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## The Dominican Sisters of Wanganui, New Zealand

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### NEWS FROM NEW ZEALAND

#### Mushrooms

A wise old nun once said “Dominicans spring up like mushrooms.” Well, the proverb appears to be correct in more ways than one. Not only do I have the pleasure of stepping on lots of little puffy mushrooms as I cross our front lawn to go

to Church, but metaphorically speaking our small congregation in Wanganui is springing up so fast we are left marvelling at the goodness of God. We are expecting two more postulants at the end of this month, four Sisters are sleeping outside in hired cabins and God is his goodness has sent us a nurse, a pharmacist, a lawyer

and will perhaps send us a medical doctor soon.

#### Out of India

There have been many events since last December which are worthy of a mention. I will begin with the arrival of Sr. Maria Swarupa from India. From the moment she stepped off the plane we have marvelled at her adjustment to western culture. The use of the knife and fork in the refectory and non-spicy food, the singing of the Divine Office, four seasons in one day and adapting to the English language: she has tackled all with determination. Her last little hurdle is to pass an English exam so she can go on to full registration here in New Zealand. We ask for your fervent prayers for this intention.



*Fr. Albert preaching a vocations discernment retreat for the girls.*

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### School Year End

The 2010 academic year at St. Anthony's drew to a close with Culture Week. This is a time when Cambridge and internal exams are over and the Sisters prepare enjoyable educational activities for the girls such as cooking, orienteering, music and art appreciation, sports and visiting the museum and local nature spots.

### Holidays

With School over for another year it was then time to prepare for a busy but contemplative holiday. This included a vocations discernment retreat for 17 young ladies to which we had the pleasure of welcoming Fr Albert O.P, our retreat master, who also preached a rosary mission to the Parish.

### Christmas

Then there was preparation for the Christmas liturgy and the traditional decorating of our refectory. We are only allowed to speak in the refectory three times a year, one of those days being Christmas, so as you can expect, we make the most of it!

Our own retreat was scheduled for 30th Dec -6th Jan and we were honoured by the presence of the distinguished and



*Intense concentration during the school music competition.*



*"My soul is alive with the sound of music..."*



*School Holidays!*



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*Girls scheming together?....*



*....Is there trouble cooking?.....*



*....Or is it a contraband chocolate cake plant operating under the sisters' very noses?.....*



*....Not a bit of it. "Our pupils are very obedient –we are so blessed!" says Sr. Madeleine.*

paternal Fr. Nély of the SSPX. The climax of the retreat of course was the beautiful Profession ceremony on the Feast of the Epiphany and the inspirational sermon on the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience which were closely linked to the gifts of the Three Kings. Our young Sisters Mary Margaret and Marie Dominique exchanged their white novice veils for the more sombre black to the melody of *Sponsa Christi* and the joyous sobs of an aforementioned Sister and the whole congregation along with her. Our new novice, Sister Mary Anthony, was also radiant in her holy habit, a symbol of purity and penance. The joy of choosing "the better part" soon became visible to all after the ceremony and has even resulted in a few little jokes played on the sisters.

### New School Year

School began in February and before we had a chance to take a breath we realised that it was the end of the first term. The students had the grace of being able to participate in a day of recollection during Holy Week (for the more sanguine, silence for a whole day was real penance) and the Children of Mary did a splendid job polishing all the brass and preparing the beautiful Altar of Repose for the Good Lord.

### Easter

Our holidays are now resounding with the Alleluias of Eastertide and as Sr. Lucia cleverly pointed out, TEN First Class Feast days in a row, one of which includes celebrating Mother's 34th Profession Day. Although holidays are a chance for the sisters to spend more time in contemplation, two will soon be off on a 5-week compulsory teaching practicum. They are

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studying towards a Diploma in Teaching at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute. In NZ, all teachers must obtain or study towards a teaching qualification.

### Your Vocation

In the meantime we continue to work and pray for Holy Mother Church and eagerly await and pray for a great harvest of vocations to work in the Lord's vineyard. My advice to young woman (and men) wondering what to do with their lives: Give your life to God! Give love for love and your reward will be very great in Heaven and your joy on earth a foretaste of what is to come, a joy which can only be experienced by those who are willing to sacrifice it. Come and taste and see how sweet the Lord is!

Mother Prioress

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*Sisters Mary Margaret and Marie Dominique exchange their white novice veils for black veils during the Profession ceremony.*



*Sr. Maria Swarupa from Kerala, India.*



*The newly professed sisters prepare to cut their cake while a young girl looks wistfully on. "Could that be me one day?" her eyes seem to say.*