



Remembering Venerable Father Domino Lázaro Castro, SM - Educator, Priest, Mentor, Formator

By Bro. David Betz

A part of my responsibilities as the Pacific Area Spiritual Advisor for the Marianist Affiliates, I am involved with the initial formation of candidates for Marianist Affiliation. Reading Marianist Documents from our Marianist History is part of this process and one of these documents is Blessed Chaminade's Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839. He wrote this letter on August 24, 1839 to Georges Caillet, Jean Baptist Fontaine and Jules Cesar Perrodin who were charged to lead the annual retreats for the members of the Society of Mary and the Institute of Mary. Blessed Chaminade wrote it after he received a decree of praise for the Society and the Institute from Pope Gregory XVI in July 1839. Chaminade's primary purpose for this letter was to let the retreat directors know how important it was to acknowledge the great work we do under the auspices of Mary and that our vow of stability calls us persevere in this work especially when we are called to do, "Whatever He Tells You." Near the end of the letter he particularly stresses this great call in light of the special vow of teaching. (Note: The vow of teaching was dropped by the time when the SM Constitutions were approved in July of 1891)

"Consequently, under the general title of teaching the Christian way of life, we accept all possible means of preserving or curing our neighbor from the infection of evil, and, in this spirit, make it the object of a special vow.

Thus, even though the vow of teaching that we make is something we have in common with other orders, this vow is far more comprehensive in the Society and the Institute than anywhere else. Its object is to carry out Mary's words, "Do whatever He tells you," and, therefore, extends to all classes, both sexes, and all ages, but to the young and poor especially, so that it really sets us apart for all other societies that make the same vow.

This, then, my dear son, is the spirit and scope of our vow of teaching. This is the distinctive characteristic that bestows upon the children of the Society and the Institute a family likeness uniquely theirs among other religious orders.

Ours is a great work, a magnificent work. If it is universal, it is because we are missionaries of Mary, who has said to us, “Do whatever He tells us.” Yes, all of us are missionaries; each one of us has received from the Blessed Virgin a commission to work at the salvation of our brothers and sisters in the world.” (See Chaminade’s Letter to the Retreat Masters of 1839)

And why did I start with this account? Well February is the month that we remember Venerable Father Domingo Lázaro Castro, SM. Fr. Lázaro died on February 22, 1935 at the age of 58 after a distinguished career as a Marianist educator in Spain. He was born May 10, 1877 in Burgos, Spain, entered the postulate in 1889 in Vitoria, Spain, made first vows in 1893 in Moissac, France and then returned to Spain in 1895 to start his first teaching assignment. Granted he may not have professed the vow of teaching but he was a great witness to the education apostolate and what Blessed Chaminade wrote about the vow of teaching in his letter of 1939 throughout his life. Because of his life as educator, priest, mentor and formator, Fr. Lázaro has been recognized for his holiness and was declared Venerable which is the second step of the process toward canonization in the Church.

I now invite you to read the biography of Venerable Father Domingo Lázaro Castro, SM which is published on www.marianist.org, the international website for the Marianists, https://marianist.org/elementor-761/society-of-mary-sm/sm-about/sm_marianist_causes/sm-causes-domingo-lazaro/.