

**The history and spirituality of the
lay Dominicans in South Africa
from 1926-1994**

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis, unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the footnotes, is my own original work. It has not been submitted previously to any other university for a degree or examination.

Mark James OP

**Mark James OP
25 August 2007**

Dedication

Jared, Dylan, Brandon, Skye and Catherine

Continue to grow in faith

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Abstract

The lay Dominicans in South Africa, originally known as the Third Order of the St. Dominic, consist of lay associates of the Friars of the Order of Preachers (or the Dominican Order). St. Dominic founded the Order of Preachers in 1216. From the Order's earliest foundation, lay people were associated with its life and preaching mission. Originally known as the Order of Penance, it emerged out of the thirteenth century reform movement of church and society known as the *vita apostolica*. One of the most prominent of these was St. Catherine of Siena. Many women were inspired to follow her example. Later a rule was developed for the Third Order, also known as tertiaries.

The tertiaries were first introduced into South Africa in 1888 by the Dominican sisters of Kingwilliamstown who accepted some women as candidates for the congregation of sisters. Later when the Dominican friars arrived in the country in 1917, Fr. Laurence Shapcote who started the first Dominican mission in Boksburg, accepted tertiaries. The first chapters were established in Boksburg, Louis Bertrand mission near Potchefstroom and Stellenbosch. The tertiaries were primarily a pious or devotional society of associate priests, solitary members (lone tertiaries) and chapter members. They emphasised the importance of the spiritual life, understood at the time, as attaining Christian perfection. From their origins in South Africa, the tertiaries included both men and women from the various racial and economic strata of apartheid society.

The tertiaries grew and developed rapidly from 1940 to 1960. They had a wide appeal because of the resurgence of contemplation and the monastic life during this period. In some parishes, particularly African ones, the Dominican friars were training tertiaries as lay ministers. In this way the tertiaries anticipated the changes that took place during the Second Vatican Council and the greater role given to the laity in the church.

During the 1960s, the first signs of a decline in interest in the tertiaries becomes apparent. Initially, the tertiaries responded well to the challenges of Vatican II but membership of the chapters declined considerably during 1970s and 1980s. The social conditions within church and society began to change. The changes allowed by Vatican II gave laity greater responsibility within the church as catechists, communion ministers, members of the parish

council and deacons. This caused a crisis of identity for the lay Dominicans after the Council. By the early 1980s many groups had collapsed as fewer laity joined the lay Dominicans preferring to involve themselves in parish ministries than join a chapter.

The lay Dominicans remained primarily a pious society. Some of the tertiaries involved themselves in lay ministries. In African parishes, lay Dominicans like Nicholas Lekoane, Joel Moja, Sixtus Msomi in Kwa Thema and Thomas Moeketsi in Heilbron rose to prominence as lay ministers. It was particularly in Kwa Thema that some innovative contributions were made in parish apostolates with the establishment of the parish ward system.

However, the intensification of the struggle against apartheid highlighted the need for a more prophetic spirituality which encouraged people to involve themselves in social change. As an organisation the lay Dominicans were never involved in anti-apartheid work with the exception of a few of individuals - Advocate Herbert Vierya, and Jimmy and Joan Stewart, Major Mehan, Barbara Versfeld and Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa. Consequently, the lay Dominicans were considered, even by the Dominican friars, as increasingly irrelevant and neglected them in their ministerial outreach. By 1984 the Lay Dominicans were still in existence but even the National Promoter, Douglas Wiseman, called for the disestablishment of the lay Dominican groups in their present form. This never happened.

During the 1980s, there were some creative attempts to revive and renew the lay Dominicans. The Dominican Family group was started in Cape Town that sought to bring together all the different members of the Dominican family: friars, sisters and laity. Another group was also established with a specific focus and mission as teachers in Dominican schools in Cape Town. This group developed into the Blessed Jordan of Saxony chapter.

Even though the number of lay Dominican chapters declined, nevertheless, the organisation did not collapse. The lay Dominicans battled to come to grips with the challenges of a church that allowed greater participation of the laity in parish life. It was unable to transform its spirituality to allow for this shift in ecclesial life. Neither did it take up the challenges of involvement in issues of justice and peace. Young people did not find involvement in the organisation attractive and so membership continued to dwindle. The question remains whether the lay Dominicans can provide a genuine lay spirituality according to the mind of Vatican II?

List of abbreviations

ACTS	Association of Catholic Tertiary Students
ANC	African National Congress
CASA	Catholic Students' Association
CAU	Catholic African Union
CCS	Community Consulting Services
CCSA	Christian Council of South Africa
CIIR	Catholic Institute of International Relations
COSAS	Congress of South African Students
CT	Cape Town
CWL	Catholic Women's League
DVI	Dominican Volunteers International
DYM	Dominican Youth Movement
Fedosa	Federation of Dominicans in Southern Africa
ICT	Institute of Contextual Theology
ICU	Industrial Commercial Union
JCCAE	Joint Council for Catholic Africans and Europeans
KAS	<i>Katolieke Afrikaner Sentrum</i> (Catholic Afrikaner Centre)
KDG	Knights of Da Gama
ME	Marriage Encounter
MK	<i>Umkhonto we Sizwe</i> (Spear of the Nation)
NCFS	National Catholic Federation of Students
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OFM	Order of Friars Minor
OHP	Order of the Holy Paraclete
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
OSB	Order of St. Benedict
OSU	Order of St. Ursula
OP	Order of Preachers (Dominicans)
PAC	Pan-Africanist Congress
SACBC	Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference
SACCL	South African Council for Catholic Laity

SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SASO	South African Students' Organisation
SCC	Small Christian Communities
SJA	See, Judge and Act
SPOBA	Saint Peter's Old Boys' Association
SVP	Society of St. Vincent de Paul
TOSD	Third Order of St. Dominic
TOSF	Third Order of St. Francis
UCM	University Christian Movement
UDF	United Democratic Front
YCS	Young Christian Students
YCW	Young Christian Workers
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army

Archival abbreviations

AAD	Archives of the Archdiocese of Durban
ASPS	Archives of St. Peter's Seminary
BCA	Bishops' Conference Archives
CDSA	Cabra Dominican Sisters' Archives
CHB	Catholic History Bureau
KWT	Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters Archives
SBA	St. Benedict's House Archives
ZAOP	Dominican Vicariate of Southern Africa Archives

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The history and spirituality of the lay Dominicans in South Africa, 1926 - 1994

Chapter 1 Outlining the study

1.0. Introduction

Democratic political institutions and structures need virtuous people... A just society can only be created and sustained by virtuous people.¹

In his book, *A New Map of the World*, Ian Linden highlighted the importance of not just structural change within society but also of moral and spiritual transformation. In the new South Africa, we have one of the most liberal and progressive Constitutions in the world but we also have one of the highest crime rates, from violent car-hijackings and bank heists to the quieter but equally lucrative forms of white-collar crime and corruption. There is no doubt that massive changes have happened within South African society in the last few years. Major structural changes have been made in the legal system but violent crime and corruption is rampant. The system has changed but the people have not. There is the ongoing need to encourage people to personally appropriate the values of a new society or alternative society if change is to be sustained and a more just society developed.

Religion has often been considered the means to instil within people moral and spiritual values. This is one of the contributions that religion makes to society. However, even in the new South Africa there appears to be a disjuncture or distortion in this traditional role of religion. In many businesses, people may begin a meeting with a prayer, or claim to be believing-Christians but their behaviour and the lived expression of their faith show little integration of Gospel values. Some believing Christians go to church each and every Sunday but will exploit and treat their employees with contempt during the week. Meetings that begin with a prayer become battlegrounds where people are spoken to in demeaning ways. Profit becomes the only value and attaining it by any means, even corrupt ones, are not questioned. The values of competition, individual pursuit of wealth, success and status are dominant but are not seen as incompatible with the Christian life and Gospel message. The capitalist system predominates to

¹ Ian Linden, *A New Map of the World* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), pp. 143-144. He was formerly the director of the Catholic Institute of International Relations (CIIR) in London.

the extent that people see no contradiction between the values of capitalism and those of the Christian gospel.

South Africa has been a democracy for thirteen years and neo-liberal economic theories, rather than apartheid, now shape the worldview of many people in the country. The resurgence of interest in spirituality is an opportunity for the re-evangelisation of an increasingly secular world. While there is a profound interest in spirituality many people are very suspicious of religious institutions. These are perceived to encourage passive, authoritarian and formal types of religion that are rigid, regimented and soul-destroying. While there is truth in some of these accusations, the spirituality that replaces institutional religion is often extremely individualistic and esoteric.

The emergence of spirituality in our post-modern and globalised context, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, highlights the shifts taking place in people's understanding of the role of faith and religion in their lives. Spirituality has become a growth industry with many different interpretations of what constitutes spirituality; this is true in society, in the church, as well as in the academy. Post-modernism with its emphasis on deconstructing meta-narratives has opened up opportunities for a variety of different and diverse voices to be heard. While this has its positive side, in that it has led to the re-emergence of interest in spirituality, mysticism and religion, there is a real danger. It is that in a post-modern and globalised context this resurgence of interest will again encourage spiritualities that are an opiate and which take people's minds off the issues and challenges of the present time.

Theology is discourse about God and Christian behaviour in the world. Throughout the history of the Church there has been a disjuncture between Christian belief and its practice. Sheldrake speaks of the importance of reflecting on how Christian believers live their faith or their theology, how they personally and communally "appropriate" their faith, the theology and dogma of the Church, and how they live it out and express it in worship, through their values and way of life.² This is the concern of spirituality.

² Phillip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian living and the doctrine of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), p. 34ff.

Throughout the history of the church there have been many innovative and creative attempts by lay people to live out their Christian call to holiness. One particular way in which this was encouraged was through the Dominican tertiaries or lay Dominicans as they were later known.³ In this study, the focus is primarily on the Christian spiritual perspectives of the lay Dominicans.

The history of their spirituality will be investigated in relation to their response to the challenges within South African society from the years 1926-1994. During this period many white South Africans and some black South Africans, many of whom were believing Christians, accepted uncritically the assumptions of apartheid. The lay Dominicans were no different. This study explores how this happened and why the lay Dominicans, on the whole, failed to find the necessary resources to challenge the injustices of apartheid.

In 1963, the Second Vatican Council transformed the Roman Catholic Church. This study will reflect on the impact these changes had on the lay Dominicans. The Council gave more scope to the laity and it would be expected that this should be beneficial to the growth and popularity of the lay Dominicans. However, the opposite proved to be the case. They declined in influence and membership in South Africa during the period 1962-1994. The reasons for this phenomenon will be investigated.

This raises the question as to what is required of a Christian spirituality that will transform the consciousness of its adherents, thus enabling them to see themselves, their neighbour and God with fresh eyes? What type of lifestyle is required that will bring people to conversion, to a change of heart and mind, to a different awareness and consciousness of themselves, other people and the world? This period provides a useful historical context in which to evaluate the type of spirituality that is required for the necessary conversion of people, church and society. The intention of this study is to reflect on what it means for lay people to be spiritual and how the history of the lay Dominicans, being a case in point, can help us to understand this challenge.

In what follows, it is important to clarify the meaning of the terms "spirituality" and "laity" and their pertinence to this study.

³ Prior to 1967, the lay Dominicans were known as the Third Order of St. Dominic or Dominican tertiaries. Throughout this study the title "lay Dominicans" will be used where there is no specific reference to a specific historical period.

1.1. What is spirituality?

In our post-modern and globalised world, many people might not consider themselves to be religious or church-going people but they do see themselves as spiritual.

The success of the word spirituality in describing religious experience is also its limitation. There are many different and competing understandings of what constitutes 'spirituality' in church, society and the academy. Tugwell calls spirituality a "tricky notion".⁴ It has become a catch-all phrase to encapsulate all the many, diverse and varied forms that the spiritual search takes today, what Downey refers to as the "spiritual sprawl".⁵ It is an ambiguous concept and not easy to define.

Sandra Schneiders points out that much of the ambiguity of this term is related to the fact that it is used to refer to: (1) a fundamental aspect of the human person; (2) the lived experience of this fundamental aspect of the person; and (3) the academic discipline which studies this lived experience.⁶

1.1.1. Spirituality as a fundamental aspect of the human person

The understanding of spirituality as relating to a fundamental aspect of the human person can be traced back to Karl Rahner who spoke of the human person as being "spirit in the world".⁷ Human beings are created in God's image and likeness and therefore, they have the capacity to be open and receptive to the transcendent ultimate mystery of life called God. For Karl Rahner, a human being is that existent thing who must listen for an historical revelation of God, given in his history and possibly in human speech.⁸ For Rahner, human beings are "hearers of the Word" within history.

Humans find God through historically conditioned experience, through the people with whom they engage in relationship, through the events of their personal and communal history, through

⁴ Simon Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection: An exploration of Christian spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984), p. vii.

⁵ Michael Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality* (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), p. 13.

⁶ Sandra Schneiders, "Spirituality in the Academy" *Theological Studies* vol. 50, December 1989, p. 678.

⁷ See Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968). For a less philosophical approach, see Karl Rahner, *Hearers of the Word* (London and Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1969).

⁸ Rahner, *Hearers of the Word*, p. 161.

the needs of the world, and through the choices made in response to these - all of which are regarded as the revelation of God.⁹

All of human life and experience, activity, events and history reveal and disclose the presence and action of God's grace. All of human experience and history becomes the "locus of God's revealing self-disclosure".¹⁰ God is known not only in the peak moments of mystical prayer but more often in ordinary events of daily experience.

Thus human beings also have the capacity to transcend, to reach beyond their own finiteness and that of the world of their immediate experience. They realise this through the pursuit of knowledge, freedom and love. They are able to transcend themselves and their history, transforming and changing self-concern into concern for others. This is a capacity within each and every human being whether they are believers or not. In this sense, each human being is by nature - spiritual.

All human beings are spiritual insofar as all have the capacity to know and be known, to love and be loved, to be free and enable others to be free. Each one is spiritual insofar as each one is, by nature, drawn to mystery.¹¹

In this way, Rahner's theology has inspired theologians like Johann Baptist Metz, Gustavo Gutierrez and David Tracy¹² to develop the social and political implications of faith. The human being as "spirit in the world" encounters the mystery of God in the world, in the events of history, in the everyday experience of each and every human being, but particularly in the suffering, the excluded, the marginalised, the other. Christian faith and holiness includes a commitment to struggle for the political and economic, social and ecological transformation of the world.

This approach gives more scope to the role of the Holy Spirit in human history which has often been downplayed in Western theology.¹³ The importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian, with its emphasis on the human experience of God's self-disclosure within the events of life and history, means that:

⁹ Joan Nuth, "History, Historical Consciousness" in Michael Downey (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993), p. 477.

¹⁰ Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, p. 33.

¹¹ Downey, *Understanding Christian Spirituality*, p. 33.

¹² See Gaspar Martinez, *Confronting the Mystery of God* (New York/London: Continuum, 2001).

¹³ See Jose Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation* (Tunbridge Wells, Kent: Burns and Oates & Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), pp. 16-17; also Philip Endean, "Theology out of Spirituality: The approach of Karl Rahner", *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1995, pp. 6-7.

the 'Jesus event' on its own cannot explain the church and Christianity. The life, death and resurrection of Jesus would have had no effect on the history of this world on their own. Without the event of experience of the Spirit, Jesus would have left nothing. It is equally true that experience of the Spirit alone would not have brought Christianity into being; it cannot be separated from the Jesus event. On the contrary: its purpose is to make Jesus enter into human history and produce the fruits of his incarnation.¹⁴

Ignoring the role of the Holy Spirit has led to dangerous dualisms in Christology, soteriology and ecclesiology. In Christology there is a separation between a Christ defined by dogmatic theology, the Councils of the Church and the historical Jesus. This is because the presence of the Spirit in the life of Jesus was overlooked. In soteriology, a division arose between the doctrine of justification by faith as separate from historical processes and a secularised theory of social liberation. In ecclesiology, there is a split between the church as institution and the church-as-mystery, an invisible, supernatural reality. This lack of continuity is similarly a result of overlooking the role of the Spirit in the church. This has led to an overemphasis on the institution of the Church as the dispenser of the Holy Spirit without enough openness to the work of the Spirit outside of the institution and its ordained ministers.¹⁵ The Holy Spirit is sent to the people of God, who exist for the sake of the world, to bring about a new creation. The Spirit's action in the Church should be directed towards this goal of realising this new creation.

1.1.2. Spirituality as lived experience of the transcendent

If it is true to say that God's grace is communicated through human experience and history, then it is also true to acknowledge that this human experience is ambiguous. This calls for careful discernment, as Albert Nolan reminds us:

The spiritual life is the constant daily attempt to ensure that the spirit that moves us is the Spirit of God and not some other spirit.¹⁶

In 1 Corinthians 3:1, St. Paul distinguished between the spiritual person (*pneumatikos*) and the fleshy or earthy one (*sarkikos* or *carnalis*). In doing this, he differentiated between two different ways of life or attitudes towards life. The spiritual ones are those who live according to the Spirit of God in contrast to those who live by their natural or egotistical desires. Paul's words have been erroneously interpreted as saying that the body is fleshy and evil while the

¹⁴ Comblin, *The Holy Spirit*, p. 2.

¹⁵ Comblin, *The Holy Spirit*, pp. 14-16.

¹⁶ Albert Nolan, *Biblical Spirituality* (Springs: Cornerstone, 1986), p. 10.

soul is spiritual and of God. Rather, being spiritual is to orient your whole being, body, mind, emotions and passions, to the service and love of God's will through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to live by the Spirit, and come to embody Christ and so becoming heirs of God (Rom 8:9-14). To be 'fleshy', in contrast, is to be puffed up with one's own ego (Col. 2:18).

Living a spiritual life, or a life guided by the Holy Spirit, has also been described as living a virtuous life.¹⁷ In our spiritual lives we stand between the possibilities of living a good and holy life or a wicked and destructive life. One has a choice to live the virtues and grow in life and responsibility or to live the vices which lead to self-destruction.

A virtue is a characteristic way of behavior which makes both actions and persons good and which also enables one to fulfill the purpose of life.¹⁸

Living a virtuous life becomes a habitual way of live, making choices and living in ways which are for one's good and the good of others. Though human beings have the capacity to be virtuous this, nevertheless, needs to be developed. Traditionally, the church has spoken about the theological virtues of faith, hope and love and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude or courage. Prudence means developing practical wisdom or right judgement about something, while justice means to know what is the right thing to do. Temperance is about having well-ordered emotions, while courage is persevering through hardship and adversity. Living a virtuous life is our way of cooperating with God's grace at work in our lives and in the world.

Sheldrake speaks of spirituality as discovering 'the whole of human life at depth'.¹⁹ This incarnational understanding of spirituality is inherently historical and contextual. It is within the arena of human life and experience that people come to a fuller knowledge of God. The divine is revealed through the secular, the extraordinary is experienced within the ordinary, the sacred in the midst of the profane. The challenge is to name the divine presence in human experience and history.

¹⁷ It is not possible to outline a theology of the virtues. For further reflection, see Paul Wadell, "Virtue", in Michael Downey (ed.), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Wadell, "Virtue", p. 998.

¹⁹ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and History: Questions of interpretation and method* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 60.

1.1.3. Spirituality as a discipline of study

This leads us to reflect on how we are to study spirituality in different historical contexts. Sheldrake points out that historically there has been a "great divorce between theology and spirituality".²⁰ This is one of the reasons why the word 'spirituality' is ambiguous and viewed with suspicion by theologians. During the patristic period, scripture formed the basis for theological reflection, but later philosophy became a more popular source for theologising. This separation was exacerbated during the Middle Ages when theology became more speculative and intellectual through the influence of Scholasticism. Spirituality, or devotion and piety as it was then known, emphasised the person's interior life, especially the affective relationship to God. Theology dealt with the intellectual content of faith while spirituality focused on the affective desire for God. It has only been in the twentieth century, that it has been realised that theology and spirituality need to be reunited again.

Both spirituality and theology had become the poorer because of the divide between them. Presently, the debate is not about whether or not they should be related but rather on how they should be related and what the nature of that relationship is. In the past spirituality was understood as an application of Christian doctrine, but not everyone is in agreement with this solution to the problem. So the question is whether spirituality is one of the theological disciplines or a field of study in its own right, separate from theological discourse, but also in dialogue with it?

For Sandra Schneiders, the relationship between theology and spirituality is best described as a partnership where the partners work together while respecting each other's autonomy. She does not accept that spirituality is just a subdivision of theology.²¹ For her, spirituality can no longer be contained by any theological discipline because it has already become interdisciplinary in its methodology, drawing on other resources like psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology and comparative religions. Spirituality has also moved into greater ecumenical and inter-faith research. Theology is no longer its only dialogue partner. A strictly theological approach would exclude research into spiritualities which have moved beyond the established theological categories or those of other faith traditions.²²

²⁰ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, p. 34.

²¹ Schneiders, "Spirituality in the academy", pp. 687-691.

²² Sandra Schneiders, "Theology and spirituality: strangers, rivals or partners?" *Horizons*, vol. 13. no. 2, 1986, pp. 253-274.

McGinn also rejects the idea that spirituality is dependent on dogmatic theology for its existence. However, he believes that it is important to keep theology as spirituality's primary dialogue partner. While spirituality can be studied in relationship to other disciplines it needs to recognise its close relationship to theology, if it is to remain Christian spirituality. It is his view that all religious experience has to be recognised and interpreted through a religious tradition otherwise it would be unrecognisable.²³

There is also the challenge of the 'turn to spirituality' within theology as it recognises its spiritual core.²⁴ Theology can be enriched by the spiritual insights of the mystics.

Daring articulations of the experience of God arising from within the history of Christian spirituality can breathe new life into theological systems that have become too closed in on themselves and too obsessed with the drive to logical consistency and technical articulation.²⁵

But spirituality without theology can degenerate into superficial devotionism or overly emotional pietism. So the relationship between theology and spirituality needs to be mutually enriching and is best described as dialectical. Nevertheless, Sheldrake said:

It is possible to say that the Christian way began with *events* rather than with a shift of theory born of intellectual speculation. The first followers of Jesus experienced their own lives and the nature of God's relationship with the world in a new way because of the impact upon them of the events of Jesus' life. In that sense experience is fundamental.²⁶

Consequently, spirituality can be said to be the axle around which the wheel of theology turns.²⁷

1.2. Defining spirituality

Spirituality studies the spiritual life. However, this doesn't mean that this study will be merely concerned with describing the prayer or liturgical practices of the lay Dominicans in South

²³ Bernard McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit: Spirituality as an academic discipline" *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, vol. 1, no. 2, Fall 1993, pp. 1-9.

²⁴ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, p. 86ff. There is not general agreement on this point. See J. Matthew Ashley, "The turn to spirituality? The relationship between theology and spirituality" *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, vol. 3, no. 2, Fall 1995, pp. 13-18.

²⁵ Ashley, "The turn to spirituality?", p. 15.

²⁶ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, p. 86.

²⁷ Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, p. 88.

Africa, but rather trying to understand and, as McGinn suggests, "appreciate how religious people actually live their beliefs".²⁸

The study of spirituality does not ignore the human situations in which people live but is rather rooted in and at times dependent on the historical and social context of people's lives. Thus Tugwell says that spirituality is concerned with "people's ways of viewing things, the ways in which they try to make sense of the practicalities of Christian living and to illuminate Christian hopes and Christian muddles".²⁹

As Sandra Schneiders points out:

Spirituality refers to the experience of consciously striving to integrate one's life in terms not of isolation and self-absorption but self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives.³⁰

In the case of the Christian, [this ultimate value] is revealed in Jesus Christ who is present as Spirit in and through the community of called Church.³¹

This study investigates how the lay Dominicans, as part of the Catholic Church in South Africa, lived their faith and the extent to which they were able to transcend the muddles that confronted them in the twentieth century. The spirituality of the lay Dominicans was influenced by their experience as laity in the church and it is to this theme that we now turn our attention.

1.3. **Laity and their spiritual life**

Fundamental to the lay Dominican movement is that it is comprised of lay people. Ever since they became a separate entity within the church, the laity have generally been seen as an accident or appendage to the church.³² In the Catholic Church, the laity are, what Yves Congar calls "negative creatures", because they are defined negatively as - "not clergy".³³

²⁸ McGinn, "The Letter and the Spirit", p. 8.

²⁹ Tugwell, *Ways of Imperfection*, pp. vii-viii.

³⁰ Schneiders, "Theology and Spirituality", p. 266.

³¹ Sandra Schneiders, "A Hermeneutical approach to the study of Christian Spirituality" *Christian Spirituality Bulletin*, Spring 1994, p. 10.

³² Yves Congar, *Lay people in the Church: A study for a theology of the laity* (London: Geoffrey Chapman and Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1985), p. 51.

³³ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 18.

Faivre shows how during the first 500 years of the church's existence, the term 'laity' appeared and evolved in meaning.³⁴ Initially, there were no laity within the church because each baptised person was considered a minister. There were no ordained ministers because all were understood to be one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). The word cleric is derived from *kleros*, which referred to the drawing of lots. Again this did not initially refer to the ordained ministers but to the whole community of believers who were called and chosen as a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart (1 Peter 2:9).

It is only in the third century that *kleros* is used to describe a specific group in the Christian community. The word *laikos* also appeared at this time. *Laikos* began to be used for that category of believers in the church who were not clerics. They were not ordained to official ministry in the church even though initially some were lectors, acolytes or catechists. Even some prominent theologians like Origen were laypersons who were later ordained. During the third century these terms were used very loosely and the affirmation of the inherent dignity and priesthood of all the baptised was still maintained.

After the acceptance of Christianity as an official religion of the Roman Empire by the Emperor Constantine, the divide between laity and clergy became more pronounced. The hierarchy of the church became more established and the number of clergy grew substantially. The tax exemptions granted to clergy by the Emperor contributed enormously to this growth.³⁵ This reinforced the idea that a layperson had an inferior position within the church. This problem was compounded by the fact that a cleric could be demoted to the ranks of the laity for irregular behaviour. It is not surprising then that laity began to be seen as second-class citizens within the church.

Many laity who became disgruntled with the state of the church contributed to the establishment of monasticism. The early monks like St. Anthony, Pachomius, Evagrius, Theodora, Sarah and Syncletica were all laypeople who were disenchanted with the church and sought a new way of the Christian life. This shows that the innovative spirit of the laity was not lacking even though they had an inferior status within the church. Monasticism provided a tremendous revitalisation of the church at a time when it was in danger of fragmentation and cooption by the Empire.

³⁴ Alexandre Faivre, *The Emergence of the Laity in the Early Church* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990). Much of this section is taken from this book.

³⁵ Faivre, *The Emergence of the laity*, p. 158.

During the medieval period the laity continued to make an innovative contribution to the life of the church. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries many laypeople took up the call for reform of the church in what became known as the *vita apostolica*. It is from this ferment of lay preaching that the Dominican Order was born. During this period, devotion to St. Michael the Archangel and soldier saints like St. Maurice, St. Theodore the Recruit and St. George was encouraged. This coincided with the promotion of crusades to the Holy Land. "There was an increased appreciation of lay life as Christian, but almost solely from the military or chivalric point of view".³⁶

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, *Devotio moderna*³⁷ emerged as a dominant form of piety and spiritual renewal for laity. It originated under the influence of Geert Groote (1340-1384) from Deventer in Holland. After studying at the University of Paris, he joined a Carthusian monastery but left and was ordained deacon for the diocese of Utrecht. He was a successful itinerant preacher preaching church reform and denouncing the worldliness of the clergy. *Devotio moderna* represented a revival of monastic spirituality that Groote adapted. Followers were encouraged to cultivate inner devotion by meditating daily on Christ's humanity, especially his passion and death. In this way one sought to conform one's own life with that of Christ. This emphasis on interiority did not exclude the performance of exterior acts of mercy and compassion for one's neighbour. However, Groote's monastic emphasis - advocating contempt of the world - meant that he did not see the importance of academic learning as having any bearing on the spiritual life. This contributed to the growing gulf that developed between spirituality and theology during the Middle Ages.

During the Reformation, reformers like Martin Luther highlighted the importance of the priesthood of all the faithful. The reformers moved away from an overemphasis on hierarchy and clergy and sought to empower the laity in the governance of the church. Paul Russel argues that Luther was particularly averse to clerical domination of the laity and their being treated as lower than animals in the church.³⁸ He did not accept the idea that the clergy were 'of the spirit' and the laity 'of the world'.³⁹ All the baptised were 'of the spirit' and in the scriptures

³⁶ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 409.

³⁷ See Otto Gründler, "Devotio Moderna" in Jill Raitt (ed.), *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation* (London: SCM Press, 1988), pp. 176-193.

³⁸ Paul Russel, *Lay theology in the Reformation: Popular pamphleteers in Southwest German 1521-1425* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 56-79.

³⁹ Russel, *Lay theology*, p.58.

many laypeople had been witnesses to Christ's mission. He changed the language of the Mass from Latin into the vernacular as a means to overcome the divide between laity and clergy. Russel says that Luther challenged the idea that the clerical state was a passport to salvation.⁴⁰

Luther believed that the education of the laity was fundamental to their integration into the church. He translated the Bible into German so that the common people would have access to the scriptures and study it themselves. Knowledge of scripture would enhance lay piety. In his theology Luther presented Jesus as a common man, a carpenter's son, who was not from the learned classes or a member of the clergy.

Luther, however, never abolished the clergy and supported the view that the church should be governed by clerics. He advocated that the priesthood should be an elected office and rejected the sacrificial understanding of priesthood prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church. Russel concludes that Luther remained ambiguous about how laypeople could exercise their apostolate - "he acknowledged their ability to preach, yet for order's sake, they ought not to preach in churches".⁴¹ Like St. Stephen, laypeople should preach in houses or the marketplaces.

The Catholic Reformation responded to the Protestant rejection of the Catholic *magisterium*, sacrificial priesthood, sacraments, tradition, bishops, and primacy of the pope. It emphasised the Church as institution and its hierarchical powers. Consequently, the laity were further sidelined and treated as passive recipients of the ministry of the bishops and priests.

Whilst Protestantism was making the Church a people without a priesthood and Catholic apologists were replying by establishing the rightfulness of priesthood and institution, the Church in more than one place was finding herself reduced to a state of a priestly system without a Christian people.⁴²

This situation persisted until the beginning of the twentieth century. Congar points out that the essential structure of the church is not her being an institution but her apostolicity; that is, continuing the mission of the Lord and his apostles.⁴³ Thus he vociferously supported Pope Pius XI's encouragement of Catholic Action in the 1930s as the 'participation of the laity in the

⁴⁰ Russel, *Lay theology*, p. 60.

⁴¹ Russel, *Lay theology*, p. 63.

⁴² Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 47.

⁴³ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 51.

apostolate of the hierarchy'.⁴⁴ In this way, he saw, the pastoral apostolate of the church as not a task for the clergy alone but rather one for clergy and laity together.⁴⁵

The role of the laity, Congar believed, was to seek holiness in their lives, to build up the Body of Christ in the world and thus contribute to the coming reign of God.⁴⁶ Through baptism, lay people affirmed their desire to conform their lives to that of Christ, who was anointed priest, king and prophet.⁴⁷ By offering their lives as fragrant offerings to God and through living righteous and holy lives in service of their neighbour, laity expressed their priesthood of communion with God.⁴⁸ This priesthood was exercised in a loving and disciplined governance over self and by a dedicated following of God's will.⁴⁹ In this way they came to a deeper understanding and even mystical knowledge of God.⁵⁰ The layperson's priesthood included attendance at the Eucharist and the apostolic mission of bringing the Gospel into a secular world but it did not include exercising the sacramental ministries that were within the domain of the clergy.

As king, the layperson was subject to the governance of the hierarchy of the church but also had a share in ecclesiastical authority in certain administrative and legal matters. Although subject to the teaching *magisterium* of the church, laity could play an important role as prophet by witnessing to their faith by the personal example of their lives and through teaching the faith as catechists.

Many of the documents at Vatican II dealing with the laity were influenced by Congar's writings. The universal call to holiness, the responsibility of all believers to work for social transformation, the involvement of laity in church ministries like lector and acolyte, and the importance of mentoring and parenting as apostolates, opened up a new role for laity in the church. There was a recognition that the gifts of the laity needed to be placed at the disposal of the mission of the church. Many more areas of lay participation in the life of the church have opened up and lay people are generously sharing their talents for the good of the church's mission.

⁴⁴ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 362.

⁴⁵ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 374.

⁴⁶ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, pp. 115-118.

⁴⁷ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 138, also see pp. 121-323.

⁴⁸ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. 168.

⁴⁹ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, pp. 234-236.

⁵⁰ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, pp. 271-273.

1.4. Lay Dominican spirituality in South Africa

The Third Order of the St. Dominic, later known as the lay Dominicans, is an example of lay people who have generously shared their talents for the good of the Church's mission. The lay Dominicans consist of lay associates of the friars of the Order of Preachers (also known as the Dominican Order). Saint Dominic founded the Order in 1216 and from the outset lay people associated themselves with its life and preaching mission. Many of the lay associates were penitents, or members of the Order of Penance, that emerged from the thirteenth century reform movement of church and society known as the *vita apostolica*.

Catherine of Siena was a prominent member of the Order of Penance in Italy. She died in 1390. The Third Order of St. Dominic was formally established in 1405, when Pope Innocent VII approved the rule. Many Third Order communities of women, inspired by the example of Catherine, were established but gradually transformed into Second Order monasteries. The tertiaries were exported to the new missions in Latin America and Asia. In Asia, they participated in the missionary endeavours of the friars. By the eighteenth century, communities of Third Order women were established again to educate and serve the needs of the poor.

In South Africa, tertiaries were accepted as aspirants for the Kingwilliamstown congregation of Dominican sisters in 1888. The Dominican friars promoted the tertiaries when the first missionaries like Fr. Laurence Shapcote came to South Africa. He started the first Dominican mission in Boksburg in 1917. The tertiaries were primarily a pious or devotional society of priests, solitary members (lone tertiaries) and chapter members. They emphasised the importance of the spiritual life, understood at the time, as attaining to a life of Christian perfection. From their origins in South Africa, the tertiaries included both men and women from the various racial and economic strata of apartheid society. This made this group an interesting one for the study of how spirituality influenced their understanding of their Christian faith as well as their response to the socio-political events of their time.

The tertiaries grew and developed rapidly from 1940 to 1960. This study will attempt to explain the reasons for this wide appeal at this time. The Dominican friars also encouraged tertiaries, especially in African parishes, to become more actively involved in the church as

pastoral assistants. In this regard the tertiaries anticipated the changes that took place during the Second Vatican Council and the greater role given to the laity in the church.

Initially, the tertiaries responded well to the challenges of Vatican II but membership began to decline during 1970s and 1980s. The social conditions within church and society also changed. Vatican II gave laity greater responsibility within the church as catechists, communion assistants, members of the parish council and deacons. This caused a crisis of identity for the lay Dominicans after the Council. By the early 1980s many groups had collapsed as fewer laity joined the lay Dominicans choosing to involve themselves rather in parish ministries.

The lay Dominicans remained primarily an organisation with an intra-Catholic church perspective used by Dominican priests and sisters for various reasons - catechists, translators, and leaders in churches. It was particularly in African parishes that tertiaries like Nicholas Lekoane, Joel Moja, Sixtus Msomi rose to prominence as lay ministers in Kwa Thema on the East Rand while in the Free State Thomas Moeketsi from Heilbron and Martin Motjotji from Frankfort were active catechists. It was particularly in Kwa Thema that some innovative contributions were made in parish apostolates with the establishment of the parish ward system. The lay Dominicans were involved as ward leaders.

However, the intensification of the struggle against apartheid highlighted the need for a more prophetic spirituality which encouraged people to involve themselves in social change. As an organisation the tertiaries or lay Dominicans were never involved in the struggle against apartheid except for a few of prominent individuals like Advocate Herbert Vieyra, Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa and Jimmy and Joan Stewart in Lesotho. Consequently, the lay Dominicans were considered by the Dominican friars as increasingly irrelevant and neglected them in their ministerial outreach.

By 1984 the lay Dominicans were still in existence but even the National Promoter, Douglas Wiseman, called for the disestablishment of the lay Dominican groups. Enthusiasm for the Third Order across the country continued to wane, as the participation of many members in the Chapter meetings dropped and the admission of new members declined.

These circumstances affected and shaped the way that the spiritual life was understood and lived. This is the context in which the lay Dominicans found themselves and it is vital to reflect

on how this impacted on their spirituality. What type of spirituality was encouraged? Were any other spiritual avenues explored? Which directions were taken and which were neglected or rejected? How did the lay Dominicans cope and deal with these developments within church and society? These are some of the questions being investigated in this study.

In telling this story, it is also important to recognise that all institutions and organisations are comprised of different individuals. These individuals are subjective actors who make their unique contribution to the particular development or decline of an institution. Through the decisions they make, or fail to make, as a result of their own gifts and shortcomings, through their own search for meaning and ways of understanding the world, they contribute to the particularity of the organisation. Without denying that structures and institutions form people's way of seeing the world and their role within it, it is important also to highlight how some charismatic individuals transcended these limitations. In telling this story, it is hoped not only to write a historical account of the past, but also to encourage others to live it afresh and even to tell it differently.

Before beginning the study itself, it will be helpful to situate the lay Dominicans as a group among other lay groups prevalent and at work in the Catholic Church in South Africa.

1.5. Other lay movements within the Church

As there are many lay movements and organisations within the Roman Catholic Church only a few have been selected.

1.5.1. Secular Franciscans⁵¹

The Secular Franciscans, previously known as the Third Order of St. Francis (TOSF), have their roots in the Order of Penance too. This Order of lay people in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries sought to live a life of penance and an apostolic life. Many groups identified themselves with the Order of Friars Minor and later became the Third Order.

The Franciscan missionaries working in Kokstad started the first TOSF groups in South Africa. The canonical erection of the first TOSF group in Johannesburg was on 31 May 1948. It was

⁵¹ See pamphlet "Franciscan Third Order in Johannesburg, 1948-1998" in author's possession.

called the Sacred Heart Fraternity and met in the Immaculate Conception parish, Rosebank. At the time of its erection, there were no Friars Minor working in the Transvaal.

According to the rule of the Secular Franciscans they are to model themselves on the example of St. Francis who made Christ the centre of his life. They are to have an active prayer and liturgical life by attending Mass and praying the Office throughout the liturgical year. The saying of the family rosary is also encouraged. Each member takes promises and commits him or herself to live by their rule. They wear a habit at Franciscan functions but are also identified by the Franciscan cross. Archbishop Garner of Pretoria was a prominent member of the Third Order of St. Francis during his lifetime.

1.5.2. Carmelite Third Order⁵²

The Third Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel is an association of lay people and diocesan priests who live their Christian life in the spirit of the Carmelite Order. Each member is connected to the Order through the promise they make. These lay Carmelites are practicing Christians who live their lives listening to the Word of God through *lectio divina* and who frequently participate in the Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation. The Third Order is divided into communities, fraternities or sodalities and is accompanied by a Carmelite spiritual director.

1.5.3. Society of St. Vincent de Paul (SVP)⁵³

A young student called Frederic Ozanam founded the Society in Paris, France on 23 April 1833. France had just recently undergone the French Revolution in 1789 and an Industrial revolution in 1830. There were numerous poor people in Paris and he started a society to help feed and clothe these people. He named the society after St. Vincent de Paul who ministered to the poor in France in seventeenth century.

Alexander Wilmot, an immigrant from Edinburgh, Scotland, started the SVP in South Africa on 17 November 1856. He convinced Bishop Patrick Raymund Griffith, the first bishop of South Africa, to permit the forming of a SVP conference at St. Mary's Cathedral in Cape

⁵² See T.J. Zeitvogel, "Challenges facing the Carmelite Third Order as we begin the Third Millennium". Presentation to the International Congress of the Carmelite Third Order, Sassone Carmelite Centre, Rome, Italy on 3 May 2001 www.carmelite.org/laycarmel/challenges.htm 24 January 2005; also 'The Carmelite Third Order' at www.ocarm.org/eng/ord4/4gen-eng.htm 24 January 2005.

⁵³ Society of St. Vincent de Paul, *Rule book and guide of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul for South Africa*. (Cape Town: SVP, 1992).

Town. The SVP is a charity-based church organisation that seeks to alleviate the suffering of the poor. The organisation seldom does any critical reflection on why people are poor.

1.5.4. Legion of Mary⁵⁴

Frank Duff originally started the Legion of Mary in Ireland. Sr. Agnes Barry and a laywoman, Esther Chinnian, in Cape Town in 1936, formed the South African branch of the Legion of Mary. Bishop Henneman had permitted the establishment of the Legion after an Irish member, Ruby Dennison, came out to work in the vicariate for a year.

The aims of the Legion are to encourage Catholics to grow in sanctification through:

prayer and active co-operation, under ecclesiastical guidance, in Mary's and the Church's work of crushing the head of the serpent and advancing the reign of Christ.⁵⁵

The Legion takes the form of a prayer group fostering spiritual growth through devotion to the Virgin Mary through praying the rosary and reflecting on scripture. These practices empower members to live the teachings of the church, to visit the sick and the needy and to encourage lapsed Catholics to return to the Church. They also encourage the transformation of the world through the power of prayer.

1.5.5. Catholic African Union (CAU)⁵⁶

Three Mariannahill priests, Frs. Bernard Huss, E. Hanisch and J.B. Sauter, formed the Catholic African Union. In response to the growth of the Industrial Commercial Union (ICU) under Clements Kadalie in the 1920s, it was decided to start a social welfare programme for African Catholics to provide a political alternative for educated Catholic Africans. There was a concern that the ICU was communist-inspired and this would be detrimental to the interests of the church if educated Africans joined the ICU. In 1927 when the organisation was formed there was growing urbanisation, the movement of African people to the cities and a subsequent breakdown in the rural areas. The CAU was primarily a rural-based organisation which sought to uplift the living conditions of African people living in rural areas, through the provision of a

⁵⁴ See Clement Langa, "The prayer of the people" in J. Brain and P. Denis (eds.), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), pp. 298-301.

⁵⁵ Clement Langa, "The prayer of the people", p. 298.

⁵⁶ See Lydia Brouckaert, "*Better Homes, Better Fields, Better Hearts*": *The Catholic African Union 1927 -1939* Unpublished Honours dissertation (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1985); also see F. Schimlek, *Against the stream* (Mariannahill: Mariannahill Mission Press, 1949).

"people's" bank, social courses, agricultural projects and other social programmes for African people. Many of the African people who joined the CAU were teachers.

In contrast to many other Catholic organisations the CAU was clearly politically aligned in its objective to counter communism. It sought to promote a specific political agenda based on liberal ideas inspired by the *Katholischer Volksverein* (Catholic People's Union) in Germany and the *Semaines Sociales* (Social Weeks) in France.⁵⁷

The CAU no longer exists. In 1954, it changed its name to the Catholic Africa Organisation when it was decided that it would no longer be an organisation exclusively for Africans. By the mid-1960s it was no longer in existence.⁵⁸

1.5.6. **Knights of Da Gama (KDG)**⁵⁹

The Knights of Da Gama was started in Durban in 1943 by Alan Woodrow, thirteen other laymen and Fr. Emmet Neville, a priest of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This society was formed primarily for Catholic men of different occupations. The objective of the Knights is to provide solidarity and assistance to other Catholic businessmen. It intended to help these men develop their commitment to their Christian faith but also to provide the necessary help and assistance to their local parishes. They are essentially a charitable organisation but also one that attempts to develop the spirituality of men within the Church.

The Knights are not politically aligned in any way but in their statutes⁶⁰ they profess to support their country. In the context of apartheid they were often seen to be politically conservative. Henriques highlighted how at their origins there was debate whether to include people of other races.⁶¹ In the 1980s during the struggle against apartheid the Knights were renowned for their campaign to support white Catholic soldiers fighting for the apartheid state.⁶²

⁵⁷ See Alan Henriques, "Catholic Laity" in J. Brain and Denis, P (eds.), *The Catholic Church in contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), p. 248.

⁵⁸ Lydia Brouckaert, "Better Homes", p. 68.

⁵⁹ See Francis Coleman, *The Knights of Da Gama 1943-1993* (Johannesburg: The Knights of Da Gama, 1993) and Alan Henriques, "The Evolving identity of the Knights of Da Gama", *Grace and Truth*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1997, pp. 3-20.

⁶⁰ KDG Statute, Vow of allegiance to one's country.

⁶¹ Alan Henriques, *The Evolving identity*, pp. 6-7.

⁶² See Francis Coleman, *The Knights of da Gama*, pp. 128-131.

At present, the Knights are known for their campaigns against abortion and the misuse of the Holy Name. It remains essentially a middle class Catholic men's organisation.

1.5.7. National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS)⁶³

NCFS was a federation of Catholic student societies based on university campuses throughout South Africa. These societies were started on some campuses like Wits⁶⁴ and Cape Town in the early 1930s. The Catholic student society at Rhodes University was formed in the 1920s.⁶⁵ The first attempt to form a federation of societies was made in 1937. However, it was only in 1939 that the Students' Catholic Federation of South Africa was formed. This organisation collapsed during the Second World War and it was only after the war that James (Jimmy) Stewart⁶⁶ and Robert Savory formed the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS).

Many young students joined the Catholic student societies to develop a Catholic community on campus. It often functioned as a church on the campus with the students themselves evangelising their peers. Liturgy was often celebrated more creatively than in the parishes and there was greater freedom for young people to ask questions about their faith. They were encouraged to appropriate the faith for themselves. NCFS also saw politics as an integral part of the Catholic faith from virtually its inception.

NCFS was also outspoken in its opposition to apartheid throughout most of its existence. It was essentially a white middle-class Catholic student organisation that espoused liberal values. Within its ranks, NCFS included the whole spectrum of political views throughout its history. In the 1950s, there were many prominent black members notably Robert Mugabe and Bernard Chidzero, both of whom were involved in the Zimbabwe liberation struggle. With the advent of Black Consciousness, a split from NCFS by black members in 1971 led to the formation of Catholic Students' Association (CASA) in 1976.⁶⁷ This radicalised some of the NCFS leadership who began to advocate a theology of liberation approach in the struggle against apartheid. This intensified the conflicts with more conservative members of the organisation

⁶³ See Anthony Egan, *The Politics of a South African Catholic Student Movement, 1960-1987* (Cape Town: The Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town, 1991).

⁶⁴ Herbert Vieyra, later a Dominican Tertiary, was a founder member of the Wits Catholic Student Society. See *Southern Cross*, 8 April 1936, 24 August 1949 and 8 December 1965.

⁶⁵ Egan, *The Politics*, p. 7.

⁶⁶ Jimmy and his wife Joan Stewart (also a previous NCFS member and Wits Catholic Society) became Dominican tertiaries. See Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ Stuart Bate, "The Church under Apartheid" in Joy Brain and Philippe Denis (eds.), *The Catholic Church in Contemporary Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), p. 170.

and threatened a further split in the organisation. The most convincing contribution of NCFS to the struggle against apartheid was in their support for conscientious objectors, like Neil Mitchell, and the End Conscription Campaign.

In 1993 NCFS and CASA amalgamated and formed a new organisation called the Association of Catholic Tertiary Students (ACTS).

1.5.8. **Young Christian Workers (YCW)⁶⁸ and Young Christian Students (YCS)⁶⁹**

The YCW is an international workers' organisation that was formed in Belgium by Joseph Cardijn in 1924. He noticed that the church was losing touch with working class youth. He decided to start an organisation for young workers. He developed a specific methodology for these group meetings based on what he called the Three Truths: the truth of life, the truth of faith and the truth of action. He felt that young workers needed to recognise that their faith had something directly to say to their life experience. It was not only important to see situations of injustice in life and understand them as against God's law of love but also to do something to change the situation. He developed a methodology called See, Judge and Act (SJA). This method was specifically designed to help young workers reflect both on the social conditions of their lives and their faith and then to formulate effective action to ameliorate the situation.

At the instigation of Bishop Whelan of Johannesburg, Eric Tyacke started YCW groups in Johannesburg in 1949. Originally most of the groups he started were parish-based and in Durban YCW was synonymous with parish youth groups. By 1972 the YCW became an organisation primarily for African working class youth whereas YCS was the movement for middle-class youth. In the early 1970s, the YCW was active on the East Rand and made a major contribution to the establishment of trade unions in the industrial areas.⁷⁰

In 1976, after an international conference in Peru, Albert Nolan and Kallie Hanekom came back to start another form of YCS based on the Latin American model. YCS was to develop over the next few years as a movement for students regardless of whether they were working

⁶⁸ See Alan Henriques, *The Catholic Church in the culture of Apartheid: the case of the Catholic laity in Natal, 1948-1965*. Unpublished MTh thesis (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1996), pp. 60-74.

⁶⁹ Langefeld, Christiaan, *An emerging ecclesial practice: A socio-theological study of the theory and practice of a church youth group in the period 1980-1988*. Unpublished MTh thesis (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1993).

⁷⁰ See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A social history* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); also Donovan Lowry, *Twenty years in the Labour movement: The Urban Training Project and Change in South Africa 1971-1991* (Johannesburg: Wadmore Publishing, 1999), pp. 130-145.

class or middle class, secondary school or university students. They were united by their identity as students.

Groups were started in Soweto, and after the 1976 student uprising, the movement grew very quickly. Many of the young people in YCS went on to start the Congress of South African Students (COSAS) in which young school pupils were mobilised against apartheid. Basing their analysis of the church as a site of struggle, YCS developed programmes and actions to involve Catholics and non-Catholics in action for social transformation. Some members became involved in the activities of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and later the African National Congress (ANC) and its military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK).

Of all the Catholic church organisations involved in the struggle against apartheid both YCW and YCS were the most radical and vocal. The leadership of these organisations were young black workers or young black students who sought to make a contribution to the transformation of apartheid society based upon their Christian convictions. They were social action movements that focused on issues of justice and peace as integral to Christian faith and spirituality.

1.5.9. **The Sodality of St. Anne (*Basadi ba Anna*)⁷¹**

The *Basadi* are a sodality of African women based in parishes which meet weekly to support each other and contribute to the work of the parish. They wear uniforms of black skirts, with purple blouses and shawls with a black hat. This gives them a visible presence in the church. They organise their own retreats and meetings and have strict requirements for membership. A strict code of conduct is also upheld for members. They do charitable works in the parish but also try to enhance the spiritual lives of their members.

Fr. R. Honorat OMI first established the Sodality of St. Anne in Quebec, Canada on 4 May 1850. Bishop Joseph Cyprian Bonhomme OMI started the first group in Lesotho in 1934. Since then they have spread to many different parishes in South Africa too.

⁷¹ Sodality of St. Anne, *Incwadi yomhlangano ka-Anna ocwebileyo* (Mariannhill: Mariannhill Mission Press, 1995).

1.5.10. **Sacred Heart Sodality**⁷²

The Sacred Heart Sodality encourages its members to cultivate a deep loving relationship with Christ particularly to his Sacred Heart. The symbolism of the Sacred Heart is a sign of the outpouring of divine love in the world and is therefore a spur to evangelisation. This means to love Christ in his wounded humanity and thus members of the sodality are called to love all people especially those in need, the poor and the oppressed.

Bishop Abbot Gerald Wolpert first started the sodality at Centocow mission in the diocese of Mariannhill in 1895. The devotion to the Sacred Heart was first advocated by Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) and spread throughout the Catholic world. Fr. van den Bussche started the first group in Johannesburg in 1946. It spread rapidly with the help of Oblate priests in the 1950s. At present the sodality claims a membership of 4000 people in Gauteng alone.

1.5.11. **Charismatic Renewal**⁷³

The Charismatic Renewal is a movement of the laity to recover the experience of the Holy Spirit as a guiding force within the Catholic Church. Charismatic Renewal is a movement of prayer groups that encourage people to experience the presence of God in their lives through an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is received often after the laying on of hands and sometimes is made manifest through receiving the charism of *glossalalia* or speaking in tongues and prophecy. It is thought that the vitality of worship among these charismatic groups is characteristic of the prayer of the early Church.

Charismatic Renewal has roots in the Pentecostal movement that originated out of Evangelical Protestantism in the United States in the nineteenth century. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal has been active in South Africa since 1971. The most striking feature about the Charismatic Renewal is that they empower the laity to take on responsibilities within the Church. A negative drawback is that too often they present themselves as an elite and they have a tendency to become closed in upon their own style of prayer and teaching. The perception that charismatics are not socially involved is not always accurate.

⁷² See Connie Nkuna, "Sacred Heart Sodality - a Profile" in *Diocesan News* (undated) as well as "16 October - Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque", *The Messenger*, September/October 1998.

⁷³ For more information, see Damian Magrath, *Introduction to Charismatic Renewal in the Catholic Church* (Pretoria: Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference, 1976).

1.5.12. **Opus Dei**⁷⁴

Opus Dei is a personal prelature of the Catholic Church which seeks to help lay people find a life of holiness in the midst of their everyday activities, especially in the workplace. It was founded by Fr. Josemaria Escriva de Balaguer in Spain in 1928. Josemaria Escriva was a Falangist, a movement which helped bring General Franco to power in the 1930s. Opus Dei also had strong links with the fascist movement in Italy. During the late 1980s and 1990s, Pope John Paul II appointed a number of Opus Dei bishops throughout Latin America to counteract and fight the influence of liberation theology.

Opus Dei comprises both lay members and priests under a Bishop who has responsibility for all Opus Dei members across the world. At present, Opus Dei claims to have over 80 000 members worldwide.⁷⁵ In order to fulfil its mission Opus Dei offers spiritual formation and pastoral care to its members. Opus Dei members are encouraged to be evangelists within society by contributing to the sanctification of the world through spreading the Gospel message in all human situations and circumstances. Many of their members are very conservative Catholics.

Opus Dei is often accused of being a secretive Catholic organisation that operates like a cult. This has given rise to the Opus Dei Awareness Network (ODAN)⁷⁶ in the United States consisting of former members who warn others about the questionable practices of Opus Dei.

Opus Dei was permitted to work in the diocese of Johannesburg by Bishop Reginald Orsmond in 1993. Opus Dei is similarly structured to a Third Order where there are different levels of commitments for members. A criticism has often been that it is not a lay movement but rather another type of religious congregation. *Numerary* members commit themselves to remain celibate and live in Opus Dei houses. Like religious they submit all their income to their superiors. They practice a strict life of prayer and individual physical mortification. They make an oral commitment each year but after five years they make a lifelong commitment. There are separate centres for men and women. Male members are encouraged to think about priesthood. *Numerary* priests join Opus Dei as laypersons and then are selected to be priests. They often

⁷⁴ John Allen, *Opus Dei* (London: Penguin Books, 2005) and J. Martin, "Opus Dei in the United States" *America*, vol. 192, no. 3, 25 February 1995. See www.americamagazine.org/articles/martin-opusdei.cfm 23 January 2005; On the Prelature of Opus Dei in South Africa, see: www.catholic-johannesburg.org.za/dms/contacts 4 February 2005; also see the Opus Dei website: www.opusdei.org.

⁷⁵ See "Mission and characteristics" at www.opusdei.org 23 January 2005.

⁷⁶ See ODAN, "What is Opus Dei?" www.odan.org/what_is_opus_dei.htm 23 January 2005.

hold the top positions in the organisation. Each house has a priest assigned to it to say Mass, hear confessions and give spiritual direction to Opus Dei members. *Numerary* assistants are celibate women who care for and clean the Opus Dei houses.

The majority of members are *supernumerary* members who are married and live with their families. They contribute a large percentage of their income to Opus Dei. They follow a similar spiritual life to that of the numeraries. *Associate* members remain celibate but don't live in Opus Dei houses. They remain at home due to their family commitments. *Cooperators* of Opus Dei provide financial support to the organisation but are not members. They don't even have to be Catholic.

1.5.13. **Focolare**⁷⁷

The Focolare movement (also known as the Work of Mary) is a church movement that lives by the words of Jesus "May they all be one" (John 17:21). The word 'focolare' means 'hearth' or 'family fireside' in Italian. In 1943, in the midst of the Second World War, a laywoman Chiara Lubich founded the movement in Trento, Italy. It is a lay movement which urges its members to strive to become a new humanity based upon mutual love between Christians but also people of other religions. Its spirituality of unity is for all people including children, youth, married couples, the single person, religious, priests and even bishops. The call of the Focolare movement is to challenge its members to live the Gospel values they profess in their own lived environment.

Focolare claims to have a membership of 87 000 people worldwide.⁷⁸ Its membership is no longer limited to the Catholic Church. It has also been recognised by the Orthodox Church as well as the Anglican and Lutheran Churches. There are three Focolare centres in South Africa and the movement is still growing.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ See Focolare (Women) at www.catholic-johannesburg.org.za/dms/contacts/dms 23 January 2005.

⁷⁸ See "What is the Focolare movement?" at www.rc.net/focolare/whatis.htm 23 January 2005.

⁷⁹ See "Word of Life group and the Focolare movement" at www.icon.co.za/~love/Sceptre/Sceptre-Word.htm 23 January 2005.

1.5.14. **Marriage Encounter**⁸⁰

Marriage Encounter is a movement for married couples to help them grow in loving relationship with one another by attending presentations conducted over a weekend. Over the weekend a trained team of three couples and a priest present a series of talks. Time is set aside for reflection by the couples on questions posed during the presentations. There are no group discussions. Usually twenty to thirty couples attend a weekend.

In 1952, a Spanish Catholic priest Fr. Gabriel Calvo developed a series of talks for married couples. The intention was to enable the couples to engage in open and honest relationship with one another. In 1962, the movement became known as *Encuentro Conyugal* and was still limited to Spain. In 1966, it spread to Latin America and came to the United States of America in 1967. The first weekend was held at the University of Notre Dame.

In 1978, Fr. Bernard Thorne OSM started Marriage Encounter in South Africa with the assistance of three couples from the United States. The first weekends were held in Durban and rapidly expanded to Johannesburg, Cape Town and later Zimbabwe and Namibia.

1.5.15. **Situating the lay Dominicans**

The lay Dominicans have the closest affinity to the other Third Order groupings of other religious orders like the Franciscans and the Carmelites. They are primarily groups of lay people living the spirituality of the different religious orders. Yet they have similarities with other groups that Congar calls "pious societies"⁸¹ like the Legion of Mary, Sodality of the Sacred Heart and the Sodality of St. Anne. Most of these groups were focused around prayer and personal spiritual development.

The lay Dominicans never had an apostolate of their own. Though not primarily focused on works of charity like St. Vincent de Paul, many lay Dominicans joined the SVP and the Legion of Mary. While some lay Dominicans got involved in some of the Catholic Action movements, as an organisation the lay Dominicans cannot be called part of Catholic Action. Unlike YCW, YCS, NCFS or CASA, the lay Dominicans never developed a social consciousness or protested against apartheid laws and injustices.

⁸⁰ "The history and philosophy of Worldwide Marriage Encounter" Updated 5 January 2006. Available on the internet at www.erl.wvme.org/sp/SP0150.pdf 21 June 2007 and *Telephonic interview with Mrs. Olinda Orlando*, 21 June 2007.

⁸¹ Congar, *Lay people in the Church*, p. xiv.

The lay Dominicans were from their earliest foundation a multiracial organisation but were essentially run by white middle class Catholic men and women. Similarly, the KDG and NCFS were primarily white run organisations. Black people were seldom in leadership positions in the national structures of the lay Dominicans, unlike the Women of St. Anne, the Sacred Heart Sodality and the CAU.

The lay Dominicans are a lay organisation but dissimilar to those of Opus Dei and the Focolare movement. The friars act as spiritual directors but generally leave the organisation to administer itself. Before Vatican II, the chaplains were much more prominent in the organisation and spiritual formation of the groups. After the Council the laity were encouraged to take more responsibility for their own affairs. The chaplain acted as a spiritual advisor.

Unlike the Charismatic Renewal the lay Dominicans were much more institutionalised. There was seldom any interest expressed in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is likely that some lay Dominicans were in Charismatic Renewal but normally few Charismatics would have been attracted to the formal prayers and meeting of the lay Dominicans. This has shifted somewhat since 1994.

The lay Dominicans are consequently lay people affiliated to the Dominican life and committed to living the Dominican spirituality in their daily lives. They are a society dedicated to prayer and spiritual pursuits, though some members are committed to social issues and concerns. Before 1994 it was a predominantly white organisation. This is no longer the case though it is still predominantly middle-class.

1.6. Motivation for study

As a Dominican friar and the provincial of the Order in Southern Africa, it is part of my responsibility to oversee the lay Dominicans. Prior to this, I had been interested in lay spirituality and felt the need to reflect on the role of the laity within the church. This has meant that it was sometimes difficult to separate my responsibilities for the organisation with my intellectual pursuits. I am now keen to know how the spirituality of the lay Dominicans can be transformed to ensure that it equips lay people with the necessary tools and skills to transform church and society.

Personally, I am interested in understanding how lay people live their faith and religious beliefs. Prior to becoming a Dominican I was accepted as a lay Dominican while I lived in the Dominican community in Mayfair, Johannesburg in 1982. At this time I was also involved in student movements in the Roman Catholic Church called NCFS and the YCS. In both movements I was introduced to liberation theology, prevalent in Latin America at the time, and the South African version called Contextual Theology. I continue to believe that this approach to theology offers the best interpretation of the prophetic and radical dimensions of the Christian gospel. Groups like the lay Dominicans have seldom functioned within this model and in many cases failed to take up the crucial challenges of the day. It concerns me that this situation will persist as long as we have groups that are not in touch with the prophetic dimension of the Christian gospel.

Having such close ties and interest in the lay Dominicans also has its drawbacks. One is the question of personal bias. There is a conflict of interest between my involvement with the lay Dominicans and the purpose of scientific study. Being subjectively involved with the organisation that I am studying, colours and influences my interpretation of events and the actions of individuals whom I know or have known in the past. There may be occasions where my subjective perspective have influenced or shaped my objective attempts to study the lay Dominicans history and spirituality.

1.7. Statement of the Problem

The major question that I will address in this study is how has the spirituality of the lay Dominicans in South Africa enabled them to respond to the challenges present in church and South African society? In order to do this a number of sub-problems need to be addressed: Firstly, why did the tertiaries flourish prior to Vatican II but decline shortly afterwards? Secondly, why did the changes of Vatican II, which encouraged lay involvement in the church, not assist the development of the lay Dominicans? Thirdly, why did the tertiaries and later the lay Dominicans never get involved in the struggle against apartheid?

1. 8. Methodology

1.8.1. Background to the research study

Little research has been done on the lay Dominicans in South Africa. A short history of the tertiaries in the Transvaal was written by Enid Ramsbottom in the 1960s and is available in the Dominican Vicariate archives. However, it has no reference to any of the African groups which existed. There has been little research done on the history of the tertiaries in other countries around the world. This is a relatively new area of investigation within Dominican historiography.

1.8.2. Archival research

Besides the short historical outline compiled by Enid Ramsbottom, nothing has been written on the history of the tertiaries or lay Dominicans in South Africa. Much of my research was done scouring the archives of the Dominican Vicariate of Southern Africa archives (ZAOP) in Springs. Many of the registers and letters of the different groups are stored in these archives. I also located material in the following archives: the Archives of the Archdiocese of Durban (AAD) in Morningside, Durban; the Archives of St. Peter's Seminary (ASPS), in Garsfontein, Pretoria; the Bishops' Conference Archives (BCA) in Khanya House, Pretoria; the Cabra Dominican Sisters' Archives (CDSA) in Cape Town; the Catholic History Bureau (CHB) in Victory Park, Johannesburg; the Kingwilliamstown Dominican Sisters Archives (KWT) in Melrose, Johannesburg; the St. Benedict's House Archives (SBA) in Rosettenville, Johannesburg; and various other personal archives like those of Augustine Shutte.

1.8.3. Oral history research

As much of what I cover in this thesis is new territory I have also made use of the Oral History research methodology to collect historical data. In choosing to use this methodology I hoped that this study would reflect the words of Paul Thompson:

Oral evidence, by transforming the 'objects' of study into 'subjects', makes for a history which is not just richer, more vivid, and heart-rending, but *true*.⁸²

The appendix to this thesis contains 11 of the 15 interviews conducted. Prior to embarking on the interviews, I first read a substantial amount of archival material. Reading the archival

⁸² Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Third edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 117.

documents raised a number of questions in my mind regarding the membership, organisational structure and functions of the different groups, as well as the development and growth of these groups. Thereafter I formulated a number of questions to ask the interviewees. The problem was that those interviewed were not always able to respond to questions requiring detailed answers. They either didn't know or they couldn't remember the details.

