

THE DOMINICAN THIRD ORDER: "OLD and NEW STYLE"

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No perceptive person can still deny that the Third Order today has become a problem. That it is not merely a regional problem, but rather a universal one, is apparent from the words of the General Chapter at Calaruega in 1958:

"Whereas the necessity for many changes in the Rule of the Tertiaries is evident from the reports of the Promoters, we urgently petition our Most Rev. Master General to establish a special commission which must make a penetrating study of the nature of the Third Order ("circa naturam Tertii Ordinis")...It is our opinion that it would be best, before any definitive alterations in the Rule are put into effect, that in each Province certain norms "ad experimentum" (that is, which will allow for experimentation) be promulgated by the Provincial Chapter or by the Provincial with his council, after hearing the advice of the Provincial Promoter and the directors of the Third Order, so that it may be determined which of the norms are more suitable for the (changing) circumstances of our times. As a result of this experimentation those things will become evident, which, upon approbation by the Master General, can be foreseen for the future renewal of the Rule of the Third Order." (Cap. Gen. 1958, no. 254.)

I have cited the entire text with a two-fold purpose in view: first of all, to make it clear to you that even the highest leadership of the Dominican Order acknowledges the Third Order to be in a precarious position. There exists a real problem - - not merely a problem of incidental magnitude, as if only certain adventitious fringes of the Third Order have become obsolete. The problem lies deeper than this, seeing that the General Chapter has affirmed a basic uncertainty with regard to "the very nature of the Third Order", there is nothing more fundamental than this! Further, I have cited the text so that from it will appear the fact that the supreme authority of the Order itself also recognizes the wisdom of a new, experimental standing for the Third Order. Hence, this means that a critique of the Third Order "old style" may not be invalidated by appealing to the traditional Rule of the Third Order as approved by the Church. On the contrary, out of respect for the basic inspiration of Dominican Life and upon the invitation of the supreme authority of the Order, we may critically examine the very nature of the Third Order in terms of its being either totally or perhaps not at all obsolete, and we may study how and if renewal of this Third Order is possible in our time. Concerning this Third Order "new style" I would like to sketch, at the invitation of your respective Provincial Promoters, certain perspectives, so that our critique may be constructive and not merely negative.

Only against the background of the "Third Order Old Style" can the distinctiveness of the new Third Order come most sharply into focus. Within the old style, then, we must make a positive distinction between the rule and norms as found in the book and the factual structure of the living Third Order.

As we consider this factual construction it becomes evident to us that the Third Order has become a devotional prayer society, concretely, as a matter of fact, only for older people. There is a monthly gathering with Mass, a sermon, and a bit of office, which of course is also a daily obligation. Whenever the Dominicans in their apostolate have need of the help of the laity, they do not call upon our Tertiaries, but rather upon the leaders of the modern Catholic lay organizations. At the most, the Third Order members are called upon for such things as holding fancy-fairs, typing or writing out addresses on envelopes, for special solemn ceremonies in the churches, and finally for the annual dinner in honor of St. Dominic. Certainly what I have offered here is a caricature and an over-extended picture, but the reality of this is in the fact suggested in each case, and this is precisely what presents the problem. In reality the Third Order is a lay-extension of the First Order as monastic and not so much as apostolic. The conventual structures are adjusted for better or for worse to the situation of the layman in the world and imposed upon his life. The structure of life in the cloister, adjusted "ad usum laicorum" (for the use of the laity), is actually followed even down to the smallest details; one speaks of the Brother Prior or

Prioress, of the Novice Master, or a novitiate, of profession, of clothing, - concepts which are essentially not lay (2) (When we speak here of "lay" we mean in contrast as much to the priesthood as to the lay-brotherhood), and which connote the apparent "monastic" tendency of Third Order life. The Third Order members have long ago felt the forced and unnatural tenor of these expressions. For this reason they are really seldom used. This feeling was but a first and superficial expression of a more general one, namely, that the laity in the Third Order do not feel themselves to be true laymen. One in fact presumes that there is a short-circuit somewhere, which lies deeper than the outer wrapping of conventual names and titles. Third Order life becomes for the laity in the world a sort of imitation of the priests' life, not as apostolic, but as monastic. Now it was in the Middle Ages that the fullness of the Christian life was thought to reside solely in the life of a cloister; consequently, whoever wished to lead a conscious and expressly Christian life entered the monastery, or imitated the monastic mode of life as far as possible in the world. This is why one spoke of "leaving the world by profession" as applied to Third Order members as well as to religious; these laymen sought a rule of life, which, in its broad outlines, placed upon them the obligations of the monastic observances of the fathers. This monastic "air" of the Third Order appears in the first Rule formulated for the Tertiaries by Munio de Zamora, the sixth Master General of the Order, in 1285. The chief emphasis lay in separation from the world. It was even said that the Third Order members lost their "secular nature" upon their "profession" in the Third Order. ("ad seculum revertere"; See: Mortier, Histoire des Maitres Generaux, II, p. 238, footnote 3.)

