

The Legend of the Orange Tree

Tradition has it that St Dominic brought an orange tree from Spain. Just prior to his death in 1221, St Dominic planted the tree in the grounds of the Santa Sabina Monastery in Rome.

We know that the tree held special meaning to the early Dominicans as in 1379, St Catherine of Siena sent five candied oranges from St Dominic's tree to Pope Urban VI.

As a tangible symbol of St Dominic's presence the orange tree has been tenderly nurtured over the 800 years following St Dominic's death. It has been re-propagated many times.

In 1895, a former student of Santa Sabina College, Strathfield, travelled to Rome and returned to Australia with a cutting from St Dominic's tree. Over a hundred years later, this orange tree continues to flourish and provides a somewhat bitter fruit which is excellent for marmalade.

Lignum habet spem

*For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down,
that it will sprout again, and that the tender
branch thereof will not cease.*

May St. Dominic's orange tree inspire us to ensure that the branches of our Dominican family remain rich with cultural diversity, strong in shared vision and determined to "*dare to see what is before our eyes*".

