

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Spiritual Powerhouse

(THIRD ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC)

By

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THIRD ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC

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Feast of the Compassion of Our Lady, 1946

To
OUR LADY
THE MOST FAITHFUL PATRONESS
OF
THE DOMINICAN ORDER

UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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CHAPTER I

THE ORIGIN OF THE THIRD ORDER

TO understand the Third Order of St. Dominic it is necessary to comprehend the age that produced it. The last half of the twelfth and the early part of the thirteenth century was a time of great spiritual dissatisfaction among the laity. They resented, quite rightly, the ignorance and corruption of the clergy as well as the almost complete lack of preaching that marked the age. The abuses were widespread and obvious. Great numbers of the faithful were looking for leadership and inspiration and they looked, for the most part, in vain. "Souls were hungering for the word of God," says Father Mandonnet, O.P., "but there was no one to speak it to them."¹ Saint Bernard's cry pierced the whole of Europe, "Give me at least a few learned and exemplary shepherds." The cry echoed for the most part in vain, just as the solemn warnings of Council after Council had fallen on deaf ears. Money, luxury, simony and immorality had too great a hold on the shepherds. Their ignorance prevented them from preaching, but their

¹ *St. Dominic and His Work* by Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., p. 124 (St. Louis, B. Herder Book Co., 1944.)

own mode of life was an even greater obstacle. Their first sermon would have been their own public condemnation.

It was no wonder then that laymen and laywomen took upon themselves the task of preaching. The Waldenses, for example, started within the bosom of the Church preaching the word of God only to end in heresy. The *Humiliati* (the humbled ones), as we shall see later, started outside the Church and ended inside. Great numbers, too, embraced the teaching of the Cathari, especially those people in southern France and northern Italy who were to stir the apostolic zeal of Dominic de Guzman.

At any rate, laymen and laywomen in great numbers were trying to remedy the ills of the Church and to restore Christ to society and society to Christ. Some were orthodox; others decidedly otherwise. Be this as it may, many groups were thus formed and Christendom was soon honeycombed with little religious associations sworn to the observance of the counsels and determined to reform the Church with (and frequently without) hierarchical approval. This tendency to organize was perfectly in accord with the spirit of the Middle Ages. It might even be dubbed one of the age's chief characteristics. This trend toward collectivism was true not only in matters religious but in political, economic, social and secular life as well. If the problem of the day was an economic one, they formed a guild or an association of craftsmen. If it was an educational problem they established a university. In this case it was a religious problem so they naturally formed a religious association figuratively rolled up their sleeves and said, "Let's get to work on the problem *together*."

THE HUMILIATI

One such group, as we have mentioned above, was the so-called *Humiliati*, a lay movement that originated in northern Italy between 1160-1170. They seem to have originated outside and beyond ecclesiastical authority and for a time incurred excommunication under Lucius III. However, the great Pontiff of the Middle Ages, Innocent III, incorporated the *Humiliati* into the organism of the teaching Church and in 1201 they were reconciled. The Pope called them a *Tertius Ordo*, a Third Order. Later from this Third Order the Pope developed a First Order, priests who lived the canonical form of life, and a Second Order composed of men and women who took upon themselves the monastic form of life. As the historian, the Rev. J. B. Walker, O.P., notes: ". . . the significance and importance of all this is not that the third was first and the first last, but that the religious institutes which so profoundly affected the life and development of the Ages of Faith owe their origin to a lay movement—an earnest, widespread, organized effort on the part of laymen to attain to the fulness of Christian life. . . ." ²

Saint Dominic, his Order and his ideal were answers to the problems of the time. It was no mere whim that inspired Dominic de Guzman to insist on an apostolate of doctrine, heralded by the motto *Veritas*, Truth, and joined to the ideal of reviving preaching in the Church of Christ. These were the obvious needs of the day. As a child of his age, St. Dominic was also an organizer and a great organizer. As Father Mandonnet once remarked to His Excel-

² *The Dominican Bulletin*, J. B. Walker, O.P. (December 1942.)

lency Archbishop John T. McNicholas, O.P., ". . . . I consider St. Dominic as a religious founder the greatest organizer that has ever trod this earth after the Lord Jesus Christ."³ An examination of St. Dominic's life reveals an amazing traveller and a prodigious worker and organizer. Wherever he went groups sprang up, friars, nuns, layfolk. It seems that he would touch them with the finger of his zeal, confide them to the Providence of God, appoint a leader, necessarily unexperienced, and be off seeking new fields to conquer, new groups to organize. Strangely enough, his sons and daughters, inspired by their only too brief contact with their father and founder, flourished and produced fruits of sanctity and apostolicity worthy of their leader. The contact was brief but the flame it enkindled burned long and brilliantly.

ORIGIN OF THE THIRD ORDER

The history of the Third Order has not yet been written. In fact it is rather shrouded in uncertainty. As to just when Saint Dominic founded it or how it originated little is known. There are different theories as to the exact origin of the Dominican Third Order. The one that has been most widely accepted is the one based on Blessed Raymond of Capua's *Life of Saint Catherine of Siena* (1347-1480). This book was written approximately a century and a half after the foundation of the Third Order but it is the earliest account we have. It is also the work of a careful and painstaking chronicler.

According to Blessed Raymond, the Third Order had its

³ *St. Dominic and His Work* by Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., Introduction.

origin in a group of laymen established by St. Dominic's friend, Bishop Foulques, and called "The Militia of Jesus Christ." Saint Dominic was their director. The purpose of the Militia was to defend the rights and liberties of the Church by all lawful means within their power, even, where necessary, by force of arms. The exact date of formation is unknown. It may have been before or after the establishment of the First Order (1216). Blessed Raymond intimates that it might have been just before Saint Dominic's death in 1221.

The rules were framed by Saint Dominic. Heresy, and the violence that often accompanies it, was ravaging the Church. Church goods and property were being despoiled. Consequently the members of the Militia were to do all in their power to defend the goods and the rights of the Church against the heretics. They were forbidden to carry weapons, unless in the defense of the Faith or for some other good reason, and never without the leave of their superiors. Their league was essentially *defensive*. They were prepared to sacrifice their fortunes and their very lives in the defense of the Faith. Women, too, were admitted. They were to help by prayer, alms and good works.

The garments of the members were to be the colors of the Order, black and white, to signify the humility and the innocence that Dominic expected in his followers. He imposed on them a certain number of *Paters* and *Aves* which they were to say when they were not able to assist at the Divine Office. Pope Gregory IX in November 22, 1227, addressed a Bull to the Militia approving it and placing it under the protection of the Holy See.

Eventually the heresies disappeared, law and order was

restored and the Militia naturally dropped its military aspect and took on the character of a spiritual rather than an earthly fighting force. The old spiritual practices were retained; perhaps intensified. The new name they took was "The Brethren and Sisters of Penance of Saint Dominic." The use of the word "Penance" in their title was perfectly in accord with the lay spirit of the age. The word was used not so much in the technical sense of satisfaction for sin but in the sense of signifying an aversion from evil and a total conversion to God, in other words, a complete change of heart. It was in this sense that practically all of the lay associations of the day understood and embraced penance, the heretical ones as well as the orthodox. They intended a reaction against the forces of evil in the world and a total turning toward God in their individual and collective lives. Their rules prescribed humility, obedience, poverty, fasts and attendance at the canonical hours during which time they recited their stated number of *Paters* and *Aves*.

MUNIO DE ZAMORA

The present Rule of the Third Order of Saint Dominic was drawn up and promulgated by Father Munio de Zamora, the seventh Master General of the Order, in 1285. What he did was to commit to writing the Rule given through word of mouth by St. Dominic, making some modifications demanded by the altered circumstances of the day. This was no careless job, but a masterly work that remained in use all the way up to April 23, 1923, when at the behest of Pope Pius XI it was modified to meet the needs of the present time. In modifying the Rule in 1923 great care

was taken to have the older text preserved in its entirety except in cases where, as Father Louis Theissling noted, "greater clearness, or the changed conditions of our times, or the new laws of the Church demand otherwise."

Even a superficial comparison of the Rule formulated by Munio de Zamora and the rule of the earlier Militia shows a striking similarity, indicating that the seventh Master General was most careful to preserve the spirit and purpose of his sainted predecessor. This is noticeably true in a comparison of their penitential aspects. Munio de Zamora's version was approved June 26, 1404, by Pope Innocent VII and again on May 14, 1439, by Pope Eugene IV. The Papal respect for the Dominican Third Order Rule was brought out very definitely by Pope Nicholas V in 1452, when he recommended it as the model for all Third Order Rules. The Carmelites were commanded to follow it in the founding of their Third Order and Martin V confirmed the Servites Third Order only on condition that they adopt the Dominican Rule word for word.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE AND FUNCTION OF THE THIRD ORDER

A THIRD ORDER is a unique organization in the Church. It is a part of a Religious Order, shares the Religious Order's very spirit, is governed by the Order and collaborates in its work. Yet the Third Order is canonically and essentially a lay organization.* Its members do not take public vows nor live the common life. This is one fact that must be remembered in seeking out and studying its nature and purpose. Although its members are part of a Religious Order they are not religious in the Canon Law sense of that term. They are lay people. Their rule is secular, "the Rule of the Secular Third Order of St. Dominic." It is designed for people "living in the world," to quote from the Rule. One might say that a Tertiary is *in* the world and *of* the Order.

A Third Order is different in kind than a Confraternity or a Pious Union. Canonically it ranks above them. The reason for this is apparent. A Confraternity has for its purpose the promotion of some public worship, while a Pious Union exists for the exercise of some specific work of piety or charity. A Third Order, on the other hand,

* Secular priests can and do belong to the Third Order. They obviously are in the clerical state and occupy a special and a different position from the laity.

provides for its members a *Papally approved way of life* which enters inevitably not only into their worship or their piety or their charity, but into everything they do. A Tertiary is a Tertiary not only on his knees but in every great and least detail of his life. He is a seeker after perfection in the world. All this can be seen from a simple examination of the official definition of the Dominican Third Order as found in the beginning of the Rule. "The Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic, also called the Militia of Jesus Christ, is an association of Christians living in the world who, sharing in the religious and apostolic life of the Order of Friars Preachers, according to their own Rule approved by the Holy See, strive to attain to Christian perfection under the government of this same Order."¹

THE THIRD ORDER AND THE FIRST ORDER

One of the modern Popes said that if one wants to find the spirit of an Order one should look to its founder. Perhaps one might just as truly say that if one wants to find the spirit of a Third Order one should look to the spirit of the First Order. A Third Order member should reflect, in some measure, the spirit of the First Order, and, of course, the spirit of the founder. This fact is of tremendous importance in the individual's choice of a Third Order. He should choose a Third Order according to *its nature and his nature* and not because one of his friends happens to belong, or for some purely arbitrary reason.

The fact that this is not always done no doubt hinders the effectiveness of the Third Order in our modern day.

¹ *The Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Third Order of St. Dominic.* No. 1.

A Franciscan Tertiary should have a special love of charity and poverty, both so characteristic of St. Francis and his followers. A Benedictine Oblate might well be decidedly liturgically minded as his Order has been traditionally concerned with the praise of God. A Dominican Tertiary should seek truth (the motto of his Order) not truth for its own sake but truth as St. Dominic sought it in the service of souls. This is quite plain from a study of the history of the Order. St. Dominic's great contribution to the needs of his day was a group of outstanding mendicant preachers who were thoroughly apostolic. As Father Mandonnet, O.P., points out ". . . no other institution of the Middle Ages expressed its apostolic aim so explicitly."²

However, these are general characteristics of individual Orders that apply in all times and in all places. To make more specific programs one should also know the background of the times in which one lives and most particularly the condition of the Church in our present day. The modern Dominican Tertiary is a child of this age and must work out his Tertiary vocation in the age in which God has placed him. Just as we examined the background of St. Dominic's time to see how and where the Third Order fitted into life in the Middle Ages, so also is it necessary to know the times against which the modern Tertiary's life is set.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE CHURCH TODAY?

