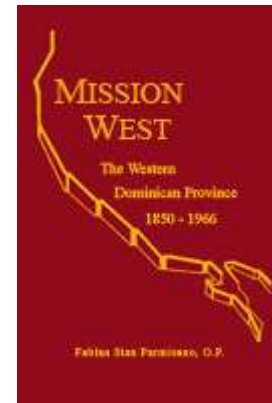


Preface

Many people have been at work in the telling of the tale that follows. Those, certainly, who from Vilarrasa forward have had a respect for the documents, personal and administrative, pertaining to the birth and continuing life of the Western Dominican Province and have seen to it that they be carefully preserved. Those also who periodically would bring order into the archives by filing and cataloging and by supplementing province documents with copies of other primary materials gleaned from libraries and archives near and far. Then, too, there have been those who have studied some of the documentation and written monographs on one or other of our founders or parishes or other ministries, and which have been gratefully and shamelessly employed in the shaping of the present



text. There are also those whose memories I have tapped in order to discover new things about the old or resolve some matters not quite clear in the archival documentation. Finally, those who searched libraries for secondary materials, did typing and indices, read my original manuscript in whole or in part, and corrected inaccuracies in history, grammar, and style, and made suggestions that have in other ways improved the narrative -- these also are responsible for what follows, though this amateur historian alone must take the blame for what failures persist in spite of others' efforts.

My sincerest thanks especially to Fr. Charles Hess, province archivist, and Sr. Veronica Lonergan of the Mission San Jose Dominicans, for all their work preparatory to and, in some instances, formative of my own. Thanks also to Fr. John Flannery, who as provincial enthusiastically accepted my offer to write the history and granted time and, through an equally enthusiastic treasurer, Anthony Cordeiro, and his finance commission, secured funding for it, and to the present provincial, Fr. Daniel Syverstad, who continued Fr. Flannery's support and encouragement. My gratitude also to the Christian Brothers of St. Mary's College for welcoming me as part of St. Mary's Dominican community where most of the writing has taken place in a quiet, scholarly, fraternal, prayerful environment. Special thanks to Frs. Finbarr Hayes and Paul Conner for their careful reading of the manuscript and detailed critiques of it. The work has profited in no small measure from their wisdom and judgment. Lisa Hamrick has been of help throughout in obtaining supplemental texts for me, reading the proofs, and writing the index, for all of which I am grateful. Sr. Beverly Bentley of the Tacoma Dominicans likewise has my gratitude for the book's apt and striking cover of her own design and execution.

I have worried over the extent to which sources for facts and statements should be acknowledged. In the beginning I had only a brief, in-house history in mind -- something of the nature of Bede Jarret's life of St. Dominic: enough chronology and facts for a sweeping picture and general appreciation for the over-all story. But, for good or for bad, I soon became caught up in detail and a multiplicity of facts, and the work of others on and around the detail and facts, so that the history grew to be much larger than originally intended. I

did not, however, want it to grow still larger by fattening it with footnotes or endnotes and bibliographical detail that might make the book even less inviting to read than it would be without them. I have decided, then, to give, for the end of each chapter, notes that would first provide a general statement concerning the sources for that chapter followed by the few additional notes required for clarification and special acknowledgment. I hope this will satisfy the academic purist while not discouraging those who would like simply to read the story as such. And I hope and pray also that it frees me from any possibility of being accused of plagiarism. At any rate, those who would check my facts and figures and gauge the extent of my borrowings should have an easy enough time doing so. Most of my sources by far are to be found, in convenient arrangement, in the Western Dominican Province archives presently located at St. Albert's Priory, Oakland, Calif.

There are self-imposed limitations to the history. First, it ends with the mid-1960s. I did not want to carry it further because thereafter the people and events are too near the present to permit proper perspective; and to write of the living, or the dead friends of the living, is risky business. As it is, I fear I have brought the history too close to those who are still making it. But the early and mid-sixties are inviting times for closure. Vatican II began in 1962 and ended in 1965; preparations for the General Chapter of River Forest which so radically altered the life of the Order, and so the province, were underway in 1966 and were concluded in 1968 with the Chapter itself; the Berkeley Priory, certainly a new and transformative phenomenon in the province, was inaugurated in 1966; the province's first foreign mission began in 1963; and the Menninger Institute's analysis of the failing morale of the province with its positive recommendations to look back with pride to the past and forward with hope for the future took place in 1965-66.

