



Sister Mary Dominic Chacon
August 5, 1925 ~ February 25, 2022

Sister Mary Dominic Chacon was born in Los Angeles. She was given the name Dora Marie at baptism. Her parents were Domingo Chacon, who was born in Mexico City, and Tomasine Munoz who was born in El Paso, Texas. There were 13 children in her family: Michael, Abel, Salvador, Raymond, Dora, Margaret, Ernestine, Joseph, Lucy, Mario, Arthur, Flavia and Alex. At least eight of her brothers and sisters preceeded Sister in death.

Sister entered religious life on February 11, 1942, received the habit on August 15, 1942, was given the religious name Sister Mary Dominic, in honor of her father, Domingo. Her first vows were on August 15, 1944, she pronounced final vows on August 15, 1948. Her desire was to serve people in need and to serve the Community as a cook, especially as a baker. She celebrated her 75th Jubilee as a Sister of St. Joseph in 2017. In 2022 she was to celebrate her 80th Jubilee, as the oldest Jubilarian for this year, when God called her home a few weeks before her Jubilee celebration.

For thirty years, Sister was cooking in hospital, parish, and high school convents of the Los Angeles Province. During these years, Sister showed an awareness of needy persons. She enjoyed sharing stories about early misadventures such as giving away chickens without permission. Throughout her life Sister had great devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, often praying the rosary for many intentions and needs.

A turning point in Sister's ministry to the poor came in 1975. She accompanied another Sister who was working at Holy Cross Parish in Los Angeles. Sister said, "We visited a sick, alcoholic man who lived in a room so dirty I couldn't find a place to sit. At first I was repulsed. Then suddenly he reached out, took my hand and whispered, "Thank you for coming. You are Jesus to me." After this incident Sister ministered as a parish sister for several years.

Sister's life can be an illuminating example of service. Working with the poor in a Pacoima parish in 1977, Sister saw the need for a Center where people could receive assistance for their varied needs. Soon the place obtained by the parish proved too small for the numbers

coming for help. With her inbred faith in God and people, Sister rented a larger place for Home

Visitation Center, set up a Board of Directors, hired several people and found volunteers. Through the Center, individuals and families received supportive services: advocacy, counseling, job referrals, assistance with immigration matters and basic needs for housing and food. Eventually the Home Center was named the Visitation Center of Pacoima. It has aided in the healing process of reconciling Church, police and public officials with the local community. The Pantry served over 2,150 families and 10,000 individuals.

During her 14 years as the moving force at Home Visitation Center, Sister became increasingly aware of the plight of women both in the workplace and in abusive situations in the home. The result was the founding of St. Jude's Residence for Women in the Santa Clarita Valley where Sister welcomed, housed, fed and offered spiritual guidance to women who had been sexually, physically and emotionally abused. About the same time a new and tragic social situation became prevalent, pregnant teenage girls with no place to stay. Soon the Residence became a haven for young mothers and their children. Each time Sister encountered a new counseling problem, she found a place to go to get assistance or information on the issue. The impact of Sister's work could be summed up in the words of an editorial: "Through her dedication and faith she literally turned lives around. And in the process, she sparked in many of us the urge to help as well."

Through the years of service, which included the draining need to "work the system" to support her dreams, Sister had suffered from ill health. Finally in 1993 her condition forced her to resign from her beloved St. Jude's and retire to Carondelet Center. She was a member of the Holy Family Community for over 26 years. An indication of the depth and maturity of her faith in accepting that difficult decision is contained in a letter to the Board of St. Jude's: "I do not question the Lord's design." In 2021 Sister was among the first sisters to transition from Carondelet Center to St. John of God Center for more extensive care. At that time she said, "It was not easy to accept, but I knew it was God's will for me. And now that I am here, it is very nice."

Sister received numerous awards as Executive Director of Home Visitation Center. Among the awards and possibly her favorite, was the County of Los Angeles Gift of Love Award for Service to the Home Visitation Center in 1987. The California State Assembly presented to Sister an award in recognition of Ten Years of Outstanding Community Service in 1990. Sister was given the County of Los Angeles Award of Merit, and the Pacoima Citizen Award, and the Community Service Award from Los Angeles County Federation, City of Los Angeles Certificate of Tribute for Exemplary Efforts and Accomplishment.

All of Sister's days were not award days. There were times of frustration, disappointment and discouragement. This gave her all the more reason to commend her work to the Lord. Sister has been described by various people as "active and involved," "having enthusiasm and organizational skills," "working diligently toward the reduction of juvenile delinquency," "devoted to the needs of the poor and underprivileged by providing shelter for the

homeless, food for the hungry, and help to the helpless," "giving outstanding humanitarian service."

Her life has offered us an example of loving service to the "dear neighbor" whatever the need, not counting the cost, living with hope and trust. Thank you, Sister Mary Dominic for your years of faithful service.

~ Sister Frances Baker