Ever since the middle of the last century the active function of the laity in the Church has been undergoing an im-

² *St. Dominic and His Work*, by Pierre Mandonnet, O.P. Page 63.

mense development. Only a glance at the writings of the recent Popes is needed to confirm this fact. There is, for example, the famous text from *Laetus Sane Nuntius*: "It is, therefore, absolutely necessary that in this our age all should be apostles; it is absolutely necessary that the laity should not sit idly by, but that they should stand ready to the call of the hierarchy, and give them vigorous assistance, in such wise that by their prayers, their self-devotion, and their active collaboration they may powerfully contribute to the growth of Catholic faith and the Christian reform of morals."³

The laity's rôle in the Church, therefore, has been most carefully defined and elaborated by the Holy See. This is not the result of chance or accident but is perhaps nothing else than the normal development of the Mystical Body of Christ. At first the Church had her Apostles, all of them Bishops, tremendously conscious of their task to conquer a hostile pagan world. After five centuries came the contemplatives and the monks. Much later came the active religious orders and the completely new and unheard-of mendicant Friars of Dominic and Francis. Now today the laity is being organized. The Church from the time of Pius IX up to our present Pontiff has been gradually coming to see the laity as an *organized* body under the hierarchy, conspiring with the hierarchy to bring the secularized world back to Christ. As such, i. e., as an *organized* body, it is something new. Indeed, after carefully defining the place of the laity in this new setting, Pope Pius XI stated that this is "the beginning of a new era in the history of

³ *Laetus Sane Nuntius*, AAS, XXI (1929), 668.

the Church."⁴

The distinction between the priest and the laity is a sharp one. The priest works directly in the spiritual order. His work is essentially to bring God to man and man to God. The laity, on the other hand, is seen by the Holy See as the instrument of the hierarchy mediating between the spiritual and temporal orders. As Father John Courtney Murray, S.J., has written, the Catholic laity today must exercise "its mediation in that borderland of the spiritual and temporal, wherein the life of the Church makes vital contact with the terrestrial life of man, to effect its humanization."⁵ In other words, while lay people, and Third Order members in particular, can and do take on many of the helps and props of religious life, such as the recitation of Office, private vows, a period of postulancy and novitiate and a rule of life, they should not try to be "little priests." Pope Pius XI indicated quite explicitly, and on many occasions, that they had a religious and spiritual work to do *but in the social order*. They are to inform social institutions with Christian principles, a task that is so enormous that it almost staggers and baffles the imagination. The great Pius XI saw that "given the changes in our times" (a phrase that he used consistently) man is not only in danger of losing his soul in hell but is very clearly in peril of losing his humanity on earth. It was the task of pre-

⁴ Quoted in *Introduction to Catholic Action*, by William Ferree, S.M. N.C.W.C., Washington, D. C. Page 8.

⁵ *Toward a Theology for the Layman*, by John Courtney Murray, S.J. *Theological Studies*, Vol. V., No. 1, March, 1944. This is an article that deserves a most careful reading. The last part of it gives one of the finest analyses of the status of the laity we have ever seen.

venting this latter that he entrusted to the layman and the laywoman of our present day.

The specific form for the organization of the laity has been called by the Holy See, "Catholic Action," which takes many and various forms. Of it Pope Pius XI made the amazing statement that he considered it "almost as indispensable at the present time as the priestly ministry itself; and in it all must cooperate, even if they do so only to a small extent."⁶ The present great Pontiff, who worked for so many years under Pius XI as Cardinal Secretary of State, has frequently stated the place of Catholic Action in his program:

"In this critical hour . . . We fix our gaze on Catholic Action and strengthen our souls with the confident hope of finding in it . . . devoted and ardent collaborators in the great enterprise which above all others fills our heart, for the supreme interest of souls and of the nations: the return of Christ to the consciences (of men), to the domestic hearth, to public morals, to the relations between social classes, to civil society, to international relations."⁷

WHERE DOES THE THIRD ORDER FIT IN?

We have spent a great deal of space on this problem because it is essential that a Third Order member understand these things and understand them well. And this for many reasons, among them the fact that Popes, Master Generals

⁶ Speech to the parishioners of S. Maria in Traspontina of Rome, December 4, 1924.

⁷ Pope Pius XII in a speech to Catholic Action Youth, *Andate in mezzo al mondo*. (AAS, XXXII, 1940, p. 366)

and Provincials have spoken plainly and consistently on this very matter. Therefore we can conclude that:

1. *The Third Order must cooperate with the new organized laity, and not ignore it.* This is the explicit command of the Holy See that has many times been reiterated by the Master General of the Dominican Order.

"The Holy See was never so anxious as in the present hour to develop in all her children, that is, in those who are baptized and confirmed in the Faith, a more enlightened conscience regarding their duties to Holy Church, so as to spur them to Catholic Action and to remind them of their duty to practice fraternal charity, in obedience to the hierarchy and in submission to both its decisions and its discipline. This is the hour then when Tertiaries especially should perfectly fulfill this duty under the direction of the Order and in accordance with its spirit; in all places where they are grouped, they should make use of such connections as nature and circumstances offer to show themselves 'true lights of the world,' exemplars, helpers of the Lord, in a word—Apostles."⁸

The same very clear directions are given in the Acts of the General Chapter where it is stated:

"We advise secular Tertiaries, who have been placed under the guidance of our Order and the immediate direction and correction of the Master General (Rule of the Third Order—n. 49), that they with ardent

⁸ Encyclical Letter of the Master General to the Third Order of St. Dominic, March 7, 1933. Page 15.

and generous spirit devote their whole lives to the works of the apostolate (n. 40). Whenever occasion comes up and with due permission, let them help the pastors and other priests in the works of Catholic Action, which our Holy Father St. Dominic saw and anticipated, namely by calling Tertiaries to cooperate in the apostolate of the priests (cfr. Words of the Holy Father Pius XI to Dominican Tertiaries, May 6, 1934, reported in the *Analecta*, Vol. XXI, p. 362). Let the moderators of the Third Order prudently strive to coordinate the apostolate of the Tertiaries with Catholic Action."⁹

Finally, the Dominican Province of St. Joseph in the Chapter Meeting held Nov. 10, 1943, said: "Let parish priests see to it that Tertiaries in our parishes cooperate in the works of Catholic Action."¹⁰

2. *The Third Order should train spiritually the leaders of Catholic Action.* Pope Pius XI insisted time and time again on the necessity of spiritual formation for lay apostles. "Catholic Action therefore does not consist only in the pursuit of one's own Christian perfection—*though this is first and foremost*."¹¹ The Third Orders are geared to do this very training. Here is the *demand*; the Third Orders have the *supply*. This does not mean that every Third Order member is going to become an official member of

⁹ *Acta Capituli Generalis Diffinitorum*. No. 79.

¹⁰ *Acta Capituli Provincialis Provinciae Sancti Joseph*, Nov. 10, 1943. Page 11.

¹¹ Letter to Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau, November 13, 1928.

Catholic Action, but the leaders of Catholic Action might well look to the Third Orders for their spiritual formation. Mutual coördination and coöperation between both groups is what the Holy See has consistently demanded.

3. *In administering this spiritual formation the Third Order should take into account the social aspect of the lay apostolate.* This was a cardinal point with Pius XI. He said that "the personal apostolate cannot any longer suffice if, indeed, it ever did suffice."¹² The individual apostolate is still valid and even necessary. But it is no longer sufficient due to the "social transformation" and the influence that social institutions today exert on individuals. The Catholic laity today must be equipped not only with the weapons of the individual apostolate such as prayer, sacrifice and good example, but also with weapons of the social apostolate such as intelligent planning, solidarity and organization. Their problem (and in training them the Third Order should never forget this) is "to alter a social reality, our paganized order of civilization, which is a complex of institutions that will not yield to individual pressures."¹³ This is a fact that our Third Order must take into account in preparing Catholic Actionists.

All people, and most particularly Tertiaries, must come to recognize that we are living in a world where "the religious sense is being almost extinguished, and moral integrity and rectitude are being day by day more miserably undermined."¹⁴ At the same time there should be great

¹² Discourse to Belgian Catholic Action Students in September 1933.

¹³ *Toward a Theology for the Layman*. Page 72.

¹⁴ *Laetus Sane Nuntius*, AAS, XXI (1929), 668.

reason for rejoicing on the part of Dominican Tertiaries who have been equipped to play such an important part in meeting the crisis of our day. For that is precisely what we are facing. "The crisis," said Pope Pius XI, "we are experiencing is unique in history. It is a world which must burst out of a crucible in which so many different energies are boiling. Let us thank God that He makes us live among the present problems. It is no longer permitted to anyone to be mediocre."¹⁵

¹⁵ Pope Pius XI to the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris shortly before the Pontiff's death.

CHAPTER III

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

THE TONE of any organization is set by its standards. In the Church the various Religious Orders, Confraternities and Societies have established definite standards that they quite rightfully demand be met and maintained by any and all prospective members. The standards are set by the nature and purpose of the particular Order, Confraternity, or Society involved. Since Third Orders occupy a place of preëminence among the canonically established organizations for the laity, it is perfectly understandable that their standards be high, which indeed they are, as anyone who seriously examines a Third Order Rule must be forced to admit. Third Order standards for membership are also regulated by the rule and spirit of the particular First Order to which they happen to be affiliated. At any rate, it is very obvious that the increase and progress of a particular Third Order depends, as the Dominican Rule points out, "chiefly upon the good qualities of the members."¹

The qualifications demanded of a prospective member of the Third Order of St. Dominic can be found in Chapter II of the Rule. They might be summarized as general

¹ *Rule* No. 8.

qualifications covering such things as age and state in life, spiritual qualifications covering the matter of the desire for perfection, perseverance, reputation, and finally what might be termed specifically Dominican qualifications—zeal for truth, an apostolic sense, and a devoted loyalty to the Church and the Pope.

GENERAL QUALIFICATIONS

Age. Members of either sex may be admitted to the Dominican Third Order provided they have completed their eighteenth year. This is one of the highest (if not the highest) age limits set by any of the Third Orders. The Franciscans, for example, receive at fourteen. There is only one possibility of an exception to the eighteen year old limit in the Dominican Third Order. For a good reason and, with the permission of the Provincial, one may be received at the completion of his seventeenth year.

State in life. The Third Order candidate may be either married or single, a member of the clergy or laity; but not a religious. Married members, the Rule provides quite wisely, ordinarily should not be admitted without the consent of the married partner unless there be a good reason for doing otherwise.

Members of the clergy can, and very frequently do, join the Third Order. In fact the Rule encourages separate Fraternities of secular priests. "In so far as possible, there should be erected Fraternities of secular priests, who, under the direction of some Father of the Order, shall strive to lead a more apostolic life."² The priest satisfies the Third Order Office obligation by the recitation of the Divine Of-

² *op. cit.* No. 7.

fice. He should, however, say once a day the Responory *O Spem Miram* with versicle and prayer in honor of St. Dominic. Should he so desire, he may obtain from the Master General the permission to use the Breviary and Missal according to the Dominican Calendar.³ "At whatever altar they say Mass, priests who are members of the Third Order have a personal indult of the Privileged Altar three times a week provided they have not obtained a similar indult for another day. All the Masses said for deceased brethren are always and everywhere privileged."⁴

Professed religious enjoying temporary or perpetual vows are naturally excluded from the Third Order. However, if one has been a Tertiary before entering religion and then returns to the world, his membership revives with the expiration of, or dispensation from, his religious vows.⁵ It is interesting to note that a novice in a Religious Order, who belongs to the Third Order, enjoys the privileges of a Tertiary during the religious novitiate.⁶ It should also be noted here that in speaking of membership in the Third Order we are not referring to the Third Order Dominican Sisters who, of course, live in Community life and bind themselves to the observance of the three vows of religion.

The final qualification touching on state in life demands that the candidate does not at the same time belong to another Third Order. An exception to this rule was made

³ *op. cit.* No. 30-31.

⁴ *New Dominican Tertiaries' Manual.* 3rd. ed. New York: Tertiary Headquarters. p. 355.

⁵ Canon 704, p. 2.

⁶ *S. Cong. Ind.*, Jan. 31, 1893.

by Pope Leo XIII in favor of the city of Bologna where membership in both the Franciscan and Dominican Third Orders is permitted in honor of the death of St. Dominic in that city.

SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS

A sincere desire to tend toward perfection. In a sense this is the crucial point in the matter of spiritual qualifications. This should be the characteristic of every Third Order member without exception. It is the point at which the Third Orders officially go beyond the Sodalities, Confraternities and Societies in the Church. It involves a spirit of wholeheartedness that eventually must open up the way to both an understanding and a practice of the life of perfection. It is the death knell to that mediocrity and part-time Christianity that pervades our age and which the recent Popes have cried out against on many occasions. If, in our day, as Pope Pius XI has said, "it is no longer permitted anyone to be mediocre," then certainly it should be absolutely unheard of for a Third Order member or candidate to sink to this level of spirituality, if we may call it such.

Perfection is not required of the candidate, mind you, but *a sincere desire to tend toward perfection.* In other words, it is not necessary to be a saint to enter the Third Order; but it is necessary to have sanctity in mind as a goal to be sought after with all one's might.

Perseverance. The candidate must give a well founded hope of persevering in his good resolutions. This sign of perseverance should be looked for, the Rule warns, especially in the young. Enthusiasm is a marvellous thing. It means, "filled with God." A so-called youthful enthusi-

asm that starts and stops with amazing rapidity is really no enthusiasm at all. The real thing, genuine enthusiasm, in young or old, is what is required to face the daily problems entailed in living a life of perfection in the world. "Filled with God" will do it; filled with anything less presages failure.