The interviews primarily were narrative accounts of why they joined the tertiaries and their subsequent involvement. They told their stories and this required little prompting. This experience called to mind, Thompson's observation that oral history also functions as reminiscence therapy.⁸³ The interview with Audrey Kelf, in particular, was an opportunity for her to recall her contribution of supporting lone lay Dominicans when she was on the National Council and to express her disappointment that now when she needs this support, it is no longer forthcoming.⁸⁴ Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathswa ended the interview with the words: "No, it's a pleasure jogging my memory about a very pleasant past".⁸⁵

In the interview with Fr. Albert Nolan, I made use of his expertise as a trained theologian to gain understanding about the theology behind the tertiaries, trying to glean from him some of the historical background as to why the tertiaries were seen as an important group to join in the 1950s. I tried to understand the spirituality that underpinned the tertiaries at this period.

In the interview with Joseph Falkiner, I also explored the subsequent history of the tertiaries and his involvement with the lay Dominican chapter in Kwa Thema. I tried to gain an understanding of the role of the tertiaries during apartheid and the social transformation that took place on the East Rand in the 1970s. Kwa Thema was the seedbed of trade unionism on the East Rand at the same time when the Kwa Thema chapter was active.

Some of the interviewees were not only informative but also provided useful background information. The interview with Fr. William D'Arcy was helpful in tracing the names of many tertiaries of whom I was not aware, like Mary Singleton, Fr. Louis Stubbs and Barbara Versfeld. The interviews with Augustine Shutte and Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathswa were essential for gleaning information on which there was virtually no written record.

⁸³ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 20.

⁸⁴ Audrey Kelf and Dennis Sweetman, interview conducted in Edenvale on 21 September 2004, *Appendix*, p. 30.

⁸⁵ S'mangaliso Mkhathswa, telephonic interview conducted from Edenvale on 16 March 2007, *Appendix*, p. 113.

Sometimes the information given by the interviewees was inaccurate and had to be checked against archival information or other interviews. Human memory is not that reliable and is often coloured by subjectivity. Nevertheless, very useful information has been received through these interviews. As Thompson said:

Oral history gives history back to the people in their own words. And in giving a past, it also helps them towards a future of their own making.⁸⁶

1.8.4. **Sampling method**

In my research, I have used a qualitative approach and employed a non-probability sampling method. The method employed is known as snowball sampling. It is also known as network or chain referral sampling. It can be understood through the analogy of a snowball that begins small but grows larger, gathering more snow, as it rolls downhill. In this sampling procedure I began with a few people - Rose Mthembu, Gloria Gearing, Joseph Falkiner and Audrey Kelf - in the initial interviews and progressively collected names of other people to interview arising from the information I gained through previous interviews. In this way I accessed a large network of people who were actively involved in the lay Dominicans over a period starting in the 1940s.

As I am doing a historical study I am limited by the information I can access and gather from archival material and interviews. The sources I have used to construct this account are from documents that have survived to the present in an archive. I have tried to supplement this information with knowledge gained from interviews. But even here my sources are limited to those who are still alive and contactable. I have only accessed a small portion of the overall story. This limits the results of my historical research.

Another limiting factor is that I am writing about a period through which I did not live and a period through which I did. Entering another historical period is similar to entering a foreign culture; one has to tread with care. But perhaps even more problematic is the period through which I have lived because I haven't sufficient distance from it.

⁸⁶ Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, p. 308.

1.9. Conclusion

This chapter considered the general outline of this study, the research and sampling methods that were employed and a description of some of the various lay groups within the Roman Catholic Church. Terms like spirituality and the laity were examined and discussed in relation to how they would be employed in this study.

Before embarking on the history of the lay Dominicans in South Africa it is important to outline the organisation's early origins and its history starting from the thirteenth century.

Chapter 2

The emergence and historical development of the Dominican Third Order from the twelfth to the beginning of the twentieth century

2.0. Introduction

Reflecting on the state of the Dominican Third Order throughout the world, Edward Schillebeeckx, in an article published in 1960, said:

No perceptive person can still deny that the Third Order today has become a problem. That it is not merely a regional problem, but rather a universal one, is apparent from the words of the General Chapter at Caleruega in 1958: '...we urgently petition our Most Rev. Master General to establish a special commission which must make a penetrating study of the nature of the Third Order'.⁸⁷

In his penetrating analysis of how the Third Order had become a devotional prayer society, Schillebeeckx noted that the laity imitated the monastic rather than the apostolic aspects of the friars' life. The question that this raises is whether this has always been the face of the Third Order? What is its' history?

When one attempts to address these questions, the dearth of literature on the history of the lay Dominicans is immediately noticeable. While accounts have been written on some prominent figures like Catherine of Siena and Rose of Lima, little has been written on lesser known figures and events in the history of the lay Dominican movement.⁸⁸ This study seeks to detail the role that the lay Dominicans played in South Africa. There are extensive historical accounts of the role played by the friars and the apostolic sisters in South Africa but very little is available on the contributions made by the laity to the preaching mission of the Order.

Before outlining the South African story of the lay Dominicans, it is important to understand the broader story of the contributions laity has made to the Dominican Order throughout its history. This chapter will trace the historical development of the lay Dominicans from the twelfth to the nineteenth century. However, this attempt is sketchy and incomplete. There are enormous gaps and further research is required.

⁸⁷ Edward Schillebeeckx, "The Dominican Third Order: 'Old and New Style'". Originally published in the Dutch Tertiary magazine *Zwart op Wit*, Aug-Sept 1960, <http://www.op.org/oplaity/newstyle.htm> 15 August 2001.

⁸⁸ An exception is the work by Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner (ed.), *Dominican Penitent Women* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2005).

2.1. Earliest Dominican foundation

The recent launch of a decade of celebrations surrounding the eight-hundredth centenary of the Dominican Order has led to a re-examination of the Order's origins. Barbara Beaumont and Liam Walsh have highlighted the significance of the early foundation of the preaching community in Prouilhe. This period starting in 1206 with the preaching bands in Languedoc highlights a number of important historical developments that are crucial to this study.

Firstly, Dominic and the early preachers developed a new ecclesial model of preaching in the Languedoc in which they adopted the lifestyle and practices of many reform movements within the church. The preachers sought to live according to the life of the apostles similar to the Cathar preachers.⁸⁹ Walsh pointed out that "what made preaching credible in Languedoc was not the canonical mandate but Gospel living".⁹⁰

Many of the Cathars were lay preachers and lived austere and simple lives. Bishop Diego and Dominic challenged the Cistercian papal legates to get off their horses and to walk and preach among the people, thereby imitating Jesus and copying the way of life of the Cathar preachers.

To preach because of their mission, to preach in a unique way and with more intensity than ever, joining the example to the word after the pattern of the good Master, on foot, without gold or silver, in perfect imitation of the method of the apostles, such was Diego's advice.⁹¹

Secondly, there were some women who were drawn back to the Catholic faith and gave up their adherence to Catharism. These women were placed in the community in Prouilhe which was to become their home but also a base for the preachers. This early community became known as the *sacra praedicatio*, the holy preaching. Originally, these women were not nuns in the canonical sense but laywomen who played a supportive role in the preaching mission of the Catholic preachers.

[Dominic's] original intuition was that the canonical mandate to preach given to the ordained would only be effective if they were first and foremost Gospel people; and to be truly Gospel people, not a clerical elite, they would need to live in communion with and share the preaching

⁸⁹ Brenda Bolton, *The Medieval Reformation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), pp. 74-75.

⁹⁰ Liam Walsh, "Sacra Praedicatio and Dominican Spirituality", Conference given to Dominican sisters in Harare, Zimbabwe in January 2002, pp. 1-2 www.op.org/international/english/Documents/Articles/sacra_praedicatio.htm 22 October 2004.

⁹¹ Marie-Humbert Vicaire, *Saint Dominic and his times* (Green Bay, Wisconsin: Alt Publishing Company, 1964), p. 89.

with all the gifted people in the Church - women, men, cleric and lay, religious and secular, educated and non-educated.⁹²

Even later when the community of women became a monastery of nuns, lay people like Ermengard Godolina and her husband, sold their possessions and committed themselves and their money to the community in Prouilhe.⁹³ In doing this, they were included in the *sacra praedicatio*. Beaumont pointed out:

So, in the first ten years at Prouilhe, there were incontrovertibly sisters, preachers, women aspiring to be nuns and lay men and women living within the same enclosed space. We know it was enclosed and not just houses in different parts of the village, as another deed of gift dated 1211 tells us of Isarn Bola, who donates to the Holy Preaching 'a house within the enclosure of Prouilhe'.⁹⁴

This community also included the clerics who went out preaching. The whole community in Prouilhe is modelled on the Jerusalem community, described in Acts 4. In this sense, they sought to live and preach the Gospel like the early Christian community.

This became Dominic's ecclesiological model for preaching. In Toulouse, he developed contacts with some laymen, like Peter Seilha, who gave him a house for the preaching brothers. He also tried to set up a monastery of nuns but this was not successful. When he went to Bologna, he insisted that the house for the nuns was built before the house for the brothers.⁹⁵ So we can see that even in these early beginnings, the presence of the Dominican Family was present in an embryonic form.

2.2. Order of Penance

William Hinnebusch, the American Dominican historian, argued that the origins of the lay Dominicans or Third Order of St. Dominic lay, not with the promulgation of the Rule in 1285 by the Master of the Order Munio de Zamora, nor with the Militia of Jesus Christ established at the time of St. Dominic, but rather with a lay penitential movement known as the Order of Penance.⁹⁶ The origins of the Order of Penance are obscure. It had no charismatic founder who commanded a following through his or her extraordinary qualities.

⁹² Liam Walsh, *Sacra praedicatio*, p. 2.

⁹³ Barbara Beaumont, "The coming of the preachers", April 2006, p. 5 www.800.op.org 4 November 2006

⁹⁴ Beaumont, "The coming of the preachers", p. 5.

⁹⁵ See Liam Walsh, "Light for the Church", April 2006, p.5ff. www.800.op.org 4 November 2006.

⁹⁶ William Hinnebusch, *The History of the Dominican Order Vol.1* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965), p. 400. Also see Richard Weber, "History of the Dominican laity" www.op.org/oplaity/layhistory.htm 15 August 2001.

In the monasteries or communities of canons regular, there were many *conversi*, or lay helpers, seeking the path of holiness. The penitents sought to live like *conversi* but claimed "that it was possible to lead authentically religious lives while carrying on their trades, unaffiliated with any community of regular or secular clergy".⁹⁷

As penitents they sought to live in the world but strove not to conform to a worldly way of life. They desired a conversion of heart and committed themselves to a life of penance for their own sins and the sins of others. The first groups developed in 1170-1180 in the Low Countries.⁹⁸ The Beguines were one of the first groups that lived this life of penance. They were comprised exclusively of women though there were groups of men, called Beghards, though fewer in number. Another group was the Humiliati who were based more in Lombardy. This movement was popular among artisans who wanted to live a more austere life but still maintain their jobs and professions.

The Order of Penance developed in a similar way. The first description of their way of life is found in a text *Memoriale propositi*, written in about 1215. The Pope approved it in 1221.⁹⁹ They made public promises of consecration to God. Some of the more ardent even accepted vowed celibacy. They wore modest clothing, a garment of undyed grey cloth. The penitents recruited both men and women but they had to abstain from all banquets, spectacles and dances. They were expected to fast more frequently and rigorously than other laity. Married couples were expected to abstain from sexual intercourse while fasting. As part of their prayer life, the penitents were expected to say the canonical hours each day. The illiterate were permitted to replace the hours by saying several Our Fathers instead. They were expected to go to confession and receive communion three times a year at Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.¹⁰⁰ Married women who joined the confraternity had to receive the permission of their husbands. They held a monthly meeting in a church at which they would receive instruction on the Word of God from a priest or a monk. "These confraternities were independent of the clergy and obeyed only their own ministers, whom they freely elected".¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ André Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious beliefs and devotional practices* (Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), p. 119.

⁹⁸ Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 119.

⁹⁹ Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 121.

¹⁰⁰ André Vauchez, "Lay religious movements in the Middle Ages", *Concilium*, no. 3, 2003, p. 54.

¹⁰¹ Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p.122.

The penitents grew and developed enormously with the assistance of the mendicant orders. This gave rise to the idea that St. Francis inspired the formation of the Order of Penance.¹⁰² Initially, it seems that the Franciscans, more than the Dominicans, actively promoted the establishment of these confraternities. Adherents to the Order of Penance were inspired by Francis of Assisi's radical conversion to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Francis went from town to town proclaiming the reign of God, calling people to conversion and to do penance for sin. Many lay people sought to imitate the perfection of Christ and followed in Francis' footsteps. They included both men and women. Many of these penitents did penance for their sins but also the sins of the church and society.

The confraternities met at their local churches and were accompanied by the priests of the religious Order of that church. However, the penitents had a preference for the new mendicant orders.

2.3. The *Vita Apostolica*

The penitents felt at home with the mendicant orders because they were in touch with the spirit of the times: a revival of the *vita apostolica*. "Men and women wished to imitate the early apostolic communities, living in simplicity and at times communally, and not infrequently engaged in expounding the Scriptures".¹⁰³

This desire to live "like the apostles" inspired lay people to join a host of lay movements like the 'Order of Penance', Beguines, Waldensians or the Cathars or to enter religious life in the new mendicant Orders. This longing to live the simplicity and radicalness of the *vita apostolica* was a product of the rapid development of lay piety in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Vandenbroucke characterises the lay spirituality of the twelfth century as a return to the Scriptures.¹⁰⁴ There was a renewed interest and devotion to the humanity of Christ, especially to the mysteries of his earthly life. Alongside the veneration of Jesus' Holy Name and a renewed veneration of the Blessed Sacrament, many lay people also reflected upon their own

¹⁰² See Thomas Johnston, "Franciscan and Dominican influences on the Medieval Order of Penance: Origins of the Dominican Laity", *Spirituality Today*, vol. 37, no. 2, 1985, pp. 108-119.

¹⁰³ Johnston, "Franciscan and Dominican influences", p. 111.

¹⁰⁴ See Francois Vandenbroucke, "New milieux, new problems: From the twelfth to the sixteenth century" in Jean Leclercq et al., *The spirituality of the Middle Ages* (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), pp. 243-282.

personal response to Jesus' life and teaching. The idea that the Gospel was the only norm, the only *regula* or rule of life for the Christian grew in popularity.

Prior to the twelfth century, the *vita apostolica* had primarily been understood as life in a cenobitic community, following the ideals of Acts 4:32ff. This gave rise to the resurgence of the monastic life and the establishment of the canons regular for diocesan priests. Another understanding emerged that spoke of the *regula* or *officium apostolorum*, namely the imitation of the apostles in their role as preachers of the good news of salvation as revealed in Matthew 10 and Luke 10. Thus the *vita apostolica* could be realised either in the common life or the function of itinerant preaching.¹⁰⁵ For St. Dominic, as we saw in the community in Prouilhe, he sought ways to fuse both aspects of the *vita apostolica* - the common life and itinerant preaching. This gave birth to the Order of Preachers with its different branches.

However, during this century, the laity proved to be the driving force of the *vita apostolica* because they read, studied and interpreted the Scriptures, primarily for their own spiritual enlightenment. "The growth of interest in the Bible coincided with a large scale re-awakening of the desire for individual spiritual experience".¹⁰⁶ In doing this they noticed the discrepancies between what the Bible said and how the clergy were living. The clergy looked upon itinerant preachers with disdain because they lacked proper learning and accused them of illiteracy.¹⁰⁷ Prior to this, spirituality and the regular life was considered to be the domain of the clergy and the monks. Now the spiritual life was open to all states of life, especially lay men and women.

This development was mirrored in secular society too, where municipalities, city states and corporations were asserting their power and rights.¹⁰⁸ The social changes taking place in the twelfth century were synonymous with the decline in the feudal system in Europe. Towns took on greater political and economic significance as markets opened up and trade routes developed. This gave rise to a new class of wealthy people, the merchants. In increasing numbers people escaped from their feudal ties and went to live in the towns. Town life gave

¹⁰⁵ Allan White, "The Foundation of the Order of Preachers and its historical setting" in Simon Tugwell, *The Way of the Preacher* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979), p. 101.

¹⁰⁶ White, "The Foundation", p. 101.

¹⁰⁷ In common with most lay people of the time, many Waldensians were illiterate only in the sense that they could not read Latin'. Quote from Brenda Bolton, *The Medieval Reformation* (London: Edward Arnold, 1983), p. 57; also see Samuel Torvend, "The Bible and lay spirituality", *Spirituality Today*, vol. 336, no. 4, 1984, p. 314.

¹⁰⁸ Vandenbroucke, *New milieux, new problems*, p. 258.

rise to the need for an urban religion.¹⁰⁹ The church of this period had scarcely begun to deal with the challenges of faith in an urban context. The preaching bands like the Waldesians, Cathars, mendicant orders and penitents filled this gap. But whereas the mendicant orders and the penitents gained ecclesial recognition for their religious response to these changing times, the Waldensians and the Cathars found themselves increasingly outside the confines of the church.

2.4. Penitents of St. Dominic

When St. Dominic went to Rome during his many tours, he was often welcomed into the home of Isabella d' Isola, a laywoman and most probably a penitent. On her death, she received the honour of being buried in the church at Santa Sabina.¹¹⁰ In a similar way, when the Franciscan and Dominican friars arrived in Florence in 1218 and 1219 respectively, the penitents working in the city's hospices welcomed them. From 1225 onwards, reference is made to the 'Penitents of St. Dominic'. The penitents who associated with the Dominicans began to distinguish themselves by wearing a black habit rather than the grey one. They attached themselves to the local Dominican priories. The penitents contributed to the financial support of the friars and the friars provided for the spiritual formation of the penitents. Together they were able to cooperate in providing many charitable works. Thus the penitents were not just a pious society but often had their own charitable apostolates and actively cooperated with the friars in the preaching apostolate.

This may have extended to even to the lay confraternities of penitents actively helping the friars root out heresy. The confraternity of St. Maria of Misericord in Bergamo in Italy, established in 1265, was concerned with charitable works of food distribution to needy families and had close ties to both Dominicans and Franciscans.¹¹¹ Among its aims and objectives was to assist in the repression of heresy. The Society of the Faith took direct action against heretics by arresting them and handing them on to the Inquisition for trial. Other penitential confraternities opposed Cathar evangelisation and its influence on city municipalities by pushing through anti-Cathar legislation which imposed severe penalties on heretics. Lambert pointed out that the lay penitents

¹⁰⁹ R.W. Southern, *Western society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (London: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 273-277.

¹¹⁰ I thank Martin Badenhorst OP for this information.

¹¹¹ Malcolm Lambert, *The Cathars* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), pp. 177-178.

acted as a conduit away from heresy even where their principal aims were charitable or devotional, for they offered a disciplined way of life, perhaps with a habit, and with regular meetings, the encouragement of participation in a common endeavour within Catholicism.¹¹²

These confraternities proved to be an effective opposition to the Cathars as they offered lay people ways of developing a spiritual life. Catharism, in contrast, only provided its followers a role of serving and adoring their leaders called the *perfecti* or the perfect ones.

2.5. The Flagellants

As the penitents grew in number it became increasingly difficult for the friars to provide for their spiritual formation. By the middle of the thirteenth century, concerns were raised about the orthodoxy of some groups. Many of the groups were losing their initial fervour and drifting into heresy. A shift in penitential spirituality in the thirteenth century towards an asceticism based on the crucified Christ became the norm. Flagellation, originally a monastic practice, became a means by which penitents expressed their faith. Many confraternities of flagellants sprang up after 1260.¹¹³ Groups of lay people would flagellate themselves in the streets, publicly demonstrating their life of penance.

During the plague known as the Black Death, over 200 flagellants processed through the towns of Alsace in 1349, seeking forgiveness from their sins.¹¹⁴ Some penitents began to believe that by imposing harsh penances on themselves, they could establish a direct relationship with God and thus dispense with the mediation of priests. The anti-clerical attitudes developed by some flagellant confraternities may account for why many clergy were hostile towards the processions of 1348-1349 and why Pope Clement VI eventually condemned these movements.

2.6. Papal recognition of the Order of Penance

In 1284, Pope Honorius IV appointed a Franciscan, Friar Caro, to draw up a rule for all the different penitential groups. This amounted to recognition for the Order of Penance by the institutional church. One account of these events suggests that the penitents associated with the

¹¹² Lambert, *The Cathars*, p. 177.

¹¹³ Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 116.

¹¹⁴ Vauchez, *The Laity in the Middle Ages*, p. 125.

Dominicans were dissatisfied with this.¹¹⁵ Not all the penitents wanted to fall under the Franciscans. Consequently, the Master of the Order, Munio de Zamora (1285-91) wrote a rule in 1285, primarily based on that of Fra Caro, for the 'Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic'. This rule did not receive explicit approbation from the Pope but was tacitly approved by him the following year. The Brothers and Sisters of Penance of St. Dominic were given the right to attend Mass and received the sacraments during times of interdict, provided they were not responsible for its imposition.

According to Hinnebusch, the situation was complicated when Nicholas IV, a former Minister General of the Franciscans, became Pope. He approved the Rule of Fra Caro for all brothers and sisters of penance under the Franciscans and seemingly wanted to have all the penitent groups attached to the Franciscan Order. He did not approve of Munio of Zamora's separate rule for Dominican laity and instructed the Dominican General Chapter in 1290 to remove Munio de Zamora from office. The General Chapter refused to comply and Nicholas IV deposed him personally in 1291. However, the Third Order of St. Dominic was already well-established by this stage. Pope Innocent VII finally approved the rule for the Dominican penitents in 1405.¹¹⁶

This interpretation of the establishment of the rule for the Third Order of St. Dominic has been questioned by recent research. Lehmijoki-Gardner writing on Dominican penitent women questioned the assertion that Munio of Zamora wrote this rule. She argues that the evidence presented for this argument is very flimsy. The first reference to this rule only appeared in Thomas of Siena's *Tractatus* on the Dominican Order of Penance. This was completed in 1407, over a hundred years after Munio supposedly wrote it. She concludes that Thomas of Siena introduced this fiction in order to show that the Dominican Order of Penance had a long institutional history. The reality that Innocent VII only approved the rule in 1405, lends support to the argument that it was written much later.¹¹⁷

Lehmijoki-Gardner also points to further evidence that she herself had discovered a forgotten copy of Munio's *Ordinationes* in the *Biblioteca Communale* of Siena. This rule was written for penitent women in Orvieto in 1286. They were only simple guidelines intended for use in Orvieto and had little relation to the penitent rule that Thomas of Siena published in his

¹¹⁵ Hinnebusch, *The history of the Dominican Order*, p. 400.

¹¹⁶ Hinnebusch, *The history of the Dominican Order*, p. 400.

¹¹⁷ See Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 5-6.

Tractatus.¹¹⁸ When Thomas of Siena claimed that Munio wrote the formal penitent rule in 1286, Lehmijoki-Gardner concludes, he wanted to show that the Dominicans had included penitents into the Order at the same time when Nicholas IV, a Franciscan pope, confirmed the Franciscan penitents with his bull *Supra montem*. However, if Munio did not write that formal penitent rule, then it is very likely that the Dominicans did not seek papal approval to incorporate the Dominican penitents into the Order at all. It is very likely that the Dominican Order was slow in establishing formal links with these penitent groups.

2.7. Militia of Jesus Christ

Another fiction that Thomas of Siena started was to claim that the Third Order arose from the Militia of Jesus Christ. Raymond of Capua included this myth in his *Life of Catherine of Siena*.¹¹⁹ Raymond of Capua had appointed Thomas of Siena to reform the Third Order, and Thomas probably began this myth and included it in his petition for papal approbation.

Hinnebusch denied that the Third Order evolved from the 'Militia of Jesus Christ'.¹²⁰ He distinguished between three different organisations that used the name 'Militia of Jesus Christ'. The first group was founded by the Cistercian Conrad of Urach, a papal legate, and Peter Savary, a knight, in Toulouse in 1221. It was a military order similar to the Knights Templar. It existed to defend church members and property in those areas of Toulouse where Cathars had taken over the town administration. This group ceased to exist in 1229 with the death of Amaury de Montfort and the end of the Albigensian crusade.

The Dominican Bartholomew of Vicenza founded a group in Parma, which was also called the Militia of Jesus Christ, in 1233. The Militia was also formed to counter heresy and defend church members, clergy, and property in the towns of Lombardy and Tuscany. Although considered to be an Order, its members were married. They did not live in community and only took a vow of obedience. Pope Gregory IX officially approved the Militia and instructed the Dominicans to provide spiritual guidance to this group. This group collapsed and was later merged with the Militia of the Glorious Virgin Mary started by the Franciscans.

¹¹⁸ Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ See Raymond of Capua, *The Life of Catherine of Siena* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1980). Part 1, chapter 8, § 78-79

¹²⁰ Hinnebusch, *The history of the Dominican Order*, p. 401.

The king of Spain formed a third group of the Militia of Jesus Christ in 1603. This group was formed from members of the Confraternity of Faith or from the Company of the Cross. These were lay people who were auxiliaries of the Inquisition. The king and Dominicans saw this group as a revival of the earlier Militia whose foundation was attributed to St. Dominic.

This idea that the roots of the Third Order lay with the Militia persisted until recent times. In 1953, Bernard Delany wrote an article in the *Southern Cross* on the tertiaries entitled "The Crusader spirit":

The Third Order in its earliest days was known as the 'Militia of Jesus Christ' when Fulk, the Bishop of Toulouse, formed a band of laymen for what we should today call Catholic action. The Bishop was a friend of St. Dominic and asked the saint to undertake the direction of the little band. At first, it seems to have had a military character.¹²¹

He went on to say that the first tertiaries were knights and crusaders so the present day successors of the Militia should themselves cultivate something of the same crusader spirit. The new heresy was no longer Catharism but Communism.

We need bands of men and women prepared not only to deplore the evil they protest against, but to deepen their own Catholic life, and by prayer, penance and sacrifice present a living protest against the godless evil that threatens the world.¹²²

There was no fighting talk about a crusade against the evils of apartheid and the policies of the Nationalist government.

2.8. Catherine of Siena - a Dominican penitent

Catherine of Siena is by far the most famous of the Dominican penitents. Catherine and her twin sister Giovanna, were born to Giacomo Benincasa, a cloth-dyer, and his wife Lapa di Puccio Piagenti on 25 March 1374. Unfortunately, Giovanna died shortly after birth. At the age of seven Catherine took a vow of virginity, cut off her hair, and declared that she was not interested in getting married. Her only spouse would be Christ.

After Catherine joined the Sisters of Penance (commonly known as the *Mantellata*) in 1363 or 1364, she gave herself to prayer and a severe ascetical life.¹²³ After about three years she felt

¹²¹ *Southern Cross*, 10 June 1953.

¹²² *Southern Cross*, 10 June 1953.

¹²³ See Raymond, *The Life of Catherine*, part 1, chapter 9, § 82-83.

commanded by God to leave her cell and to go into the world and serve her neighbour.¹²⁴ She began to nurse the sick, minister to the poor and prostitutes, visit the lepers, prisoners and victims of the plague. She even accompanied the condemned prisoner Niccolò di Toldo to the gallows. She became politically involved by acting as a peacemaker between feuding Italian states and families.

Catherine's life and theology contributed to a revival, not only of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, but of the whole Dominican Order.¹²⁵ It is with good reason that Catherine is considered the second founder of the Order:

Through letters, conferences, and spiritual direction addressed to friars, nuns, and tertiaries, she continually returned to the characteristic themes of Dominican spirituality - preaching, community life, prayer, and study; poverty of spirit; the primacy of Truth; and contemplation expressed in active ministry.¹²⁶

Catherine's life and theology reveal her penitent spirituality. Her personal piety included many acts of penitence. She fasted extensively and voluntarily adopted severe penances for herself even flagellation.¹²⁷ Catherine's writings emphasise the sufferings and wounds of Christ and how through his blood human beings experience the mercy of God. In her *Dialogue*, Catherine asks for God's mercy for herself and her own sins, a sinful and suffering world and a sinful church. In Jesus' blood shed on the cross, Catherine finds an expression of the mercy of God made visible. "Flowing from every part of his wounded body, his blood opens to our eyes our own capacity to destroy, and the infinitely greater capacity of God to heal".¹²⁸

Thus Catherine was profoundly aware of the depth of suffering in the world, how wounded the world was and its need for healing and the mercy of God. Only later in her life did Catherine become aware of how the church was wounded like Christ her founder. It became clearer to her

¹²⁴ Raymond, *The Life of Catherine*, 2, 1, §119.

¹²⁵ By the fourteenth century, the Dominican Order was in desperate need of reform. In 1303, the friars numbered about 20 000 brothers but these numbers masked many problems. Community life was falling apart as Office in common was neglected and some brothers were able to keep gifts and stipends and own property. Strict mendicancy was abandoned and Masters of Theology and Preachers General were able to finance a private life. They lived in their own quarters with servants to serve their meals, quite independent and separate from other brothers in the community. Ordinary brothers in the community often lacked the basic necessities of life. Later, the Black Death contributed to a massive decline in the number of friars in the Order. See William Hinnebusch, *The Dominicans: A short history* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1985), pp. 71-75.

¹²⁶ Richard Woods, *Mysticism and Prophecy: The Dominican Tradition* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), p. 105.

¹²⁷ See "The *Miracoli*" Chapters 8, 10, 11 in Maiju Lehmijoki-Gardner (ed.), *Dominican Penitent Women* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2005), pp. 90-104. See also Raymond, *The Life of Catherine*, 1, 9, §82-83.

¹²⁸ Mary Ann Fatula, *Catherine of Siena's Way* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1987), p. 127.

that her mission was to work for the church's reform and renewal. In the *Dialogue*, Catherine writes about the mystical body of the church and how it mediates the Word of God¹²⁹ and nourishes God's people through the sacraments.¹³⁰ The priests and ministers of this church are corrupt and sinful.¹³¹ She calls for reform of the Church. In this regard, Catherine reveals her penitent spirit calling for personal, ecclesial and societal conversion.

Catherine's writings are not just learned treatises but rather writings that arose from her own personal spiritual experience. Even though Catherine was considered to be illiterate, because she had no formal education, she had an enormous influence on the church of her time. Recognised as a visionary and a mystic, this opened doors as a peacemaker to rival Italian states and as an advisor to Pope Urban IV.

Lehmijoki-Gardner notes that the relationship between Raymond of Capua (ca. 1330-1399) and Catherine opened a new phase in the relations between the friars and the penitent women.¹³² Raymond had been Catherine's confessor from 1374 until her death in 1380 and he later wrote her biography. She challenged and encouraged him in his efforts to reform the Dominican friars.

2.9. The first rule for the penitents of St. Dominic¹³³

The growth of the penitents gained new impetus from the life and writings of Catherine of Siena. Raymond of Capua appointed Thomas of Siena to reform the penitents and he worked tirelessly to promote it. Thomas was based in Venice, where there were active and wealthy groups of penitent men and women. While there were more groups of penitent women, the group in Venice was one of the few known groups of Dominican penitent men. They were actively involved in helping Thomas gain formal approval of the Dominican rule for penitents through their financial contributions and contacts with the papal curia in Rome. Innocent VII recognised the rule in 1405 and the penitents were institutionally accepted as part of the overall Dominican Order.

¹²⁹ Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue* (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 110, p. 206.

¹³⁰ Catherine, *Dialogue*, 114, p. 213.

¹³¹ Catherine, *Dialogue*, 129, p. 256.

¹³² Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 7.

¹³³ See "The Dominican Penitent Rule" in Maiku Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Dominican Penitent Women*, pp. 47-56.

According to this rule, penitents, both men and women, had to show that they lived a good moral life and held an orthodox faith. They had to be zealous in the defence and propagation of the Faith. Penitential practices were directed to the apostolate and were not to be seen as ends in themselves. This rule required that all postulants must have settled their debts and been reconciled with their enemies. Once they were received into the Order they wore a habit of a white tunic with a black cloak. They were forbidden to leave unless they chose to join a religious order with solemn vows. Thus the ceremony of profession was a canonical entrance into the Order. They virtually became lay religious who did not live in the cloister but continued with the tasks of ordinary life.

They were obligated to recite the Divine Office and had to adhere to severe requirements for fasting and abstinence. They were to give up all revelry and dances. They were also expected to visit the sick and offer suffrage prayers for the dead. They were placed into chapters and elected their own priors and prioresses. A spiritual director was appointed by the friars to accompany each chapter. Penitents were under the obedience of these directors and could not leave town without permission. It was possible for penitents to be expelled for grave and scandalous faults. The most marked aspect of this new rule was that the penitents made profession to the prior of the local Dominican priory¹³⁴ and the groups were given Dominican friars as spiritual directors.¹³⁵

2.10. Women penitents in Italy after Catherine of Siena

Catherine of Siena inspired a whole number of women to live as penitents over the next hundred years. Thomas of Siena wrote *The Legend of Maria of Venice* and outlined the life of Maria Sturion. She was born to a wealthy Venetian family in about 1379. She married at the age of fifteen but it was not a happy marriage and her husband abandoned her. She moved back to her parents' home and attended Mass in the Dominican church. She was received as a Dominican penitent just prior to her death in 1399, at the age of twenty. Thomas showed in this account how Maria of Venice embodied the spirit of Catherine of Siena, without her excesses. He presented Maria as a very ordinary young woman but one who exemplified what any pious woman could live if they chose to follow the Dominican penitent rule.

¹³⁴ "The Dominican Penitent Rule", chapter 4, p. 49.

¹³⁵ "The Dominican Penitent Rule", chapter 20, p. 55.

The penitential life became popular among widows in cities. Their husbands' deaths often placed them in a precarious financial situation. By becoming penitents they were able to support each other. This way of life also attracted single women who did not have the means to get married or enter a monastery. Married women were able to join if they had the permission of their husbands. Some of the penitents came from the urban poor like Giovanna of Orvieto, who was a dressmaker and Stephana Quinzani, a domestic worker. Generally though the members of the penitents came from middle class urban families.

Like Catherine, many of the penitents lived in their parents' homes or those of their relatives. A poor woman, like Stephana, was forced to live with her benefactors. A married woman, like Lisa Colombini, on the other hand, was able to stay at home with her husband and children in her family home. She pursued her religious life there. Often widows were forced to return to their parents' home or if they were wealthy enough lived in their own homes. Some penitents lived as hermits but this was not encouraged.

Only after the approval of the penitent rule in 1405 did women begin to establish formal penitential communities. This became popular at the end of the fifteenth century when women like Colomba of Rieti, Stefana Quinzani, Lucia Bartolini Rucellai, Lucia Brocadelli of Narni and other penitent women were able to secure enough funds to start religious houses. The lifestyle in these houses resembled the monastic routine, though they were not enclosed and the women did not take monastic vows. Blessed Clara Gambacorta (d. 1419), together with her friend Marie Mancini (d. 1431), became Dominican penitents and later founded a monastery of Dominican nuns. Hinnebusch points out that many monasteries of nuns first started following the Third Order rule and then were later transferred to the Second Order.¹³⁶ Many Third Order communities differed in whether they took vows or not, some fell under the jurisdiction of the Master of the Order and others under the local bishop.

The penitents were also promoted through the preaching of St. Vincent Ferrer and John Dominici. Inspired by Catherine, Vincent Ferrer encouraged a princess, Blessed Margaret of Savoy (d.1464) to join the penitents and she too started a monastery of nuns.

Many of these penitents followed moderate ascetical practices like wearing of hair shirts, taking the discipline, restricting sleep and fasting. Notably, they were discouraged from

¹³⁶ Hinnebusch, *The history of the Dominican Order*, p. 403.

following Catherine's excesses. They were encouraged to attend Mass, hear sermons in the Dominican churches and also read their rule once a month. The penitents' spiritual life centred on the humanity of Jesus Christ, like Catherine of Siena. The meaning of their ascetical lives came from the imitation of the life of Christ, especially his passion. One of Giovanna of Orvieto's favourite ways of praying was with her arms outstretched as if on the cross, as Dominic did. She would meditate on Christ's passion in this way.

The difference between the Franciscan and Dominican rules was that the Franciscan one encouraged penitents to engage in charitable works for the poor. Franciscan saints like Margaret of Cortona founded a hospital in her hometown. In contrast, Dominican penitents were not obliged by the rule to care for the sick or the poor. They were expected to care for one of their own number if they took ill, or attend the funeral of a fellow penitent and pray for their soul.¹³⁷ This point is important when considering how these groups gradually devolved into pious societies.

Most of the history of the Dominican penitents and tertiaries is centred upon significant figures who have been canonised, beatified or been revered as holy men or women. Little has been written about how the penitents became a Third Order, what their influence had been in the Order and in the broader church, how the tertiaries changed and shifted in spirituality down the centuries. They have often just been mentioned in passing and have seldom been of interest to historians of the Order. Only until recently, has there been any interest to understanding the unique role and contribution they have made to the life of the Dominican Order. Nevertheless, the fact that numerous tertiaries have been canonised and beatified shows that this way of life has flourished down through the centuries.

2.11. The Third Order in England

A comprehensive history of the tertiaries in England has never been written and what is available is very sketchy.¹³⁸ The establishment of the friars in England was supported enormously by King Henry III, who assisted and contributed financially, to the establishment of forty priories in England during his reign. There is no evidence that he was a tertiary though he was a significant benefactor.

¹³⁷ Lehmijoki-Gardner, *Dominican Penitent Women*, p. 19.

¹³⁸ See Fabian Dix, "The Third Order" in *The English Province 1221-1921* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1921).

King Richard II seems to have been a tertiary as he recited the Divine Office according to the Dominican rule¹³⁹ and gained Pope Boniface IX's permission for the chaplains of the Chapel Royal to do this too.

The most prominent tertiary in England was Sir Adrian Fortescue (1476-1539). He came from an illustrious landed family from Devon. He was a successful soldier fighting campaigns in France for King Henry VIII. In July 1534, there was an entry in his account book that he contributed 12 pence to the Blackfriars of Oxford, presumably a sign that he had joined the Third Order.¹⁴⁰ This was the same year in which his conflict with the King developed. He refused to recognise King Henry's title of Supreme Head of the Church in England. He was arrested and beheaded for treason on 10 July 1539.¹⁴¹

2.12. The Third Order in Latin America

Unlike the tertiaries in England, St. Rose of Lima, a tertiary of Latin America, displayed a very clear link to the penitential spirituality of Catherine of Siena and the Italian women penitents. Rose was particularly known for her penitential excesses. Following her model Catherine of Siena, Rose cut off her hair and made a commitment of perpetual chastity. She went further though. Known as a woman of great beauty she deliberately mutilated her features and rubbed her face in nettles to try to make herself ugly. She took on severe penances and very austere practices that verged on the masochistic.

Her extreme form of piety needs to be understood against the backdrop of colonial and racial oppression in the Latin America. She was a contemporary of Martin de Porres who was denigrated as a "mulatto dog" because he was of mixed race.¹⁴² Guillermo Alvarez claims that Rose chose to be a tertiary rather than a cloistered nun because she believed that racial segregation in the monasteries was scandalous. He based his conclusion on Rose's letters to church authorities in Spain requesting permission to establish a monastery for women of all

¹³⁹ Dix, "The Third Order", pp. 319-320.

¹⁴⁰ Dix, "The Third Order", p. 321.

¹⁴¹ See Mark Elvins, *Blessed Adrian Fortescue: Englishman, Knight of Malta, Martyr* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1993), pp. 13-14.

¹⁴² For a fascinating re-reading of the life of St. Martin de Porres, see Alex García-Rivera, *St. Martin de Porres: The 'little stories' and the semiotics of culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995).

social groups: Indian, Spanish, *mestizas* or Black.¹⁴³ If Rose had this level of social awareness, there is a strong possibility that her penitential practices may have been a way of identifying herself with the suffering of the poor and oppressed people of Lima.

As was the case, in Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it appears that men chose to be *conversi* attached to the First Order rather than tertiaries. There is the possibility that Martin de Porres never made vows as a friar but was considered as a *hermano converso*, that is a layperson attached to a monastery or religious order.¹⁴⁴ There seems little indication that there were communities of penitents in Lima, though it might just be that this history has not been documented.

2.13. The Third Order and persecution in Asia¹⁴⁵

This was not the case in Asia. In evangelising Asia, the friars of the Holy Rosary Province specifically promoted the tertiary movement as an integral component of their missionary strategy. After the Edict of Persecution was declared in Japan in 1614, many of the Dominican missionaries like Alphonse of Navarette (1571-1617), the first Dominican martyr in Japan, organised the laity into a Third Order and the Confraternity of the Rosary in Nagasaki. As persecution intensified and missionaries were executed many of these lay Christians continued the work of evangelisation and supported the missionaries as an "underground church". Members of the Third Order, like Casper Koteda (d.1622), Francis Kurobioye (d. 1627), Margaret Kiyota (d. 1627), Margaret of Nagasaki (1610-1634), Marina of Omura (d. 1634) were mercilessly tortured and died as martyrs alongside Dominican friars. The lay martyrs include members of the Rosary confraternity, as well as catechists, innkeepers and benefactors. The Japanese rulers sought to exterminate every believing Christian from the islands of Japan.

Similarly among the martyrs of China and Vietnam numerous tertiaries died for their faith. Little has been written on how these groups operated and how they cooperated in the work of evangelisation.

¹⁴³ Quoted in Brian Pierce, "Martin de Porres: Compassion in full bloom" in John Orme Mills (ed.), *Justice, Peace and Dominicans, 1216-2001* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2001), p. 118.

¹⁴⁴ Pierce, "Martin de Porres", p. 119.

¹⁴⁵ See Ceferino Puebla Pedrosa, *Witnesses of the faith in the Orient: Dominican martyrs of Japan, China and Vietnam* (Hong Kong: Dominican province of Our Lady of the Rosary, 1989).

2.14. The Foundation of the congregations of Third Order Regular of sisters

During the eighteenth centuries the most remarkable growth of the Third Order was in the development of Third Order congregations of sisters. This development mirrored the developments of fifteenth century penitent women groups in Italy. Again Catherine of Siena provided the model for these apostolic communities of Dominican women. The founder of this new model of Dominican women's communities was Marie Poussepin (1653-1744).¹⁴⁶ She was born in Dourdan, France into a wealthy family involved in business. Her mother died when she was twenty-two years old and she took over the running of the household. She also helped in her father's business of knitting silk stockings. At the age of thirty, her father died and she took over the family business. She expanded the business and paid off all the debts that her father had accumulated. In 1690, at the age of thirty-seven she gradually withdrew from the business, handing it over to her brother Claude, and became a Dominican tertiary. She devoted herself to works of charity and visiting the sick. In 1695, Marie left Dourdan and went to Sainville to establish a community of the women of the Third Order of St. Dominic dedicated to working in hospitals and schools. This was a very novel idea at the time and it did not gain acceptance for a number of years. It is only in 1728 that the bishop of Chartres officially recognised her congregation -the Dominican Sisters of Charity of the Presentation of Tours. At the time of her death in 1744, at the age of ninety, there were 113 sisters in twenty communities throughout France. Pope John Paul II beatified her on 20 November 1994.

Another prominent tertiary in France was Catherine Jarrige (1754-1836).¹⁴⁷ She was born near Mauriac where she lived all her life. She became a tertiary at the age of twenty-two and was initially involved in charitable works. However, during the French Revolution, this peasant woman organised an underground network of safe houses and escape routes for priests being persecuted during the Reign of Terror. She often brought babies for baptism to a hide-out in the forest where the priests were hidden. She also took priests to the bedsides of the sick and the dying. There were several attempts to trap her but she and her priest fugitives were able to avoid capture. She continued her charitable works after the Revolution until she died in 1836 at the age of eighty-two.

¹⁴⁶ See "Blessed Marie Poussepin: Historical Facts" on the worldwide web at www.dominicansistersofthepresentation.org/blessed_marie_poussepin.htm 20 May 2007. Also see Benedict Ashley, *The Dominicans* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1990), p. 189.

¹⁴⁷ See Mary Jean Dorcy, *Saint Dominic's Family: Lives and legends* (Dubuque: The Priory Press, 1964), pp. 493-495.

Mother Margaret Hallahan (1802-1868) was responsible for the development of the Third Order Regular in England. She came from a poor home and at an early age worked as a servant-maid. She became a Dominican tertiary and was aware of a call to respond to the needs of the sick and elderly, the education needs of children in orphanages and schools. Many of these needs arose out of the developments of the industrial revolution in England. She established a number of convents in response to these needs.

In 1863, shortly before the death of Mother Hallahan in England, the Irish Cabra sisters came out to South Africa at the invitation of Bishop Patrick Raymund Griffith, the first vicar apostolic of Cape Town. At this time, Ireland was an English colony as was the Cape. The Cabra sisters arrived in Cape Town before the sisters from Sion Hill, who arrived in Port Elizabeth in 1867. Originally, both foundations in Ireland had been enclosed communities of nuns. In South Africa, they were freed from the enclosure and were involved in the establishment of Catholic schools in the Western and Eastern Cape.¹⁴⁸

On 22 October 1877, the first group of sisters from St. Ursula's in Augsburg, Germany arrived in Kingwilliamstown. These sisters established schools and hospitals in the Eastern Cape. From Kingwilliamstown sprang the congregations of Oakford and Zimbabwe. The Newcastle and Montebello congregations developed from the foundations of the Oakford sisters.

2.15. **The Third Order and Lacordaire's revival of the Order in France**¹⁴⁹

The nineteenth century also saw the restoration of the Dominican Order in France, after the French Revolution, by Henri Lacordaire. He saw a unique role for the Third Order, particularly for men. In 1852, the first provincial chapter of the restored French province approved the establishment of a male branch of the Third Order dedicated to teaching. This had originally been the idea of Abbé Cedoz, a priest and Dominican tertiary, on the staff of a college at Oullins near Lyons.

¹⁴⁸ For further information on the contribution of the Irish Dominican sisters from Cabra and Sion Hill to education in South Africa, see Kathleen Boner, *Dominican women: Time to speak* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000).

¹⁴⁹ See Lancelot Sheppard, *Lacordaire: A Biographical Essay* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), pp. 155-172.

Lacordaire saw the teaching Third Order as an integral part of his restoration of the Order in France. They did not to follow all the observances of the friars and neither did they have the same habit. The congregation fell under the jurisdiction of the Dominican provincial who approved all the elections of superiors at each school.

After his term of office as provincial ended in 1854, Lacordaire devoted himself to developing the teaching Third Order at Sorèze, near Toulouse. This was the teaching congregation's second foundation in France. The congregation grew and flourished but eventually was incorporated into the First Order.

2.16. Conclusion

The history of the Third Order of St. Dominic has deep roots in the reform movements of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The emergence of the Order of Penance lies at the heart of the spiritual movement later known as the tertiaries or Third Order. Most of the penitents associated themselves with the friars at the priories closest to them. They sought spiritual guidance and assistance from these friars. By the end of the thirteenth centuries, the Franciscans formalised their relationship with the penitent groups associated with them. The Dominicans were a little slower in formalising their relationship with these groups. By the time of St. Catherine of Siena the penitents consisted mainly of women.

The life of St. Catherine inspired many other women to become penitents, living within their home and work situations a more intense religious life. In Italy, most of the groups of penitents appear to have been women though there is one documented group of men in Venice. Many penitent women instituted communities of penitents who lived a lifestyle similar to the monasteries of nuns. This persisted in Italy until the sixteenth century. Some of these communities later joined the Second Order.

The expansion of the Church to the mission areas of Latin America and Asia saw the exporting of the Third Order to these continents too. Rose of Lima was the most notable of tertiaries in Latin America and the unique role of the tertiaries in Japan, China and Vietnam as "underground evangelists" shows how the Third Order found roots in differing contexts.

Most of the history of tertiaries and penitents has centred on significant individuals and little is known of the life of communities. In England there seem to have been groups of tertiaries that

affiliated themselves to the Dominican priories and there is no indication that they were tertiary communities until the establishment of the Third Order Regular. This new expression of the Third Order was widespread in England, France, Germany, Italy and the United States in the nineteenth century. A number of congregations of sisters were established in South Africa at this time too. Lacordaire established a congregation of Third Order of teachers for the education of boys in France. These various expressions of the Third Order show the versatility of the Third Order rule which allowed for various creative responses to the challenges faced by Dominicans at different historical periods.

The flexibility of the rule allowed for different versions of the Third Order. Some were sedate prayer groups, some semi-monastic communities, some focused on apostolic outreach, others provided a more intense spiritual identity and level of commitment. Whatever the manifestation, the unifying factor of all these different formulations of the Third Order, was the desire of laity to live a more committed Christian and Dominican life.

Chapter 3

The beginning, growth and development of the Tertiaries in South Africa (1926-1963)

3.0. First beginnings (1888-1917)

The establishment of the Catholic Church in South Africa was marked by the arrival in Cape Town of Bishop Patrick Griffith in 1838. Soon after his arrival, he built a school for the children of the white settlers in Cape Town.¹⁵⁰ It was only with the appointment of Bishop Thomas Grimley in 1861, as Griffith's successor, that the Cabra Dominican sisters from Ireland were invited to start and staff church schools in Cape Town.¹⁵¹ They arrived in 1863 and the Sion Hill sisters went to Port Elizabeth in 1867.¹⁵²

In 1877, sisters from the Convent of St. Ursula, Augsburg, Bavaria,¹⁵³ a monastery of Second Order nuns, sent out sisters to start a foundation in Kingwilliamstown. In 1888, Mother Maurentia Teifenböck,¹⁵⁴ the first prioress of this new congregation, wrote to the provincial of the Irish Dominican friars in Dublin and asked for a copy of the Third Order constitutions. She realised that if some of the sisters in the community belonged to the Third Order of St. Dominic (TOSD), then they would be much freer to go into the town and deal with some of the community's business matters. They could do buying for the community as well as nurse the sick, assist the poor, supervise the children from the school going on walks and attend different public occasions.¹⁵⁵

On 28 August 1888 two young women, Miss Mary Condon, originally from Lismore, County Waterford in Ireland, and Sister Mary Cecilia Delaney, a nun from the Convent in

¹⁵⁰ Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A social history 1577-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 77ff.

¹⁵¹ Kathleen Boner, *Dominican Women: A time to speak* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2000), p. 33.

¹⁵² Boner, *Dominican Women*, p. 41.

¹⁵³ The Augsburg Convent was founded in 1335, at first as a Beguinage by six pious women calling themselves the "Sisters of Voluntary Poverty". This community was affiliated to the Third Order of St. Dominic in 1394. The sisters spent their time in prayer, pious exercises, lace-making, other needle-work and nursed the sick in their homes. At the time of its South African foundation the convent already had several daughter houses in Germany'. Quoted from Mariette Gouws, *All for God's people* (Johannesburg: Dominican Sisters of Kingwilliamstown, 1977), p. 5.

¹⁵⁴ See Mary Alacoque Brien and Mary Joseph Sweetnam, "Mother M. Mauritia OP: A biographical sketch", Booklet on her life (1962).

¹⁵⁵ See "Chronicle, Book 7", pp. 22-23 (KWT, Box file 1).

Grahamstown,¹⁵⁶ were received into the Third Order. The names of these two sisters are not recorded in the necrology files of the Kingwilliamstown congregation so it is not clear how long they remained in the convent or whether they persisted in their vocation.¹⁵⁷ By doing this, Mother Mauritia accepted the first Dominican tertiaries in South Africa. It was a way of solving a practical problem for the sisters.

Many of the early communities of Dominican sisters were hampered in their missionary work because they still followed the lifestyle of Second Order nuns¹⁵⁸ with their strict regimes of prayer, manual labour and community living. It was no different with the early Kingwilliamstown community. The Kingwilliamstown congregation was only recognised as a Third Order Regular community on 23 November 1908 by the Master of the Order, Hyacinth Cormier.¹⁵⁹

3.1. The Secular Third Order of St. Dominic: The early years (1917-1936)

The story of the tertiaries picks up again with the arrival in Boksburg of Fr. Laurence Shapcote in March 1917. Sr. Rose Niland OP, the prioress of the Newcastle congregation of Dominican sisters, invited the English Dominicans out to South Africa to be chaplains at schools of the Newcastle congregation. A new school was planned for Boksburg on the East Rand. Laurence Shapcote, the previous provincial in England, was appointed parish priest of Boksburg. In 1927 when a number of other English Dominicans were sent out to work in South Africa, the bishop of the Transvaal, Bishop Cox OMI, also gave the Dominicans responsibility for two parishes on the West Rand, namely, Klerksdorp¹⁶⁰ and Potchefstroom.¹⁶¹

A few of the lay people in these parishes had requested to become Dominican tertiaries. Laurence Shapcote received a number of individuals into the Third Order. It was a small and inauspicious start as the numbers were not large enough for groups to be formed. They were mostly accepted as lone tertiaries. They followed the life and rule of the tertiaries as individuals. The records of these earliest members, whom Laurence Shapcote received, have been lost. In a handwritten account of the establishment of the Secular Third Order of St.

¹⁵⁶ It is most likely that Mary Cecilia Delaney had previously been an Assumption sister.

¹⁵⁷ Information supplied by Sr. Berna, the KWT archivist.

¹⁵⁸ See Boner, *Dominican Women*, p. 34.

¹⁵⁹ See "Document of affiliation to the Order of St. Dominic" (KWT, Johannesburg).

¹⁶⁰ The Dominicans accepted Klerksdorp parish in 1927. Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 116.

¹⁶¹ This parish was accepted in 1928. Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 116.

Dominic in the Transvaal,¹⁶² Enid Ramsbottom, the author, quotes from a letter from Fr. Ceslaus Hylands:¹⁶³

The records were supposed to be kept at the seat of the Vicar Provincial which had always been at Boksburg. Later it was at Klerksdorp when Fr. Shapcote removed there... It might be among Parish Registers and so not noticed when the OPs¹⁶⁴ departed... Wherever Fr. Shapcote went, he would surely have taken the Register with him, as he alone as V.P.¹⁶⁵ had power to deal with it. It was there.¹⁶⁶

The first recorded name that appears in this early account of the tertiaries was Thomas Grunno.¹⁶⁷ Laurence Shapcote received Grunno as a tertiary in Boksburg sometime before 1926. There are also references to Maria Madgalene Schaeffler (neé Hogan)¹⁶⁸ and Misses Eddie and Alice Morris. They were all received as tertiaries in Klerksdorp.

About this time, a retired magistrate, Maynard Mathews, was received into the Third Order in England on 7 May 1926. His son, Llandaff Mathews, had been killed in a mining accident at Burnside Colliery near Newcastle. The son was only twenty-eight when he died. Maynard Mathews made a request to the parish priest in Ladysmith to build a side chapel attached to the Catholic Church there. This was refused so Mathews built a small chapel in his son's honour at Van Reenen. The little church can only hold about ten people and is now a national monument.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶² No author is mentioned but in the *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, January 1957, p. 2. Tribute is paid to Enid (Sr. Catherine) Ramsbottom, a tertiary and secretary of the Johannesburg Womens' Chapter. 'With infinite care and patience, and not without a great deal of hard work, she traced the history of the beginning of the Third Order in this country and wrote up the records'. The account is handwritten. Also in a letter dated 16 July 1954, she writes to Fr. Peter Paul Feeny 'You will remember that I have been trying to trace the history of the secular Dominican Tertiaries in the Transvaal...' This work provides the basis for most of this present section that follows. However, she never included any reference to the African chapters that were in existence at the time (ZAOP, Book: *Dominican Tertiaries - Transvaal chapters*).

¹⁶³ Ceslaus Hylands was the first South African to join the English province. He originated from Benoni. He studied in England and returned to work in South Africa in 1926.

¹⁶⁴ OP is an abbreviation for Order of Preachers.

¹⁶⁵ V.P. is an abbreviation for the vicar provincial. When a new vicariate is started in another country the provincial of the founding province appoints a vicar to administer the vicariate on behalf of the provincial.

¹⁶⁶ Enid Ramsbottom, "The Secular Third Order of St. Dominic in the Transvaal 1917-1955" (ZAOP, Springs).

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Grunno had worked with Fr. Ceslaus Hylands in Springs as a pastoral assistant for many years. He died during a visit to Rhodesia either killed by a lion or trampled by an elephant. Quoted in Ramsbottom, "The Secular Third Order in the Transvaal" (ZAOP, Springs).

¹⁶⁸ She was the grandmother of Margaret Schaeffler OP, a Dominican sister of the Kingwilliamstown congregation.

¹⁶⁹ There is a photograph of Maynard Mathews in his tertiary habit in the Llandaff oratory at Van Reenen. For more information on this chapel, see *Southern Cross*, 12 July 1961 and 12 November 1969 and also Joy Brain, *Catholics in Natal Vol.2*. (Durban: Archdiocese of Durban, 1982), p. 301.

During the years 1927 to 1937, four others became tertiaries. Mrs. T. McCormick (known as Sister Paula) was clothed by Fr. Maurus Revill¹⁷⁰ (1898-1976) in Klerksdorp in 1927 and also professed by him a year later. Mrs. Kidd (known as Sr. Mary Agnes) was clothed by Maurus Revill in Boksburg in 1934 and professed in 1935. Her daughter had entered the Newcastle congregation of sisters and was known as Mother Mary Agnes. Gerald J. O'Phelan (Brother Thomas) received the habit from Fr. Bertrand Pike in Boksburg in 1935 and was professed by Maurus Revill in 1937. Miss L. Teubes (known as Sr. Lewis Bertrand) was received at Holy Cross Priory in Leicester, England in 1936 and was professed in December 1937 before she returned to Johannesburg in April 1938. She was a teacher at Belgravia Convent. She also taught later at Cradock Convent before her death in 1952.

Fr. Nicholas Humphreys¹⁷¹ professed the first African tertiary at the St. Louis Bertrand parish, an African parish near Potchefstroom where he was parish priest. Magdalena Zuke joined the staff of the mission school in about 1936. She had been a novice with the Kingwilliamstown sisters, but had had to leave on the grounds of health.¹⁷² She was instrumental in building up the tertiaries in the parish.

3.2. Establishing the first tertiary groups (1937-1940)

In August 1937, two past pupils of Dominican convents in Potchefstroom and Boksburg, Marie Ryan and Jean Munro, met Fr. Maurus Revill, the vicar provincial and parish priest of Boksburg, and expressed an interest in becoming tertiaries. They were accepted in October and November 1937 and they were both professed a year later. As numbers were growing Maurus Revill decided to start a group in Boksburg. Revill proved to be a driving force for the establishment of the tertiaries on the East Rand.

The new group was comprised of Mrs. McCormick, Mrs. Kidd, Gerald O'Phelan, Miss Teubes, Marie Ryan (later Mrs. N. MacKellar), Jean Munro, Kathleen Doyle, Kathleen Fincham and

¹⁷⁰ Maurus Revill arrived in South Africa in 1926. He arrived together with Ceslas Hylands. See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 115.

¹⁷¹ Nicholas Humphreys came to South Africa first in July 1919. He worked on a farm near Addo in the Eastern Cape. He later taught at Weston government school in Mooi River. He was considering joining the religious life and visited Fr. John Dominic Rouselle in Newcastle, Natal and then later returned to England and joined the English province. He came out to work in South Africa in October 1931. See Damian Magrath and Finbar Synnott (eds.), *Not so trivial a tale: A memoir of Nicholas Francis Humphreys OP, 1890-1975* (No publisher mentioned, 1977), pp. 22-28.

¹⁷² See St. Louis Bertrand Mission, Potchefstroom, undated, p. 3 (KWT, Box 42).

Lionel Clifton. Initially the group met once every three months but later, meetings were held every two months on a Saturday afternoon. During meetings the Council, that is the office bearers, met first, then prayers for the monthly meeting were said and thereafter the chaplain gave a spiritual conference. The choral recitation of compline followed and the meeting ended with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. This was all followed by tea in the presbytery. In August 1938 Maurus Revill arranged for the group's first retreat.¹⁷³ By December 1940 the number of tertiaries living on the Rand had grown to over twenty.¹⁷⁴

In the Free State, the vicar provincial of the Dutch province, Fr. de Groen, accepted the profession of Mrs. Hanrakan, known as Sr. Catherine, into the Third Order on 30 September 1937. She was resident in Mamusi, Clocolan. On 2 August 1939, he delegated authority to an Oblate priest, Fr. Hartjes OMI from St. Boniface mission in Kimberley to clothe Mr. Basil Norman Evans and his wife Mrs. Dorothy Madgalene Evans in the habit of the Third Order. Dorothy Evans was professed a year before her husband on 19 November 1940 while her husband was only professed on 3 January 1941. No chapters were established and those professed continued as lone tertiaries. On 16 February 1946, Fr. de Groen accepted Miss Dorothy Imelda Boosey from Bloemfontein as a tertiary in Winburg. The records of these professions were written into the register of Fr. Art Teils in the Dominican priory in Huissen.¹⁷⁵

In the Western Cape the English Dominicans had established a new foundation in Stellenbosch in 1930.¹⁷⁶ Fr. Oswin Magrath was appointed superior in 1937.¹⁷⁷ Under his leadership Stellenbosch became the novitiate house and *studium*¹⁷⁸ for the English province in South Africa.¹⁷⁹ It also became a centre for the flourishing of the Dominican tertiaries in the Western Cape.

In 1940 on the feast of the Assumption, Magrath clothed two women Patricia Harrison and Sylvia Symonds in the tertiary habit.¹⁸⁰ Patricia Harrison was professed a year later.¹⁸¹ In

¹⁷³ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 168, February 1939, p. 3. This publication was produced by the English province with news and short articles for the interest of the Dominican tertiaries in England.

¹⁷⁴ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 190, December 1940, p. 3.

¹⁷⁵ See "3e Orde v. St. Dominicus", handwritten page (ZAOP, File: Third Order, Dutch province).

¹⁷⁶ On the establishment and development of Stellenbosch see Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 124ff.

¹⁷⁷ Oswin Magrath arrived in South Africa in December 1934.

¹⁷⁸ A house of studies.

¹⁷⁹ See Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 127-133.

¹⁸⁰ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 189, November 1940, p. 3.

February 1941 the Cabra sisters in Cape Town received two coloured sisters as postulants and clothed them in the habit of the Secular Third Order. They were Mabel Meyer and Angeline Fortes and were both very young. Meyer was only fifteen years old and Fortes was seventeen. The Cabra sisters were envisaging the establishment of a separate congregation for the coloured sisters.¹⁸²

At this time were already five lay tertiaries and five priests of the Western Vicariate in the Cape Town group already.¹⁸³ Oswin Magrath expressed the hope that soon Cape Town would have its own chapter. Another prominent cleric to join the tertiaries as a lone tertiary was Monsignor Hugh Boyle, the vicar general of the Eastern Vicariate.¹⁸⁴

3.3. The establishment the first tertiary chapters (1941-1946)

3.3.1. St. Dominic's Chapter, Boksburg

Due to the rapid growth of tertiaries on the Reef, Maurus Revill wrote to the English provincial, Bernard Delany, in 1941 requesting permission to erect the first tertiary chapter in South Africa at Boksburg. Delany granted this permission and David O'Leary, the Bishop of the Transvaal Vicariate, also gave his formal approval for the erection of the Boksburg chapter on 16 November 1941.

Herbert Vieyra (1902-1965), a prominent lawyer in Johannesburg, was appointed prior of the newly established chapter. Vieyra had joined the tertiaries just a few years previously and was actively involved in the Catholic Federation in Johannesburg.¹⁸⁵ A medical student, presumably Jean Brouckaert,¹⁸⁶ became the sub-prior while Maurus Revill became its spiritual director. He remained so until April 1951. The chapter took the name of St. Dominic's Chapter

¹⁸¹ *The Southern Cross*, 30 July 1941, p. 2 and *The Dominican Annals*, no. 200, October 1941. There is no indication that Sylvia Symonds continued with the tertiaries.

¹⁸² See "St. Rose's Congregation: 1938-1974" in Boner, *Dominican Women*, pp. 269-290. Boner (p. 270) says that originally the idea was to establish a local diocesan congregation that would not form part of the Irish congregation. The reason given was so that the diocesan congregation would be free from enclosure. Most of these diocesan congregations for African and coloured sisters did not survive, the Montebello congregation was the exception. St. Rose's and St. Martin de Porres (branch of Kingwilliamstown congregation) were later reintegrated.