Obviously it was thus that the worldly appendage of the First Order was seen above all as an extension into the world of Dominican life seem as monastic, not so much as apostolic. And just in that respect (not the second) is this view debatable at its very roots, as we hope to show. (One should note that, as much for this article as for any others which could be brought to bear on this question, the principle applies: "valet auctoritas quod valet argumentum"! I only remain open to an "argumentum" and not to cries of alarm.)

The fundamental Dominican inspiration of the Third Order was based quite differently than it appeared in this first official Rule of Munio de Zamora. Humbert of the Romans spoke of "doing penance in the midst of the world". (De eruditione Praedicatorum, bk. II, tr. 1, sermo 39: Bibl. Patrum, XXVII, pp. 474-5). Hence the emphasis lay on the character of "exinanitio", on Christian self-denial, as implied in dedication to the living God. In addition to this penitential lay movement, there was another movement which stemmed from a more apostolic orientation: the "Militia Christi" which was launched in the interests of the Church (following the ideas of the time and the needs of the Church). Their "penance" consisted, as documentary evidence shows, of apostolic (they were actually "armed"!) devotion for the Kingdom of God.

The help of some lay people which St. Dominic envisioned for his apostolate had something of these penitential movements and something of the "militia" movements, with the essential reservation that for him this "militia" was not to be an armed apostolate, but a religious one through the exercise of spiritual and corporal works of mercy, and apostolate filled with prayer and reflection. With this was proffered; as M.H. Vicaire and E. Meersemann, proved, its typically lay character, With justice could Fr. Congar say that the outline of the Third Order, as it was composed beforehand in the mind of Dominic, foreseen with its own statutes and officially erected, was not as an apostolic-military "militia", nor a "penitential" movement in the Franciscan sense (self-sanctification and apostolate by good example), but a harmony of "penance" and "apostolate" with an eye to lay-help in the care of souls engaged in by his fathers (See: "France dominicaine", Dec. 1958). We may well say that the Third Order as it was formulated for the first time in the Rule of 1285, (already expressed to a certain extent) a one-sidedness somewhat contrary to the vision of St. Dominic (although this was not yet the Third Order which he intended).

Crisis stemming from the modern Catholic Lay-Movement

Since the Middle Ages, something wholly new has taken place in the Church. The growing realization of the true place of the laity in the Church, the realization of the dedication of the Christian lay person to

the world, the secular institutes, and, lastly, all sorts of new external forms of the lay apostolate have all laid aside the old idea of the Third Order, so much, that the Dominican fathers, insofar as they call upon the laity for help in their apostolate, as I have indicated, without exception, seek help from these other lay-groups. Examples lie close at hand, but I would rather not bring them up. At the most, the Tertiaries are summoned in this apostolate to perform what one could call the more "household" chores.

Nevertheless, as we wish to strike out in a new direction with the Third Order, I want to say expressedly beforehand, that in doing this, we do not intend to minimize the many good things which the Third Order "old style" accomplished: devotion to our houses, deepening in the life of prayer, and in many places, a truly apostolic endeavor. To indicate a new direction does not mean to throw stones at what others have zealously built up; it means rather an encouragement to continue, but at the same time, in a purified fashion.

In order to understand the "new way", we will cite the "old" canonical definition of the Third Order in full. The first paragraph of Canon 702 gives the following decree concerning secular Tertiaries:

"They are Christians who do their best to strive for Christian perfection in the world, under the guidance of a religious order and corresponding to its spirit, and this in a manner, which corresponds to their life in the world, following the Rule approved for them by the Apostolic See."

We should adhere to this definition, yet in a way which the key words in it, namely "in the world" receive a deeper theological significance; moreover, in a way in which the apostolic element in the decree is accepted, at least for our Dominican Third Order. Just as for the First Order, the apostolate seen as the specific goal of Third Order life must be designated as the salvation of souls. To elucidate this we must first set forth, in brief, a theology of "the Christian in the world," for without this theological insight, we would stand in danger of viewing the Third Order members, against all the spiritual currents in the Church, as an appendage of the Dominican monastic life, instead of seeing it as a secular extension of the Dominican priestly apostolate.

The Laity in the Church and in the World

The ecclesiastical distinction between "laity" and "priests" may not be based upon the fact that the priest has care of the kingdom of God, while the layman is characterized by his task in the world. Rather, the ecclesiastical distinction between layman and priest can only lie in the structure of the supernatural society which is the Church. As Christians, the laymen as well as the hierarchy have an ecclesial-sacred task. (3) Only the latter fulfill this task in an authoritative way and from a jurisdictional principle, while the laity must have the selfsame ecclesial mission and the selfsame ecclesial solicitude for the Kingdom of God, yet as the "people of God," that is, without an authoritative function. Being lay, as an ecclesiastical category, cannot therefore be defined by the fact that the lay person takes seriously the "inner consistency" of things (as Congar calls it-as though priests and religious are not required to do this!) or by their task in the world, but rather by their task in the Church, consequently, by an ecclesial-sacred mission. The theological and ecclesiastical definition of the laity is based, therefore upon ecclesiastical membership (with an ecclesial call) in the kingdom of God, which is not the world.