SPECIAL DOMINICAN QUALIFICATIONS

Zeal for the promotion of truth. This should be a characteristic of every Dominican. It was the ruling element in St. Dominic's life, the keynote of his genius. It must be participated in by all who would call themselves his followers. The degree to which it is participated in is the measure of the success or failure of the Dominican vocation. Tertiaries are, as Father Gillet, O.P., points out, "the true collaborators of the Friars-Preachers."⁷ As Dominicans they must give of their superabundance to others. Perhaps in few places has this been so well put as in the Encyclical Letter of the Master General to the Third Order:

"Tertiaries offer themselves in our service with a zeal and a generosity that frequently astounds us and that always evokes our heartfelt gratitude. And yet this genuine, deep and devoted love that they feel for the Order does not really find expression unless Tertiaries unite together and gather along with themselves around the Fathers, souls of good will who shall receive through their means a stronger and a more abundant spiritual life. The perfection that they draw from Dominican sources should be handed on by them in their turn; that is the point: if Tertiaries are to

⁷ Encyclical Letter of the Master General, Page 14.

learn, to receive benefits, and to acquire ardour in the Dominican household, it is in order that when the moment comes or the occasion presents itself, they may communicate to others the superabundance of their own supernatural life."⁸

It is interesting to note that the Rule expects a "burning zeal for the promotion of truth" as a condition of entrance. How much more must be expected of those who have been members of the Dominican family for any length of time!

Loyalty toward the Church and the Pope. Traditionally the Dominican Order has been a loyal defender of the Church and the Papacy. Her champions of truth have always rushed to her defense in times of strife, conflict and heresy. In the case of the Dominican Tertiary the "devoted loyalty" that the Rule enjoins certainly should extend not only to a verbal defense of Christ's Church and His Vicar but also to a more than passing knowledge and diffusion of Christian doctrine. To the excuse of insufficient knowledge and inability of Tertiaries to expound doctrine the Master General gave a very sharp and succinct reply, "They should master the content of their Faith and strive to give a reasonable account of it."⁹

Finally it should be noted that all non-Catholics are excluded from membership in the Third Order even though they be in good faith or benefactors. Likewise the general law of the Church excludes those who belong to any condemned society or who are notoriously under ecclesiastical censure or who are publicly known as sinners.¹⁰

⁸ *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁹ *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁰ Canon 693, No. 1.

CHAPTER IV

THE MAKING OF A TERTIARY

NATURALLY one does not become a Tertiary over night. There are graduated steps toward the goal just as in the case of religious life. So, a candidate is first a postulant, then a novice, and finally he is professed. In other words very little room is left for mistakes. With the wisdom possessed only by the Church it is quite definitely established whether the Third Order member really belongs in this exalted state. In this way the well-being of both the Order and the candidate is guaranteed by giving both sufficient time to know one another.

POSTULANCY

The candidate should be examined and subjected, as the Rule states, to a period of probation before being received into the Third Order. This is a time of great importance for it allows the Director and the Council members ample opportunity to study the prospective candidate. It will be remembered that when Saint Catherine of Siena applied for admission to the Third Order, so high were their standards at that time, that it was seriously debated as to whether or not she should be admitted to the Chapter at Siena.

While the Rule does not specify the length of this postulancy, nevertheless, it certainly should be sufficiently long

to determine the seriousness of the candidate's intentions. Perhaps from three to six months might be sufficient time to make this judgment. In this way it can be determined from the candidate's general attitude, by his attendance or non-attendance at the monthly Chapter meeting, whether or not he is of Third Order caliber.

In the case of private tertiaries, that is, those who cannot for some special reason be enrolled in a Fraternity, this period of postulancy is perhaps even more important. This is also true of the period of novitiate for private tertiaries. For the private tertiary is very much on his own. He lacks the stabilizing influence of the Fraternity members and is more or less cut off from directly Dominican influences. These people should not be rushed into the Third Order. They, above all others, should have a thorough knowledge and appreciation of the way of life they are entering. Cut off from constant contact with the Order, their Dominican training must come almost entirely from a study of the Rule and a reading of the lives of the Dominican Saints and other works by Dominican authors. The fact that the private tertiaries are not in touch with the Order makes them no less Dominicans and does not mean that the Order is any less interested in them.

THE NOVITIATE

Reception into a Third Order Fraternity is made into the hands of the Director or his delegate. In the case of private tertiaries it is made into the hands of any priest having the legitimate faculties. The ceremony, which is simple yet impressive, is carried out before the main altar of the Church or in some other convenient place and in the pres-

ence of at least some members of the Fraternity. Witnesses are not required for the private tertiary ceremony.

"What do you ask?" the priest says at the start of the ceremony.

"The mercy of God and yours," answers the candidate.

The habit is then blessed by the priest using a prayer that reminds the candidate that the white habit is to be worn "in token of the innocence and humility" that should permeate the tertiary's life. Where it is customary a lighted candle is now given to the postulant and the *Veni Creator Spiritus* is said. A prayer is then addressed to St. Dominic and one to the Saints of the Order. It is well to note that both of these prayers stress the penance that should be so characteristic of every Dominican. Indeed this idea runs like a theme through both the reception and profession ceremonies. The Third Order is a renunciation of the vanities of the world and the Ritual very appropriately speaks of "the vanity of the world," "the penitential rule," and "those that forsake the world."

Then follows the imposition of the scapular, the essential part of the investing ceremony. As the priest places the blessed scapular of St. Dominic over the shoulders of the candidate he says:

"Receive the scapular of our holy Order, the most important part of our Dominican habit, the mother's pledge from heaven of the love of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary towards us, under whose wings and mantle thou shalt find a shade from the heat, and a bulwark and defense in life and in death from all dangers both of soul and body."

The *Te Deum* is then intoned and the Dominican family rejoices that another follower of Christ has embraced, at least for a time, the life of perfection in the world. The Novitiate has begun. For a year's time the novice will study the Rule under the direction of a Novice Master so that he comes to a thorough knowledge of his obligations and becomes imbued, as the Rule states, "with the spirit of our holy father, St. Dominic."

After a short series of prayers the new member of St. Dominic's family is blessed by the priest. Then, if the priest wishes, he may bestow a religious name upon the novice and the ceremony comes to a close.

At Reception the novice "is admitted to a share in all the spiritual favors of the Brothers and Sisters of the Order."¹ He is one of the family and he should be made to feel that way by all the other Chapter members. The reception day, as in Religious Communities, should be a day of family rejoicing in which all should join without exception.

Directors should remember both in receiving and professing members into a Fraternity that the previous consent of the Council is necessary. This is quite clear in the Rule (No. 11 and No. 22). On this particular point the General Chapter of Definitors held in Rome, 1938, had this to say: "We admonish all those who have the faculty of receiving into the Third Order that they may not receive aspirants who seek to be admitted as members of any Fraternity, or profess them as such without the previous consent of the Council of the Fraternity."

¹ Rule No. 19.

PROFESSION

"At the end of the year of probation, or even before, if the particular circumstances of the person seem to demand it, the Novice may be admitted to profession by the Director with the consent of the majority of the Council of the Fraternity."² The private novice may be professed according to the prudent judgment of anyone having legitimate faculties.³ This profession, unlike that of religious profession, is not a vow. It is, however, a formal promise made to God to live according to the Rule of the Third Order "until death." Such a promise is not to be taken lightly. "Until death" means precisely that. As Father Joret remarks: "One does not leave a fraternity as one might cease to attend a salon."⁴ So high was Blessed Ossana of Mantua's conception of tertiary profession that after being received as a novice she deferred making her profession for forty years.

The Rule now becomes a lifetime preoccupation of the tertiary. It does not oblige under pain of sin, except in the case of those precepts that are of divine or ecclesiastical origin. It does however bind the tertiary to the penalty fixed by the law or by the Prelate or Director.⁵ In other words if the tertiary offends against some precept of the Rule the Director may impose a penance and the tertiary is bound to accept it. This concept of the Rule was fixed by St. Dominic himself at the Chapter at Bologna "for the

² Rule No. 22.

³ cf. Rule No. 23.

⁴ *Dominican Life* by F. D. Joret, O.P. London: Sands & Co. p. 31.

⁵ cf. Rule No. 71.

consolation of the timorous" as he put it. Since that time the Dominican idea in this matter has been extended by the law of the Church to all religious families, vindicating the wisdom of Dominic's concept of a religious rule.

The profession ceremony is very similar to reception. The essential part of the ceremony takes place when the novice, kneeling at the feet of the Director, holding in one hand a lighted candle and in the other the Book of the Rule, reads aloud the formula of profession:

"To the honor of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and Blessed Dominic, I, Brother _____, before you, Father _____, Director, and before you _____, Prior of the Fraternity of the Order of Penance of Blessed Dominic of this place _____, who hold the place of the Master General of the Order of Friars Preachers, do make profession that it is my will to live henceforth according to the Rule and form of the Brothers and Sisters of the same Order of Penance of Blessed Dominic until death."

The *Te Deum* is chanted and, after a prayer of thanksgiving and one beseeching God that the lives of the tertiaries "may so agree with the name of penance that their professions may be always manifest in their work," the ceremony rapidly moves to a close. Sprinkling the newly professed with holy water the priest blesses him and the ceremony comes to an end.

CHAPTER V

THE OFFICIALS AND THE COUNCIL

PERHAPS even more important than the admission of good candidates to the Third Order is the choice of good officials and council members. For without aggressive and forward looking leadership a Third Order can quite easily develop into an organization whose only resemblance to the Militia of Jesus Christ envisioned by St. Dominic is in the fact that they claim the name while literally rejecting the reality. As a consequence this matter of the officials and council members is most important. Not everyone is chosen to lead an army; nor should everyone be chosen to lead Christ's Militia. Souls are at stake here. Bungling is terribly costly. The success or failure of an army often depends on the officers and members of the general staff. With the Third Order the parallel is so close that it is perfectly obvious.

OFFICIALS

"In every Fraternity there should be a Prior, a Sub-prior, a Novice Master, and other Officials and Councilors."¹ (In Chapters of women, of course, the title is "Prioress," "Sub-Prioress," etc.) The Council should not

¹ Rule No. 57.

exceed twelve members, among whom are the Prior, Sub-Prior, and Novice Master, who are members of the Council in virtue of their important office.²

When a Fraternity is established all the original officers are installed by the Provincial. The same thing happens when the Council is dissolved or even when the majority of the Council, for any cause, leave office.³ Obviously, it is up to the local Director to see that these names are presented to Father Provincial and that they have been selected after considerable thought and prayer.

The term of office for both Officials and Councilors is three years. The manner of renewing the Council is somewhat complicated although it is explained in some detail in the Rule itself.

"... but each year a third part of the Councilors will be renewed by the Director with the cooperation of the remainder of the Council. In the year in which the Officials are to be removed, let the Council be first completed. Then let the Prior and other Officials be instituted by the Director conjointly with the completed Council. In case of dissension between the Director and Council, recourse should be had to the Prior Provincial."⁴

STANDARDS

Ordinarily, however, the obligation of choosing the Officials and Council members rests squarely on the Director and the Council. Between them, it is, as the Rule points

² cf. *op. cit.* No. 58.

³ cf. *op. cit.* No. 59.

⁴ *op. cit.* No. 60.

out, a matter of "coöperation" and joint action. Therefore both the Director and the Council members should have certain standards whereby they might better judge whether or not the candidates are suitable for office. The Rule makes no mention of these standards; but it is perfectly clear that they should entail something more than the usual standards set for the admission of candidates to the Third Order. For that reason it might be well to elaborate a few of the qualities that experience teaches should be sought for in a real Third Order leader. They are *good judgment, competence, and generosity*.

Good judgment is the prerequisite of every leader. To lack it is to lack real prudence and therefore to lack the ability to choose the right means to the right end. A sure way to accomplish nothing in a Fraternity is to pick leaders whose judgment is faulty. After a few successive failures the members cease to show interest and the Chapter lapses into a mental and spiritual coma to be disturbed only temporarily by the next brain child of a well meaning but misinformed leader.

This is not to stifle action. Good judgment is a guarantee, not an enemy, of action. It presupposes the choice of the right means to the right end. This is not worldly prudence but Godly prudence.

The second quality to be sought in a leader is *competence*. He must not only know the right means to the right end, he must be able to use the means to reach the end. In a word he must know his job, and do it well. A Novice Master, for example, who knew nothing about the Rule would be of no help to a Chapter in the training of Novices. The Novice Master is required to spend a year's time

preparing the Novices in the Rule previous to their profession.⁵ Inability to do this would argue an incapacity for the office of Novice Master. It is undoubtedly the duty of the Fraternity Director to prepare the Novice Master for this difficult task, and then it is up to the Novice Master to transmit what he has learned to the Novices and Postulants.

