

**Mitták Tünde**

**THE HISTORY OF THE SECULAR THIRD ORDERS, THEIR  
FUNCTION AFTER THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL,  
ESPECIALLY IN HUNGARY**

**BOOKLET OF THESIS**

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The first organized secular orders – such the third orders have taken shape around the significant order's founders – came into existence at the end of high Middle Ages, although keeping penitence and appeasement was already known – which was kept by the prophet in the community's name or onto a prophet's call – in the age of the Early Church.<sup>1</sup> So many lay people desiring a conversion followed Jesus and the apostles likewise, after all can not be considered religious associations. Though the institutional form of monastic life and the Third Orders did not take shape yet in the first centuries of Christianity, the aim of perfectness in the individual life is already known from this time (like ascetics, hermits or anachorets, virgins).<sup>2</sup> In the ancient Christian age the private associations initially were bodies of religious, the real motivation was the formation of their faith and affection, furthermore resignation from the temporary goods, earthly joys from the aim of the God's country and the gaining of the eternal life. After the medieval improving of the European institutionalized monasticism and its blooming the claim arise from the part of the secular ones, that to the religious let a similar life be lived. The first organized associations consisted of the followers who may not have uptake for any reason in the orders, but the order founders may not have left them out of consideration because of followers' numbers growing and the persistent validation of their intention. Based on the sources verifiable, that the thought of the Third Orders Secular was already arise by *Saint Norbert of Xanten*, who gave formulated rules of life to *Thibault of Champagne* around 1124 intending, and what increasingly more people started observing next.<sup>3</sup> The legal experts' point of view yet until the today's day not uniform in that question, the first canonically organized secular order was the *Third Order of Saint Norbert* or the *Third Order of Saint Francis*, because of memoranda at the 17<sup>th</sup> century earlier did not stay above about Third Order of Saint Norbert.<sup>4</sup> In our opinion, it's possible to respond to the open questions after the accurate clarification of the canonical concepts, concerned on the road of historical fact-finding.

Indisputable fact, that rules of life were given to Thibault by Saint Norbert of Xanten and this started the development of the Third Orders towards it.

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<sup>1</sup> See 1Sám,7,6; Neh 1,6 and 9,2; Iz 63,7–64,12; Dán 9,4–19. cf. *Bibliai Lexikon*, Budapest 1989. 205–207.

<sup>2</sup> ÓRIGENÉSZ, *Az imádságról és a vértanúságról* (Ókeresztény írók 14), Budapest 1997. 164–219. cf. VANYÓ L., *Ókeresztény írók lexikona* (Szent István Kézikönyvek 10), Budapest 2004. 375–389. SCHERMANN E., *Szerzetesjog*, Pannonhalma 1927. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Szent Norbert Világi Harmadrendje*, Csorna 1945. CAMPBELL, H., *Szent Norbert a premontrei rend alapítója*, 213–214. *Szent Norbert Világi Harmadrendje*, see <http://www.opraem.hu/harmadrend.htm>. GRASSL, B., *A premontrei rend szentjei*, Budapest 1941.

<sup>4</sup> CAMPBELL, H., *Szent Norbert a premontrei rend alapítója*, 213–214.

Apart from the rules for these tertiaries were first formally approved by Pope Honorius II in 1126.<sup>5</sup> The Holy See approved the regulation renewed of Third Order of Saint Norbert, after it they were revised and approved by Pope Benedict XIV in May of 1752. The next revision was approved by Pope Pius XI in 1923. The last revision was approved by Pope Pius XII on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 1949.<sup>6</sup> After Saint Norbert's death with some seventy years, St. Francis of Assisi was looking for the living of evangelical councils perfectly through the keeping of the penitence. The sources testify that it was organized by him around 1220, the third order named Brothers and Sisters of the Order of Penance and his regulation comes from the seraphic father concerned.<sup>7</sup> The order founder first of all gives outlined the lifestyle recommended in a document titled *Epistula ad fideles*,<sup>8</sup> which was complemented and approved by Ugolino cardinal in 1221 (*Memoriale Propositi*). Regulation was constructed by *F. Caro OFM* in 1284, that published and approved by Nicholas IV in 1289 (*Supra montem* – 18 Aug. 1289).<sup>9</sup> The rules were in validity until a new regulation published by Leo XIII in 1883.

