Lay Orders of the Catholic Church

By Nick Bain
February 28, 2014

A Man-to-man Presentation
Third Order Seculars of the Catholic Church

A more technically accurate title
My interest in the topic

1. The Teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas; Suma Theologica, Proofs for the existence of God, patron saint of student and teachers.


3. My investigation into the Lay Order of the Dominican’s; St. Thomas was a Dominican priest. (Order of Preachers, “O.P.”)
Third Orders signify in general lay members of religious orders, i.e. men and women who do not necessarily live in community and yet can claim to wear the habit and participate in the good works of some great order.

General definition according to the Catholic Encyclopedia
Origin of the three orders

Tradition says that St. Francis founded three orders – the Friars Minor, the Poor Ladies (Clarens), and the Brothers and Sisters of Penance – generally referred to as First, Second, and Third Orders of St. Francis.
The Origin:  (Open to some disagreements)
The essential nature of the tertiary is really an innovation of the thirteenth century. At that date many of the laity, impatient of the indolent and sometimes scandalous lives of the clergy in lower Europe, were seized with the idea of reforming Christendom by preaching.
History Lesson: (Part II)

1. Pope Alexander III at first welcomed and authorized their teaching.
2. But as their knowledge of theological teaching was limited, their sermons were seldom dogmatically inaccurate and eventually defiantly heretical. So Pope Lucius III forbade them to preach.
3. Eventually in 1207 they were given permission to resume their preaching by Pope Innocent III but were restricted to moral questions and not doctrinal subjects.
History Lesson (part III):
The Third Orders can each be divided into (a) regulars, i.e. living in convents, and professing vows. (b) seculars, i.e. living in the world, and making a solemn promise. (With several exceptions, of course.)

Any Catholic may join a Third Order, but may not at once belong to more than one, nor may he without grave cause leave one for another.
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Out Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
  - U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
- U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
Order of the Brothers of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel
Introduction

What today is the Carmelite Order began not as a religious order but as a small band of mostly lay people who came together and formed community on the slopes of Mount Carmel in the Holy Land at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It would be some years before they were given an official status by the Church authorities. Over the centuries since then, many people have felt called to Carmel: some as religious (that is friars, nuns or sisters in the Third Order Regulars); others as lay people (Third Order Seculars). Since the Middle Ages lay people have been inspired by the values of Carmelite spirituality, and aspired to share in the life of the Order. Some have done this within the context of marriage and family life, others as single people either living alone or in small informal communities. (From Carmelite Web Site)
The Carmelite Rule states that it is fundamental for a Carmelite to "live a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ - how, pure in heart and stout in conscience, must be unswerving in the service of the Master".
Carmelite Rule (cont.)

To live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ, the Carmelites bind themselves especially to:

- develop the contemplative dimension of their life, in an open dialogue with God
- live as brothers, full of charity
- meditate day and night on the Word of the Lord
- pray together or alone several times a day
- celebrate the Eucharist every day
- do manual work, as Paul the Apostle did
- purify themselves of every trace of evil
- live in poverty, placing in common what little they may have
- love the Church and all people
- conform their will to that of God, seeking the will of God in faith, in dialogue and through discernment.

(In its entirety)
The Carmelite Shield
First appeared on a book about St. Albert in 1499.
1. A Mountain – symbolizes Mt. Carmel
2. Three Stars, six-pointed – symbolizes Carmelites
3. A Crown – symbolizes the Kingdom of God
4. Twelve Stars – symbolizes the Marian Nature
5. Cross – symbolizes the Cross of the Holy Land
1. At the heart of Carmelite Charism is **Prayer** and Contemplation. *The quality of the prayer determines the quality of the communal life and the quality of the service.*

2. **Fraternity** – *The Carmelites live in a community where each person feels accepted and valued.*