Finally, experience proves that the real Third Order leader should be noted for *generosity*. This generosity should manifest itself in a wholeheartedness that consistently places Third Order interests, and those of the Fraternity, above personal convenience. Anything that the Fraternity undertakes, even projects of individual Tertiaries, should receive his full support, provided, of course, the project is a worthwhile one.

More than anything else the generosity of the leader is a matter of being generous with his time. There is bound to be, in an active Chapter, great demands made on the time of the Chapter officials. There are Council meetings and other meetings that must be attended. Plans must be formulated for any and all Tertiary projects and the leaders should be on hand to help the various committees formulate their ideas. Not that the Officials and Council members should do all the work. They shouldn't. But they are the leaders and to them the Fraternity members look for direction and guidance.

There remains then to examine the duties and offices of each leader in particular.

THE PRIOR

After the Director, the Prior is the supreme authority in

⁵ *op. cit.* No. 21.

the local Fraternity. His duties are explicitly laid down for him in the Rule.

"It will be the duty of the Prior to take care that the Rule is observed by all. He should also take care that nothing in deportment, manner of life and dress be done by any Brother of the Fraternity, that can give disedification. If he sees any transgression or negligence, he should charitably rebuke and correct it, or if it seems more advantageous, he should have recourse to the authority of the Director."⁶

The Prior must work in close cooperation with the Director so that together they can plan the specific policy and program of the Fraternity. Merely to see the priest Director at the monthly meetings is certainly not enough. Moreover, the Prior should be a man of ideas as well as ideals. After all, he is in even closer contact with the Fraternity members than the priest. He probably knows them better because he is one of them. It is up to him then to make known to the Director the needs and the aspirations of the group. A wise Director will make constant and valuable use of the knowledge and experience of a well-trained Prior.

THE SUB-PRIOR

As the very name indicates the Sub-Prior takes the place of the Prior when, for any reason, he is absent. All that has been said about the Prior refers also to this official. It goes without saying that for the good ordering of any Fraternity these two, the Prior and Sub-Prior, should be es-

⁶ *op. cit.* No. 61.

entially of one mind in regard to the general policy of the particular Fraternity.

THE NOVICE MASTER

This office is of tremendous importance. In a very real sense the future of a Fraternity lies in the Novice Master's hands, for on him is placed the extremely important duty of instructing the Novices in the Rule. Here, more than anywhere else, competence is required. Very probably a novice's entire outlook on the Rule and things Dominican depends on the training he received in the year's Novitiate.

In selecting a Novice Master (or Novice Mistress) there are several hazards to be avoided. Too often there is a tendency to pick a devout person who is almost totally uninformed. This is fatal. Then, too, one must distinguish between real devotion and what might be termed "piosity," a peculiar form of religion that has little or no connection with real holiness. At any rate the Novice Master must be a man not only of devotion but also of a certain amount of simple knowledge which he must be able to impart to others. He should also be approachable and generous with his time *as he must get to know the candidates.*

When it comes time to vote on the reception and particularly the profession of new members the Novice Master's judgment on the suitability of the candidates should be given considerable weight by both the Director and the other Council members.

THE COUNCIL

The Council should be the dynamo of the Fraternity. It should be essentially the planning committee, the board of

strategy. Council members should be chosen with this in view. They are to be the brains behind the organization. They should have ideas and be able to express them. Under no circumstance are they to be considered a "rubber stamp" committee blindly following the ideas of the Fraternity officials.

The Director calls and presides at the Council meetings which are had each time that a vote is required and whenever, according to particular custom, matters of great moment are to be handled.⁷

The quality of *good judgment* should be especially sought for in the Council member as he has the serious duty of voting on the Postulants and Novices and also of collaborating with the Director in the choice of the Fraternity Officials.⁸

OTHER OFFICIALS

There may be need in a particular Fraternity for other officials to carry out special duties. The Rule makes provision for these other officials although it should be noted that these "other officials" are not *ipso facto* members of the Council. Thus there might be need of a Secretary to take care of the correspondence and to record notes at the meeting. A Treasurer or Burser might be needed to take care of any temporalities of the Fraternity, such as dues, etc.

If the Fraternity has a Library (which it should), then obviously a competent librarian should be placed in charge. On this point there seems no reason why a Third Order Li-

⁷ cf. *op. cit.* No. 64.

⁸ cf. *op. cit.* No. 22, 60.

brary should not be open to the general public as well as to Fraternity members. It should be easily accessible and thoroughly staffed by Third Order people. More will be said about this later.

Finally there may be a special need of a Sacristan, Chanters, Organist, or Visitors to the Sick. All must be selected in accord with their unique talents and, as in the case of every Third Order official, a sense of responsibility must be developed and placed on the shoulders of each one of them.

CHAPTER VI

THE DIRECTOR OF THE THIRD ORDER

THE MASTER GENERAL of the Dominican Order is the supreme authority and superior over the Third Order secular. He has the immediate direction and correction of all Fraternities, all Directors and individual tertiaries as regards those things that pertain to their living according to the Rule.¹ The Provincial, also, by reason of his office, has the care of the Third Order within the limits of his own Province.² Both the Master General and the Provincial have the right to visit the Fraternities every year and even more frequently if the situation demands it. Ordinarily these visits are conducted through a delegate. Any counsel, admonition, orders or correction should be received by all with a grateful and humble spirit.³

THE DIRECTOR

While private tertiaries have only the Master General and the Prior Provincial as their superior in the Third Order, Fraternity members depend also on the priest Director of their Fraternity. To all practical intents and purpose this priest Director has immediate charge of the particular

¹ cf. *Rule* No. 49.

² *op. cit.* No. 50.

³ *op. cit.* No. 51.

Fraternity. He is the supreme local authority and on his shoulders rests, in great part, the success or failure of the Chapter. Hence it is of the utmost importance that the priest Directors, whether they be Dominicans or members of the secular clergy, have a great love for the Order, a consuming zeal in propagating its work and a thorough knowledge of the duties and obligations entailed in their office.

It should be noted first of all that the institution of the Director of a Fraternity belongs exclusively to the Master General or the Prior Provincial. This is not an appointment, as in other of our societies and confraternities, of the local pastor. "In churches not belonging to the Order, the consent of the local Ordinary is also required beforehand."⁴ The office of Director lasts for three years. At the expiration of these three years he may be re-appointed.

DUTIES OF THE DIRECTOR

The Director should see that there is a Fraternity register wherein is recorded the name of each member and the date of their reception and profession. Those who receive private tertiaries should send this same information to the Provincial Headquarters where it is recorded on the Provincial register.

The choice of the officials and Council members is one of the Director's most important duties. In this matter he works hand in hand with the other Council members, as we have seen in the preceding Chapter, and every effort must be bent toward establishing in office real, zealous tertiaries who are imbued with the Dominican spirit and cap-

⁴ *op. cit.* No. 54.

able of living the full tertiary life. The Director also must vote on all new members and on each novice before profession. The standards and qualifications demanded by the Rule should be followed exactly.

The priest Director has the duty of calling the Council meeting and of presiding at it. This Council meeting should be called not only when there is need to vote on the reception or profession of new members, but also "when matters of greater moment are to be handled according to its particular rules."⁵

At the monthly meeting the Director must instruct the members, read and expound the Rule, make any current announcements and correct and rebuke carelessness as occasion demands and as he deems expedient.⁶ At the meeting he should also see that the suffrages are said for the living and the dead and give absolution from faults because of any transgressions of the Rule. He should see to it that these meetings are lively and interesting as well as profitable. They should not be dragged out interminably nor should they be rushed through, since the members assemble only once a month.

Certain Fraternities have the custom of dividing the meeting into two parts. The prayers and instruction, under this arrangement, are usually had in the Church; any other business, announcements or activities are cared for in the second part of the meeting which is usually held in the school or church basement. This has its good points as it allows the members the opportunity of speaking up and ex-

⁵ *op. cit.* No. 64.

⁶ *op. cit.* No. 65, 66.

changing ideas as well as affording them the opportunity of getting to know one another better. This last has very practical and very obvious advantages as far as the smooth running of a Fraternity is concerned and the priest Director should give this idea either a trial or at least serious consideration.

Finally it is quite evident that the Director should get to know each one of the members of the Fraternity. They are not people to be seen once a month and that only during the time of the meeting. They are brothers and sisters in Christ and in St. Dominic. Their interests should be the interest of the Director. Their spiritual life above all else should be his concern. They should feel free to approach him any time with their problems and he should be willing and able to help them. This presupposes on the priest's part a knowledge of the life, work and general environment of the tertiaries under his direction. It also presupposes therefore that he study the conditions under which these souls are living and that, in our day especially, he understand the part that social institutions are playing in the dechristianization of the masses. The Dominican tertiary of today is being affected much the same way as everyone else. The Third Order Director must show them how to combat this subtle, unchristian influence.

CHAPTER VII

THE MASS IN THE LIFE OF THE TERTIARY

THE SAINTLY POPE PIUS X IN HIS *Motu Proprio* said: "The primary and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit is the active participation of the faithful in the Holy Mysteries and in the public and solemn prayer of the Church."¹ These words of the late Pontiff explain more than one thing in the Dominican ideal as elaborated by St. Dominic so many centuries ago. They explain, for example, St. Dominic's insistence on the important part that the liturgy should play in the lives of his spiritual children. In spite of the tremendous activity that he demanded of his followers he always insisted that it be counterbalanced, as it were, by liturgical prayer. It is related of St. Dominic that so great was his devotion while celebrating the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass that he used to shed copious tears from the Consecration to the Communion. This love for the liturgy he instilled in his followers so that many of them, particularly the saints and blessed of his Order, have been especially noted for their love of the liturgy and devotion to the Holy Eucharist. St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Thomas Aquinas, Blessed Marcolino are just a few. A study of the lives of the early brethren

¹ Nov. 22, 1903.

shows very clearly their eagerness not only to celebrate Mass but also to serve Mass. As Gerard de Frachet puts it: "Everyone sought the honor of serving the celebrant." St. Thomas was in the habit of making his thanksgiving by serving another Mass.

It is not at all surprising, then, to find the Third Order Rule legislating regarding the Eucharistic life of its members. This particular section reads:

"Tertiaries should approach the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist at least twice a month unless legitimately hindered. If they wish to be refreshed more frequently, even every day, by the Most Holy Body of Christ, their devotion is to be commended. Tertiaries should make an effort to be present, as far as they are able, at the daily Sacrifice of the Mass and to follow the priest with devout attention during the course of the Mass."²

A short examination of these two Rules should give a fairly accurate picture of the Order's mind, as well as that of the Church, in regard to the Eucharistic life of the tertiary.

It should be noted that the Rule suggests, as a minimum, the bi-monthly reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. However, it very clearly commends a more frequent, even daily, reception of Holy Communion. Certainly a tertiary who understands the great privilege of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ would be more than anxious to avail himself of this privilege every day. Since lovers seek union then naturally the lover of the Eucharist seeks union with the Divine Lover. And when this can be

² Rule, Nos. 32, 33.

brought about every day, so much the better.

While there is hardly any way of checking on this matter, perhaps it might be estimated that in our day and in our country almost half of the Dominican tertiaries are daily Communicants. Probably many more would be receiving were they not hindered by reason of ill health, old age, distance or work. After all, daily Communion, since the time of Pope Pius X, has become a fairly common practice of many thousands of Catholics. Certainly it should not be surprising that among their number should be found many of the laity who, by profession, are dedicated to a life of perfection in the world. Indeed, the opposite situation would be the surprising one.

The tertiary should realize, of course, that Holy Communion is a part of Mass and that it is not the whole of Mass nor even the essence of Mass as some people, by their strange practices, would seem to think. As a consequence the tertiary should realize that the best preparation for Holy Communion is an intelligent following of the Mass, just as St. Thomas found that the best thanksgiving was the attendance at another Mass.

THE MASS

The Rule distinctly encourages daily attendance at the Holy Sacrifice. St. Dominic, in an age when priests and religious did not ordinarily celebrate daily, adopted this practice. Even when he travelled he followed this custom and in 1221 obtained from the Pope permission for his friars to celebrate upon a portable altar. As Petitot, in commenting on this, remarks: "The founder of the Preachers

thus contributed very effectually toward the introduction into the Church of the use of daily Mass."³

Very often tertiaries cannot manage to attend Mass, receive Holy Communion, have breakfast and get to work on time. They can, however, attend the Holy Sacrifice and still get to work on time although they may have to forego the privilege of receiving. Under the circumstances they should at least strive to attend Mass. The Rule states that they "... should make an effort to be present, as far as they are able."