Now it is certainly true, that this ecclesial mission which the laity receive by their baptism, is given to one man, that is, to each person, who as a human being, has a meaningful task to fulfill in this world consequently, to a human being who also has the calling to order the secular affairs of his human life. By this fact, the lay-believers receive simultaneously by their baptism, the mission to integrate their vocation in earthly life with their communion of grace with God in Christ. In this way, the earthly mission becomes for the laity a portion of their total religiously oriented way of life. (4) The baptized must thus integrate secular life with their faith and ecclesial being, which naturally means that "apostolate in the world" shall be typical of the Christian layman.

In what does this secular apostolate ("apostolate in the world") consist?

In order to delineate what it means to be a layman, at least as an ecclesial phenomenon, we ought continually to bear in mind that baptism is the sacrament of our incorporation into the Church and so into Christ. Now the Church is the historical and tangible public sign (*verschijningsvorm*) of the victorious grace of Christ. In and through the Church, the grace of God in Christ stands in the midst of us as an historically evident reality: "*signum elevatum in nationes.*" Due to the Incarnation and its continual presence in the Church seen as the earthly "Body of the Lord" - this tangible external sign of grace belongs to the very essence of Christian grace. Wherever grace takes a visible and historically evident form, it becomes the "Church".

Because incorporation into this tangible community of grace is the first and immediate effect of baptism, the believer receives in and with the grace of baptism the mission to take part in the essential function of the Church; he receives the mission to make his communion of grace with God into a visible form -- in and through his own life. In this way, the life, and the whole life, of the baptized layman must become, in the here-and-now of his earthly life, a visible grace: "*signum gratiae christianae.*" Every baptized person, each Christian layman, thus carries with him a responsibility for the Church and for her function as a sign in the midst of the world.⁽⁵⁾ Wherever he stands as a citizen in the this-side dimension of earthly life, the layman has along with it, as baptized, that is, as a Christian layman in the Church, the mission to be the "Church" in this dimension; that is to say, wherever these Christians stand in this world, the Church had to receive from them a visible form or stature, whether it be in their normal vocation, in their social intercourse with the rest of mankind and things, in their families, or in the resultant bonds with society and the community of all men, in short, in the whole of their secular life. This taking-root in the world, as a concrete visible sign of their security in God's grace and of their care for the kingdom of God, is typical of Christian laity.

Being lay -- as an ecclesial vocation -- thus signifies the calling and the sending: (1) to a personal intercourse with the living God in the complete ecclesial life of the Church of Christ, and (2) to fructifying this Christian life in social intercourse with men and in contacts with the things of this world. The Christian layman is seized by God in the totality of "to-be-a-man". The fact that he is a layman is a result of the whole of his human life rooted in this world, indeed an unconditionally dedicated life to the living God. Thus the worldly character of Christian lay-life is also possessed in full, although intimately bound up with the integral-religious, and hence apostolic, attitude of life. It was incumbent upon us to propose all of this before we could consider the Third Order itself as will now do.

THE THIRD ORDER "NEW STYLE"

1. The apostolic extension of the first Order

Since the secular member of the Third Order, as Canon Law states, is truly a layman and not a priest or religious,⁽⁶⁾ it follows from the ecclesiastical meaning of "laity" that we may not, nor can we under any consideration, view the Third Order as a secular extension of the First Order as "monastic." Everything in the Rule of the Third Order that "reeks" of a lay decoction of the monastic spirituality of the Dominican Order seems to me to be wrong. That one cannot reproach the Middle Ages for this is evident. Secular Christian spirituality was a gift by the Holy Spirit to his Church at a much later date, or better, a gift which, in subsequent penetration into Christian self-consciousness, was only brought to an explicit expression in our time. All this new realization is for many laymen and women still vague and little understood; the layman is, as it were both willing and unwilling to be caught up in this new stream in the Church. Furthermore, as a result of this new realization, he feels the Third Order is a monastic appendage of the First Order, and inevitably, as something "foreign." The modern Christian layman does not feel at home in the Third Order and seeks to give form to his apostolic aspirations elsewhere. A demonstration of this fact is, among other things, the failure of the Third Order to attract the young.

As I set out, then, against the "monastic" implications in the Third Order, I hope no one will misunderstand me. Often the so-called Catholic lay-movement comes to rest, here or there, upon defective foundations. Those responsible for this, layman and priests alike, often forget that the laity as Christians also belong to the "ecclesia," i.e., to those called out and assembled, the "separata a mundo," the separated of God. Lay persons belong with those whom St. Paul calls the "saints": those taken from the world and consecrated to God. After the fashion of another Pauline word, each Christian is "not at home," "a stranger" to this world, but "at home" in the kingdom of Heaven. For this reason there is a type of enthusiasm for the world which can truly be called unchristian. Salvation (a fortiori the grace of redemption, which snatches us from the clutches of sin and places us in communion with God) implies by its very nature, on account of its Divine ascendancy above this world, a fundamental "exinanitio," selfdispossession or self-abnegation, as the counter part of the sanctification of our whole being to the living God, who meets us person to person and who invites us in his goodness to a personal intercourse, that of child to Father. Seen in this perspective, there exists a non-christian conception about the so-called contemplative in action, as if our being christian, our being cherished by God, and our prayer should not be a personal, intimate living with God in faith, but only an external living with God in works and apostolate. This would be a basic misunderstanding of theological life, of life in union with God, to which each Christian is called.

