

## St. Dominic - August 6<sup>th</sup>



St Dominic was born in Castille in 1170. Founded Dominican order of Friars (officially the Order of Preachers, unofficially the Blackfriars) in Toulouse in 1215. The Dominicans are associated with teaching and preaching, and a number of important scholars have been members of the order.

Most famous and influential is St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). For me, the most important feature of his work is not any specific point of detail, but rather his method, especially the way in which he balances faith and reason. Some things, Aquinas held, can be known by reason, but many of the most important truths of Christianity such as the Trinity, the Incarnation and the creation of the world in time, can only be known through the response of faith to revelation. Here too, however, reason has a part to play: things known by faith must be shown as not contrary to reason. Thus, as far as reason goes, the world may always have existed or it may have come into being at a particular moment: it is through revelation that we know the latter to be true. His method in the *Summa Theologica* was always: first pose a question; next list the objections to his preferred answer, as stated by other writers, contemporary and ancient; third give his answer, backed by quotations from scripture or the Church fathers; fourth to give positive arguments for his view, and finally provide a detailed rebuttal of each of the objections listed in the second step. In this way he is able to ground his positions firmly in the teachings of scripture and the Church, while showing that it is also consistent with reason.



Dominic moved to Bologna in 1218 and died there in 1221. In the Basilica which bears his name we can find his tomb, which is one of the most beautiful of all tombs. Originally designed in 1267 by Nicola Pisano, a number of additions were made in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

These include two small angels, carved by the 19-year-old Michaelangelo, which are among his earliest known sculptures.