Many people today, especially in metropolitan areas, are attending the noonday Mass usually celebrated for the convenience of lunch-going workers at 12:10 P.M. Some few (and their number seems to be growing) receive Holy Communion at this Mass. At any rate the noonday Mass might well prove to be the solution for the tertiary who cannot attend in the morning. Certainly at least it is a possible solution.

INTELLIGENT PARTICIPATION AT MASS

It goes without saying that the tertiary's participation at Mass, whether it be daily or weekly, should be intelligent. Certainly he should know what the Mass is and should have an ever growing appreciation of this central act of all Christian worship. He should know that the Mass is Christ's death renewed and re-presented; that it is Our Blessed Lord's death contemporized for this generation as for past generations and for future generations. He should know that it is the death of Christ renewed in a very mysterious way *but in an unbloody manner*.

³ *Vie de St. Dominique*, p. 461.

The tertiary should know, too, (as indeed every Catholic should know) the various parts of the Mass, their history and their relative importance. He should know that the Mass is not merely an expression of his own private devotion but that it is the supreme public act of worship offered by a legitimately constituted minister who acts, as the present Pope Pius XII pointed out in his Encyclical on the Mystical Body, "in the person not only of Our Saviour but of the whole Mystical Body and of everyone of the faithful."⁴ Not only that, but he should also come to realize the very depths of his being that he, a simple Dominican tertiary, is offered along with Christ to the Heavenly Father. As the same Encyclical expresses it "... He (Christ) offered not only Himself as Head of the Church to the heavenly Father, but His mystical members as well. He embraced them all, even the weak and ailing ones, in the tender love of His Heart."⁵ Great profound truths are contained in these last two quotations of Pope Pius XII. They should be meditated upon and studied by all. A practical way of understanding Mass is to follow it in the Missal where the very words that the priest reads can be followed by the faithful.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

It will be remembered that Pope Pius X insisted on the active participation of the faithful in the Mass. Moreover, he insisted that in this active participation is to be found "the primary and the indispensable source of the true Christian

⁴ Encyclical Letter *Mystici Corporis*, Pope Pius XII (N.C.W.S. edit. p. 50).

⁵ *op. cit.* pp. 50, 51.

spirit." His words are definite and incontrovertible. The Mass is not something that the tertiary should attend as a spectator. He should not watch Mass. Pius X said: "Do not pray during Mass, but pray the Mass."

A very practical way of carrying out the recent Pontiff's exhortation for active participation of the faithful in Mass would be where the entire congregation would join in singing the Solemn High Mass or *Missa Cantata*. This, of course, would be ideal; but it is not always either practical or possible. Consequently by way of preparing for a more active participation on the part of the people certain priests, with the permission of their bishops, have introduced the *Missa Recitata*, also popularly called the Dialogue Mass, in which the people respond along with the servers at the Low Mass. The Sacred Congregation of Rites granted the local Ordinaries "the full right prudently to regulate this form of liturgical piety."⁶

There is a possibility then that certain Chapters of the Third Order might, through their director, obtain permission for the Dialogue Mass either occasionally or even at their monthly meeting. Other groups that have had experience in this matter are almost unanimous in agreeing that where the Dialogue Mass is done well it very definitely brings about the sense of active participation so ardently desired by the teaching Church.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

Study clubs and discussion groups might well be the solution to a more active participation of the tertiary in the

⁶ Decree No. 4, 365.

Mass. This is said with some reservation. A study club or a discussion group on the Mass can be very interesting or very boring, depending, in great part, upon the manner of presentation. It must be conducted in a thorough, interesting, and popular manner; otherwise it will fail. A small group is definitely to be preferred to a large one. Masses can be held in private homes, in the church basement, or even in a convenient downtown library or bookstore.

The so-called "Dry Mass" where the priest leader illustrates the Mass by going through and explaining the entire Mass from the vesting to the conclusion is extremely popular with the people. Instruction in the use of the Missal is also always appreciated as well as needed.

Finally the Third Order Chapter might very well make these study and discussion groups a part of their own apostolic program. Instead of just having them for their own instruction they might be able to throw them open to the general public and thereby bring more and more people to the intelligent and active participation in the Sacred Mysteries so ardently desired by the Church in our day.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RECITATION OF THE OFFICE

THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS and the Divine Office are closely related. In religious houses, quite fittingly, the entire Office is recited round about the altar where the Adorable Sacrifice is daily offered. Indeed, the Office might be viewed as the framework for the Mass. The canonical hours of Matins, Lauds, Prime, and Terce lead up to and prepare the soul for Mass. Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline extend the Mass throughout the remainder of the day and on into the night. The Dominican tertiary, while not reciting the Divine Office, should, nevertheless, in the recitation of his own Office, strive to appreciate this close connection between the Mass and the Office. This is not something purely arbitrary. There is a sound historical basis for connecting the Divine Office and the so-called Little Office of the Blessed Virgin and therefore also for connecting the Mass and the Little Office.

In the last half of the Seventh Century there was added to the Divine Office the practice of reciting the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. The early Dominicans, both priests and sisters, followed this general practice. Blessed Humbert of the Romans tells us that Saint Dominic himself ruled that, because of the great need for more study time, Matins of Our Lady's Office should be recited by the brethren while they were dressing.

With the increase of apostolic work and the need for

more and more study, ultimately the secular clergy dropped the practice of reciting Our Lady's Little Office entirely. Pope Pius XI in our own day suppressed the practice, even for Dominicans, so that this obligation is no longer binding on the religious of our Order. It is a great comfort, however, to know that this ancient custom of honoring Our Lady is still being carried out by the Order through the tertiaries, who are today, in a very real sense, supplying the place of the Fathers in reciting the praises of Mary.

THE RULE CONCERNING THE OFFICE

In the early days of the Order's history the tertiaries had their own particular Office which consisted of a stated number of *Paters* and *Aves* recited at the usual canonical hours. This old Office was known as the *Pater Noster* and, since most tertiaries at that time were unable to read or write, this Office was the logical expedient. On Sundays and feast-days and even daily during Advent and Lent the tertiaries used to come to the churches of the Friars to assist at the regular Divine Office, especially Compline.

Today conditions have greatly changed and most tertiaries are able to read the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, which, in fact, many of them manage to do. Actually the Rule today recognizes both Offices as well as the Rosary. Because of a great deal of misunderstanding in this matter it would be well to set down clearly what precisely are the tertiary's obligations in this matter. There is what might be called the primary obligation which leaves a choice of three kinds of daily prayers and an alternative obligation which leaves a choice of two.¹

¹ cf. *Rule*, Nos. 28, 29.

THE PRIMARY OBLIGATION

- 1) The Old Office (*Pater Noster*)
 - Matins—28 Our Fathers and Hail Marys
 - Lauds
 - Prime
 - Terce
 - Sext
 - None
 - Compline
 } Seven Our Fathers and Hail Marys at each hour
- Vespers—14 Our Fathers and Hail Marys
(The Apostles Creed is recited before Matins and Prime and after Compline)
- OR—
- 2) The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin according to the Dominican Rite.
- OR—
- 3) The entire Rosary (15 decades)

THE ALTERNATIVE OBLIGATION

If tertiaries be hindered from saying any of the above they should say either:

- 1) One of the little Offices approved by the Order.

—OR—

- 2) A third part of the Rosary (5 decades)

The confusion regarding this matter is unfortunate. Sometimes it is said quite mistakenly: "All you have to do to belong to the Third Order is say five decades of your Rosary." Aside from the fact that this statement completely

ignores the basic notion that a Third Order is a *way of life*, it also fails to understand that the five decades of the Rosary is just an alternative to be used when one is hindered from saying either the *Pater Noster* Office, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, or the entire Rosary. The Third Order must never become a haven for people interested solely in spiritual bargain-hunting. It is a way of life designed by the Church for those interested in the maximum in things spiritual, not the minimum.

WHEN SHOULD THE OFFICE BE RECITED?

Since there is also some confusion among tertiaries as to the time when the various hours of the Office should be recited, the following table might be helpful:

Matins	}	the preceding evening or in the morning
Lauds		
Prime	}	before mid-day
Terce		
Sext		
None		
Vespers	}	before the end of the day
Compline		

It should be noted, however, that actually the Office, or any part of it, may be said, as the Rule explicitly notes, "at any hour of the day provided the regular order of hours is observed."² The words of the Office should be pronounced with the lips. However, it is not necessary to read the

² *op. cit.* No. 29.

words aloud. It might also be noted that, from a practical point of view, one hour of the Office recited by the tertiary with dignity, attention, and devotion would be obviously better than several hours just hurried through in order to say that the obligation has been fulfilled.

TERTIARY PRIESTS AND THE OFFICE

The recitation of the Divine Office by priest tertiaries or tertiaries in major orders satisfies the Office obligation. They should, however, recite every day the Responsory *O Spem Miram* with its versicle and prayer in honor of St. Dominic.

Tertiary priests may obtain permission to use the Dominican Breviary and Missal according to the calendar of the Order. This permission should be sought from the Master General whose headquarters are at Rome.

GROUP RECITATION

Tertiaries generally recite the Office privately. On certain occasions, however, for example, at the monthly meetings, they can and do recite at least part of the Office in group. On these occasions they should be most careful to carry out the ritual and rubrics of the Office as best they can. The priest director should instruct them in this matter, see that they make the pauses in the middle of the psalms, maintain the tone, carry out the various inclinations. The leader of the Office (hebdomedarian), those who give out the versicles (versicularians), and the cantors should be trained to fulfill as accurately and as perfectly as possible their various functions. Nothing is too good for the praise of God, and St. Dominic himself, who

was a canon as well as an apostle, placed great stress on the liturgy in all its details. Some chapters on occasions have learned to chant the Office much the same way as the priests and sisters. This practice, of course, is most commendable.

THE SALVE REGINA

The custom of singing the hymn *Salve Regina* to Our Lady is one of long-standing in the Dominican Order dating back to those early days when a diabolical persecution was raging against the brethren, especially in the convents of Bologna and Paris. At the command of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, St. Dominic's immediate successor, the *Salve* was sung every night in every convent. The devil's persecution ceased immediately. Since that time the *Salve* has become a nightly feature of the Friars' Office. It is sung at the end of Compline. As the *Salve* is started the Friars file out from the choir into the Church where they line up before Our Lady's altar and at the words, *Eia ergo, advocata nostra*, they kneel while each one is sprinkled with holy water in memory of the time St. Dominic saw the Blessed Mother going from cell to cell sprinkling each of the sleeping brethren. When they reach the plaintive words, *O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria*, they all bow profoundly. As Father Joret, O.P., so beautifully explains it: "When they utter that beloved name the Friars bow deeply, as though a great gust of wind were bending them all at the same moment."³

Tertiaries should come to love the *Salve*. It is the night

³ *Dominican Life* by F. D. Joret, O.P., p. 185.

song of the Order, the Dominican farewell to their Mother. Even though the tertiary may not be able to attend the *Salve* in the Church of the Friars he can, nevertheless, recite it at the end of the Office with all the dignity and fervor of a true Dominican. Certainly he should be mindful of this beautiful custom as, at night, he takes holy water and blesses himself before retiring.

CHAPTER IX

THE SPIRIT OF ST. DOMINIC IN THE THIRD ORDER

THE SPIRIT OF A RELIGIOUS ORDER is always to be sought in the spirit of its founder. That is why, on March 19, 1924, the late Pope Pius XI wrote to the superiors of Regular Orders exhorting them and all their followers to look to their respective founders, "if they wish to have a sure and certain share in the graces which flow from their vocation." A Dominican tertiary, if he wishes to be a true son of St. Dominic, must then look to his fatherly lawgiver for direction in his life as well as for inspiration. In a word, he must take his spirit from the Castilian Patriarch, Dominic de Guzman, who is, in a very real sense, the father of all Dominicans.

What was St. Dominic like? Is the popular picture of St. Dominic an accurate one? What was his spirit? How does it differ, let us say, from the Franciscan spirit? Or the Benedictine? The answers to these questions are important for they give us the clue to true Dominican life in our present day as well as the year 1245.

SAINT DOMINIC

To be misunderstood in their own day was the fate of most of the saints of God. To be misunderstood seven hundred years after death has been the misfortune of St.

Dominic. Of all the saints in the Calendar of the Church, he has been one of the least understood. Strangely enough, he was appreciated much better in his own time than in ours. Too often in our day he is pictured as a stern, forbidding sort of person, an inquisitor, the unbending judge and dispenser of exacting justice. As a matter of fact, he was none of these things. He was not a stern man, but a joyous one; even tender and compassionate. People were not afraid of him; they loved him. When he celebrated Mass, for example, so great was his devotion after the Consecration that frequently he was observed to be bathed in tears. His brethren rejoiced at his comings and sorrowed at his goings. As for the charge that he was an inquisitor, this is completely false. As Father Mandonnet remarks: "Whatever may be said to the contrary, Dominic never exercised the office of judge delegated for the prosecution of heresy, an office instituted by Gregory IX twelve years after the saint's death, one which a number of Preachers were required to exercise."¹ He certainly loathed heresy, but never heretics. These unfortunate people were the object of his fiery zeal. It might be said that he loved them with the love of a rescuer.