¹⁸³ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 200, October 1941, p. 3.

¹⁸⁴ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 190, December 1940, p. 3.

¹⁸⁵ The Catholic Federation in Johannesburg was established by Bishop David O'Leary in 1926. See Joy Brain, *The Catholic Church in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1991), p. 209.

¹⁸⁶ Jean Brouckaert, known as Brother Albert, was to play a prominent role in the Durban chapter.

which was also the patron saint of the parish in Boksburg. Five years later, when the English provincial, Hilary Carpenter was visiting the vicariate, he met the thirty men and women tertiaries of the Transvaal chapter.¹⁸⁷

3.3.2. Chapter in St. Louis Bertrand mission, Potchefstroom

The next Chapter to be established was at the St. Louis Bertrand mission near Potchefstroom. Fr. Nicholas Humphreys¹⁸⁸ had been appointed parish priest on 1 April 1933. The King Dominican sisters who ran a school in the parish reported that prior to his arrival "there were about a hundred children at the school of whom only nine were Catholics. In the whole district of Potchefstroom there were 169 Black Catholics and Catechumens".¹⁸⁹ However, this was to change dramatically in the fifteen years of his being parish priest.

When Father Nicholas left in August 1948, there were about 1300 children in the school of whom some 450 were Catholics, and another thousand in the outstations. He had baptised 3500, always after two years' instruction except in the case of very old people, or those in danger of death.¹⁹⁰

Humphreys saw the tertiaries as integral to his missionary work. They were not just a prayer group; he actively involved them in the parish apostolate. In his book *Missionary in South Africa*¹⁹¹ he wrote:

Where groups of Tertiaries are flourishing they can be a great asset ... They worked at chant and ceremonial so that they added considerably to the conduct and dignity of services. They helped the congregation to sing liturgical music by the lead they were able to give. On the active side they were nearly all members of the Legion of Mary and did excellent apostolic work.

In 1944, the numbers of tertiaries in the parish had grown sufficiently that a formal chapter¹⁹² was established with the consent of the bishop. Most of the tertiaries were catechists working in the parish.

¹⁸⁷ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 231, September-October 1946, p. 3.

¹⁸⁸ Nicholas Humphreys writes in his unpublished autobiography that he became a Dominican tertiary in St. Dominic's, Hampstead, London. He was received by Fr. Wulstan OP in 1924. See Nicholas Humphreys, "A trivial tale" vol. 1, chapter 16, unpublished memoirs, p. 10. (ZAOP archives, Springs). Also see Damian Magrath and Finbar Synnott, *Not so trivial a tale* (No publisher, 1977), p. 29.

¹⁸⁹ See "St. Louis Bertrand Mission" in Mariette Gouws, *All for God's people*, pp. 325-328.

¹⁹⁰ Gouws, *All God's people*, p. 328.

¹⁹¹ Nicholas Humphreys, *Missionary in South Africa* (London: Blackfriars, n.d.), p. 81.

¹⁹² There is no documentation to this effect in the ZAOP archives. See St. Louis Bertrand Mission, Potchefstroom, undated, p. 3. (KWT, Box 42).

They had been saying Vespers in Choir once a week for a good while, and holding monthly Chapter. They have always shown a good spirit, and work steadily, twice a week learning Chant, so as to help the congregational singing. There has never been a choir, as such in this congregation.¹⁹³

When Hilary Carpenter¹⁹⁴ was out on his visitation to South Africa in 1946, he is reported to have met some of the tertiaries.¹⁹⁵

There were about twenty Dominican lay tertiaries and these had achieved so high a standard of liturgical excellence that Rev. Father Hilary Carpenter OP, said they were the most moving thing he had witnessed in Africa.¹⁹⁶

When Humphreys left the parish in 1948, the Dutch Dominicans took it over. It is not clear what happened to this group of tertiaries. It is very likely that they collapsed after the Dominicans finally left the area in 1950.

3.3.3. Stellenbosch Chapter

Back in 1940 it was reported in *Dominican Annals*¹⁹⁷ that Oswin Magrath planned to establish a tertiary chapter in Cape Town. In 1941 the number of tertiaries in the Cape was reported to be five lay tertiaries and five priests. In 1942, this number had risen to seventeen tertiaries in Cape Town and suburbs: six diocesan priests, three lay men, and eight lay women.¹⁹⁸ When the Stellenbosch Chapter was formally erected on 5 October 1945¹⁹⁹ it had forty members, though only twenty-five attended meetings regularly. Many lived far from Cape Town and found it difficult to make the meetings.

These meetings of the Stellenbosch chapter were held in Cape Town on the first Saturday of each month at St. Mary's Dominican Convent. Just as the other chapters the format for meetings was to recite compline, say their monthly prayers, hear an address from the spiritual director, Fr. Ninian McManus, and then discuss some business matters. This chapter also

¹⁹³ Nicholas Humphreys, *Missionary in South Africa*, p. 81.

¹⁹⁴ Hilary Carpenter was English provincial from 1946-1958. After he completed his term he came to work in South Africa for a year until he was called to Rome as a member of the Dominican General Council. He died in Rome.

¹⁹⁵ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 231, September - October 1946 reported: "At Potchefstroom there is also a most enthusiastic native Tertiary Chapter. They meet each week and sing part of the Office and close with sung *Salve* and *O lumen*. Unfortunately the provincial [Hilary Carpenter] could not be present at a chapter meeting, but met several of them individually and was immensely impressed by their fervour and zeal".

¹⁹⁶ Gouws, *All God's people*, p. 328.

¹⁹⁷ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 190, December 1940, p. 3.

¹⁹⁸ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 205, May-June 1942, p. 3.

¹⁹⁹ See "Deed of erection" (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

printed a one page monthly bulletin to keep all their far-flung membership informed about chapter developments.

After Hilary Carpenter, the English provincial, met the Stellenbosch chapter of tertiaries on 27 July while on visitation to South Africa in 1946, the following report appeared in *The Dominican Annals*:

There are about thirty brothers and sisters from both the white and coloured population. Here too the provincial found the same zealous spirit animating the Tertiary body as he had found elsewhere; a wonderfully consoling augury for the Order's future in South Africa.²⁰⁰

3.4. Sustained growth and development of the tertiaries (1945-1950)

The tertiary chapters continued steadily particularly in Boksburg and Cape Town. They received the accompaniment of their spiritual directors. The growth of the tertiaries was slow and steady - nothing as rapid as the growth of the Third Order of St. Francis (TOSF). In 1941, a report in *The Southern Cross*²⁰¹ said that close to 200 tertiaries participated in the Third Congress of the TOSF held in Cape Town. This is phenomenal growth considering that the TOSF was only established in South Africa in 1939. By 1945, the members of the Dominican tertiaries probably amounted to no more than about eighty members.

Even though the Dominican tertiaries were few in number interest was growing in a variety of new places. On 25 October 1945, a Sister Kessell from the Sanatorium in Pietermaritzburg completed her novitiate as a tertiary and made profession. She was the first Dominican tertiary to be received in Natal.²⁰² The vicar provincial, Hildebrand James, gave Fr. J. J. Gannon OMI permission to receive her profession. Nothing more is known of her.

Requests were being received from even far afield as Southern Rhodesia. The mother general Mary Amilia of the Dominican sisters wrote saying that a couple in Salisbury - Anthony Joseph Pillay and Cecilia Bridget Pillay, a husband and wife - wanted to become tertiaries.

We are employing a Coloured Builder at our new Coloured School, Martindale ... Mr. Pillay has proved himself a very valuable employee by his unselfish and devoted work and both, he and his wife are leading an exemplary life ... We should like to combine with this reception the

²⁰⁰ *The Dominican Annals*, no. 231, September - October 1946, p. 3.

²⁰¹ *The Southern Cross*, 19 November 1941.

²⁰² "Letter from Fr. JJ Gannon OMI, St. Mary's, Pietermaritzburg to Fr. Hildebrand James OP", 25 October 1945. (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD EP I File: Tertiaries 1951-1955).

Profession of Miss Lucy Meyer whose period of Noviceship has expired. She is working at Martindale too and we shall be glad if Fr. [Dominic] Rosse, [an Italian internee] will be allowed to perform both ceremonies.²⁰³

In 1946 the Dutch Dominicans working in the Orange Free State decided to open a novitiate for African Dominicans on the Allingham farm near Greenlands. They had come to work in the Kroonstad prefecture back in 1930 when they accepted responsibility for the parish of Heilbron. They accepted seven candidates and they were all clothed as members of the Third Order on 8 October 1948.²⁰⁴ Unfortunately, this venture did not succeed and was closed in 1951.²⁰⁵ A few of these individuals who tried their vocation continued as tertiaries²⁰⁶ but did not establish a group or chapter in the Free State.

3.5. Flourishing of the tertiaries (1950 - 1962)

If the development of the tertiaries during the 1930s and 1940s can be characterised as slow but steady, then in comparison the developments of the 1950s were fast and furious. Over the next ten years the existing chapters of Boksburg and Cape Town were split into separate men and women chapters and seven new chapters came into existence all over the country. Some of these were also split into men and women's chapters. There were also numerous requests from priests and lay people, from parts of the country where there are no chapters and even from Southern and Northern Rhodesia, seeking to become tertiaries.

3.5.1. Boksburg Chapter

The Boksburg chapter continued to grow and flourish under the watchful eye of Maurus Revill. From June 1950 until December 1951 the chapter published a monthly newsletter.²⁰⁷ Bros. Thomas O'Phelan and Vincent Brückl were the editors. A series of articles on the Office were included, with news items of interest to the tertiaries as well as a spiritual reflection. The

²⁰³ "Letter from Mother General M. Amilia from Salisbury, S. Rhodesia to Oswin Magrath", 9 April 1946 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD EP I, File: Tertiaries 1951-1955).

²⁰⁴ A notice in Dutch listing the names of the different brothers who were clothed and professed at the Allingham farm are listed as John (Albertus) Makatini, Stephan (Hyacinth) Moya, Israel (Pius) Makabane, Gerard (Alfred) Tiyane, Simon (Martin) Taele (incorrectly spelt as Taili), Paul (Dominic) Mpanya and Joseph (Thomas) Basso. (ZAOP, File: Third Order, Dutch province)

²⁰⁵ See Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 206-217.

²⁰⁶ Pius Makabane lived in Welkom and then Virginia from 1966. He wore the habit of a tertiary until his death in a car accident in 1986. See Denis, *Dominican Friars*, p. 216. Simon Taele became a catechist and applied to be a lone tertiary while staying in Zastron and Paul Mpanya is still a parishioner in Rammulotse in Viljoenskroon.

²⁰⁷ There are no copies of this newsletter available.

success of the newsletter led Hildebrand James, spiritual director of the Stellenbosch chapter, to suggest that the Boksburg newsletter become a tertiary bulletin for all South African tertiaries. Unfortunately, this never transpired as Vincent Brückl went back to Europe and Thomas O'Phelan was unable to continue alone as editor. The means to print the newsletter in Stellenbosch also fell through, so the idea of a tertiary bulletin had to be given up and the newsletter was discontinued.

In April 1951, Maurus Revill's long tenure as parish priest of Boksburg and spiritual director of the tertiaries came to an end. He left for Brakpan and Nicholas Humphreys became the interim spiritual director until Peter Paul Feeny took over in August 1951.

As the numbers in the Boksburg chapter grew, it became apparent that the group was too big. Many members were travelling from Johannesburg and so in May 1952 the vicar provincial, Geoffrey Lynch, agreed to establish a separate Johannesburg chapter. Bishop Whelan gave the new Johannesburg chapter permission to meet at the Johannesburg Catholic Library and use the oratory for saying their Office.

Many of those who had become tertiaries were considering a vocation to the religious life. By 1952, seven members of the Boksburg chapter had entered religious life: Kathleen Doyle became an Ursuline sister, Jean Munro joined the Oakford Dominican sisters, Agnes Farry entered with the King Dominican sisters, Denis Middlewick joined the Dominican friars in Stellenbosch, Kevin Cawte joined the Oblates of Mary Immaculate while Dorothy Bean and Mrs Lewis entered the Newcastle Dominican sisters.

In May 1955, the Boksburg chapter was split again with the canonical erection of separate brothers' and sisters' chapters. Francis Moncrieff OP was appointed spiritual director to both chapters. At the time of the division the brothers' chapter consisted of 9 finally professed members while the sisters' chapter included seventeen professed members, two novices and three postulants.

In January 1957, the Boksburg chapter produced the first issue of the new *Tertiary Newsletter*.²⁰⁸ Unfortunately, the newsletter did not name the editor but it was most likely Fr. Francis Moncrieff, who in writing to the prior of the Johannesburg chapter in 1959, said:

"Thank you so much for your letter and the POs²⁰⁹ enclosed for the Newsletter. It makes me feel very remiss, because I have never succeeded in getting out the April one, and now it is too late".²¹⁰

3.5.2. St. Dominic's Chapter, Johannesburg

When the new chapter started in May 1952 it was also placed under the patronage of St. Dominic because it was a branch of the Boksburg chapter. At its origins it was already comprised of twenty professed tertiaries, three novices and three postulants. Both Advocate Vieyra and Gerald O'Phelan moved over to the Johannesburg chapter.

The Johannesburg chapter was split into a men's chapter and a women's chapter on 8 May 1955. In doing so the tertiaries were further emulating the structures of the Dominican religious life. The men's chapter met at the Mazenod Dominican Hostel²¹¹ in Judith's Paarl on the first Sunday of each month. In 1957 the chapter was comprised of eight tertiaries, five novices and two postulants²¹² and Fr. Francis Moncrieff OP was the spiritual director. One of the brothers, van Kets had a son, Lieven (baptismal name - Raf) van Kets, who was a Dominican working in the Belgian Congo at this period.²¹³

The women's chapter also met at the Mazenod Hostel on the second Sunday of every month. Francis Moncrieff was the spiritual director of this group too. The women's chapter was instrumental in promoting Our Lady's Guild of the Sick. This Guild was founded in Scotland and fell under the direction of the superior general of St. Joseph's Society for the Foreign Missions in Mill Hill, England. Each sick member of the guild adopted a priest for whom to

²⁰⁸ This is inferred from a comment in the second issue in *Tertiary Newsletter*, April 1957, p. 10: 'Secretaries - please ensure that news for the next issue are received in Boksburg by the 1st July'.

²⁰⁹ Postal Orders, money sent via the post office.

²¹⁰ "Letter from Fr. Francis Moncrieff OP to Gerald O'Phelan", 22 June 1959, Stellenbosch (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

²¹¹ This centre is now known as Koinonia and still run by the Oakford Dominican sisters as a conference centre.

²¹² See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, January 1957.

²¹³ See Jourdain Costermans, *Cent ans de Mission au Congo, en Uélé: 1903-2003* (No publisher, no date) p. 126.

pray.²¹⁴ By 1960, there were invalid members of the guild in twenty-seven different countries and priest members in over thirty countries.²¹⁵

3.5.3. Stellenbosch Chapters

The Stellenbosch chapter was also experiencing a growth spurt. A number of prominent personalities had joined the tertiaries over the years. The most well-known were: Fr. Jack Swan,²¹⁶ the vicar general to Archbishop Henneman; Fr. Louis Stubbs, the editor of the *Southern Cross*; as well as Mary Singleton,²¹⁷ a columnist in the *Southern Cross*. Major Alick Mehan was clothed by Oswin Magrath in 1942 and was professed by Maurus Revill the following year. He took the name Anthony. Madge Green joined the tertiaries and was professed on 5 April 1947.

In August 1954 Ninian McManus the newly appointed spiritual director to the Stellenbosch chapter wrote to the vicar provincial, Peter Paul Feeny, suggesting that two separate chapters be erected - one for men and one for women - in Cape Town, separate from Stellenbosch.²¹⁸ In another letter later that same month Ninian outlined his reasons for this suggestion:

For reasons of convenience the meetings of this chapter were always held in Cape Town and still are. In Cape Town there are about thirty women Tertiaries and about fourteen men Tertiaries. ... at a guess I'd say there are at least fifteen women and seven men professed. They meet regularly once a month at St Mary's Convent chapel (women) and at St Mary's Convent Hall and Library (men) ... I am the Director of both groups. The Stellenbosch Chapter is erected at St. Nicholas's: not at the Vlei.²¹⁹ It is mixed in sex and race: there are coloured women Tertiaries and one Native (sic) man Tertiary but no coloured men. In Stellenbosch there are only two Tertiaries, Mr Shaw and a Native (sic) Joseph Malamba.²²⁰

Two weeks later Ninian reported to Peter Paul that Oswin Magrath had seen the Archbishop of Cape Town, Owen McCann, who had agreed to authorise the erection of separate chapters for

²¹⁴ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no.1, January 1957, p. 2.

²¹⁵ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no.11, April 1960, p. 10.

²¹⁶ Fr. Jack Swan was one of the first South African diocesan priests in Cape Town. He was a lone tertiary by the time William D'Arcy joined the tertiaries in Cape Town. He said that Fr. Swan had stopped coming to meetings by the time D'Arcy joined in 1946. See William D'Arcy, interview conducted in Cape Town on 19 October 2005, *Appendix*, p. 77.

²¹⁷ Mary Singleton ran a column called 'The Home Circle' in the *Southern Cross* from 1932-1952. See William D'Arcy, *Appendix*, p. 78.

²¹⁸ "Letter from Ninian McManus to the Vicar Provincial PP Feeny", 19 August 1954 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiary Chapter, File: Tertiaries).

²¹⁹ He was referring to Ida's Vallei, a coloured township in Stellenbosch.

²²⁰ "Letter from Ninian McManus to PP Feeny", 29 August 1954 (ZAOP, Box: CT).

men and women in Cape Town.²²¹ The existing chapter erected on 5 October 1945 was reserved for men tertiaries only and a new chapter was erected for the women's chapter.²²² The permission authorising the erection of the women's chapter at Stellenbosch was received from the Archbishop of Cape Town and given on 5 October 1954.²²³ Meetings of the women's chapter were held in the library of St. Mary's Convent in Cape Town. By 1957 there were twenty-five active tertiaries, three novices and three postulants in the group. Damian Magrath became their spiritual director.

3.5.4. Springs Chapter

Springs was built around the gold mines established by Anglo-American Corporation and became one of the most prosperous towns on the East Rand. Many people flocked to Springs for employment and the town was busy and bustling with activity.

On Sunday 3 August 1952 a tertiary group in the parish of Our Lady of Mercy, Springs was inaugurated. It is surprising that a group was not established earlier since the parish was established in 1925 and the Dominicans had been saying Mass there from 1917. Fr. George Taylor, the parish priest of Springs was appointed the spiritual director. Fr. Peter Paul Feeny, the vicar provincial formally established the chapter on the feast of St. Dominic in 1955. Meetings were held in the parish church on the first Sunday of each month at 3.00pm.

In January 1956, Maurus Revill, who had been in Brakpan, took over Springs parish and became the spiritual director to the tertiaries. By August 1956 a separate women's chapter had been established in Springs. In January 1957 the men's chapter comprised of ten members and one postulant. Vincent Hortop, the father of Fr. Peter Hortop OP, was the prior and secretary of the chapter.²²⁴ At this time the average age of the group in Springs was twenty-eight years of age.²²⁵

The following year Springs hosted the annual retreat for tertiaries at the Convent from 14-16 December 1957. The retreat master was Fr. Sylvester O'Brien OFM. Fifty-four tertiaries

²²¹ "Letter of Ninian McManus, Stellenbosch to PP Feeny", 15 September 1954 (ZAOP, Box: CT).

²²² "Letter of Ninian McManus to PP Feeny", 30 September 1954 (ZAOP, Box: CT).

²²³ "Letter from Archbishop of Cape Town", 5 October 1954 (ZAOP, Box: CT).

²²⁴ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, January 1957, p. 3.

²²⁵ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 2, April 1957, pp. 6-7.

attended from all the Reef chapters, Durban and some lone tertiaries. Near the end of the retreat discussion arose about the involvement of the African tertiaries in future retreats:

It was unanimously agreed that in future the African Chapters be invited to all joint Tertiary functions, such as the St. Dominic's Day celebration, Retreats, Days of Recollection etc. As the question of sleeping arrangements at Retreats may clash with civil law, it was agreed that at first the directors of African Chapters would make as convenient arrangements as possible, with the hope that in later years some more fraternal arrangements could be arrived at.²²⁶

It is not clear where the members of African chapters were expected to stay during the retreat. A retreat for tertiaries of the newly-erected Durban chapter had already been held at the Dominican Convent in Montebello in 1956. They had held a multi-racial retreat and resolved the problem of accommodation by holding the retreat in a convent of predominantly African sisters.

3.5.5. Durban Chapter

Dr. Jean Brouckaert together with his wife and family moved down to Mariannahill from Johannesburg in 1951 to work at St. Mary's Hospital.²²⁷ Brouckaert had become a tertiary in Boksburg through the encouragement of Advocate Herbert Vieyra. It is not clear how many tertiaries were already in Durban when he arrived in 1951. Three years later Margaret Maytom,²²⁸ herself a tertiary affiliated to Boksburg, wrote to Peter Paul Feeny saying that there were about seven professed tertiaries in Durban, one in Mariannahill and one down in Margate.²²⁹ Among these tertiaries were Gratia Kraemer, Bertina Ebert and Paula Wittig, three Oakford Dominican sisters who had left the congregation.²³⁰ They had established themselves

²²⁶ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 5, January 1958. Don Shongwe, a Methodist minister, recalled how synods of the Methodist Church in 1963 were still affected by an apartheid mentality: 'During the synods we had different facilities: eating, sleeping, toilets, you know. It was separate, separate, separate, and yet they claimed to be one and undivided church. We used to challenge these things at all our synods. Where was this undivided church they spoke about? It was just lip service'. See Philippe Denis, Thulani Mlotshwa and George Mukuka (eds.), *The Casspir and the Cross: Voices of Black clergy in the Natal Midlands* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), p. 46.

²²⁷ In the early years of the hospital Dr. Brouckaert and Dr. Gloria Gearing, his wife, were the only two doctors until others joined later. They were very busy and worked very hard having little time for themselves. Nevertheless, he faithfully attended lay Dominican meetings down on the Bluff in Durban on his free day a month. This had a bearing on his family life. Gloria Gearing, telephone interview conducted from Pietermaritzburg on 31 July 2003.

²²⁸ Margaret Maytom was Deputy Mayor of the city of Durban and later became Mayor in 1967. Born in Durban in 1899, Margaret served on the Durban City Council since 1938 and had been a Provincial Councillor since 1949. See articles in *Southern Cross*, 31 May 1950; also *Southern Cross*, 4 July 1956 and 12 July 1967.

²²⁹ "Letter from Margaret Maytom to PP Feeny", 21 January 1954 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²³⁰ They left as a result of a leadership quarrel within the congregation. Gemma Neunzling, interview conducted in Bedfordview on 18 December.

in a house in Escombe called "Calaroga"²³¹ and continued to live a religious life together according to the Third Order rule.²³²

When all the necessary permissions were received from the English provincial, Hilary Carpenter, as well as Archbishop Hurley, the new chapter was established in Durban on 14 March 1954. Fr. Francis Hill OMI²³³ agreed to be the chapter's spiritual director. Brouckaert became prior, Findlay McKinnon was made sub-prior, Gratia Kraemer became novice mistress and Margaret Maytom accepted the task of secretary. Meetings were held at the St. Augustine's Sanatorium. The chapter already grown to fourteen members as they had received five postulants.²³⁴ By April 1958, the number of tertiaries in the Durban chapter had grown to twenty-one professed tertiaries and four novices.

In 1960 the Durban chapter got its first Dominican spiritual director when Fr. Reginald Dellaert OP, was stationed at Oakford Priory, Verulam. He replaced Fr. J. Benson OMI.²³⁵ They also listed six professed brothers (two others were overseas) as well as two brother novices and fifteen professed sisters and one sister novice. In total twenty-six tertiaries were affiliated to the Durban chapter.

3.5.6. Kwa Thema Chapter

Tertiary groups were being established in all the Dominican parishes of the English province. The people in Kwa Thema originally lived in Payneville near Springs. However, in 1952 the Nationalist government forcibly removed the African people from Payneville and relocated them to a new township built on the redundant Springs West mines.²³⁶

The Dominicans established a parish in Kwa Thema in 1952. The first parish priest, Fr. Valentine Wood, drew together a number of men of the parish and established a tertiary group.

²³¹ This was a different spelling of the village of Caleruega in Spain, the birthplace of St. Dominic de Guzman (1175-1221).

²³² "They'd come from Magaliesberg, I think. They were Oakford sisters ... They was a dispute at the time and four of them left but they never gave up living in community and doing everything as a community and working very hard in various parishes ... They were very good tertiary members, of course". See Dennis Sweetman, interview conducted in Brakpan on 20 September 2005, *Appendix*, p. 59.

²³³ Fr. Hill was Archbishop Hurley's vicar delegate for the Archdiocese. See Denis E. Hurley. *Memoires: The memoirs of Archbishop Denis E Hurley OMI* (Pietermaritzburg, Cluster Publications, 2005), p. 52.

²³⁴ See "Letter from Margaret Maytom to PP Feeny", 20 March 1954 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

²³⁵ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 11, April 1960, p. 7.

²³⁶ For more information on the establishment of Kwa Thema, see Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 256-259.

After seeking the approval of the vicar provincial, Peter Paul Feeny, and the bishop of Johannesburg, Hugh Boyle, the chapter was erected on 19 March 1955.

The first office bearers of this Chapter²³⁷ were Maurus (Bro. Sixtus) Msomi as prior, Nicholas Lekoane²³⁸ (Bro. Thomas) the sub-prior and Timothy Botlolo (Bro. Vincent), the novice master. In total there were ten brothers in the chapter at the end of the year.²³⁹ The group also comprised members who were still resident in Payneville. Members of the chapter were involved in assisting the priest in the parish by being catechists, visiting the sick and the lapsed, and were also members of the St. Vincent de Paul society which cared for the needs of the poor.²⁴⁰ They were also given the task of taking a parish census of all the Catholics in the rapidly expanding township. All the brothers of the chapter were also trained to lead the congregation in prayers. The prior Sixtus Msomi translated the tertiary rule into Zulu while another member of the chapter Martin Mpilo did the translation into Sesotho.²⁴¹ Most of the meetings of the tertiaries were conducted in English but hope was expressed that other members who didn't speak English would also join.

3.5.7. Brakpan Chapter

When Maurus Revill arrived in Brakpan in 1951 he set about establishing a tertiary chapter. The first meeting of tertiaries took place on 10 August 1952. The canonical erection of the chapter happened only in January 1956. Francis Middlewick took over Brakpan parish in April 1957 from Ninian McManus who went to Stellenbosch to lecture. Francis became the tertiaries' spiritual director.

Dennis Sweetman, who was professed in Brakpan in 1958, describes tertiary life in Brakpan under Francis Middlewick:

Francis kept them [the Brothers' chapter] together by his sergeant major activity. He was actually quite tough. In those days Francis even made us do the *venia* as his tertiaries. It was monasticism, wasn't it really? It was proper Dominican life in a priory ... For Easter, [we used

²³⁷ "Letter from PP Feeny to Valentine Wood", 19 March 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²³⁸ See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 257-258.

²³⁹ "Letter from Valentine Wood to PP Feeny", 25 October 1956 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁴⁰ Nicholas Lekoane was involved in SVP until a racist incident when he asked a white SVP member from Benoni for a job. The response he received was: "I fire boys, I don't hire them". Lekoane did not suffer similar racist attitudes from the tertiaries. Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja, interview conducted in Nigel on 16 March 2007.

²⁴¹ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, January 1957, pp. 4-5.

to wear the full habit and take off the cappa] at the Gloria and just stay in white. It was quite effective.²⁴²

The group continued to grow and flourish. By January 1957 the tertiaries numbered eleven professed members, two novices and three postulants. By the beginning of the 1960s, the Brakpan chapter had taken over the National Secretariate and published the *Tertiary Newsletter*.

3.5.8. Port Elizabeth Chapter

In 1955, a catechist from New Brighton near Port Elizabeth, Thomas Zini, seventy-two years old, wrote to Peter Paul Feeny asking to be admitted to the tertiaries. His letter was accompanied with one from his parish priest, Fr. Michael Tuohy.²⁴³ Later that month Feeny received another letter from Zini stating that he had arranged to meet with Monsignor C.R. Murphy of Mater Dei parish in Newton Park, Port Elizabeth:

for consultation in regard to prospects of my commencing as a postulant. Msg²⁴⁴ is the priest who received me and my family into the church about 33 years ago ... in Bedford, Cape.²⁴⁵

It turned out that Monsignor Murphy was a Dominican tertiary and had also recommended that Zini be permitted to enter the tertiaries.²⁴⁶ There is no indication in the correspondence that Thomas Zini was ever accepted as a tertiary.

However, three years later an article in the *Tertiary Newsletter*²⁴⁷ included a report from Port Elizabeth:

There are a number of Tertiaries here. They had several preliminary meetings at the house of Mrs. Middlewick,²⁴⁸ followed by a meeting at the Dominican Convent, where it has been arranged to have regular meetings in future. Rev. Fr. O'Mahoney is taking a keen interest in them and giving his full support, and there are several other Priest Tertiaries²⁴⁹ in the district. A number of lay men and women are attending so it is hoped that members will steadily increase and make possible the early foundation of a Chapter.

²⁴² Dennis Sweetman, *Appendix*, p. 62.

²⁴³ "Letter from Fr. Michael Tuohy to PP Feeny -Thomas Zini's letter attached", 8 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

²⁴⁴ Msg is an abbreviation of Monsignor.

²⁴⁵ "Letter from TM Zini, New Brighton, PE to PP Feeny, Kolbe House, CT", 29 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

²⁴⁶ "Letter of TM Zini, New Brighton, PE to PP Feeny, Kolbe House, CT", 27 December 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

²⁴⁷ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 5, January 1958, p. 6.

²⁴⁸ Veronica Middlewick was the mother of Fr. Francis Middlewick OP.

²⁴⁹ "Statistics from PE Chapter", March 1958 (see ZAOP, Box: Confraternity TOSD).

Statistics of the group in Port Elizabeth, sent to Peter Paul Feeny in March 1958, indicated that it comprised of four priests (two professed and two novices); six professed (five women and one man); novices: ten (all women); postulants: five (four men and one woman).

On 12 April 1959, a mixed chapter was erected in Port Elizabeth in the Cathedral church of St. Augustine. This followed the profession of eleven members and the clothing of two novices.

Meetings had been taking place regularly since 1957 when a start was made with a small nucleus in the home of Sr. Frances Middlewick, now Novice Mistress, under the spiritual guidance of Fr. T. O'Mahoney and later of Fr. S. Sheeran.²⁵⁰

By December 1959, the number of tertiaries had grown to eight clerics (including Monsignor J.P. Murphy; Frs. S. Sheeran; Tuohy; Duffy), seventeen professed made up of three men and fourteen women, three novices were men and four were women. Two of the novices, a husband and wife were considered to be lone tertiaries. There were also two postulants, one man and one woman.

3.5.9. Tertiaries in Stirtonville

Another African group was established in the Stirtonville parish near Boksburg. In an article entitled "African Tertiaries" the following appeared:

An important member of this group is Mr. Mokgokong, who is a Bachelor of Science and is now writing for his Master of Education degree. He is President of the Catholic African Teachers' Federation and Principal of the Pimville Bantu Secondary School. Tertiaries belonging to this group make great sacrifices to attend their monthly meetings. Most of them live in Johannesburg and travel 15 miles or more to attend. It is a mixed group, consisting of Indians, Coloureds and Africans. They meet in the church every first Saturday of the month, where they say Compline (in English), listen to a sermon and have a few minutes' mental prayer, followed by Confessions for those who wish. Afterwards they meet for tea in the Std. VI classroom, where they can get to know each other and their director, whom they only see once a month.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 10, November 1959, p. 7.

²⁵¹ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 2, April 1957, p. 9.

3.5.10. Tertiary group established in Welkom²⁵²

On 6 December 1959 a new group of tertiaries was started in Welkom, Orange Free State. At the first meeting, held at the Dominican Convent, Welkom, Fr. Benedict van der Meer, OP, vicar provincial of the Dutch Dominicans in South Africa, presided. He gave an address on the spirit of St. Dominic, stressing that all members who took St. Dominic as their leader would be true Dominicans, upholding the truth, and always striving for perfection.

The group started with nine members, three of whom - Bro. Vincent Diab, Sr. Evangeline Diab and Bro. Peter Osler - were already professed lone tertiaries. Though not yet formally a chapter it was hoped that by the end of the year it could be erected as one. Other members clothed were Bro. Bernardus Wytenberg, Bro. Patrick Brislin, Sr. Irene Brislin,²⁵³ Sr. Emily Wytenberg, Sr. Christina Mulcahy and Sr. Kathleen Hart. It is not known for how long this group met.

3.5.11. Tertiaries at the seminary at Pevensy²⁵⁴

The English Dominicans took over responsibility for St. Peter's seminary for training African diocesan priests in Pevensy on 10 December 1957. The Mariannahill congregation had originally established this seminary at Pevensy in 1946. Oswin Magrath, together with a team of other Dominican friars (Nicholas Humphreys, Finbar Synnott, Damian Magrath, Francis Connell and Jerome Smith), was given the task of running the seminary. The training of indigenous African priests was a project close to Oswin Magrath's heart.

Due to the example of the staff, some of the students chose to be tertiaries and had even requested to join the Order.²⁵⁵ Among them was a young student Patrick S'mangaliso Mkhathswa, who later was to become Secretary General of the Bishops' Conference, Director of the Institute of Contextual Theology, Deputy minister of Education and Mayor of the city of Tshwane. He was prior of the community of tertiaries at St. Peter's.²⁵⁶

²⁵² *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 11, April 1960, pp. 8-9.

²⁵³ Patrick and Irene Brislin are the parents of the present bishop of Kroonstad, Stephen Brislin.

²⁵⁴ See Denis, *Dominican Friars*, pp. 217-222; George Mukuka, *The establishment of the Black Catholic clergy in South Africa from 1887 to 1957*, Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 2000), pp. 240-247.

²⁵⁵ Mukuka, *The establishment of the Black Catholic clergy*, p. 240.

²⁵⁶ See an unsigned and undated list of names of tertiaries (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity). The other names listed are Remy Mokoka, Martin Molefi, Alexander Mohlalisi, Lucas Saliwa, Cosmas Gebashe, Pius Myeza, Lewis Marshall, Simon Nzangeka and James Mafuna. Remigius Mokoka was ordained on 27 June 1966 (ASPS, Box:

In a comment after a visit to the seminary, Peter Paul Feeny, the vicar provincial, said:

Some of the Native (sic) students were members of the Third Order and had years ago hoped to become Dominicans. Due to lack of Fathers we had been and we still are unable to accept and train them owing to our country's social customs.²⁵⁷

The interest of students at Pevensey in the tertiaries was due to the influence of the Dominican friars teaching at the seminary. When the seminary in Pevensey moved to Hammanskraal,²⁵⁸ the chapter continued to meet. Remy Mokoka was listed in the *Tertiary Newsletter* as the secretary of the chapter.²⁵⁹ In May 1968, the different office bearers of the chapter were listed: the president was Florian Makoro,²⁶⁰ the vice-president and novice master was Albert Ntokoane and the secretary was Daniel Ntombeni. Fr. Jonathan Fleetwood OP took over from Fr. Ronald Torbet OP as the chaplain of the fraternity.²⁶¹ It is not clear how much longer after this the group continued to exist. It is very likely that due to the tensions in the seminary and its closure in October 1971 the group's presence at the seminary was eclipsed.²⁶²

3.5.12. Tertiaries at St. John Vianney seminary²⁶³

Interest also came from St. John Vianney Diocesan Seminary in Pretoria. Roy Rudden, a student at the seminary expressed interest in becoming a tertiary. However, due to illness he had to leave the seminary and decided to delay his reception as a tertiary.²⁶⁴

Past students 1964-1966 File: Mokoka, R, 1964). Cosmas Gebashe was described as "popular" and "finest all-round student". No ordination date was given (ASPS, Box: Past students 1960-1963 File: Gebashe, C, 1963). Pius Myeza was ordained on 4 July 1966 (ASPS, Box: Past students 1964-1966 File: Myeza, P, 1965). James Mafuna left the seminary of his own accord on 12 March 1964. He was described as "a man who has had much experience of life and is rather intensely affected by social and political problems of the country, extremely serious about his vocation" (ASPS, Box: Past students 1964-1966 File: Mafuna, J, 1964).

²⁵⁷ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 7, July 1958, p. 3. The reluctance of the English Dominicans to break the law or to find an alternative venue for the novitiate and studentate hampered the acceptance of black vocations for many years. It also created the impression among many black candidates that the Dominicans only wanted white vocations.

²⁵⁸ The new seminary in Hammanskraal was opened in 1963. For more information, see George Mukuka, *The impact of Black consciousness*, pp. 47-49.

²⁵⁹ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 24, January - April 1963, p. 2.

²⁶⁰ Florian Makoro was born on 19 November 1945 and was ordained to the priesthood on 28 June 1970 for the diocese of Umtata. See *The Rock*, 1970, p. 12 (ASPS, Box: Student Annals).

²⁶¹ See *Lay Dominican Newsletter*, no. 12, May 1968, p. 11. This also appears to be the last issue of the newsletter.

²⁶² For more detailed commentary on the struggles at St. Peter's in the 1970s, see Denis, *Dominican Friars*, pp. 228-234.

²⁶³ For a history of St. John Vianney Seminary, see Joy Brain, *St. John Vianney Seminary* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2004).

²⁶⁴ "Letters from Roy Rudden to PP Feeny", 3 September 1954 and 8 August 1954 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

On 16 March 1956, Paul Hughes,²⁶⁵ a student at the seminary, was professed by Nicholas Humphreys in Boksburg and given the religious name of Raymond. In the same ceremony Harry Wilkinson was also received as a novice in Boksburg.²⁶⁶ Wilkinson later went to the seminary in Pretoria and is presently parish priest of Rosebank in the diocese of Johannesburg.

By 1961 a group of ten diocesan students were meeting at the seminary. Two of these students were already professed tertiaries - Harry Wilkinson and Mr. Wallace.²⁶⁷ On 26 November that year three more novices were professed - Donald de Beer, Michael Shackleton and Patrick Robertson.²⁶⁸ Fr. Stephen Whyte OFM, a lecturer in moral theology at the seminary, agreed to receive postulants, novices and professed into the Dominican tertiaries.

3.5.13. Diocesan priest tertiaries

As mentioned previously, five diocesan priests from Cape Town became tertiaries in the Stellenbosch. Among them were Frs. Jack Swan and Louis Stubbs. Monsignor Hugh Boyle also became a tertiary in the Eastern Cape. In the Eastern Cape Fr. Michael Tuohy wrote to Peter Paul Feeny²⁶⁹ requesting to be admitted to the tertiaries. He had come out to South Africa on the same boat as Francis Moncrieff OP in October 1954. Another diocesan priest Fr. Patrick Francis Duffy from Izeli mission also requested admission and was given the habit at Izeli on Monday 29 August 1955 by David Donohue OP.²⁷⁰ Frs. Seamus Sheeran and Monsignor Murphy were also members of the Port Elizabeth chapter.

3.5.14. Lone tertiaries

Many tertiaries lived in parts of the country or on the continent in which there were no chapters. Often they lost touch with their chapters because of the demands of moving to

²⁶⁵ Paul Hughes was a novice in Stellenbosch in 1953 with the religious name of Raymond. He was professed in 1954 but later left the Order to become a diocesan priest. After his ordination he was secretary to Bishop Boyle and later moved to Canada to work in a diocese there. In the 1990s he returned to the diocese of Johannesburg but subsequently left the priesthood. Information gratefully received from Albert Nolan.

²⁶⁶ "Note made by Nicholas Humphreys", 17 March 1956 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁶⁷ "Letter from Donald de Beer to Father [PP Feeny]", 16 November 1960 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁶⁸ "Letter from Patrick Robertson to Father [PP Feeny]", 9 September 1961 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁶⁹ "Letter from Fr. Michael Tuohy, Schauder Township, PE to PP Feeny", 28 May 1955 (ZAOP, Box:

Confraternity TOSD EP I, File: Tertiaries 1951-1955).

²⁷⁰ See "Letter from Fr. Patrick Francis Duffy, Izeli Catholic Mission to PP Feeny", 4 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity) and the "Letter from David Donohue OP, Kingwilliamstown to PP Feeny, Cape Town", 31 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

different towns and cities in search of employment. Mrs. Rose Mthembu had been a member of the Durban chapter.

At the end of 1959 I left Nongoma and came to Durban and stayed here for sometime and then the bishop of Eshowe offered me a post in Nkandla. So I went back to Nkandla and worked there, at a post at the Nkandla hospital ... I lost contact of everybody I didn't know where they were staying and I didn't get any newsletter. So I just stayed and carried on with my prayers, of course.²⁷¹

These tertiaries were known as lone or private tertiaries. The rule allowed that these tertiaries be admitted as long as they were affiliated to a chapter and honoured their commitment to saying the Office of our Lady. Many found wearing a scapular²⁷² to be a constant reminder of their vocation. Jimmy Stewart,²⁷³ a lecturer in English at Pius XII College in Lesotho, writing to Peter Paul Feeny asked:

- a) What if any arrangement about connection with the nearest Tertiary Chapter is made for people 'way in the mountains, like us?
- b) How can one get Tertiary scapulas in South Africa? I want to get (and pay for!) about a dozen so we're well set up for daily use.
- c) I'm continually (even in Basutoland) losing my little office. I would like to get (and pay for!) at least two spares!²⁷⁴

Many found themselves isolated from the support of other tertiaries. Margaret Robertson, a tertiary in Bulawayo, wrote:

If I am ever there [Johannesburg] I will most certainly call on you and also join in the meetings etc., it is rather lonely being the only Dominican Tertiary - there are 17 Franciscans here, however the Sisters at the Convent are very good to me. There are several women here interested in the Order so I am wondering if you could let me have some literature so that I can gather them around.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Mrs. Rose Mthembu, interview conducted in Kwa Mashu on 30 July 2003, *Appendix*, p. 2.

²⁷² In a "Letter from Enid Ramsbottom to PP Feeny", 9 March 1956, she quotes from an article written by Ambrose Farrell in *Dominican Annals*, March-April 1954, explaining the use of the scapular. 'After the sixteenth century, with changing conditions of society the outside Tertiary habit ceased to be worn in public, and the small scapular began to come into use. There is an obligation on Tertiaries to wear a small woollen scapular, instead of their full habit. Accordingly the scapular is sometimes known as the 'little habit'. No other emblem or medal may take its place as a substitute, as was declared by the General Chapter in Rome, 1938. It should also be worn at night or at least kept near-by. The size of the "little habit" is not prescribed. It must be of wool ... '. The scapular was worn around the neck under one's clothing.

²⁷³ Jimmy and Joan Stewart were received as tertiaries presumably in Cambridge, England. See "Letter from Enid Ramsbottom to PP Feeny", 9 February 1956 'I told Joan that I had seen the notice of their profession in the Nov-Dec. *Dominican Annals*'.

²⁷⁴ "Letter from J.E. Stewart TOSD, Roma, Basutoland to Fr. PP Feeny", n.d. [Feeny noted that he received the letter and/or replied on 6 February 1956] (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁷⁵ "Letter from Margaret A. Robertson (Sr. Marie Terese TOSD) Box 974, Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia to Rev. Fr. [PP Feeny], Boksburg", 2 March 1953 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

Some lone tertiaries were as far away as Kenya and Uganda. Aileen Williams²⁷⁶ was a doctor working in Kenya but due to the Mau Mau uprising, moved to a mission hospital in Uganda. Even though many were isolated and cut off they found the strict regimen of prayer, required by the tertiary rule, to be their saving grace:

[In] December '59 I was transferred to Tanzania and I had a year in Tanzania - 1960 - and two years in Namaqualand - 1961 and '62 - before I joined the Order. Now going to Tanzania of course I had my manual with me and so I continued the prayers, not all the time but saying the Little Office of our Lady and I think that probably had a lot to do with my vocation in the Order, in the First Order with the brethren. Especially the last year in Namaqualand, when I was getting very unhappy with being a geologist in the mining house, I felt I was doing an immoral job. The only spirituality I knew was in this book and so I used to pray the Office quite regularly during 1962.²⁷⁷

Some lone tertiaries like Simon Taelé,²⁷⁸ who had been a novice in Greenlands, re-established contact with the tertiaries. Many of the aged applied to become lone tertiaries as they were no longer able to attend chapter meetings. Sometimes it was also because of conflicts in the chapter.²⁷⁹ Many other lone tertiaries just fell away if there was no contact. Consequently, a member of each chapter was often given the task of writing to the lone tertiaries affiliated to their chapter.²⁸⁰

Miss P. Bohn, a nursery school teacher based in Livingstone, Zambia, became a tertiary under the guidance of a local Capuchin priest, Fr. Albert²⁸¹ as there were no Dominicans nearby.²⁸² She started her own nursery school on 1 July 1957, after taking a loan from a building society when she had to repay over a ten-year period. She intended to leave it to the church in her will.

²⁷⁶ "Letter from Aileen (Sr. Catherine) Williams, Jinja, Uganda to PP Feeny", 14 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁷⁷ Fr. Joseph Falkiner OP, interview conducted in Johannesburg on 24 March 2004, *Appendix*, p. 14.

²⁷⁸ "Letter from Finbar Synnott to Peter-Paul Feeny", 7 September 1960 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity). In the letter Finbar, teaching at Pevensey, wrote to say that Simon Taelé had written for his habit. He previously was a novice at Greenlands in the OFS but was now married and working as a catechist at Smithfield station, part of the Zastron mission.

²⁷⁹ "I am writing to ask you to agree to my transferring from the Men's Chapter of the Stellenbosch Tertiary Chapters meeting usually in Cape Town to a Private Tertiaryship. Since this Brother has been Brother-Prior I have been unhappy in the Chapter because of his discourteous attitude to myself, if unintentional, notwithstanding this. I am an old man". "Letter of A.S. Mehan (Bro. Anthony TOSD), Rondebosch to PP Feeny", 16 July 1959 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiary Chapter).

²⁸⁰ Enid Ramsbottom writes: 'Yes, I was the one whom you joined to Sr. Catherine Williams. Strangely enough I have been thinking about her rather specially. I have a spare scapular ... I shall write to her and send it at once'. "Letter from Enid Ramsbottom to PP Feeny", 25 August 1955 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

²⁸¹ Surname not supplied in the letter and not known.

²⁸² See "Letter from (Miss) P. Bohn from Livingstone, Zambia to Peter Paul Feeny", 1 September 1960 and "Letter from P. Bohn to PP Feeny", 13 October 1960 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

At the Nursery School, we are only a staff of three. A European Assistant, myself and an African Servant. My living quarters are in the same building - very humble, just one room, which is office, bedroom and ever[y]thing ... At present we have 16 pupils.²⁸³

3.6. Conclusion

When the first chapter in South Africa was erected in Boksburg on 16 November 1941, it marked the end of little groups of tertiaries on the Reef. It also paved the way for the foundation of two other chapters in the 1940s. Stellenbosch was erected in 1945 and the first black chapter in the St. Louis Bertrand mission in Potchefstroom in 1948. This marked the beginning of the identification of laity with the Dominican mission in South Africa. These humble beginnings gave rise to a flurry of interest in the tertiaries throughout the 1950s. In the next chapter we analyse and attempt to explain this surge of interest in the tertiaries at this period.

²⁸³ "Letter from P. Bohn to PP Feeny", 23 October 1960 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

Chapter 4

Tertiary spirituality, Catholic Action and Apartheid

4.0. Introduction

In the period 1926 to 1962 the tertiaries in South Africa flourished after a slow start. The rapid growth of the Third Order in the 1950s was particularly noticeable. The Dominican tertiary life attracted diverse groups of Catholic laity and priests seeking to develop and give expression to their spiritual life. During this period the tertiaries became a national organisation and included among their number members of all the racial and class categories in a segregated South Africa. This period of substantial growth also coincided with the establishment of apartheid.

In reflecting on the history and spiritual life of the tertiaries it is important to account for this rapid growth of the tertiaries, in light of the socio-political developments in South Africa during the period under study. Integral to this is the importance of affirming Catholic identity and human agency in a hostile world.

4.1. Catholic Ecclesial context

During an address to the Catholic faithful in Johannesburg in 1933, Archbishop Gijlswijk, the Apostolic Delegate from 1922 to 1944, summed up the attitude of the Catholic Church of this period:

In the midst of these movements (religious sects),²⁸⁴ amid the religious and moral uncertainties of our time, the Catholic Church stands unshakeable, because she is built on rock. Her members are of one spirit, based on the oneness and unchangeableness of doctrine round the centre of the ark of the altar where God is abiding ... gathered around the altar in unity with God, let us promise to remain always united among ourselves, performing our Catholic activities unitedly for the greater glory of God, for the spread of His Kingdom and the welfare of society.²⁸⁵

Gijlswijk's statement highlighted a number of factors that illuminate the Catholic Church's self-understanding in South Africa at that time. It appeared to be a self-assured church convinced that it was the true church of Christ, unshakeable and unchangeable. However, it was also a threatened church conscious that it existed in a predominantly Protestant and Calvinist country. Archbishop Hurley called the Catholic Church of this period "a Catholic community with a

²⁸⁴ Presumably the Protestant churches.

²⁸⁵ *The Southern Cross*, 15 February 1933.

minority complex ... and a persecution complex".²⁸⁶ De Gruchy says that even though the Union of South Africa constitution did not prejudice Catholics or the church in law, the perception of many people in the country was that Catholicism was "a danger to the soul of the nation"²⁸⁷ - equal to that of communism. It was an alien influence.²⁸⁸

Nevertheless, underlying Gijlswijk's words was a perception that the Church's mission was to bring all non-Catholics into the community of the Catholic Church, as it was the only true church of Christ. This fortress mentality of the church was quite prevalent worldwide as the church saw itself as the bastion against the evils of the modern world.

The church was seen as an alternative society to that of the world. The true church was unified and uniform throughout the world. A Catholic could go to mass in Africa, Asia, Europe or America and participate in the same Latin rituals as at home. The church was secure and confident in its conviction as the possessor of the keys of the kingdom of God.²⁸⁹

When the Catholic Church was first established in South Africa under Archbishop Patrick Griffith in Cape Town, the intention was primarily to minister to the settler community and overcome the religious intolerance towards Catholics. The conversion of the indigenous peoples was not given high priority. This obvious discrepancy between the "two churches"²⁹⁰ is what Archbishop Gijlswijk sought to eradicate.

Already in the 1920s he challenged the bishops of South Africa to implant the church more among the indigenous people and brought in many religious congregations to engage in missionary work among African people.²⁹¹ The church grew in size and influence but the distinction between the settler church for whites and the mission church for blacks was not overcome. This mentality unavoidably influenced the establishment of the Dominican tertiary in South Africa and became even more exacerbated during the next decade as the organisation grew and flourished.

²⁸⁶ Denis E. Hurley, *Memoirs: The memoirs Archbishop Denis E Hurley OMI* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2006), p. 58.

²⁸⁷ John de Gruchy, "Catholics in a Calvinist country" in Andrew Prior (ed.), *Catholics in apartheid society* (Cape Town and Johannesburg: David Philip, 1982), p. 76.

²⁸⁸ This gave rise to the term: *die Roomse gevaar* (the Roman danger).

²⁸⁹ Stuart Bate, "One Mission, Two Churches" in Joy Brain and Philippe Denis (eds.), *The Catholic Church in contemporary South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), pp. 5-36.

²⁹⁰ Bate, "One Mission, Two Churches", pp. 5-36.

²⁹¹ See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in South Africa: A social history* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

4.2. Strengthening Catholic identity

Archbishop Hurley pointed out that Catholics at this time had a derogatory and contradictory understanding of the world.²⁹² On the one hand, Catholics believed God had created the world and that is was good, on the other hand 'world' also "referred to human society with all its sinfulness and moral turpitude".²⁹³ The world was not just a site of struggle between good and evil but was morally flawed and contaminated by evil. Thus the Church saw itself as the bastion of truth in opposition to the world.

This view of the world arose from the Catholic Church's reaction against the Industrial and French revolutions. Initially, the Church refused to accept the changes brought about by liberal society.²⁹⁴ Gregory XVI and Pius IX were anti-liberal popes. But in 1878, Leo XIII opted for a strategic recognition of modern society as a way of developing the influence of the Catholic Church. However, he was fundamentally anti-modern because he sought the winning back of the world to Catholicism. It was from this basis that his famous social encyclical *Rerum Novarum* criticised both capitalism and socialism.

Leo saw in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, a philosophical and theological means through which the Church could articulate an alternative Catholic vision of society. In the socio-political and economic spheres, Catholics were encouraged to set up parallel structures to those in society, promoting Catholic trade unions, Catholic political parties, Catholic schools and universities, Catholic health services and Catholic lay associations. These institutions and movements were to compete and be an alternative to liberal and socialist institutions and movements. Catholics were encouraged to join these alternative structures.

Within this Catholic world people's social and religious needs could be met. Catholic institutions like the schools provided an excellent way to strengthen one's Catholic identity, as were church organisations like the Knights of da Gama, the Catholic Women's League and the Legion of Mary. They encouraged adherence to a Catholic way of life and ethos. Albert Nolan, reflecting on his early experience of involvement in the church in Cape Town, said:

²⁹² Hurley, *Memories*, p. 59.

²⁹³ Hurley, *Memories*, p. 59.

²⁹⁴ Joe Holland, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: The Popes confront the industrial age, 1740-1958* (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2003), pp. 112-145.

I was in the Legion of Mary and that was very formative ... you met and you had prayers together but you had a very well-organised apostolate. You would visit hospitals and sell *Southern Crosses* on the street, you would visit lapsed Catholics and things like that ... I also worked for the youth club, and was on the committee and then at one stage maybe after I became a tertiary, I was beginning to be trained in the Catholic Evidence Guild²⁹⁵. The Catholic Evidence Guild was a lay organisation that would preach on street corners - in Cape Town we did it outside OK Bazaars.²⁹⁶

4.3. Monasticism as model

The negative and derogatory understanding of the 'world' and Catholics' place in the world contributed to a resurgence of interest in monasticism and the religious life in the Catholic world. The monastery became the way to salvation, away from the influences of this corrupt world. This monastic view of denying the world and entering an alternative world of Catholic identity and culture has been called *fuga mundi* - flight from the world.

During the 1950s, "Thomas Merton was an icon of holiness and perfection".²⁹⁷ In his earlier writings, this American Trappist monk re-iterated the view that entering the monastic life was to leave behind the world and to focus on God by living a life of contemplation and prayer. These writings captured the cultural and ecclesial mentality of many Catholics at this time. For laity, however, it was not possible to flee the world by entering a monastery so the next best thing was to join a Third Order. Nolan recalled that tertiary life was very formally organised just like a monastery:

You had a rule and became a novice and you had a novice master. Billy D'Arcy was my novice master and you were a novice for a year. Apart from the chapter meetings, as it was called, you had to meet with the novice master regularly and he told you more about being a Dominican, and prayer, explain more about the Office perhaps and told you more about what the promises were about and went through the rule with you, that was a big thing to go through.²⁹⁸

So the tertiaries flourished during this period because they reinforced this Catholic identity and because they gave lay people a way to live a religious life in the midst of a secular world.

²⁹⁵ The Catholic Evidence Guild originated in England and many Catholic preachers, lay and clerics, used to preach on Hyde Park corner to present the truths of the Catholic faith. The English Dominican Vincent McNabb was renowned for his preaching at Hyde Park.

²⁹⁶ See Fr. Albert Nolan, interview conducted in Johannesburg on 4 May 2005, *Appendix*, p. 47.

²⁹⁷ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 47.

²⁹⁸ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 47.

4.4. The desire for holiness and perfection

Lay people could become holy by becoming tertiaries. Dominican friars, like Fr. Bernard Delany OP,²⁹⁹ encouraged this view. In 1953, he wrote an article on the tertiaries in the *Southern Cross*. He suggested that the Catholic Church's position in the country was not compromised by its numerical insignificance or its lack of political clout. Rather the issue lay with the fact that Catholics were not holy enough. By holiness he meant the courageous attempt to follow one's conscience, seeking and doing God's will as well as conforming to the rules of the Church even if this was to one's own personal disadvantage. The call to holiness was also the call to be perfect. "The only way we can qualify for the vision of God is by being perfect (i.e. loving God above all things)".³⁰⁰

However, he argued, no one feels that they are holy. So those who are striving after the Christian ideal look to the religious life, as founded by the Lord, as a means to sanctity. By linking up with a religious order, which has stood the test of time, a layperson could say "I may be able to embark on this great adventure of loving God with all my heart in the company of better people than myself and be carried along by their example".³⁰¹

Delany also encouraged lay people to join the Third Order of St. Dominic because it gave them a chance to share in the religious and apostolic life of the Order of Friars Preachers - by adhering to an approved rule and striving to live the life of Christian perfection. By wearing the habit, living according to a rule, saying the Office of our Lady,³⁰² tertiaries emulated the monastic lifestyle of the Dominican friars.

4.5. The tertiaries' regular life: a monastic-style spirituality

One became holy by following a rule. By fulfilling the requirements of the rule, a monk found the path to salvation. Faithful adherence to the rule led to the attainment of the desired goal of

²⁹⁹ *Southern Cross*, 3 June 1953. Bernard Delany was appointed chaplain to the Dominican sisters in Kingwilliamstown before going to Stellenbosch as novice master in 1954. Albert Nolan and Gregory Brooke were his novices.

³⁰⁰ *Southern Cross*, 3 June 1953.

³⁰¹ *Southern Cross*, 3 June 1953.

³⁰² This was shorter version of the Office of the Church or the breviary said by the priests and religious. It was in English and not Latin.

Christian perfection and knowledge of God. The tertiaries' rule was founded on a similar pattern of life.

The object of the Third Order is the sanctification of its members or the practice of a more perfect form of Christian life, and the salvation of souls, in conformity with the condition of the faithful living in the world. The means of attaining this end are, besides the accomplishment of the ordinary precepts and the duties proper to one's state: the observance of this Rule, especially assiduous prayer.³⁰³

The rule brought stability because adherents knew what was required in order for them to belong and be part of the community. It set the limits between who was a member and who was not. The rule gave an identity to those who follow it. It also included regulations as to who could be accepted and who not. It prescribed the habit they were to wear and when they could wear it; the duration of the postulancy, the novitiate and their simple profession as tertiaries; the obligation to recite daily either the Little Office of our Lady or fifteen mysteries of the rosary; the obligations to receive the sacrament of confession and communion regularly and to do other pious exercises; to fast; to avoid worldliness; to have reverence for prelates and clergy; to engage in apostolic and charitable works including visiting the sick of the chapter; the obligation to pray for the dead; outlining those responsible for pastoral care of the tertiaries; the offices and duration of those in office in the chapter; how often they are to meet; how they were to be corrected if they were guilty of any fault; when dispensations from the rule could be granted as well as a reminder that the rule did not bind under pain of sin.

Entry into the tertiary chapter was also modelled very closely on that of the chapter of a Dominican priory. Tertiaries were received into the Order like members of the First Order by first doing a short postulancy, then a novitiate of one year during which they received the habit. At the beginning of the novitiate they were given a new name to mark that they have left behind the profane world and that they were now entering the sacred world of the religious life. After completing the novitiate, during which they were under the supervision of a novice master, they made profession (making promises for three years) before taking their solemn promises for life.

The structures of the chapter meetings were similarly modelled on the priory where the officials of the chapter were called the prior, the sub-prior and novice master. Each office was

³⁰³ "Rule of the Brothers and Sisters of the Secular Third Order of St. Dominic" Chapter 1 §2-3 in F-D Joret, *Dominican Life* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1958).

held for a specific term and officers were elected to positions of authority in the chapter as in any priory. While many of the tertiary chapters were mixed chapters comprising both men and women, it was common that when a chapter became too large they would be separated according to gender into chapters for men and those for women.³⁰⁴ The chapters in Boksburg, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Springs and Brakpan had separate chapters for men and women at different periods.

4.6. Christian perfection and contemplation

Laity saw in the monk and the monastery, the friar and the priory, the path to Christian perfection and a true representation of the contemplative ideal.

To reach Christian perfection you had to follow a rule and the principal thing in that rule was: commitment to the Lady Office. If you were in a monastery, or in the First Order of the Dominicans or the Sisters you would have to say the full Divine Office.³⁰⁵

In 1951, Oswin Magrath wrote an article on Christian perfection as the law of charity - the love of God and the love of neighbour. He pointed out that according to St. Thomas Aquinas, it is the bishop, and not the monk, who is the epitome of perfection.³⁰⁶ The bishop is engaged in both contemplation and serving the people of God. The bishop highlights both aspects of the call to Christian perfection. However, the teaching of St. Thomas' was overlooked. The monastic life, with its emphasis on asceticism and contemplation life, was understood as the ideal Christian life. "Male and female monastics came to be viewed as the ideal Christians, the religious virtuosi who combined ascetical self-mastery and the knowledge needed to attain God".³⁰⁷

In the tertiary chapters great emphasis was placed on the importance of prayer. Joseph Falkiner who joined the Springs men's chapter in 1960 prior to becoming a Dominican priest, recalled:

³⁰⁴ This reflects the model of religious life where there continue to be separate congregations of women from men. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, where there were mixed chapter groups, the prior tended to be a man and the secretary, a woman. Splitting into separate chapters gave women greater autonomy in the running of their own chapters. The chaplain was always a priest who gave the spiritual input during the meeting.

³⁰⁵ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 48.

³⁰⁶ Oswin Magrath, "The pattern of perfection", *Life of the Spirit*, Vol. 6, no. 61, July 1951, pp. 2-8. *Life of the Spirit* was an English Dominican publication on the spiritual life. A number of English tertiaries contributed regularly to its "Letters to the Editor" column. It is not clear whether tertiaries in South Africa ever read this publication but the priests, who acted as spiritual directors, most likely did.

³⁰⁷ Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1991), p. 132.

I remember the real emphasis was on spiritual life. I don't remember us doing any real apostolate but *spiritual life*. And the spiritual life was governed by formal prayers ... we were like a little sodality and we were supposed to say prayers ... we said the prayers in the book, we recited them together.³⁰⁸

Nolan concurred:

Spirituality was prayer, was discipline, saying prayers and saying prayers. There was mental prayer, but not in the sense as today with a mantra or anything of that sort. I remember Thomas Merton was already having an influence ... We used to go to Stellenbosch as a priory for silence, for solitude, for private prayer. So that was already the contemplation that was part of one's holiness and Christian perfection.³⁰⁹

Emphasis was placed on the proper way of praying and chanting the Office. The following extract from the *Tertiary Newsletter*³¹⁰ highlighted the emphasis placed on the Office by some chapters:

English is advised for communal recitation of the office. When different chapters are reciting the office together English should be used.

- 1) Community Office begins with the prayer 'O Sacred Banquet' etc., if the Blessed Sacrament is present. The Prior or Prioress starts the Antiphon and says the Versicle and the Prayer.
- 2) Before Matins the prayer 'Open O Lord my lips' is said, started by the Prior and Prioress.
- 3) The Prayer 'O, Lord in union, etc' is always said when beginning the office - started by Prior or Prioress who should also give a sign for the office to begin, if necessary.
- 4) The Prior or Prioress should on each occasion appoint a member to 'take' the office. Two chanters or chantresses should also be appointed.
- 5) The 'Glory Be to the Father' at the beginning of the hours should be said by all.
- 6) The antiphon after psalms, the canticles, and for memories should be said by all.
- 7) The Prior or Prioress should start the prayer which is said after Compline - O holy and undivided trinity, etc'.
- 8) The whole body is bowed during the office at the places indicated or customary.
- 9) We may add here for the guidance of all chapters that the prayers for the Clothing and Profession, absolutions and for giving indulgences should be in Latin. Local chapters may continue their custom of saying these prayers in the vernacular as well.

In some chapters chanting the Office in Latin was considered preferable:

Margaret Maytom, Mary Clarke and X (forgot her name) were here with us last Saturday evening and we practised Compline, with the result that seven of us shall suggest at the next Chapter Meeting (April 4th) to sing/say the Office in Latin instead of English.³¹¹

However, it proved to be impractical as the comments of Margaret Maytom to Peter Paul Feeny outlined:

³⁰⁸ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, pp. 12-13.

³⁰⁹ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 51.