If two married people should so live for one another that they dedicated all their work, their thoughts, and their feelings to one another -- the wife at home and the man at the office -- yet in such a way that they never did anything for entertainment, to love one another by simply being together, having no time for this or never making time for this, you would unhesitatingly say: "No! This is no genuine love." Furthermore dedication of all one's thoughts to another in such cases is often only a sham, a pretext! On the level of the relationship between men we can see through this easily.

Yet we seem all too easily to forget this, in our weakness, in our relations with God and think too readily of the "contemplativus in actione," forgetting that this is impossible unless as an abiding presence and after-effect of, and a continuously renewed desire for, the express and personal communion of prayer with God. This holds true not only for priests and religious, but equally for all the faithful, for each truly religious man. Therefore, any endeavor to bring to life a Third Order "new style" in which this fundamental aspect should be neglected would be a concession to modern "activism" or to what is called the "heresy of action"; it would be the denial of the most intrinsic value of the Third Order. This spirit of prayer, with its accompanying self-dispossession, is in fact nothing other than what some call, the "spirit of the evangelical counsels";⁽⁷⁾ it flows from the eschatological and world-transcending character of Christendom. Seen in this way, there is an intrinsic relationship between Christian life itself and religious life, which is but an accentuation of Christianity. But this spirit of the Third Order should not be expressed in monastic form, for it has its own special worldly one.

Thus, the Third Order "new style" must also lay exacting emphasis upon the life of prayer and self-denial. In this way, the Third Order, "new style" shall be a prolongation of the medieval Dominican "penitential movement," although, thoroughly adapted to the lay manner of life and hence free of all monastic observances applied to laymen. In this sense, the first and most basic rule of the new Third Order is: the personal effort towards a conscious and formal spiritual life, in the spirit of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. Of itself, this indicates that the forms of prayer used by the modern Third Order members will be other than those used in the monastery or cloister. Above all, these new forms of prayer should be conceived by the laity themselves and not from behind theological "round table" conferences, which are already surrounded by the "good aroma" of conceptions from cloistered brains; these concepts will be batted about for the worse because the "brains" will tend to read their own priestly or religious training into the situation of the laymen's life. The "without incense" and "between the concrete and the asphalt" mystique will prove this to be true!

Herein then we have offered a primary critique of the Third Order "old style" so that the truths contained in its way of life, which up to now have not been lived in a true, and consequently secular, manner will now be affirmed in a purified way.

II. The Dominican Third Order

Against this background and drawing from this inspiration, the Third Order "new style" ought formally to be seen as an apostolic lay movement. The Third Order is indeed a worldly extension of the First Order, but seen as apostolic, in this sense, then, a "Dominican lay movement."⁽⁸⁾ What is contained in this expression? I will clarify it in three sections:

A. The secular nature of the Tertiary

The expression contains first of all the full secular life as has been schematically explained above; hence, it implies the consequent living by the laity in their mission in the Church, and of the world, with an emphasis on "apostolate in the world". From a deeper, more consciously personal religious mode of life all of this will flow, wherein dedication to God with its implication of self-denial and the accompanying gospel inspiration will be the ultimate nucleus. So viewed, the apostolate of the Third Order member is not a "help" for the fathers in their apostolic labors. It is above all: to consciously stand in the world as a Christian apostolic layman. One might object that we can find this in all the other lay movements which have grown up during the course of this century! Very true. But they have developed it while the Third Order let this golden opportunity pass it by. Isn't what we now call "actio catholicorum" and even "actio catolica" (looked at from a Dominican point of view, which we haven't done up to now) one of the deepest tendencies which Dominic had in mind for his lay movement? Catholic action, centers for religious instruction, social work, convert work, the Legion of Mary, etc., have all appeared next to the Third Order, so that this, its deepest tendency, is no longer recognized. What excellent opportunities could this all have had for the Third Order. But the most active lay movements had grown up outside of the womb of the Third Order, so that the Third Orders as well as the Sodalities of Our Lady exist and are carried over as a pale residue, which only testify to ancient glories and which did not grow along with the needs of the times. It is precisely for this reason that we no longer take counsel with the Third Order. It has become devotional prayer society for people who, for one reason or another, have contact with our cloisters; a bringing together in prayer the friends of the house, and a help for the fathers in their works. Once again, I will not deny that not a few of the members by their "entrance" and in their prayer life did not go along with this type of apostolate, and that many, in the silence of their personal Third Order life have become holy by applying their Rule. Perhaps many would be of the opinion that because of the new organizations of lay-apostles, which moreover have the backing of the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy, the Third Order should remain simply a small flock of friends of the Dominicans, which because of its relations with our house, becomes an object of frequent pastoral zeal of our Fathers. Everyhouse, even of orders and congregations which have no Third Order, has something similar; therefore, what already exists in our case should remain. There is something to this approach.

