

Dominic de Guzman



Feast Day: August 8

Canonized: July 13, 1234

Since the beginning of the Church, some people have preached false beliefs. The Church calls these people *heretics*. It calls their beliefs *heresies*.

One heresy spread through southern France in the 13th century. The Albigensian heresy said that all matter is evil. The human body is matter. Therefore, they taught that the human body is evil. And if the human body is evil, then Jesus was not human.

One man stepped forward to preach the good news that Jesus was both human and divine. That man was Dominic.

Dominic was born in 1170 in Castile, Spain. It was said that at his baptism, the priest saw a star-shaped light on the baby's forehead. You will sometimes see a star in artwork of St. Dominic, and he is the patron saint of astronomers.

When he grew up, he studied and became a priest. He used what he learned to fight against the Albigensian heresy. Dominic heard this heresy when he traveled to France. He wanted the Albigensians to know that their bodies were good and holy. He wanted them to remember that they were created in God's image. So Dominic began to preach this good news.

Soon a group of men gathered around him. They, too, wanted to pray and study and then to preach. Dominic formed them into the Order of Preachers. This group of men became known as Dominicans. For almost 200 years the Dominicans preached against the Albigensian heresy. Finally, it died out. Why? Because the Dominicans helped people accept the goodness of God's creation.

Dominic died in 1221, at the age of 51, and was canonized in 1234. His Dominicans still continue to pray and study and preach today.