³¹⁰ *Tertiary Newsletter*, 10 December 1959, pp. 10-11.

³¹¹ "Letter from Gratia Kraemer to Fr. Geoffrey Lynch OP", 27 March 1954 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity, File: Durban).

Our efforts at Latin at Chapter meetings must be almost cacophony to the initiated. I was one of the supporters for Latin when it was first mooted and my main reason was because you once asked me, sometime ago, if I said the office in Latin which in itself was more desirous. I appreciate your criticism; it is one with which several of us agree; yet we know once a start is made it is difficult to change. Had we started in English, Latin might never have been used. The real difficulty lies in the fact that we are in effect a Natal Chapter and not a parish one. We have little opportunities of practice ...³¹²

4.7. Contemplative life in the world

The whole resurgence of fervour for the contemplative life in the 1940s and 1950s must be seen as part of a world-wide awareness in the Catholic Church of contemplation in the world. In his encyclical *Mater Provida* Pope Pius XII encouraged laity to recognise their vocation as contemplatives in the world. He also allowed for the establishment of secular institutes where lay people could take vows, normally reserved for religious - those who left the world - and yet continue doing their secular jobs and occupations.

Integral to this whole conceptualisation of the spiritual life was the idea that laity and secular priests live in the world while monks and religious leave the world behind. Thus for many laity and secular priests attaching themselves to a religious order like the Dominicans, Franciscans or Benedictines enabled them to live a contemplative life in the world - 'to be in the world but not of the world' - to use the phrase from John's Gospel. At this time, it was prevalent to consider the contemplative life as superior to that of the active life in the world.³¹³

The English Dominicans published a journal called *Life of the Spirit* and the issue of 'contemplative life in the world' was hotly debated. In a letter to the editor an English tertiary wrote:

May a humble tertiary, encouraged by your words in the *Life of the Spirit*, offer a few observations which present themselves after reading the most interesting articles on the subject of the contemplative life in the world? First of all, one has been surprised that it has not been suggested that a group of people who wish to offer themselves for this life might be formed *within* the existing Third Order ... Second. It sometimes seems a pity that so much spiritual writing appears to be written by and for religious only, and to imply that to make real progress one MUST join a religious Order ... It would seem that lay holiness is specially desirable and in accordance with the Divine plan, as well as specially necessary to these times. Yet in the

³¹² "Letter from Margaret Maytom to PP Feeny OP", 23 September 1954 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity, File: Durban).

³¹³ For further reflection on the contemplative life being superior to the active life in the world, see Susan Rakoczy's chapter on Martha and Mary in her book, *Great mystics and social justice: Walking on the two feet of love* (New York: Paulist Press, 2006) pp. 71-80.

writing about groups of lay contemplatives, it seems to be envisaged throughout that any such development can only be undertaken by those who are almost without responsibilities in this life, and who might as well be, humanly speaking, *inside* the cloister.³¹⁴

This letter sums up the attitude of the times. If one could not enter the cloister the second best was to become a tertiary. However, this must not distract us from the awareness that most of the people who joined the tertiaries did so because they wanted to make progress in the spiritual life and attain Christian perfection while still in the world. It was this motivation that drew people to the Third Order.

4.8. Love of neighbour

Love of God could be attained through prayer but also through love of one's neighbour. Nolan points out that to love one's neighbour was understood to mean engaging in acts of charity, working for the good of others.

Actually going to hospitals - even though we were told by the priest, where to go and where we were needed - selling Southern Crosses and all that kind of thing was not really church work. It was serving your neighbour, it was doing good to your neighbour rather than doing just church work. I mean to go visit people in hospitals wasn't like being an altar server or being a tertiary.³¹⁵

The tertiaries never got involved in particular works of charity as an organisation. Many of the tertiaries joined other organisations focusing on works of charity particularly the Legion of Mary, the Saint Vincent de Paul society or the Catholic Women's League. Another way of serving one's neighbour was to get involved in organisations committed to Catholic Action. Being a member of the Legion of Mary or Young Christian Workers was seen "as working for the good of your neighbour but it was for the individual neighbour".³¹⁶

Going beyond just one's individual neighbour was to become involved with Catholic Action.

4.9. Tertiaries and Catholic Action

Catholic Action was a movement inspired by Pope Leo XIII to re-christianise secular society influenced by the liberal ideas of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Prior to this,

³¹⁴ "Letter to the Editor" signed D., TOSD, *Life of the Spirit* vol. 3, no. 33, March 1949, pp. 426-427 [All emphases those of the author].

³¹⁵ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 51.

³¹⁶ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 49.

the Catholic Church had retreated into a "fortress mentality" rejecting and condemning the liberal values of the French Revolution. Pope Pius IX (d. 1878) enacted the *Syllabus Errorum* in 1864. This anti-modern document included eighty condemnations of all doctrines that undermined religion, the Church and Christian society, especially the evils of state totalitarianism and liberal society.³¹⁷ Catholics were encouraged to protect themselves from the influence of modern liberal society.

While remaining anti-modern, Leo XIII advocated a less condemnatory approach than his predecessors and encouraged Catholics to influence society with Christian values. He was more open to moderate liberal ideas that did not attack the Christian faith and tried to include them into Catholic conceptualisations of the state and society.³¹⁸ Consequently, he encouraged the establishment of Catholic organisations that paralleled those in secular society.

This Leonine approach was continued by other popes and Pius XI, in particular, promoted it vigorously. He defined the task of Catholic Action as "the participation of the laity in the apostolate of the hierarchy".³¹⁹ Catholic laity, who had been trained in Catholic Action were expected to create Catholic political parties, Catholic trade unions and employers' organisations as well as other Catholic professional groupings. It was hoped that the Catholic laity would promote and implement the teachings of the church through these organisations and in their various fields of work and expertise within secular society. Catholic Action was a movement of Catholic social reformers to change and influence society in accordance with Catholic thought and morality.

The Dominican tertiary from Cape Town, Anthony Mehan saw Catholic Action and the lay apostolate as:

essentially an apostolate of example given by Catholics living strictly according to Catholic principles and totally disregarding the insidious weakness of human respect. This life of example is carried out in various works, active and spiritual, all with the same objects, - the extinction of the poison of Secularism, the restoration of the reign of Christ in public and private life, the extension of Christ's Kingdom.³²⁰

³¹⁷ See Roger Aubert et al, *The Church in a secularised society* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd; New York: Paulist Press, 1978), p. 40; Henri Daniel-Rops, *The Church in the age of revolution* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons; New York: E.P. Dutton and Co. 1965) pp. 283-285.

³¹⁸ See Aubert, *The Church*, p. 41.

³¹⁹ See Denis Hurley, "Catholic social teaching and ideology" in Andrew Prior (ed.), *Catholics in Apartheid society*. (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982), p. 27.

³²⁰ Anthony Mehan, "The lay apostolate in South Africa", 9 October 1952 (AAD, Archbishop Hurley's papers, Box: General correspondence, File" Lay organizations).

As if this was not stated clearly enough, Mehan continued to condemn the secularism of modern society.

Secularism, under the name of "Liberalism", came to us as a child of the French Revolution, the outcome of rational Protestantism. Liberalism evicted Christ from public life and ended the glory of the age-old Christian State and the rule by Christian principles. Religion was declared the private affair of the individual.³²¹

The focus of Catholic Action was on the re-Catholicisation of society and to challenge the evils of liberalism and communism. This is the Church militant in its relationship with the modern world. The involvement of the laity in the Church's evangelising mission was described by Van Etten³²², writing about the training of laity in South Africa, as a military force.

Before an army goes into action it has to be trained as a united force. The soldiers have to know how to handle their guns, must get accustomed to the field and environments ... They have to understand the religious apathy of the modern world and must foresee from which side to expect objections and attacks ... It is necessary for them to acknowledge the important role they are playing in the Church in the present times, as the outside activities of clergy are so much curbed through many factors, or because the priest has simply no 'entree' in certain fields.

The first organisation in South Africa to embody this ideal of Catholic Action was the Catholic African Union (CAU).³²³ It was started by two Mariannhill priests, Frs. Bernard Huss and Emmanuel Hanisch in 1924 as a movement of social action for Africans. It was very influential in the province of Natal. Unfortunately, it lacked a political agenda and vision for African people.³²⁴

One of the most successful Catholic Action organisations in South Africa was the Young Christian Workers (YCW).³²⁵ Joseph Cardijn started this movement in Belgium. As a parish priest in a working class parish he noticed that the Church was losing its influence among young workers. Through the method of See, Judge and Act he encouraged young workers to reflect on issues related to their work environment and devise actions to address the exploitation they experienced. In this way young workers were able to experience the solidarity of the church with their struggles.

³²¹ Mehan, "The lay apostolate", p. 2.

³²² D. van Etten, "Training of the Laity", *The South African Clergy Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, December 1958, pp. 47-50. The quote is on p. 48. Van Etten was a Dutch Dominican and was working in the diocese of Kroonstad.

³²³ See Lydia Brouckaert, "*Better homes, better fields, better lives*": *The Catholic African Union 1927-1939*, Unpublished Honours thesis (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, 1985).

³²⁴ See Hurley, *Memories*, p. 64.

³²⁵ See Chapter 1.

In 1952, Bishop Patrick Whelan of Johannesburg sent a young man, Eric Tyacke, to England to learn about the YCW and to start the movement in South Africa. This he did and soon many groups were set up on the Reef and in Natal. Albert Nolan recalls that some tertiaries got involved with YCW in Cape Town:

Bernard Meager for example, was a Dominican tertiary. His action wasn't in the Legion Mary it was to join YCW. He died of a brain tumour at twenty-one and he was a good person, a holy person but he worked in YCW. But nobody saw that as terribly different as working in the Legion of Mary or something like that because even the YCW in those days weren't fighting apartheid.³²⁶

Another group that could be considered to be a Catholic Action organisation in South Africa was the Joint Council for Catholic Africans and Europeans (JCCAE) set up in the 1940s.³²⁷ This body was a sub-committee of the Catholic Federation, the diocesan council of the lay organisations in the diocese of Johannesburg. For many years, Advocate Herbert Vieyra, a Dominican tertiary, was chairperson of both the Catholic Federation and the JCCAE. This organisation played a prominent role in social matters in the diocese of Johannesburg.

Originally, the term Catholic Action was used exclusively for those lay organisations which engaged with socio-economic and political issues and the transformation of society. It was a specialised focus of some groups, mandated by the church hierarchy, within the broader framework of the lay apostolate. At the World Congresses of the Lay Apostolate in 1951 and 1957, Pius XII broadened out the idea of Catholic Action to make it synonymous with what had previously been understood as the lay apostolate.³²⁸ The whole lay apostolate was dependent on the hierarchy to different degrees. Pius XII distinguished between "apostolate in the wide sense" and "apostolate in the strict sense". Hurley referred to those Catholic Action organisations and associations which focused primarily on ministry within the church as Catholic Action with a small 'a'.³²⁹

³²⁶ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, pp. 48-49.

³²⁷ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, note 62 on p. 39.

³²⁸ See Finbar Synnott, "The nature and necessity of Catholic Action", *The South African Clergy Review* vol. 11, no. 4, December 1958, pp. 5-12.

³²⁹ Hurley, "The social teaching of the Church", p. 27. Those groups with a specific mandate to evangelise the socio-economic and political sphere of society was presumably Catholic Action with a capital 'A'.

Most of the tertiaries were involved in lay associations which focused on the internal life of the parish, "catholic action with a small 'a'".³³⁰ The most well-known of these groups were the St. Vincent de Paul societies,³³¹ the Legion of Mary,³³² the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine³³³ and the Catholic Evidence Guild. The tertiaries were not considered to be part of Catholic Action. This was due to the way the tertiaries were organised as a group:

Now the lay Dominicans or the tertiaries as such never did any apostolates or ministries. That wasn't strange because you went to your parish to do that. You went to the Legion of Mary or a youth club or something like that. That's where your ministries and your apostolates came in. But the Lay Dominicans never organised ministries or apostolates in that chapter.³³⁴

Consequently, the tertiaries' participation in Catholic Action groups was complementary to their contemplative involvement in the Third Order.

Many African tertiaries were also catechists and Catholic teachers. The catechist was seen as a prime example of a person involved in the Catholic Action. These 'priests without cassocks'³³⁵ played a vital role in the evangelisation of the African people throughout Africa. In South Africa, where many missionary priests were not fluent speakers of the indigenous languages, they relied heavily on the evangelising work of their catechists.

The competent catechist works in a milieu with which he is quite familiar. He speaks the language which the people speak. He is acquainted with their customs. In short he is one of them. For this reason it is easier for him to make contacts with individuals than it will be for missionaries who come from a foreign country.³³⁶

This led Pius XII to claim that "one missionary with six catechists can do more work than seven missionaries".³³⁷ With the expansion of work among the African communities after the intervention of Archbishop Gijlswijk³³⁸ and the efforts of the missionary religious orders, like the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Mariannhill missionaries, the number of catechists

³³⁰ Hurley, "The social teaching", p. 27.

³³¹ See Chapter 1.

³³² See Chapter 1.

³³³ Pius X promoted this confraternity in 1905 to set up by to encourage lay catechists in parishes. Its roots lay in the world of St. Charles Borromeo after the Reformation. See Ed Sheehy, "Confraternity of Christian Doctrine" *The South African Clergy Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, December 1958, pp. 38-42.

³³⁴ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 48.

³³⁵ F.J. Hagel, "Priests without cassocks", *The South African Clergy Review*, vol. 7, no. 1, May 1954, pp. 22-32.

³³⁶ A. Streit, "The principal fields of Catholic Action in South Africa", *The South African Clergy Review* vol. 11, no. 4, p. 14.

³³⁷ Quoted in Streit, "The principal fields", p. 14.

³³⁸ See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A social history 1577-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 150-160. Denis says that Gijlswijk unreservedly supported Propaganda of the Faith's (Vatican department for the missions) view that the church had to become indigenous in the missionary territories, see p. 149.

grew rapidly. Hagel says that Mariannahill opened the first training school for catechists and then followed by Kimberley in 1925/26.³³⁹ In 1936 there were 1409 catechists in the country and by 1953 this figure had risen to 2 474. The tertiaries were able to count a fair number of catechists among their number: Simon Tael in the Free State, Thomas Zini in Port Elizabeth. In the 1960s, others like Thomas Moeketsi and Martin Motjotji became tertiaries.

The focus of the Second International Congress of the Third Order of St. Dominic, held in Rome³⁴⁰ in 1958, was on the relationship between the tertiaries and Catholic Action. Margaret van Essche, a tertiary from Cape Town, attended the Congress and reported:

The Pope in his speech has emphasised the great need of lay apostles in Asia, Africa and South America. We need men Tertiaries of a similar kind to those described - entirely dedicated to God, yet not priests.³⁴¹

Summing up the conference van Essche said:

There was a common trend, a general tendency to point out, to warn against a passive attitude, to warn not to remain satisfied to live a 'life of prayer' as a real life of prayer should, in time, overflow naturally with an urge to extend our charity to all the needs of our neighbours, and for us Dominicans, most especially to the needs in accordance with the aim of our vocation - Caritas, Veritas, contemplative prayer overflowing into action.³⁴²

The tertiaries were severely criticised for their lack of social engagement. "Much was said, particularly in the French province, about the prejudices which most people engaged in Catholic Action have against the Tertiaries".³⁴³

There appeared to be little response to this call from the local South African tertiaries. Albert Nolan recalls:

People didn't have a social consciousness, so you didn't think in terms of 'what about the social dimensions? What about the social injustice?' I can't even remember that word being used 'social justice' or things like that. It just didn't come in so that your religion and your spirituality everything was so totally individualistic that you didn't even recognise the social dimension and, of course, a lot of people who weren't Christians also didn't recognise the social dimension. The other thing was that even in YCW, I don't think that at that stage the social dimensions were that clear, it was still working to help workers and the individuals really.³⁴⁴

³³⁹ See Hagel, "Priests without cassocks", p. 32.

³⁴⁰ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no.8, Oct 1958, pp. 3-9.

³⁴¹ See Margaret held in Rome" in *Tertiary Newsletter* no. 8, Oct 1958, pp. 17-18.

³⁴² van Essche, "Notes on the Dominican Tertiary Congress", p. 18.

³⁴³ van Essche, "Notes on the Dominican Tertiary Congress", p. 18.

³⁴⁴ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 49.

Colin Collins, a priest working at the Bishops' Conference, called for a greater involvement of laity to involve themselves in the socio-economic issues of the country.³⁴⁵ He believed that Christ should be carried into every sphere of life particularly those in which people spend most of their time - the family, work and broader society. He argued for specialised groups which could evangelise the economic, cultural and political spheres of society. He lamented that most Catholic Action organisations left the socio-economic environment untouched and that "without such a plan the Church will not progress in this country".³⁴⁶

4.10. Catholic laity's response to apartheid

Colin Collins' lament, that Catholic organisations neglected facing socio-political issues of the country, was an indication of the ineffectiveness of Catholic Action in South Africa. This was ten years after the Nationalist government had come into power, in 1948, under D.F. Malan. This was hardly surprising when one considers the Bishops' Conference's conciliatory approach to the government's apartheid policies.³⁴⁷ The Conference chose a path of negotiation and moderation in order to safeguard the interests of the Church.³⁴⁸

Prior to this, Bishop Henneman of Cape Town had issued a letter in 1939 highlighting the problems of racial segregation. He followed this up with a pastoral letter, written on 2 September 1948, addressed to all the clergy of his diocese. In this letter, he condemned the Nationalist government's apartheid policy as "noxious, unchristian and destructive".³⁴⁹

In 1949, Bishop Hurley wrote a series of articles in the *Southern Cross* under the general title of "Catholic Action in South Africa", calling for more radical action against the Nationalists.³⁵⁰ In these articles he sought to clarify for laity the political laws being promulgated by the new

³⁴⁵ See Colin B. Collins, "Catholic Action and socio-economic environment", *The South African Clergy Review*, vol. 11, no. 4, December 1958, pp. 59-65. Collins became national chaplain to NCFS in the 1960s and was also a founder member of University Christian Movement, an ecumenical student movement. During his tenure as chaplain NCFS developed a more social action consciousness, see Anthony Egan, *The politics of a South African Catholic student movement, 1960-1987* (Cape Town: The Centre for African Studies, 1991), pp. 34-39.

³⁴⁶ Collins, "Catholic Action", p. 65.

³⁴⁷ See Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985).

³⁴⁸ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, pp. 26ff. Abraham writes that the Apostolic Delegate Archbishop Lucas is reported to have assured Malan that the Church would act according to negotiation and moderation rather than in an underhand way.

³⁴⁹ "Two letters of Bishop Francis Hennemann" in The Theological Advisory Commission, *The things that make for peace: A report to the Catholic Bishops and the Church in Southern Africa* (Springs: Theological Advisory Commission of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference), p. 219. See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, pp. 23-24.

³⁵⁰ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p. 31; *Southern Cross*, 20 July 1949, 17 August 1949.

government and outline an appropriate Catholic response. Hurley was totally opposed to the colour bar and felt that he would be betraying his mission if he did not speak out against it.

Apart from the involvement of Catholic Action in charitable and humanitarian organisations, Bishop Hurley also stressed the need for the Catholic laity to involve themselves in the political sphere.³⁵¹

The first lay Catholic organisation to issue an uncompromising statement against apartheid was the Catholic Men's Society of Pietermaritzburg in August 1948.³⁵² In April 1949, the Joint Council for Catholic Africans and Europeans (JCCAE) in the Johannesburg vicariate organised a week of debates and talks around the theme of "Promoting inter-racial harmony".³⁵³ The JCCAE was similarly based on the Joint Councils for Europeans and Natives, established by liberals in urban areas in 1921. They wanted to respond to the Hertzog government's attempts to entrench segregation through legislation.

Membership of these Joint Councils comprised liberal professionals, African politicians, academics, clergy and welfare workers. Their primary concern was to deal with issues of social welfare, to build bridges between whites and blacks and to influence government policies.³⁵⁴

The JCCAE met for the first time on 20 February 1949, in the presbytery of the Cathedral in Kerk Street, Johannesburg. Herbert Vieyra, a Dominican tertiary was elected as its first president and the priests appointed to the Council were: Terence Kelly OMI, Patrick Whelan OMI and Maurus Reville OP. This organisation was a sub-committee of the Catholic Federation, the association of all the lay organisations, established in the Johannesburg vicariate in 1926. By 1949, the JCCAE comprised of forty black members and twenty-five white members who were actively organising talks, discussion groups, adult education on socio-political issues in the vicariate. This organisation enjoyed the active support of Patrick Whelan, when he later became the bishop of the Johannesburg vicariate.

³⁵¹ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p. 32. See *Southern Cross*, 27 July 1949; and Bishops' meeting of 8 November 1949 (BCA, Box: AV1).

³⁵² *Southern Cross*, 11 August 1948. For further information on this parish-based society for Catholic men, see T.E. Kinna, "The Catholic Men's Society" in *The South African Clergy Review*, no. 3, 3 November 1950, pp. 79-82.

³⁵³ *Southern Cross*, 6 April 1949.

³⁵⁴ Saul Dubow, "Liberalism and segregation revisited" in *The societies of Southern Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, vol. 15, 1990. The Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London: Collected seminar papers no.38, pp 1-12. The quote was taken from p. 4. The Catholic version was based on a similar model. Also see Paul B. Rich. *White power and the liberal conscience* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984), pp. 10-32.

Other lay organisations like the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS), a federation of Catholic university student societies, responded to this call too. In 1953 they criticised apartheid policies in their newsletter arguing that "discrimination on racial grounds was INADMISSABLE (sic)".³⁵⁵ They didn't only make statements but also embarked on many relief or charitable projects. NCFS members taught in adult night schools in Langa, near Cape Town, but also in Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg. They started a bursary scheme to help disadvantaged black students. Many white students were politicised through their contact with black students at university.

Through meeting black students on the politically 'neutral' ground of their faith, they were able to form friendships, gain insights into apartheid's indignities and become its staunch opponents.³⁵⁶

The Kolbe Association also debated issues regarding apartheid. This was an organisation of Catholic intellectuals brought into existence by NCFS. It was another Catholic Action initiative for "Catholic graduates and professional people, banded together, irrespective of race, to assist one another in Christianising the milieu in which they find themselves".³⁵⁷

The Association was also a federal structure with groups in the major city centres. The first joint meeting was held in October 1950 in Pietermaritzburg between representatives of the Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg branches. An annual winter school was mooted at this meeting and continued for many years in Mariannhill. Fr. Pat Holland OMI, a lecturer at the OMI Scholasticate in Cleland, was one of the major driving forces behind the Association. The theme of the 1952 Winter School was entitled: "The Racial situation". Among those who presented papers were Advocate Vieyra and Jimmy Stewart. Vieyra was already a tertiary while Stewart was later to become one. In March 1957, the Separate University Education Bill was introduced to parliament³⁵⁸ and the National Executive of the Kolbe Association voiced its opposition.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Anthony Egan, *The politics*, p. 8. For a succinct analysis of NCFS' intellectual challenge to apartheid, see Anthony Egan, "Catholic Intellectuals" in Joy Brain and Philippe Denis (eds.), *The Catholic Church in contemporary South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1999), pp. 320-323.

³⁵⁶ Egan, *The politics*, p. 7.

³⁵⁷ D.H. Craighead "The Apostolate of the Intellect: The Kolbe Association in 1952", *Southern Cross*, 10 December 1952.

³⁵⁸ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p. 113.

³⁵⁹ *Southern Cross*, 8 May 1957.

The Catholic African Union (CAU) was another vehicle by which African people were able to express their concerns about segregation and apartheid. Hurley recalls that many concerns were raised during the Congresses of the CAU, some very revolutionary, but were dampened down by the clerical control of the CAU.³⁶⁰

These organisations were the exception. The lack of social involvement of the tertiaries was characteristic of Catholic laity in general. Many church people, including priests, believed that the Church had no role to play in politics. Albert Nolan recalled:

I remember that in the youth club we were planning talks, we used to get together and we wanted to plan a talk, someone would come in and talk about apartheid and the priest said "No, that's politics. You can't talk about politics in any way" and I remember that we were fed up about that but that's as far as it went. So there was no way in which the tertiaries were going to say anything different. It may be difficult to believe but it was just regarded as another world.³⁶¹

4.11. Tertiaries involved in social issues

While it is true that organisationally the tertiaries never became involved in the socio-political issues of the day, this does not mean that certain individuals did not get involved or hold strong views on the situation in the country.

4.11.1. Herbert J. B. Vieyra (1902-1965)

The most prominent tertiary to be involved in socio-political issues was Advocate Herbert Joseph Bernard Vieyra, later a judge of the Supreme Court. He was born in Johannesburg on 17 September 1902 of Jewish parents who had emigrated from the Netherlands in 1896. His father Barend Vieyra is considered one of the greatest gymnasts in early South African history and made invaluable contributions to the development of the sport in the country.³⁶²

H.J.B. Vieyra was educated at Marist Brothers' College in Koch Street where his father was the first gymnastics instructor. He qualified as a lawyer in 1927, after studying at the University of

³⁶⁰ See "Transcript of interview conducted with Archbishop Denis E. Hurley" in the Appendix to Alan Charles Henriques, *The Catholic Church in the culture of apartheid: The case of Catholic laity in Natal (1948-1965)*, Unpublished MA thesis (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1996), pp. 30-43.

³⁶¹ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 49.

³⁶² See B.J.T. Leverton. "Barend Vieyra" in C.J. Beyers (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography Vol. 5*. (Pretoria: Human Sciences Resource Centre, 1987), pp. 842-843.

the Witwatersrand, and became an advocate twenty years later.³⁶³ He made legal history in the first year of his practice by establishing for the first time that marriage by proxy was valid in South Africa. In 1959 he was offered the Chair of Law at Rhodes University but declined this offer. He was made a judge of the Supreme Court in 1962.

Vieyra converted to Catholicism after his twenty-first birthday contrary to the desires of his family. He was the only member of his family to change his religious beliefs. This caused him to be estranged from his family for many years. He married Enid Seeligson, a young Jewish woman, but their engagement only took place after her conversion to Catholicism. After her death in 1953, he married another convert Elfrieda Langenhorst in 1955.³⁶⁴

Vieyra was one of the founding members of the Wits University Students' Catholic Society in 1931.³⁶⁵ He also became a member of the Catholic Federation of the Transvaal vicariate in the same year.³⁶⁶ Vieyra was the legal adviser to the Administrative Board of Catholic Bishops. In the 1930s he was involved in drafting the constitutions of the newly-formed Pius XII College in Roma, Basutoland³⁶⁷ and was later appointed on the Board of the College.³⁶⁸ He was also legal adviser to the Regent of Basutoland during the minority of the Paramount Chief, later King Moshoeshoe II.

He became a Dominican tertiary in Boksburg in 1935. He assumed the name of Bro. Martin de Porres and was received by Fr. Maurus Revill. He was a dedicated member of this chapter and then later the Johannesburg chapter until his death in 1965.

Vieyra was concerned with involvement of Catholics in social action. In a talk to Wits students at the Catholic society he outlined his perspective on the lay apostle. The first requirement for a lay apostle was spiritual formation. Secondly, a knowledge of philosophy was fundamental to

³⁶³ See Isaac Goodman, *Judges I have known* (Cape Town: Legal and Financial Publishing Company, 1969), pp. 173-180.

³⁶⁴ See *Southern Cross*, 14 November 1956.

³⁶⁵ See *Southern Cross*, 27 June 1956.

³⁶⁶ See *Southern Cross*, 28 October 1931 and 26 July 1933. The Catholic Federation was set up by Bishop O'Leary in 1926. See Joy B. Brain, *The Catholic Church in the Transvaal* (Johannesburg: Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, 1991), p.209. The Federation was an umbrella body comprising all Catholic lay societies and sodalities. According to Brain, its objective was to promote the welfare of Catholics and the Church.

³⁶⁷ See "Constitution of Pius XII University College", pp. 12 and 15 (BCA, Box: 1, File: Statistics of Catholic Education, 1963).

³⁶⁸ *Southern Cross*, 17 January 1951.

understanding one's faith. Thirdly, he emphasised the need for public speaking. Those with this skill will be able to share their faith with others.³⁶⁹

Vieyra also had an interest in ecumenism. In 1949, Vieyra gave a talk entitled "The present conflict in morality" at the first "Shoe party"³⁷⁰ organised by the Community of the Resurrection, an Anglican religious order, in Rosettenville. Other speakers included Fr. Trevor Huddleston on the "Colour Bar" and the "Christian doctrine of Man" and Dr. Keppel Jones on "Apartheid".³⁷¹

4.11.1.1. Vieyra and the Bishops

As the bishops' legal advisor, Vieyra was part of a delegation, comprising Bishop Whelan and Fr. Finbar Synnott OP, that presented the Church's position, in favour of establishing trade unions for black workers, before the Industrial Legislation Commission in January 1949.³⁷² The Nationalist government did not accept this and passed the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act in 1953. This Act excluded black workers from joining white or coloured trade unions and prohibited them from going on strike. Instead of recognising African trade unions, the Act set out a completely separate procedure for resolving labour disputes between black workers and their employers. The legislation was intended to uphold the colour bar and prevent Africans from access to the same jobs and rights as whites.³⁷³

In November 1949, Vieyra was again part of another official delegation consisting of Bishops Riegler and Whelan that appeared before the Eiselen commission in Pretoria to present the church's view on African education.³⁷⁴ The government wanted the churches to hand over their mission schools to the government. Vieyra attended the SAIRR Conference on the Bantu Education Act with Bishops Hurley and Riegler as well as many priests and black and white

³⁶⁹ *Southern Cross*, 24 August 1949.

³⁷⁰ *The Star*, 7 February 1955. 'Shoe parties' were monthly talks on different theological and political themes held at St. Benedict's house in Rosettenville. They were called shoe parties because the meeting room at St. Benedict's battled to accommodate the large number of people who attended them, just like in the nursery rhyme about the old woman who lived in a shoe. Sr. Maureen Harrison OHP, interview conducted in Johannesburg on 18 January 2007.

³⁷¹ "Programme for the first shoe party, 1949" (SBA, Rosettenville, Johannesburg).

³⁷² Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p. 90; *Southern Cross*, 19 July 1950.

³⁷³ See Don Ncube, *The influence of apartheid and capitalism on the development of black trade unions* (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1985), pp. 82-84.

³⁷⁴ See Abrahams, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, footnote 27, p. 82; Bishops' meeting of 16 August 1949 (BCA, Box: AV1). For more information on the church's response to the introduction of Bantu Education see Hurley, *Memories*, pp. 96-118.

Catholic laity.³⁷⁵ Catholics resisted this Act refusing to hand over their mission schools to the government. On 14 April 1954, the *Southern Cross* reported that the government had decided to halve subsidies for mission schools in retaliation for the Church's decision to retain full control of its schools. The Johannesburg Catholic Federation, the JCCAE and the Kolbe Association rejected the government's justification for reducing the subsidies. They challenged the government arguing that the money belonged to the taxpayers and not the government and so they did not have the right to an unfettered say in the way the money should be used.³⁷⁶ In December the bishops launched a nationwide campaign to establish an education fund to save the schools. After an intensive fundraising campaign, over a million pounds was pledged and £756 540 was collected.³⁷⁷ The Liberal Party's newsletter *Contact* commended the church for this action saying:

Nowadays it is often argued that European South Africans are quite prepared to support policies of racial discrimination and will continue to support them until they find their pockets are affected. It is a relief to find this cynical suspicion refuted, at least in part. Here is a case where a great number of Europeans have shown themselves quite willing to put their hands into their pockets in order that children of another race should not be discriminated against.³⁷⁸

Vieyra assisted Bishop van Velsen negotiate with Anglo-American for land for the Catholic Church in Welkom.³⁷⁹ On 21 November 1952, he also appeared before the Tomlinson Commission with Archbishops Garner and Hurley, Bishops Riegler and Whelan to present the church's position in relationship to influx control.

His greatest contribution was to the Joint Catholic Council for Africans and Europeans and it is to this organisation that we now turn.

4.11.1.2. **Vieyra and the Joint Catholic Council for Africans and Europeans**

Vieyra was elected the first president of the Joint Council for Catholic Africans and Europeans (JCCAE),³⁸⁰ a sub-committee of the Catholic Federation, on 20 February 1941. It was a

³⁷⁵ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p. 66; *Southern Cross*, 13 August 1952.

³⁷⁶ *Southern Cross*, 19 January 1955.

³⁷⁷ Joy Brain, "Moving from the margins to the mainstream: The Roman Catholic Church" in Richard Elphick and Rodney Davenport (eds.), *Christianity in South Africa: A political, social and cultural history* (Cape Town: David Philip and Oxford: James Currey, 1997), p. 205.

³⁷⁸ *Southern Cross*, 28 December 1955.

³⁷⁹ Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 171.

³⁸⁰ *Southern Cross*, 19 March 1941.

position he was to hold for many years.³⁸¹ The JCCAE was structured to facilitate inter-racial cooperation within the church. The group met at the Village Main mission on the fourth Sunday afternoon of each month. Vieyra outlined the work of the Council to:

hear the difficulties of the Africans in many spheres, endeavour to advise them and to enlighten them by having at each meeting a lecture or discussion. When necessary we interview the police authorities, transport controllers, municipal departments, in an effort to better conditions. We are already known to the Department of Native Affairs and are invited to give evidence before commissions. We aim at developing 'cells' of the Council in all Native townships, where grievances may be discussed and remedied locally or brought to the central body for action.³⁸²

4.11.1.2.1. JCCAE and trusteeship

The patronising and paternalistic attitudes prevalent among white liberals of the period were based on the belief in the innate superiority of Western civilisation and moderate political reform. The liberal Joint Council structures, upon which the JCCAE was modelled, encouraged paternalism as a political strategy. Albert Hoernlé, a professor of philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand and a co-founder of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR),³⁸³ described how these Joint Councils functioned.

The first [impression] is of the value of the contributions which the Native members are capable of making, once they have gained the confidence to speak their minds without hesitation. The other is of the practical leadership of the White members - the inevitable result of the fact that any practical steps to be taken involve, as a rule, interviews with White authorities, or some other action in the White world. There the White members of the Council 'know the ropes,' as no Native can know them. Whites can best judge what procedure and what arguments are most likely to be effective; and the presence of Whites on a joint deputation to White officials generally secures a better hearing for the Native case. The White members of these Councils act as a sort of bridge between the dominant and the dominated sections. They offer a unique channel for the practice of the spirit of trusteeship.³⁸⁴

Trusteeship was the name given to the liberal spirit by which it was believed whites should benevolently govern the indigenous black people. It was a concept initiated by the treaty of Versailles after the First World War. Many of the German colonies were given to the victorious Allies to be governed as mandates. The League of Nations insisted that these countries promote the welfare of the indigenous people as they were considered to be a "sacred trust of

³⁸¹ *Southern Cross*, 3 September 1952.

³⁸² *Southern Cross*, 7 April 1952.

³⁸³ The SAIRR was essentially a research body on race relations in South Africa. It was started in 1929. For more information on the SAIRR, see Paul Rich, "The South African Institute of Race Relations and the debate on 'race relations', 1929-1958" in *The societies of Southern Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries*, vol. 12, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1981, pp. 77-89.

³⁸⁴ R.F. Albert Hoernlé, *South African Native Policy and the Liberal spirit* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1945), p. 97.

civilization".³⁸⁵ This idea was encouraged as a way to avoid the exploitation and oppression of these peoples and their countries by those given these mandatory powers.

In the South African context, Alfred Hoernlé defined trusteeship as "the sense of moral responsibility, in the dominant White group, for the welfare of all these non-European groups over whom it exercises dominance".³⁸⁶

Black people were seen as being placed in the trust of their white rulers. They were children placed in the caring hands of parents. It was the duty of the whites to look to the best interest of their wards. Liberals, like Hoernlé, believed this was a benevolent and better alternative to white colonial domination and exploitation.

Even if we say that the central core of trusteeship is the paramountcy of the interests of the wards, it still remains true that it lies with the White trustee to define what interests are to be made paramount, and in what way. It is possible - and it is the present practice in some Missions - to concentrate on the 'saving of souls,' and to define this 'spiritual' interest of the Native wards in such a way that the system of White domination is not challenged.³⁸⁷

The final aim of trusteeship varied among liberals between permanent trusteeship for wards; acculturation and common citizenship of wards; and the independence of wards in their own self-governing community. Hoernlé dismissed the first option as undesirable, the second as impractical, but favoured the third one.³⁸⁸ This proposal was not that different from the later Nationalist government's homeland system.

Not all liberals subscribed to the practice of trusteeship. Vigne makes the interesting distinction between the 'social liberal' and the 'militant liberal' that emerged in the 1950s. Both types of liberal repudiated the colour bar and the repressive apartheid legislation which maintained it. However, the 'social liberals' preferred to work through the SAIRR, social welfare and church bodies. They tended to do things for African people rather than with them. In this sense, Vieyra was a 'social liberal'. He never became a member of the Liberal Party or engaged in public protest against apartheid, Vigne's criterion for a 'militant liberal'.³⁸⁹ African Catholic leaders

³⁸⁵ Hoernlé, *South African Native Policy*, p. 57.

³⁸⁶ Hoernlé, *South African Native Policy*, p. 98.

³⁸⁷ Hoernlé, *South African Native Policy*, p. 62.

³⁸⁸ See Hoernlé, *South African Native Policy*, pp. 99-102.

³⁸⁹ Randolph Vigne, *Liberals against Apartheid: A history of the Liberal party of South Africa, 1953-68* (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), pp. 88-89. Members of the Liberal Party directly challenged the Nationalist government using both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary methods. A few even engaged in armed resistance to apartheid.

like Anton Lembede and Solomzi Ashby Peter Mda abandoned liberal political ideas altogether for the more militant and confrontational politics of the ANC Youth League.³⁹⁰

4.11.1.2.2. JCCAE and race relations

In July 1949, the JCCAE organised a workshop on issues of race relations. An outline of the talks presented gives an indication of some of the debates that took place within the JCCAE. Ninian McManus, a Dominican priest, spoke on "The Nature of Man and his place in God's universal plan", while T. Gilooly spoke on "Communism". Vieyra invited Mrs. Hoernlé, the wife of the late Alfred Hoernlé - to attend this meeting. She challenged Walter Barker who gave a talk sympathetic to the Nationalist party's apartheid policies. Oliver Clark OP spoke on Native housing from the missionary's point of view. In the same meeting, Vieyra made an appeal that domestic workers, artisans and factory workers be invited to the JCCAE meetings because most African members were teachers.³⁹¹

Vieyra participated in the SAIRR. He was named as a member of the editorial committee of the Institute's 1949 manual.³⁹² Many white clergy or laity were reluctant to get involved with activist political organisations like the ANC or the Congress of Democrats because they were considered too revolutionary.³⁹³ Many in the church believed that these organisations were communist-inspired.³⁹⁴ Participating in the SAIRR was a much safer option.

On 24 May 1950, the JCCAE held a conference at Village Main, Johannesburg, attended by 283 people to discuss the issue of African education.³⁹⁵ Bishop Whelan opened the conference with Mass. The speakers were Otto Brückl, B.A., of the JCCAE and a member of the Wits Students' Catholic Society and Richard Msimang, B.Comm, the vice-chairperson of the JCCAE. Brückl said that university education was vital for African people to become leaders and professionals. He suggested that more money should be made available to assist Africans

³⁹⁰ For an interesting introduction to the politics of A.P. Mda, see Robert Edgar, "Changing the Old Guard: A.P. Mda and the ANC Youth League 1941-1949" in Saul Dubow and Alan Jeeves (eds.), *South Africa's 1940s: Worlds of possibilities* (Cape Town: Double Storey, 2005), pp. 149-169.

³⁹¹ See *Southern Cross*, 6 April 1949.

³⁹² See *Southern Cross*, 27 April 1949.

³⁹³ See Alan Henriques, "Interview with Hurley", p. 35.

³⁹⁴ Communism was considered a major problem for the Church during the 1950s, particularly in Europe. Many articles in the *Southern Cross* were devoted to the dangers of Communism. Further research is required to understand the extent to which many white bishops and prominent Catholics were hesitant to support the ANC during this period because they were aligned with the South African Communist Party.

³⁹⁵ See "Village Main Annals", entry for 24 May 1950, pp. 174-175 (KWT, Box: St. Thomas Training College, Village Main, JHB) and *Southern Cross*, 5 July 1950, 12 July 1950 and 19 July 1950.

with university education. Msimang had more fight in his presentation. He said that the fundamental understanding of education in South Africa was clouded by two factors: firstly, that certain job opportunities, due to the racial stratification of the society, were only open to one race group and not another and secondly, the clash of cultures where one was more advanced in its material and intellectual resources than the other which was only starting out. Education was a battleground for vested interests and the education system was not determined by purely educational considerations. He said that many Europeans were threatened by African competition.

In the discussion that ensued, Fr. Finbar Synnott OP picked up on the problem of job reservation adding that:

for the next decade, it would be better to concentrate on the three Rs and to fit Africans for adaptability to factory or other jobs available to them, than to give them higher education, with its attendant frustration when they found it was of no practical use to them.³⁹⁶

He did go on to qualify this statement adding that exceptions could be made for those brilliant few. However, the focus of the whites on the JCCAIE did not appear to be primarily focused on challenging injustice but on how to encourage Africans to accommodate themselves to the law of the land.

Prior to the issuing of the "Statement on Race Relations" by the South African bishops in June 1952, the first time an official church body publicly criticised the apartheid policies,³⁹⁷ Vieyra and the JCCAIE organised an Inter-racial Justice Week, a few months earlier in March.

The Joint Council was convinced that white Catholics were equally guilty of perpetuating race prejudice as were other white South Africans. The chairman of the Joint Council, Adv. HJB Vieyra, in an address to the Catholic Federation, called on the Catholic laity consciously to change their attitude to people of different race. He held that Christian realism, recognising as it did the dignity of all men, should determine the relations between white and black.³⁹⁸

4.11.1.2.3. **Vieyra and apartheid**

Vieyra had his own personal views on apartheid and they were expressed in the talks he gave and the papers he wrote. Integral to Vieyra's view of apartheid was his emphasis on the human

³⁹⁶ *Southern Cross*, 19 July 1950.

³⁹⁷ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, footnotes 8 & 9, p. 41.

³⁹⁸ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p.41.

dignity of every person. In a talk to the Kolbe Association on "The notion of absolute sovereignty",³⁹⁹ Vieyra argued that when parliament considers itself absolutely sovereign and above God's natural law, it places the 'will of the people above God's will'. It is then in danger of passing laws regardless of whether or not they are just.

In an article entitled *Catholic Apartheid*, Vieyra criticised white Catholics who paid lip service to their Catholic beliefs. On the one hand, they professed belief in the God-man who died for all and yet deny the equal dignity of all people. He accused them of being nominalists who give too much credence to the differences between people rather than honouring their Catholic belief that "men of every colour and condition should be designated by the same word 'man'".⁴⁰⁰

Vieyra returned to this theme of the dignity of each person again in two letters written to the editor of *The Catholic Times*, a newsletter started by the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The first letter is entitled "Why the natives should be educated". In a report that appeared in the *Volksblad* and then reprinted in *The Star*, the writer asked: "Why must 'we' pay for Native education?" Vieyra responded by saying that people who ask these questions never ask themselves why white children should receive a school education.

Surely the only reason is because there is a fundamental right in all human beings, because of their very nature, to develop their faculties. That is why there is a right to education ... In a developed society, such as our own, it is necessary that the State should help to complete the task ... Our society in the Union does not consist merely of so-called whites ... the blacks and coloureds also are members of that society.⁴⁰¹

In the second letter he tackled the problem of police torture.

Our courts are too frequently the scene of enquiries into the conduct of those whose duty it is to keep the public order and to bring suspects to justice. Torture has been used ... and in particular in their relations with Africans, too many policemen have behaved merely as barbarians devoid of any natural virtue. They have been guilty of crimes that cry to heaven for reparation ... this disease in the body of men who are policemen is but a symptom of the society in which they live, a society which ... has lost its sense of ... fundamental values, in particular, the worth of the person and the rights and duties that stem from that worth and the fact that all of us have a right to enjoy and a duty to protect.⁴⁰²

³⁹⁹ H.J.B. Vieyra, "The notion of absolute sovereignty" in Pat Holland (ed.), *Kolbe Winter School: Selected papers* (Durban: Kolbe Association of South Africa, 1952) pp. 56-65. See *Southern Cross*, 1 August 1951.

⁴⁰⁰ *Southern Cross*, 7 May 1952. I have not changed the language of the quote so as to be more inclusive.

⁴⁰¹ *The Catholic Times of South Africa*, vol. 19, no. 7, July 1954, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰² *The Catholic Times of South Africa*, vol. 19, no. 12, December 1954, p. 3

Vieyra protested against the injustices in society but never engaged in active resistance to apartheid. This is evident in the response of the JCCAE to the Defiance Campaign.

4.11.1.2.4. JCCAE and the Defiance Campaign

The unity of the JCCAE was threatened when they discussed the contentious issue of how the church should respond to the Defiance Campaign. In 1952, the ANC and the Communist Party launched the Defiance Campaign, a civil disobedience campaign, to protest against the Nationalist Party's passing of discriminatory legislation. They called on black people to defy these unjust laws. Over 8 000 people were arrested for defying the laws on curfews, passes and separate amenities. The government passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 to forbid these civil disobedience campaigns.⁴⁰³

On 31 December 1952, the *Southern Cross*⁴⁰⁴ reported on Bishop Whelan's address to the JCCAE on the principles which he felt should govern the Catholic attitude to the Defiance Campaign. Many black members were dissatisfied with this statement. African members believed the Defiance Campaign was the inevitable result of the long-endured indignities and repression suffered by black people in South Africa. Bishop Whelan's views, however, carried the day and the following resolution was passed:

This Council is presently not in agreement with the Defiance Campaign as it is not satisfied that it is conducted without hatred because there is no strong moral probability that such a campaign will be able to achieve a new order in society, more in accord with justice and charity.⁴⁰⁵

It is not clear what Vieyra's personal standpoint was on this matter but it is probably accurate to assume that he concurred with Bishop Whelan. While he might criticise parliament for passing unjust laws it is unlikely that he would have encouraged open confrontation with the government. He probably supported Bishop Whelan's views on the Defiance Campaign and opposed those of the black members of the Council.⁴⁰⁶ Whelan and many of other Catholic bishops were wary of directly challenging government policies or encouraging laity to defy

⁴⁰³ See Nigel Worden, *The Making of Modern South Africa: Conquest, Segregation and Apartheid* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), p. 100.

⁴⁰⁴ *Southern Cross*, 18 February 1953; see Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁰⁵ "Interracial Council not in agreement with the Defiance Campaign", *Southern Cross*, 18 February 1953.

⁴⁰⁶ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, pp. 49-50 and *Southern Cross*, 28 January 1953.

apartheid because they were afraid of the consequences for the church's mission in an already hostile environment for Catholics.⁴⁰⁷

Our attitude seemed to be that in this way we could avoid stirring the *Roomse gevaar* fires and earn acceptance among Afrikaners while nevertheless proclaiming some acceptable Christian criticisms of racial injustice.⁴⁰⁸

The JCCAE survived this crisis and continued to meet in the Johannesburg diocese. However, the issue highlighted the ineffectualness of African participation on the Council. It also displayed the limitations of the liberal position within the Church. It is no wonder that black liberals became disenchanted with liberalism and increasingly saw the ANC as their political home.

In spite of the Defiance Campaign debacle, the JCCAE continued to expand. A cell group was started in Alexandra⁴⁰⁹ and by 1956, there was talk of establishing another in Orlando in Soweto. In 1957, the *Southern Cross* carried a report on the JCCAE addressing the issue of 'How to ask for better wages' and dealing with issues concerning just wages.⁴¹⁰

Vieyra finally resigned from the Catholic Federation and the JCCAE in 1958. The leadership of the JCCAE was taken over by Colm O'Connor.⁴¹¹ Vieyra committed himself to building up the Johannesburg branch of the Kolbe Association until his appointment as judge of the Supreme Court in 1963.⁴¹² Tragically, he died of a heart attack on 15 December 1965 at the age of sixty-three.

4.11.1.3. Vieyra - "a living influence"

⁴⁰⁷ The Christian Council of South Africa (CCSA) did not support the Defiance Campaign either. In January 1953, the Executive of the CCSA issued a statement stating that while it had sympathy for 'non-European Christians' it felt "bound to point out that obedience to the law is a Christian duty, and that disobedience is only justified when such obedience involves disobedience to the dictates of conscience". Quoted in David Thomas, *Christ divided: Liberalism, Ecumenism and Race in South Africa* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2002), p. 138. Thomas suggests that the lack of official church support for the Defiance Campaign reflected white liberal church leaders' ambivalence or even hostility towards African nationalism.

⁴⁰⁸ Hurley, *Memories*, p. 93. Seeking acceptance meant compromise. It was only with the Namibia Report, published in 1982, that the bishops openly challenged the Nationalist government regardless of the consequences. A court case was opened against Archbishop Hurley for criticisms made against Koevoet atrocities in Namibia in 1983. Charges were eventually dropped. See SACBC, *The Bishops' speak, vol. 3, 1981-1985* (Pretoria: SACBC, 1989), pp. 43-44.

⁴⁰⁹ *Southern Cross*, 5 September 1956.

⁴¹⁰ See Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, p.107 and *Southern Cross*, 17 April 1957.

⁴¹¹ *Southern Cross*, 10 September 1958. The Catholic Federation was disbanded in 1967 and probably the JCCAE along with it. See *Southern Cross*, 14 June 1967.

⁴¹² *Southern Cross*, 14 August 1963.

In 1957 Vieyra gave a talk to the Kolbe Association which sums up his life. He spoke about the importance of being a living influence for the faith. He said that it is not important to believe but to live the faith. This, he saw, as the special vocation of the laity. Vieyra sought in his own life to be a living influence to the world by asserting the need to respect everyone's rights and promoting what he called "the brotherhood of man"; as well as by living humbly and courageously in the service of God.⁴¹³

While he strove to be a living influence, he had his shortcomings. It is interesting to note that A.P. Mda was able to shift from a liberal political perspective to a more radical one having started a similar theological premise, as Vieyra did, emphasising the dignity of the human person. Both were anti-Communist but Mda's disenchantment with liberalism came as a result of a disillusionment that a political system controlled by whites could bring out the transformation required by black South Africans.⁴¹⁴ In contrast, Vieyra accepted to work within the system as a judge of the Supreme Court.

4.11.2. **James (Jimmy) Stewart (1922 - 1984)**

Jimmy Stewart was born in Cape Town in 1922, attended Rondebosch Boys' High and then studied at the University of Cape Town from 1946 to 1949. He graduated with a BA and LLB. Originally brought up in the Presbyterian faith, he came to Catholicism, after a period of being an atheist and a Trotskyite.⁴¹⁵ Becoming Catholic did not mean he abandoned his socialist ideals which he continued to hold throughout his life.

In 1948 during his university days he became the first president of the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) and vice-president of National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). He was keen that these organisations respond to the socio-political issues of the day.

⁴¹³ H.J.B. Vieyra, "Living influence" in Pat Holland (ed.), *The Christian in the crisis of modern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Kolbe Association of South Africa, 1957). Roneoed booklet. (CHB, Box 102: Kolbe Association).

⁴¹⁴ Robert Edgar, "Changing the old guard", pp. 151-156.

⁴¹⁵ See Patrick Giddy, "James and Joan Stewart" *Grace and Truth* Vol. 5, no. 3, August 1984, pp. 106-107, 127 and J.E. Stewart, "Called out of darkness into his marvellous light" *The South African Clergy Review*, February 1949, pp.160-169.

It was at an NCFS conference that he met his wife Joan Hope (b. 1931), a student from Wits University. After completing her BSc degree she went to study in Oxford for non-degree purposes, while Jimmy was studying English literature in Cambridge. They were married in June 1954 by an English Dominican, Gervase Mathew.⁴¹⁶ They also became Dominican tertiaries around this time.⁴¹⁷

After returning from England, Jimmy and Joan Stewart settled in Lesotho from 1956 to 1962, where he taught at the Catholic university, the Pius XII University College. They originally intended to establish a Dominican Centre in Roma but nothing came of these plans.⁴¹⁸ He participated in the Kolbe Association and participated in the third Winter School of the Kolbe Association held at St. Dominic's Convent, Boksburg in July 1953. The theme of the conference was 'Racial Conditions in South Africa'. He delivered a talk entitled "Non-European Reactions to Oppression".⁴¹⁹ He painted an apocalyptic picture for South Africa's future. He believed that the oppression suffered by black people in South Africa would lead to intolerable frustration, which in turn, would be the catalyst for the formation of extreme and militaristic policies. It was these conditions, he claimed, "that served as a breeding ground for Marxist-Communism, the sworn enemy of Catholicism".⁴²⁰

After spending time in the United States, Jimmy and Joan went to England where he completed his doctorate at Cambridge on D.H. Lawrence. While in Cambridge the family attended the Dominican priory church as parishioners. They had regular contact with Dominicans like Sebastian Bullough⁴²¹ and Kenelm Foster.⁴²² The children attended catechism at the priory.

They moved to Kenya from 1967 to 1972 where Jimmy Stewart was secretary to the Catholic Laity Association in Nairobi. After this they moved onto Malawi where he taught at the University of Malawi until his expulsion from the country in November 1975. After brief periods in England and the United States (where Joan completed her Master degree in theology), they finally settled back in Lesotho in 1978 and established the Transformation

⁴¹⁶ For further information on Fr. Gervase Mathew, see Aidan Nichols, *Dominican Gallery: Portrait of a culture* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1997), pp. 268-303.

⁴¹⁷ See "Letter from Enid Ramsbottom to PP Feeny", 9 February 1956 in which the reference to *Dominican Annals*, November-December 1955 is made (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

⁴¹⁸ See "Letter from Jimmy Stewart to PP Feeny", 9 February 1956 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

⁴¹⁹ See James Stewart, "Non-European reactions to oppression" in Pat Holland (ed.), *The Kolbe Summer School Selected Papers* (1958) pp. 69-82.

⁴²⁰ Abraham, *The Catholic Church and Apartheid*, footnote 90 P, p. 57.

⁴²¹ Nichols, *Dominican Gallery*, pp. 223-267.

⁴²² Nichols, *Dominican Gallery*, pp. 304-341.

Centre in Maseru. This ecumenical organisation was focused on working for justice in society and securing socio-political transformation in South Africa and Lesotho, based on Christian principles. It provided resources, organised workshops and sought to conscientise people about "the social implications of being a Christian in Southern Africa".⁴²³ Being outside South Africa they were also readily available to assist South African exiles in Lesotho. The centre was situated very near the Blessed Jordan of Saxony Dominican community in Maseru which served as the novitiate house for the friars from 1982 to 1992. The Stewarts had regular contacts with the brothers in the community like Edmund Hill, Gregory Brooke and Joseph Falkiner.

They were both tragically killed in a motor car accident near Roma, Lesotho in July 1984. They were driving home to Maseru after attending a theological winter school seminar. While both Jimmy and Joan had never been active members of a tertiary chapter, they remained, as their son John Stewart described them, "life-long friends of the Dominicans".⁴²⁴

4.11.3. Major Anthony Mehan

Alick Mehan joined the tertiaries in Cape Town in 1945. He was one of the earliest members of this chapter. He was clothed on Ash Wednesday 1942 by Fr. Oswin Magrath and took the name Anthony. He was professed on 14 May 1943 by Fr. Maurus Revill. His contribution to the social involvement of tertiaries was in relationship to his personal spirituality and piety rather than his political involvement.

He had an aversion to all forms of discrimination wherever it was manifest, whether in society, in the church or even among the tertiaries. In 1955, he wrote a letter to the editor of the *Southern Cross* challenging manifestations of apartheid he had come across in the church. He tells how the parish priest of a country parish had invited him to leave the 'reserved' seats at the back of the church and to sit higher up. He refused, choosing to remain in the pew he had selected:

for if one is seeking where Christ loves most to be he must look for Him among the rejected, the despised and the meek and in that little country church it was amongst the holy ones, our Catholic Coloured people united with Jesus at Mass, that I felt the Divine Presence closest.⁴²⁵

⁴²³ Patrick Giddy, "James and Joan Stewart", p. 107.

⁴²⁴ John Stewart, interview conducted in Harare, Zimbabwe on 2 October 2004.

⁴²⁵ *Southern Cross*, 4 May 1955.

On 16 July 1959, Mehan wrote to the Dominican vicar provincial of the English province, Peter Paul Feeny.⁴²⁶ His request was that he be permitted to leave the chapter in Cape Town and become a lone tertiary. There was conflict between Mehan and the new prior and he claimed that he was getting too old for the group.

In a subsequent letter he raised critical questions about how officials like priors, sub-priors and novice masters were elected. His concern was that they were elected more on popularity than for competency to do the task at hand. He pointed to his time as prior of the chapter when a young brother was elected novice master but did not know much about the rule or choir rubrics for compline and consequently couldn't train the postulants and novices adequately. In particular, he questioned the way in which elections were conducted. He wrote:

Recently in Cape Town a Novice Master was elected. The Br. Prior brought a Brother's name up. This Brother not being a Councillor was not present. In proposing him the Br. Prior spoke a eulogy of the proposed Brother with great emphasis on his worth and ability to teach and pressing for his election. I had in mind a Brother, long professed, well conversant with the Rule and Rubrics, a University graduate, an experienced educationalist, a holy, quiet, unobtrusive, humble man. He is a Cape Coloured. This Brother was a Councillor and was present at this Council meeting. I could not ask that he withdraw while I canvassed for votes for him on the line the Br. Prior had taken. I could not speak for him on this line in his presence, so that the matter had perforce, to go by default and all I could do was vote for him in the secret ballot. I was the sole vote for him.⁴²⁷

The reasons for Mehan's dissatisfaction with the chapter may have revolved around his disappointment that chapter members were reluctant to elect a coloured tertiary as the novice master.

Mehan also related his experiences in the army and wrote:

At 50 the Army appointed me - by reason of long qualifying experience - to be visiting Staff Officer to the whole Bantu and Cape Coloured organisations of the Army, with a General Officer's delegated authority - that is I could 'do' on my own initiative what I judged necessary. If I judged White/Black friction was affecting efficiency I sent a list of names to GHQ - without prejudice to the characters of those named - and transfers were automatically made. I saw the sadistic treatment of Bantu troops was punished and that Bantu troops were treated as attested Soldiers and not as servants. I was called "Kaptein Kafferboetie", but brought decent treatment to some thousands of African men. I defended African soldiers at Court Martials and in one season obtained a succession of acquittals or virtual acquittals rising to about 15 through charges arising through White men's negligence or malice. I caused 5 Commanding Officers to

⁴²⁶ "Letter of A.S. Mehan (Bro. Anthony TOSD), Rondebosch to PP Feeny", 16 July 1959 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiary Chapter).

⁴²⁷ "Letter of AS Mehan to PP Feeny", 24 September 1959 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiaries).

lose their commands through the same negligence to supervise unworthy subordinates, yet so just and legal were my acts that I was never once successfully impeached, nor even harmed in the slightest so correct and constitutional were my decisions in the face of, often, tremendous pressure and threats ... I said my Office seated in Mess Lounges in winter where the only fire was and my Rosary as I walked from duty to duty or in my spare time. I was called by well disposed officers "The Bishop" Navalese⁴²⁸ for Chaplain.⁴²⁹

4.11.4. **Father S'mangaliso Mkhathswa**⁴³⁰

S'mangaliso Patrick Mkhathswa was born in Barberton on 1 June 1939 and did his secondary education first at Maria Trost in Lydenburg and completed it at Pax College in Pietersburg (presently, Polokwane). He entered the seminary at Pevensy in 1959 and completed his studies in Hammanskraal. While a student at the St. Peter's he joined the tertiaries and became prior of the chapter. He recalled that Fr. John Francis Connell, an American friar teaching at the seminary, was the spiritual director of the chapter. Other prominent members of the chapter were John Louwfant and Remy Mokoka.

After his ordination for the diocese of Witbank-Lydenburg in December 1965, Mkhathswa did pastoral work among mineworkers in the diocese for five years. He did not continue his association with the tertiaries after his time at the seminary. In 1970, he was appointed to work for the SACBC secretariate in Pretoria. A year later, he went to the University of Louvain in Belgium and completed his Master's degree in dogmatic theology in 1973. After his return to South Africa, he continued to work for the Bishops' Conference heading the Justice and Peace and Ecumenism departments. In 1976, he was detained and given a five-year banning order in June 1977.⁴³¹ In 1983 he accepted being a patron of the United Democratic Front (UDF), an organisation launched that year to coordinate mass-based non-violent resistance to the apartheid state. During the first state of emergency in 1985, he was arrested and detained without trial. Mkhathswa was detained a second time during the second state of emergency in 1986 by the Ciskei homeland authorities for over five months.⁴³² In 1988, he left the SACBC

⁴²⁸ 'Navalese' is Mehan's creation to refer to the language used in the navy, army or airforce.

⁴²⁹ "Letter of AS Mehan to PP Feeny", 24 September 1959 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiaries).

⁴³⁰ Biographical information taken from George Mukuka, *The Impact of Black Consciousness on the Black Catholic clergy and their training from 1965-1981*, Unpublished MTh thesis (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1996), p. 9; www.whoswhosa.co.za; www.dacb.org; and www.worldmayor.com 3 April 2007.

⁴³¹ For further information concerning the conditions of the banning order, visit the following website: www.sahistory.org.za/pages/specialprojects/livesofcourage/pages/wall/banned-M.htm

⁴³² Local and international support committees and campaigns were organised for Mkhathswa and three other Catholic detainees, Fr. Peter Hortop OP, Sr. Bernard Ncube CSA and Tom Waspe, a member of YCS and Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee (Jodac). See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 290 and the 'Release Catholic Detainees' pamphlet in the illustrations appendix.

to become the director of the Institute of Contextual Theology (ICT) in Johannesburg. In the 1994 elections he was elected as a ANC member of parliament and became Deputy minister of Education in 1996, a post he held until his appointment as mayor of Tshwane (previously known as Pretoria) in 2000. He retired as mayor in 2006 and is presently working in the President's Office in Pretoria.

In the next chapter we will look at the contribution of Mkhathswa and the lay Dominicans in Hammanskraal to the development and promotion of the Saint Peter's Old Boys' Association (SPOBA) and the Black Priests' Manifesto.

4.12. Conclusion

This period provides the greatest testament to the flourishing of the tertiaries in South Africa. A number of illustrious Catholics became members of the tertiaries. These included bishops, diocesan priests, seminarians and prominent lay people. The reasons given for the interest can be attributed to the fact that many people saw in the tertiaries a spiritual path to live the call to Christian perfection. The tertiary life gave those who joined a way to live their Catholic faith in a dedicated way by emulating the life and example of the friars. They had a rule that stipulated how they were to live their tertiary life and attain the goal of Christian perfection. This was to change drastically with the advent of the Second Vatican Council. It is to this phase of the history of the tertiaries that we now turn our attention.

Chapter 5

From tertiaries to lay Dominicans: Development or Decline?

5.0. Introduction

The establishment of the tertiaries in the 1940s and its quick growth and development in the 1950s was influenced by a major change in the Church in the 1960s, namely the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965). Archbishop Denis Hurley, who actively participated in the Council, described it as "the greatest experience of my whole life".⁴³³ Vatican II, as it is colloquially known, was a major transformative moment in the history of the Catholic Church.

This was particularly true for the laity. Blakley,⁴³⁴ in his reflection on Decree on the Apostolate of lay people (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*), which was passed at the Council on 18 November 1965, said that Vatican II was the first Council of the Church to address the issue of the laity.⁴³⁵

In an earlier document on the Constitution of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*) the image of the church as "people of God" was given prominence. In the document the chapter "people of God" was purposely placed ahead of the image of the church as hierarchy. This showed the intention of the Council to place the distinction between clerics and laity within the context of the overall call to holiness of all the baptised. The laity are members of the church too!

The Decree on the Apostolate of lay people encouraged the participation of laity in the mission of the church (§2) and emphasised, firstly, the need to develop a lay spirituality (§4), secondly, it encouraged laity to play its role within the church community (§10) and thirdly, that the mission of the laity was a participation in the church's overall mission to evangelise and to sanctify the world (§7-8). The laity have their own mission, in which the clergy cannot

⁴³³ Denis E. Hurley, *Memories: The memoirs of Archbishop Denis E Hurley OMI* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2006), p. 148.