B. Lay Cooperation with the First Order

Yet the phrase, "members of the Third Order" can receive a deeper meaning than the above, although we will have difficulty in speaking here of a "proper Dominican spirit", and most certainly will not weave an almost countless "mystique" around the concept "homo Dominicanus" (as does Fr. Congar in the article cited above: see below).

The Third Order presupposes a full lay-life with its task in the world and the Church.⁽⁹⁾ Nevertheless, as a Tertiary, the layman lives his ecclesial and worldly life of the secular apostolate from a definite standpoint; this standpoint is the only real cause of the difference between the Third Order and the many new forms of lay-spirituality and lay-apostolate. What then is the differentiating standpoint?

It has to do with a Dominican Third Order. This means that these laymen shall be involved, and from their secular situation, in attaining the goal of the Dominican Order. Now the special goal of the First Order is the "zelus amimarum," an apostolate in the universal sense of the word with a stress placed upon the proclamation of the Word (in the broadest sense of the word). Third Order members are therefore Christian laity who are involved in the apostolate of the First Order. (One might note that this, with the addition of the "Dominican character," is approximately the definition of Catholic Action, namely, lay cooperation with a priestly corps, in fact, with the priestly corps that is Dominican!) This property of the laity, besides, is wonderfully in tune with contemporary needs and unrest prevailing in the pastoral care of souls. The fact is that priests in many cases are carrying on an apostolate which, the longer it is maintained, the more proper priestly work is relegated to the background. These forms of the apostolate could be better entrusted to the laity. I am speaking in generalities so as not to offend any particular sensitivities. The modern lay apostle is man enough, in a properly personal and responsible way, to take over many of the apostolic endeavors of our fathers, so that the Dominican priests might carry on a purely priestly task, now so often left by the wayside! In this manner, the Third Order can participate in the pure apostolate of the First Order, and the latter's apostolic radius action via the Tertiaries might extend ever wider. Thus the fathers would have a complement of their own priestly apostolate in the world, made more fruitful by the Third Order itself. Hence Third Order life is a special case of apostolic cooperation of laymen and priests. What is special in this case is that there is operative an apostolic cooperation of laymen with the priestly apostolate of distinct religious Order.

The authority of the Third Order director, who is thus to be a father, should determine the specific call of the individual Third Order members in the light of this principle of apostolic cooperation. And herein it appears that the prior, by definition, coordinating the apostolate of his fathers, must also be the director of the Third Order in his area -- at any rate, this would seem to be the best form required by the very essence of the Third Order seen as a worldly armature of the priestly apostolate of the Order. And whereas the Dominican province itself must accompany, direct, and control the ministry of the fathers according to a definite plan, it follows from the essence of the Third Order that the provincial, in this case not aided by a provincial promoter, has the ultimate supervision over the coordination of this lay apostolate with the ministry of his fathers.

C. Dominican Spirituality

At this point we are not yet finished. Cooperation demands a unified mentality for all; we can call this a distinctive "spirituality." Therefore the Tertiaries, in their apostolic cooperation with the First Order, shall make Dominican spirituality their own.

But let us not become infatuated with this word. In reality, it depends upon the amount of spiritual leadership given by the Dominican Fathers. If we wish to give a meaningful content to the word "Dominican spirituality," it immediately appears that this spirituality is not to be separated from the essential conventual forms of the monastic nature of Dominicans. If we separate this spirituality from its conventual forms, then the properly Dominican aspect by that very fact becomes "dismantled"; then we only preserve, let me say, the "contemplari" and the "contemplata aliis tradere", a motto in which St. Thomas in his Summa did not express the Dominican ideal properly so-called (he had already treated of this in the concrete earlier), but the essential form of every Christian apostolate (and hence not only Dominican).

Dominican spirituality, detached from the concrete Dominican monastic forms in which the general Christian motto of "contemplata aliis tradere" receives its distinctively Dominican stamp, is naturally an improper expression. It holds good only for the fathers, brothers, and Dominican sisters. We could at this point only deplore that the beautiful chance which Père Loew had placed before the Order, has not been taken, namely, of a Dominican secular institute wherein would stand, as a new appendage in the Dominican Order, real "secular Dominicans" of the evangelical counsels, existing nevertheless, in the full lay condition of the world.[\(10\)](#) Here we had a fine chance not only to find a happy solution to the

problem of the "worker-priests," but also to link the already strongly growing tendency in the Church of the apostolate of the secular institute as a powerful organ in the apostolic dynamism of the First Order for the service of the Church. The Third Order might have then obtained her own fully proper meaning as a worldly armature of the Dominican secular institute, without the vows of this institute, of course. Nevertheless, it did not come to pass, and it now takes place outside the Order. Seen from the point of view of the Church, we can only rejoice "if Christ is but preached." From the standpoint of our specific Dominican apostolate it is easier to regret that this has passed us by, for by degrees, namely via our secular institute and the Third Order, the Dominican apostolate could have penetrated all dimensions of human life, a privilege which we do not now enjoy. That others presently do this, we can only rejoice; but the question remains: Do we still maintain sufficient feeling in contemporary situations, which are basically modified, for the original Dominican apostolic purpose as Dominic envisioned it, following the demands of the circumstances of his time? But that is beyond our scope; we are only concerned here about the Third Order.