3. **Service** – *The Carmelite responds to the needs of the Church and the world, which differ according to time and place; depending also on the talents of each.*
Since the earliest days of the Carmelite Order, lay people have been integral members of the Carmelite Family. In many different ways, 'Lay Carmelites' live out the Carmelite contemplative Charism of prayer, community and service, modelled on Mary and the prophet Elijah. Some are bound to the Carmelite Family in a formal way by professing promises or vows; others have a more informal sense of connection to 'Carmel'. We refer to all these people broadly as 'Lay Carmel'.
**Formation**: It is a process involving:
1. Individual Study, Rule of St. Albert, reading the lives of the Carmelite saints, and *Climbing The Mountain* or attending online classes with the Carmelite Institute.
2. Living the Life of a Lay Carmelite through
   - Prayer,
   - Community – monthly meetings, and
   - Service
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
  - U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
St. Dominic

Saint Dominic, also known as Dominic of Osma and Dominic of Caleruega, (1170 – August 6, 1221), was a Spanish priest and founder of the Dominican Order. Dominic is the patron saint of astronomers. He was born in Caleruega near Osma in Spain. He was educated in the arts and theology. During the famines in Spain he gave away all of his money to feed the poor. In 1194 he joined the Benedictine Order. And between 1215 to 1217 he founded the “Order of Preachers” known as the Dominicans.
The Dominican Order

The spread of the Rosary, a Marian devotion, is attributed to the preaching of St. Dominic. The Rosary has for centuries been at the heart of the Dominican Order. Pope Pius XI stated that: "The Rosary of Mary is the principle and foundation on which the very Order of Saint Dominic rests for making perfect the life of its members and obtaining the salvation of others." For centuries, Dominicans have been instrumental in spreading the rosary and emphasizing the Catholic belief in the power of the rosary.
The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic

We are men and women, singles and couples living a Christian life with a Dominican Spirituality in the secular world. We find our inspiration following the same path taken by many saints, blesseds, and other holy men and women throughout the almost 800 history of the Dominican Order.
Members of the Fraternities of St. Dominic are lay men and women who are fully incorporated members of the Order of Preachers and live out their Dominican vocation in the world. Lay Dominicans, who in the past have been called Third Order or Dominican Seculars, have existed almost as long as the Dominican Order itself. The Lay Fraternities of St. Dominic was founded with their own rule in 1285 and was officially recognized by the Church on the feast of St. Thomas Aquinas in 1286.
The Life of Lay Dominican

Most lay members work in the world and attend to their vocation of marriage or the single state of life. Therefore, community life is most directly experienced in the family.

For example, a father who has a vocation to the Fraternities of St. Dominic carries out most directly the communal aspect of his vocation with his wife and children. He prays with them, cares for them, and helps them.
Communities of Lay Dominicans

Lay members, meet with their local chapters and exercise their call to community specifically among this group. The local chapter is a group of lay individuals in a city or area who share in common a vocation to the Order. Much as the early Christians faith communities support one another in the faith, fraternity members try to meet regularly. Each chapter typically gathers once a month for spiritual and intellectual formation; in most cases, a Dominican priest or a professed Dominican tertiary direct this formation.
Communities of Lay Dominicans

Provinces,
Regions, and
Chapters all over the world.

(Not in Atlanta.)
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
The Third Order
Society of St. Francis
Province of the Americas

Are you... called to Contemplation?

Are you... also called to Action?

Are you... passionate about Social Justice?

Are you... striving to be a Peacemaker?

Are you... yearning for a deeper relationship with God?

Are you... concerned about the Poor and the Marginalized?
The Third Order consists of men and women, single or in committed relationships, who, though following ordinary professions, are called to a dedicated life of service to our Lord through prayer, study, and work. Tertiaries make a lifetime commitment to live a Rule of Life in company with the sisters and brothers in their Order. Tertiaries follow Francis in prayer and action by striving to be peacemakers, working for social justice, and deepening our relationship with God. We share Francis’ concerns for the well-being of the earth, the poor, and the marginalized.
Our Rule

The Holy Eucharist.
Since we see the Eucharist as the heart of our prayer, our personal rule would call us to frequent participation in this Sacrament.

Penitence.
Regular examination of our obedience to Christ is necessary. To be reconcilers we must first be deeply reconciled to God. We practice daily self-examination and regular use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Personal Prayer.
We set aside a definite time for prayer each day to spend time with God, to pray for others, to meditate and to express our thankfulness. Prayer is the root from which our lives and ministries grow and are nourished.