⁴³⁴ Alan F. Blakley, "Decree on the Apostolate of lay people, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 18 November 1965" in Timothy O'Connell (ed.), *Vatican II and its documents: An American reappraisal* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1986), pp. 141-157.

⁴³⁵ Edward Schillebeeckx acknowledges that Vatican II is a step forward for the laity but argues that the Council doesn't go far enough. It chose to focus on the apostolate of the laity rather than face the more challenging question of "who is the laity?" While Vatican II affirmed a more positive role for the laity in the church but it didn't define the lay state. To do this would require both a rethinking of the role of priesthood and the development a new ecclesiology. For further discussion, see Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human story of God* (London: SCM Press, 1990) and Paul Lakeland, *The Liberation of the Laity: In search of an accountable Church* (New York and London: Crossroad, 2003), pp. 107-109.

participate - namely, a life of witness in marriage and family life (§11) and in the situations in which they work (§13).

This perspective was a major shift in understanding the role of the laity within the church and led to a different self-image of the layperson. This had significant bearings on the development and self-understanding of the tertiaries in South Africa.

5.1. The initial reception of Vatican II by the tertiaries

Just prior to the start of Second Vatican Council, the *Tertiary Newsletter* in June 1962,⁴³⁶ listed the existence of thirteen different tertiary chapters and groups around the country. According to the reports in the newsletter these groups were active and meeting regularly. The tertiaries were well established and at the peak of their development.

The first reference to the Second Vatican Council by the tertiaries in South Africa appeared in the *Tertiary Newsletter's* editorial comment on the death of Pope John XXIII.

The death of Pope John has left an extraordinary sense of loss, not only in the Church, but in the world as a whole. When he began his reign he was referred to by some misguided person, as the 'Caretaker Pope', - as though he would be some sort of stop-gap. He has shown just how much care he has taken of the Church, achieving so much in the short time he has reigned - a revitalised Church, the interest and good-will of the non-Catholic world.⁴³⁷

5.1.1. Liturgical changes

Soon enough the tertiaries themselves were caught up in the developments of the Council. The editorial of the July 1964 issue of the *Tertiary Newsletter* welcomed the Council's changes to the liturgy regarding the use of the vernacular.⁴³⁸

⁴³⁶ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 19, June 1962, pp. 1-2.

⁴³⁷ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 25, June 1963, p. 1.

⁴³⁸ The "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" *Sacrosanctum Concilium* was passed on 4 December 1963. See Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1996), pp. 117-161. The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference decided to introduce the vernacular into the Mass in three stages. First the reading of the Epistle and the Gospel in the vernacular was introduced. After this the recitation in the vernacular of the *Kyrie, Gloria, Credo, Sanctus, Pater Noster* and *Agnus Dei* would follow. The third step was the use of the vernacular throughout the first part of Mass. See *Southern Cross*, 4 March 1964. The Durban Archdiocese were the first to introduce the changes on Palm Sunday, whereas Cape Town set 5 April as the date for introducing the first step of changes while Johannesburg chose 17 May. See *Southern Cross*, 1 April 1964.

The recent reports on the approved changes in the Liturgy with regards the use of the vernacular, show that we are living in exciting and challenging times as far as the Church is concerned. Pope John's earnest hopes for the unification of Christianity and Peace in the world, are well on the way to fruition.

That the use of the vernacular will be of great benefit to new converts to the Faith is obvious, for no longer will prospective converts be faced with the biggest obstacle to understanding - the use of a foreign language.⁴³⁹

The tertiaries saw a role for themselves by helping fellow parishioners adjust to the new changes in the liturgy and the church:

To Catholics, of course, there begins a period of difficulty in that the use of the vernacular is going to [be] strange at first, and time is going to be needed to get used to the changes. This is where we, as Dominicans, come into the picture. As a result of our vocation, we have a greater understanding and knowledge of our Faith than the usual Catholic, so we should be in the lead in the 'indoctrination' of the congregation. The use of the vernacular will encourage participation in the Holy Mass and so give a greater understanding to the passive Catholics. This participation we can encourage by giving the responses in a loud and clear voice, and by giving the congregation a lead in all liturgical matters. This ... entails a knowledge of the responses and rules ourselves but we are sure that Tertiaries will do their utmost to be in the lead in all matters pertaining to the participation in, understanding and propagation of the Faith.⁴⁴⁰

5.1.2. Changes in the tertiary rule

The Second Vatican Council gave the tertiaries reason to redefine and clarify their role within church and society. The Master of the Order, Anicetus Fernandez Alonso, approved a new rule on 30 May 1964 and determined that it be used for an experimental period of three years. One of the major shifts was that each province was to establish a national tertiary council and secretariate to oversee the overall running of the tertiaries. They were encouraged to live a life of study, to seek Christian perfection through their secular state and to work for the renewal of the world by carrying out their professional and secular duties with Christian love and charity.⁴⁴¹ Permission was also given to use non-Dominican and vernacular versions of the Divine Office, including the breviary.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ See Editorial, *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964. This issue marks a new beginning of the *Tertiary Newsletter* (later known as *Lay Dominican Newsletter*) edited by the National Secretariate in Brakpan.

⁴⁴⁰ Editorial, *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964.

⁴⁴¹ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964, pp. 4-6.

⁴⁴² See "Stellenbosch Women's Chapter minute book", St. Mary's Convent, January 1964 - October 1973, entry for 21 November 1964, p. 70 (CDSA, Cape Town).

In South Africa, the national secretariate⁴⁴³ had already been established in Brakpan by November 1963.⁴⁴⁴ The purpose of the secretariate was to coordinate the different chapters across the country. Damian Magrath outlined the first task of the secretariate to prepare an instruction course for use in the chapters. They also took over the editing of the newsletter⁴⁴⁵ and soon more articles dealing with the challenges of the Second Vatican Council appeared.

5.1.3. Afrikaans apostolate

The new spirit of Vatican II, typified by a greater openness to dialogue with the modern world, was evident in an article written in Afrikaans by Anton Goosen, a tertiary from Boksburg. He encouraged other tertiaries to engage Afrikaners in discussion about faith and religion in their own language.

Ons wil mos in staat wees om godsdiens met die Afrikaner te kan bespreek, en dit besef ons is nie kinderspeletjies nie. Miskien het ons alreeds die geleentheid gehad om met 'n Afrikaner 'n paar woorde op kantoor of oor die heining te wissel en op hierdie manier eerstehandse kennis opgedoen van die groot leemte wat tussen ons heers.⁴⁴⁶

The English and Dutch Dominican friars had been promoting the Afrikaans apostolate for many years. Bede Jarrett OP, the English provincial raised the funds to establish a community in Stellenbosch in the heartland of Afrikanerdom in 1930, with the intention to convert the Afrikaner.⁴⁴⁷ In 1952, the Dutch Dominicans, under Bishop van Velsen, set up the Katolieke Afrikaner Sentrum (KAS) in Kroonstad which published a monthly magazine called *Die Brug*. The intention was to build a bridge between Afrikaners and the Catholic faith⁴⁴⁸ but also to promote the use of Afrikaans within the Catholic Church.⁴⁴⁹ Anton Goosen is described in the magazine as a "medewerker" (colleague), translating some articles into Afrikaans⁴⁵⁰ and

⁴⁴³ See *Southern Cross*, 18 September 1963.

⁴⁴⁴ "Letter of Damian Magrath to all tertiaries", Brakpan, 9 November 1963 (ZAOP, Box: Confraternity).

⁴⁴⁵ See *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964, p. 2.

⁴⁴⁶ See Anton Goosen "Die Afrikaner en ons", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964, pp. 9-11. [Translation: "We want to be able to talk about faith with the Afrikaner and this we realise is not child's play. Perhaps we have already had the opportunity to exchange a few words with an Afrikaner, at work or over the back fence, and in this way received first hand knowledge of the great divide that exists between us"].

⁴⁴⁷ See Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars in Southern Africa: A social history 1577-1990* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), pp. 120-126.

⁴⁴⁸ Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 174-183.

⁴⁴⁹ See Hyacinth Engering, "Afrikaans in the Church", *Southern Cross*, 16 April 1969.

⁴⁵⁰ See "Lucia en die rooi wolk" in *Die Brug*, vol. 14, no. 1, Februarie 1965, pp. 20-21 and vol. 14, no. 2, Maart 1965, pp. 17-18, 23.

occasionally writing a few articles.⁴⁵¹ A more regular contributor to the magazine was another tertiary, Luky Whittle from the Welkom chapter.⁴⁵²

5.1.4. Common apostolate

Another concern for the tertiaries, in relation to Vatican II, was the question of their apostolate. Francis Krumm from Brakpan raised the question whether the tertiaries should not have some common apostolate. He admitted that there were conflicting answers to this question. Most tertiaries were members of parish groups and made their contribution in this way. While he raised the question, he never answered it. He merely suggested that those who already participate in parish organisations should ensure that their contributions to the parish be marked by their tertiary ideals. The article ended rather lamely: "If we do this, we become more loving towards our neighbours, more christian-like, in fact more Christlike".⁴⁵³

A major limitation among the tertiaries proved to be their inability as chapters to undertake a common apostolate. The prevailing thinking was that the tertiary life gave one the spiritual capital to strengthen one's social involvements and apostolates within the church and that it was not necessary to do something together. Many of the tertiaries also did not want another involvement that took them away from their family for another evening during the week.⁴⁵⁴

5.1.5. Prayer and the Divine Office

Among the tertiaries there was also a shift in emphasis from just saying the daily Office towards greater personal prayer. Fr. Francis Middlewick writing on mental prayer encouraged the tertiaries to grow in friendship with God. "Talk to God in your own words as you would talk to a Father, to a Friend Who loves you very much".⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵¹ He contributed two articles, see *Die Brug*, Januarie/Februarie 1967 and Januarie/Februarie 1968, pp. 22-23 and pp. 20-21 respectively. He wrote to the *Southern Cross* in defence of the controversial editorial in *Die Brug* by Hyacinth Engering in support of apartheid. For more on this controversy, see *Southern Cross*, 3 June 1964 and 22 July 1964.

⁴⁵² During 1968 and 1969, Whittle contributed five articles to *Die Brug*. She was later a columnist in the *Southern Cross*.

⁴⁵³ Francis Krumm, "Third Order Apostolate", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 1, July 1964, pp. 12-14.

⁴⁵⁴ Comment of Fr. Gregory Brooke OP in discussion with the author, 4 March 2007.

⁴⁵⁵ F.D.S. Middlewick, "Mental prayer", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 2, October 1965, pp. 7-8.

What is striking about all these articles is the attempt by the tertiaries to relate their faith to their own life experience. Vatican II challenged the tertiaries to develop a new direction and response to the lay vocation in the modern world which called for a deepening of their own spirituality and call to mission. However, these changes also made some tertiaries very anxious. In the editorial of the April 1966 issue, concern was raised that "a large majority of our Third Order members are NOT SAYING THEIR OFFICE EVERY DAY and are not fulfilling their obligations regarding the rule of the daily office".⁴⁵⁶

This issue also included different contributions on the importance of saying the daily office or substituting it with five decades of the rosary, if it was not possible to complete the office. This greater flexibility in prayer was also a cause of confusion for some. Anthony Mehan wrote: "After my life of 23 years in the Third Order I do not ask for the office to be altered".⁴⁵⁷

Another contributor M.F.P. was of the opinion that the office was an anomaly.

Our Office is laid down for us, and then immediately we are told that if it is not possible for us to fulfil it we can say as little as 5 decades of the Rosary ... I should like to see the reading of the Rule reversed viz:- 'All Tertiaries are obliged to one or other of the exercises daily. It is, however, RECOMMENDED that when possible the full Lady Office be recited daily'.⁴⁵⁸

5.1.6. Questioning the tertiaries' way of life

There was also some dissatisfaction in some quarters about the structure of the tertiaries which was considered to be too rigid. In a letter to Albert Nolan, the chaplain of the Cape Town chapter, Alfred Thorburn wrote:

Thank you for your printed letter in connection with Tertiary matters. I regret to say that I am one of the guilty members to whom it is addressed. My absence from Chapter Meetings has not always been due to other obligations. I have absented myself because I did not want to disturb the others with the growing uneasiness I have developed about tertiary life over the last year or two.

I have found myself growing away from its restrictive monastic spirituality and I have come to find my tertiary obligations burdensome. I am sure the fault lies with me and not the Rule. It is apparent that my lack of disposition shows that I do not really have a vocation to tertiary life. Therefore the sooner I am dispensed of my promise the better; for I do not want to be a scandal to others, which I am obviously becoming very rapidly. I trust you will understand and accept my predicament, and that my discontinuing tertiary life will not alter our friendship,

⁴⁵⁶ *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 4, April 1966, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁷ Anthony Jordan Mehan, "Contentment with the Rule", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 4, April 1966, p. 9.

⁴⁵⁸ M.F.P., "More extracts from comments on our daily office", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 4, April 1966, p. 10.

as I should like to continue to feel welcome at the Priory, although I may no longer be a member of the Order.⁴⁵⁹

The discontent felt by Thorburn had already started back in the 1950s. While official membership burgeoned, there were often complaints from chapters that attendance at meetings was very poor. New people started out with enthusiasm but this fervour gradually waned and they stopped attending meetings. For example, a young woman in Cape Town, Catherine Allin, who was still simply-professed, requested leave of absence from chapter meetings for the entire winter season. She had just joined a hockey club and she played matches every Saturday afternoon. The women's chapter did not know how to respond to what was described as "a new case".⁴⁶⁰

The task of *aggiornamento* or "updating" the tertiaries was a difficult and tumultuous one, fraught with many dead-ends and pitfalls. In the remainder of this chapter, I will attempt to evaluate the lay Dominicans' reception of the Second Vatican Council in relation to three areas: development of a new spirituality; involvement in ministries within the church and the call to evangelise and sanctify the world.

5.2. Tertiaries and lay spirituality

In the Decree on lay apostolate, lay people who were members of any of the associations or institutions approved by the church were encouraged to make their own "the forms of spirituality that were proper to these bodies".⁴⁶¹ In order that the tertiaries would be able to develop a lay spirituality and apostolate appropriate to their vocation, Damian Magrath realised that the tertiaries would "have to be formed in the Dominican character".⁴⁶² It was for this reason that he proposed the training course for the tertiaries. This lecture course was produced and used in the different chapters.⁴⁶³

⁴⁵⁹ "Letter from Mr. Alfred Thorburn, Rondebosch, Cape Town to Albert Nolan", 15 August 1966 (ZAOP, Box: CT Tertiaries).

⁴⁶⁰ See "Stellenbosch Women's Chapter minute book", St. Mary's Convent, January 1964 - October 1973. Entries for 20 June 1964 and 18 July 1964, p. 66 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁴⁶¹ "Decree on the apostolate of lay people" in Austin Flannery (ed.), *The Basic sixteen documents of Vatican Council II* (Dublin: Dominican publications and New York: Costello publishing company, 1996), p. 409.

⁴⁶² Damian Magrath, "Tertiaries in the Church", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 25, June 1963, p. 11.

⁴⁶³ 'Sr. Prioress reported that she had received the first batch of lectures from the Tertiary Secretariate'. "Stellenbosch Women's Chapter minute book", 20 June 1964, p. 8 (CDSA, Cape Town).

However, there were others who, like Thorburn, questioned whether the tertiaries would ever be able to modernise and develop a lay spirituality in the spirit of Vatican II. This was not just an issue for the Dominican tertiaries but was common to all the tertiary groups in the country.

5.2.1. The Third Order mentality

In 1967, a fierce debate broke out in the *Southern Cross* concerning the identity of the tertiaries. Fr. J. McVey gave a talk to the Catholic Women's League (CWL) in Grahamstown, and encouraged the women to develop a lay spirituality consistent with the mind of Vatican II. This, he suggested, was a spirituality through which "the laity best serve the interest of Christ by serving the world". He then went on to say: "Hence it is important to get away from the 'Third Order Mentality'" ⁴⁶⁴.

This last statement caused a furore among tertiaries from various Third Orders. The *Southern Cross* received many letters from irate tertiaries. The first to respond was a Franciscan tertiary, C. C. Fitzmaurice from Vereeniging. ⁴⁶⁵ He challenged McVey to explain what he meant by getting away from Third Order mentality. Fitzmaurice went on to criticise McVey for being ignorant of the fact that for over 500 years different popes had encouraged laity to become members of Third Orders. Third Orders were of great help to parish priests and that there were many diverse groups of tertiaries.

In a subsequent letter, McVey outlined his views. He denied that he was making a statement but rather raising points for discussion when referring to the Third Orders. One of these points for discussion was the question:

Can the Third Orders still be regarded as providing a genuine *lay* spirituality according to the mind of Vatican II? I, personally, am not altogether sure. ⁴⁶⁶

He explained his reasons for saying this. Firstly, he argued that religious orders were an obstacle to the development of a genuine lay spirituality because they adapted the religious order's spirituality for lay people. This adapted spirituality, he said, implied that "lay holiness was something irretrievably lower than the higher holiness of the religious". ⁴⁶⁷ This is what he

⁴⁶⁴ "Eastern Cape CWL: 'The laity best serve Christ by serving the world'", *Southern Cross*, 5 July 1967.

⁴⁶⁵ "Third Orders defended", *Southern Cross*, 26 July 1967.

⁴⁶⁶ "Worldliness of lay Christians", *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1967.

⁴⁶⁷ "Worldliness of lay Christians", *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1967.

meant by the Third Order mentality - that the laity are left to lick up the scraps that fall from the rich man's spiritual table like the dogs in the story of Lazarus in the Gospels. This created a frame of mind among laity that they must be content with just collecting virtuous acts and receiving the privilege of being buried in the habit of an Order. He also criticised the offering of indulgences to lay people as the religious orders' way of offering laity "attractive spiritual bargains". This approach was no longer "edifying in the light of recent papal pronouncements".⁴⁶⁸ The spiritual formation given to tertiaries was not suitable as it appeared to come from the first book of the *Imitation of Christ*, in which lax monks are encouraged not to get taken in by the ways of the world. Rather than having an adapted spirituality, he argued, lay people have to find their sanctity in the midst of the world, not apart from it. The layperson, "belonging wholly to Christ, ... stands at the same time belonging wholly to the world".⁴⁶⁹

Many of the letters completely missed McVey's challenging points. Anthony Mehan, the Dominican tertiary from Rondebosch in Cape Town, wrote suggesting that if McVey felt that the tertiaries had a problematic mentality, then he should have raised his concerns with a First Order priest, who had the responsibility for directing these tertiaries.⁴⁷⁰

An emotional response was received from 'One of them' in Johannesburg. This Franciscan tertiary responded angrily to McVey's reference to tertiaries being "petty, sanctimonious and like the canines in the Gospel grateful for the crumbs". The writer pointed out that tertiaries still had an important role to play in the transformed church of Vatican II. At a time when there is a lack of priestly vocations, many lay deacons could be drawn from the tertiaries. A tertiary could help ordinary lay Catholics make sense of the changes of the Council especially regarding the liturgy. The writer pointed out that tertiaries were "schools of perfection" and were able to retain in the 1960s, the wisdom of the Middle Ages. The letter ended with the words: "Father McVey, don't throw us out on the junk heap yet".⁴⁷¹

'Twentieth century tertiary' from Johannesburg asked whether Fr. McVey found a Third Order chapter a foreign influence in the parish? This writer tried to show that religious don't adapt their spirituality for the laity. Rather it was the individual's affinity with a particular spiritual

⁴⁶⁸ "Worldliness of lay Christians", *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1967.

⁴⁶⁹ "Worldliness of lay Christians", *Southern Cross*, 9 August 1967.

⁴⁷⁰ "Tertiary practice", *Southern Cross*, 16 August 1967.

⁴⁷¹ "Don't throw us on the junkheap!", *Southern Cross*, 23 August 1967.

tradition that attracted them and not a desire for indulgences. Tertiaries had produced many Catholic actionists too, the writer noted.⁴⁷²

C. C. Fitzmaurice from Vereeniging wrote once again and accused McVey of being sarcastic, lacking in charity, envious of the friars and disliking tertiaries. This aggressive letter took offence at McVey's statements which did not consider Third Order spirituality to be a genuine *lay* spirituality. He argued that adherence to a rule of life was a guide to attain the holiness to which all Christians were called by Vatican II.⁴⁷³

Fr. McVey writing from Port Alfred, reiterated his view that few of the tertiary correspondents had responded to his basic question: "Can the Third Orders *still* be regarded as providing a genuine lay spirituality *according to the mind of Vatican II?*"⁴⁷⁴ He concluded his letter by suggesting that a medieval system of spirituality was no longer suitable for a nuclear age.

The last correspondent to write was Therese-Marie Meyer, a Carmelite tertiary, who considered McVey's concerns fair and necessary. She believed that a Third Order was a valid spiritual path and that it had perennial validity. However, she acknowledged that a transformation of the out-dated and impractical tertiary rule was required because it prevented tertiaries from being in touch with the present realities of the world.⁴⁷⁵

McVey had touched a raw nerve. His comments and questions went to the heart of the challenges faced by the lay Dominicans and with which they were forced to grapple for the next decade.

5.2.2. Attempts at formulating a lay Dominican spirituality

The shift in conceptualising the role of the Third Order in a post-Vatican II church can be summed up by the transition from tertiary to lay Dominican. This change in South Africa was in line with the changes within the Order worldwide.⁴⁷⁶ Between August and November 1967, the tertiary newsletter changed its name to the *Lay Dominican Newsletter*. Chapters were

⁴⁷² "Tertiaries defended", *Southern Cross*, 6 September 1967.

⁴⁷³ "Updating Third Orders", *Southern Cross*, 6 September 1967.

⁴⁷⁴ "Third Orders: question not answered", *Southern Cross*, 20 September 1967.

⁴⁷⁵ "Third Orders in the modern world", *Southern Cross*, 4 October 1967.

⁴⁷⁶ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, p. 14.

referred to as fraternities and priors became presidents. A change in name was also a change in identity that could challenge the lay Dominicans to articulate a new spirituality.

Integral to developing a new spirituality among the tertiaries was the question of how to relate faith to life experience. It was also a question of how to make the Dominican spiritual tradition their own, in the light of their own experience as laity, rather than that of the professed religious. However, the search for a lay Dominican spirituality was not an area on which the tertiaries or their chaplains focused much attention. They were more concerned with declining membership and adapting the tertiary rule.

This was exacerbated by the dissolution of the men's chapter in Cape Town in 1970 as it was unable to attract new membership. Heinz Beerman informed Albert Nolan, the spiritual director of the chapter, that the chapter had "decided regretfully to suspend activities of the Chapter owing to smallness of numbers".⁴⁷⁷ All the existing members were to become lone lay Dominicans. The drop in membership became a worrying trend for the lay Dominicans throughout the 1970s.

5.2.3. First lay Dominican National Congress in 1972

The headline in the *Southern Cross* "Soul-searching by Dominican Third Order"⁴⁷⁸ summed up the mood and tone of the discussions at the first lay Dominican Congress held at St. Benedict's House in Rosettenville, Johannesburg in May 1972. The report said that the lay Dominicans underwent a great deal of soul-searching in order to identify the reasons why there was a lack of interest among some members and a general decline in membership.

In his opening address, Fr. Hans Brenninkmeijer, the vicar general of the new South African vicariate, highlighted this concern.

If I count well, we have at the moment 8 Chapters and at one time even 10, not counting the numerous 'lone members' which were to be found all over the country ...

It is in the more recent years that many of our Chapters have experienced a regrettable loss of members, very often a not so accountable process of quietly sliding away of Members, which is not counterbalanced by an equivalent inflow of new candidates. This is of course not a

⁴⁷⁷ "Letter from Heinz Beerman to Albert Nolan", 22 February 1970 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans Promoter's file II). The lone tertiaries are listed as Heinz Beerman, John Brand, William D'Arcy, Leo Hoeben, Alick Mehan, Edward Shaw and Norman Waterson.

⁴⁷⁸ *Southern Cross*, 12 July 1972.

South Africa and publish a new manual containing the new rule, the directory, Dominican prayers and ceremonies for the admission and profession of new members.⁴⁸²

5.2.4. Second lay Dominican Congress in 1975

Nothing much had changed by the time the second congress was held in Rosettenville from 30 August to 1 September 1975. The reports given by the different chapters to the second Congress of lay Dominicans are telling.⁴⁸³ Numbers attending the chapters in Brakpan and Boksburg had dropped dramatically so it was decided to amalgamate the two chapters. The new one became known as the East Rand chapter. Joan Urban, the secretary of this chapter, reported that the monthly meetings were held in rotation at various houses of members. Membership of the joint chapter was now at fourteen members.⁴⁸⁴ Madge Green reported that there were dwindling numbers in the Cape Town chapters. The official membership of twenty no longer reflected the chapter's true position. "Departures and resignations had reduced the effective membership down to 8".⁴⁸⁵ In Durban, the situation was no different. Paula Wittig, reporting on behalf of the president who was unable to attend the Congress, said "a membership of 25 had dwindled to 7 or 8, but the 'remnant' was persevering with monthly meetings. None of the male members of the Fraternity remained".⁴⁸⁶

Cyril Silberbauer reported for the Johannesburg chapter:

the Fraternity had experienced a long period in the doldrums, from which it had emerged mainly through the loyalty and dynamism of [the] National President, who had been formed and assisted by Fr. Engering.⁴⁸⁷

While their average attendance of chapter meetings was still high, about twenty members, there were no young people joining.

Even the Kwa Thema chapter, which had been growing steadily, experienced a decline in membership from ten members down to three.⁴⁸⁸ It was reported to the Congress that the

⁴⁸² *Southern Cross*, 12 July 1972.

⁴⁸³ "Minutes of the Second Congress of Lay Dominicans" held at St. Benedict's House, Rosettenville, 30 August - 1 September 1975 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans: 1976-1978, File: Up to 1976).

⁴⁸⁴ See "Minutes of Second Congress", p. 7.

⁴⁸⁵ "Minutes of Second Congress", p. 7.

⁴⁸⁶ "Minutes of Second Congress", p. 7.

⁴⁸⁷ "Minutes of Second Congress", p. 7.

Springs chapter was in a very weak condition. There was no recognised leader and the three or four dedicated members in the chapter were all suffering from various physical disabilities. They were, therefore, unable to play an active role. However, there were groups in Welkom, Port Elizabeth and Heilbron that were functional and still meeting regularly. Only one new chapter had recently been established in Bulawayo in Rhodesia.⁴⁸⁹

While there were many reports of dwindling numbers and the lack of interest among young people to join, many of the chapters continued. They engaged in Bible studies and group discussions. The Johannesburg chapters were principally involved in the promoting:

Our Lady's Guild of the Sick, which has been revitalised and, according to reports, enjoyed a good response from both invalids and priests. More priests and sponsors were, however, needed.⁴⁹⁰

While there were some attempts to analyse and address this obvious crisis in the life of the lay Dominicans, a great deal of the deliberations at the Congress focused on subsidiary issues like whether or not the wearing of the scapular was obligatory⁴⁹¹ and the publication of the new manual.⁴⁹² The discussion around the manual, however, is instructive because it revealed the tensions and differences of vision among the lay Dominicans.

5.2.4.1. New manual

The tertiaries were battling to develop a lay spirituality in the light of Vatican II. Central to the reform of the tertiaries was the publication of a new manual which it was hoped would capture the new spirit of Vatican II and attract more members to the lay Dominicans. In the discussions reported in the minutes there are hints of a new spirituality developing among lay Dominicans. Fr. Joseph Falkiner said that the newly established group in Bulawayo "were anxious for a set of rules which set out every possible aspect of lay Dominican life in black and white".⁴⁹³ Falkiner questioned this approach to the Dominican life.

⁴⁸⁸ There is a typographical error in the original text. It reads: 'Bro. Sixtus Msomi recounted the history of this [Kwa Thema] Fraternity whose fall in membership from three to 10 active Tertiaries does not provide a true measure of its effectiveness'. See *Minutes* p. 9. It is most likely that the figures were switched around.

⁴⁸⁹ The first meeting of the Bulawayo lay Dominican group was held on 16 April 1975 under the direction of Sr. Mary of the Divine Heart. They held their meetings on the third Wednesday of each month at 5.15pm and ended with Benediction in the Convent chapel at 6.00pm. See *Dominican Topics*, vol. 17, no. 2, November 1975 p. 14.

⁴⁹⁰ See "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 9.

⁴⁹¹ See "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 10.

⁴⁹² See "Minutes of the Second Congress", pp. 2-5.

⁴⁹³ See "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 2.

Fr. Damian Magrath agreed that rules always presented the temptation to seek safety instead of looking for the reason behind each rule and from this, work out and shape a disciplined way of life. Madge Green from Cape Town countered saying that in relaxing rules and laying the main emphasis on Christian living we were not really making any radical change. She was concerned that lay Dominicans were just coming together for liturgical celebrations but nothing more. She was concerned that university students be encouraged to join but realised that the particular character or composition of a chapter was not an attractive draw card for young people. She proposed that a more specialised group be established that would attract younger people. Magrath had no objection to this proposal. The national president Phyllis Honeywill disagreed saying that:

while there was a need to interest University folk, they should join an existing Fraternity in order to learn how things were done, and it was the duty of the Fraternity to see to it that people were attracted rather than repelled. Specialised groups could be of inestimable value, but they should commence their work within the framework of the Fraternity and then, if they outgrew the Fraternity, they could carry with them this experience of Chapter life in erecting new Fraternities.⁴⁹⁴

Green felt that people attending chapter meetings wanted to be "pepped up" spiritually. Far more was needed than could possibly be compressed into a series of talks or sermons by a spiritual director. If nothing was done to make meetings more appealing to younger people the lay Dominicans would repeatedly be "letting the opportunity of realising the true function of the Third Order slip through our hands".⁴⁹⁵

Later in the discussion a question was raised concerning the presence of a priest at monthly meetings. Falkiner said that the presence of a priest at monthly meetings was not essential. As an example, he referred to a meeting he had attended while in Rhodesia. The chapter was composed of people with a high degree of spiritual knowledge. Honeywill again disagreed claiming that the presence of a priest was of inestimable value in circumstances where the lay Dominicans were still in the process of growth and reconstruction. It was the duty of the First Order to assist the Third and the input from a priest once a month gave extra Dominican impetus that was still needed.

⁴⁹⁴ "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 3.

⁴⁹⁵ "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 4.

The discussion ended inconclusively and no decisions arose from the debate. Nevertheless, the following decisions were made at the end of the Congress:

1. Although the emphasis is on flexibility, the requirements for admission to the Order remain stringent.
2. Without departing from the principle of flexibility, guidelines and rubrics would be helpful. Dominicans are not disposed to fringe, or wildcat, devotions and as our prayer is a communal prayer and our life a communal life, a minimum of uniformity would not limit our freedom.
3. Additional prayers, i.e. Office of the Dead and a Penitential Office, as also Prayers for special occasions, are needed.⁴⁹⁶

During the congress, Phyllis Honeywill was re-elected as National President. The Council members elected were: Ivy Andrew, Keith Simpson, Victor Sing, Sixtus Msomi, Thomas Moeketsi and Cyril Silberbauer. Honeywill's leadership ensured that no real innovations were to be forthcoming.

5.2.4.2. **Need for young people**

The second Congress of lay Dominicans again missed the opportunity to reflect deeply on developing a genuine lay spirituality. They were still concerned with adapting the rule but did not really think outside the parameters of this rule. When Madge Green proposed attracting university students this was at least a suggestion in the right direction. It was never taken up. So the lay Dominicans continued to lose ground to other lay organisations. Fr. McVey's perspective continued to be borne out that the tertiaries were not suited to a Vatican II church.

Yet it would be opportune at this moment to reflect on what spirituality was driving young people at universities' at this time. There had been a massive shift in spiritual and theological perspectives among the younger Catholics in the 1960s and 1970s, especially those at university. Albert Nolan remembers that young people never used the word 'spirituality'.

[In] YCS and YCW, nobody ever talked about spirituality what they talked about was theology and I think that's an interesting kind of shift. In the Lay Dominicans that I first joined you never talked about theology that was a subject you studied in the seminary. But we all talked about spirituality in the form you can call Christian perfection. But later on this wasn't [acceptable], spirituality was regarded as a very individualistic thing, as me and God, and spirituality was the born-again people and they just had to pray about it and problems would go away. Theology was saying how justice was done and that God was on the side of the poor and things like that. So theology was much more [used]... and Jesus, very much so but not spirituality as such.⁴⁹⁷

⁴⁹⁶ "Minutes of the Second Congress", p. 5.

⁴⁹⁷ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 52.

When Albert Nolan was the National Chaplain of NCFS, he gave a number of talks on Jesus at the 1972 National Conference which later formed the basis of his best-selling book *Jesus before Christianity*.⁴⁹⁸ In this book, Nolan presents a picture of the historical Jesus who sought to bring his people back to a just, compassionate and loving practice of their religious faith. In this sense he was revolutionary because he challenged his contemporaries to live by Kingdom values of sharing, humility, human solidarity especially with the poor and service. This was in contrast to the values of the selfish accumulation of wealth, prestige, group solidarity and power, which marked the behaviour of Herod, the scribes and the Pharisees.⁴⁹⁹

This call to a radical faith and following of Jesus inspired some students to set up communes in Cape Town and Johannesburg where they lived a simple lifestyle. It also challenged them to become more involved in challenging the injustices of apartheid society. They became interested in liberation theology, black theology and politics.

What is strikingly different about the spirituality lived by the students is that it was not monastic. The emphasis was increasingly on living in the world, facing the injustices in society and making a contribution to changing them. It was no longer a contemplative monastic spirit that energised the younger generation but rather an activist one. An apostolic spirituality spoke more clearly to their hopes and ideals. They wanted to be out there changing the world, making it a better place, facing the challenges of the day.

Even the more conservative students who objected to the excessive left-wing tendencies among some of the students in NCFS, in particular, preferred the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement which was lively and energetic in its celebrations.

The spirituality ... people would talk about would be the experience of singing and dancing at Mass, that kind of thing. The excitement of it, the excitement of a conference and planning together, doing things together, that would have been very much spirituality. So if you asked the NCFS people in those days where they found God, if you like, it would be at an exciting Mass.⁵⁰⁰

The more sedate monastic spirituality of the lay Dominicans did not appeal to the younger generation. Younger people were not eager to join the lay Dominicans because the emphasis on

⁴⁹⁸ Anthony Egan, *The politics of a South African Catholic Student Movement, 1960-1987* (Cape Town: The Centre for African Studies, 1991), p. 65.

⁴⁹⁹ See Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity: A gospel of liberation*, Twenty-fifth anniversary edition (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001).

⁵⁰⁰ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, pp. 52-53.

following a rule, wearing of habits, saying prayers, taking vows was considered old-fashioned and being a "stick-in-the-mud".⁵⁰¹

Even less so did the lay Dominicans attract black youth into its organisation. Many of the black students were greatly influenced by Black Consciousness and looked upon multi-racial church organisations with disdain. The exception was the lay Dominican group in Hammanskraal which numbered among its members young black seminarians like S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa and John Louwfant who were influential in developing the St. Peter's Old Boys' Association (SPOBA) and the Black Priests' Manifesto. They were greatly impressed by the openness and freedom of the Dominican friars who taught them in the seminary. Through their studies and receptivity to ideas of the Black Consciousness movement these young black priests and seminarians challenged the church of their time to take Africanisation of the Church more seriously. Their perspectives did not influence the mainstream of the lay Dominican movement at this period in any way whatsoever.

Unlike religious orders and congregations, the lay Dominicans at this period were never encouraged to return to their roots in the penitential movements of Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This may have given rise to a different spirituality based on the itinerant preaching of Jesus and perhaps the lay Dominicans may have been able to attract a younger generation. As the discussions around the manual at the Second National Congress showed, the opinions of Phyllis Honeywill held sway and the lay Dominicans in the 1970s were unable to make the adjustment to a new and different spirituality. They stayed with what they knew and, consequently, few young people joined them.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that there were not some attempts to bring a new spirit to the lay Dominicans. After the 1975 Congress, Cyril Silberbauer was delegated by the National Council to develop an updated formation programme for those entering the lay Dominicans and those given the task to instruct them.⁵⁰² This he did with enthusiasm. He identified a number of challenges prevalent among the lay Dominicans of this period.

⁵⁰¹ Dennis Sweetman, *Appendix*, p. 65.

⁵⁰² At the National Council meeting in Brakpan on 14 February 1976, Cyril Silberbauer, in consultation with the Promoter, Fr. Engering, was asked to prepare a draft guide booklet on the training of novices (probationary members). See *Dominican Topics*, vol. 18, no.1, August 1976, p. 17.

5.2.5. New formation policy for the lay Dominicans

Cyril Silberbauer's treatment of the formation programme was really an explication of the rule but it was accompanied by practical advice. There were suggestions about how to prepare lessons, what should form the basis of instruction and what could be profitably left out. For example, he proposed that it was not necessary to engage in too much devotional instruction regarding "the seafaring exploits of St. Raymund of Pennafort or the delivery of the Holy Rosary".⁵⁰³ He suggested that the one giving instruction should plan carefully and seek advice from the chaplain or National Council, if necessary. The instructor should always do more preparation than was strictly required but should also avoid overloading the probationary member (novice) with too much information. The instructor should be firm and maintain authority by not allowing the session to degenerate into idle chit-chat. The one under instruction should be given homework *within reasonable limits*. The instructor should never direct the instruction in the direction of their 'pet' point of view but should seek to remain down-to-earth. Most of the advice was basic common sense. However, what is striking is not the formation programme he outlined as much as the context in which he placed these thoughts.

Firstly, he pointed out that even though the lay Dominicans were small in number and chapters had been reduced to mere 'groups', and while fragments of others were scattered around the country as a lone Dominicans, this was not cause for alarm. He said: "At the moment, lay Dominicans constitute a 'remnant'".⁵⁰⁴ This remnant was the leaven that Jesus could use to achieve his great work. Silberbauer placed the 'depressing' reality within a new framework of interpretation and used this more positive assessment of the lay Dominicans as the basis for further reflections.

Secondly, he highlighted another concern that of the vocation of the lay Dominican. "What are lay Dominicans expected to do?"⁵⁰⁵ He pointed out that the function of the Order was to be open to the world.

⁵⁰³ Cyril Silberbauer, "Training of Lay Dominican probationers (novices) and probationer instructors (novice-masters)", handwritten pages, 29 February 1976 (ZAOP, Orange Rand Flat file).

⁵⁰⁴ Silberbauer, "The Training of a Lay Dominican", p. 3.

⁵⁰⁵ Silberbauer, "The Training of a Lay Dominican", p. 11.

It may be a fallen world. It may at any time approach its foreordained doom. But it is still God's world, God's creation. It is the only world we know. Transformed it will shine in the glory of the Kingdom.⁵⁰⁶

He went on further to emphasise that lay Dominicans had a prophetic role to play in the world:

Change is most dramatically brought about through the instrumentality of man. It may present horrifying, harrowing, aspects. But we cannot take refuge in an illusory 'home for little children, above the bright blue skies'. We must look it squarely in the face, just as the Master did. We have a prophetic role. We must issue words of warning, words of protest, words of consolation. This becomes urgent today, because of the nature of man-made change.⁵⁰⁷

The task of the Dominican was to engage with this world through prayer, study and contemplation. This was essential if Dominicans were not to become reactionaries who dug in their heels and only looked after their own invested interests and their own outlook on life. It would also prevent them becoming radical activists who seize upon current thought-patterns and fashioned their own truth which they would willingly impose by violence.

For Silberbauer, the challenge to participate in the colossal task of salvation was not just for the friars and sisters but for the laity too.

A Lay Dominican is now called upon to step into the shoes of a Dominic, a Catherine, a Martin de Porres. The enormous wealth of tradition behind us, our methods which have worked in the past, do not provide us with ready-made solutions to every problem. We live, after all, in the closing years of the twentieth century. We have to pray with confidence, observe and study our problems, work harder and set our 'lamp on a lampstand'. Our Bishops have laid down general guidelines as to what is expected of us. There is still time for concentrated preparation, a deeper sincerity in our practice, a deepening of our ties of friendship and solidarity with one another. 'Happy those servants whom the Master will find watching when he comes'. And happy those who are ready for action when He calls.⁵⁰⁸

This amazing document presented an outline for the new type of spirituality which would have provided the basis for a regenerated understanding of the lay Dominicans in South Africa. Silberbauer was truly in touch with the spirit of the times. This document was never adopted by the National Council or sent to the different chapters for discussion. No printed versions of it were ever produced. The document was mostly likely placed in a file and forgotten about.

⁵⁰⁶ "The Training of a Lay Dominican", p. 13.

⁵⁰⁷ "The Training of a Lay Dominican", p. 13.

⁵⁰⁸ "The Training of a Lay Dominican", p. 15.

Despite its innovative ideas, the document had a number of flaws. One was that Silberbauer was still operating out of the idea of a contemplative focus for the lay Dominicans without placing sufficient emphasis on the apostolic and preaching component of the Dominican life. Secondly, he made no mention that the most urgent prophetic task of the time was to challenge the injustices of apartheid. However, to be fair to him the document was most likely written before the student uprisings of June 1976. The document is undated, but a shortened version entitled *Training of Lay Dominican probationers (novices) and probationer instructors (novice-masters)* is dated 29 February 1976.⁵⁰⁹ A summary of the text was also published in May 1976 issue of *Dominican Topics*.⁵¹⁰

5.2.6. Third National Congress in 1979

By the time the third National Congress was held in Victory Park in 1979, the same downward trends were still being reported as at the previous congresses. In Cape Town, active membership was reduced to six. When the original Stellenbosch chapter, established in 1945, was divided into separate men and women's chapters in 1955, there were over thirty members in the women's chapter. For the past few years there had been no sign of life from the Men's Chapter, so men attended the women's chapter. In fact, it had become the only chapter in Cape Town. There were some prospects of new members joining as two men were being instructed by Fr. Peter Paul Feeny OP and it was hoped they be both be professed as lay Dominicans.

The high age level and largely conservative nature of our group make it unlikely to attract younger people, and it may be that in them the Dominican spirit will find fresh forms of expression. Meanwhile the faithfulness of our present Lay Dominicans makes it worthwhile to continue the Chapter for the foreseeable future.⁵¹¹

The East Rand group was still meeting in the homes of members. This was an innovation that other groups later copied. Prior to this they often met in a Dominican parish or convent.

Some good news came from the newly established group in Virginia. It was started on 7 August 1977 when three brothers entered as postulants - Harold Dom, Michael Galbraith and Edwin Engle. According to the report, two black members, Sr. Doris and Bro. Pius Makalane, later joined this group. Bro. Martin Motjotji, who came all the way from Frankfort, also made

⁵⁰⁹ See Silberbauer, "The training of a Lay Dominican", p. 8.

⁵¹⁰ *Dominican Topics*, vol. 17, no. 4, May 1976, pp. 10-11.

⁵¹¹ "National Congress Report" (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans, File: 1978-1986). The Cape Town report given by Madge Green.

contact with this multi-racial group. In April 1979, Michael, Harold and Edwin became full members of the lay Dominican family at a Mass celebrated by Fr. Dominic Lansen. In September 1977, three novices were accepted. The apostolate of the chapter members included involvement in lay ministries, care for the sick and justice and reconciliation.⁵¹²

Other good news was that the Springs chapter had renewed its activities in 1976.⁵¹³ The chapter in Bulawayo had increased in number and had about fifteen members.⁵¹⁴ Attendance at meetings was hampered by petrol rationing due to the war that Rhodesia was engaged in against ZANLA and ZIPRA fighters.⁵¹⁵

It was also reported that the Kwa Thema chapter was going through a difficult period. However, Emil Blaser was going to help them as they were meeting again.⁵¹⁶ Other developments were that Bernard Connor took over from Joe Falkiner as assistant chaplain and attended the National Council meeting on 18 February 1979.

While there were attempts to formulate a new spirituality for the lay Dominicans, the question about whether it was ever implemented is difficult to answer, but reports indicate that by 1979 there had been no radical shift in policy among the lay Dominicans. Except for the emergence of a few new groups, attendance and numbers in existing groups and chapters continued to drop. No new spirit was engendered among the lay Dominicans during this period.

In relation to their involvement within the church and parish structures there were significant shifts which might also account for why there was a dearth of new membership.

5.3. Involvement within the Church

The most wholehearted embracing of Vatican II by the lay Dominicans was displayed in their involvement in lay ministries in the church. The establishment of parish councils and diocesan councils encouraged the laity to make greater contributions to the running of the church. In South Africa, a Laity Commission was established to communicate to the Bishops' Conference

⁵¹² "President's Report - 1979 Congress" (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans, File: 1978-1986) and *Dominican Topics*, vol. 19, no. 4, May 1978 p. 23.

⁵¹³ "President's Report - 1979 Congress" p. 4.

⁵¹⁴ *Dominican Topics*, vol. 20, no. 2, November 1978, p. 20.

⁵¹⁵ *Dominican Topics*, vol. 19, no. 4, May 1978, p. 18.

⁵¹⁶ "President's Report - 1979 Congress", p. 3.

the views and perspectives of the laity within the Church. The lay Dominicans became members of this Commission.

Commenting on the drop in numbers among the lay Dominicans, Johannes Brenninkmeijer, the vicar general, made a handwritten comment in the margin of his paper, given at the first Congress of the lay Dominicans in 1972. He wrote:

perhaps that in the changing structures of the Church, like parish councils and other challenges for lay cooperation in the Church, the Third Order and its methods as we know it, doesn't offer enough scope for several of our past members of whom many remained active in church life.⁵¹⁷

Laity were being called upon to take up greater responsibilities in the parishes especially because of the establishment of parish councils and the involvement of more lay catechists. Even during the 1950s the lay Dominicans were primarily concerned with doing ministry within the church. This interest was maintained after Vatican II.

5.3.1. Parish councils

The "Decree on the Apostolate of lay people" in article 26 recommended that all parishes set up parish councils.⁵¹⁸ Laity were expected to get more involved in the pastoral and apostolic ministry of the church. In the Archdiocese of Durban every parish was expected to establish a parish council by 26 February 1967.⁵¹⁹ Guidelines for the establishment of parish councils in the diocese of Johannesburg were circulated by April 1967.⁵²⁰ The Johannesburg cathedral parish council was established on 1 May 1967.⁵²¹ On 30 May, it was decided to disestablish the Catholic Federation, which had been in existence in Johannesburg diocese since 1926, in favour a Diocesan Council.⁵²²

⁵¹⁷ Fr. J. Brenninkmeijer OP, "Opening address to the Congress". National Congress at St. Benedict's Guest House, Rosettenville, 12-14 May 1972. (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans 1976-1978, File: Up to 1976).

⁵¹⁸ See "Decree on the Apostolate of lay people" in Austin Flannery, *Vatican II: Constitutions, Decrees, Declarations* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1996), p. 434.

⁵¹⁹ "Parish Councils' D-Day in Durban", *Southern Cross*, 15 February 1967.

⁵²⁰ "Guidelines laid down for Rand parish councils", *Southern Cross*, 19 April 1967.

⁵²¹ *Southern Cross*, 10 May 1967.

⁵²² *Southern Cross*, 14 June 1967.

By 1969, the *Southern Cross* reported that a speed up in the implementation of parish councils around the country was sought. "In some territories parish councils are almost fully established; in others a start has been made".⁵²³

The greater involvement of laity in the running of the church at parish level in parish councils and catechetics called for a more mature Christian faith. There were calls for a mature Christian faith in the light of challenges of Vatican II in the *Lay Dominican Newsletter*.

The maturity of a Christian is measured by his knowledge of God, of self, of neighbour, and by his response to them all. Never can a mature person consider his neighbour (Who is your neighbour?) as an object of exploitation; for maturity means above all, genuine communication in healthy self-respect and in deep respect for the other.⁵²⁴

The article neglected to situate the answer to the question it asked: "Who is my neighbour?" In the South African context the oppressive nature of apartheid legislation and its denigration of black people got no mention nor is there any reference to the need for justice in South African society.

Developing a more mature faith was also confusing for many tertiaries. In the past the laity did what the clergy told them. Now, their opinion was being sought. Due to this encouragement many lay Dominicans did get involved in the parishes. They participated in parish councils, taught catechetics, and became communion ministers, some even elected to become permanent deacons. All these were positive initiatives but they had their downside too.

Looking at the world today, one gets the impression that everything is being turned upside down. All our tried and tested customs and cultures have been 'given the boot' and are being replaced by new trends and ideas that appear, to the older generation at least, to be unstable and a cause for great concern.

Turning to our faith for encouragement and enlightenment we find that our religion too has somersaulted. In the old comfortable religion, obedience was the accepted way of life, the Parish Priest's word was law and his authority was never questioned. In spite of more severe penances, it was good to know exactly what was permitted and to feel solid rock under one's feet.

But all that has changed. The laity now find themselves afloat rather like a rudderless ship with no captain at the helm. Parishioners are being asked to join Parish Councils and actually run Parishes and instruct Priests on what should be done! For centuries they have taken orders - suddenly they are to take command and issue orders. Small wonder that so much confusion exists. The average man and woman finds it difficult to adapt to change and still more so to radical changes. Hardly had the laity become accustomed to Latin dialogue at Mass when they had to switch to the vernacular. Eucharistic fasts have been relaxed as well as fasting

⁵²³ *Southern Cross*, 24 September 1969.

⁵²⁴ "Maturity", *Lay Dominican Newsletter*, no. 11, February 1968, pp. 1-2.

and abstinence. Even the Canon of the Mass has changed ... The point is: where does the Tertiary fit into this picture?⁵²⁵

The shift in emphasis from being tertiaries to lay Dominicans was more than just a name change. It was also a shift in identity. Tertiaries got their identity in the past from being attached to and copying the lifestyle of the friars and sisters. Now the challenge was to live their own identity as Dominican laity not as pseudo-religious. This was a difficult transition for many of the tertiaries but they realised that they must update or be left behind.

In this decade, we too as Tertiaries must up-date our methods or be left behind and fail in that important precept of 'sanctification of souls'.

If the learned Fathers of the Church have seen the need for Parish Councils, then we should be willing and eager to offer our services on such councils and to serve in the manner most suitable to our own particular station and in accordance with the time at our disposal. In this way we shall surely be fulfilling that injunction to assist the parish priest and to do apostolic works for the Faith and the Church.⁵²⁶

By the end of the 1960s, many became so involved in their parishes that they found it difficult to maintain their interest in the lay Dominican groups. Attendance at meetings continued to plummet and fewer people joined the lay Dominicans. This was to be the underlying crisis faced by the lay Dominicans in the 1970s. Laity no longer needed to be tertiaries in order to make a meaningful contribution to the life of the Church.

5.3.2. Permanent diaconate

Vatican II gave permission for the ordination of lay men to the permanent diaconate. Paul VI approved the permanent diaconate for both married and single men in the document "The Sacred Order of the Diaconate" on 27 June 1967.⁵²⁷ In 1968, the bishops in South Africa agreed to establish the permanent diaconate throughout their territories and expected the first ordinations the following year.⁵²⁸ Bishop van Hoeck OSB of Pietersburg ordained the first two married South African permanent deacons - Mr. Joseph Mabusela⁵²⁹ and Mr. D. Maleka. Mabusela was ordained in Warmbaths on 30 November 1969 and Maleka in Potgietersrus on 7 December, a week later.

⁵²⁵ Sr. Catherine, "Today and yesterday", *Lay Dominican Newsletter*, no. 13, August 1968, p. 4. It is not clear whether Ivy Andrew from Brakpan or Madge Green from Cape Town wrote the article as no surname is supplied. They were both given the name Sr. Catherine when they became tertiaries.

⁵²⁶ Sr. Catherine, "Today and yesterday", p. 5

⁵²⁷ *Southern Cross*, 5 July 1967.

⁵²⁸ *Southern Cross*, 15 May 1968 and 2 October 1968.

⁵²⁹ See article in *Die Brug*, vol. 19, no. 9, Oktober 1970, pp. 7-8 and photograph in vol. 19, no. 10, on inside cover.

The diocese of Kroonstad under Bishop van Velsen ordained many deacons to assist in the pastoral work of the diocese. It was seen as a way of alleviating the lack of priestly vocations in the diocese⁵³⁰ and over a period of ten years from 1972 to 1982 thirteen deacons were ordained.⁵³¹

The impact this may have had on the tertiaries is difficult to ascertain. Martin de Klerk, and Eddie Bock, both lay Dominicans in Springs, were among the first deacons to be ordained in the diocese of Johannesburg.⁵³² After ordination they found it difficult to maintain their involvement with the lay Dominicans. In Virginia, Mike Galbraith and Harold Dom also became deacons and faced similar challenges in the Free State.

5.3.3. Lay ministries

The liturgical functions of lector and communion minister were opened up to laity after Vatican II. Many tertiary men and women chose to take on the office of reader⁵³³ or communion minister as supplementary to their tertiary involvement. It was part of one's commitment as a tertiary to make a contribution to the parish in one way or another. Further research is required for a deeper appreciation of the contributions made by the lay Dominicans to lay ministries in the parishes.

5.3.3.1. Kwa Thema chapter

The lay Dominicans in Kwa Thema parish were virtually all lay ministers, often both lectors and communion ministers. Previously, the Dominican priests working in African parishes on the Reef, used the tertiaries as informal lay ministers. In white parishes this did not really happen but in African parishes the tertiaries translated the priest's homilies during the Mass and did the work of catechists in some places.

⁵³⁰ Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 197.

⁵³¹ Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 200.

⁵³² See "Letter from Yvonne Grobler, Springs to Fr. Engering", 2 November 1979 (ZAOP, Lay Dominicans promoter's file II).

⁵³³ Lectors were responsible for doing the readings during the Mass.

Fr. Joe Falkiner was one of the parish priests in Kwa Thema in the 1970s,⁵³⁴ as well as being the spiritual promoter of the chapter. He noticed that the lay ministers did not have sufficient background to the scripture passages they were reading at Mass. So he started a Bible study group among the lay Dominicans. In the discussions interesting points would be raised and form the basis for further reflection. On one occasion, Falkiner remembered the impact of one those questions raised during these sessions:

One of them said, 'This book is very strange, it talks about all these political groupings and that sort of thing, it makes it sound as if Jerusalem is a real place with a history.' He had been reading in church and interpreting priests' sermons for years and he thought the whole thing was a story, a kind of mythical story. The impact of that on me was enormous because it made me realise that we have a real task to do to make people aware of the historical background to our faith, that Jesus came in history, God worked through history. They had no idea; maybe some of them did but that particular person did not.⁵³⁵

In a report to the Bishops' Conference's Commission for the Lay Apostolate, the lay Dominicans reported that the Kwa Thema group were planning a Bible study tour of the Holy Land for 40 people.⁵³⁶ They also applied for financial assistance from the Bishops' Conference. This tour never took place.⁵³⁷

The lay Dominicans themselves wanted to participate more fully in the church and to be involved in disseminating the gospel. The priests often delegated them to officiate at funerals and do communion services in the parish. They would have to preach too. The greatest innovation in which a number of lay Dominicans were involved was the establishment of the parish ward system. Fr. Benedict Mulder and a parishioner Mr. Kekana, a policeman from the local police station, were integral to establishing the ward system, the first in the diocese of Johannesburg.⁵³⁸

For the lay Dominicans, relating faith to the political, economic and social issues of the day like the apartheid system, did not come naturally. Lay Dominican chaplains, like Joe Falkiner and Albert Nolan who were involved in encouraging youth in YCW or YCS to reflect on the social issues of the day in the light of their faith, did not encourage the use of the See, Judge, Act method among lay Dominicans. It was Nolan's opinion that "the tertiaries wouldn't have

⁵³⁴ There was a team of Benedict Mulder, Gregory Brooke and Joseph Falkiner.

⁵³⁵ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, pp. 16-17.

⁵³⁶ See "Report to the working committee of the Commission for the Lay Apostolate", p. 2 (BCA, Box: J7 Lay Apostolate).

⁵³⁷ Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja, interview conducted on 16 March 2007.

⁵³⁸ Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja, interview conducted on 16 March 2007.

been interested in that".⁵³⁹ They were more interested in working in the church and for the church than engaging with the social questions of the day.

5.3.4. Catechetics

Prior to Vatican II, many tertiaries were involved in the Confraternity for Christian Doctrine established by Pope Pius X. He introduced this society in order to encourage laity to pass on faith to children and converts.

In 1969, Fr. Paul Nadal and Sr. Theodula CSP published a series of new catechism books for the church in South Africa. They were called the 'People of God' series.⁵⁴⁰ The manual for teachers empowered many lay people to involve themselves in teaching catechism to children. The criticism levelled against the manual was that it was aimed at trained teachers and not volunteer catechism teachers as most of the lay Dominicans would have been.⁵⁴¹

It is not easy to ascertain how many lay Dominicans got involved in catechetics. Much more detailed research is required to understand the specific contribution of individual lay Dominicans to the challenge of teaching catechetics in their parishes. It is likely that this only developed in the 1980s as the number of sisters in schools declined.

Another area of involvement for the lay Dominicans was the national Laity Council.⁵⁴²

5.4.5. Lay Dominicans and the Laity Commission

The establishment of a Catholic laity commission was proposed by Paul Goller and Mollie Horn after their return from the third World Congress of the Lay Apostolate in Rome in 1967.⁵⁴³ A steering committee was appointed by the delegates from the Johannesburg diocese in 1968 to garner support from the laity for the establishment of a national lay council.⁵⁴⁴ In

⁵³⁹ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 53.

⁵⁴⁰ "New South African catechism", *Southern Cross*, 2 July 1969.

⁵⁴¹ Prudence Hategekimana, *Setting the captives free: The development of a catechetical programme for Southern Africa 1965-1991* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2002), p. 35.

⁵⁴² *Southern Cross*, 23 February 1972.

⁵⁴³ For a report on the congress see *Southern Cross*, 6 December 1967. A lay Dominican from Cape Town, Heinz Beerman attended the congress as an independent observer. He was particularly interested in issues of ecumenism. See *Southern Cross*, 1 February 1967 and 4 October 1972.

⁵⁴⁴ *Southern Cross*, 24 January 1968.

1971, at a seminar for the laity in Johannesburg, Archbishop Hurley announced that the bishops had agreed to the establishment of this laity council.⁵⁴⁵ The purpose of the council was stated as giving a voice to the laity within the church. Elected representatives from every diocese and lay organisation in the church would be on the body. A steering committee was established to work in conjunction with the Bishops' Commission for the Lay Apostolate.⁵⁴⁶ The South African Council for Catholic Laity (SACCL) was finally accepted and approved on 31 January 1974 at the Bishops' plenary meeting.⁵⁴⁷

The lay Dominicans made an application in 1972 to be accepted and listed as a national organisation for the lay apostolate by the Lay Apostolate Commission. This application by the promoter, Fr. Damian Magrath OP, was not accepted. The Commission did not seem clear about the criteria required for the recognition of national organisations.⁵⁴⁸ One of the requirements suggested was that the lay Dominicans establish a national executive.

Two years later, Father S. J. Engering OP, the promoter of the lay Dominicans, submitted another application, this time to the SACCL. In this application he explained that the lay Dominicans were not limited to religious activities only, but that the members were involved in activities in the apostolic field. The lay Dominicans had to submit the names and addresses of their national executive to the SACCL.⁵⁴⁹ The SACCL approved this application and the lay Dominicans were accepted as members of the SACCL.⁵⁵⁰

Nicholas Lekoane from the Kwa Thema chapter and Phyllis Honeywill from the Johannesburg women's chapter attended the SACCL seminar in Rosettenville in January 1975. This meeting was held in preparation for the laity consultation with the Bishops' Conference scheduled for

⁵⁴⁵ *Southern Cross*, 3 March 1971.

⁵⁴⁶ The Southern African Bishops' Conference established a Lay Apostolate Commission that was inaugurated in Pretoria on 26 June 1967.

⁵⁴⁷ "Minutes of meeting: Commission for Lay Apostolate", 31 January 1974, p. 4 (BCA, Box: J7 File: Commission for Lay Apostolate) and in the *Southern Cross*, 23 February 1972.

⁵⁴⁸ The Commission considered 'that it would be one of the tasks of the proposed Council of the Laity to lay down the conditions by which a lay organisation can be recognised on a 'national level'." See the "Minutes of the Plenary session SACBC 4-8 February 1974" and the "Annual Report - Commission for Laity", p.4. (BCA, Box: J7 File: Commission for Lay Apostolate, 1970-1974).

⁵⁴⁹ "Letter from L.E.M. Thom to Emilia Charbonneau", 13 June 1974 (AAD, Box: SA Council for Laity, File: Papers correspondence). The National Council comprised of Hyacinth Engering (provincial promoter), Joseph Falkiner (assistant promoter), Phyllis Honeywill (president), L.E.M. Thom (secretary), Ivy Andrew (East Rand chapter), Nicholas Lekoane (Kwa Thema chapter) and Keith Simpson (Johannesburg chapter).

⁵⁵⁰ "Minutes of the SACCL Executive meeting - Pretoria", p. 4 (BCA, Box J7, File: Southern African Council of Catholic Laity, 17-18 August 1974). Also "Letter from Emilia Charbonneau to Hyacinth Engering", 30 April 1974 (AAD, Box: SA Council for Laity, File: Papers correspondence).

February.⁵⁵¹ This consultation was held with the bishops at St. John Vianney seminary on 8 February 1975. While no lay Dominicans attended this first consultation of the laity by the bishops in the South African church, Nicholas Marabe, a delegate from Kwa Thema parish, did attend.

This meeting highlighted the greater prominence that the bishops gave to the involvement of the laity in the mission and work of the church after Vatican II. At the second congress, Nicholas Lekoane from Kwa Thema reported on the meeting of laity and the bishops that was held in February 1975.⁵⁵² He said that it was not only the laity who needed formation and training to enable them to work with the clergy but the clergy also needed formation so that they could adapt to lay participation and co-responsibility in the church.

The lay Dominicans continued to keep in touch with developments with the Laity Commission. In 1979, they responded to a request for discussion themes for the 1979 SACCL Conference. In response, Miss L.E.M. Thom, the secretary of the National Council of lay Dominicans, sent in three suggestions from the different chapters: social justice, formation of the laity and youth.⁵⁵³ The questionnaires and theme of the National Pastoral Consultation, planned for 1980, were posted to the different chapters.⁵⁵⁴ While lay Dominican delegates attended these meetings, the discussions at the SACCL did not appear to have had any influence or bearing on the direction of the lay Dominicans in South Africa.

While the lay Dominicans were getting involved in the national events and developments with regard to the involvement of laity in the mission of the Church, they were facing a crisis within. With declining membership and a lack of prophetic leadership, the lay Dominicans were unable to develop a new direction or spirituality to equip them to face the challenges of the 1980s.

⁵⁵¹ See BCA, Box: J6 Lay Apostolate Conferences, File: Preparatory seminar, January 1975.

⁵⁵² "Minutes of SACCL", pp. 12-13.

⁵⁵³ "Letter from Miss L.E.M. Thom to Miss I.M. Helsdon", 23 April 1979 (ZAOP, Lay Dominicans, Promoter's file II).

⁵⁵⁴ See "Minutes of SACCL", p. 2.

5.4. Evangelising and sanctifying the world

The lack of historical awareness among the lay Dominicans, the continuing predominance of the monastic model of the lay Dominican structure and the lack of attentiveness to the prophetic voices even among the lay Dominicans themselves compromised their ability to respond to Vatican II's challenge to the laity: evangelising and sanctifying the world.

The 'world' that the laity in South Africa was called upon to evangelise and sanctify at this time was one dominated by apartheid. During the 1960s and 1970s there was a resurgence of resistance to this unjust system, especially after 16 June 1976. There was a growing social consciousness developing among the Dominican friars especially at the priory in Stellenbosch with brothers getting involved in the Christian Institute,⁵⁵⁵ NCFS and University Christian Movement (UCM).⁵⁵⁶ By 1973, four Dominican friars had been deported or excluded from returning to South Africa because they criticised the injustices of apartheid.⁵⁵⁷ This was also the period of the development of Black Theology and the development of a "prophetic theology" that challenged the churches to a more radical witness against the system of apartheid. Only one Dominican chapter made some contribution to this new theological development and it is to this story we now turn.

