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READING—CHANNEL OF TRUTH

TRUTH IS AT THE VERY HEART OF REAL DOMINICANISM. A Dominican not interested in truth would be even more of an anomaly than a maestro not interested in music or a mother not interested in children. He simply would not make sense. All his training, all his traditions, all his life would be contradicted. Now a Dominican Tertiary is as much a Dominican as a Dominican religious and truth means as much to the one as it does to the other, or at least it should. The Tertiary may not have professional interest in truth as, let us say, the theologian, yet he has as great a need for truth, in some cases even greater because he can more easily be taken in by error than his religious brother.

One of the great problems of our day is the fact that the channels whereby the truth, the word of God, should reach our people are being gradually closed to them. One of the great tragedies of our day is that the people do not know it, or if they do, they either don't care or don't know what to do about it. Great and international news cartels deliberately "slant" the news to suit selfish local or national prejudices and thereby blackout truth usually in the name of strange and devious ideologies. Radio commentators make the most outrageous statements and millions of Cath-

olics who should know better nod (the word is apt) their heads in tacit and placid approval. The truth of Jesus Christ is not so much attacked as it is ignored. It is almost as if He had never spoken, had never lived. The fact that over 75,000,000 of our people profess no belief whatsoever in the supernatural is a fairly good indication of where we are drifting.

In the face of all this organized and unorganized opposition to truth how is the Dominican Tertiary going to meet it? The following is merely a partial answer to this question treating just one phase (that of reading) of a problem that is complex and many-sided.

DOMINICAN SPIRITUAL READING

One of the Tertiary's first obligations is to become imbued with the spirit of the Order. Therefore, it is his duty to learn the history and tradition of his Order as well as the lives of the Dominican saints. A logical starting point would seem to be a good life of the father and founder, St. Dominic, and for this perhaps nothing more appropriate could be suggested than the small but fascinating *Life of St. Dominic* by the late Father Bede Jarrett, O.P. This is easy reading and catches some of the spirit of the Order and its founder. Then there is the study, *St. Dominic, Servant but Friend* by Sister M. Assumpta O'Hanlon, O.P. The Tertiary will also want to become acquainted with St. Dominic's most famous son, the great intellectual and spiritual giant, St. Thomas Aquinas. For this purpose he might read *St. Thomas Aquinas* by G. K. Chesterton or the lively *The Man from Rocca Sicca* by Father Reginald Coffey, O.P.

If the Tertiary be a woman she should make a special

study of the lives of the women Dominican saints, notably those of the Third Order secular, St. Catherine of Siena and St. Rose of Lima. Very little has been written in English on St. Rose although two juvenile works (*Angel of the Andes* by Mary Fabyan Windeatt and *Rose of the Americas* by Sara Maynard) have appeared and are worth reading even by adults. Fortunately there is no such scarcity of literature in regard to St. Catherine of Siena. There comes to mind such books as *The Mission of St. Catherine* by Martin S. Gillet, O.P., *Catherine of Siena* by Sigrid Undset, *Saint Catherine of Siena* by Alice Curtayne, *St. Catherine of Siena* by Jorgensen and the rare but invaluable *Life* by her confessor and spiritual director, Blessed Raymond of Capua. For a short sketch of all the Dominican saints (including the recently canonized St. Margaret of Hungary), the Tertiary might read *Dominican Saints* by the Dominican Novices.

There is also a vast field of what might be called general Dominican literature written by (and sometimes about) Dominicans. A few might be mentioned: *Treatise on the Spiritual Life* by St. Vincent Ferrer, *St. Dominic and His Work* by Père Mandonnet, O.P., all the works of Father Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., with special mention being given to his well-known *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*. Father Garrigou-Lagrange's works are excellent although it must be admitted that they are by no means easy reading, especially for those who have had no philosophical or theological background. Other works are *The Gospel of Jesus Christ* by Père Lagrange, O.P., the late lamented biblical genius; all the spiritual works of Father Bede Jarrett, O.P., to mention just a few, *Meditations for Layfolk*, *Our Lady of*

Lourdes, The House of Gold, and The Space of Life Between; likewise the spiritual writings of such other English Dominicans as Reginald Buckler, O.P., who wrote *The Perfection of Man Charity*; Vincent McNabb, O.P., who wrote *The Craft of Prayer, The Craft of Suffering* and many others, and the talented Gerald Vann, O.P., who wrote among others *Eve and the Gryphon, The Divine Pity* and *The Heart of Man*.