We may affirm that the group of the secular took shape around both order founders in his life yet, who would have liked living similarly to them. All two saints considered that the family and the secular missions are important, gave rules of life for their followers in order for the evangelisation to be continued in their own life state. Both of them laid a rule system, which became a uniform regulation later devised. The Third Order of Saint Norbert received an affirmation by Honorius II in 1126, while the Third Order of Saint Francis founded by Nicholas IV in 1289.<sup>10</sup> Despite all that, the Third Order of St. Norbert preceded the foundation of the Order of Penitents of St. Francis in time and received an affirmation papal before, after all doubtless, that most sources remained about the Franciscan Third Order.

In Italy all of localities and cities became tertiaries under St. Francis' life. The members of the penitent order already maintained sanctuaries, hospitals in this time, the abandoned ones, orphans and poor were supported institutionally.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Third Order of Norbertine* in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV., 96.

<sup>6</sup> *The Third Order of Norbertine* in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV., 96.; PUSKELY M., *A keresztény szerzetesség történeti fogalomtára*, 757–758.

<sup>7</sup> LINO, B., *A ferences világi rend természete*, 5. VÁRNAI J., *Kézikönyv a Ferences Világi Rend életéhez*, 46–48. NIGG, W., *A szerzetesek titkai*, 279–319. *Third Orders* in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV., 93–94. BALANYI GY., *Anima Franciscana*, Budapest 1930. 108–109.

<sup>8</sup> *Fonti Franciscane*, Padova 1983.<sup>3</sup> 151–158.

<sup>9</sup> *Bullarium Franciscanum*, Tom. IV., Roma 1768. 94–97.

<sup>10</sup> *Memoriale Propositi* was approved oral by Pope Honorius III in 1221. See *A ferences harmadik rend*, 18. cf. UNGHVÁRY A., *A harmadik rend történelmi méltatása* in BUTTYKAY A. (szerk.), *Szent Ferenc nyomdokain (1226–1926)*, Budapest 1926. 375–381.

The first example like this there was San Paolo hospital in Florentine, but the urban hospital was guided by tertiaries in Imola (Italy) too. Beside this the social significance of the order can be manifested unambiguously in every age, even the religious life the strength of moulders, even the alleviation of the debates between the other ones. The name of the Order of Penitents at first beginning changed to Third Order of Saint Francis in a bull titled *Supra montem*. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the division of Third Orders began from that claim budding, that some people would have liked living a community life, but after all as a monk. The Third Order Regulars came into existence so, that follow the rules set up for the tertiaries were observed, but live separating from the world.

The Third Order Secular of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was formed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century after the order started expanding into Europe. It can be found a difference in it so, that the order founder did not formulate the rules of life for the Secular Carmelites. By the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the institutionalized Third Order became, which was found by *Blessed John Soreth*. He obtained from Pope Nicholas V, a Papal Bull, *Cum nulla* of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1452, which was approved by Pope Sixtus IV in 1476 (*Mare magnum privilegiorum*).<sup>11</sup> Adapting to the claims of the age *Theodor Stratus* the order's general gave new rules to the Carmelite tertiaries in 1635, which were reviewed in 1678 next.<sup>12</sup> The regulation of Carmelite tertiaries was renewed in 1921, then – in the spirituality of the teaching of Second Vatican Council – it was again renewed in 1979. The newest approbation – with twenty years after coming into effect of the Code of Canon Law in 1983 – the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life demanded it on 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2003. After Second Vatican Council the reform made (makes) a change not only in the monastic regulations and the rules of Third Orders Secular, but also influenced the function of the secular orders, the members' view. The Pope Paul VI approved the regulation of Third Order on 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1978 with *Seraphicus Patriarcha* beginning circular letter, later the constitutions of the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites in 1979. The synodical teaching and a theological picture which to improve was continued from the secular ones is reflected well in the renewed regulations.

The expression of tertieries disappears gradually from the regulations and instead of the Third Order the Franciscan Secular Order, the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites, Secular Order of Saint Norbert widespread.

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<sup>11</sup> PUSKELY M., *Szerzetesek*, 61–64. and 144. PUSKELY M., *A keresztény szerzetesség történeti fogalomtára*, 757–758.

<sup>12</sup> *The Third Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel* in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV., 96.

