

The Third Order of St Francis was essentially founded for lay people living in the world; but the Rule has since been taken as the basis for the constitutions of many religious societies and congregations living in a community. Hence, we are accustomed to speak of 'Third Order Secular', and 'Third Order Regular'. To the latter, therefore, belong many active sisterhoods, and, so far as I have knowledge of, two communities of men priests, viz.: The Third Order Regular (T.O.R.), who have centuries of good work behind them, and the less than fifty years old 'Friars of the Atonement' of Greymoor, New York. There are also many communities of Brothers with the Third Order Rule. The Conventual Franciscans, therefore, are quite distinct in Rule and origin from the Third Order Regular Franciscans.

I remain,

Sincerely yours,

REV. FR EDMUND, O.F.M.Conv.,

Bristol, June 17.

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Dear Sir,—The Provincial Register of Tertiaries is now in my keeping. I should be most grateful to all who have knowledge of Clothing, Professions, and Deaths of Tertiaries if they would keep me informed of these events.

I should also be pleased to receive suggestions of place and date for a Tertiary Congress in 1948.

FR FRANCIS MONCRIEFF, O.P. (*Provincial Promoter*),  
St Peter's Priory, Hinckley, Leics.

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## REVIEWS

L'ORAISON (Cahiers de la Vie Spirituelle; Les Editions du Cerf: Blackfriars Publications; 9s.)

While the first part of this book is mainly historical, and the second a guide to the nature and practice of prayer, both do in fact centre on those contemporary conditions of life which notably affect growth in the ways of prayer today. The remark that the Paris metro seems to be the privileged place of prayer typifies the atmosphere in which the discussions and explanations are carried on. The alternative of 'Method' or 'No Method' is always to the fore. This contemporary setting, in spite of all its inconveniences and the not very tranquil air induced by it, once chosen is turned to good advantage by the contributors. The extreme contrariety between that recollection which is so necessary as a condition of prayer, and the monstrously distracted spirit of the times allows to stand out emphatically those first principles which alone explain the activities and growth of prayer. Thus two articles by A. Plé, O.P., *L'Oraison chez les Laïcs de Notre*

*Temps*, and *L'Oraison Théologique* give an excellent and simple account of the rôle of the theological virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The question of method is raised at the outset by Père Paul Philippe's *L'Oraison dans l'Histoire*, immensely illuminating in its situation of various notions of prayer and its exercise, current in the Church's tradition, within a unified historical chain of development. The first period develops the vocabulary of the subject, showing a highly developed activity of prayer in the Church without much systematic reflection on it. Nevertheless the words Meditation, Prayer, Contemplation gradually acquired their own connotations in use, and the prolonged pondering of Scripture and the recitation of the Divine Office became recognised means of promoting union between the soul and God. At the end of the eleventh century the appearance of literary meditations and prayers indicates a tendency to reflective investigation of practices favourable to growth in prayer.

From the opening of the twelfth century to the close of the Middle Ages there is a marked development from the mere explicit recognition of reading, meditation, prayer and contemplation as four normal acts of one exercise of prayer, to the minutely detailed prescriptions of the *Devotio Moderna* in the 15th century. The scholastic method which gave rise to the *Ars Moderna* in the composition of sermons exercised a similar influence here. At the same time the new emphasis on the discursive element in meditation was also favoured by the inculcation of sensible representations of the scenes of the Gospel. But throughout the period, the act of contemplation was considered the normal outcome of combined meditation and prayer.

From the sixteenth century onwards it becomes customary to treat of modes or degrees rather than acts of prayer. The time of reading is sharply distinguished from the time of prayer, and the latter is considered according as it is chiefly characterised by meditation or the exercise of affections of the will, or by infused contemplation. The Ignatian exercises in their fullness comprise both discursive meditation and affective prayer (as Père Rouquette, S.J., also points out in his article on Meditation), but early became interpreted as allowing the former only. Their real novelty was in the essentially practical end at which they aimed, seeing union with God as service rather than contemplation. On the other hand the older view was continued by Louis of Granada and St Peter of Alcantara, but with a strong emphasis on the function of the will which would later develop into the teaching of what St Francis of Sales called 'the Prayer of Simple Surrender', Père Lallemand 'the Prayer of Silence', and Bossuet 'the Prayer of Simplicity'. Meanwhile St Theresa and St John of the Cross had described with unparalleled insight the psychological characteristics of the different degrees of prayer, a work which in fact, though by no means in intention, contributed to their being regarded as essentially separate and mutually exclusive, so that meditation and affective prayer came to be thought of as the two ordinary degrees, and mystical prayer as an extraordinary one.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries discursive meditation came to be looked on as the only safe way of praying, but in recent years the true sources of the theology of prayer have happily been rediscovered, and the act of contemplation restored to its proper place as the normal goal of prayer. These recent studies have incidentally made possible the writing of an article so greatly instructive and refreshing as the one we have described. All those that succeed it should be read against its background. They show St Paul, the Desert Fathers, St Francis of Sales, and Charles de Foucauld at prayer, enquire into the prayer of layfolk in our own times, give valuable instruction in the practice of meditation and the prayerful exercise of the theological virtues, and stress the value of Holy Scripture for feeding the spirit and fostering its ardour in prayer and life. A widespread and general shrinking from the least suggestion of method is revealed as characteristic of prayerful souls today, but while the contributors are not slow to condemn exaggerated complications of the past, there is an undercurrent of suggestion that some degree of regularity and discipline is a normal requirement for progress. The not infrequent generous desire to lead a life that draws its strength from prayer may prove an idle reverie and cover a dangerous self-deception if it is not persistently expressed in the ascetic discipline of regular practice.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

OUR BLESSED MOTHER. By the late Fr Edward Leen and Fr John Kearney, C.S.Sp., edited by Fr Bernard Fennelly, C.S.Sp. (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds; 10s. 6d.)

Those who during the past years have refreshed themselves with the spiritual writings of Fr Leen and Fr Kearney must have felt a pang of regret when they learned that these two gifted pens had ceased. There were still vast fields of God's supernatural world to be worked over: great themes on which to bring their *sapida sapientia* to bear. To both the fitting theme would have been Our Lady. 'If I could write a book on our Blessed Lady', said Fr Leen, 'I should feel that my work as a spiritual writer would be complete'. God ordained otherwise. What Fr Fennelly has done for us is, with the help of the Sisters of St Mary's Convent, Arklow, to give us fifteen talks of Fr Leen and four conferences of Fr Kearney's. We can therefore gather what was uppermost in their minds on the subject of Our Lady and have an inkling of a greater banquet, which Providence withheld.

It might be well on the appearance of this posthumous work of Fr Leen to try to discover what we might be permitted to call his 'Secret'. We are all conscious of the difference between the *Summa* of St Thomas and the ordinary theological manuals. The *Summa* somehow feels warm and the manual cold. It is not a question of brevity and precision, but a *Respondeo dicendum* seems to live whereas a thesis with its *Status Questionis* and its ordered array of