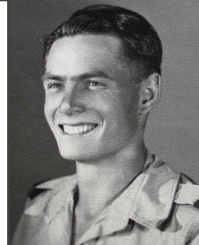


MARIA 'DOMITILLA' HYAMS NEE ROTA
(7 MAY 1918 – 18 JANUARY 2011)

DANIEL 'DANNY' GEORGE HYAMS
(1 JUNE 1921 – 28 DECEMBER 2012)

hyamscause.org.za



Welcome to the second edition of our quarterly newsletter. You won't believe that so many people want to make heaven but are not ready to die to self and be born again. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again." (John 3:3). A spiritual new birth is mandatory if one wants to go to heaven. Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3).

Heaven is a state of perfect peace, love and happiness. This fact was very clear to our Servants of God hence all through their spiritual journey on earth their utmost desire was to be surrounded by God's infinite love and grace.

In this edition as well as subsequent ones we will be feeding you with short biographies of the servants of God.

A LIFE OF SIMPLICITY

Maria 'Domitilla' Hyams née Rota, was born on 7 May 1918 in the house of her grandfather Carlo Pietro Rota in the village of Albenza, in the province of Bergamo in the Italian Lombardy region. Domitilla was the second youngest of four siblings from the union of her father, Carlo Giuseppe Pietro Rota, known as Carli (b.13 August 1886; d.15 April 1920) and her mother, Elvira Mazzoleni (b. 11 July 1893; d. 22 April 1965). Domitilla also had three half-brothers and sisters. Her father was a widower when he married Elvira Mazzoleni having lost his first wife Ester Rosa Rota to typhoid fever in 1914.

The following day on 8 May 1918 after her birth, Domitilla was baptised by the parish priest Don Luigi Foiadelli in her parish church of San Rocco, Albenza. A few years later, 8 September 1924, she was confirmed by Bishop Luigi Maria Marelli, Bishop of Bergamo, again in her home parish. Domitilla was



just under two years of age when her father passed away. Life was not easy for Elvira Rota, née Mazzoleni on the demise of her husband. She did not remarry and apart from serving the dual role of mother and father to her family in times of severe hardships, she and the household also accommodated Domitilla's cousin Renza (who had lost her mother in childbirth), Pio (uncle), Teresa (aunt) and their seven children. With faith, fortitude and courage and as the matriarch of the family, Elvira Rota nevertheless ensured the deep faith, spiritual and family values in her offspring. Owing to financial means and in a rural environment lacking in facilities, life no doubt was challenging for Domitilla's family as a result she discontinued her formal education at the age of 10 years. Thereafter she helped the household to survive by looking after the few animals in the meadows, collecting wood and chestnuts in the forest and attending to work in the fields but above all, according to her cousin Egidio 'Gigi' Rota, she lived in deep adoration of her mother. Despite her rudimentary education, her passion for the intellect however remained strongly infused as witnessed by her self-studies in her latter twenties in the topics of

music, the Italian language, mathematics and above all a keen desire for her own spiritual development. This much we know from her handwritten journals.

Domitilla's family, like most other village families had close ties to the parish church with members consecrated to the religious life. As a young girl, Domitilla had dreams and aspirations of becoming a missionary in Africa.

Domitilla was one of those rare, humble and caring individuals who led a truly spiritually oriented driven life and as a result also created purpose and hope for countless others. Her life was guided by the life and philosophy of St. Therese of Lisieux, she lived a simple life of prayer and devotion with love and humility. Her unfaltering faith and constant prayers, which defined her very being as she laboured selflessly in the face of numerous challenges to bring purpose and especially love into the lives of the most marginalised and neglected, remain an inspiration to many today. She lived each day with unshakable faith and trust in God's love. There is no doubt, Domitilla left behind a remarkable legacy of compassion and love for children and adults with intellectual disabilities whom she always called her 'angels'.

Today, her spirit continues to live on in the hearts and minds of all associated with the LITTLE EDEN society and beyond.

A LIFE OF HEROIC VIRTUE

Daniel 'Danny' George Hyams was not a prolific writer and hence left very little original material from his pen. Being a chartered accountant by profession, one who would always remain in the background. He was a reserved, deeply religious and chivalrous human being whose concern was always for the 'other'. His documentation was mostly limited to his professional work and the secretarial and legal

documentation associated with LITTLE EDEN Society which he co-founded with his wife Maria 'Domitilla' Hyams née Rota.