Dominican Life by F. D. Joret, O.P., is a book written especially for Tertiaries and one that all Tertiaries should read. Another splendid work is *The Spirit of St. Dominic* by Humbert Clerissac, O.P. For those deeply interested in the liturgy there are *Hymns of the Dominican Missal and Breviary* by Aquinas Byrnes, O.P., and *History of the Dominican Liturgy* by William R. Bonniwell, O.P., who has also recently written the life of one of our little known tertiaries, *The Life of Margaret of Metóla*.

To mention just a few others there are: *The Life of Christ* by Père Didon, O.P., *St. Thomas Aquinas Meditations* and *God Cares for You*, both edited by E. C. McEniry, O.P., the classic *Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena, Blessed Jordan of Saxony's Letters of Spiritual Direction* translated by Norbert F. Georges, O.P., *The Way of the Blessed Christ* by Father Kienberger, O.P., *Our Lady of Fátima* by Archbishop Finbar Ryan, O.P., and the Marian classic (written incidentally by a Tertiary priest) *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary* by Saint Louis de Montfort.

THOMISTIC READING

Many Tertiaries, of course, will want to go into the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. This can be a life-time occupation

and study. The laity has been given invaluable help in this matter by courses and lectures inaugurated in various parts of this country for this purpose. Most of these courses, presented to layfolk in the non-technical language that they can grasp, have been based on the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas. The entire *Summa Theologica* can now be obtained in English. A book that has been practically universally used has been the marvelous *Companion to the Summa*, a four volume masterpiece by the late Fr. Walter Farrell, O.P. This work is just what its title claims to be, a companion and not a substitute for the *Summa*, at the same time being a splendid synthesis of St. Thomas' classic work. Striking figures and examples make it comparatively easy for the lay reader to grasp some of the more difficult ideas. Another book that might prove most helpful to the Tertiary is *The Basic Works of St. Thomas Aquinas* edited by Anton Pegis. This two volume work of several thousand pages contains substantial parts of the *Summa Theologica* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*. The Holy Name Society National Headquarters, N. Y. C., has a series *Theology for Laymen* which would be ideal for study club purposes.

The Tertiary pursuing Thomistic studies will not find the road easy, nevertheless his hard work will be well repayed in obtaining a solid grasp on Catholic doctrine.

GENERAL BACKGROUND AND SOCIAL READING

It goes without saying that Tertiaries should have much more than a passing or casual acquaintance with Sacred Scripture, particularly the New Testament. Christ, His words and His doctrine must become a part of the Tertiary's very life. This can be accomplished in part by a

daily reading of the Sacred Scripture as well as through an intelligent use of the Missal wherein so much of the Scriptures is to be found. *The Imitation of Christ* should be familiar to the Tertiary. Both the Scriptures and the Imitation can be used quite effectively as helps in meditation.

Other non-Dominican spiritual writers should be given careful consideration, for example, the works of Father Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., Abbot Marmion, O.S.B., Père Plus, S.J., Caryll Houselander, Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B., not to mention the classic spiritual writers such as St. Augustine, St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross and St. Francis de Sales, to cite a few.

Nor should the great social, historical and economic writers of our day be neglected. We are living in a day of great transition, not to say upheaval. The writings of men like Dawson, Belloc and Chesterton, should not only be read but might well be taken as texts for study groups and discussion clubs. They have a message for our day that is largely being overlooked, much to our shame and disadvantage. They deserve a careful hearing and Dominican Tertiaries should be among the first to face squarely the truths they have to offer, however bitter the dose. That great Dominican, Father Vincent McNabb, O.P., has, in his social writings, a message for our time that rings stronger and truer as our world drifts more and more surely into chaos. Perhaps a good work of Father McNabb's to begin with would be *Old Principles and the New Order*.

In this field of the social order Dominican Tertiaries should be keenly alive to the pronouncements of the Holy See and should literally snap them up as quickly as they are delivered. The morning after any important Papal pro-

nouncement the full text has been appearing in *The New York Times* and frequently in *The Herald Tribune*. There should be such a demand for copies of these issues that newspaper publishers all over the country would immediately see the advantage (even financial) of printing these important, epoch-making pronouncements in full. Whether it be an Encyclical Letter or merely an important talk, all Catholics, and particularly all Tertiaries, should be alert to the one voice in our world that speaks truth fearlessly and unashamedly and, at the same time, commands a world-wide hearing.