Self-Denial.
This is the discipline of saying “No” to oneself by putting God first. We are often aware of the places in our lives where additional self-discipline is needed, but our Spiritual Directors should be asked to help in this area. We also focus on eliminating the ways we may manipulate others to our own ends.

Retreat.
Silent retreats and quiet days provide an opportunity to rest and grow physically, mentally and spiritually. At least once a year, we participate in organized or private retreats.

Study.
We all need to learn more about God and His will for us. Study of the Scriptures and of Franciscan spirituality is important to our Christian growth.

Simplicity of Living.
Simplicity calls us to examine our giving of self as well as the material things over which we have control. Our cluttered lives, our preoccupations with “belonging”, can interfere in our relationships with God and our brothers and sisters. We are called to a life of simplicity, eliminating those aspects of ourselves and our lives which prevent our full expression of God’s love.

Work.
Service has always been an important part of the Franciscan vocation. Daily work is one way in which Tertiaries serve God and others; we are often also called to serve God and our brothers and sisters in individual ministries, ranging from prayer to social activism.

Obedience.
All Tertiaries are obedient to the decisions of Third Order Chapter. We say the Daily Offices, we support each other by prayer, attendance at Fellowship meetings and a pledge of financial support to the Third Order. We report regularly to the Order on the keeping of our Rule. We have Spiritual Directors whom we see a minimum of twice a year.
Our Rule

The Holy Eucharist  Penitence
Personal Prayer    Self-Denial
Retreat            Study
Simplicity of Living Work
Obedience.
The National Fraternity of the Secular Franciscan Order

The Secular Franciscan Order an organic union of all Catholic fraternities scattered throughout the world and open to every group of the faithful. These fraternities of brothers and sisters, led by the Spirit, strive for perfect charity in their own secular state. By their profession they pledge themselves to live the gospel in the manner of Saint Francis by means of this rule approved by the Church.
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
- U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
The Servants of Mary (Servites) is a Catholic community of women religious and lay associates called to bring the compassionate presence of God, in the spirit of Mary, to all those whom we meet and with whom we minister. We belong to an international community, the Order of Servants of Mary (OSM). Our Motherhouse (Our Lady of Sorrows Convent) is located in Omaha, NE. We have members across the country and around the world. Together, we are committed to a life rooted in prayer, community, and service.
Vowed Membership (Regulars)

Vowed membership as a Servant of Mary (Servite Sister) is a permanent commitment to live in community and take the vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience. While prayer is an integral part of our lives, Servants of Mary is an apostolic community engaged in active ministries of service. Our charism (spirit) of compassion calls us to be women of prayer, community and service in the Spirit of Mary.
Associate Membership (Seculars)
An Associate is a Christian woman or man, married or single, young or old, who resonates with the Servants of Mary/Servite charism of compassion.
An Associate has a desire to connect with the community to grow personally and spiritually to deepen her or his own expression of compassionate presence.
Third Orders approved by Vatican

- Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
- T.O. Secular of Out Lady of Mount Carmel
- Third Order of St. Dominic
- T.O. Secular of St. Dominic
- Third Order of St. Francis
- U.S., Canada, G.B. & Ireland
- Province of The Sacred Heart of Jesus
- Third Order Secular of St. Francis
- Third Order Regular of the Servites
- Third Order Secular of the Servites
Augustinian Seculars are lay men and women who bind themselves by formal promises to share in the Augustinian way of life, being of one mind, and one heart, intent upon God. While living and working within the community, Augustinian Seculars live their faith, hope and love through community, following Christ through Augustinian spirituality.
Benedictine Oblate
An Oblate is a lay or clerical, single or married, person formally associated to a particular Benedictine Monastery. The Oblate seeks to live a life of harmony with the spirit of St. Benedict, as revealed in the Rule of Saint Benedict and its contemporary expressions.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Are you called to Contemplation?
2. Are you called to a closer relationship to God?
3. Are you called to action/service?
4. What are your thoughts and reactions to Lay Orders?