A most interesting and enlightening portrait of St. Dominic has been left us by Cecilia Cesarini, one of the sisters to whom St. Dominic gave the habit at St. Sixtus: "The Blessed Dominic was of medium height and of slight build. His countenance was beautiful, of fair complexion, with light auburn hair and beard and luminous eyes. A kind of radiance shown from his brow, inspiring love and rev-

¹ *St. Dominic and His Work* by Pierre Mandonnet, O.P., p. 62.

erence in all. Full of joy, he seemed ever ready to smile, unless moved to pity by the affliction of his neighbor. His hands were long and shapely; his voice strong, noble and sonorous. He never was bald, and his corona was complete, sprinkled with a few white hairs."

So far for the physical description of St. Dominic. In the dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena the most magnificent eulogy ever pronounced upon St. Dominic was delivered by the Father Himself to the wool-dyer's daughter. "Dominic," said God the Father, "has taken on him the office of the Word, of my only begotten Son. . . . He was a light which I gave the world through the intervention of Mary."² At another time speaking of Dominic, the Father told St. Catherine: "I have two sons; I have begotten the One by the generating act of My nature and the other by a free and loving adoption." What other words could even begin to express the true greatness of the founder of the Dominican Order?

Finally, it should be noted that Dominic de Guzman was a man of his age. He did not dwell in a world apart. He mingled with the people of his time and wrestled with their problems. He was associated with all the great movements of his age, besides inaugurating one himself. The religious hunger of the people, which at that time amounted to a movement, stirred him. So did the widespread heretical propaganda that took such a heavy toll among souls of the Thirteenth Century. The crusade of that day, the problem of communal life in the city, the disputes among the schoolmen in the university centers, particularly those

² *Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena.*

in Paris and Bologna, attracted his attention. He was not only interested in all these things, he was vitally concerned with them. His zeal drove him into the very midst of the fray. He could no more avoid them than he could avoid breathing. William de Montferrat, who knew Dominic at Rome, said he never met a man so zealous for the salvation of souls.³ Briefly, Dominic de Guzman was that rare combination of contemplative, teacher and apostle. It is the heritage he has left his children, a shining example of a man of prayer who managed to teach and save souls while maintaining a perfect balance in his own life.

THE DOMINICAN SPIRIT

Every religious order has a spirit that is distinct, even incompatible with that of another. The Church herself recognizes this fact. That is why, for example, one cannot belong to the Third Order of St. Francis and that of St. Dominic at the same time without a very special dispensation. As the Father said to St. Catherine, ". . . Dominic and Francis were two columns of the holy Church. Francis with the poverty which was specially his own . . . and Dominic with his learning"⁴ It is not that the various orders are opposed but rather that they have different rôles to play in the Church's drama. As St. Paul so beautifully said: ". . . there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of workings, but the same God who works all things in all."

What is the spirit behind St. Dominic's order? Like

³ *Processus* (Bologna), No. 12.

⁴ *Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena.*

every order, the Dominican Order seeks the perfection of each one of its members. In seeking this perfection the Dominican goes by way of contemplation. He must accentuate the truth in everything he does. *Truth* is the motto emblazoned on the shield of his order. It must also be emblazoned on the Dominican soul. Every night St. Dominic is hailed by his brethren in the hymn *O Lumen* as "Light of the Church, Doctor of truth." St. Thomas Aquinas said: "Our Spirit must strive unceasingly to know God more and more."⁵

The means that St. Dominic left at the disposal of all Dominicans for the attainment of truth were, principally, choral prayer and, above all, religious study. It is chiefly through these means that a Dominican is to reach his goal—the contemplation and the apostolate to which his life must be dedicated. This is true even for simple tertiaries. As Father Joret remarks: "Even simple Tertiaries should be relatively better instructed and more intellectual than other Christians, and assuredly no Dominican soul worthy of the name will ever prefer sentimental dreams to the certainty of Faith."⁶ As we have noted before, the Master General, in his encyclical letter to the tertiaries, refused to take as an excuse an insufficient amount of religious instruction on the part of Dominican tertiaries. The Rule itself in treating of this point says: ". . . he should be filled with a burning zeal for the promotion of truth and should be characterized by devoted loyalty toward the Church and the Pope."⁷

⁵ *De Trinitate*, II, 1, ad. 7.

⁶ *Dominican Life* by F. D. Joret, O.P., p. 90-91.

⁷ *Rule*, No. 8.

When a postulant enters the Third Order all these things should be made clear to him. Of course, it will take time to convey the Dominican spirit but the ideas and ideals can be presented gradually. It is the task of the priest director and the novice master to instruct all new members not only in the Rule but also in the life of St. Dominic and the spirit that is behind his way of life.

CHAPTER X

AN ORDER OF PENANCE

FROM ITS VERY BEGINNING SAINT DOMINIC'S ORDER attracted great numbers of penitents. These people had been searching in vain for spiritual help and immediately sensed in this new Order that spirit of unworldliness they had been seeking. As we have mentioned before, it was the Master General, Munio de Zamora, who in 1285 gave these sincere layfolk a definite Rule of Life suited to their needs and safeguarded by the prudent and ever watchful eye of the Church. It is significant that the full title of the Third Order is "The Third Order of Penance of St. Dominic."

BASIC MEANING OF PENANCE

In his splendid Encyclical, the Most Reverend Stanislaus Gillet, O.P., in commenting on Munio de Zamora's concept of the Third Order as a religious life lived in the world says, ". . . when one receives a call into the Third Order, one spiritually abandons the world."¹ The very word "Penance" in the title of the Third Order implies a turning away from the world (*aversio a mundo*) and a conversion to God (*conversio ad Deum*). A person enter-

¹ Encyclical Letter to the Members of the Secular Third Order of St. Dominic (1933) p. 13.

ing into religion (whether in the convent or in the secular Third Order) does precisely this. There is a change of heart, a turning away from the inordinate love of the world, its vanities and empty pleasures, and a turning to God and the things of God. Sometimes a Third Order is referred to as "the Order of the Change of Heart."

It is no small thing to be a tertiary. Indeed it is a great honor and a privilege. The late Pope Pius XI in his *Aracoeli* address indicated in no uncertain words the dignity of the tertiary vocation and way of life:

"An assembly of Tertiaries would always and under all circumstances be particularly affecting to our heart because of what your profession as Tertiaries implies and proclaims.

"It proclaims the dawn and realization of a thing most beautiful in itself and most welcome to the heart of God, something that is a supreme blessing to poor mankind, something which has a prominent place in the designs of God, something allied in every way with the inestimable attainments of the religious orders in the world and in the Church. . . ."²

A tertiary is good insofar as his change of heart has been complete and lasting. The real test of the tertiary's profession could be found in the answer to two simple, yet all embracing, questions. "How much have I detached myself from the things and the spirit of the world?" and "How closely have I attached myself to God?" This last, of course, is the more important of the two.

From this it follows that the life of penance enjoined for

² Pope Pius XI in an address, *Non e piccolo* (Feb. 26, 1923).

tertiaries does not essentially consist in depriving oneself of many things, in penitential practices, or in acts of mortification. All these may or may not be important. Unless the tertiary, through the use of these things, turns to God, they mean nothing. Penance for penance's sake is stupid, even debasing. Penance for God's sake is penance with a purpose.

Unhappily, there is a type of person who mistakes the Third Order Rule as a mere set of pious observances and mortifications. Certain externals of the Third Order are taken for the substance and the result is almost always disastrous for the individual as well as for the Order. A sentimental attraction to the prayer life of the Third Order, its penitential practices, the wearing of the scapular or the idea of being buried in the habit can lead one far astray. Unless there be a breaking with the world and a conversion to God, these things, all good in themselves, can mean very little. Indeed, the very means established by the Order to help souls attain the end of the Order can become a hindrance rather than a help and can blind one to the real meaning of tertiary life. The best things can be perverted. That is why St. Augustine says in his Rule: "Pride enters into good works in order that it might destroy them."

PENITENTIAL PRACTICES OF THE THIRD ORDER

The penitential practices explicitly mentioned in the Rule are comparatively few. Those that are mentioned, however, are a constant reminder to the tertiary that God must hold the first place and that the unruly demands of nature must be curbed and checked.

Three threats to the tertiaries' spiritual progress are men-

tioned explicitly:

First, there is the threat of vanity, particularly vanity in dress, which can be a great temptation especially for women. The Rule says very simply:

"The attire of tertiaries should be according to approved custom and age. That Christian modesty may shine in the dress of tertiaries, all worldly vanity should be shunned, especially in the form of fashion of one's garments. This is becoming to the servants and the handmaids of Jesus Christ."³

Especially in our day must tertiaries beware of extreme fashions among women. The Holy See has many times spoken on this dangerous trend, and tertiaries, of all people, have the duty to be on their guard against any and all attempts to lower the standards of modesty among women.

The second threat is that which comes by way of over-indulgence in food. It is taken care of by an insistence on fasting. The tertiary is to fast on the vigils of three great Dominican Feasts, the Most Holy Rosary, St. Dominic and St. Catherine of Siena. . . . they should also observe the Fridays of the whole year as fasts and exercise themselves in other works of penance—with the advice, however, of the Director or a discreet confessor."⁴

The third threat is that which is offered by way of worldly amusements. On this point the Rule says:

"Tertiaries should refrain from visiting places of

³ Rule, No. 17.

⁴ Rule, No. 37.

worldly amusement. They should not go to dances or worldly banquets or frivolous shows. If, however, it is impossible to abstain from all these, they should ask the permission of the Director or at least inform him."⁵

In general then it is quite plain that pleasure must never be sought as the ultimate end of any of the tertiaries' activities. As Father Joret, in commenting on this point, says: "It (pleasure) may accompany them (our activities) and may even help us to accomplish a duty. But we must never act for the sake of pleasure. On that fundamental principle we must base the austerity of our life."⁶

⁵ *Rule*, No. 38.

⁶ *Dominican Life* by F. D. Joret, O.P., p. 283.

CHAPTER XI

MEDITATION IN THE LIFE OF THE TERTIARY

A DOMINICAN TERTIARY should learn to meditate. The motto of the Order formulated by St. Thomas Aquinas, "To contemplate and to give to others the fruits of our contemplation," applies to the Tertiary as well as to the priests and religious. One cannot be a champion of the faith and a true light of the world, as the Dominicans have been called by the Holy See, unless there burns brightly within the heart the flame of interior prayer.

Unfortunately, the people of our secularistic age have come to look upon meditation as being the sole privilege of priests and nuns. "We don't have time to meditate anymore." "What is meditation anyway?" "After all, I'm not a saint!" This strange perversion (for that is what it is—a twist of the mind) can be accounted for in many ways. The art of thinking itself has become practically a lost art in our day, when our thinking is being done *for* us rather than *by* us, and consequently meditation, which involves thinking, has become obsolete. Another explanation, especially among people of good will, people really interested in the things of God, is the inferior meditation books that have flooded the market. All too frequently these books fall into the hands of the spiritual child who

is just beginning to toddle in the way of perfection. Sometimes meditation is presented as something involved, complicated. The beginner shies away. He gets the idea that meditation is "quite high." In no time he makes the conclusion, "This can't be for me."

To rule out meditation is a spiritual tragedy. One of the surest and best means of advancement is henceforth closed to this spiritual child who all too frequently lapses into a state of lethargy or a never-ending spiritual infancy. What should have been spiritual development gives way to spiritual stagnation. Where there is no progression there is bound to be retrogression. As Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., says: "The interior life is for all the one thing necessary. It ought to be constantly developing in our souls more so than what we call our intellectual life, more so than our scientific, artistic, or literary life."¹

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is not involved. It is comparatively simple. Meditation entails two steps—thinking and loving. Only in meditation the thinking must be in some way *about* God, the loving which accompanies the thinking must be a loving *of* God. When both of these take place, we have the essentials of meditation. As a matter of fact, we do both of these things, thinking and loving, many times during the day, or at least we should. To tell anyone that he is incapable of thinking or loving would be considered the height of insult. To tell anyone that he is incapable of meditation is, in a certain sense, to say the same thing. Yet

¹ *The Three Ways of the Spiritual Life*, p. 1 (New York: Benziger, 1938).

the ordinary Catholic today would resent the first charge and wholeheartedly agree with the second!

