

Bezel A2

SAINT FRANCIS AND SAINT DOMINIC

INSCRIPTION:

(...) THUNDERING AND READY TO INCINERATE THE ENTIRE WORLD WITH FIRE DUE TO THE SINS OF MAN. THE GREAT MOTHER OF PIETY, MARY, ALWAYS MITIGATED HIS RIGHTEOUS WRATH BY PRESENTING THE GREAT MERITS OF THESE TWO GREAT CAPTAINS, FRANCIS AND DOMINIC.

IT IS TOLD THAT...

Saint Dominic was in Rome for the Lateran Council called by Pope Innocent III in 1215. During a night of prayer, Saint Dominic dreamed that Jesus, indignant at the sins of man and ready, like thundering Jupiter, to launch his darts to incinerate the world, was stopped by Mary. She pointed out two men to him: Dominic recognized himself in one of them, but the other was a stranger. The next morning, he met Saint Francis and had no doubts: he was the man in the dream. Dominic approached and embraced him.

The two saints spoke for a long time. Saint Dominic admired Francis' spirituality enough to ask him to unite their two Orders. However, Francis declined, realizing that despite their underlying affinities, the life choices of the two Orders were too different.

Dante writes: "Providence, which governs the world (...) ordained two princes in its favor, who here and there were to guide it. One was completely seraphic in ardor; the other through wisdom on earth was a splendor of cherubic light."

It is unknown what Fra Giuseppe had painted between the two saints, as a window opened after the frescoes were created makes the vision incomplete. However, the "here and there" position is emphasized. The four figures are arranged as if at the four points of an 'X': two below, on the earth, and two above.

In the position of their arms and hands, Dominic imitates Christ: they both have their arms spread wide; Francis imitates Mary: both have their right hand on their chest and the other with the palm open upwards. The relationship of Francis and the Franciscans with Mary was privileged, marked by constant fidelity and seraphic ardor: they venerated her, loved her, defended her, and consecrated the Order to her. Franciscan spirituality, on the other hand, is linked to Nature, to the Earth, to the Mother. The Franciscan patrons often asked painters to depict the baby Jesus even in the arms of the Immaculate Conception.

Saint Dominic, says Dante, had the wisdom of a cherub. "A soul no less passionate (than Francis) but all realism and energy... he felt nothing but an ardent love for the Church and a fervent humility. He had only one passion: to convert men from beliefs that he considered sacrilegious." Preaching and teaching were the privileged tasks of the Dominicans. Their communities were centers of study of theology and sacred history. To a large extent, the Church entrusted them with the responsibility of the Inquisition. Dominic's bond with the male figure of the thundering Christ, ready to punish, is certainly understandable.

Dante Alighieri, Divine Comedy, Canto XI. "Providence, which governs the world, wanted two princes to act as its guide from one side to the other: one was full of mystical ardor of charity like a Seraph, the other was resplendent in wisdom like a Cherub."



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