Another restriction I have imposed on myself is in the matter of editorializing. I have tried for as objective a presentation as I could manage. This is one reason for the extensive citations, the long quotations, in the text. I might easily have summarized a given letter or document, and sometimes I have, but by and large I have let people speak for themselves, without my adding some wise or witty comment of my own. People as well as events are the stuff of history and what people say, and the way they say it, is often as revealing of the history involved as are their actions. Some subjectivity, some editorializing and comment have intruded, however, in spite of my good intentions, if only in my selection of the people and events that appear herein. Other people and other events might have been chosen which might add up to somewhat of a different tale. I trust, however, that what is narrated here is substantially and in fact history and not just story.

Still another limitation, which in addition to being self-imposed seems to be in the nature of the beast, is the open-endedness of the history. So much of what is said is incomplete. Events that the reader would like to see developed, questions inherent in a discussion which he or she would want resolved are left hanging; persons mentioned are seldom adequately described and only a thimble full of all that was being done at a given time is treated. But such is the limitation of every history book: it can only be a series of snap shots of the current of life racing by. One can only hope that the snaps are such that they might at least suggest the rest. But loose ends are not necessarily to be lamented. They may be followed out and tied by some future historian. So much of our history as recorded here

cries out for other histories, and for better historians. This, I believe, may constitute a blessing rather than a curse.

Which brings me to my last introductory comment, an important one. The best (and worst?) of our history is not recorded here. What is recorded are some of the visible, tangible events of which there is documentation, and the people who visibly featured in them. What is left unsaid are the forever hidden corners of the province, all the thought and silent activity that has sustained the western Dominican venture and stands behind what we tend to think are its moments of importance, the "historical." Such especially is all the suffering endured by many of the brethren through the years -- the cross that forever saves, nourishes, redeems. I think of all the people I would like to have mentioned in this study, particularly some of the lay/cooperator brothers and the sisters at St. Albert's and elsewhere who prayed and exemplified and sometimes counseled the rest of us through and beyond initial formation. I think particularly of the likes of Fr. Stanislaus E. Olsen, O.P. I first met him when my novitiate class was visiting Mount LaSalle back in 1947. He was chaplain to the Christian Brothers at the time. I was impressed by him because he had open on his desk a volume of Horace in the original Latin. I asked him if he could read classical Latin, and he answered, "Of course." Then I asked him if he had a favorite poet and he said: "I don't think so. I just like a good poem whoever wrote it." Later on I heard him give a powerful extempore speech at a gathering of the brethren at St. Albert's, and was again impressed. And in writing this history I uncovered some of the fine things he did in his ministry. But my most vivid and valued memory is of a very old Fr. Olsen, now retired at the novitiate in Ross. His diabetes had deprived him of his two legs. He was a mere stump of a man dependent on others for just about everything. Still, he was as gracious, at least to me, as ever, and as feisty and filled with life and love. He appears in this history for some of the things he said and did, but what he suffered and what he thought and prayed in his suffering is "historically" uninteresting. Yet this is what has had most value for the province and enabled it to have and continue to have a history. It's as Robert Browning wrote in a verse that ought to stand at the beginning of every history book, as it does of this one.

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Note on citations

In quoting I have tried to be faithful to the original text in its phraseology as well as meaning. I have, however, corrected spelling and some of the more obtrusive grammatical mistakes -- this in order to avoid the repetitive use of the clumsy and boring notation [sic]. Latin texts, which abound, I have translated because not many today, even among the brethren, understand even the simplest Latin. Those who do understand Latin and would like to see the originals will find them ready to hand in the archives in the files broadly referred to in the endnotes. The same goes for texts in Spanish. The originals are in

Vilarrasa's files or in those of Baja. Translations of the Spanish texts which I have used are those appearing in the books or periodicals referred to in the notes unless otherwise indicated. Translations of the few French and Italian texts cited are, for the most part, my own.

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