In brief, therefore, meditation is essentially a movement of supernatural knowledge and love. Or, as St. Teresa of Avila says: "Mental prayer is nothing else, in my opinion, but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him, who, we know, loves us."² This is not at all complicated—supernatural thinking and loving, frequent conversation with the Divine Friend.

Sometimes the affections (for example, joy, sadness, etc.) enter into meditation. This is well and good provided they are controlled by reason; otherwise we have sentimentality, or fanaticism; but not real love or true devotion. When Saint Dominic shed copious tears while praying, it was not because his affections were running away with him or because he was weak or sentimental. Rather, the intensity of the act of his will, his loving, overflowed into his affections.

The Tertiary should beware, therefore, of sitting down and deliberately inducing "feelings" in prayer. This is, to say the least, dangerous, indicative more of a prideful spirit rather than a prayerful one. It is an effort to enjoy the good things of God rather than the God of good things. It is in such things as this that the Tertiary, as well as the ordinary Christian, stands desperately in need of enlightened spiritual direction.

MEDITATION IN DAILY LIFE

Since supernatural thinking and loving are the two big steps in meditation, then obviously meditation is not some-

² *Life of St. Teresa by Herself* (Chapter VIII).

thing that has to be confined to a definite period each day, as some seem to think. It can be done at any time. The saints did it practically all the time. A young lady who is very much in love with a young man does not confine her thinking about him and her loving of him to a half hour before breakfast. Her mind and her heart are apt to seek him in the midst of housecleaning, while typing a letter, or when coming upon his picture. For her this is perfectly normal and perfectly natural. In the case of the lover of God we might say it is perfectly normal and perfectly supernatural.

Obviously such a spirit of recollection is not a starting point; but it should be the aim of every true lover of Christ. The Dominican Tertiary who takes his vocation seriously should work with this goal constantly in view. To aim at anything less is to invite mediocrity.

Man being what he is, however, it is usually necessary that at the beginning he set aside a certain time each day for meditation. Otherwise he is apt to neglect it altogether. There is a discipline in prayer and like all discipline it must be learned the hard way, by close attention to small details. For this reason the Tertiary should at the beginning set aside some fifteen minutes to a half-hour each day which must be reserved entirely for meditation. This will not prove easy at first. It is something that one must repeat constantly before the habit of prayer is acquired. In selecting this time the morning is to be preferred to the afternoon or evening as it is generally agreed that this is the best time for spiritual exercise. Due to their complicated day lay people may often find the morning impossible, in which case any other convenient time will have to do.

HOW TO MEDITATE

In the beginning the Tertiary may have to use a book. Any good spiritual book will do; the New Testament or the Imitation of Christ would be excellent. The book is to be used, not as spiritual reading, but merely as the *starting point* of meditation. This is important. There is a tendency on the part of beginners to spend the entire time reading and then considering this to be meditation. If the time should come when the book is no longer necessary, it should not be used. It is the means to an end; not an end in itself.

The Church is the best place for meditation. If this is not possible, some quiet spot at home could be chosen.

First of all, make an act of humility. This is fundamental for every prayer should be humble. Realize just for a moment what you are (your pride, your sinfulness, etc.) and what God is (His Goodness and His Power, etc.). Ponder on the fact that by sanctifying grace the Blessed Trinity dwells within you. This fact should make you humbly adore Him in your heart.

Then make an act of faith. This is where the book can be helpful. Read or think on God, His Perfections, on Our Lord, His Life, Passion or Death, His Resurrection. Perhaps dwell on your own state in life, the mystery of grace in your soul, your last end. Try to gaze on one of these truths. Admire it. Love it. Believe it. Make an act of faith. *Credo*, I believe.

An act of hope naturally follows. The light of faith has revealed God as being the answer to your desire for happiness. Turn to Him in His Infinite Goodness and ask His help to attain the reward He has promised you. "As the

hart panteth after the fountains of living water, so doth my soul pant after Thee, O God."³

You are now ready for an act of charity. Spontaneously there should arise in your soul an act of love for God not only because of His gifts but because of Himself. Perhaps you will say a simple: "I love You." Perhaps you will turn to your God in sorrow for your sins, your pride, your sensuality, begging Him to conform your will to His and thereby break the chains of sin that bind you to earth. Perhaps you will, under this impulse of charity, make some definite resolutions to break with some specific sin or fault. This is meditation.

When you have made this act of humility and the three subsequent supernatural acts of Faith, Hope and Charity, you have meditated. You have thought about God and loved Him. It is as simple as that, and just as profound.

³ Ps. 41, 1.

CHAPTER XII

THE TERTIARY'S DEVOTION TO MARY

DOMINICANS HAVE ALWAYS CLAIMED MARY as their special Patroness. The early history as well as the traditions of the Order constantly sing the praise and devotion of Dominic's children for Mary and, what is even more important, of Mary's love and solicitude for Dominic's children. The opening passage of the delightful "Lives of the Brethren" claims that the Dominican Order was founded at the behest of the Blessed Mother. "If we carefully examine the sacred scriptures," it reads, "we shall clearly perceive that Our Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary, is our gracious mediatrix with her Son and the very pious helper of the human race . . . amongst these various graces not the least outstanding was the foundation of so great and so famous an Order. Her prayers obtained it from God for the salvation of men, as we know from the revelations that have been vouchsafed in several instances."

One such instance is related of a holy monk who revealed that, while in ecstasy, he saw the Mother of God pleading to her Divine Son for the salvation of mankind. At first Our Lord refused her; but eventually He said to Our Lady: "Mother, what more can I do or ought I do for men? I sent them the patriarchs, and the prophets,

and they made little effort to amend their ways; I came to them, I sent them the apostles, and they slew them as they had slain Me. I have sent them martyrs, doctors and confessors in plenty and they would not obey their voice. Nevertheless, because I will refuse you nothing, I will send them my Preachers to enlighten and to cleanse them."

Blessed Jordan of Saxony tells us that Blessed Reginald, before he had even been admitted to the Order, received the Dominican scapular from the hands of Our Blessed Mother herself, a singular indication of her maternal solicitude. This completed the habit of the Order which is still in use today.

Throughout all of history great Dominican names have always been connected with outstanding devotion to Our Lady, as witness, St. Dominic himself, Blessed Alan de Rupe, and Blessed Louis de Montfort. Perhaps the Dominican attitude toward Mary has best been expressed by the latter in his "secret of Mary." In this classic treatise, referring to all humankind, Blessed Louis states quite flatly, "Mary has received a special office and power over our souls for the purpose of nourishing them and giving them growth in God."¹

THE TERTIARY AND OUR LADY

The present day Tertiary should make it his concern to learn the Dominican history and tradition about Our Lady so that he might come to a filial love and devotion for his Mother. The Third Order Rule explicitly states that the Tertiary "should cultivate a special devotion, based on a

¹*The Secret of Mary* by Bl. Louis de Montfort, p. 6. (Bay Shore N. Y., The Montfort Fathers).

particular attraction toward the most faithful Patroness of the whole Order, the Virgin Mary."²

This special devotion toward Our Lady may take any form. The Tertiary should understand that there is no iron-clad way of honoring Mary, just as there is no particular spiritual mold out of which Dominicans are expected to be turned. Dominican spirituality always leaves ample room for the development of the individual's personality—that is why there is always found such variety among Dominicans and that is why, as is often remarked, the Dominican saints are so noticeably different, one from another. However, there is one form of devotion to Mary that every Dominican cherishes and practices. That devotion is, of course, the Rosary.

THE ROSARY

Tradition has it that the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Dominic one night while he was praying in the chapel of Notre Dame in Prouille. In her hands she held a Rosary which she taught Dominic to say and bade him preach it to the world. Our Lady promised St. Dominic that through the Rosary sinners would be converted and the just would obtain graces. At that time St. Dominic was preaching, with little success, against the vicious and powerful Albigensian heresy that had swept over southern France and northern Italy and was threatening the rest of Christendom. From this time on, armed with this heaven-sent weapon, Dominic finally began to stem the tide of the heresy and to bring many of its adherents back to the true fold.

²*Rule*, No. 34.

Ever since, the Rosary has been associated with the Dominican Order and has been propagated with great success throughout the entire world. Pope Leo XIII, along with many Popes before him, speaking of the Rosary, said: "... This devotion is the rightful property of the Dominican family. To the Friars Preachers is entrusted the commission to teach it to the Catholic world."

It was a Dominican Pope, St. Pius V, who instituted the feast of the Holy Rosary in thanksgiving for the success of the Christian fleet against the forces of Islam at the famous battle of Lepanto in 1571. It is also interesting to note that at Lourdes in 1858 and at Fátima in 1917 Our Blessed Lady, in both instances, carried a Rosary and urged its recitation as a remedy against the ills of society. At Fátima, a small town in Portugal about sixty miles from Lisbon, Our Lady in answer to a query put to her by the child Lucy as to who she was, said, "I am the Lady of the Rosary and I have come to warn the faithful to amend their lives and ask pardon for their sins. They must not continue to offend Our Lord, already so deeply offended. They must say the Rosary."

THE TERTIARY'S ROSARY OBLIGATION

As has been stated in a previous chapter, the Tertiary is obliged by the Rule to say either the old "Pater Noster" Office, the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin according to the Dominican rite, or the entire Rosary. If he is hindered from saying any of these, he may say one of the Little Offices approved by the Order or a third part of the Rosary.³

³ *Rule*, No. 28.

Many of the Tertiaries, for various reasons, choose to say the Rosary rather than the Office. The Rule leaves a choice in this matter. For one thing, the Rosary can be said at times and in places where the Office would be more difficult. It also can be divided and said decade by decade rather than all at once. As someone recently remarked, the Rosary can be said in blackouts, or bomb shelters, or in any number of places where many other forms of prayer would prove exceedingly difficult, if not impossible.

Finally, the Dominican Tertiary should remember that the Rosary is a form of mental prayer as well as vocal prayer. It must never become for him a sheer mumbling of words. Meditation on the mysteries of the Faith, as presented in the Rosary, will normally lead to a great sense of conviction regarding the truths of our religion. Ultimately such conviction will immeasurably increase the spiritual stature of the Tertiary.

CHAPTER XIII

READING—CHANNEL OF TRUTH

TRUTH IS AT THE VERY HEART OF REAL DOMINICANISM. A Dominican not interested in truth would be even more of an anomaly than a maestro not interested in music or a mother not interested in children. He simply would not make sense. All his training, all his traditions, all his life would be contradicted. Now a Dominican Tertiary is as much a Dominican as a Dominican religious and truth means as much to the one as it does to the other, or at least it should. The Tertiary may not have the professional interest in truth as, let us say, the theologian, yet he has as great a need for truth, in some cases even greater because he can more easily be taken in by error than his religious brother.

One of the great problems of our day is the fact that the channels whereby the truth, the word of God, should reach our people are being gradually closed to them. One of the great tragedies of our day is that the people do not know it, if they do, they either don't care or don't know what to do about it. Great and international news cartels deliberately "slant" the news to suit selfish local or national prejudices and thereby blackout truth usually in the name of strange and devious ideologies. Radio commentators make the most outrageous statements and millions of Cath-

olics who should know better nod (the word is apt) their heads in tacit and placid approval. The truth of Jesus Christ is not so much attacked as it is ignored. It is almost as if He had never spoken, had never lived. The fact that over 75,000,000 of our people profess no belief whatsoever in the supernatural is a fairly good indication of where we are drifting.

In the face of all this organized and unorganized opposition to truth how is the Dominican Tertiary going to meet it? The following is merely a partial answer to this question treating just one phase (that of reading) of a problem that is complex and many-sided.

DOMINICAN SPIRITUAL READING

One of the Tertiary's first obligations is to become imbued with the spirit of the Order. Therefore, it is his duty to learn the history and tradition of his Order as well as the lives of the Dominican saints. A logical starting point would seem to be a good life of the father and founder, St. Dominic, and for this perhaps nothing more appropriate could be suggested than the small but fascinating *Life of St. Dominic* by the late Father Bede Jarrett, O.P. This is easy reading and catches some of the spirit of the Order and its founder. The Tertiary will also want to become acquainted with St. Dominic's most famous son, the great intellectual and spiritual giant, St. Thomas Aquinas. For this purpose he might read *St. Thomas Aquinas* by G. K. Chesterton or the recent *The Man from Rocco Sicca* by Father Reginald Coffey, O.P.

If the Tertiary be a woman she should make a special study of the lives of the women Dominican saints, notably

those of the Third Order secular, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Rose of Lima. Very little has been written in English on St. Rose although two juvenile works (*Angel of the Andes* by Mary Fabyan Windeatt and *Rose of the Americas* by Sara Maynard) have appeared and are worth reading even by adults. Fortunately there is no such sparsity of literature in regard to St. Catherine of Siena. There comes to mind such books as *The Flame* by Jeannette Eaton, *St. Catherine of Siena* by Alice Curtayne, *St. Catherine of Siena* by Jorgensen and the rare but invaluable *Life* by her confessor and spiritual director, Blessed Raymond of Capua. For a short sketch of all the Dominican saints (excluding the recently canonized St. Margaret of Hungary), the Tertiary might read *Dominican Saints* by the Dominican Novices.