5.4.1. Lay Dominicans in Hammanskraal

The Hammanskraal's chapter proved to be a tenuous link between the lay Dominicans and the development of prophetic Christianity in South Africa. Two ex-tertiaries, S'mangaliso Mkhathswa⁵⁵⁸ and Johannes Louwfant,⁵⁵⁹ were part of a group of newly-ordained black priests

⁵⁵⁵ Mark Collier and Rob van der Hart were two friars who got involved in the Christian Institute. Collier wrote an article in the *Southern Cross* on the subject in the 22 May 1968 issue. It is recorded that Albert Nolan, the spiritual director of men's chapter in Cape Town in 1965, encouraged the members to join the Christian Institute if they were looking for an apostolate. See "Minutes of the St. Thomas Aquinas Men's Chapter, Cape Town", March 1961-1965, the entry for 15 June 1965 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁵⁵⁶ On the involvement of the friars in the struggle against apartheid, see Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 238-291.

⁵⁵⁷ These were Rob van der Hart, Toine Eggenhuizen, Edmund Hill and Peter Sanders. On Rob van der Hart, see *Southern Cross*, 1 January 1969.

⁵⁵⁸ S'mangaliso Mkhathswa was a tertiary during his student years. He discontinued involvement with the tertiaries after his ordination. He ministered in the diocese of Witbank-Lydenburg where he did not maintain his contacts with the Dominican Order, see S'mangaliso Mkhathswa, telephonic interview conducted from Edenvale on 16 March 2007, *Appendix*, p. 113. There is no indication that John Louwfant continued after his seminary years either.

⁵⁵⁹ John Louwfant was ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Pretoria on 30 June 1963 (ASPS, Box: Past students 1960-1963 File: Louwfant, J, 1963).

who formed the St. Peter's Old Boys' Association (SPOBA). This organisation received the support of Oswin Magrath, the rector of the seminary, and Finbar Synnott, one of the lecturers.⁵⁶⁰ Mkhathswa was elected the first president of the St. Peter's Old Boys' Association in July 1966. SPOBA saw its task as challenging the bishops to Africanise the Church and also to criticise the bishops' tendency to support the 'settler regime' at the expense of the indigenous clergy and laity within the church. They sent many petitions to the bishops raising their objections to discriminatory practices within the church. The bishops were slow in replying to their concerns.⁵⁶¹

In 1970, Mkhathswa and Louwfant were two of the signatories of the Black Priests' Manifesto, a letter sent to the bishops challenging them to stop treating black priests as "glorified altar boys". This manifesto was published in the *Rand Daily Mail*⁵⁶² and caused wide-scale reaction both within and outside the church.⁵⁶³ The lay Dominican chapter lent their support to these initiatives and those of SPOBA.⁵⁶⁴

Throughout the 1970s, the students were increasingly involved in conflicts with seminary staff. Students first criticised the removal of Oswin Magrath as rector,⁵⁶⁵ then responded to offensive comments made by Cardinal Owen McCann about black people governing South Africa,⁵⁶⁶ and also challenged the heavy-handed approach of the new rector, Dominic Scholten.⁵⁶⁷ They demanded that there be more black staff and teachers at the seminary and the bishops appointed Fr. Lebomang John Sebidi as St. Peter's first black rector on 1 December 1975.⁵⁶⁸

Due to the lack of documentation, it is difficult to ascertain precisely the nature of support that the lay Dominican chapter played in these events. However, what can be established is that the whole atmosphere in the seminary affirmed black seminarians and gave them the confidence to assert their concerns and demands; some were even inspired to join the Third Order. It was

⁵⁶⁰ For more information on SPOBA, see George Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness on the black Catholic clergy and their training from 1965-1981*. Unpublished MTh thesis (University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1996), pp. 52-57.

⁵⁶¹ Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness*, p. 57.

⁵⁶² *Rand Daily Mail*, 23 January 1970.

⁵⁶³ For more information on the black priests' manifesto see George Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness*, pp. 65-85; Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 222-228.

⁵⁶⁴ S'mangaliso Mkhathswa, *Appendix*, p. 111.

⁵⁶⁵ Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness*, p. 88.

⁵⁶⁶ See *The Star*, 27 October 1970, *Southern Cross*, 24 February 1971 and 7 April 1971. Mukuka is incorrect in dating this incident in 1971. See Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness*, pp. 86-91.

⁵⁶⁷ *Rand Daily Mail*, 21 October 1971.

⁵⁶⁸ Mukuka, *The impact of Black Consciousness*, p. 115.

primarily the influence of the friars, rather than being a tertiary, which inspired these seminarians. Mkhathshwa remembered that lecturers like Finbar Synnott inspired them to think critically:

In matters of social justice, Finbar had a tremendous influence on our thinking and development. I recall in the early 60s, when I had just come from high school where I had not been trained in critical thinking and had tended to take many things for granted, Finbar did an excellent demolition job on some of my favourite truths, myths, statements, practices and attitudes. He was a real iconoclast who smashed some of the models of behaviour for the 'right life' that had been held up to us.⁵⁶⁹

The militancy of the young seminarians at St. Peter's resulted from their being open to new ideas taught to them by the Dominican friars. The seminarians' minds were broadened and this prepared them for the changes of the Second Vatican Council. The Dominicans who taught at the seminary recognised that these seminarians would be future bishops and leaders in the church and sought to provide them with the best education possible.⁵⁷⁰ The Dominican spirit that the seminarians encountered at Pevensey and Hammanskraal and their interest in Pan-Africanist and Black Consciousness inspired a generation of student leaders who discovered a new way of seeing themselves and their place within church and society. Consequently, they became active in challenging the mentalities and structures of apartheid.

Seminarians at Hammanskraal were privileged as they were exposed to recent theological and philosophical studies that made them different from the other lay Dominican chapters. Nevertheless, they provide helpful pointers to understanding the shortcomings of the other chapters. Firstly, the Hammanskraal seminary consisted of young black youth who were affected by the injustices of apartheid. Secondly, the seminarians were inspired to study and think critically. Thirdly, they had the encouragement of Dominican friars committed to cultivating self-belief into their students and training them for leadership in the church. Fourthly, they had the confidence to engage in common actions and fight together for justice and peace.

Unfortunately, when the Dominican presence at the seminary ended so did the chapter in Hammanskraal. Sadly, the experience at Hammanskraal did not filter into the national organisation nor did black youth join this organisation elsewhere in the country.

⁵⁶⁹ S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa, "Modern day saint" in Rita Raubenheimer and Lynn Stevenson, *That man Finbar* (Johannesburg: Dominican Order, 1995), pp. 3-4.

⁵⁷⁰ See Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 220-221.

5.4.2. Lack of social consciousness among white lay Dominicans

The lay Dominicans during the 1960s and 1970s consisted primarily of white middle class and middle-aged members. Many were unable to appreciate the changing times that South Africa was undergoing. However, the vast majority of the white lay Dominicans did not develop a social consciousness and so were uncritical of the Nationalist government's policies. There were exceptions like Barbara Versfeld who was an organiser for the Black Sash⁵⁷¹ in the Athlone Advice Office in Cape Town.⁵⁷² In 1968, she encouraged the churches to move from protest to action and help the people being forcibly removed in the Western Cape.⁵⁷³

The process by which those people who did stand up [against apartheid] got to it was [through] conscientisation and it was making people aware of the suffering that was happening, making people aware of the fact that it can change. Now that didn't get through to most older people, black and white, and it didn't get through to the tertiaries certainly.⁵⁷⁴

However, the vast majority of the white lay Dominicans were not exposed to the suffering of black people under apartheid, unlike those who were involved in the Christian Institute. Neither were they radicalised by facing the challenges of the Black Consciousness movement, as were the white students in NCFS and YCS.⁵⁷⁵ This was particularly evident in the articles the lay Dominicans wrote in their newsletters. Evidence of this lack of conscientisation can be found in an article signed I.E.A.⁵⁷⁶ In speaking about the importance of developing a spirituality of every day, the writer creatively used the image of shopping in a self-service supermarket to warn against a preoccupation with 'self-service' rather than service of our neighbour.

We can serve him [our neighbour] in our normal day-to-day living, travelling to and fro from work, in the office, the garage, the workshop. We do this by example, kind words, sympathetic understanding, showing appreciation, seeking that justice is done. If we think less of SELF and

⁵⁷¹ The Black Sash, also known as the Women's Defence of the Constitution League, was originally formed in May 1955 by white women to protest against the removal of Coloured voters from the voters' roll by the Nationalist government. They stood in public places in silent protest against apartheid laws, holding placards and wearing a black sash. See Rodney Davenport and Christopher Saunders, *South Africa: A modern history*, Fifth edition (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), p. 396.

⁵⁷² See Barbara Versfeld, "Policy in Practice: Stories from the Athlone Advice Office" *Black Sash*, vol. 7, no. 3, October/November 1963 and "Workmen's Compensation", *Black Sash*, vol. 12, no.4, February 1969, pp. 24-25.

⁵⁷³ Barbara Versfeld, "How can we help our displaced people", *Southern Cross*, 20 November 1968.

⁵⁷⁴ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 55.

⁵⁷⁵ See Anthony Egan, *The politics*, pp. 56-78.

⁵⁷⁶ It is not clear to whom these initials refer - possibly to Ivy Andrew from Brakpan.

more of others we will be better able to put ourselves in the place of the man in need and consequently be better able to give the necessary help.⁵⁷⁷

Unfortunately, the writer's solution was to encourage the tertiaries to pray for the needs of their neighbour. She talked in general terms and made no reference to one's neighbour also being a black person. Due to the lay Dominicans lack of social awareness they were not sensitive to the aspirations of black people and consequently saw no need to change the way the organisation functioned, to encourage black leadership among the lay Dominicans, or to engage in issues of justice and peace. Consequently, the lay Dominicans remained essentially a multi-racial and apolitical church organisation.

5.4.3. Racial relations among the lay Dominicans

The Roman Catholic Church in South Africa as well as the other English-speaking churches is comprised of people of different races and classes. They have consequently been sometimes referred to as 'multi-racial' churches.⁵⁷⁸ These churches tended to operate from primarily a racially-based analysis of the problems in the country. From its earliest beginnings, the lay Dominicans shared this multi-racial nature. The tertiary groups and chapters were established in the areas and parishes, both white and black, where Dominicans worked. Most of the chapters reflected the social habitation patterns of apartheid society, while a few were mixed groups like the chapter in Stellenbosch and Durban. From the outset these chapters had very little interaction with one another.

This was all to change in 1972. National Congresses were organised every three years and members of the National Council were elected during these gatherings. This increased the interaction between all the different chapters but particularly brought together the white and black chapters. This was to prove to present new challenges to the lay Dominicans.

During the preparations for the first National Congress in 1972, the Kwa Thema chapter sent a memorandum to the organisers outlining a number of concerns. The first one they articulated concerned their safety while attending a multi-racial gathering. They sought assurances that

⁵⁷⁷ I.E.A., "Self-service", *Tertiary Newsletter*, no. 9, August 1967, pp. 7-8.

⁵⁷⁸ See Ernie Regehr, *Perceptions of apartheid: The churches and political change in South Africa* (Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press and Kitchener, Ontario: Between the lines, 1979).

African lay Dominicans attending the meeting would be free from police harassment.⁵⁷⁹ Their fears were not totally unfounded. In the document submitted to the National Council they referred to the arrest of Bishop Alphaeus Zulu, Anglican bishop of Zululand. He had been attending a multi-racial meeting.⁵⁸⁰ The black lay Dominicans attending the National Congress, being their family's breadwinners, were hesitant to attract the attention of the police,⁵⁸¹ as this might have impacted negatively on their family life and employment opportunities.

The congresses were held at the St. Benedict's House of prayer in Rosettenville, Johannesburg, a retreat centre originally started by the Community of the Resurrection, an Anglican religious order. Due to the witness of Trevor Huddleston, they were known for their opposition to apartheid. Throughout the apartheid years the retreat centre continued to host multi-racial meetings and accommodate all racial groups at the centre.⁵⁸²

The Kwa Thema chapter was also concerned about the use of English at the meeting. They pointed out that the use of English would discourage some of the Africans from attending. They would not be unable to participate fully in proceedings because they found it difficult to express themselves adequately in English. Their proposed solution was to request that the agenda be sent out well in advance so that all the members would be able to prepare themselves adequately prior to the meeting.

Kwa Thema also proposed that the African lay Dominican groups be granted a greater degree of autonomy. They recommended that a separate Council for All-African Tertiaries be established. This Council could present the point of view of African tertiaries and that at mixed gatherings a few people could be chosen to speak in English on behalf of the African members. A separate directory for African lay Dominicans was also proposed. The reason why this

⁵⁷⁹ The Group Areas Act and Separate Amenities Act prevented black people from staying overnight in a white area. See Regehr, *Perceptions of Apartheid*, pp. 49-51.

⁵⁸⁰ In 1971, the University Christian Movement (UCM) organised a number of seminars on black theology around the country. Bishop Zulu was arrested during one of the seminars on a technical pass-law offence. See John W. and Stephen de Gruchy, *The Church struggle in South Africa*, pp. 149-150.

⁵⁸¹ Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja, interview conducted on 16 March 2007.

⁵⁸² See *The Star*, 16 March 1956. The government turned a blind eye to the racially-mixed groups and meetings at St. Benedict's. While the centre was occasionally placed under police surveillance, they were never forced to close down. The Nationalist government themselves would request that St. Benedict's house accommodate government visitors from African countries. The sisters made use of the opportunity to present their own views to these African visitors and challenge the perspectives of the Nationalist government. Sr. Maureen Harrison, interview conducted in Johannesburg on 18 January 2007.

suggestion was made, according to Nicholas Lekoane, was because African tertiary students found that "most of the whites were too comforting, too paternalistic".⁵⁸³

At this time SASO and Black Consciousness were encouraging black people to withdraw from multi-racial organisations. Black people would never be able to take charge of their destiny if they continued to be party to their own oppression by participating in multi-racial organisations. Black people needed to set up separate structures free from white domination in order to effect their own liberation. What the lay Dominicans from Kwa Thema proposed was not too different. Black students walked out of liberal student organisations like the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and church groups like NCFS and also forbade whites to attend SASO meetings. This did not happen with the lay Dominicans. The Kwa Thema chapter did not start a new movement or exclude whites from their meetings. Many of the black members of the lay Dominicans were pious but not highly politicised.⁵⁸⁴

When this matter was raised during the Congress, the Dominican provincial, Hans Brenninkmeijer, intervened in the discussion. He said: "There were wide powers of dispensation built into the Rule and differences of approach could be met by having special directives and suggestions by non-European (sic) chapters incorporated into a common Directory. This Directory must be translated into Sotho and Zulu".⁵⁸⁵

No discussion on the formation of a separate Council for African chapters was held and no changes were effected. Consequently, the lay Dominicans continued as before. Multi-racial chapters continued to be erected. Paternalism persisted and leadership remained firmly in the hands of the white members.

⁵⁸³ Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja, interview conducted on 16 March 2007. 'Paternalism means the treatment in a way that is benevolent in intention but in fact inhibits from recognising the maturity of the other. It also inhibits the other from coming to his own full maturity'. Quoted from Peter Randall (ed.), *Apartheid and the Church* (Johannesburg: Sprocas publication, 1972), pp. 45-48.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Joel Moja was at that time instrumental in running Pilkington United Brothers' Football Club in Pilkington's factory. Many factories set up football teams at that time to prevent people going to trade union meetings during their lunch hour and so on. And as I say he was a very nice guy who would respond to anything, so if the boss said a football club he set up a football club. He wouldn't analyse what the purpose in the boss' mind for the football club. So the lay Dominicans of Kwa Thema were not really politically conscious, the politically conscious people were not in the lay Dominicans'. See Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, p. 17.

⁵⁸⁵ "Minutes of the National Congress", p.4 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans 1976-1978, File: Up to 1976).

The new chapter that was started in Welkom comprised of about fourteen members of whom three were African.⁵⁸⁶ There was also ongoing cooperation between white and black chapters. A cooperative venture was held on the Reef on 3 December 1972. Fr. Joseph Falkiner taught the lay Dominicans at the gathering to sing the psalms. At a retreat organised for the Kwa Thema chapter, members from the Free State, from Kliptown and "five representatives of Johannesburg and Springs chapters attended".⁵⁸⁷ On this day 29 September 1973, three probationary members were received, namely P. Maboe, Joel Moja and Thomas Moeketsi.⁵⁸⁸ Two others who made their profession, James Mahlangu and Meshak Nkosi, were from Kwa Thema.

Neither the Hammanskraal nor the Kwa Thema chapters survived into the 1980s. In Kwa Thema, when Sixtus Msomi retired and went back to KwaZulu-Natal and Timothy Botholo returned to Taung the group gradually dissolved as no new membership was forthcoming.

5.5. Conclusion

In assessing the growth or decline of the lay Dominicans during the 1960s and 1970s, it is important to reconsider the developments of this period. The Second Vatican Council brought with it a totally different conception of church which challenged not only the laity but the clergy too. Prior to Vatican II there was a Catholic culture that "envisaged the Church as separate from the world, dedicated to spiritual as opposed to earthly values, to the supernatural rather than the incarnational".⁵⁸⁹

After the Council suddenly Catholics were called to reject this outlook and to rather live in the world, to read the signs of the times and to work for the transformation of society. No longer were laity considered the passive recipients' of the teaching of the priest, they were asked to actively assist in the administration and running of the parishes and dioceses. No longer were Protestants considered heretics rather Catholics were encouraged to engage in dialogue and discussion with them. The liturgy was no longer in Latin but in the vernacular, in languages which lay people understood and in which they could participate.

⁵⁸⁶ See report of Hyacinth Engering, "Welkom Chapter" (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans 1976-1978, File: Up to 1976).

⁵⁸⁷ *Dominican Topics*, no. 15, no. 3, February 1974.

⁵⁸⁸ In the *Dominican Topics* article quoted above, Thomas Moeketsi's surname was misspelt as Moketsi.

⁵⁸⁹ Peter Walshe, *Prophetic Christianity and the Liberation Movement in South Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1995), p. 34.

It was a confusing time but it was also an exciting time. Many lay groups developed and flourished during this period but this was not the case with the lay Dominicans. The lay Dominicans tried to update themselves. A new rule was instituted and each national body of lay Dominicans had to update their directories. Much energy went into formulating a new manual.⁵⁹⁰

The main cry of the lay Dominicans in South Africa was that there was a dearth of young people joining the Third Order. Younger people were not interested in a monastic spirituality with which the lay Dominicans were still associated. This was considered boring or stick-in-the-mud.⁵⁹¹ Many of the younger people were rather attracted to groups where they could make difference and change the world. So they gravitated to groups like YCS, YCW, NCFS, CASA and Chiro rather than the lay Dominicans.⁵⁹²

The lay Dominicans tried to adapt to the new times but were still operating out of an older paradigm. They were grappling to move from a monastic outlook to an apostolic one. They were involved in parish ministries but did not yet recognise that the historical and contextual challenge of the times was to face the issues of social justice. South Africa was a country beset by economic, political and racial inequalities. They missed the opportunity to preach the good news in an unjust society. Their spirituality did not prepare them adequately to respond to this challenge. They remained a pious society.

⁵⁹⁰ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, p. 15.

⁵⁹¹ Dennis Sweetman, *Appendix*, p. 65.

⁵⁹² Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, p. 52.

Chapter 6

New developments (1980 -1994)

6.0. Introduction

Fr. Hyacinth Engering, the national promoter of the lay Dominicans since 1972, died of a heart attack on 24 June 1980. The assistant promoter, Bernard Connor, stepped into Engering's shoes and found himself faced with an organisation in serious trouble. Connor had previously been lecturing at St. Peter's Seminary in Hammanskraal and had a keen sense of the challenges facing the church. He wrote an incisive report on the state of the lay Dominicans in South Africa on 13 July 1980.⁵⁹³ Connor's report reflected the downward trend noticeable during the 1960s and 1970s.

Compared to fifteen to twenty years ago there has been a marked decline in lay Dominican membership and activity. In this time very few new members have joined, so the average age of chapters has increased and this has had a multiplier effect in putting off the young from joining.

Connor attributed a number of reasons for the decline of the lay Dominican chapters over the previous decade. Firstly, people were unable to sustain a personal and definite interest in the lay Dominicans. Secondly, some people experienced a change of circumstances liking moving away from a Dominican centre, or had become ill, or had aged and were unable to maintain their previous levels of commitment. Thirdly, other people found more absorbing interests in the church like becoming a lay minister or deacon, getting involved in charismatic renewal or Marriage Encounter. Fourthly, there was a lack of awareness of what it meant to be a lay Dominican in today's world. Fifthly, there was a low level of ability and awareness among lay Dominicans to widen their horizons and doing something new and innovative. The friars were reluctant to help because they realised that in many cases these were not people who would be likely to change very much.

The bulk of lay Dominicans are people whose interests, preoccupations and recreation centre around the church ... They want to belong to it in a tangible way. But as far as public life and issues are concerned, e.g. in the fields of education, literature or science, politics, philosophy and theology, etc there is almost no interest. This leads to the position where many of the brethren find that Lay Dominicans are not the sort of people they associate most easily with and who share common interests and concerns. There are a fair number of lay people with whom a number of the brethren cooperate and associate much more easily, and value their contribution in a personal and apostolic way, but who would be stifled in any present chapter.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ Bernard Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", 13 July 1980, p. 1 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans, File: 1978-1986).

⁵⁹⁴ Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", p. 2.

Joseph Falkiner remembered this very clearly, he said:

What made brethren excited was things like: the training of deacons in the Welkom diocese; the training of lay ministers in Kwa Thema; the whole rise of worker consciousness; the strikes all our parishioners in the Black townships were involved in and then the Soweto uprising in '76 which lasted a couple of years because it spread gradually throughout the country; the activities of the security police ... the enormous proliferation of the ward system. All these things were things that dominated us, so unless the lay Dominicans could fit into those things they weren't a high priority. So I think the brothers were just not interested in the lay Dominicans. They saw them as elderly people who wanted formal prayers and the monthly meeting which was basically a tea party. That's how they saw it - they saw it as irrelevant. I'm not surprised that the lay Dominicans felt that the Fathers were not interested in them.⁵⁹⁵

6.1. New lay Dominicans

Bernard Connor not only saw the problems that faced the lay Dominicans but also mapped out the challenges and questions that confronted them in 1980. He listed the following:

1. How possible is it for lay people to make a commitment for life to belong to a definite Dominican group when they are likely to move away from a centre where they can meet and share with others regularly?
2. Is a chapter meant to be a 'spiritual association' only, where people sustain one another by meeting for prayer once a month, or is it meant to be more of a definite community with a definite sharing of life, of apostolic concerns and extra-ecclesial involvement? If the latter, then, some more definite provision has to be made for it to be a unity of families, rather than of individuals;
3. How does one prevent chapters from becoming a refuge for people of limited ability and self-confidence, who cannot face standing on their own as Christians in the public world, yet need to belong to some group that sustains them?
4. What means can be used to keep in contact with many scattered members, and for them to maintain contact with one another?
5. Since the rule - in whatever form - can only be very general, it is insufficient to give guidance as to what people should undertake in the varying circumstances of their lives. Due to that, the chapter itself as a lay group will have to give more direction and be able to direct its members, possibly through some form of communal responsibility and accountability.⁵⁹⁶

Connor dreamt of the "new" lay Dominicans. He worked out four guiding principles for new groups. Firstly, members should pray the morning and evening prayer of the Church, together with the Dominican supplementary breviary. Secondly, they should endeavour to become well educated in their faith as they are in the academic and professional life. Thirdly, local groups should develop a sense of communal responsibility for one another, and be able to decide on a definite course of activities which commit all their members. In order for this to be practical,

⁵⁹⁵ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, pp. 21-22.

⁵⁹⁶ Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", p. 3.

especially in view of family and work obligations, a consensus would have to be arrived at, rather than having one person issuing orders to others. His fourth point was that as a lay Dominican apostolic group, members should be taking the Word of God out into society, into their neighbourhood, their place of work, public life, and witnessing to Gospel values there.

This seemed to me to be a possible distinguishing feature of a Dominican group, which would not primarily have the function of sustaining its own members within the church and so cutting them off from non-Catholics and public involvement. As a lay group they should be able to penetrate to quarters that clergy and religious are excluded from.⁵⁹⁷

Unfortunately, Connor was not able to implement his vision for the new lay Dominicans as he did not continue as national promoter.

6.2. New national promoter

Albert Nolan, the Dominican provincial appointed Damian Magrath, rather than Bernard Connor, to succeed Hyacinth Engering. Magrath also sought to develop a new approach towards the lay Dominicans. In a circular sent to all the lay Dominicans Magrath wrote:

We felt that we had an obligation to give inspiration and leadership to our Lay Dominicans and also that many of the groups felt the lack of definite objectives. The Dominican life was seen as embodying three main elements: contemplative prayer, study and apostolate. For the development of Dominican life among the laity they should have opportunity as far as possible for continuing contact with the brothers and sisters in the religious life in order to share, as appropriate, the prayer, study and apostolates of the Order.⁵⁹⁸

Rather than building upon Connor's insights, Magrath took his cue from Fr. Bernard Olivier, the General Promoter of Dominican laity in Rome. Olivier highlighted Vatican II's stress on the vocation to holiness of all the baptised and the value of the lay state in the Church. Formerly, the Third Order sought to share in the austerities of the monastic life, leading a kind of religious life in the world by sharing in the spirituality of the Order and its prayer. These views no longer held sway. Olivier recommended that the lay Dominicans needed "to have a *doctrinal base*, a kind of 'miniature theology of Dominican laity'"⁵⁹⁹ but also they required "a certain *pluralism of form* i.e. different models of fraternities, e.g. of priests, households".

⁵⁹⁷ Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", p. 3.

⁵⁹⁸ Damian Magrath, "Circular to all the Lay Dominicans in Southern Africa", August 1980, p. 1 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans File: 1978-1986).

⁵⁹⁹ Magrath, "Circular to all the Lay Dominicans", p. 1.

In the past, Olivier noted, the lay Dominicans had been thought of as a pious association. But now, while it was still important to maintain within the fraternities⁶⁰⁰ a pious life impregnated with prayer and practising 'works of charity', there was a more urgent need to awaken and encourage groups to be more apostolic. Lay Dominicans needed to participate in the mission of the Order as laity, not as pseudo-religious. This was vital if the lay Dominicans were to appeal to young people.

After quoting Olivier's call to a more apostolic form of lay Dominican life, Damian Magrath ended his circular saying:

Against this background the Vicariate Council thought it important that special consideration should be given to formation and especially study and it is hoped we can bring out a course of study suitable for new candidates for the Lay Dominicans.⁶⁰¹

The urgent task of challenging the lay Dominicans to be more apostolic and oriented to mission was not pursued. While an opportunity was missed, it did not mean that other new initiatives were not developed. A new approach that emerged this same year did not start with the friars or sisters but a layperson.

6.3. Dominican Family group in Cape Town

Augustine Shutte, a lecturer in philosophy at the University of Cape Town,⁶⁰² started a Dominican Family group in Cape Town in 1980. This group was not a lay Dominican group.⁶⁰³ His innovative idea was to organise a meeting to which all branches of the Dominican Order were invited. Shutte did not just want it to be a group for the laity alone but rather representative of the whole Dominican Family. This was in accordance with the ideas emerging from recent General Chapters of the Order as well as from his own experience.

⁶⁰⁰The word fraternity rather than chapter had become more fashionable at this time.

⁶⁰¹ Magrath, "Circular to all the Lay Dominicans", p. 1.

⁶⁰² Augustine Shutte had considered becoming a tertiary in 1964 before joining the friars. See entries in "St. Thomas Aquinas, Cape Town Men's chapter, Minutes March 1961 - Nov 1965" for 21 January 1964, 31 March 1964, 21 April 1964 and finally a note on 19 May 1964 reads: 'The Secretary should note that Mr. Shutte no longer required notices of meetings'. He made final vows and was ordained but left the Order in 1972 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶⁰³ See "Letter from Madge Green, Cape Town to Damian Magrath", 24 August 1980 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans, Promoter's File II). She writes: 'I have heard that there is a move towards establishing some type of "new look" fraternity here in Cape Town. It will have more chance than our existing conservative Chapter of presenting a dynamic Dominican image. But if it does come into being, I should like to think that we take cognisance of each other's existence, and possibly meet perhaps once a year for joint liturgical action - possibly on St. Dominic's Day?'

Augustine had been a friar but left the Order in 1972. During his stay in Stellenbosch, he became conscious of the divisions among the friars.

Even within the First Order clerical novices and lay brother novices recreated in different places, brothers and fathers recreated in different places and I wanted to get over that so that everybody would be all together in the same place. So I particularly wanted to stay in touch with nuns and sisters and brothers.⁶⁰⁴

Augustine wanted the Dominican Family group to be all-inclusive because he was aware of the richness of the whole Family. The different branches of the Family could enrich and inspire each other. Rather than keeping them separate it was important that they converse and be in dialogue with one another.

The religious life, I think, has this function that it's there to somehow inspire other Christians. Religious exist for Christians and Christians exist for the world. So religious life as a church focus was sort of prophetic for the church and the church was prophetic for the world. My experience of religious life gave me that feeling, and I felt that when I was a religious, I needed lay people as the people who I was supposed to be serving. When I became a layperson I needed religious to remind me and keep me in touch with the essentials of the Christian life. So I think that there is that two-way purpose and I'm sure that this is how Dominic saw the Order and it's certainly the way, I think, classically the Dominicans functioned in this way. This is why they had tertiaries.

The group accorded with Magrath's vision, as it was more of a study group than an apostolic group, Shutte explained:

People, who joined the group, were people who were pretty involved in all sorts of social and other activities, very busy people. And so the group was in no sense adding another cause or another project to the projects that we were all involved in anyway. It was a group that was formed to support us and enable us to do these projects better and our ordinary involvements more wholeheartedly.⁶⁰⁵

In an article in which he explained the reasons for starting this group, Augustine Shutte also outlined its purposes.⁶⁰⁶ Firstly, a reason for being part of the Dominican Family was to share one's Christian life with other Christians. While this could be done in a parish, a parish was often too large to experience the prophetic dimension of being Church, that is, being a member of "God's underground". The value of being a member of the Dominican Family rather than the Knights of da Gama or the St. Vincent de Paul was that one was part of a religious order. A religious order comprised of people who sought to be really serious Christians.

⁶⁰⁴ Augustine Shutte, interview conducted in Cape Town on 17 October 2005, *Appendix*, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁰⁵ Augustine Shutte, *Appendix*, p. 68.

⁶⁰⁶ Augustine Shutte, "Why I want to be a member of the Dominican Family", undated. (ZAOP, File: Dominican Family Group [DFG]).

They have taken a conscious decision as adults to give their ultimate loyalty to Jesus. By making the vows they have, they have tried to make all aspects of their lives express and communicate their faith in him. They try to follow him and to identify with him in putting God first in the three basic areas of our life: our relationship with things, our relationship with other people and our relationship with ourselves.⁶⁰⁷

In answering the question, why choose the Dominicans, Augustine Shutte wrote that it was because of the importance given by Dominicans to community life. Dominic's genius was that he was taken up into the Order he founded and the structures of its communities.

*They are deeply and truly democratic, a bit like families, a bit like cells in a resistance movement, a bit like the group who went with Jesus as he walked through Galilee ... It is free and flexible. At the same time solid and comprehensive.*⁶⁰⁸

Shutte went on to explain the Order's emphasis on Truth and that Dominican preaching seldom promoted pious platitudes. Dominican preachers were realistic and accepted that there were serious problems in life and contemporary culture. What they preached arose from their prayer and study. Shutte concluded:

*We are lucky to have Dominicans in South Africa. Our society needs clear heads. It also needs open hearts. The Dominican Order has been in the forefront in the Church's opposition to apartheid. Dominican schools have long been open to all races, and the Order has gone to great lengths to make itself a microcosm of the sort of integrated South Africa the Christian Gospel demands. The Dominican Order in this country is South African in the best sense, committed to the Christian education and transformation of this society. At the same time, because it is a worldwide order it has defenses against the parochialism and jingoism that all too often is part of our South African way of life.*⁶⁰⁹

The focus of the group was primarily on house meetings, where the members would pray together, have a theme or talk to reflect upon and end with tea.⁶¹⁰ Unfortunately, few records of these meetings have been preserved so it is not clear what were the topics for reflection and discussion. Those that are available do not have a complete date on them, but they appear to be from the year 1981.⁶¹¹ More than fifty people were recorded as attending these Dominican Family meetings over the year. These minutes reflect the group's struggle to establish its

⁶⁰⁷ Shutte, "Why I want to be a member", p. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ Shutte, "Why I want to be a member", p. 2.

⁶⁰⁹ Shutte, "Why I want to be a member", p. 3.

⁶¹⁰ This proved to be disappointing for Madge Green who had hoped for a more dynamic and active group. She wrote: 'I had wondered whether the new group, "Dom-Family" might result in a new line of effort, but it seems that so far it is still a matter of meeting for liturgy and prayer and discussion', "Letter from Madge Green to Douglas Wiseman", 9 October 1983 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans, Promoter's file II).

⁶¹¹ There are constant references in the minutes to making plans for 1982. See "The Dominican Family minutes" signed by Augustine, no date given. (Personal archive of Augustine Shutte, copies in ZAOP, File: DFG, Cape Town, 1980-1992).

identity and method of operation. The topics for discussion in the meetings included themes like "The Dominican approach to the Divine Office",⁶¹² "Writing poetry as a Dominican apostolate"⁶¹³ and "Contextual theology".⁶¹⁴

There were debates about whether they should keep to the same format of having house meetings or break into various cell-groups.⁶¹⁵ It was decided to experiment with the establishment of three cell groups for 1982. The idea was that these cell groups would meet more frequently in the homes of members and that the whole group would meet less often. Three groups were established: one in Rondebosch, a second in Matroosfontein and the third in Springfield. It was hoped that these cells would meet at least three times before the full group meeting scheduled for 5 June 1982.⁶¹⁶

It is not clear how successful these cell groups were but the Dominican Family group continued to meet regularly until 1992 when it was eventually discontinued. The group stopped functioning when Augustine Shutte was no longer able to organise the meetings. He attempted to delegate the organising of meetings to other people, and in particular to the sisters, but this never worked out.⁶¹⁷ It was unfortunate that this model did not have more impact on the structure of the lay Dominicans. Margaret Fogarty, an ex-Cabra sister, in collaboration with Stephen Withers, an ex-friar, started a similar group in the Transvaal.⁶¹⁸ This group met twice a month and received regular visits from Dominican priests and sisters from this area.⁶¹⁹

The Dominican Family group in Cape Town was affected by the fact that it didn't really meet its ideals of involving the whole Dominican Family. The friars closed their priory in Stellenbosch in 1980 and so were seldom present at these meetings. The existence of the Federation of Dominicans in Southern Africa (Fedosa), established in 1974, provided for meetings of friars, sisters and laity at an annual assembly as well as organised regular Fedosa

⁶¹² Talk by Sr. Thecla McGowan, see "Dominican Family minutes", 5 September [1981] (ZAOP, File: DFG).

⁶¹³ Talk by Sr. Maria Mackey, see "Dominican family minutes", 3 October [1981] (ZAOP, File: DFG).

⁶¹⁴ Study session on a module written by Albert Nolan from the Institute of Contextual Theology in Johannesburg. See "Letter from Madge Green, Cape Town to Emil Blaser", 8 November 1987 (ZAOP, File: LD Lay Dominicans).

⁶¹⁵ The establishment of Small Christian communities (SCC), similar to the Basic Christian Communities in Latin America, was being encouraged as a model for the Christian life. The Lumko Pastoral Institute in Germiston, a department of the SACBC, encouraged the establishment of SCCs within the church.

⁶¹⁶ See "Dominican Family minutes", 13 March 1982 (Personal archive of Augustine Shutte, copies in ZAOP, File: DFG 1980-1992).

⁶¹⁷ Augustine Shutte, *Appendix*, p. 69.

⁶¹⁸ Augustine Shutte, *Appendix*, pp. 69-70.

⁶¹⁹ *Dominican Family minutes* of 5 September [1981] (ZAOP, File: DFG).

formation days throughout the country. This may have diminished the appeal or need for the Dominican Family group among some Dominicans.

The establishment of the Dominican Family group was indicative of the new thinking that was percolating among the laity, sisters and the friars.⁶²⁰ An indication of this was also evident in the writings of Bernard Connor. He contributed a number of important articles analysing the role of the church and the Dominicans, both professed and lay, within South African society.

6.4. Evangelisation as the key to an apostolic church

On 1 August 1981, Fedosa published a number of articles written by Bernard Connor under the general topic: Dominican planning. One was entitled "Analysis of the political, economic and social situation in which we live and preach the gospel". The second was entitled "An analysis of the Catholic Church in RSA, 1981". In the second article Connor highlighted the shift from Pius XII to the post-Vatican II Church. He typified the shift as involving five trends: from uniformity to unity in diversity; from a fortress mentality to dialogue with humankind; from centralised institutional control to creative local community; from a clerically run organisation to lay participation and from sacramentalisation to evangelisation.

The paper is an elaboration of these five trends. In relation to the mission of the church Connor made an important distinction:

The goal of proclamation can therefore be understood according to two models different but complementary: A. *Extending the Visible Communion of the Church* - Proclamation here has a 'centripetal' purpose, leading people directly into the Church, which in this way becomes a visible communion, implanted within a people, in a way that it is capable of growing into a full institutional reality. B. *Recognizing and Furthering the Values of the Kingdom* - Proclamation in this model has a 'centrifugal' purpose, allowing the power of the Gospel to move out and encounter humanity in its struggles and diversity. It entails in the one who proclaims a readiness to seek the Christ he or she announces. This kind of proclamation of the Gospel is fruitful when it promotes and furthers the values of the Kingdom within a culture and denounces and inhibits what is not of the Kingdom of Christ.⁶²¹

⁶²⁰ In 1990, one of the friars, Brian Williams, sent out a discussion paper he had formulated after meeting with representatives of the Dominican Family group in Cape Town. He sought to encourage debate among the brothers about developing the Dominican identity as family rather than just as friars, nuns, sisters and laity. This had implications for the formation of the friars and their mission. He advocated the establishment of mixed house (a community of brothers, sisters and laity). See Brian Williams, "The Dominican Family and the Dominican Order", Discussion paper, 1990 (ZAOP, File: DFG).

⁶²¹ Bernard Connor, "An analysis of the Catholic Church in RSA", Pamphlet, 1981 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans 1978-1986).

The lay Dominicans since Vatican II had done outstandingly well in relationship to the first model, what Connor called 'sacramentalism',⁶²² through lay ministries and involvement in parish councils. However, in relationship to the second model of evangelisation and proclaiming the values of the Gospel in the unjust society of apartheid, the lay Dominicans were found wanting. Nevertheless, there were some attempts by lay Dominicans to implement this second model.

6.5. St. Catherine's Chapter, Rondebosch

One lay Dominican chapter that took up this challenge was the St. Catherine's chapter in Rondebosch. This was partly due to the influence of their spiritual director Sr. Thecla McGowan OP. At one of the chapter meetings she gave a talk on justice. "As Dominicans," she said, "we should seek the truth and not be content with heresy".⁶²³ Three months later the minutes noted that the Dominican Planning literature that Frs. Albert Nolan and Bernard Connor had written was distributed among its members.⁶²⁴ The establishment of the Fedosa Justice and Peace Commission led to the foundation of Dominican Justice and Peace groups in different parts of the country. They were comprised of sisters mainly and Sr. Thecla was appointed the leader of the Cape Town group.⁶²⁵ The minutes of the Justice and Peace Commission were also distributed to all the members of the group.⁶²⁶

There was interest in justice and peace among lay Dominicans in Cape Town. However, it was never taken up by the National Council and so consequently, issues of justice and peace failed to make the agenda of the National Congress in 1983.

6.6. Fourth National Congress

The Fourth National Congress of the lay Dominicans in Southern Africa was held at the Holy Family provincialate in Victory Park, Johannesburg from 6-8 May 1983. The newly-ordained Douglas Wiseman OP had been appointed national promoter just prior to the meeting. He

⁶²² Bernard Connor, "The Future" in Andrew Prior (ed.), *Catholics in apartheid society* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1982), pp. 141-153.

⁶²³ See "St. Catherine's chapter, Rondebosch. Minutes 1981-1991", 16 January 1982 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶²⁴ "St. Catherine's chapter, Rondebosch. Minutes 1981-1991", 17 April 1982 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶²⁵ Fedosa had decided to make justice a priority and small regional groups were to be formed wherever there were Dominicans. See "St. Catherine's chapter, Rondebosch. Minutes 1981-1991", 17 July 1982 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶²⁶ "St. Catherine's chapter, Rondebosch. Minutes 1981-1991", 15 January 1983 (CDSA, Cape Town).

succeeded Peter Paul Feeny who had taken over from Damian Magrath, who died suddenly on 28 April 1982.

In her President's report, Audrey Kelf reported that communication with the different chapters had been disappointing during her term. She mentioned that Cyril Silberbauer had represented the lay Dominicans at the 1980 National Pastoral Consultation conference at Hammanskraal.⁶²⁷ She focused most of her attention on Our Lady's Guild of the Sick. She commented that growth of the Guild was slow because so few lay Dominicans were interested in fostering it. She added that: "as you know, this work is very necessary to our way of life today".⁶²⁸ Except for Johannesburg, none of the other chapters did much to promote the activities of the Guild. Cape Town had decided, as early as 1973, that the Guild for the Sick be a private devotion and not a chapter effort.⁶²⁹

The chapters that were in a state of collapse, according to Kelf's report, were Bulawayo, Springs, Kwa Thema and Durban. Since the previous Congress held in 1979, the chapter of Mary Magdalene, Bulawayo had been reduced to only two members with four lone Dominicans attached to it. This drop in membership was attributable to the fact that, due to the transition from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, many members had emigrated to South Africa or Australia. Those that remained in the country found it difficult to attend meetings because of curfews in force around Bulawayo.

The Spiritual Directress [Sr. Thomasina OP] in her last letter says 'We are facing problems here which I cannot put on paper. The decline in the Dominican Vocation especially the Lay Vocation, is understandable'.⁶³⁰

⁶²⁷ "President's Report", p. 2 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶²⁸ Kelf wrote in her report: 'At present there are 154 names of priests, 14 seminarians and 168 sponsors on our books. It is not the procedure of our Guild to allocate a Sponsor to pray for a Priest in his own Diocese, although we have had to do this sometimes because of a shortage of Sponsors from another part of our Country... If there had not been a need for this Guild, God would not have allowed it to come into being. Please help us in this privilege of praying for our priests', "President's Report", p. 3.

⁶²⁹ See "Minutes of the Stellenbosch Women's chapter", St. Mary's Convent, January 1964-October 1973, 28 April 1973, p. 146 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶³⁰ See "President's report", p. 2. In 1983, the Fifth Brigade, a military unit trained by North Korea to deal with internal dissidents, was sent by President Robert Mugabe to quell Ndebele resistance to ZANU (PF) rule. It was called the *Gukurahundi* incident, a Shona word meaning: "the rain that washes away the chaff from the last harvest, before the spring rains". For more information see Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "The post-colonial state and Matebeleland Regional perceptions of civil-military relations, 1980-2002" on the following website: www.iss.org.za/pubs/OurselfsToKnow/Ndlovu.pdf.

The East Rand chapter, back in June 1982, agreed to incorporate the remaining members of the Springs chapter which was closed down. There was no report at the congress from either the Kwa Thema or the Durban chapters.

In Cape Town, it was reported that there was an average membership of ten people and a regular attendance of seven or eight at chapter meetings. While originally the women's chapter, two men had joined but they were unable to attend meetings regularly. One lived in Stellenbosch and the other in Atlantis. Sister Thecla McGowan OP of the House of Prayer, St. Michael's Convent, Rondebosch gave talks on the Bible and the liturgy.

Membership of the Johannesburg Chapter included eleven life members, a novice and twenty-six lone lay Dominicans. They were concerned with the large number of chapter members who no longer attended meetings.

These Lay Dominicans receive the monthly minutes, literature, copies of Fedosa minutes and National Council minutes, Newsbriefs and Viewpoints, reminders of monthly meetings, reminders of Dominican days and all notices of concern to the Chapter. Do we make these members Lone Lay Dominicans?⁶³¹

During the debates at the Congress, concern was raised that many of the lay Dominicans were finding it difficult in present circumstances to maintaining their commitment.

Most of the members of Chapters are working during the day, the weekends are needed to catch up on the shopping and other personal matters which also require attention in family life ... many of us are now in the older age group trying to hold down jobs due to spiralling cost of living, we who are on pension look for the extra salary to supplement the pensions. If we are to draw up a charter at the Congress let us be sensible and not ask for the impossible from members who are doing all they can under difficult circumstances.⁶³²

The resolutions of the Congress were that the lay Dominicans wanted to emphasise the family dimension of the Order and to take the challenge of sharing the fruits of contemplation according to each distinct apostolate.⁶³³

⁶³¹ "Congress report", p. 3 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans, 1983-1984).

⁶³² "Congress report", p. 6 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans, 1983-1984).

⁶³³ See "Charter of the National Council of lay Dominicans in South Africa" and "Congress resolutions" (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans, 1983-1984).

6.7. Continuing downward spiral

Five months after the Congress, Douglas Wiseman, the national promoter, expressed his concern about the state of the lay Dominicans around the country. He wrote a circular letter to all the lay Dominicans in Southern Africa in which he observed:

Our Congress in May was a very worthwhile event in our life as Lay Dominicans ... Unfortunately, most of the delegates were from the Johannesburg and East Rand Chapters. Cape Town was represented and a Lone Lay Dominican from Natal ... We are going through a difficult period at the moment and it is only right that I should keep you informed as to what is happening. Firstly, the Chapters of Bulawayo, Durban and Kwa Thema have collapsed and there seems to be no chance of reviving them at this stage ... This leaves us with four Chapters - Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg and East Rand. There is also a small group in Virginia. Secondly, many of our Lone Lay Dominicans do not maintain contact with the National Council, especially Sr. Rose Kelf,⁶³⁴ who gives so much of her time to maintain contact with all ... Thirdly, there are a number of people who have expressed interest in the Dominican way of life but are far away from existing Chapters ... It is useless to admit candidates formally who cannot be under the direct supervision of either the brethren or sisters, so they should be discouraged.⁶³⁵

He pointed out that it was vital that the lay Dominican chapters try to consolidate themselves:

Therefore, it seems to be that, at this stage, we need to consolidate our situation. The National Council needs to be kept informed about all that is happening in the local Chapters. We all need to play our part in our Chapters - accepting responsibilities in the running of it and not just leaving this to a few willing horses. We need to maintain regular contact with our 'Loners' attached to the Chapter by visiting or corresponding with them.⁶³⁶

But Wiseman was overwhelmed by the effort required to stop the rot. By the end of the same year, his attitude had changed enormously. In a despairing letter to the lay Dominicans, he announced his resignation⁶³⁷ and that of the national president Mrs. Audrey Kelf.⁶³⁸ Wiseman questioned whether the lay Dominicans could be anything more than the pious society they had become. He asked why the lay Dominicans had not taken up the brethren's commitment to justice?⁶³⁹ It was also his opinion that the lay Dominicans did very little regarding the Dominican ideals of prayer and study.

⁶³⁴ Rose was Audrey Kelf's lay Dominican name.

⁶³⁵ Douglas Wiseman, "Circular letter to all lay Dominicans in Southern Africa", L/8, 3 October 1983, pp. 1-2 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans 1978-1986).

⁶³⁶ Wiseman, "Circular letter", p. 1.

⁶³⁷ "Letter from Douglas Wiseman to Albert Nolan", 15 October 1983 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans 1983-1984). In this letter Wiseman tendered his resignation to the vicar general.

⁶³⁸ Kelf complained of ill health. "Report on the Lay Dominicans - June 1982 to January 1984" given by the National Promoter Fr. Douglas Wiseman (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans 1978-1986).

⁶³⁹ In May 1982, the Dominican friars made a commitment as a whole vicariate to make justice their chief priority in South Africa. See Denis, *The Dominican friars*, p. 286.

Wiseman saw no future for the lay Dominicans and proposed that they be disestablished in their present form. He observed that most of the members were elderly and so he recommended that, after these members retired, the chapters should be closed down. It was also his opinion that no defunct chapters should be revived or new chapters established. He believed that most of the lone lay Dominicans should be dropped except for a few really committed ones.

The future of the lay Dominicans, he suggested, lay with the new Dominican Family group in Cape Town. There should be greater contact with them because they could become the nucleus for a future lay Dominican movement. They should be encouraged to establish themselves, with the help of the friars and the sisters, in a more permanent way throughout Southern Africa.

Wiseman's criticisms, on the whole, were valid but his proposal that the lay Dominicans be disestablished was never pursued. The organisation continued to limp along and the friars lost interest in promoting them. Under the leadership of a new president, Dennis Sweetman from Brakpan, the lay Dominicans attracted a few new members. At a Fedosa meeting,⁶⁴⁰ six months after Wiseman's resignation, the Johannesburg chapter reported:

We have twenty-six professed Lay Dominicans, two novices and two visitors, one an Indian lady.⁶⁴¹ Fifteen members attend more or less regularly. Thirteen Lone Lay Dominicans cannot attend owing to health reasons or a travelling distance. In January this year one Lay Dominican made her Final Commitment and another for three years. In March two were admitted to Probationary Membership (Novitiate). As we are so scattered we do very little work together but work in our parishes e.g. Child Welfare, Vestments, choir, Legion of Mary, NCW, CWL, visiting homes and taking part in work that is needed.⁶⁴²

New members from Atlantis, a coloured township north of Cape Town, joined the St. Catherine's chapter in Cape Town. They were Mrs Fortuin, Mr and Mrs Rosen and Mrs Francis.⁶⁴³ Since 1982, this chapter had been including issues of justice and peace on their agenda.

On the international scene, the first Congress for lay Dominicans was planned for 1985. This meeting held great promise for the revitalisation of the mission of the lay Dominicans in South Africa especially since a delegate from the National Council was able to attend.

⁶⁴⁰ "Report of Audrey Kelf to FEDOSA", 9 June 1984 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

⁶⁴¹ This refers to Elizabeth Lucas who joined the lay Dominicans at this time. She was originally part of the Johannesburg group and then later joined the East Rand chapter. She is still an active member of this chapter.

⁶⁴² "Report of Audrey Kelf to FEDOSA", 9 June 1984 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

⁶⁴³ See "St. Catherine's chapter minutes, 1981-1991", 21 July 1984 (CDSA, Cape Town).

6.8. First International Congress of the Dominican Laity

Dennis Sweetman attended the first International Congress of the Dominican Laity. It was held at the Institute of the Sisters of Providence in Montreal, Canada from 25-29 June 1985. South Africa was permitted to send two delegates, but only Sweetman went as the cost to pay for another delegate was prohibitive. He managed to arrange that a business trip coincide with the meeting in Montreal.

Prior to the meeting, the National Council sent out a questionnaire from Rome to all the chapters in South Africa. The only response received came from Cape Town.⁶⁴⁴ They considered that the current lay Dominican rule was adequate because it allowed for freedom of interpretation. They saw no need to change it. However, the chapter did propose that the term "tertiary" be maintained rather than lay Dominican as this excluded deacons and priests from joining the groups. They also preferred the use of the word 'chapter' to 'fraternity'. The word 'fraternity' suited an all-male group or a mixed group, but it was inaccurate when used to describe an all-female group. They also suggested that the national promoter should be responsible for the whole Dominican Family and not just for the laity.

In his opening address to the assembled delegates, the Master of the Order, Damian Byrne, set the tone for the Congress when he said:

We may look towards the past and rejoice over the things we have shared together over 700 years, but we must especially turn our eyes to the future and see all that is left to be done.⁶⁴⁵

The Assistant to the Master for the apostolate, Bernard Olivier,⁶⁴⁶ outlined the threefold objectives of the congress. Firstly, that everyone at the congress become better acquainted with one another as brothers and sisters of St. Dominic. Secondly, that a new text of the rule be written and thirdly, that everyone at the Congress be open to the search for new forms of life for the Dominican laity.

⁶⁴⁴ See Madge Green, "Cape Town chapter - Lay Dominicans", reply to questionnaire from Rome preparatory to Congress to be held in 1985, 25 March 1984 (ZAOP, File: Lay Dominicans: 1983-1984).

⁶⁴⁵ See "Get ready for the Third Millennium: Father Byrne to the International Congress of the Dominican Laity" in *Reseau 65 - Journal de liaison de la province dominicaine canadienne* July - August 1985, p. 1E. [E - refers to the English text and F - the French one]. (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans, File: LD Lay Dominicans).

⁶⁴⁶ Previously General Promoter of the Dominican Laity too. See *Reseau 65*, p. 2E.

Two talks were presented to the assembled delegates. Fr. Dominicus Abbrescia, the national promoter of the Italian laity, spoke on the history of the Dominican laity. He pointed out that their roots lay in the movement of penitents in the thirteenth century. Eleonore Perkins, an American delegate from San Francisco, gave the second address. She challenged the laity "to look and talk as laypersons" not to live a derived spirituality but to become a sacrament of the world. She questioned why the lay Dominicans had a rule? Laity needed to live as laypersons and recognise that they were called to holiness as a consequence of their baptism. They had to become people of their time, responding to the needs of their time with the tools of their time, just as Dominic had done in his time.

Interestingly, she questioned whether the commitment of laity to the pastoral ministries of the church had not been to the detriment of lay involvement in the market place. She called on the delegates to listen to the prophets, especially Dominican prophets. Lay Dominicans needed to hear what these prophets were saying about the role of the laity in the church and in the Dominican Family. She urged that all Dominicans consolidate their ties as Dominican Family, so that "we pray as family, we work as family, we develop and grow as family".⁶⁴⁷

In the discussion during the Congress, preaching was emphasised as the Dominican vocation proper, even for laity: "To proclaim the Gospel in season and out of season". Four priorities were agreed upon to ensure that preaching was adapted to the times. Preaching needed to be doctrinal and emerge from the Order's tradition of study; it had to concern itself with justice and peace; it had to be missionary; and lastly, it had to make use of the mass media.

The Congress formulated a new text of the fundamental rule for the Dominican laity but it was left to Bernard Olivier to formulate the definitive text. Discussions during the debates focused on whether 'lay' was inclusive of priests and permanent deacons who were members of chapters. It was also felt that 'lay' had a belittling connotation like lay brother. In the end the Congress could not decide and agreed that all three terms: 'Dominican laity', 'lay Dominicans' or even 'Third Order' could be used. Thus, the question raised by the Cape Town chapter was partially resolved. The Congress also formulated a text on formation. Lay formation included formation to preach the Word of God by defending human dignity, life and family, promoting Christian unity and dialogue.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ *Reseau* 65 July - August 1985, p. 3E.

⁶⁴⁸ See *Reseau* 65, p. 4E.

The Congress was far-reaching in its emphasis on the equal role of the laity in the Dominican Family. They were not "Third Order" as in third class but a constitutive part of the whole Dominican Family where their vocation was also determined by their preaching the gospel. They too required formation for preaching just like the friars, nuns and apostolic sisters. The laity were expected to be apostolic and preach the gospel by their lives striving for a more just and human world, to engage in ecumenical dialogue and the other signs of our times.

Little of this dynamic understanding of the role of the laity in the life of the Order filtered down to the chapters in South Africa. Members of the National Council were not social activists, unlike the students from NCFs and YCS. They did not promote the ideas of the Montreal Congress in a way that could revitalise the different chapters. Another opportunity was missed.

6.9. Growth of prophetic spirituality in South Africa

In South Africa, 1985 was the year that PW Botha's Nationalist government declared the first State of Emergency. The government had implemented new constitutional reforms granting Coloured and Indian people the right to vote in a three-tiered Constitutional Assembly.⁶⁴⁹ However, the African majority were still excluded from having the right to vote. This provoked increased resistance to apartheid by the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the liberation movements like the ANC and PAC. The state of emergency was declared to quell this growing tide of resistance. The arrest and detention without trial of anti-apartheid activists, including church activists, became the order of the day.

6.10. Kairos Document⁶⁵⁰

At this time, some theologians and church laity grew dissatisfied with the official statements coming from church leaders. So in 1985, theologians aligned with the Institute of Contextual

⁶⁴⁹ "Why the bishops reject the new constitution", *Southern Cross*, 2 October 1983.

⁶⁵⁰ For more information on the Kairos Document, see Albert Nolan, "The Eschatology of the Kairos Document", *Missionalia*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1987, pp. 61-69 and "Kairos Theology" in John W. de Gruchy and Charles Villavicencio (eds), *Doing theology in context: South African perspectives* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and Cape Town: David Philip, 1994), pp. 212-218; Desmond van der Water, *The legacy of a prophetic moment*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal, 1998); John and Steve de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa: 25th Anniversary Edition* (London: SCM Press, 2004), pp. 195-200.

Theology analysed the political situation in the country and produced the Kairos Document. This prophetic document recognised that the repression and crisis prevalent in the country at the time was a moment of grace and opportunity in which God was offering the churches "a challenge to decisive action".⁶⁵¹

The document slated state theology for its use of the Bible and theology for its own political objectives. This theology encouraged subservience to the state and the maintenance of law and order. Church theologies, as represented by the official leaders of churches, were criticised for calling for peace and reconciliation without sufficiently dismantling the apartheid system. In condemning all violence the churches were overlooking the structural violence of the apartheid state and condemning the "desperate attempts of the people to defend themselves".⁶⁵² In contrast, the document called for Christians to embrace a more prophetic theology that addressed the suffering and oppression being experienced by the black majority in South Africa. By reading the signs of the times and acting against tyranny the churches could offer hope to the oppressed South African people. The moment for action had arrived and the churches needed to side with the oppressed and participate in the struggle against apartheid through civil disobedience and other campaigns.

The challenge of the faith and of our present KAIROS is addressed to all who bear the name Christian. None of us can simply sit back and wait to be told what to do by our Church leaders or anyone else. We must all accept responsibility for acting and living out our Christian faith in these circumstances. We pray that God will help all of us to translate the challenge of our times into action.⁶⁵³

As a result of this document, the challenge was clear for the churches to move from mere protest to active resistance. The Kairos Document questioned the state's legitimacy and rallied Christians to engage in actions of civil disobedience.

Two members of the Dominican Family group in Cape Town, Srs. Clare Harkin and Aine Hardiman, signed the Kairos Document.⁶⁵⁴ The response from the lay Dominicans was much slower. In 1986, seven members of the St. Catherine's chapter in Cape Town attended a meeting in Matroosfontein organised by the Council for Religious on "The Crisis in South

⁶⁵¹ Institute for Contextual Theology, *The Kairos Document: Challenge to the church*. Revised second edition (Johannesburg: Skotaville Publishers, 1986), p. 1.

⁶⁵² *Kairos Document*, p. 13.

⁶⁵³ *Kairos Document*, p. 31.

⁶⁵⁴ Two Dominican sisters from Cape Town, Sisters Aine Hardiman and Clare Harkin, were signatories of the *Kairos Document*. They are listed as nos. 33 and 34 respectively. They frequently attended the meetings of the Dominican Family group. See the first edition of the *Kairos Document* p. 26.

Africa". Albert Nolan spoke on the need in South Africa for a prophetic theology and how the Kairos Document challenged Christians to do something about the violence in the country.

After tea we formed groups to discuss what each of us could, and should do, to help one another. Many felt that the church was not doing enough and the 'whites' should not always be chosen to lead.⁶⁵⁵

In May 1986, one of the lay Dominicans, Cecilia Manshon, shared during the meeting on all the pain, suffering and insults which coloured and black people had endured and continued to endure in the country. The chapter also offered prayers for the priests who had been detained.⁶⁵⁶ As a sign of growing social awareness among the Cape Town lay Dominicans, John Fortuin, a chapter member from Atlantis, was asked to talk about his work for the Catholic Welfare Bureau at Crossroads and KTC, two informal settlements on the Cape Flats. He was involved in starting a job creation project in the impoverished Atlantis area too.

On the East Rand, members and lone lay Dominicans associated with the chapter were encouraged to join in a day of prayer for Fr. Peter Hortop OP, Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa, Sr. Bernard Ncube and Tom Waspe.⁶⁵⁷ After his release from detention, Peter Hortop spoke to the sisters and lay Dominicans in Cape Town about his experiences of being in detention for over eight months.⁶⁵⁸

While the lay Dominicans' involvement in justice and peace was never extensive, after 1982 they did begin to grow in social awareness. This was most notable in the Cape Town chapter. This was probably due to a greater participation of coloured members in the chapter and the deepening of the political crisis in the country. However, the National Council still failed to place justice and peace issues on the national agenda.

6.11. Involvement in the South African Council for Catholic Laity

The SACCL, of which the lay Dominicans had been members since 1973, shifted their focus from being an organisation which merely gave the opinion of the laity on church affairs to a

⁶⁵⁵ "St. Catherine's Chapter - Rondebosch. Minutes 1981-1991", 19 April 1986 (CDSA, Cape Town). Also see "National Council minutes", 17 August 1986 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

⁶⁵⁶ "St. Catherine's chapter minutes, 1981-1991", 17 May 1986 (CDSA, Cape Town).

⁶⁵⁷ The worldwide day of prayer was organised for 29 November 1986. See the "National Council minutes", 1 March 1987 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes) and Philippe Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, p. 290.

⁶⁵⁸ "St. Catherine's minutes, 1981-1991", 21 March 1987 (CDSA, Cape Town). He was detained from 17 June 1986 to 27 February 1987, see Denis, *The Dominican Friars*, pp. 289-290.

body which also sought to support the bishops' stand against apartheid. They were instrumental in implementing the bishops' pastoral plan too. Many of the more conservative white lay organisations did not appreciate this shift in policy. Peter Sadie, the secretary of the SACCL at this period, confirmed that the lay Dominicans were not involved in these new initiatives.

The lay Dominicans, the lay Franciscans and those small groupings were on the periphery. I think what was different with the youth is that they tended to speak more with a common voice whether they were from CASA or CATHSOC or YCS or CHIRO. There was a sense that what was happening in the country was wrong and that as young people we wanted to bring about change.⁶⁵⁹

In 1988, the National Council withdrew from participation in the triennial SACCL meeting.⁶⁶⁰ No reason is given though it is noticeable that on the agenda for the meeting was a proposal to support the 'Standing for the Truth' campaign.⁶⁶¹

6.12. Chapters stabilised

At the National Council meeting held in Johannesburg back in August 1986, Audrey Kelf was elected president of the lay Dominicans in a postal vote. Kathy Fee was re-elected the Council's secretary. Kelf replaced Dennis Sweetman who had been president since 1983. During his term he had achieved in bringing stability to the lay Dominican chapters around the country.

This was evident in the reports issuing from the different chapters around the country. Cape Town, Johannesburg, East Rand and Port Elizabeth were all doing better with members involved in different apostolic ventures in their parishes.⁶⁶² New members were also joining these chapters and there were fewer reports of chapters in distress. The Port Elizabeth chapter, for example, reported to the November meeting of the National Council that:

many younger people ... are attending the meetings and displaying interest in the Lay Dominicans and the Order. This Chapter has a good membership and has three new members. Attendance at meetings is excellent.⁶⁶³

⁶⁵⁹ Peter Sadie, interview conducted in Johannesburg on 16 January 2007, *Appendix*, p. 104.

⁶⁶⁰ "Letter from Audrey Kelf to Peter Sadie", 4 July 1988 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁶¹ See "Letter from Peter Sadie to delegates of SACCL", 21 June 1988 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁶² Audrey Kelf, "National Council reports for 1987 and 1988" (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

⁶⁶³ "National Council minutes", 2 November 1986 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes). Similar report for PE in "National Council minutes", 7 June 1987. 'There seems to be a revival of the Dominican Spirit and members appear to be more dedicated. One member who left the Chapter has returned and visitors are showing interest'.

The St. Catherine's chapter in Cape Town also reported the return of several former fully professed members now that their family commitments were not so heavy. Johannesburg and East Rand were more cautious and reported that attendance at chapter meetings remained constant.⁶⁶⁴ The presence of the lay Dominicans in the Western Cape was boosted with the establishment of a new chapter of teachers from the schools of the Cabra Dominican sisters.