The new content of the synodical teaching was founded on the manner turning yet into the single constitutions and partial statutes at the same time in. In a domestic look the success of the synodical effects not only on the space of the legislation, but also in the practical life was shifted onto later, which the 50-year-dictatorships ripping the Hungarian history in half caused. The separative endeavours after the World War II and a land reform affected the whole Hungarian church seriously.<sup>13</sup>

The communist era was the government on it in order to force back the church influence with all devices. The church schools were nationalized, a church's separation was decided in 1948, the obligatory catechism ceased in 1949.<sup>14</sup> Finally on 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1950 the monastic orders' function permit and the ones with which the state signed a separate convention may have continued to work only. The Piarist got back their institutions (in Budapest and in Kecskemét), the Benedictine (in Pannonhalma and in Győr), the Franciscan (in Esztergom and in Szentendre), and the female schoolmaster order being active on Budapest and in Debrecen, Poor School Sisters called of Our Lady.<sup>15</sup> The 1956 Revolution and War of Independence protesting against dictatorship and oppression spoiled the situation longer. As a result of the serial arrests', ceaseless harassment of Magisterial of Security of the States, constant watch and anticlerical measures more priests, a monk and tertiaries suffered injuries in body and soul, concerning their death caused by.<sup>16</sup>

The effects of Second Vatican Council may not have come really before the political transformation in Hungary so. It managed to attain results on liturgical and church government space only, because of the State Church Case Office emphasized it in a number case in his secret reports strictly, that it is necessary to be hampered by him.<sup>17</sup> The domestic reform of the orders may have ensued after the political transformation only so.

Franciscan Secular Order and the communities of the Secular Order of the Discalced Carmelites working illegally between 1950 and 1989 recovered relatively quickly, but the dispersing mostly suffering of the thing the organization of the secular ones occurred after the turn of the century only in order of Saint Norbert. Following the year of the turn it to get organized ambitious monastic orders had to face up to a heavy situation.

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<sup>13</sup> GERGELY J. – KARDOS J. – ROTTNER F., *Az egyházak Magyarországon*, 209.; See 1945 yearly VI. law.

<sup>14</sup> See 1949 yearly XX. law – § 54. and decree of 1101/1-1949. (IX. 6.).

<sup>15</sup> CZENE –POLGÁR V., *Egyházpolitika az 1950-es években*, in ÖZE S. – MEDGYESY-SCHMIKLI N. (szerk.), *A ferences lelkiesség hatása*, 460–468.; NAGY P. T., *Hitoktatás az ötvenes években*, in *Iskolakultúra* 10 (2000/2) 38–46.; BELICZAY A., *A magyarországi vallásoktatás története*, in *Theológiai Szemle* 35 (1992/2) 96–100.

<sup>16</sup> See decree of 4353/1949. (XII. 28.).

<sup>17</sup> SZABÓ CS., *A Szentszék és a Magyar Népköztársaság kapcsolatai*, 64–81, 200–201, 290–292.

The monks' majority grew old or they suffered injuries in body and soul so, that the order may not have counted his active activity. Those orders that pursued their activity unbrokenly under the years of the illegality were able to recover primarily from the apathy state. We could contact with the present leaders of the orders, we may have looked in into the single communities' life, in their documentation and we agreed in it, that the renewal process lasts even today. The time passed since the political transformation were not enough that way, that the members can get over the persecution lasting. All summed up the study of sources, all the archival work, all the results of the personal experiences, we make the under mentioned proposals.

It is necessary to continue the additional church history research of the sources of carmelitan and premonstratensian, it is necessary to direct the archives' present situation. The exploration of the function of the secular orders with a scientific claim, his past knowledge and the international comparisons helps the secular ones in a church, concerned for his mission filled in a world in the spirituality of the teaching of Second Vatican Council. In the interest of this necessary the secular ones from the side of his continuous and more thorough training, the monastic orders the tighter contact and spiritual support, the dissemination of the spirituality of the order among the young persons. The 21<sup>st</sup> century's burning problem is the family's crisis, therefore secular ones can evangelize here the most efficiently. Their mission needs to be perceived through their example and on the community level especially on the life protection, family protection areas.

The salvation of souls is the church's capital objective and his task, in what the secular orders may be his efficient helpers. Thereby since, that they live in the world, a "bridge role" is played not only the monastic orders, but also towards the diocesan priesthood. We consider it may be important to invite the national leaders of the secular orders to diocesan synods, at least in observer status. They have got most information about Christ believers' daily problems and his difficulties, valuable solution proposals may be made in fulfilling of the church aims in the world through their evangelisation mission.