Daniel was born on June 1, 1921, in Jeppestown, Johannesburg. He was the second child of Louis George Hyams and his wife, Agnes Mary Joseph Le Breton. Although his father was Jewish himself, he insisted that his two sons have a Catholic upbringing, in accordance with their mother's religious background. Accordingly, on March 10, 1922, Daniel George Hyams (or simply Danny, as he came to be known throughout his life), was baptised by Fr Francis in St Anne's Catholic Church in the Eastern Johannesburg suburb of Belgravia, with his maternal Grandfather Louis Bretton and Aunt Lucy Bretton as sponsors. From 1926 to 1930, Danny and his brother Louis attended the convent school in Potgietersrust (today Mokopane). They then attended the Convent school [Dominican St Pius' convent] in Pietersburg (Polokwane) from 1930 to 1931 while living with Uncle Sep and Aunt Lucy in a room in the laundry of the College of the Little Flower. Both boys then started at the College of the Little Flower where Danny matriculated in 1937 at the age of 16 years and with a lifetime dedication and commitment to his Catholic faith. Years later, Danny would attest that his great devotion to St. Therese began with the Brothers of Charity College of the little Flower. Since those early formative years Danny always retained a great devotion to this Little Flower, St. Therese.

In March 1938 Danny started studying for his degree towards becoming a Chartered Accountant at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Effectively combining it with work.

He joined the Catholic Men's Society (C.M.S.) of the Braamfontein Parish (where he was a parishioner in 1938) and at the age of 17 years became the treasurer. With the outbreak of WWII and just having turned 18 years age, Danny volunteered to join the war effort in North Africa. With the fall of Tobruk, Danny was taken as a POW (Prisoner of War)

and transported to Italy finally arriving at the Grumellina concentration camp on the outskirts of Bergamo. When opportunity presented itself, Danny escaped and hid for 20 months in the mountains above the village of Albenza being looked after by the villagers and regularly attending Holy Mass at Albenza's San Rocco church. In this wartime period he met his future wife, Maria 'Domitilla' Rota whom he married upon his return to Italy after qualifying as a chartered accountant. The couple then emigrated to South Africa in late 1947.

Upon his retirement from the corporate world, Danny was invited by the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) to join its finance department – a position he filled for the next 16 years until his 'second' retirement in 2002 at the age of 81 years. In appreciation and recognition of his loyal service to SACBC, in 2003, Danny was acknowledged with the Papal Benemerenti award. His life, we believe, was lived in heroic virtue.

UPDATES

1. We now have enough printed materials, books and prayer cards available at the Chancery and Little Eden.
2. Beautiful T-Shirts which were won by the many from various deaneries at the last pilgrimage are also still available.
3. A book on reflections of Domitilla is out, titled "Reflection of a Servant of God. Also available at the Chancery and Little Eden.
4. A theme hymn for Domitilla and Danny Hyams Cause is now available in audio as well. It was performed publicly for the first time at the Commemoration pilgrim mass by St. Philip Neri, Moletsane.
5. The Deanery awareness Masses are on-going. The Deans are responsible for planning and coordinating the awareness Masses at their given dates. Usually the Archbishop is the presider. All priests and their parishes are highly encouraged to attend.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER THROUGH DOMITILLA AND DANNY HYAMS

(for private devotion)

Lord God and Father,

inspired by the example of the power of prayer in the lives of Domitilla and Danny in which they lived the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, and, through the example of their lives of Christian service to our neighbours with intellectual disabilities, confidently and humbly we beg through their intercession

(state the request)

if this be your sovereign will, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,

who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever

AMEN.

(In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgement of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.)

Those who obtain favours through the intercession of Domitilla and Danny Hyams are requested to notify the Postulator of their Cause at: postulator@domitilladannycause.org

Or Postulator, PO Box 121, Edenvale 1610, South Africa

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE PEOPLE

1. You are encouraged to support the Cause champions of your parish in promoting their Cause.
2. Join in saying the intercessory prayer asking for the success of their Cause.
3. Your financial support will be of great help.