6.13. Foundation of Jordan of Saxony chapter in Cape Town

A new chapter under the patronage of Jordan of Saxony was formed in Cape Town in 1987. This chapter emerged from an initiative of Sr. Marian O'Sullivan, the regional prioress of the Cabra Dominican sisters in Cape Town. A few years previous to this, she visited all the staff rooms of the Cabra schools and invited teachers to form a teachers' support group. Ruth West was one of the teachers that joined this group. She recalled that originally the group, which met at St. Mary's convent in Cape Town, was comprised of approximately twenty-four teachers. This number dwindled down to about ten or twelve members when the teachers realised the nature of the group. Some of the teachers were under the impression that the group was going to be a teachers' club.⁶⁶⁵

O'Sullivan's vision for the teachers' group was that it could prove to be an ideal way for these teachers to deepen their understanding of the Dominican charism that informed the ethos of the schools. The number of sisters in schools was steadily declining and lay people were taking up most of the teaching and leadership positions in the schools. Sr. Madeleine Corcoran recalled that:

This coincided with decreasing vocations ... There were no young nuns coming up to teach in schools. There was no one to teach Latin after me except Bernie Keeson, there was no sister in sight. And people like Jennifer Alt, she was a very good history teacher and English teacher but she didn't want that line ... she started to talk about doing psychology. She went to Cape Town University. So there was that movement there - of a sense of individual vocation outside teaching. There was a line somewhere in the acts of one of our chapters, where this was certified: do we keep to teaching education only or other avenues? The decision was follow other avenues.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ "National Council minutes", 1 November 1987 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁶⁵ See Ruth West, Margaret Nicholson, Natalie Frieslaar and Madeleine Corcoran, interview with members of the Blessed Jordan of Saxony chapter conducted in Cape Town on 11 October 2005, *Appendix*, p. 90.

⁶⁶⁶ See Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, pp. 93-94.

The sisters were of the opinion that many of the lay staff employed to run the Dominican schools lacked a distinctive Catholic stamp.⁶⁶⁷ Margaret Nicholson remembered the situation at the time:

I must say that our school had Catholic teachers and teachers from other faiths. We had also had the working staff, the hostel staff and the day staff. They were people from all kinds of denominations ... There was always new people coming in and some of them never really knew or understand what the Catholic faith or the Catholic school was about. Very often I remember we used to have Mass and the children would go to Mass and the teachers would be there. They would come and talk to you afterwards about the Mass and things like that. It was always like a tug-of-war.⁶⁶⁸

There was also concern that catechism was not being properly taught in the schools either.

The teaching of catechism in schools, was also not going anywhere and I think that was a big concern to the owners of the school and the Dominican Order as well.⁶⁶⁹

O'Sullivan hoped that through reflecting together and sharing the same teaching ministry that what the teachers learnt about the Catholic faith and Dominican ethos would overflow into the schools. Initially, the intention was not to form a lay Dominican group but to consider the group as part of the Dominican Family group of which Sr. Marian was a regular member.⁶⁷⁰

It was after Marian O'Sullivan left for Ireland to take up her responsibilities as Prioress General of the Cabra sisters that Sr. Genevieve Hickey was appointed to accompany the group. By this time the group had been further reduced to seven members. The focus of the group was primarily on Bible study and prayer. During 1987, there was talk of this group joining the lay Dominicans.⁶⁷¹ Emil Blaser, the provincial, suggested that they be recognised as a separate chapter only after they made their commitment.⁶⁷²

On 24 April 1988, the seven members made their first profession as lay Dominicans at St. Mary's Convent in Cape Town. Albert Nolan celebrated the Mass and declared the chapter,

⁶⁶⁷ This term was used by Sr. Madeleine Corcoran in Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 94.

⁶⁶⁸ Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 93.

⁶⁶⁹ Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁰ Information supplied by Sr. Marian O'Sullivan OP through email correspondence with the author.

⁶⁷¹ See "Letter from Madge Green, Cape Town to Emil Blaser, Johannesburg", 5 October 1987. Madge wrote: "Sr. Raymunda has not so far made contact with me over the teachers' group ... I was under the impression that the contact would be Sr. Genevieve, but in any case I am available if they need anything further from me". (ZAOP, File: LD Lay Dominicans).

⁶⁷² "Letter from Emil Blaser, Johannesburg to Madge Green, Cape Town", 17 November 1987 (ZAOP, File: LD, Lay Dominicans).

under the patronage of Blessed Jordan of Saxony, as duly constituted.⁶⁷³ The seven members were Helen Erasmus, Sannie Williams, Brenda Nieuwstad, Margaret Nicholson, Gladys Klopper, Ophelia Prinsloo and Ruth West.⁶⁷⁴

The chapter focused on encouraging its members to live as Dominican preachers in the schools. This was understood as maintaining the Catholic ethos in Dominican schools. Ruth West, principal of the Deaf School in Wittebome, recalled:

I became one to enforce the ethos, as I should as the principal, by being very strict about the assemblies and keeping to our Mass times and also going around and asking Catholic teachers to get them together to help one another with the RE [religious education]. Since then I've got a very good RE co-ordinator, she was a very good Catholic, a good woman.⁶⁷⁵

The Dominican sisters were held in high regard for the quality of education and moral development that they had imparted in their schools. For these seven laywomen, being a lay Dominican, gave them a sense of confidence and recognition that they were continuing the tradition set by the sisters before them. Ruth West remembered that "even the children sign us, they would say you are the same as the Sisters".⁶⁷⁶

Lay Dominicans, like Natalie Frieslaar, realised that they had received the preaching mantle of the sisters to continue this mission within the school too.

As a child I had always been in a Dominican school. I attended several schools and knowing that the Sisters were getting old and there are no more young sisters coming up. So when I became a lay Dominican I felt a special challenge, I was so grateful for the input I had, that I didn't realise as a child that I was getting, that I felt an obligation now to continue what they had given to us. Because it was given to us I had to take it carefully and to ensure that I do use it, and that I do help and carry on the lay part of that school. As a secretary I would try my best to do it in the life of the children, in the office, in school, in the classroom to teach them the motto of truth. Helping them to keep an upright outlook on what they are doing on the playground. A lot of children come to talk all the time and I give them opportunity to know themselves.⁶⁷⁷

The Jordan of Saxony chapter was unique because, unlike other lay Dominican chapters, they discovered they had a common apostolate even though they were not all doing this apostolate in the same school.

⁶⁷³ "Letter to Lay Dominicans of St. Catherine of Siena chapter, Cape Town from Madge Green", 10 July 1988 (ZAOP, File: Correspondence of National Council with chapters).

⁶⁷⁴ See "Letter to Audrey Kelf, Johannesburg from Sr. Genevieve Hickey, Cape Town", 8 November 1988 (ZAOP, File: Correspondence of National Council with chapters).

⁶⁷⁵ Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 94.

⁶⁷⁶ Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 95.

⁶⁷⁷ Ruth West et al, *Appendix*, p. 95

6.14. Lone lay Dominicans

Despite new members joining the lay Dominicans, the fact remained that many members were aging. The Durban chapter was a case in point. As early as 1986, this chapter was referred to as the Emmanuel chapter of lone lay Dominicans. They met in each other's homes whenever they could but they were all registered as lone lay Dominicans.⁶⁷⁸ Eventually even these occasional meetings were discontinued because of transport difficulties.

Audrey Kelf, the national president, spent much of her time writing to these lone lay Dominicans and keeping in touch with them.

Most of my work was done through the post and I kept in touch with all the lone lay Dominicans throughout the country by post. There were many lone lay Dominicans who were too far from any church to be able to do very much or keep in contact and were sitting out on a limb ... And these people got to know about the National Council and corresponded with me and I kept in touch with all of them and through them I learned of others.⁶⁷⁹

The black lay Dominicans from the inactive Kwa Thema and Free State chapters were excellent correspondents and kept in regular contact with the National Council. Sixtus Msomi, Timothy Botlolo, Victor Modiba, Thomas Moeketsi, Martin Motjotji and Ignatius Puane would write in appreciation for the regular National Council correspondence that came their way.⁶⁸⁰

In 1990, at the initiative of the president of Fedosa, Sr. Catherine Owens, it was decided to do a survey to ascertain the interest of the lone lay Dominicans in being members of the Third Order and in attending a national convention planned for 1993. In a letter dated 5 November 1990, she asked them to respond to six questions:

1. Are you still a Lay Dominican?
2. Would you want to have a better share / fuller participation in the Dominican Family?
3. Are there any other Lay O.P.s near you?
4. Are you able to get around? / How do you manage for transport?
5. Would you be interested in being part of a regional and later national convention?
6. Would you like to make any suggestion regarding the Dominican Family and in particular the Lay members of the Family.⁶⁸¹

⁶⁷⁸ Audrey Kelf, "National Council reports for 1987" (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁷⁹ Audrey Kelf and Dennis Sweetman, interview conducted in Edenvale on 21 September 2004, *Appendix*, p. 25.

⁶⁸⁰ See "National Council minutes", 2 November 1986; 1 November 1987; 6 March 1988; 28 August 1988; 27 November 1988; 19 March 1989; 22 October 1989; 25 February 1990; 27 May 1990; 3 February 1991.

⁶⁸¹ "Letter from Catherine Owens to the lone lay Dominicans", 5 November 1990 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans).

She received fifteen responses to her letter from approximately the thirty-three she sent out.⁶⁸² In response to her questions they all answered to the affirmative that they still considered themselves to be lay Dominicans. However, due to their age and lack of mobility⁶⁸³ most of them were unable to participate in any local initiative or a national convention. Only one respondent, Victor Sing from Kliptown, was actively involved in his parish as a communion minister. He did not participate in the Johannesburg chapter because he worked on weekends.⁶⁸⁴

6.15. Aging membership

The aging membership of the lay Dominicans was also reflected by the strain that some chapters were experiencing. In 1990, Audrey Kelf resigned from the Johannesburg chapter because of ill-health⁶⁸⁵ as did the chapter president Marjorie Heighway. A year later the whole chapter went into abeyance for a few months because many members were ill and unable to attend meetings. Meetings of the Johannesburg chapter were only restarted on 23 April 1992 at Koinonia. Fr. Benedict Mulder OP was appointed the chapter's spiritual director and Mrs Shirley Rousseau became its new president. Durban had ceased to meet and none of the African lay Dominican chapters were in existence any longer either.

6.16. New vision to revitalise the lay Dominicans

In February 1991, the National Council took the initiative to approach the Community Consulting Services (CCS)⁶⁸⁶ to request assistance in developing a vision for the lay

⁶⁸² Owens notes that she contacted 18 others from which she received no response.

⁶⁸³ May Cameron from Howick - 80 years old; Margaret Inglis from Durban - 70 years old (deaf); Paula Wittig, F. Emrich and Bettina Ebert from Durban - all between 78-82 years of age; Mr. F. McKinnon from Durban - 82 years old (bad eyesight); Mrs. A. Carnevalle-Maffe from Durban - over 75 years old; Doris Rogan, Durban - 92 years old; Mrs. D. Seaward from Port Elizabeth in an old age home; Donna Colonna from Idutywa - 90 years old; Mrs. Brodie, Springs - bad eyesight; Derek Matthews from Cape Town, living in a retirement home (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans).

⁶⁸⁴ "Letter from Victor Sing to Sr. Catherine Owens OP", 22 November 1990 (ZAOP, Box: Lay Dominicans).

⁶⁸⁵ "National Council minutes", 9 September 1990 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes), she later returned to the chapter, hosting meetings at her flat.

⁶⁸⁶ CCS was an organisation started by the Kingwilliamstown Dominican sisters to facilitate transformation within church organisations and congregations of religious in South Africa. See Celia Smit, "Community Consulting Services" in Stuart Bate (ed.), *Serving Humanity: A sabbath reflection* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1996), pp. 164-168.

Dominicans in South Africa. Srs. Aloysia Zellman OP and Beatrice von Felten OP were appointed to meet with the National Council and plan a way forward.⁶⁸⁷

Both sisters were invited to attend the meeting of the National Council on 4 August 1991.⁶⁸⁸ Concern was raised at the meeting that young blood was needed; that the chapters lacked real dynamism; that there was a lack of good, strong leaders in the chapters; and the need for a good formation programme.⁶⁸⁹ At the subsequent meeting on 24 November 1991, it was agreed that the National Council needed to develop a process in which a new vision for the lay Dominicans in a non-racial, democratic South Africa could articulated.⁶⁹⁰

We really struggled to get a new direction. As I say, we used to get a fair amount of criticisms from our brethren in the First Order. We couldn't get direction. We felt that the old idea of chapters was dying in a way.⁶⁹¹

At the National Council meeting on 28 June 1992, it was agreed to send out the Fedosa vision statement with reflection questions, to all the lay Dominican chapters around the country. In doing so it was hoped that the National Council would gain an overall picture of the needs of all the lay Dominicans so that they could prepare for a brighter future for the organisation.⁶⁹² Virtually all the chapters responded and even some lone lay Dominicans.⁶⁹³ In summary, the responses highlighted the importance of prayer and spiritual formation to ensure that the lay Dominicans strive for a life of holiness; that the lay Dominicans reflect on scripture and evangelise where they can, thus spreading the good news; that they engage in works of charity and service to the poor and needy; and that they serve the parishes in which they live through various ministries. St. Catherine's chapter in Cape Town highlighted the importance of doing "our part in making South Africa a happy country where justice and peace reigns".⁶⁹⁴

Thomas Moeketsi from Heilbron was the most articulate in presenting the challenge of justice and peace at the forefront of the challenges facing the lay Dominicans in South Africa. He

⁶⁸⁷ "Letter from Sr. Aloysia Zellman to Audrey Kelf", 15 March 1991 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁸⁸ "Letter from Audrey Kelf to Sr. Aloysia Zellman OP", 27 March 1991 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁸⁹ "Meeting with the National Council of the Lay Dominicans", CCS facilitators' report, 4 August 1991 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁹⁰ "Meeting with the National Council of the Lay Dominicans", 24 November 1991 (ZAOP, File: National Council correspondence).

⁶⁹¹ Audrey Kelf and Dennis Sweetman, *Appendix*, p. 26.

⁶⁹² "National Council minutes", 28 June 1992 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

⁶⁹³ The exception was the Jordan of Saxony chapter in Cape Town.

⁶⁹⁴ See "National Council minutes", 18 October 1992.

believed that lay Dominicans should play a prophetic role in the country, preaching salvation in Jesus, a message of liberation and love so as to end apartheid, hatred and fear and to build God's kingdom.⁶⁹⁵ These responses were sent out to all the chapters again and they were asked to reflect on them and comment on which responses were applicable to the lay Dominicans in South Africa today. There appeared to be no further response from the chapters regarding the initial responses. The focus seemed to have shifted to the National Congress planned for 1994. Yet again the lay Dominicans failed to capitalise on an opportunity to articulate their vision and spirit more clearly.

6.17. Small miracle

On 30 April 1993, Audrey Kelf sent out a letter to all the chapters informing them of the National Council's decision to call a National Congress for May 1994. Fr. Carel Spruyt, the provincial, had taken it upon himself to help the lay Dominicans. On the eve of this fifth National Council meeting, the last having been held eleven years previously, there were two chapters in Cape Town with the possibility of two more chapters being established in Matroosfontein and Fish Hoek.⁶⁹⁶ The East Rand chapter was still strong and meeting regularly though Johannesburg was staving off closure. At the beginning of 1994, the Port Elizabeth chapter was doing incredibly well. They made a decision to change the venue of their meetings from the Holy Rosary Convent in the city centre to the northern suburbs of Gelvandale. Many of the new members came from this area and had been travelling into town from the coloured township. As a result of this, membership doubled.⁶⁹⁷

This was also the year when the negotiated settlement in South Africa gave rise to the first democratic elections in South Africa. It marked the relatively peaceful transition from a white minority government to an ANC-controlled government with Nelson Mandela as president. Some political commentators have described South Africa's transition to full democracy as a small miracle.⁶⁹⁸ The resurgence in growth of the lay Dominicans was a smaller miracle.

⁶⁹⁵ "National Council minutes", 18 October 1992.

⁶⁹⁶ "National Council minutes", 4 July 1993.

⁶⁹⁷ Sr. Servatius OP, "Saint Augustine's chapter of lay Dominicans Port Elizabeth", undated report - probably 1996. (ZAOP, Springs). This chapter has met continuously since its foundation in 1957 and in 2006 was elected to administer the National Council.

⁶⁹⁸ See Steven Friedman and Doreen Atkinson (eds.), *The small miracle, South Africa's negotiated settlement* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1994).

6.18. Fifth National Council in Johannesburg in 1994

In January 1994, Audrey Kelf resigned as president. Dennis Sweetman describes the relief the National Council felt when they were able to hand over the reigns. "You know we were very pleased to hand it over because we seemed to be very bogged down in our thinking".⁶⁹⁹

The National Congress of the lay Dominicans was held at Koinonia, Johannesburg from 13-15 May 1994. It was a historic moment for the lay Dominicans in South Africa. This Congress consisted of forty delegates who elected the Jordan of Saxony chapter to take over responsibility for the National Council. Graciously they accepted this challenge. This marked a significant shift to black leadership of the lay Dominicans. Members of a new and dynamic chapter growing and developing in KwaZulu-Natal under the patronage of St. Rose of Lima were also present at this Congress. They were all Zulu-speaking. The revitalisation of the lay Dominicans in this region was due to the initiative of Sr. Michael Mdluli, a Montebello Dominican sister. KwaZulu-Natal were destined to take over leadership of the organisation in 2000. The future of the lay Dominicans in South Africa looked more secure. This was due to the dogged persistence of the National Council which kept the lay Dominicans going through very difficult years. But the vitality of the Jordan of Saxony chapter in Cape Town ensured that there was leadership able to face the challenges of the new South Africa.

6.19. Conclusion

Bernard Connor's concern for establishing a new form of lay Dominicans was partially realised in the succeeding years. He was not part of any of these initiatives. The new initiatives ironically developed in Cape Town where the friars were no longer present. The first was the establishment of the Dominican Family group by a layperson, Augustine Shutte, and the second was Sr. Marian O'Sullivan calling together a group of teachers in Dominican schools. These new groups had some of the old features of the lay Dominican chapters but also some new ones. The Dominican Family group had a different and new look to it because it tried to overcome the inherent fractures of Dominican life between brothers, sisters and laity. By emphasising the unity of being family it drew its membership from all three branches of the Dominican Order. Many of the members of the group were 'progressive' in theological and political outlook but they chose to adhere to the traditional lay Dominican perspective of not

⁶⁹⁹ Audrey Kelf and Dennis Sweetman, *Appendix*, p. 33.

engaging in a common apostolate. They were a prayer and study community and did not visibly participate in any preaching mission or apostolate.

The Jordan of Saxony chapter, a traditional lay Dominican chapter, did not start out this way. Originally, the motive to establish a group for teachers teaching in Cabra Dominican schools was to provide support for lay teachers and promote the Catholic ethos in these schools. This provided the Jordan of Saxony chapter with a clearer mission which was in sharp contrast to the Dominican Family group. No other lay Dominican group in the country developed a preaching mission that involved all its members, most of them remained focused on community, prayer and study. This emphasis on mission was a new development.

When the Dominican brothers gave up on the lay Dominicans after Douglas Wiseman's resignation, there was a real danger that the National Council would collapse. At the same time, the national president Audrey Kelf took ill and resigned. It was left to Dennis Sweetman and the remaining National Council members to see the lay Dominicans through a difficult period of their history. Audrey Kelf resumed her presidency in 1986 and together with Sweetman on the National Council, they saw the lay Dominicans through to the National Congress in 1994 with great courage and perseverance.

The National Council's shortcomings were evident in that they pulled the lay Dominicans pulled out of the SACCL at a time when it became outspoken in support the bishops' anti-apartheid stance. However, to be fair to the National Council, many of their members were aging and in ill-health, so it is not accurate to attribute the withdrawal from the SACCL to political conservatism. However, the question can be raised as to why issues of justice and peace and the involvement of the lay Dominicans was never placed on the national agenda.

Another important development that took place during this period, was the increasingly prominent role played by Dominican sisters as chaplains and spiritual directors to the lay Dominicans. Sr. Bridget Kelly was appointed national promoter in 1984 until her resignation in 1986.⁷⁰⁰ Srs. Genevieve Hickey, Fabian Doyle and Thecla McGowan supported and kept the lay Dominican women in Cape Town going with spiritual guidance, Sr. Servatius Nyhan did the same in Port Elizabeth while Sr. Leontia Murphy provided clear leadership and guidance for the East Rand chapter.

⁷⁰⁰ "Minutes of the National Council", 18 May 1986 (ZAOP, File: National Council minutes).

Chapter 7 Lay Dominicans: The way forward

7.0. Introduction

At the end of this study the question that still remains is the one asked by Fr. McVey in 1967: "Can the Third Orders still be regarded as providing a genuine lay spirituality according to the mind of Vatican II?"⁷⁰¹ Are the lay Dominicans still hemmed in by a "restrictive monastic spirituality"⁷⁰² or have they managed to develop a spirituality that enables them to find sanctity in the midst of the world? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to recapitulate what we know so far about the tertiaries and the lay Dominicans.

7.1. The struggles of the lay Dominicans in South Africa

The tertiaries came to South Africa as an already existing institution that had been in existence in Europe since the fifteenth century. The 1940s and 1950s was a period of creative and innovative growth of the tertiaries in the country as many people were attracted by their monastic spirituality. This growth included people from across the cultural and racial groups. Many of the African tertiaries were involved in helping the priest in their missionary activities. The Third Order assisted lay people to realise their desire to live and deepen their spiritual life. Some tertiaries like Major Mehan, Advocate Vieyra, Jimmy and Joan Stewart, Barbara Versfeld and Fr. S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa contradicted and challenged apartheid mentalities or structures. In a situation where the bishops themselves were ambivalent about their attitudes towards apartheid, it is not surprising that so few tertiaries were in the forefront of calls for social change.⁷⁰³

The tertiaries in South Africa were greatly affected by the developments and decisions of the Second Vatican Council. While they initially responded enthusiastically to the changes proposed by the Vatican II, despondency soon set in when new membership was not forthcoming. Many of the existing groups did not function well and closed down during the period 1962 to 1979. This appeared to confirm McVey's view that a medieval system of spirituality was no longer suitable for a nuclear age. However, the tertiaries did attempt to

⁷⁰¹ See Chapter 5.

⁷⁰² These are Alfred Thorburn's words that he used in his letter of resignation as a tertiary. See Chapter 5.

⁷⁰³ Garth Abraham, *The Catholic Church and apartheid* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), pp. 121ff.

update. The rule was reformed, they underwent a name change, they involved themselves in their parishes, established the National Council and held regular National Congresses. They were also accepted as members of the newly established South African Council for Catholic Laity (SACCL). They called their chapters - fraternities - and elected presidents instead of priors. The outward forms of the organisation changed but there was little shift in their theological and spiritual outlook. They were still tertiaries albeit with a new look. During this period, the lay Dominicans were also essentially unresponsive to the challenges posed by living in an apartheid society. It hardly impinged on the activities of the National Council or even local lay Dominican chapters except for the one in Hammanskraal.

After this period of turmoil and confusion regarding the role of lay Dominicans in South Africa, the period from 1980 to 1994 was marked by some attempts to reformulate the structure of the lay Dominicans. These new initiatives took place in Cape Town where the friars were no longer present after the priory was closed down in Stellenbosch. These new groups introduced some new and creative ideas but also faced some of the same shortcomings of the tertiary model. One spearheaded by Augustine Shutte, a layperson though previously a Dominican friar, promoted the idea of the Dominican Family and attempted to overcome the forced dividedness between the different branches of the Order. In essence, however, the Dominican Family group remained a prayer and study community with no common apostolic outreach. The other attempt, started by Sr. Marian O'Sullivan, the regional prioress of the Cabra Dominican sisters, addressed the problem of bringing spirituality into one's apostolate. Eventually this group of teachers, who had a clear mission and apostolate by maintaining the Dominican ethos in schools, chose to become a lay Dominican chapter.

While there were some new initiatives being developed in Cape Town, for the rest of the country, the lay Dominicans merely limped along. The National Council kept the lay Dominicans from collapse throughout the 1980s due to the dedicated work of Dennis Sweetman, Audrey Kelf and John Harvey among others. However, membership continued to shrink during this period, except for the Western Cape. Too little was done to encourage the involvement of lay Dominicans in confronting apartheid.

How are we to understand these developments?

7.2. Ambiguity of religion

Firstly, it is important to realise as the Canadian theologian, Gregory Baum puts it: "Religion is ambiguous: it is both alienating and life-giving".⁷⁰⁴ Throughout the history of the lay Dominicans this has been very evident. Most of the tertiaries found working within the church and its structures life-giving. Only a few were able to develop a social consciousness and develop a critical response to apartheid.

Religion is able to blind some people and make others see, it produces sickness in some and leads to health in others, it acts as legitimation for the *status quo* and as a catalyst for social change. It ... is capable of generating its own critique.⁷⁰⁵

7.3. Seeking treasure in heaven, accumulating spiritual capital

The writings of Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, can assist in understanding why religion can be alienating and why good people can be blind to the injustices around them. His analysis of social situations is based on his understanding of *habitus*. He argued that within human beings there is a degree of blindness or near-sightedness in that "social agents tend not to reflect on the forces that dispose them to act and behave as they do".⁷⁰⁶

All human beings have unexamined assumptions which are taken for granted, that are habitual and treated as natural and common sense. These assumptions arise from life experience and socialisation. For example, one's class position affects the way you see life, one's racial classification affects one's outlook on life, so too one's nationality, one's culture and also one's religious beliefs. Many white South Africans, who made up the majority of the tertiaries, seldom questioned 'segregation' and apartheid. They took it as a given. Spiritualities that do not equip people with the necessary critical tools to examine and challenge their assumptions, can blind people to social injustices. This can be understood as participation in social sin.

Social sin is thus found in unjust structures, or recurrent patterns of behaviour that hold back the truth of what people created in God's image should bring out in their lives together. It becomes so engendered in people's thoughts, attitudes, feelings, relations and priorities that they

⁷⁰⁴ See Gregory Baum, *Religion and Alienation: A theological reading of sociology* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975), p. 97.

⁷⁰⁵ Baum, *Religion and Alienation*, p. 110.

⁷⁰⁶ Jen Webb, Tony Schirato and Geoff Danaher, *Understanding Bourdieu* (Sydney: Sage Publications, 2002), p.

do not readily realize anything is amiss. Social sin thus brings about a darkness that those accustomed to it no longer notice.⁷⁰⁷

Bourdieu also formulated the idea that in various fields or spheres of life people are motivated by different values. But, he argues, what people don't realise is that in fact what they are seeking is often merely the accumulation of capital in a different form. It is most evident in the economic sphere of life, that people are often driven by the accumulation of economic wealth and the influence that comes with this. In politics, people often seek the accumulation of political capital and thus they engage in the drive for power. In the cultural sphere of life, the accumulation of symbolic capital like recognition and prestige is sought. In extending Bourdieu's analysis somewhat, we might say that in the spiritual sphere, religious people can be caught up in the desire for the accumulation of spiritual wealth, that is, securing one's eternal destiny. The main objective for one joining the Third Order was "the sanctification of its members or the practice of a more perfect form of Christian life, and the salvation of souls, in conformity with the faithful living in the world".⁷⁰⁸

Tertiaries placed themselves under the direction of the Order so that they may learn how to attain Christian perfection. This perfection was understood as loving God through contemplation and prayer as well as loving one's neighbour. But more weight was often given to drawing closer to God through prayer and contemplation than through concern for one's neighbour. Delany summed up the popular perspective of the objective of the tertiary life when he wrote that:

The only way we can qualify for the vision of God is by being perfect (i.e. loving God above all things). If we are not perfect when death comes, and we are in God's grace, we shall have to work out our perfection in purgatory which is God's mercy extended beyond the grave. So this business of perfection is all-important and the Church is constantly impressing upon us our Christian duty that we must be holy.⁷⁰⁹

Consequently, many of those attracted to the tertiaries were motivated by a desire to secure their own sanctification, the accumulation of spiritual wealth. The focus on love and service of neighbour was lost in the ephemeral desire for union with God.

⁷⁰⁷ Bernard Connor, *The Difficult Traverse: From Amnesty to Reconciliation* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1998), p. 85.

⁷⁰⁸ See F-D Joret, *Dominican life* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1958), p. 1.

⁷⁰⁹ Bernard Delany, "First things first", *Southern Cross*, 3 June 1953.

This ahistorical spirituality can be compared to Bourdieu's critique of scholastic forms of academic thought where academics are divorced from the struggles of people. For scholastic and academic thought to be empowering and not just a reflection of its own social context it needs to be self-reflexive. Academics need to empathise with the circumstances of life as experienced by dominated classes.⁷¹⁰

Nolan pointed out that this was the turning point for many Christians who became socially and politically involved in the struggle against apartheid:

So the growth of social consciousness for some people was almost always involved or almost always arose through some kind of experience of the suffering of black people because of the system, because of apartheid. So, for myself it would be when we started going into townships, even coloured townships and seeing what was happening there and what conditions the people were staying in - but that was all after the 1950's.⁷¹¹

As we have seen this did not happen very extensively among the lay Dominicans. Very few of the white lay Dominican leadership had any experience of the struggles of black people. Even black lay Dominicans, while being good and pious Christians, failed to see that faith involved a social commitment. The desire for the spiritual life focused on God and often overlooked the reality that loving one's neighbour in a context like South Africa had social and political connotations too. This was a blindness from which much of the Catholic Church in South Africa suffered, not only the lay Dominicans. As Archbishop Denis Hurley, in an article on the social mission of the church in South Africa, lamented:

The full explanation [for the slowness of the Church to interest itself in South Africa's social problems] lies elsewhere: perhaps in the general weakness (to which the Church, alas, is not immune) of failing to notice sudden social changes and their political and economic consequences; perhaps in the individualistic Catholicism characteristic of the age, which permitted the best-intentioned people to give meticulous attention to certain religious observances while remaining blind to enormous community sins of omission...⁷¹²

More Catholics became socially and politically aware after Vatican II but even then the lay Dominicans battled to come to grips with a faith commitment that went beyond just personal relations. Most of the lay Dominicans concerned themselves merely with church affairs.

⁷¹⁰ Jen Webb, *Understanding Bourdieu*, p. 138.

⁷¹¹ Albert Nolan, *Appendix*, pp. 49-50.

⁷¹² Denis E. Hurley, "The social mission of the Church in South Africa", *Blackfriars*, vol. 91, no. 481, 1960, pp. 150-155.

7.4. Structures and creativity

Social change takes place through the initiatives of creative persons and groups; these initiatives eventually result in new structures. Unless charismata become routinized in new structures, no gain or breakthrough would last.⁷¹³

The structure of the tertiaries suited the spiritual needs of many people during the 1940s and 1950s. Contemplation was also a highly considered spiritual value and the tertiary life, not only the Dominican version, was a popular way to attain spiritual growth. Many prominent members of the Church sought to become members, like Bishop Boyle in Port Elizabeth, Frs. Jack Swan and Louis Stubbs in Cape Town, Jean Singleton and Barbara Versfeld from Cape Town, Advocate Vieyra in Johannesburg, Dr. Jean Brouckaert from Mariannhill hospital, Margaret Maytom from Durban among others. Seminarians like S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa, John Louwfant, Donald de Beer, Harry Wilkinson, Michael Shackleton also joined the tertiaries.

Herbert Vieyra was an exceptional tertiary who was completely dedicated to his spiritual life and was also socially involved. He was one of the few active tertiaries who did question and criticise the institution of apartheid during the 1950s. He also criticised Catholics for accepting prejudice and intolerance within the church. However, the distinction between his spiritual life, being a tertiary, and his apostolate as a member of the Catholic Federation and the JCCAE, were separate and compartmentalised. The two were not integrated. Joseph Falkiner knew, for instance, that Vieyra was a prominent Catholic but never realised that he was a tertiary.⁷¹⁴ The compartmentalisation of spiritual life and active life among the tertiaries was a contributing factor to the decline in commitment to the tertiaries. As lay Dominicans got more involved in social matters or parish responsibilities, they no longer saw any need for lay Dominican involvement. This became particularly critical after Vatican II.

The Second Vatican Council was a charismatic moment in movement long characterised by institutionalisation. In this respect, it engendered a crisis for many people within the church. Many priests and religious left the Church and got married. The lay Dominicans in South Africa were not excluded from experiencing the crisis. They too were seriously affected by the innovations of the Council. The structures of the lay Dominicans were suddenly found to be wanting. The tertiary rule, with its insistence on performing the necessary prayers, rituals and

⁷¹³ Bernard Connor, "Structures and charisms in the serving community" in Stuart Bate (ed.), *Serving Humanity: A Sabbath reflection* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 1996), p. 47.

⁷¹⁴ Joseph Falkiner, *Appendix*, p. 22.

patterns of worship that ten years previously was very popular, was now denigrated.⁷¹⁵ Vatican II highlighted the need for lay people, especially those associated with religious institutions, to develop a more appropriate spirituality that conformed with their way of life. As we have seen, the lay Dominicans struggled to develop a spirituality that accorded with their context and experience.

Prior to Vatican II, the tertiary groups were very strong and active across the country. However, the monastic spirit called for people to leave the world rather than engage with it. After Vatican II, a new vision of spirituality was born for Catholics, Christian life with an historical consciousness. God's grace was accessible in the daily events of each day. God was present in human history. The challenge was no longer to leave the world but to live more fully immersed within it. It was the way one lived one's life in search of virtue, concerned for the needs of one's neighbour, especially the suffering and the poor. This became the arena in which God became known. The lay Dominicans battled to make this shift in mentality and spirit. Some succeeded like Jimmy and Joan Stewart who established the Transformation Centre in Lesotho but they were never involved in a lay Dominican chapter. At Hammanskraal, many black priests, some of whom had been tertiaries, contributed towards the development of Black Theology in South Africa. This had less to do with their being lay Dominicans than the training they had received from their Dominican lecturers.

However, most of the lay Dominicans were not prophetic people. Bernard Connor had lamented that many of the lay Dominicans were people lacking in ability, initiative and self-confidence.⁷¹⁶ They maintained the institution of the lay Dominicans but lacked the charismatic leadership required to transform the organisation. When some attempts were made to do this, they did not have the desired effect. For example, Cyril Silberbauer's formation programme was never distributed.

It is also true to say that prior to Vatican II, most tertiaries were never encouraged to take initiative or take responsibility for life in the Order. They attended meetings at which the priests gave spiritual talks, they said a few prayers, had tea and went home. So, it was no wonder that after Vatican II these same people battled to come to terms with the new demands placed upon them.

⁷¹⁵ See debate about "Third Order mentality" and the resignation of Alfred Thorburn in Chapter 5 above.

⁷¹⁶ See Bernard Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", 13 July 1980 (ZAOP Box: Lay Dominicans File: 1978-1986).

During the 1970s, the leadership of the lay Dominicans failed to provide the necessary prophetic changes required to re-engage a new outburst of enthusiasm for the organisation. This period was marked by a great sense of confusion and pessimism about the future direction of the lay Dominicans. This was in sharp contrast to other lay groups and movements in the Catholic Church, like the National Catholic Federation of Students (NCFS) and Young Christian Students, Young Christian Workers and others, which did manage this transformation. These groups managed to attract young people interested in a spirituality of social transformation. Other groups too, like Marriage Encounter and the Charismatic movement, captured more clearly the spirit of Vatican II. The lay Dominicans were considered an organisation of elderly people⁷¹⁷ and too institutional.⁷¹⁸

However, in different parish ministries the tertiaries did exercise some creativity. Many of them enthusiastically took on lay ministries, the prime example being the lay Dominicans in Kwa Thema like Nicholas Lekoane and Joel Moja. They were involved with the Dominican priests who ministered there in setting up an extensive ward system in the parish. They comprised of neighbourhood groups within the parish that are active in the parish to this day. Lay Dominicans got involved in the parish councils, teaching catechetics, and some became permanent deacons. Yet the structures of the lay Dominicans remained the same.

The tertiaries had emphasised adherence to the rule as the backbone of Third Order life and commitment. Even during the 1970s much effort and debate went into reforming and changing the rule. This adherence to the structure of the organisation proved essential in keeping the organisation going during the difficult period of their history. This concern with structure at a time when a new charism was required to move the lay Dominicans into a new way of life and structure, by being more conscious and responsive to the challenges of modern life and the unjust society in which they lived, proved elusive. The lay Dominicans were unable to transform their spirituality adequately and so were unable to effect the necessary structural changes. They tinkered with the tertiary rule and some of the structures but without developing a more apostolic or contextual focus. The real challenge was to articulate a new spirituality and so thereby find a new way of living the Dominican charism. They did not adequately correlate

⁷¹⁷ Peter Sadie, *Appendix*, p. 104.

⁷¹⁸ See Chapter 5.

the tradition they had received with the new challenges they were meeting within the changing context of South African society and the church.

7.5. The way forward

What can be gleaned from this study to help understand the way forward for lay people interested in the Dominican life? As this is the concluding chapter it is not possible to go into much detail but to highlight areas for further study and reflection. Perhaps they can be summed up in five ways:

1. Spiritual life
2. The Dominican Family
3. Mission
4. Commitment to justice and peace
5. Formation and study

7.5.1. Laity called to live a spiritual and a religious life

In the 1950s many people flocked to join the tertiaries because they desired to deepen and strengthen their spiritual and religious lives. This religious desire and search for a life-giving spiritual life is again very prominent in our times and is recognised as one of the signs of our times.⁷¹⁹ However, Erik Borgman reminds us that:

The religious life is about living and experiencing one's contemporary situation as a religious situation. It is not as if our time primarily *needs* religion and spirituality. There is no gap in our souls - for example the need to give depth to our lives - nor is there a gap in our society - for example the need for a foundation for values and norms - which the Christian tradition, Christian spirituality and the tradition of the religious life are to fill. Like any time, ours too is a religious time ... Thus it becomes clear that from a particular perspective our questions about existence are religious questions and the answers to them, the ways of dealing with them which we find, are religious answers and religious forms. So our life already *is* a religious life.⁷²⁰

Borgman points out that the real question is how to help people live a good and meaningful life. How can the resources of the Dominican tradition assist people in their search for a fuller life? Catherine of Siena speaks of walking the path of holiness on the two feet of love, the love of God and love of neighbour. This has also been described as the feet of mysticism and

⁷¹⁹ Albert Nolan, *Jesus Today: A spirituality of radical freedom* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), pp. 3-14.

⁷²⁰ Erik Borgman, *Dominican Spirituality: An exploration* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), pp. 3-4.

prophetic social action.⁷²¹ The challenge for lay people is to begin to reflect on how they are challenged to live and preach the Gospel within the context of their own lives, open to the prompting of the Spirit who calls forth new life. Contextualisation is central to the Dominican spirit, as Edward Schillebeeckx, highlighted:

Dominican spirituality is therefore in the first instance to be defined as a spirituality which, on the basis of admonitory and critical reflection on the heritage left behind by the past religious tradition, takes up critically and positively the cross-thread provided by whatever new religious possibilities for the future keep emerging among us. Therefore it can never be a *material* repetition of what Dominican forebears have themselves done admirably. Nor, however, can it be an *uncritical* acceptance of whatever 'new movements' (in the mystical or political sense) are now evident in our midst.⁷²²

The Dominican spirit and life is most dynamic when it takes the tradition inherited from the past and brings it into dialogue with emerging trends in the present. A new cloth is woven when the old and the new are brought together in a creative way. This creative task is precisely the challenge that faces a preacher, bringing together life experience and a scripture text. The Dominican motto, *contemplata aliis tradere* - "passing on the fruit of one's contemplation" - indicates that the Dominican vocation is to be a "contemplative preacher".⁷²³ There is a need to keep both contemplation and apostolate together. It is no solution for the lay Dominicans to be merely engaged in apostolates in the world without them also being hearers of the Word too.

Catherine Hilkert has a marvellous phrase which captures the task of the Dominican preacher: "naming grace".⁷²⁴ Grace is present within the historical conditions of everyday life and it is the task of spirituality and especially for the Dominican preacher, ordained, consecrated and lay, to discern and name divine presence in the midst of life. For lay people, it is difficult for them to engage in formal preaching during the Eucharist but it doesn't mean that they shouldn't be engaged in the same task as the ordained preacher. The challenge to name the grace at work in the world and in the people of God is to also recognise the Holy Spirit. Thus Hilkert said:

The Spirit of God is active in creation and human history as the unfailing, but also unpredictable, presence and power of God-among-us. That same Spirit, the source of all

⁷²¹ See Susan Rakoczy, "A Church alive in the Spirit: The dynamic of mysticism and prophecy" in Denis Hurley, *Vatican II: Keeping the dream alive* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2005), pp. 276-297.

⁷²² Edward Schillebeeckx, "Dominican spirituality" in Erik Borgman, *Dominican spirituality. An exploration* (London and New York: Continuum, 2000), p. 99.

⁷²³ Albert Nolan, "Preaching and Contemplation" in Michael Monshau (ed.), *The Grace and Task of Preaching* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2006), pp. 238-254.

⁷²⁴ Mary Catherine Hilkert, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the sacramental imagination* (New York: Continuum, 1997).

inspiration, insight, power and prophecy, anoints both preacher and hearers of the Gospel to speak and live the 'word of truth'.⁷²⁵

Lay Dominicans need to be encouraged to recognise that they also share in the vocation to be contemplative preachers, those who name grace in the midst of life. It is not enough to slavishly follow a rule of life without personally meeting the God who transforms hearts and minds and is active in our world. Then they will truly discover the creativity and social conscience required to be preachers of good news in the world and yet keep their distance from the world's corrupt values. This is precisely what lay at the heart of the *vita apostolica* which gave rise to the Order of Penance - Christian people striving to live an authentic Gospel life in the midst of a turbulent world.

7.5.2. The Dominican Family

In the past we spoke about the Dominican Order, with the different branches referred to numerically. Unintentionally, this has given rise to the situation where the First Order was considered higher and more important than Second and Third Orders. Originally the emphasis on orders was a medieval idea of different states of life or ordering of life.⁷²⁶ Nevertheless, it is important because it refers to "the religious society of all those who, through their public profession, are incorporated into the Dominican mission as it is recognised by the universal church".⁷²⁷

This is the image of the Dominican Family which goes back to the early foundation of the Order and "has always been part of who we are".⁷²⁸ The present interest in the early origins of the Order and the challenge of the *sacra praedicatione* might continue to help in our understanding of the Dominican Family.⁷²⁹ Though this image is not perfect, nevertheless, it more closely embodies the sense of unity among the different branches of the Order. The friars are not above or better than the nuns and laity. Each are different but equal members of the Dominican Family.

⁷²⁵ Hilkert, *Naming Grace*, p.184.

⁷²⁶ See Borgman, *Dominican Spirituality*, pp. 13-14.

⁷²⁷ "Acts of the Chapter of Bologna" § 148,3 www.op.org/curia/bologna98/bologna9805.htm 10 June 2007.

⁷²⁸ Timothy Radcliffe, "To Praise, to Bless, to Preach: The mission of the Dominican Family" in *I call you friends* (London: Continuum, 2001), pp. 144-145.

⁷²⁹ See Chapter 2.

The development of the Dominican Family is also a way to overcome the tendency in the Church and Order to define the laity negatively, as non-clergy. How should this gap be broached? Perhaps the Spirit is calling us to reflect upon our Dominican life together and develop an ecclesiology that can assist the whole church? Augustine Shutte's insights are pertinent and the Dominican Family group in Cape Town is a possible new way forward for the Dominican Family in South Africa. This needs further exploration.

7.5.3. Dominican Family in mission together

In 2000, a ground-breaking meeting of the whole Dominican Family was held in Manila. The central theme was "Dominican Family in Mission together". The Dominican Family shares a common mission. Timothy Radcliffe said in Manila:

We are sent out together to preach the one Kingdom, in which all humanity is reconciled. Our unity with each other will be discovered as we go out together. We will need new structures to build a common mission. Already these are beginning to emerge.⁷³⁰

Bernard Connor was concerned that the lay Dominicans not only be a "spiritual association" but also have apostolic and extra-ecclesial concerns too.⁷³¹ This was the greatest failing of the lay Dominicans in South Africa that they never engaged in a common mission. They worked with or for other organisations but never developed an apostolate together as a chapter or with the friars or sisters. The one exception was the Jordan of Saxony chapter which focused on the Dominican schools. This innovation was never carried over to the other lay Dominican chapters.

The chapter at Bologna said that for all Dominicans:

the mission holds pride of place, while every branch realizes this vocation in the manner proper to it. We, together, constitute the Order and together realize its whole mission. Thus, the most complete manifestation of our total identity is in our collaboration together.⁷³²

Some of this is already happening with the establishment of Dominican Volunteers International (DVI) where young people volunteer a year or two of their lives to work with Dominican friars or sisters around the world. There is also the Dominican Youth Movement (DYM) which opens up new possibilities for the participation of young people in the mission

⁷³⁰ Radcliffe, "To Praise, to Bless, to Preach", p. 149.

⁷³¹ Connor, "Report on Lay Dominicans", 13 July 1980.

⁷³² "Acts of the Chapter of Bologna" §31.2,3 www.op.org/curia/bologna98/bolo9802.htm 10 June 2007.

of the Order. Fedosa is a Dominican structure in South Africa which could facilitate the mission of the Dominican Family.

Radcliffe encouraged the delegations at Manila to accept every occasion to preach and even to create new occasions:

Preaching in a pulpit has always been only a small part of our preaching. In fact, one could argue that Dominic wished to carry the preaching of the gospel out of the confines of the Church and into the street. He wished to carry the Word of God to where people are, living and studying, and arguing and relaxing. For us, the challenge is to preach in new places, on the Internet, through art, in a thousand ways. It would be paradoxical if we thought that preaching in the pulpit was the only real way of proclaiming the gospel. It would be a form of fundamentalism that would go against the creativity of Dominic, a retreat back into the Church.⁷³³

The challenge is how are the different members of the Dominican Family can collaborate in the Order's preaching mission. There are no easy solutions to this problem but the Dominican Family, in itself, is a preaching which both contradicts and offers hope to a world and society where people feel increasingly isolated and atomised. This doesn't diminish the challenge for Dominicans to search out and find the new preaching spaces. People need to hear a word of compassion especially those who are suffering and marginalised. The Fedosa preaching project in South Africa is a way in which this challenge is being explored as Dominican Family.

7.5.4. Commitment to justice and peace

A Dominican life and spirituality that is contextual will always include a commitment to justice and peace. This commitment has emerged as a major focus of the preaching and mission of the Dominican Family. In the past, the lay Dominicans in South Africa made limited contributions to the struggle against apartheid. This mistake must not be repeated. The transformation and healing of South African society is not yet complete. There is still much to be accomplished. The lay Dominicans and the Dominican Family need to recommit themselves to continued involvement in issues of justice and peace.

⁷³³ Radcliffe, "To Praise, to Bless, to Preach", p. 151.

7.5.5. Formation and study

The lay Dominicans in South Africa gave formation pride of place in the chapters. This is fundamental to the development of the different members of the Dominican Family. Bernard Connor thought that the lay Dominican chapters often became a refuge for people of limited ability and self-confidence. While formation of the laity by the friars and sisters is an important need among lay Dominicans, nevertheless, laity must take responsibility for their own formation. Study is vital for the preaching mission and for ensuring that the laity are able to engage with the friars and sisters as equals.

All Dominican formation should be mutual formation. In many parts of the world, the novices of the sisters and the brothers spend part of their formation together. Often we drastically underestimate how much our lay Dominicans can teach the other branches of the Dominican Family ... Conversely, in many parts of the world, lay Dominicans are thirsting for a full formation in the theology and spirituality of the Order which we do not always offer. This is surely one of the most urgent priorities now.⁷³⁴

Formation is required for transformation.⁷³⁵ The task of formation is to bring people to conversion, to a transformation of heart and mind and to grow in receptivity to the Holy Spirit. Lay Dominicans, just like the professed members, need a solid grounding in the tradition of the Order, in scripture, theology and spirituality, in order to be receptive hearers of the Word and able to recognise God's grace in the midst of life.

7.6. Conclusion

A response to McVey's query, raised at the beginning of this chapter, is required. A genuine lay spirituality, according to the mind of Vatican II, is possible for the lay Dominicans if they reflect upon and live the Dominican spirit, in different historical periods, in new and creative ways. Edward Schillebeeckx confirmed this when he said:

Dominican spirituality is a living reality today; it is handed on (or distorted) by Dominicans living now, who reshape the Dominican family story here and now with an eye to the situation in the world and the church, the cultural historical situation of the moment.⁷³⁶

⁷³⁴ Radcliffe, "To Praise, to Bless, to Preach", p. 156.

⁷³⁵ A phrase adapted from Rosemary Haughton, *The transformation of Man* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), p. 209. She speaks of the formation of human life towards transformation.

⁷³⁶ Edward Schillebeeckx, "Dominican spirituality", p. 95.

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**The history and spirituality of the
lay Dominicans in South Africa
from 1926-1994**

APPENDIX

Mark James

Supervisor: Professor Philippe Denis

**Submitted to the School of Religion and Theology, University of
KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg in fulfilment of the academic
requirements for the degree of Master of Theology.**

August 2007

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TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MRS ROSE MTHEMBU

on
30 JULY 2003

at
11.15
in
KWA MASHU

by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Mrs Rose Mthembu
in Kwa Mashu on Wednesday 30 July 2003**

M: How did you meet the Dominicans?

R: I first met the Dominican sisters at Nongoma when they were admitted to there as patients. I was working there in Nongoma as a clerk. So every lunch hour I used to go to their wards and visit these sisters, talk to them. As time went on, I think in '55 there came Fr. Humphries at Nongoma for holiday. So one day when she went just past the office he saw me, and he came in and asked me who I was. I told him my name and my surname, and then he said, "Oh, a Ncube, do you know Edith?" Then I said, "No, Edith is my half-sister. Where is she, Father?" And Father said, "She is in Boksburg where I am from. Do you know what Father, her father has just died and we were wondering how to get hold of her so Father made a call straight away to the convent and asked the sisters to release her immediately to come and attend her father's funeral. From that time on then, we were friends with Fr Humphries because he had come to learn Zulu and I was coaching him in Zulu. He told me he had a Centre, he was running St. Martin's Centre, at Springs and he had newsletters. He wanted these newsletters translated into Zulu and so he asked me to help him to translate these newsletters into Zulu and he was going to post them every time to me. So I agreed I could do this for him. Well, that is when I came to know about the Third Order of St. Dominic. He said it was for lay people who stay in their homes but belonged to the Order. So when he went back he sent me a manual of St. Dominic and from that time on I became a novice for a year.

M: What year did you say that was?

R: It was in 56, then.

M: And then you became a novice?

R: And when I finished my period I had to go to Boksburg to be admitted.

M: To the lay Dominicans?

R: To the lay Dominicans, yes. I was there to the convent there just during my leave I went up there. My mother accompanied me because she was not too free to let me go alone as far as Boksburg. So she accompanied me there, then we found my sister Edith there.

M: She also came?

R: She came back alone, because after the funeral she went back she was working there for the nuns in the convent there. So I think we were there for a weekend and then I was received by Fr. Humphreys in the chapel of the sisters there. Then I came back and practiced, of course, I was just by myself there. Then one day one of our nurses was very much interested in this she wanted to know what was going on and then I told her and she started going with me, going with me everywhere, where I wanted to go. It was Christentia Khumalo. So that day there came a retreat we were

invited to a retreat here in Montebello, so she went with me there. Then we took the picture there, it was Father Humphries who was conducting the retreat there at Montebello. In 1957, I was going to be professed. Father Valentine Wood came down to Nongoma for my profession ... Then well we kept on with this lady going together attending chapters here in Durban. I remember at the time the president of our chapter was Mrs. Margaret Mead's home. She was staying opposite the Crown Hotel.

M: Was she married then?

R: Margaret Mead? She was Mrs. Margaret Maytom. So as time went on in 1959 I left Nongoma and my friend went to practice in Vryheid, so we separated. In Inkandla I was alone I said my prayers and lost contact with the people in Durban. At the end of 1959 I left Nongoma and came to Durban and stayed here for sometime and then the bishop of Eshowe offered me a post in Inkandla. So I went back to Inkandla and worked there, at a post at the Inkandla hospital. 1961, I worked for a year and came back to Durban. I lost contact of everybody I didn't know where they were staying and I didn't get any newsletter. So I just stayed and carried on with my prayers, of course. It was a bit small but I ... The money was a bit small.

So I just stayed there without any contact with the Dominicans here in KwaMashu. Until one day in 1997 I saw this lady (pointing to Rita Luthuli) coming into the house and told me I am looking for someone by the name of Rose Ncube. Then I said, "Well I am the one". "We are looking for you we are lay Dominicans and we were given your name, you are one of us". So I was so excited, I was so excited when I got those news and that's when I went back there to them.

M: You were part of the community, so you were no longer just a lone lay Dominican?

R: Yes, it was then when we were together.

M: I wanted to ask you about the other group that you met once in 1956. Were they all from Durban, were they a chapter or were they also lone lay Dominicans?

R: I couldn't distinguish then. I am sure they were a chapter at that time. Every time we met at Maytom's place, they were all there. They were a chapter. I was the only one from that area.

M: From Nongoma. The other lady was there, Christientia? This is Christientia here? (referring to the photograph).

R: Yes, that is right.

Interruption: Sorry Father.

M: This is you.

R: That's right. I was still able to walk with my crutches but now I can't manage with them anymore.

M: Did Fr. Nick give you any more instructions about the Dominicans? How did you keep contact with him?

R: Yes, I kept contact with him.

M: Through letters?

R: He was my spiritual director very time, yes, yes. He was my spiritual director.

M: So you were not just forgotten and abandoned?

R: No, not at all. Well, he had requested me to help with the newsletters, so we really had contact. Because every now and then he used to send me newsletters, and then I translated these, typed them and then send them back again to him in Springs.

M: So you did the typing and translating for the Zulu version?

R: Yes, the translating and typing for the Zulu newsletters, yes. When he was in Donnybrook, we had contact even there with St. Martin Centre. All the Zulu translations were done by me.

M: And so what 1961, when you came here? When did you lose contact with St. Martin Centre?

R: Even when I was here, Father, because the last typewriter that he bought me he was already in Stellenbosch, he was already in Stellenbosch and he sent it to me by rail.

M: So you still did the newsletter when you were in Kwa Mashu?

R: Yes, Kwa Mashu.

M: Until he died? Was it? And then someone else...

R: We had contact until he died.

M: Sometimes the lone Dominicans have the biggest suffering because they are not part of the group and they can be easily...

R: No, no, Father Humphries kept contact with me all the time.

M: When you had the meetings with this other chapter when you were here in Durban when you were staying in Kwa Mashu and going to the chapters sometimes, you say it was at Margaret's house?

R: When I was already staying here in Kwa Mashu there was no contact anymore, I think Margaret was still alive or had died. I think she had died. When I went to Margaret's house it was when I was still staying in Inkandla.

M: What were you doing in those meetings? What were you discussing? Do you remember any of things you were discussing?

R: Everybody said how they were working and gave their reports and so forth.

M: What they were doing? Do you remember what they were doing other than giving reports? How did they bring their ... perhaps it is a question for yourself as well, how did you bring your Dominican life together with your working life as a nurse?

R: I was a clerk myself. I was saying my Office to myself and I would speak to other people and speak to them of my life.

M: How did you find being a lay Dominican enabled you to grow as a Christian?

R: Most of the time I was saying my prayers; I wasn't a person who had many friends so that it just kept me busy talking to my Lord in my prayers. That's all. Not much contact with other people.

M: What were the themes that were given during your retreats? It is a long time ago, I know, over 50 years ago. Do you have any memories that stayed with you from those retreats? Any stories that you remember or anything they said to you during those retreats?

R: Fr. Humphries used to give me, he used to encourage me and he made me accept myself, you know, he made me accept myself as I was. He actually he acted always as my spiritual director.

M: You mentioned earlier that you used to always walk with a stick. Have you always had the disease you have?

R: I had polio at the age of three. I had polio at the age of three and I went back to my knees, I was crawling again on my knees. But I must say that I really admire my mother who had faith, my mother had a very strong faith in God. So when she found that I had gone back on my knees, she says she started praying very hard because after going to the district surgeon, she took me there to the district surgeon and the district surgeon said, "Well, we can't do anything with her anymore, she is going to go like this going on her knees. We've also got children who can't walk".

So my mother was very much discouraged by that district surgeon but her faith told her that, well, it's God that really gave you this child so my mother says she started praying very hard for three full days, she says she used to get up in the morning and take her bucket for water, and go there and cry and speak to God. "Dear Lord you have given me this child as healthy and nice as she was but now if the devil has done this harm on her I know that you put the patch on her that she just ends up she can walk again, that she may just walk again". She did this for three days; on the fourth day God had answered her prayers.

At home my father had prepared some beer. So my father sent for our *induna*, he was next door to us. The Lord must have spoken to this man because that was the man

who answered my mother's prayers. That's how God answered my mother's prayers through this man. Then he came over to my father's place he took something to chop a stick. He came there and chopped a nice stick with it. He came over he found me at the yard just sitting down because I couldn't go to other, with the other children, just sitting down. He came to me and said, "Hey, why are you sitting here?" Then I said because I can't walk. He said, "Why? You stand up." Then he put the stick in front of me and said, "Hold this stick!" I stood up, I tried to stand I was so weak my legs were so weak. Then he pulled me with the stick. I followed him, followed him, followed and he took me right to the other end of the yard. Then he left me there and said, "Well, go back to your house, to your mother's house!" But don't leave this stick here you are going to walk with this stick. So I started standing up and trying to walk, tried and tried and got tired in the middle of the yard, and I sat down. I stood up again.

In the meantime, my mother was just watching through the small door. "Ooh, God is now answering my prayer. There is the catch I was asking for, that stick, my child is going to use that stick to walk. So I tried to go to my father's house. Until I came there she was so pleased that she said, "If you practice this what he has told you, you are going to walk again". So I stood up, that's how I stood up. Started walking with this stick.

I was already at the age of nine I hadn't started school yet. So, the only thing that is going to help this child is take her to school. The school was very far. They used to carry me in the morning and leave me at the school to meet with the principal there. At dinnertime he releases me so that I can start walking home again. It was a long distance. I got used to it, I got used to the stick so I could cover the distance going to school until I passed standard four. From standard four I went to a boarding school for standard five I went to a boarding school, it was a Catholic school.

What I left out was that once I was sick at the age of three. At the point of death there came a catechist, it was a catholic catechist. So he spoke to my mother and asked her if he could baptise me because I was at the edge of death. So my mother agreed that he baptises me and he gave me the name of Rose. And my sponsor was.. [tape indistinct] because she was at Boksburg, my sponsor. She was head of sisters because she was a Catholic. But then when I grew up my mother was a Methodist so she didn't tell me that "Wena, you've been baptised as a Catholic". So of course I couldn't go alone to the Catholic church, I was too small. So I went, I grew up attending the Methodist church until I passed standard four at school.

When I applied to the boarding school, the Roman Catholic boarding school, Father there must have suspected that this was not a Methodist name and so he went through the register, baptismal register. It wasn't very big, I suppose, and then he found me there, he found my name there. So when my mother brought in my application form and to pay for my fees, Father said, "Where does this child belong?" and she said "We are Methodist" "Who baptised you?" "I was baptised by a Catholic catechist". And he said "Well, this is ours, bring her back she is our child." So when I came to the boarding school, Father told me straight away "You are no more a Methodist. You go and take instructions you are a Catholic now." (Laughter).

M: And he gave you a Dominican name too on top of it? Rose.

R: Rose, yes.

M: So there was a....

R: Your father by the way yes he was [tape indistinct] he was given that name.

M: Where were you staying? In Nongoma?

R: Nongoma, yes that where I grew up, where I started working.

M: Did you complete studying at the boarding school?

R: Our school went as far as standard seven. So I went to Inkamana for standard eight and standard nine and at the end of standard nine I couldn't go for matric because I didn't have enough funds. Even standard eight and nine I was helped by a nun who was my principal at the Christ King School. She paid for my standard eight and nine.

So when I finished, when I had the middle of standard nine in June holidays, I asked the sisters at the hospital if they could give me a job, a temporary job at the hospital. So I got a job there, I was just helping the sister in the sewing room, patching up everything for the fathers and sisters.

And there was a lady then who was working at the Nongoma hospital, you know the normal hospital had a secretary there, white lady. So I thought well I am in standard nine now and my ambition is to become a clerk. So I went to this lady during lunch hour and asked her if she could help in time, just to coach me about typing because there was no typing at the Inkamana and I knew I wanted to be a clerk. So I just went to this lady and told her that the only work that I love and can do is clerical work but unfortunately at Inkamana I had no secretarial courses going on, so I wonder if during these holidays she could coach me about typing.

So this lady was very much interested in me, she became interested in me, she said, "You want to be a clerk?" I said, "Yes" then she said, "Ok, you go back to school, then in December holidays I'll start teaching you." This was in the June, July holidays when I asked her.

I went back to Inkamana to finish up my standard nine. In November when we were writing before holidays I saw the father there who was the secretary of the hospital. I saw him coming in and I was called into the principal's office. Father told me that "Well, Mrs Power is now leaving Nongoma and she wants you to come and work", so I said "Father, but I'm busy, I'm busy with my exams. I don't want to leave my exams. I want to pass standard nine." So he said "OK, when you finish up, we will take you there." I got a job straight away.

When I finished with exams, Father took me there to Nongoma and the lady called me "You work now, no more in typing, but in all clerical work". She taught me everything there, then she gave me typewriter, I was practice typing in the meantime. That's how I came in there.

M: I would like to ask some more questions, but would you like to have a break?

R: Let's have a break then...

M: Let's have a break and then we come back to it later. Thank you.

(Break)

M: I just thought of what Ruth has just mentioned. Those years when you were a Lay Dominican, it was the years of apartheid. Did you not experience the difficulties of black and white people having to meet? Were the people afraid of those times that you can have meetings of black and white people. What was the situation like when you went to the meeting at the different houses?

R: Actually it was those who were Catholic and we were in the Order we didn't have that spirit. They were just relaxed and we had that feeling we were just welcomed. I didn't feel it.

M: You didn't feel it. So you were welcomed as a lay Dominican.

R: Yes.

M: So like when you had retreats together you were mixed group or was it a retreat for whites and a retreat for blacks?

R: No, it was just one.

M: Just one retreat for the lay Dominicans. That was quite unusual for the time, because remember in apartheid there was always had to have "for whites and for blacks". And I found it very interesting that you were in a retreat together.

R: Maybe because we were just two...

M: Well, there was a sister too.

R: No, the sister was just catering for the retreat.

M: Oh I see.

R: No, she was not part of it she was catering for it.

M: But you were part of the meetings you were included in...

R: We were part of everything.

M: Oh, ok. And Father Nicholas Humphreys, he was a man who didn't worry about those sorts of thing?

R: He never thought of it.

M: He wasn't a man who was pro-apartheid in anyway.

R: Even when he was staying in St Mary's, I had a temporal job in Edendale. I used to visit him every Sunday at mass time in the chapel.

M: Did he ever talk of the group, I went through some records and I think he started a group in his parish in Potchefstroom. Did he ever talk about the lay Dominican groups he had started before in other places?

R: Not with me.

M: Not with you. Ok, he didn't say anything. I was quite interested because one of the first groups that was started in Boksburg in 1937, they had already started a group in his parish in Potchefstroom. The Boksburg group I think was mostly white. But the one he had started in Potchefstroom about the same time was African people. So, I just thought maybe he had mentioned it or spoke to you about it but obviously not.

What was it like being a lone lay Dominican in the sense that you didn't have the sense of community, now you have a sense of there are others who are with you. But when you were out there in Inkandla?

R: Ngoma and Inkandla, very lonely actually but somehow I did enjoy it. I don't know how but I did enjoy it. Now that there we are a group I enjoy it very much.

M: How do you find that it has affected your spirituality now?

R: It has it really has affected my spirituality. Actually twice I was a lone Dominican and I think that I had chance to get in contact with the seminarians, so these are the people who really boosted my spirituality. The boys of the seminary, I used to write to them I used to contact them and just like their mother, you know?

M: So you were like their spiritual mother, just encouraging them and supporting them. Is that the kind of ministry you feel you do now still, are you still doing that?

R: I'm still doing that Father but not very active as before because of some reasons, I can't even phone them now. I used to phone them I used to write to them but now I can only pray for them now and I meet very few of them now.

M: How did you meet them before how did you get to know them?

