

Reflection Thursday Week 21 Blessed Dominic Barberi 2021

Blessed Dominic Barberi (1792 - 1849), born near Viterbo, Italy, in 1792, joined the Passionist Order believing God was calling him to be a missionary in England. Ordained priest in 1818, he worked in Italy and Belgium before coming to England in 1841. His first foundation was Aston Hall, Staffordshire; he established four Passionist houses, and received many Anglicans into full communion, the most famous being John Henry Newman at Littlemore, Oxford, on 9th October 1845. Blessed Dominic was noted for the personal warmth of his approach to non-Catholics and for his zeal in preaching; he drew crowds in spite of his strong Italian accent. He favoured a higher profile for the small Catholic body in England; he always wore his Passionist habit and, in 1844, organised a Corpus Christi procession through the streets, which is believed to be the first public procession of its kind in England in modern times. Blessed Dominic died in Reading on 27th August 1849 and was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1963.

Not knowing the hour when the Master comes is a blessing because all our focus and energy would be spent in preparing for the Master's arrival; pastoral care would take a back seat. Blessed Dominic was not worried about the Master's arrival, he gave his life to evangelising and bringing people to God. If the Master turned up unexpectedly, he would have invited him to help! With the same sensitive love and care for others as Jesus, let us live our lives loving God and our neighbour to the best of our ability. And, when the Lord comes, he will join in and help.

*I dreamed death came the other night
and Heaven's gate swung wide.
With kindly grace an angel ushered me inside.
And there to my astonishment,
stood folk I'd known on earth.
Some I judged and labelled as unfit—
or, of little worth.
Indignant words rose to my lips,
but never were set free.
For every face showed some surprise
no one expected me!*

What did the atheist say when he got to heaven?

I can't believe it!

Why are the gates of Heaven guarded?

Because everybody's dying to get in.