

University of Notre Dame
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What About This Third Order?

Last Spring, quietly in the Log Chapel, a small group of St. Mary's and Notre Dame students were received into the Third Order of Saint Francis. There had been before that event, and there has been since, no publicity. The impetus came from the candidates themselves. As the months run by, more and more students are becoming interested in the Third Order.

What is it? What is its purpose? What kind of people belong to it? What are the advantages to be derived from joining? What are the obligations?

St. Francis of Assisi founded three orders--the first for priests; the second for nuns; the third for men and women, married and single, who, though occupied in trades and professions in the world, want to live a more perfect Catholic life. The Third Order is a religious order. It offers to lay men and women a clear definition of what constitutes their spiritual perfection. It provides certain ideals, aids and advantages that direct and assist members toward the perfection of their state in life.

Altogether, there are at present approximately 90,000 "tertiaries" (members of the Third Order) in the United States. The local group already consists of 20 members--five St. Mary's girls, and 15 Notre Dame men. Among the great characters of history, Dante and Christopher Columbus, Raphael and Michael Angelo, St. Thomas More and Frederick Ozanam, Daniel O'Connell and Terence McSweeney, Francis Thompson and Matt Talbot have been members of the Third Order.

What have the Popes of modern times thought of the Third Order especially for young men and women? Of the last five Popes at least, all without exception have enthusiastically encouraged the spread of the Third Order. Once a group of young men and women visited the great Pope Leo XIII and asked him what he considered most urgent that they should do. Quickly he sent them to Assisi to be enrolled in the Third Order of St. Francis.

The Third Order does not exclude a normal Catholic lay life; in fact, that is exactly what it fosters. It does not exclude membership in any other Catholic society such as the K. of C.'s, or St. Vincent de Paul, or the Holy Name; in fact, it encourages tertiarys to join in the work of such organizations.

The Third Order presents a system of life by which the Gospel teachings can be practised more intelligently and effectively by laymen. Members are urged to offer Mass and Holy Communion every day; the rule requires, however, Mass and Holy Communion only once a month. The Third Order Office, consisting of 12 Paters, Aves, and Glorias is to be recited daily by members. There is one meeting every month that members are urged to attend even at some sacrifice. Each tertiary always wears his habit--a brown scapular, and the white Franciscan cord--under his ordinary clothing. Members have the privilege of being buried in the full outer habit of the Order. Upon being received, a novice takes some religious name of his own choice. Usually male candidates take the middle name "Francis"; female candidates, the name "Clare." No rule of the Order is binding in conscience. By failing to follow any of the prescriptions of the rule you simply forfeit the spiritual benefits attached to observance.

At the request of the local tertiarys a petition has been sent to Most Reverend Bishop Hall asking his permission for the canonical erection of a Third Order unit here at Notre Dame. It is hoped that the formal erection of the unit may take place early in Holy Week. If you are interested and want further information, consult the Prefect of Religion.

PRAYER: (deceased) uncle of John Baltos (Dill.). Ill, cousin of Edwin J. Schneider, S.S.; father of John Koenigshoff (Ly.); grandmother of John Gordon (Cav.); Robert Schmitz (Ly.), appendectomy; friend of a student. One special intention.