There is also a vast field of what might be called general Dominican literature written by (and sometimes about) Dominicans. A few might be mentioned: *Treatise on the Spiritual Life* by St. Vincent Ferrer, *St. Dominic and His Work* by Pere Mandonnet, O.P., all the works of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., with special mention being given to his well-known *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*. Father Garrigou-Lagrange's works are excellent although it must be admitted that they are by no means easy reading, especially for those who have had no philosophical or theological background. Other works are *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* by Pere Lagrange, O.P., the late lamented biblical genius; all the spiritual works of Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., to mention just a few, *Meditations for Layfolk*, *Our Lady of Lourdes*, *The House of Gold*, and *The Space of Life Between*; likewise the spiritual writings of such other English Dominicans as Reginald Buckler, O.P., who wrote *The Per-*

fection of Charity; Vincent McNabb, O.P., who wrote *The Craft of Prayer*, *The Craft of Suffering* and many others, and the talented Gerald Vann, O.P., who wrote among others *On Being Human*, and more recently, *The Heart of Man*.

Dominican Life by F. D. Joret, O.P., is a book written especially for Tertiaries and one that all Tertiaries should read although at this writing it is out of print. Another splendid work is *The Spirit of St. Dominic* by Humbert Clerissac, O.P. For those deeply interested in the liturgy there are *Hymns of the Dominican Missal and Breviary* by Aquinas Byrnes, O.P., and *History of the Dominican Liturgy* by William R. Bonniwell, O.P.

To mention just a few others there are: *The Life of Christ* by Pere Didon, O.P., *St. Thomas Aquinas Meditations* and *God Cares for You* both edited by E. C. McEniry, O.P., the classic *Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena*, *Blessed Jordan of Saxony's Letters of Spiritual Direction* translated by Norbert F. Georges, O.P., *The Way of the Blessed Christ* by Father Kienberger, O.P., *Our Lady of Fatima* by Archbishop Finbar Ryan, O.P., and the Marian classic (written incidentally by a Tertiary priest) *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Blessed Louis de Montfort.

THOMISTIC READING

Many Tertiaries, of course, will want to go into the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. This can be a life-time occupation and study. The laity has been given invaluable help in this matter by courses and lectures inaugurated in various parts of this country for this purpose. Most of these courses, presented to layfolk in the non-technical language that they can grasp, have been based on the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas.

nas. The book that has been practically universally used has been the marvelous *Companion to the Summa*, a four volume masterpiece by Walter Farrell, O.P. This work is just what its title claims to be, a companion and not a substitute for the *Summa*, at the same time being a splendid synthesis of St. Thomas' classic work. Striking figures and examples make it comparatively easy for the lay reader to grasp some of the more difficult ideas. Another book that might prove most helpful to the Tertiary is *The Basic Works of St. Thomas Aquinas* edited by Anton Pegis. This two volume work of several thousand pages contains substantial parts of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

The Tertiary pursuing Thomistic studies will not find the road easy, nevertheless his hard work will be well repayed in obtaining a solid grasp on Catholic doctrine.

GENERAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL READING

It goes without saying that Tertiaries should have much more than a passing or casual acquaintance with Sacred Scripture, particularly the New Testament. Christ, His words and His doctrines must become a part of the Tertiary's very life. This can be accomplished in part by a daily reading of the Sacred Scripture as well as through an intelligent use of the Missal wherein so much of the Scriptures is to be found. *The Imitation of Christ* should be familiar to the Tertiary. Both the Scriptures and the *Imitation* can be used quite effectively as helps in meditation.

Other non-Dominican spiritual writers should be given careful consideration, for example, the works of Father Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., Abbot Marmion, O.S.B., Père Plus, S.J., Robert Hugh Benson, not to mention the classic spir-

itual writers such as St. Augustine, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales, to mention a few.

Nor should the great social, historical and economic writers of our day be neglected. We are living in a day of great transition, not to say upheaval. The writings of men like Dawson, Belloc and Chesterton, should not only be read but should be taken as texts for study groups and discussion clubs. They have a message for our day that is largely being overlooked, much to our shame and disadvantage. They deserve a careful hearing and Dominican Tertiaries should be among the first to face squarely the truths they have to offer, however bitter the dose. That great Dominican, Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., has, in his social writings, a message for our time that rings stronger and truer as our world drifts more and more surely into chaos. Perhaps a good work of Father McNabb's to begin with would be *Old Principles and the New Order*.

In this field of the social order Dominican Tertiaries should be keenly alive to the pronouncements of the Holy See and should literally snap them up as quickly as they are delivered. The morning after any important Papal pronouncement the full text has been appearing in *The New York Times*. There should be such a demand for copies of this issue that newspaper publishers all over the country would immediately see the advantage (even financial) of printing these important, epoch-making pronouncements in full. Whether it be an Encyclical Letter or merely an important talk, all Catholics, and particularly all Tertiaries, should be alert to the one voice in our world that speaks truth fearlessly and unashamedly and, at the same time, commands a world-wide hearing.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MODERN APOSTOLATE OF THE THIRD ORDER

A DOMINICAN IS BY NATURE AND GRACE an Apostle. Our Order was founded for souls; the salvation of souls was its aim and its end. Saint Dominic himself was an apostle to his fingertips. He labored, as Our Lord labored, "even unto weariness for others." The Order he founded was to be a skillful and a highly trained instrument of the apostolate. How well he succeeded, how well his Order succeeded, is a matter of historical record.

However, the Dominican Order or the Dominican ideal must not be looked upon as a mere phenomenon of history. Dominicanism is, and must be, a living reality in this our present day. The Order's mission did not end in the Thirteenth Century; it is still continuing in the Twentieth. There are souls to be saved today as there were souls to be saved in the days of Dominic and Thomas and Reginald and Jordan of Saxony. Only today, due to many intricate circumstances, the task is a much more difficult one.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

We live in a secularistic society. Stated that bluntly it means very little. Actually the implications are tremendous. Saint Dominic, were he introduced to our society, would be amazed and aghast at the things that are commonplace for

us today. God was a reality in the lives of the people of his age; for us God has become either a myth or has been relegated to the position of a peculiar old relative who is kept more or less hidden away upstairs so that His Presence may not cause us embarrassment before our "enlightened" friends. Among many Catholics He has a place certainly, but it's a relatively unimportant place and one that can quite easily be superseded by business or pleasure or any number of "really important things, you know."

To take just a few examples. . . .

God no longer enters into work as He did in Saint Dominic's day. Business is now business. And that is that. This is not a mere passing attitude of a few mistaken people. It has become a philosophy, a way of life for millions. It is almost as universally accepted as a rainstorm and is considered almost as inevitable. It would be very inconvenient, not to say embarrassing, to introduce God into the intimate workings of a secular publishing firm or a big-time advertising concern. He might insist on having something to say about the inconsistency of publishing a defense of the Catholic Religion one day and the philosophy of Marxism the next. "After all," we are told time and time again, "truth is relative." (How Saint Dominic would have flayed that!) Or, introduced into the inner workings of an advertising agency, God might question their highly questionable copy and thereby curtail the freedom of the press! So God is put out of business—if you know what I mean.

The home is another point of departure—for God. The teaching of Christ on the sanctity of marriage is being systematically undermined. It is a fact of public knowledge that the divorce rate is fast catching up with the marriage

rate in our country. A mid-western city reported that there were three divorces for every four marriages last year. The Diocesan chanceries of our big cities are busy with marriage cases. That is what happens when Christ is taken out of the home.

The same is true of modern economic life, recreation life, educational life. Christ has been removed from them all. Our age has little, if anything, in common with the age of Dominic de Guzman. Our age resembles rather the days of the early Church. As the present Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, pointed out: "The new conditions have nothing in common with the learned controversies of the past. Today Christians are being reproached for the same offenses against the law as those for which Peter and Paul were reproached by the Caesars of the first century."¹ Our age today it is, in a certain sense, much worse. Our darkness is even more impenetrable. For we are living in a world that has known the Light of Christ and rejected it. The contrast between the Light we once knew and the darkness we now have only adds to our confusion.

Some of the very things of which we are so proud have worked and are still working (though not necessarily) to our own destruction. While we revel in the magnificent scientific discoveries of our age, it might be well that we examine every one of them to see if we are using them or they are using us. From this point of view the modern press, radio, and movie, for example, should be subjected to the closest of scrutiny. As Christopher Dawson points out: "... today the scientific development of the techniques of

¹ Pope Pius XII in a broadcast on Mary 12, 1942.

social control have created a new situation in which for the first time in history it has become possible to make the human soul itself a cog in the mechanism of planned organization."² For, as Dawson further states, "If the channels are closed by which the word of Christ and the power of the Spirit are communicated to man corporately and individually, the world must fall back into the state of darkness and slavery which Christ came to destroy."³

THE TERTIARY IN THE MODERN WORLD

That, very briefly, is the challenge the Twentieth Century Dominican faces. His apostolate must be found within this field. The Third Order of St. Dominic, being a real part of the Dominican Order, must, by nature and by Rule, help in the apostolate of the First Order.

"... They (tertiaries) should also help in Apostolic works, particularly those of the Order. They should devote themselves to works of charity and mercy according to the conditions of time and the necessities of place, either privately or as a body, according to their limits and capabilities under the direction of their Superiors. They should also willingly assist the parish priest in pious works and particularly, where there is a necessity, in imparting religious instruction to boys and girls."⁴

Since the big problem of our day is secularism, then the

² *Christian Freedom* by Christopher Dawson, p. 12 (London: Sands).

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Rule, No. 41-43.

laity have, as the recent Popes have clearly indicated, a truly providential mission to fulfill in our day. For secularism is a disease that infects not one part of the social body but all of it. In other words, since society is made up chiefly of lay people, then it is particularly the lay life that has been taken away from Christ and that must be restored to Him. The Third Order member does not have to search for a field of the apostolate; he is surrounded by countless fields, all desperately in need of apostolic attention. In business life and home life and recreational life and economic life have all been taken away from Christ, then the modern tertiary and tertiary groups must enlist, as it were, on the spot and fight Christ's battles *where they are*. In deed, the Church herself has laid this charge on the shoulders of Christian men and women of our day.

"In order to bring back to Christ those whole classes of men who have denied Him, we must gather and train from amongst their very ranks auxiliary soldiers of the Church, men who know their mentality and their aspirations, and who with kindly fraternal charity will be able to win their hearts. Undoubtedly the first and immediate apostles of the working men must themselves be working men, and the immediate apostles of the employers must themselves be employers."⁵

The battle is where we are. The modern tertiary, mother of a family, finds herself and her children the object of the most vicious and diabolical paganism via press and radio. She must protect her children from movies that are

⁵ Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*.

unfolding a philosophy of materialism that is as insidious as it is technically perfect.

The tertiary businessman often finds himself involved in a system that takes no account of God and very little account of man. He finds corruption in high places and in low. To be completely and wholeheartedly Christian in his business practices he finds, very often, to be well nigh impossible, this side of bankruptcy. What should he do? The field of his apostolate is right before his eyes. It consists, as Pope Pius XI took pains to point out, in *organizing* against such an unjust system.

The young woman tertiary, in this year of Our Lord, finds that there is a widespread conspiracy against her modesty and the modesty of her girl companions. The beauty of young womanhood is being systematically exploited by such things as modern advertising in order to sell such things as cornflakes, whiskey, cigarettes and numerous gadgets. She finds it hard to buy clothes that are modest—according to a Christian standard of modesty; she finds it impossible to get bathing costumes that bear any resemblance to common decency. She does not have to look far for the field of her apostolate. Obviously she might enter the field of clothes, of designing and dressmaking to restore these important fields to Christ. She must protest loudly and effectively against so many of the advertisers who are betraying her young womanhood for thirty pieces of silver.

* * * *

Perhaps never before in our history has the Dominican apostolic ideal been faced with such universal apostasy from

Christ among all peoples and in all places. The struggle is going to be a desperate one. The devil is organized. His battle lines stretch far and penetrate deeply into our society. May our Third Order see its place in this great warfare and may it line up shoulder to shoulder with other lay apostolic groups who, under hierarchical direction, are determined to bring Christ, to use Bedoyre's phrase, "into the marketplace" of our society. This is the apostolic challenge that faces our Third Order. "To restore all things in Christ," as the late Pius X used to say. To do this there is needed on our part the strongest faith, the most ardent courage and hope, and unbounded charity.