, this tragedy was interpreted as a punishment from God. Her husband became a

Carthusian monk – reading between the lines, he entered religious life with rather less enthusiasm than his wife

One of SHOP's principal aims is to establish extensive bibliographies for the study of the history of Dominican women. This is why the contact with the **Monasticon-Matrix** project at the University of Los Angeles is so important. This is an on-line bibliography of the history of religious women in the pre-modern period. What better way to publish bibliographies? SHOP has already been able to enhance the bibliography on Prouilhe on this site: <http://monasticmatrix.org> . And further contributions are on the way.

Invitations

Invitations to speak at a number of events have been received. Sr Barbara will be on the move in early summer, giving an address at the McGreal Centre, Dominican University Chicago, at a conference entitled "In Our Keeping"; from there on to Lima for a session on the beginnings of the Order for the Peruvian federation of nuns; finally in early July with a group of scholars from the US and Europe, a gathering at the magnificent Château de la Bretesche in Brittany around the themes: "Generating methods and vocabularies for the study of pre-modern religious women across religious traditions" and "New definitions of pre-modern religious women and their communities". The programme sounds challenging and fascinating

Congratulations

Most sincere congratulations are due to Sr Mary Nona McGreal, whom Fr Carlos, Master of the Dominican Order appointed as the first woman member of the Order's historical commission on 5th February 2008. Hopefully the next woman member won't have to wait until she is over 90 for such an honour!

The library

Parcels of books have been arriving almost daily and for this we are most grateful. The library is coming on in leaps and bounds – but obviously there is still a very long way to go, especially for the Spanish speaking world, where Dominican sisters have played such an important role. Please help us out with this if you possibly can. Jean Reimer invested a lot of time and effort in getting a catalogue started.

Publications

Sr Barbara is hoping to publish in booklet form the articles (revised and amended) that she wrote for IDI during the Jubilee Year, together with some illustrations and a bibliography for the study of the history of Prouilhe. If you are interested, it can be ordered by e-mail or by post, and will cost about 10 €.

Visitors



SHOP is always happy to welcome visitors, and since the last newsletter we have been honoured to receive: Fr Karl Meyer op from Hamburg, former provincial of Teutonia, who was seeking information on the thorny question of St Dominic's whereabouts between 1208 and 1211. We were able to lend him a copy of Simon Tugwell's lengthy article on the subject in *Archivum*, which filled his leisure hours during his stay at Prouilhe.

Early in the New Year, Fr Baltasar Hendriks op from the Netherlands province visited SHOP and donated a number of books.

Taking tea and talking history at SHOP – Fr Karl and Sr Barbara

On the feast of the Epiphany – the official end of the Jubilee year – we welcomed two promoters of nuns: the outgoing one, Fr Manuel Merten, one of the first supporters of our project, and his successor Fr Brian Pierce, who seems equally interested.

Sr Elizabeth Hellwig op, archivist of the Dominican Sisters of Eastern Australia, visited in February, and shared about her research on the history of the beguines and their links with the Dominicans.

Sr Marie-Bruno Imbert op of the Congregation of St Dominic at Gramond, France, also visited and has expressed an interest in spending time with us in Fanjeaux and helping out on a regular basis. She will be most welcome, as will be her degree in Spanish! She is preparing a book on Catherine of Siena for publication.

We look forward to the visit of Sr Patricia Hannan op of the New Zealand Dominican sisters, who is to spend three months with SHOP at Fanjeaux from September.

***Once more we recommend our work to your prayers and to your generosity.
Suggestions for future activities are also welcome.***