If we do not courageously dare to adopt this apostolic way of life in the Third Order, sooner or later the Third Order institute will disappear, because no more youth will be found who will see in it any Christian opportunity. A number of other new organisms will then appeal to their Christian dynamism. In this sense we are already too late to reflect. For this reason, I am not going to project any false expectations for the future, no matter how very much we may desire them. An Order must also dare to acknowledge a lost cause.

Yet I am not going to be so pessimistic either, although I must acknowledge that the endeavors attempted in this country and elsewhere to erect a Third Order for young people have miscarried.⁽¹¹⁾ This situation appears not only in the case of the young, but also with the Third Order "old style" itself. Once again may I say, that as the Third Order is an opportunity for older people who from their earlier work-a-day Christian life feel the need in their later years to lead a more intense life of prayer, it has a task which we may not derogate.

When we thus inquire about the Dominican character of the Third Order we must root this "Dominican" stamp in the lay cooperation with the apostolate of the First Order and thus simultaneously in the spirituality of one family, which must inspire such a cooperative society, and itself by this cooperation be inspired. Stemming from this cooperation and from spiritual direction (chiefly in and through our present Dominican way of life which had a power for expansion) is manifested the personal type of life of the Third Order members, what we within the Dominican Order itself can call "Dominican spirituality". He will see in this conception first these distinctive marks (which are not however exclusive to our Order), secondly the Dominican conception of grace, whereby our contemplative and apostolic activity is seen as the grace-filled action of God in and through us -- with all the consequences for the atmosphere in which our personal goal is executed --, and, simultaneously, the Dominican sense of life in the world. For this I propose, in line with St. Thomas, in opposition to the other great medieval tendency, the understanding of "structures-within-the-world" (what St. Thomas called the "secondary causes," which, because of our theocentrism we may not lose sight of). Moreover, this double Dominican sensitivity may well be called especially contemporary, since the whole of the modern problematic at present worsens in the context of the problem of the relationship between "service of God" and "life in the world." The adjective "Dominican," Third Order can account for all of this. Thus, the Dominican Third Order means:

"Under the coordinated direction of the Dominican fathers, in their spirit of dialogue with God and dialogue with the world, consciously-Christian lay persons work together (cooperate) in a permanent bond of life with the apostolate of the First Order, chiefly and precisely in those places where the Dominicans in the priestly and religious sense cannot penetrate into dimensions of the world."

Next to these two fundamental distinguishing factors of Dominicans, under the cooperative spiritual direction of Dominicans, other types of Dominican spiritual viewpoints should be imparted to the

Tertiaries -- for example, balance in judgement, the reasonableness of the faith, a deep spirit of trust in God, joy, etc. Nevertheless, we must be careful in stressing the Dominican distinctiveness of similar distinguishing factors chiefly because we can ascertain in our day that non-Dominicans embody these so called "Dominican attributes" more excellently THAN WE OURSELVES. All the modern Christian spiritual movements, influenced by the Bible and stressing conceptions of the "total man," tend in the direction of an attempted synthesis between "service of God" and "life in the world"; in this way the scriptural conception of grace is revived, and ideas such as trust in God, the joy of life, the reasonableness of faith, and the balance of the total human and Christian personality all hold key positions. Because of all of this, genuine "Dominican spirituality," in the proper sense of the word, cannot be torn away from its monastic forms wherein it derives its own distinctive stamp.

Accomplishing the Third Order "New Style"

In this section we will treat what is expressed in the title, The practical orienting of the Third Order "New Style" next to the existing forms of the "Old Style" is naturally a complex puzzle, and will demand of us both tact and sensitivity.

In each case, it will be necessary to fashion a whole new Rule for the Tertiaries, if one has become interested in any of the perspectives which I have outlined. For I have proposed that we cannot stand outside of history! In this rule, apart from the general norms for the spiritual life of laymen, a chapter should be formulated on "apostolate in the world" and on an occupational ethics for the Third Order members which will be needed in their function as lay apostles. Moreover, directives could be given for an adequate apostolic cooperation of these laymen with our pastoral care of souls. Here, too, the autonomy of this lay apostolate and its independence of the authority of the Dominican Order should be circumscribed in broad outlines. The intellectually theological education (to use an elaborate phrase) of our fathers must go to the heart of these Third Order members, In fact, we note that in some of our towns, the Dominican "Centers for Religious Awareness" are being run behind the back of our Third Order. Truly another case of how our Third Order is not up to date! In this could appear another Dominican attribute.

In the ultimate analysis, the proper apostolate of most of our Third Order members should consists in the "apostolate in the world" and in their Christian testimony of life, wherever it might appear in many situations in their lives, in their families,

the professional world, in day-to-day intercourse with people, in their function in society. Members who cooperate directly in the apostolate of the First Order "full time" or who frequently help in their free hours will form a smaller kernel.

Since one is not a Third Order member by the fact of his Christian life, of his will to live as an apostle, or, moreover, by his contact with a Dominican cloister, Third Order life should then be based upon a special decision of life -- a commitment; this is self-evident. But words, such as "profession," "clothing" and the like, are inappropriate to express the properly religious-secular inspiration behind this commitment to a way of life.

From all of this it follows that an institutionalizing of the Third Order must grow only out of the experience and new practices of the Third Order "New Style"; then and only then, can this experience be institutionalized and codified by the authorities of the Dominican Order, in order to bring both support and canonical status to the new members in the light of this experience .

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can determine that the name "Secular Dominicans," in the full sense of the word, really would apply only to an eventual Dominican "secular institute," which should be added as a new

limb to our Order. Such an institute should be most properly a Third Order. To speak of "Secular Dominicans" in the context of our lay Third Order members remains an improper expression. I truly do not know what they might best be called, as we do not wish to empty our words and concepts completely. Various titles which can be considered are "per denominationem extrinsecam" (in contradistinction to lay-brothers, congregations of sisters, and an eventual "secular institute," which alone are essentially Dominican), that is from cooperation with the spiritual direction by Dominicans. Thus, the Third Order characteristics would be intimately related with the spirit of the First Order. It would then be more logical to call our cloistered sisters and cloistered brothers, without distinction, the Second Order, the eventual Dominican secular institutes the Third Order, and finally our present-day Tertiaries a secular armature-in-the-world of what the Dominicans themselves, following their original vocation, must mean for the Church and for the world. The Third Order members are thus the outermost boundary of the Order's apostolic radius of action and are where the "zelus animarum" of our Order is most deeply rooted in the worldly dimensions of family and society. This is in no sense a betrayal of the true Third Order -- quite the contrary. It follows logically from the complete worldly situation of the Tertiaries. Any other conception fights against the ecclesial current of the times, and will fail.

I have not discussed beautiful things perhaps nearer your taste. But yet I think that, provided we do not sustain outmoded and dead characteristics, there can still be a fine future in the Third Order "New Style." That one should view these proposals, still to a great extent only hesitatingly suggested, as a betrayal of the Dominican tradition, I must in each case most positively object. Not only because the highest authority of the Order has placed the question of the Third Order in a precarious position, but more fundamentally by reason of a Rule of our Constitutions which has perhaps not been satisfactorily appreciated. According to this rule, out of a trust in the "gratia originalis" of our Order -- to use a phrase of Pere Cormier -- the flexible adaptation to new circumstances of the time is asserted as a fundamental law. This daring phrase, which could be the object of envy of all orders and congregations, stands at the beginning of our Dominican Constitutions: "The means established by our Holy Father for carrying out the end of our Order are: Besides the three solemn vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty, the regular life with monastic observances, solemn recitation of the Divine Office, and the assiduous study of sacred Truth. These means may not be removed nor substantially changed in our Order." (Const. n. 4, sec. 1). Only this is the unalterable nucleus of the Dominican Order; all the rest can come into flux and movement. And moreover, even of this substantial nucleus it is stated that it (apart from the three vows, of course) can be altered appropriately "in keeping with the circumstances," so that above all the purpose of the Order may be attained (same place as cited above), namely: preaching and the care of souls (n. 3, sec. 1). I do not believe that apart from the "freethinkers" of the Church -- as someone had been so good as to call us -- one religious Institute had foreseen in its own Constitutions this enormous principle of plasticity and continual renewing power. For that reason we need not rely upon tradition in the call to solve modern apostolic problems, and yet simultaneously we do not contradict the original constitutional tradition of the Order! In this spirit of our Constitutions, the Third Order still has a fine future.

Additional Notes

For the purpose of explanation and in anticipation of misunderstandings I would like to give, in conclusion, a few theological definitions of the conceptions found in the terms frequently used in this article.

A. Worldly or secular (secularicity): By this we understand the "presence au monde", but as a portion of the total-religious attitude of life; therefore, to fulfill in and towards this world an earthly task. (Thus, this embraces not only the earthly vocational life, which does not comprise the whole of human life, but the whole of life within the world.) "Secular" or "worldly" stands in opposition to: (1) "of the world," that is, the "world" in the Joannine sense, the sinful world, or the attitude of men who so conduct themselves upon the earth that they fail to appreciate the world-surpassing character of the redemption -- the being not-of-this-world of the Kingdom of God, to: (2) "the profane", that is, the worldly inasmuch

as this is now not included in a religious mode of life (materially then, this coincides with "worldly or secular"), as to (3): The religious life, which is state of life building its structure upon the world-transcendence of the life of grace. Hence a religious is not-secular by his very nature.

b. Lay, (layman, laity): These words are sometimes used (not theologically) as synonyms for worldly, secular, and secularity (they apply then to the non-priest and the non-religious). Theologically there is still another distinction. A layman is an ordinary member of the Church's community in distinction to the specialized membership (the cleric).

The lay person can live his ecclesial lay-life, however, in two ways: in a secular way, or in a religious, non-secular way. In the second case: Lay brothers and sisters; in the former case: the so-called laymen in the world and (although seen from the nucleus of the evangelical life of perfection) the lay-life of a secular institute.

c. The "state of perfection": Since the foundation of the secular institutes, this does not coincide with the religious life. The religious life is naturally "non-secular", while in the fourth canonical grade of the states of perfection (the secular institutes) the evangelical counsels (under the form of vows, promises, or oaths) are lived in a secular manner, i.e., in and towards the world and worldly activities. Secularity can therefore not only be a portion of the total religious attitude of life, but also of the evangelical life of perfection in the canonical sense of the word. Precisely for this reason, we must handle the phrase, "flight from the world" ("fuga mundi") very carefully.

d. The secular activity of religious (i.e., of those consecrated to God in a non-secular way) forms its own problem. We have left this problem untouched in this article.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This article was originally published in the Dutch Tertiary Magazine, Zwarp of Wit, Aug-Sept., 1960. Before it was published, it was delivered as an address to the regional directors and administrators of the Third Order, first at Louvain on June 6, 1960, and then at Utrecht on June 29, 1960. (trans. footnote)

2. "on-laical": This is just one of the words which are difficult to translate into English. Schillebeeckx uses, "laical," "monachaal," "theologisch," and "kerkelijk" to emphasize the concrete manifestations of the root words involved, in opposition to the abstract and structural aspects so often connected with words such as "ecclesiastical" and "theological", etc. For an excellent explanation of these terms and similar ones, see: E. Schillebeeckx, O.P., *The Sacrament of the Encounter with Christ* (NY: Sheed & Ward, 1964). especially the footnotes from p. 19ff. (trans. footnote)

3. "Kerkelijk-sacrale": This is translated as above in order to set it apart from the shade of meaning in the word "ecclesiastical," which indicates a formalized structure of authority. Here Fr. Schillebeeckx is considering the Church as a supernatural society, the Body of Christ -- a new life on earth. (trans. footnote)

4. This was the standpoint from which I wrote the article "Delek in de Kerk" ("The Layman in the Church") in the Tijdschrift voor geestelijk Leven 15 (1059) 669-694, but this standpoint cannot be identified with the definition of the laity which I had already given in the first part of the article.

5. See: "De kerkelijkheid van de godsdienstige mens" ("The Ecclesial Character of the Religious Man"), TGL 15 (1959) 108-131; since then an article by K. Rahner has appeared in which a similar insight is developed: "Die Sakrament be Grundlegung des Laienstandes" ("The Sacramental Basis of the Lay-State") in Geist Und Leben 33 (1960) 119-132.

6. We are not speaking here of secular priests and religious sisters who are Third Order members, as they constitute a separate matter.

7. I will not consider here whether and how this expression: "spirit of the evangelical counsels," can be justified biblically and theologically. At one time many non-biblical statements were made in the context of the evangelical counsels, which were then equally identified with the religious vows, so that, when we do not consider these vows, what is left is called only "the spirit of the evangelical counsels!" Here one could turn the question around. Whoever denominates the Christian life as essentially the life of the vows "according to the spirit," implicitly denies that earthly values in the last analysis, can be redeemed, and affirms by doing this, at least under one aspect, a tragedy of Christ's redemption. I hope to go into this question more extensively in conjunction with an analysis of the life of perfection according to the Scriptures which will appear in TGL.

8. "What is in a name?" In the word, "Third Order" as such, no "cloisteral" ideas are indicated. "Order" is a medieval name for a guild or "corporation," no matter whether it be religious or profane -- hence the "tierce ordre" (or "etat") as a social position during the French Revolution. Resulting from these profane conceptions of social attitudes one came to speak of "ordines" in the religious terrain as well. In our day, the original signification has been lost and for this reason, the word "Third Orders" immediately sounds in our ears the notion of a "religious order." "Lay Order of St. Paul" is an expression describing an existing "secular institute." For this reason, "Lay Order of St. Dominic" would be the best name for a Dominican secular institute, but not for the Third Order, which might be called, for example, "Lay Society of St. Dominic."

9. What this comprises is brought to light schematically in "Dek leek in de Kerk," op. cit.

10. Herein lies a difficulty stemming from the papal documents about secular institutes. These documents expressly state that a secular institute might well depend upon some distinct religious order, but must nevertheless maintain full independence. The aim of this measure is to safeguard the distinctively non-conventual way of life as found in the secular institute. The difficulty present is surmountable however. In fact, most of the Dominican sisters are independent of the supervision of the order, and yet belong to the great Dominican family. A secular institute could thus be Dominican, and still possess an internal independence, If need be, moreover, the papal documents permit a genuine dependency.

11. What has been said here applies at any rate to our Western European circles. Perhaps the situation is different in the southern and Iberian Anglo-Saxon circles of the Church. From this variation it can be seen for example, that the central authority of the Order will be less inclined to implement cheerfully our Western-European suggestions. We should not forget for a moment that there is a difference between "doctrinal power" (I mean to say, the intrinsic truth of the arguments we propose) and "governing power." This latter could perhaps strike out in a different direction than that which we have outlined without denying, in doing this, the internal force and justification of our considerations.