R: The seminarians, I think, I had written an article in *Umafrika* supporting priests. I think. It was an article ... Then one of them read this article; then I saw a letter from unknown person at Pretoria called Cosmas Mzizi. He saw this article in Pretoria and he said "I could feel that you like priests, so I wonder if you could write to me, to us, if we could correspond. So it was then that I started writing to them. Actually once I was at Nongoma there was a boy who studying priesthood.

R: Actually when I was working at Nongoma, there was, he is now Father Johannes Mbeka. He was still studying at that time and he used to during holidays. Father used to send him to the office to come and help me work. That is where I started having a deep love for the boys who are preparing for priesthood but at that

time I feared to write to him. I didn't want to cause trouble for him cause I did not know if they were allowed to receive letters from females and with a different name I might run the risk of spoiling his future, or else I was just writing to him telling him how interested I was in what he was doing.

So that's when I started liking the seminarians. Then I got this letter from Father Mzizi. I was so pleased I said the doors have opened now. So I started writing to Cosmas Mzizi, then it came to me that if Cosmas leaves he would finish his studies then I have no contact anymore.

So let me write a general letter to everyone and see if they are not going to respond, so I wrote to them and I started getting letters, lots of letters from each one of them now, individually. That is when I started connecting with them and it went so well, I used to feed them some spiritual upliftment and I got it from their letters too. I started phoning them and they phoned back, phoning was not so expensive at that time as it is today.

Now a lot of them are priests now and most of them I have never met. During holidays they used to come and look for me and they found me and they say, "Oh this is the lady who is writing to us".

M: So it became your ministry, your dream became a reality. And are they still working around KwaZulu-Natal or are some in other parts of the country?

R: Some of them are very far in Johannesburg, Soshanguve and in Zululand, of course.

M: Did you keep a copy of that letter that you wrote to Margaret?

R: Oh Father, that I had written to Margaret? Ooh I don't think I have it.

M: Maybe...

R: No, no, I didn't know that it was required.

M: No, it's not required

R: Yes of course that it would be necessary to produce this, no I didn't.

M: You don't remember what year it was that you wrote this letter?

R: '80's I think it was '84 or '85.

M: Ok. Thank you very much; I've taken up a lot of your time. I've enjoyed hearing what you had to say.

R: No, no, no, it was just the day for you, Father.

M: Thank you very much.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
FATHER JOSEPH FALKINER OP
on
25 MARCH 2004
at
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at
AQUINAS PRIORY
in
JOHANNESBURG
by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Fr Joe Falkiner in Mondeor, Johannesburg
on Good Friday, 25 March 2004**

J: OK, Mark has asked me to talk on what I remember about lay Dominicans in my life. I was trying to remember when I joined the lay Dominicans. It was in the 1950's and it was possibly 1959 but it may have been before then. I joined the lay Dominicans in Springs, I can't for the life of me remember why I joined the lay Dominicans. Possibly I was just invited because I wasn't somebody who rushed around joining things. So I presume somebody, possibly Eric Hodgson, said to me "Why don't you become a lay Dominican?" and I said "OK" or something like that which was the way I live my life, you know, people invite me to all sorts of things and I try and respond.

What do I remember about that? Well first of all we had a manual, a book, which we've got here... (Picking up of manual), I'm just picking it up and this little book guided us, it's basically a prayer book and as far as I remember the real emphasis was on spiritual life. I don't remember us doing any real apostolate but spiritual life and the spiritual life was governed by formal prayers, so I don't think contemplation was 'in' in those days and spiritual guidance certainly wasn't 'in'. It was considered to be a Jesuit thing that Dominicans didn't do but formal prayers was what Dominicans did do. And this book, I was just looking at the index now and it's basically a prayer book.

First of all its got the Rule, and then its got the Little Office of our Lady, and then it got commemorations of the saints and blessed of the Order, and then its got two litanies; the Litany of our Lady and the Litany of the saints in the Dominican rite; its got an Office for the Dead; its got indulgenced prayers; its got hymns to St. Dominic, hymns to Catherine and the hymn to Thomas Aquinas; its got prayers for going on a journey. Its got a ritual reception of the habit and the profession and various formulas; like formulas for general absolution, formula for blessing of the sick, blessing of rosary beads; blessing of the Dominican scapula, blessing of the cord of Saint Thomas...

M: I'd like to read that.

J: You can read that, ja. ...And indulgences, and how to serve at Mass. I've read that out because I think that gives a picture of what we were about, we were like a little sodality and we were supposed to say prayers. The group was, the prior, I think that's the terminology used, was a very tall man, called Eric Hodgson, who worked on one of the gold mines I think and the group wasn't big and I think it was all men. I'm not sure I can't remember. Another person in the group was the novice master and as far as I remember we had a monthly meeting, but in addition to that I as a novice had to meet with the novice master separately, go to his house and I think that was supposed to be monthly as well but it only happened two or three times. As far as I remember his job was to instruct me in use this manual, how to say the prayers and how to say the Office but once he showed me that there wasn't any further need for instruction. So that seemed to be the novice master's job, it was in connection with the manual.

And then of course the parish priest was our chaplain, that was Maurus Revill and the monthly meeting held at the church consisted of the laid out prayers for the

monthly meeting as laid out in this book and a little talk by the chaplain. I can't for the life of me remember what he spoke about, the monthly meeting was very formal...

M: What do you mean by formal?

J: Well, we said the prayers in the book, we recited them together, now I have the wrong page, but you'll find it in here. I was looking at it just now, it was sort of opening invocations and then a psalm, a blessing and so on, almost like a mini-Office, but it wasn't the Office. But we were supposed to say the Office, the Office of our Lady everyday at home. Then as I say, I was a novice and I don't know if I ever was professed or not because I was transferred out of Springs in 1959 in December and I don't think I had been a novice for the whole year. I don't think I got profession but I might be wrong. If I had joined earlier than that when I was still a university student then I probably did make profession but I don't remember. I do remember that on occasion the lay Dominicans wore their habits and I don't remember myself ever wearing a habit. [p] Habits were kept in the sacristy of the church, you couldn't take them home with you. But I think it was on special occasions, I can't remember, maybe the Feast of Saint Dominic or something.

M: Were you involved in the parish with the priest? Did you work in a parish? Were you encouraged to assist in the parish?

J: Right, remember this was pre-Vatican II. It was half a dozen years before Vatican II. So it was very much the old style of church, so there's no parish council or nothing like that. But there was a thing in this diocese called the Catholic Action Group and the Catholic Action Group functioned like a parish council. It wasn't called a parish council and it was made up of delegates from every society or sodality in the parish. I think I did end up being on that Catholic Action group representing the lay Dominicans. I should say representing the tertiaries, because the term lay Dominicans didn't come in yet, we were tertiaries. The First Order was the brethren, the Second Order was the nuns, the contemplative nuns, and the Third Order was made up of all the sisters as well as today what we call the lay Dominicans; so the Kingwilliamstown sisters, the Cabra sisters, the Oakford sisters, the Newcastle sisters, lay Dominicans, those were all tertiaries except that there were the conventual tertiaries and ones who weren't conventual.

M: Conventual would've been the one's who had sisters?

J: Ja and of course you didn't put OP after your name you put TOSD after your name, TOSD: Third Order of Saint Dominic.

But I don't remember us doing anything else in the parish. The parish was run by the priest. Maurus always ran the parish his way, he made all the decisions and we said "Yes Father, thank you Father". We had rosary in the church on certain occasions during the year, solemn rosary. Solemn rosary is different from ordinary rosary. Solemn rosary is sung and done in a procession. Possibly the lay Dominicans used to dress up for that because we used to process inside the church around the benches, you can imagine Springs church.

M: Around the sanctuary?

J: No, no. Wherever we started from, say we started from the sanctuary up towards the front door, out of the church first front door where they sell the Southern Cross, into the front door of the other side of the table, down the other aisle back towards the sanctuary, round the sanctuary. We would do that until five decades had been sung. Maurus used to sing the "Glory be..." solo. So anyway, that's about all I can remember from that year but I was then transferred.

M: Was that about 1960?

J: December '59 I was transferred to Tanzania and I had a year in Tanzania 1960 and two years in Namaqualand - 1961 and '62 - after I joined the Order. Now going to Tanzania of course I had my manual with me and so I continued the prayers, not all the time but saying the Little Office of our Lady and I think that probably had a lot to do with my vocation in the Order, in the First Order with the brethren.

M: Why is that? Did it help strengthen your Dominican vocation?

J: Especially the last year in Namaqualand, when I was getting very unhappy with being a geologist in the mining house, I felt I was doing an immoral job. The only spirituality I knew was in this book and so I used to pray the Office quite regularly during 1962. I don't have my book anymore I don't know what happened to it, once I went to Stellenbosch I didn't need it. But several other people who came to Stellenbosch while I was a student had also been lay Dominicans. Douglas Wiseman had been a lay Dominican. I think possibly Neville [Maccario], check with Neville, because the lay Dominicans, I don't know if it was under the Vicar General at the time or what, but it did seem to be a thing of inviting young men to be lay Dominicans.

Anyway at the end of '69 I got ordained and I came up to this diocese in Johannesburg and now that's after Vatican II and round about this time a new Rule came out, where the term lay Dominicans was coined.

And this is where we changed to another manual, this yellow one, [picking up of manual] and I was just glancing at this just now and it begins here: "The new rule for Dominican Lay Fraternities has been approved by the general chapter held at River Forest in the United States". This letter from the Master of the Order is dated November '68.

So, that was just before I was ordained, so once I was ordained and I got interested in lay Dominicans at all, it would have been with the new Rule. This book, I don't know whether this book is dated. This book was published in 1976, so between 1968 and 1976 very little happened in introducing the new rule in South Africa. So the group sort of staggered on and I wasn't really associated with them. But round about, I suppose, 1974/1975 I was asked by the Vicar General to be assistant promoter of the lay Dominicans, and I think I said "Why? I haven't been working with lay Dominicans." And they said "Well, Father Engering has been appointed to be promoter of the lay Dominicans but we feel he needs some help, especially when it comes to the new rule and bringing new things in because he knows the old things." So I agreed and I was based up in Springs, Springs/Brakpan area. He had been in contact with the tertiary groups in South Africa and was trying to form a national structure. And I think he did form a national structure, that was

headed by a lady in Johannesburg, I can't remember her name. Do you remember her name? Her daughter is still in contact with the Order?

M: No, I think ... Phyllis Fletcher's mother.

J: Ja, that's right, but Fletcher's her married name.

M: Yes, Phyllis' mother's married name.

J: But you'll get her name anyway. She was prioress, of what now came to be called the lay Dominican chapter in Johannesburg. The lay Dominican chapter in Johannesburg had adopted an apostolate, their apostolate was a prayer apostolate and it was called 'Our Lady's Guild Of The Sick'. So they went round promoting this 'Our Lady's Guild Of The Sick' and the idea was that you made contact with a sick person who would in turn pray for a priest. So that the lay Dominican chapter would then pray for this list of sick people but they'd meet with them and arrange that 'because we prayed for you, you must now pray for the priest' and they had a prayer card that they gave to all the sick people.

So that was a bit startling for me, I had never heard of this and it seemed that the Johannesburg chapter of lay Dominicans; it was Honeywill I think, yes that's her name; met I think at her house but you could check that with her daughter. Most of their meeting was business about this 'Our Lady's Guild Of The Sick', I don't think they ever held discussions on spirituality or anything, it was all just assumed.

Anyway my job was to bring new ideas and that's where this new manual comes in because I edited this. This is my work. I made all the decisions. Engering left it almost entirely to me. So it's a mixture of old and new. Its very much based on the sort of headings of the previous manual, but its got the new rule in it to replace that old rule, plus the general declarations of the Order, plus a directory for Southern Africa because part of the new rule was that each country should make a national directory. Then its got ceremonies of admission, its got the end of a chapter meeting but its got new things like: What's the vocation of lay Dominicans? What are lay Dominicans? Young lay Dominicans.

These are the new ideas that were coming through and I wrote most of those sections in this book myself. Its' still got traditional Dominican prayers and its got a page on 'Our Lady's Guild Of The Sick' because that's what Mrs. Honeywill said being a lay Dominican was.

M: What would you say has typified the shift? From your experience of being a lay Dominican, you said it was just formal prayers, to what you were trying to do with this book. What was this kind of shift that happened in the Vatican?

J: What comes to mind immediately is that these people were a lot older. The lay Dominicans that I encountered then after this book seemed to me to be of a 'Grandmother Age'. Whereas the lay Dominicans that I had joined was young adults, or not necessarily young but youngish adults; married people with children and so on. There were some grandmothers, I mean my mother joined for example. She joined the previous chapter I think once I became assistant promoter. So there were people like my mother in it for a time but they, for them, for those older people it was still basically a prayer thing - so study didn't come in. Once this book came out I think my role was more or less finished because once Engering died a new promoter was

appointed and I wasn't an assistant to the new promoter. I was particularly an assistant to Engering, he sort of said 'You get on with it, Joseph'.

M: What I read in some of these notes was that you were chaplain to the Kwa Thema group?

J: In the '70's, yes in that period.

M: What can you tell me about that because it was also very similar just a prayer group or a scripture group?

J: No. That was a scripture group but I think that was me. There were these guys; I think they were already lay Dominicans...

M: Yes, it started in 1957.

J: Yes and they were all readers at mass and that seemed to be their job. But they didn't seem to know much about what they were reading and so what we did there was to I'm trying to remember... we worked through some of those New Testament reading guides. You know those little booklets, the New Testament reading guides?

M: TEF booklets?

J: No, they not TEF. They published by the Liturgical Press, Minnesota. We got a couple of them in the library, I'll show you some. We started with the one called 'The Introduction to the New Testament' and I can still remember the first letter because there were discussion questions, and people were told to read two or three pages at home and then come to the meeting and we would discuss these questions.

The first one, the first chapter I think in that first one was just giving background information about Jerusalem and the only thing they had to do was explain 'What's a Pharisee?', 'What's a Sadducee?', 'Who were the Sanhedrin?', 'Who were the Romans?' and so on. I can remember when we discussed that one of the lay Dominicans said 'We've been reading and interpreting in church...' because the readers were also interpreters for the priests, who preached in English. One of them said, 'This book is very strange, it talks about all these political groupings and that sort of thing, it makes it sound as if Jerusalem is a real place with a history.' He had been reading in church and interpreting priests' sermons for years and he thought the whole thing was a story, a kind of mythical story. The impact of that on me was enormous because it made me realise that we have a real task to do to make people aware of the historical background to our faith, that Jesus came in history, God worked through history. They had no idea; maybe some of them did but that particular person did not.

So then our meetings was all on scripture after that and we'd use some of those New Testament reading guides and we'd say prayers and, I think, they met once a week and we'd say a bit of Office at the meeting and do some scripture.

M: Once a week not once a month?

J: Because of the scripture I think we had to meet more frequently. I didn't feel that what we were doing in Kwa Thema was being done by other groups in the country. The other groups were still old people just wanting a bit of spirituality. Then of course once I moved away from there I occasionally went to the meeting in Brakpan because the present East Rand group is a combination of Springs and Brakpan and Boksburg.

M: Maybe you can just come to Brakpan later, just a few more questions about Kwa Thema. When you were in Kwa Thema, you were with Gregory [Brooke] and Benedict [Mulder], were these lay Dominicans somehow included or involved in ward system?

Were they included or did they function like a separate group altogether?

J: The people who had ran the ward system were a very good group and some of them were lay Dominicans. I can't remember which were lay Dominicans and which weren't. Nico Marabe was parish chairman, who was highly involved in the ward system, had a reason for not being a lay Dominican because he said 'Lay Dominicans are like a sodality and the parish chairperson mustn't belong to this or that sodality. He has got to worry about the whole parish'. But I've got members like Joel Moja, Mike Mpilo and so on...

M: Nick Lekoane

J: And Nick Lekoane yes, they're lay Dominicans and highly involved in the ward system. They were people who responded to the priests. I mean they were very good people willing to work and you know the priests invited them to do this or that and they took initiative themselves. But I can't remember which ones were specifically lay Dominicans.

M: The 1970's was the beginning of the resurgence of political activity...

J: Well, in Kwa Thema it took two forms because it took the form of a worker consciousness as well as of a political consciousness.

M: Black consciousness was emerging at that time in other places. Was that influencing the lay Dominicans in any way?

J: Not very much, not very much. Take Joel Moja. Joel Moja was at that time instrumental in running Pilkington United Brothers' Football Club in Pilkington's factory. Many factories set up football teams at that time to prevent people going to trade union meetings during their lunch hour and so on. And as I say he was a very nice guy who would respond to anything, so if the boss said a football club he set up a football club. He wouldn't analyse what the purpose in the boss' mind for the football club. So the lay Dominicans of Kwa Thema were not really politically conscious, the politically conscious people were not in the lay Dominicans, some of them were ward leaders - yes.

M: They were politically conscious.

J: Oh yes. Nico Marabe, for example, who was the parish chairman was also treasury of the East Rand Engineering Union and got victimised for that. Of course, the Kristo Nkosi parish was the centre of trade unionism, most of the unions held meetings in the classroom and people even used to come to Sunday mass and send their wives and children into mass and go and slip around the back into a classroom and have the trade union meeting during mass so that the security police wouldn't realise there was a union meeting going on.

M: Do you know of lay Dominicans being involved as union leaders?

J: I don't remember no.

M: Did you see, you know the See, Judge, Act methodology was very prominent in YCW was that never really suggested or introduced into the lay Dominicans? It was seen to be a prayer group therefore See, Judge, Act didn't seem to be the place.

J: The Kwa Thema group was focusing on scripture and getting to know scripture and being able to share in ward meetings scripture-wise. But I don't remember any social apostolate.

M: There was no like charitable apostolate or things like that?

J: That was going on in the parish but I don't remember. I think the lay Dominicans role was particularly scripture.

M: Were they preaching?

J: No, not yet. But they were doing things like holding prayer meetings in the halls so I suppose there was probably...

J: As I was saying that because they were doing scripture and they attended ward meetings and things they might of shared in ward meetings...

M: Parish ward meetings?

J: In parish ward meetings, which would be, a form of preaching of course but it wasn't formal preaching as yet.

M: There was a case at one of the national councils of the lay Dominicans that one of the Kwa Thema groups asked specifically to start a separate movement, not to be considered part of the ordinary 'white lay Dominicans', do you have any recollections of that?

J: No, did I say that?

M: No, no. It's something I read. In fact in 1972 or so they had a problem because they felt that many of their members couldn't speak English or appreciate English and they felt that they were wanting to start a separate be a separate group. You don't know anything about that?

J: I wonder if that was Timothy Botlholo. That whole family was Black Conscious and Timothy was an old man who had been a lay Dominican and one of the ward leaders. He might have expressed that firstly as his son Gregory Botlholo was very much Black Conscious, the forerunner of AZAPO. So that might have been expressed but I don't remember it.

M: And you don't remember much of the national council meetings that were held in Rosettenville at St Benedict's?

J: No, is that where it was held. I don't know whether I attended that or not.

M: I saw your name in one of them.

J: Yes. I might have been there to say Mass or to attend a session or give a talk or explain a new rule or something like that. But I don't remember being there throughout but I might have been there.

M: What was his name, his first name?

J: Timothy Botlholo.

M: You spoke about Brakpan. You went out to Kwa Thema and then to Brakpan.

J: Yes, the Brakpan group was still meeting so that would've been Andrew Prior's aunt, what was her name?

M: Ivy Andrews.

J: Ivy Andrews, ja, and I think Chris' sister was probably there. Several of them were relatives of people who had gone to the priory because when Francis Middlewick was made priest of Brakpan. He held a passion play and all the young men in the parish were in the passion play and this had had a fantastic effect on them and about 10 of them went to Stellenbosch to become Dominicans. I think that was before my time, but just the fact that several of those lay Dominicans from Brakpan had relatives who had worked in the priory or had been at the priory. I suspect that's how they came to be lay Dominicans but I don't know if that's correct I'm just..., well that might have been a factor.

There were some very good Dominican priests working in Brakpan, all the years. Francis made a huge impact and Dominic had produced the passion play but it was a Brakpan parish function. I mean the passion play was put on in, I think, the city or the town hall of Brakpan for public audiences and so on, you can ask Dominic Baldwin about that. That was before my time.

So there were these people in Brakpan who were very loyal parishioners. So Ivy Andrews, when she retired from Boksburg-Benoni Hospital where she had been administrative matron, she became parish secretary in Brakpan for no pay. That was her apostolate you see. All she wanted was petrol money to get from home to the church everyday. She was a fantastic parish secretary and she was full of compassion for the people. If somebody came to the door or rang the telephone, for example, to say that they were new parishioners, she didn't take them in and say 'OK, what's your name and your address' and all that, she didn't treat them like that at all. She got into

conversation with them about their children and marriage you know, she was a real pastoral worker. It wasn't just writing down statistics of where people live. People used to come to the presbytery to see Ivy not to see me. I was delighted because I was running two parishes and she was the key person in the lay Dominicans there, she kept the group together. But people were dying off and getting old and pulling out and that's why we got this present set up where there's one group on the East Rand instead of three.

M: You said that she had the record book; do you think it might still be in Brakpan parish, because it seems to have gone missing?

J: You can just ask, there's not even a regular priest at Brakpan at the moment. The Sacred Hearts live there but they don't regard themselves as the parish priests. The house has been altered by them, so there might be stuff there and there might not be, but try them.

M: Did you notice within the lay Dominicans any tensions, racial tensions with joint meetings? For example I remember once there was an article where the black members were afraid to come to the National Council unless they could get a guarantee that they were going to be safe of any police raids. What's interesting is at that time in the '70's blacks and whites were meeting together and even staying in the same venue, which was going against the Group Areas Act. I found that quite intriguing that the lay Dominicans were in fact breaking the law.

J: I might have raised that issue because we had that experience in YCW, there'd been a National Council of YCW at Stellenbosch and I'd been instrumental, I had already been ordained but I was instrumental in booking what was the old convent across the road from the Priory which was being used as a conference centre, that had been raided previously. The woman who was running the conference centre had been told by the authorities that 'Alright, if blacks had permission to stay there then we won't raid you' but individuals have to get permission, so it was seen that anybody coming to the centre would first have to go to the Bantu Affairs department with his pass and get a rubber stamp into his pass with permission to stay in a white area for two nights or something. Of course, the YCWs came down for a national conference and were told to go to the Bantu Affairs to get their passes stamped and refused point blank and that National Council was not held.

Now in the aftermath of that, it's quite likely that I raised that issue. If they are going to stay together let's avoid such incidents. But I don't remember the conversation but they would've been nervous to stay in a white area because it was illegal to stay in a white area, as it was illegal for whites to stay in a black area. There were regular raids. Springs presbytery got raided. Our Dominican houses got raided. Stellenbosch got raided.

It was more a question of avoiding incidents than anything else.

M: It wasn't like protest?

J: It wasn't a protest, no. It was more, let's not get... our people don't want to get into trouble, they don't want to draw the attention of the security police.

It was different from students. The first raid in Stellenbosch was when young doctors from NUSAS were meeting. They were young graduate doctors from all over

South Africa and they were quite happy to get raided because they were at that age, young, weren't yet married, becoming politically conscious. If they were going to get arrested, some of them were quite happy with that: "It shows I'm part of the struggle at least".

But the lay Dominicans were mostly an older group, married with children, jobs to keep and all that kind of thing. I don't remember them being involved in the struggle as lay Dominicans. As I say some of them were trade unionists but that was a bit different because legislation was continuing to change to allow for trade unions to grow.

M: As far as you can remember what were the occupations of the lay Dominicans?

Did they see their role, their life, as taking their prayer and spirituality into the workplace, into their occupations?

J: More into the parish, I think. The ones I encountered were more into the parish except for the Johannesburg group which was... [tape is indistinct]

M: I just wanted to ask you about the brothers' attitude towards the lay Dominicans especially 1970's... were they supportive and were they encouraging groups? What was happening in terms of the relationship with the lay Dominican groups?

J: This was a terribly exciting period for us; the whole implementation of Vatican II, in which we played an important role, plus the political situation dominated our lives. So something like the lay Dominicans was not a high priority because they were not seen to be involved very much in either of those two things.

What made brethren excited was things like: the training of deacons in the Welkom diocese; the training of lay ministers in Kwa Thema; the whole rise of worker consciousness; the strikes all our parishioners in the Black townships were involved in and then the Soweto uprising in '76 which lasted a couple of years because it spread gradually throughout the country; the activities of the security police; the setting ... the enormous proliferation of the ward system. All these things were things that dominated us, so unless the lay Dominicans could fit into those things they weren't a high priority. So I think the brothers were just not interested in the lay Dominicans. They saw them as elderly people who wanted formal prayers, the monthly meeting which was basically a tea party. That's how they saw it - they saw it as irrelevant. I'm not surprised that the lay Dominicans felt that the Fathers were not interested in them.

M: As far as you know were there any lay Dominicans who got involved in lay ministries or became deacons or things like that?

J: Yes, there were but then the focus was then on that role and they would be part of another group in the parish, a lay ministers group or a deacon training group or something like that. So the training was not done in the lay Dominicans regions.

M: Did they continue as far as you know as lay Dominicans or did they fall away?

J: Well, in Kwa Thema they continued but it wasn't a big issue.

M: Many of those Kwa Thema people actually became lay ministers later?

J: Well, I think, they all did because they all were really involved even before Vatican II in being readers and all that.

M: So in some senses Vatican II confirmed what they were doing or gave them more scope.

J: Gave them more scope yes, to carry out some kind of especially liturgical apostolate, but which was not run by the lay Dominican group. So the lay Dominicans did emphasise things but the lay Dominican group just provided spiritual background for that. Did that make sense?

M: I also wanted to ask you about Advocate Vieyra. Do you know much about him and his role in the lay Dominicans in Boksburg in the '50's?

J: I didn't know he was a lay Dominican but he was very powerful in the diocese. When I was a late-teenager I suppose, that's when we heard his name often because he was the head of this thing called the Catholic Federation.

M: What was that about?

J: The Catholic Federation was a... I had explained what a Catholic Action Group in the parish earlier... the Catholic Federation was the same thing in the diocese. It brought all the sodalities together on the diocesan level and their meeting was called the Catholic Federation. And their team, I suppose, today would be called the Diocesan Pastoral Council except there was no such structure and the Catholic Federation was the voice of the laity in the diocese and he, I think, was the head of that. And he was quite often quoted and he must have been quite a spokesperson to be quoted. There were two things happening in the diocese at that time: one was the building of Christ the King cathedral and the other one was the building of that building in Kerk street where the Catholic Bookshop used to be, which was called the Catholic Centre.

He, I think, for me, at any rate became the spokesperson especially for the Catholic Centre, which was supposed to be a Catholic Centre for everyone in Johannesburg. Imagine if Emil today making Veritas radio a Catholic radio station, with emphasis on the word "Catholic". The Catholic Centre was that, to be a centre where everyone could come and meet and talk. Of course, it was never a team but that was the impression given, and we were all asked to buy bricks for the Catholic Centre. I think it would have cost two and six pence a brick.

But Advocate Vieyra was more than that he was a spokesperson on issues involved in the church the press would've gotten from him.

M: I found records that he met with Archbishop Garner and Whelan too, at the time about the Education Acts to see Verwoerd and to negotiate for the church.

J: Ja, that's the sort of, that's how he got into the press as representing the Catholic people. I didn't know he was a Tertiary.

M: He was a Prior of Boksburg for a number of years.

J: Was he? I had no idea. He didn't come through as a tertiary doing that. He was a spokesman for the Catholic laity. That's very important.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MRS AUDREY KELF AND MR DENNIS SWEETMAN
on
21 SEPTEMBER 2004
at
10.15
at
TARENTAAL RETIREMENT VILLAGE
in
EDENVALE
by
MARK JAMES
UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Mrs Audrey Kelf and Mr Dennis Sweetman
on 21 September 2004 in Edenvale**

M: So you were talking about the lone lay Dominicans that you were...

A: Yes, well most of my work was done through the post and I kept in touch with all the lone lay Dominicans throughout the country by post. There were many lone lay Dominicans who were too far from any church to be able to do very much or keep in contact and were sitting out on a limb because they had no contact with any lay Dominicans and there was no chapter at any church where they may have been able to get to occasionally. And these people got to know about the National Council and corresponded with me and I kept in touch with all of them and through them I learned of others and we had all sorts. I am saying this with due respect, speaking about a lot who were African people who used to write us the most beautiful letters. How they kept their faith with the Dominicans through their prayer book and their Office and they were so faithful to the whole course of the lay Dominicans and they did so much, as best they could out in the *bundu*. They used to write faithfully and I used to correspond with them, so a lot of my work was done through the post - that was throughout the country.

But at that time, it was the beginning of my presidency, we had a very strong, in fact we had two I think, chapters in Rhodesia and they were very strong indeed. Any correspondence to do with them, I haven't got at the moment. I have given you the information, that sort of information should've been handed to Father Carel.

Then there was trouble in Rhodesia. They wrote and said because of the trouble and this kind of thing, that they would have to disband. So a lot of them went to live out where their homes were, which was too far away which meant that the chapters weren't able to be together anymore, so they disbanded completely and so we had no further contact with any chapters there. But I did keep in contact with some of the sisters who were helping in the chapters.

M: Do you remember which year that might have been? Was it about 1979?

A: Well, it was just after I had been made president at that time. I had to be vague about these things because I really have nothing to jog my memory now. So as far Rhodesia is concerned, it went that way. But here we had our meetings... Dennis, was it once every three months?

D: Yes, once every three months.

A: Every three months we used to meet and in that period I was corresponding with all the chapters in the country and all the lone lay Dominicans. I used to inform them when we were having our meeting and we would ask each chapter: "Please to let us have the information about their chapter and their meeting in the last three months". So we used to get this in and all this was recorded at our three monthly meetings to do with all the chapters, anything that popped up in the course of our conversation at our meetings, difficulties or anything, I would make a note of them. I would write them down and send copies of our meeting to all our chapters. Any difficulties I would write to the president of the individual chapters and ask to help us out with information about what ever the problems might be. This way I kept in touch with all the lone lay Dominicans, whichever way it was, whether they were lay or

whether they belonged to a chapter. And then we also used to have quite a lot to do with the sisters who also used to attend the meetings of those chapters. So if anything went wrong, perhaps the president was away or whatever, the sister there, like Port Elizabeth, was very good about that. They would always write and let me know what was going on. So in this way we were always fully in touch with all the lone lay Dominicans throughout the country as best we knew how. And that mainly was the work I did as president.

M: The 1970s was a quite a difficult period because, as you say, there was a lot of groups closing down. Were there other groups closing down too? What was the sort of response of the National Council? What were you trying to do to try and understand? Because I read some of the documents, a lot of it still talking about needing to change in terms of Vatican II and develop a new identity. What was the sort of, do you remember what was the sort of questions that came up at that time?

A: Can you help out? (Directed to Dennis)

D: Audrey, we really struggled to get a new direction. As I say, we used to get a fair amount of criticism from our brethren in the First Order. We couldn't get direction. We felt that the old idea of chapters was dying in a way. Remember? And we were looking for another way of revitalizing things, but then came the idea of the friends of St Dominic, which came much later, and we were quite pleased with that, you know we were very keen, that that should continue as a way from the old fashioned chapter idea about this. But we were not successful in it at all, every meeting we had the difficulty of which way should we go? How can we revitalise, how can we resurrect the thing? We had no input from these new Dominican groups.

A: I think at that time, the latter time you're talking about, as I recall, which was when chapters were weakening throughout the country and they were not getting new members. They were battling to get new members and everything was stagnant you might say. This was towards the end of the National Council's time in Johannesburg.

D: What caused that, I don't know.

A: It was just a falling away because there had been little contact between the National Council and the chapters all that period of time that we were talking about. I suppose it's like everything else, everything builds up whatever it is, whether it be within the church or out of the church, we see it around us even today. Things build up and everything seems nice and rosy and all of a sudden something happens and there is a general collapse but eventually it comes around again. But for us we were on the way out so we didn't see that.

D: Can't you remember how you struggled to get an answer from anybody, PE, Durban, Cape Town. We couldn't get an answer from, and we couldn't get an answer from them.

A: They wouldn't write, they just wouldn't write.

D: I think Madge Green was the only one who ever sent us something.

A: She was one.

D: I came from a very strong chapter in Durban but nobody there ever answered us.

A: Durban was impossible at that time.

D: Okay, that enough of that (Laughter).

A: Port Elizabeth was very good from the point of view that when we struggled to get information from the chapter, the sisters actually stepped in and occasionally they used to correspond. But as you say, everything appeared to be stagnant at that time and we didn't get anywhere at all with any of them and that was the time when, I think, Father had decided that "We'd better fold". But now you see its coming back into its own again.

D: You see even at that time three chapters on the East Rand were melded into one.

A: That's right, look what happened to Springs. Springs I can't, I'll never be able to understand what happened in Springs because it was so strong. All the priests in Springs were Dominicans. This was a strong, strong chapter and almost overnight the whole thing folded, just like that. And there was no means of finding out what went wrong. It was just dead-end. Even today when I look back I am amazed that a chapter so strong in a Dominican parish should fold as it did. Something went wrong.

D: You say that but you know, Audrey, I grew up in a Dominican parish and I hadn't even heard of tertiaries or mention of it. Although the priest at the time used to say that "There is going to be a Third Order meeting", even though we met it was never explained to us. Father Revill obviously chose his people very carefully to join the chapter. He didn't make it open. He obviously approached people and that's probably what happened to me. Or he spoke to my prior at the time, to contact me to come along to meetings and so on and see if I like it there. I got a few notes here that I was a postulant in the mid-'50s, you know. But at that time there were three strong chapters on the East Rand. Father Revill had previously started the one in Boksburg.

A: It was very strong when I first joined in Johannesburg...

D: I don't know what date that was that Father Revill started Boksburg and later started Brakpan. It must have been the early 40's. Yes, because he was with us nine years until 1947. Both chapters in Boksburg and Brakpan were started when he came as parish priest.

M: When you started the Johannesburg group, was Advocate Vieyra or Judge Vierya part of this chapter. Did he know much about him or of him?

A: Who was that Father?

M: Advocate Vieyra. He was quite prominent.

A: I knew of him.

M: He died in 1965.

A: That's right.

D: Yes, he was very prominent.

A: I may have met him, I don't recall. I was still very new at that time. I didn't know much about the Dominicans at all because that was when I first came back to Jo'burg in 1964, '65.

M: When you joined that group, who was involved in it at that time?

A: Phyllis Honeywill and Father Engering were the two that I can remember best just off the cuff.

M: And what were the sorts of things that you would do during your lay Dominican meetings? What was the sort of emphasis, because there was a Guild for the Sick?

A: We had a very strong chapter at that time. The meetings were very good because we used to have the prayers and the Mass. I think I've got that written down on one of those papers there.

A lot of that and then, of course, I was so new I used to sit and do all the listening. Do as I was told, more than anything else until I got used to the set up. We had our meetings at the Catholic Centre. But it was a strong chapter at that time and Phyllis Honeywill, of course, saw to it that it was strong and that everybody did what they had to, she had us all under her thumb.

M: She was a very good organiser?

A: Well, you know she was so wrapped up in the Dominicans, that you didn't dare put a foot wrong.

[Laughter].

And another thing we had which was also in those papers - the Johannesburg chapter took on the 'Guild of the Sick' and that I put in one of those papers too. Apparently that was started in London and it was going very strong with the ... what was the Order of priests there? Was there an MSM or something? Whatever.

They were going to give that up and I don't honestly know how it originated to come out here, whether they appealed to different countries to take it on because they wanted to give it up and Phyllis Honeywill stepped in and she took it on. And I have it there it was approved by the hierarchy, it is on the paper and the 'Guild of the Sick'. Now you see, anything like that Phyllis would follow that through to the death. She never let a thing slip up, not ever. She followed that through and I can't tell you how many books she had with all the priests and the people that she had managed to get to pray for all the members of the "Guild of the Sick". She had all these little leaflets printed at the time and we all a priest, [referring to the leaflet], that was our

leaflet. We were all given a priest to pray for. You didn't have to know the priest and you didn't have to correspond with him but he would be notified about you and he would be told the same thing. He wasn't under any obligation. He was merely asked to pray for the person praying for him and we had an obligation to pray for him.

In fact I'm still praying for 'my one' and I was very worried about 'my one' because he is still very much alive and he is one of the favourites. He is just up here on the East Rand. He still keeps in contact with me, he tried very much to try and get me away at one stage. He used to pop in sometimes but he battles because I think he is staying with his sister in a farm outside Benoni/Boksburg, or one of these places.

I went to Father Harry and I said what do I do, in a case like this, because he has been good to me, for me to pray for, and my name has been given to him for him to pray for me. Well, he has made point over the years and we going back a lot of years now, but he actually been to visit me and I still pray for him everyday, say a prayer for him everyday. He has tried very hard. He sent me a card last Christmas or the one before and a picture of a statue and the crucifix that's hanging on his chapel wall where he is. And he said that if I would like to see it sometime I must just let him know and he'd come and fetch me. But, of course, I haven't responded to it. I haven't seen him since but I still keep on with the prayers.

So he is still saying Mass his way and the strange thing is they have a following. This is the strange thing down there. Anyhow Father Harry said maybe I should just continue the prayers. I actually said to him one day that he came to visit, I said to him 'You know things have changed overseas with these people why don't you come back?' and he didn't answer. He just sat still so I said goodbye to him. I don't know what to do about people like that. The thing is, is that...

M: You don't know how God is working in their lives. Just leave it to God to...

A: I don't know how God is going to find the time to sort all of us out.

[Laughter]

M: He created us and caused his own problems.

A: He has so many millions to sort out. So I don't know, he knows best.

M: I wanted to also ask you about how do you find that in the years that you've been a lay Dominican it helped your own commitment as a Catholic, as a layperson in the church? How did it form you as a person? How did it make a difference in your life?

A: It makes you very much stronger; it makes you very much stronger in my outlook on life and also on contact with friends that I made. I feel stronger in my discussions on religion with friends, most of them are not Catholics. Somehow you have the strength to be able to put forward your case, your beliefs to your friends when having an argument. I find that in all respects my prayer life and in my everyday life that having been, having joined the Dominicans, having absorbed all of my time with them and all I learned, I find that I am much stronger within myself now. I am able to face up to problems with more spiritual strength.

But I still find that the devil was very visible, in fact he has been busier than ever since I've become a lay Dominican. The devil doesn't like us, you see. But I wouldn't change anything. I was sad when I stepped down as an active lay Dominican and have been so for ten years. I was sad at that period because Dennis has been the only one who kept in touch me and I feel that that stems from the fact that the years that I was president, not polishing my own halo, but I looked on it as part of the job. That having kept in contact with all those lay Dominicans, people I had never ever met, yet I knew through the post. Having kept in touch with them, having tried to keep them altogether and the chapters all those years that suddenly when I was in the position where I needed somebody to keep in touch with me - there was no one. For ten years there has been no one and you can't do anything because you've got no transport. You can't do anything like that on the telephone anyhow, so you left to your own devices. And then I thought to myself, many times I've thought about it even after ten years, that if it wasn't for the fact that being a Dominican and having made my promise that I had the strength, and if it wasn't for the fact, that I had the strength to get through the Order - I don't think this last ten years would've been so easy for me. It's been difficult because I had to live a life from that angle, quite differently from when I was in touch with everybody, the priests and the sisters and the members and the work, all that keeps you in touch all the time. Suddenly it was all gone, everything went.

The Legion of Mary went, I'm a lone lay Dominican and I'm also a lay member of the Legion of Mary. Then I was an assistant minister of the Eucharist that all went. And everything I had to do personally in the church, overnight it all went and I was just left on my own. I suddenly had to come to terms with that and you know it hasn't been easy. When I could've felt sorry for myself I thought 'Well you know this isn't right' and I tried to look upon it as something that God had visited on me or allowed to be visited on me to try my faith, and it is that that has kept me going and has kept me strong as best I can as a human being with all my faults and my weaknesses. But if it hadn't been for the background, these ten years wouldn't have been easy because you have some much to fight and you do it on your own, and with the background it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference.

Then of course you've to remember that you've got to go to confession and the months go by and I'm a Catholic and I've got to go to confession. How do you get there? You've got to work all these things out, you can't just go and there's nobody to take you. All that, little things you know? You don't think of them at the time until you are suddenly left on your own and you've got to work all this out. But God and our Blessed Mother, they have helped me such a lot and I tell you what has helped me as much as anything, is my trip to Medjugorje. Since then there's nobody who can slay me now because I have got the strength at Medjugorje that I have never ever had before.

Have you ever been?

M: No, I haven't.

A: If ever you get a chance, go. Go! It's the most wonderful place to go to. Just a village but you know when you there you can feel Our Lady around you all the time. You don't have to look for her, she's just there and she's never left me all these years since I was there, she has never left me. I say a lot of rosaries and prayers and so on, but I can feel her around me. I'm not talking just through the back of my head now. I'm telling you really and truly telling you since Medjugorje there has been such a

change in my spiritual outlook on life. Straight from there everything, so with Dominicans, it's all there. Of course, I pray to St Dominic, Catherine, St Rose, I sometimes wonder about St Rose, I said to her one day 'I have a feeling you don't look after me'. I'm still waiting for her to answer me on that.

M: I don't think she looks after herself very much either. She's very well known for her strict discipline. Toughen her up.

[Laughter]

D: What congresses did you oversee? I think you did the one at Victory Park and I think you did the one at Koinonia.

A: Two, I did two. Yes. You know those congresses are wonderful.

D: Well certainly, you know the congresses we've been to, we have asked ourselves questions, we haven't just glided through the whole thing. We always had some difficult things we had to try and find direction with.

A: Yes. I find it very stimulating. Some of them would come up with questions we had never even thought of and there was always someone who knew the answer. That helped us a lot with answers and suggestions and then afterwards when we were roaming around the grounds there was always somebody we could talk to about some little something that we weren't sure of. It just had to be a little thing, and it just binds two parts together. So I'm all for these congresses, I think they are very good and excellent.

M: Why would, the reason as far as you could remember, why would there be a 13-year or a 14-year gap between the congress in 1981 and the one in 1994? What happened there?

A: We were going to have, there was to be, we were to have one every three years and then when we were getting ready for the next one, after the Koinonia one, something cropped up that we didn't have it. I have a feeling now that, I don't know the books are there for yourself, that the membership throughout the country was dropping and I also think it had something to do with the cost.

D: But Audrey was going to do the International congress as well and I think the feeling was let us see what comes out of the International congress, of which I attended in Canada.

A: Yes you did. That's right. It might have had something to do with that.

D: I think it was a feeling at the time of the provincial too, because there was a heavy document put out with lots of changes envisaged and I think it was felt that 'Let's hold, let's leave the local congress on hold until something very definite came out of that international congress'.

A: Yes, you're right. Sorry, I had forgotten about that.

D: But it took and whether ever it arrived I don't know, a real conclusion from that congress in Canada. I don't think I ever saw a document that was prepared of the findings. All I found when I went there was that there was a very definite split between the English-speaking Dominicans and the French-speaking Dominicans. Not differences of, maybe of opinion only, it wasn't a split but they had some very definite ideas of their own, the French-speaking. And the Dutch wouldn't even come. They said we were so archaic in our thinking chapters as lay Dominicans; they refused to come to the congress because they were *avant-garde* in the Netherlands and preferred not to come. This was a great pity because their input would've been invaluable of a different approach, you know?

A: I don't think there was anything.

D: We never got anything at the National Council. You know it wasn't sponsored, I happened to tie it up with an overseas company visit and I did that leg off into Canada and back into the States.

M: What year was that '85? I'll go and look it up, it's in the records.

D: It will be in the records. It could've been '85. When was the Gulf War?

M: I think it was '87.

D: It was '85.

M: So the National Council was active in that period in '81-'94?

A: Yes.

D: Definitely.

M: So they still met with regular meetings?

A: It was very good and the chapters were all functioning very well. It was just the most unusual thing that all of a sudden there was this general collapse. I suppose, you know people leaving and going to live elsewhere or perhaps deciding they don't want to carry on anymore.

D: We do say that we were quite relieved at Koinonia that somebody else would take the cudgels...

A: At that time...

D: You know we were very pleased to hand it over because we seemed to be very bogged down in our thinking weren't we? [Directed at Audrey].

A: Well we were, you see because we had no further stimulation. You know you've got to be active in the world as well to be able to progress and to see the world through different eyes and, of course, I was just sitting at home at that time so the only thing I had was really the post or telephone.

M: How did you find the support from the Dominican brothers and the priests? You spoke a lot about the sisters; you said Father Benedict was around. Was there much other support from the priests or Dominican brothers around you?

A: Well you know, I suppose we were lucky with our spiritual directors; they sort of kept us together. I can't say much about it because I wasn't around very much. I had to rely on people getting to me from A to B. I don't know how you found it. There was some who weren't even the least bit interested. There was one in particular. Who was he? Do you remember?

[Directed at Dennis]

He didn't want to know about us. Oh look at that, I've forgotten. It wasn't Father Spruyt, was it Father Spruyt?

D: I think Carel did quite a lot for us - to resurrect things - he helped us a lot. No, it was somebody else who felt that we were wasting our time.

A: I thought he was the one who wasn't so interested in us but then he took us on.

D: Yes, that's the one.

A: And we were surprised that he took it on because of what he said.

D: He was at the Congress in Victory Park when he took us on and probably rightly so because we needed assistance.

A: We were battling. We were battling.

D: We were in a bit of a rut and we couldn't see our way because it was a sort of changeover too from the old style of chapters.

A: Now you see we were very ... just speaking generally about the Dominicans ... I'm looking at it now. You attend a meeting, you go home and you make a note in your diary of that next meeting but in the interim, what do you do? Nothing! Now the priests and the sisters have something to do but the lay Dominicans, don't do anything except their ordinary daily work.

D: Ja, that was one of the comments, you're quite right.

A: You see now with the Legion of Mary, I'm only saying this as a contrast, with the Legion of Mary we met once a week and all chapters, all the Presidia, in all the different suburbs, they used to all meet once a week. Once a month there was a *sonatus* meeting, a senior council and the offices of senior council had to attend *sonatus* once a month. I'm mentioning this purely because each week we had something to do, when you went to your meeting you were given work to do. Now the Legion doesn't do anything material on the point of view that they would go and visit people on behalf of the parish priest that is basically what it is about. So you would go to somebody's door, the flats would be given and you would introduce yourself and

say that you are visiting on behalf of the parish priest and that you are Catholic and so on. The majority of people would invite you in for a cup of tea and we don't talk about religion, they know where we come from and if they knew of people suffering this something you could discuss.

This is what the Legion is about, we had other work to do visit the hospitals and those of course who could do it would go to jails and places like that. So you are doing something every week and then you go back to your next meeting and you have to report about the visit you were instructed to do. The Dominicans don't have anything like that, you go to your meeting once a month but that's it for a month. I'm just wondering if that might be what made the difference where people were stripped away or don't go to the meetings or find that there is nothing to interest them, or so on.

D: The new people showed immense loyalty didn't they?

A: Yes, because we have never taken from them. That's the one thing that once you've made your promise for life, that's it. Somehow or the other you stick by that through thick or thin.

M: You've given me very helpful insight because I was talking to another person the other day and they were saying they have a prayer group and at first they wanted to meet every week but a lot of them said no, they were too busy they can't do that. So they came to a compromise and the meet every second week and one of the people said the other day that that was the best decision they ever made because if it was only once a month it was just too far apart and other concerns take over. But when you have it regularly, she said, she realises now why having it every week is probably the ideal but maybe a bit impractical. But everything was working well every two weeks because of this regular contact.

A: This is it. You have an obligation. And I think that this is what we were seeking but it didn't turn out that way. It's difficult...

D: And Audrey again just as a comparison, when you had the Legion, were you all in that parish in that parish in that area? Did you live close? Not like we were...

A: Well, we belonged to that particular church, let's put it that way.

D: So you worked for that parish?

A: Yes, we worked for that parish.

D: What we kept saying is that we used to disappear after our meetings and work for our parishes at various places and I think at that time that same priest said that's not good enough that's not Dominican in its completeness and that's where we looked for direction. So what else could we do to be fully Dominicans but still work in our different parishes? You see we still have that in the East Rand, people coming from Boksburg and people coming from Benoni and we have Springs, Tim comes from Springs, and we have Brakpan. At one time Margery Heighway and her mother used to come all the way from Jo'burg because she had a difficulty with people in the Johannesburg chapter. What was her mother's name? Anyway, they had some

problem with the Jo'burg meeting and they used to come all the way from Jo'burg to our homes wherever we met and they did it for some months. We had someone else come in from Witbank occasionally. But you know they used to disappear into their own parishes doing work, probably doing excellent parish work but not Dominican work as such.

M: Wasn't there an understanding at the time that part of your Dominican commitment was to do some work in the parish and so you were encouraged to be part of some Legion, be a lay minister?

A: Yes, that is correct and I did and I suppose anybody else who was in the Legion and the Dominicans, did it through the Legion. So whatever work ... any stimulation I would get I would do through the Legion. My work was done weekly. The difficulty with the Legion was that ... Half the trouble was that our country like the world changed. People were starting to, for instance, you couldn't get into the flats. You press the buttons down at the bottom, you press the button of the person you wanted to visit and if they knew who you were you were lucky. So it fell away, you'd have to go back to the court and try to get in. There were some homes too with big walls and a button at the gate, like at Saxonwold. And you'd press the button and tell them who you were and we'd like to see you and ... sorry too busy and that was it, so you'd just walk away.

Well, it became impossible to visit people because of that and we had to do it after working hours because most of us were working and it just became quite impossible. Now they had two African presidia at the time. I think one was still functioning and the other I think collapsed now it was very much on its way out. But they would visit in the backyards. So they were still alright because they could get in the gate.

So really and truly because of the condition in the world today, full of crime, it's just making the work very difficult. Hospitals were not so easy, it's all the same thing, you know this business of, you know allowing these people in, not knowing who they are. So, all that kind of thing is becoming a difficulty now. I don't know about the lay Dominicans because if you get it started and going again as it was in those days you're still going to have that month between meetings and unless there is something to stimulate the members it's going to be the same problem.

M: But, that didn't seem to be the case after the '70's after Vatican II. Life became busier and busier and it's strange that it just fell away.

A: I don't know that there is any alternative because it's not going to be any different.

D: You see, what you saying now is how, how we were stuck at that time, what else can we do? What's the alternative?

A: This is where we started to fold because there's no doubt about it we were not getting any correspondence from the chapters, the few that were left and there seemed to be a general disinterest all round. You know, Madge Green went, Phyllis had gone, the stronger ones. It was just what we were talking about and I think there is really nothing that one can suggest.

D: You see even Fedosa sort of cut us out completely, Audrey, you know...

A: Oh, I used to dread those Fedosa meetings.

D: But you know Fedosa meetings for a layperson, a day would be fine. But some of those Fedosa meetings or Fedosa get-togethers were all congregations or communities and they would be there for a few days. The few times I tried to go they would be put out because we wouldn't be there for the whole time. I couldn't be comfortable there. The Sunday - or something like that. Whereas they would be there in heavy discussion for about three days, we just couldn't do that. I think that there was the odd invitation we had but we didn't often get invitations to Fedosa days. And even now if we are often hear 'Oh there's a Fedosa meeting this Saturday' and it's sometimes too late for people to go.

A: Phyllis used to love those Fedosa meetings. I went once with her and she sat down. It was with all the sisters you see, and they can be very critical of what you do, and Phyllis used to stand up there and she used to lay down the law and nobody ever got the better of Phyllis. Not ever.

I only once went on my own and I thought I hope I never have to go to another one because you know they can't see why you can't do this or why you can't do that. But you know they're not in the world as we are, doing in offices, working and this kind of thing. Our life is so different.

D: I went to many of them when I was with the National Council, we attended many of them and they used to say 'Yes, but why can't you do this and why can't you do that?' It's not the same.

A: It just doesn't work that way.

M: Well thank you very much for all this, it's been very helpful.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MR. THOMAS MOEKETSI

on
26 NOVEMBER 2004

at
10.30
in
PHIRITONA, HEILBRON

by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Mr Thomas Moeketsi
in Phiritona, Heilbron on 26 November 2004**

M: There was a Lay Dominican Congress in 1975. Do you remember being there at that meeting in '75?

T: I was there at that meeting but the only thing is, I was new. It was the time that I was studying for this. I've got no material to share about that meeting. That is why I say, Father, gave me that Bible to read and some pamphlets.

M: About the lay Dominicans?

T: Ja, about the lay Dominicans. Now in 1978, I had experience, that's why I said I joined.

M: You were professed in 1978. In 1975 you said there was a group here in Heilbron, you said there were five in a group. Were there other members?

T: There were other members but the others are all passed away.

M: They've all passed away now. What were you doing in your group, what work were you doing? Were they also catechists?

T: They were also catechists. We came together in group and read the Bible and select some words, those words that we were selecting were from the Bible. There was a small book we are using still there...

M: The yellow one?

T: Yes, the yellow one. We were using prayers from there. It was a small book you remember.

M: Yes, I remember.

T: It was our material; we were using that material and some prayers together.

M: From that book?

T: Yes, from that book.

M: How long did that group continue for? How many years were you working for that?

T: Many years. I think about Ntate Mtjotji about 6 years.

M: Ntate Mtjotji was from Frankfort? So you were with him? Did you know him when you were working at Frankfort?

T: We were working together.

M: You were working together?

T: He came after me.

M: He was a catechist as well?

T: Yes, he was a catechist in Frankfort.

M: Because I saw his name was written in the records.

T: We were working together. I was working with him. It's me who influenced him to be a lay Dominican. Our aim was to show these Fathers and people that even Dominicans, even different things we can conquer the difference of the church. It was our aim.

M: Right to show them. Why did you choose the lay Dominicans? You said you liked the style...

T: I did like their style. The style of cooling down ... Again I liked the way they handled education and the way they explained things, they were not going that way and that way. They were straightforward. Again I was always writing the articles to the Southern Cross asking some questions.

M: You were writing to the Southern Cross?

T: Yes, I know one article which I wrote about 'Jesus does not want violence, Jesus against violence.' That was my article.

M: Were you experiencing violence in this area?

T: There are many violence. Some are the violence are what we feel inside and when it comes outside, you don't respect anybody, you see? I know violence is there inside, you throw the stone and everything is started there. The violence started there inside to do that. I wrote so many articles but I like that one. Even the thing I'm talking about; farmers, I wrote that one.

M: Farmers chasing you...

T: Ja, about illiteracy. I spoke about that. I even asked the bishop one day 'When are you going to get the Catholics to get their own school?'

M: Here in Heilbron.

T: Here, now. Anywhere he likes in the diocese. I was speaking about our diocese.

M: Who were the other members of the group, you said there was Mr. Mtjotji?

T: The other one went to Natal, I don't know the name. Ntate Mtjotji, we were three this side. We were three and we were scattered all over the place.

M: I just wanted to check with you if you have contact with any of the other lay Dominican groups in Welkom or Virginia?

T: No.

M: Nothing?

T: No, I did but they didn't answer me.

M: Oh, they didn't write back.

T: Any comment.

M: Because I know there was Brother Pius.

T: Who?

M: Brother Pius. He was at Allingham farm and then he went to Virginia, to work in Virginia. Also he is a catechist, I think.

T: Oh, I know him. What was the name? Virginia, yes.

M: He wasn't part of your group was he?

T: Ja, he was part of our group. We wanted to open this up to Odendaalsrus but we couldn't. I don't know, I don't know what was wrong but we had nobody who was encouraging us except Johannesburg where we were writing.

M: Father Engering?

T: Ja, he helped us a lot.

[Laughter]

M: But you had no chaplain in this group?

T: He was the chaplain.

M: He was the national chaplain?

T: We didn't form a, we couldn't form somebody because we were all over. We were scattered all over. It was too hard. If we got 4 or 5 people in Heilbron, it was much better. It is a group. Now Ntate Mtjotji passed away while we were still discussing these things.

M: Did you have much contact with the lay Dominicans in Kwa Thema?

T: Yes.

M: You knew Mr. Lekoane and Mr. Msomi?

T: Yes, there's one staying in Soweto somewhere. He was from Matatiele. We worked together and Ntate Msomi went to KwaZulu-Natal.

M: And he retired there.

T: He retired from work. I worked for seven years.

M: So did you correspond?

T: We did correspond, we did.

M: I don't know if you remember that in '75 when you had the congress in Johannesburg, What happened?

T: I was also there. I think...

M: Were you all staying in the same place together?

T: No, myself I was staying in Villiers at that time. So it was easier to go there and come back, not like here. There was a train going straight to Johannesburg.

M: But when you stayed at the conference, were you all staying at the same conference centre together?

T: Yes.

M: Whites and blacks?

T: Whites and blacks together.

M: You weren't worried about the police coming to raid, like in Kwa Thema or things like that?

T: No, no, no. It was good that way. There was nothing happening.

M: There was nothing happening? The police never came to ask questions about why the whites and the blacks were staying in the same place?

T: No, no, no. There was nothing. It was quiet and the work went on smoothly. Everybody was happy. It was a good thing.

M: Because in the '72 the Kwa Thema group had some worries that they might be arrested for having a meeting at the lay Dominican centre.

T: Ja, but it didn't happen. They must think so because they were preparing something. You can't say they were wrong, they must see what was going on.

M: It was the time.

T: Yes, it was the laws at that time. God has done things in other ways we must follow that.

M: That's right.

T: But we must respect that. Now there are still some questions to help me. I need you to help me. I did these notes, long, long ago.

M: Can I look at them and return them to you sometime?

T: You mean this? You won't sleep at night. It's not professional, you see?

M: Is it more notes, it's not written?

T: It's notes, somewhere I was teaching the people in ministry.

M: Oh, is it a catechist thing?

T: Yes, it's a catechist thing.

M: Like your preparation for your classes and that?

T: Now, if I find that that is alright, I keep it.

M: I wanted to ask you I only heard recently that you had been a lay Dominican. It seemed that the lay Dominicans collapsed.

T: Ja, it fell apart.

M: What happened? When did you last have contact with the lay Dominicans, in Johannesburg for example?

T: They always write some letters to me and everything stopped.

M: It just stopped? Who was writing to you?

T: I was writing to the chairman.

M: You don't remember the name?

T: It is a long name, surname.

M: Honeywill?

T: Yes. Where's she, is she still there?

M: She's passed away, I think, quite a few years back. I never met her, I met her daughter but I never met her. But you remember Audrey Kelf?

T: Yes.

M: I met her the other day she's 85.

T: 85? Oooh. That's old.

M: She took over from Honeywill.

T: Oh, there was one Chinese there. I don't know if he is still there.

M: Sing?

T: Sing.

M: You don't remember his first name?

T: No, I know it but I don't remember his first name. Sing. Sing, I think, is a lion.

M: In Chinese?

T: My child was in Singapore, he asked why they call themselves Sing, because Sing is a lion, pore is a city. Lion City. Why, because there are no lions there!

(Conversation between Mr. Moeketsi and his wife - in the kitchen - in Sesotho).

T: Mama, do you have anything to share with Father here?

W: No, Ntate, I do not have anything.

T: But you have just taken the money to the church now.

W: Yes, it is for our sodality.

T: *What is the news of your sodality? Share with us.*

W: There is no news, Ntate.

(Mr. Moeketsi speaks to me in English again).

T: She was a schoolteacher.

M: Here in Heilbron. I just want to ask one last question. Did you have anymore contact with the lay Dominicans since the letters stopped?

T: Since, you see it was something that is broken, you see? You can connect the pieces.

(Mrs. Moeketsi comes into the lounge and reminds Mr. Moeketsi in Sesotho to share with Father about the difficulties they experienced in Villiers).

T: Oh Father, I mustn't forget to tell you about some difficulties in Villiers.

M: In Villiers?

T: Now I told you that we were teaching people. We started from the streets up until the buildings.

[Laughter]

M: Because the farmers wouldn't let you come and work on the farms. Is that why you worked on the streets?

T: No. The location itself there was no Catholics. The whole place they didn't know about the Catholic Church. They have to build the church there, down there and go up, from grassroots up. We did that.

M: So you started on the streets before you built the church?

T: We used the streets. I was going ... where? Somewhere, in Vrede or somewhere taking my bicycle and go like that, round. Telling about the Catholic Church.

W: It was not easy.

M: From person to person. Did they accept what you were saying? They didn't give you any trouble on the streets.

T: No. There was no trouble. She was a schoolteacher.

(Mr. Moeketsi turns to his wife in Sesotho and invites to share the difficulties she had with teaching the rosary in Villiers)

T: Mama tell Ntate about your rosary problems in Villiers.

W: Hmm! What problems?

T: Tell him about the problems that people had trying to understand the rosary in Villiers when we first started there.

W: Rosary?

T: Is it not that people did not know anything about the Catholic Church. They did not know the rosary either.

W: Oh! Yes, yes indeed.

T: Remember how difficult it was for you at school to wear your rosary?

W: Oh! You are right. At that time, the rosary was unknown, and so we have to hide it because we could be chased out of the job.

T: Even in teaching, even in teaching.

M: Because they didn't like the Catholics?

T: They didn't like the Catholics. I know one farmer wanted to shoot me, you see?

M: Was it because they did not like the Catholics?

W: (adds in Sesotho) Many people were prejudiced against the rosary. They saw it as "Catholic magic". Therefore, anyone seen wearing a rosary was sidelined. She goes on to recall the first visit of the Catholic bishop in Villiers, and how much the people were happy and amazed at the same time. But slowly things began to relax and people got to understand the rosary and then for many it became part of their lives. They now can wear it without difficulties and pray it openly.

M: Thank you very much.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
FATHER ALBERT NOLAN OP

on
4 MAY 2005
at
20.55
at
AQUINAS PRIORY
in
JOHANNESBURG
by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Fr Albert Nolan in Mondeor, Johannesburg
on 4 May 2005**

M: I just wanted to ask you in terms of your own involvement with the lay Dominicans. What were you involved in? What was happening at the time? What attracted you to the lay Dominicans? And to what extent did that include your decision to become a Dominican yourself?

A: OK, first I was a lay Dominican from I think about 1951 to '53 because in '54 I became a novice in Stellenbosch. So I think it was '51 to '53 and that's only about three years to begin with. Before I can explain something about why I became a lay Dominican I need to go a little bit further back, say for a year or two before that - it was a year. I had already become much more involved in the church. I was in the Legion of Mary and that was very formative in the sense that you met and you had prayers together but you had a very well organised apostolate. So you would visit hospitals and sell Southern Crosses on the street, you would visit lapsed Catholics and things like that.

That was the kind of apostolate ministry [where] work for your neighbour came in. I also worked for the youth club, and was on the committee of the youth club and then at one stage maybe after I became a tertiary, we called it tertiary in those days, I was also beginning to be trained in the Catholic Evidence Guild. The Catholic Evidence Guild came from England, and it was the kind of thing that Vincent Mc Nabb preached at Hyde Park corner and it was ... The Catholic Evidence Guild itself was a lay organisation that would preach on street corners, not only in Hyde Park but in other places - in Cape Town we did it outside the OK Bazaars actually. On a Sunday night somebody would preach and people would gather and they would ask questions and he would answer the questions and things like that. Then we were trained to do that, you went to them, you listened to what somebody did and they trained you on how to do it. I didn't get very far with it but I say all that because that was the ministry, that was the apostolate, the kind of thing to do. What was lacking, if you want to call it lacking, was some kind of spirituality.

I'm not quite sure anyone would have used the word spirituality as such but...OK let's say you felt the need for some kind of spirituality. The place for that would be, for example, would be the tertiaries, and so as Billy D'Arcy and Guy Ruffel went ... No, Billy D'Arcy was already a tertiary. So Guy Ruffel and I were invited by Billy D'Arcy to join the chapter in St Mary's convent that is, behind the cathedral. We met every it can't be every Saturday, but it was on Saturdays anyway perhaps once a month but I think it was more frequent than that, and what we would do in the afternoons was the main thing that happened was that we would say the Lady Office and then there would be a Dominican priest there and he would give a talk. Then we might discuss some things or get some information about Dominicans and things like that.

Now it was quite formally organised in the sense that you had a rule and became a novice and you had a novice master. Billy D'Arcy was my novice master and you were a novice for a year. Apart from the chapter meetings, as it was called, you had to meet with the novice master regularly and he told you more about being a Dominican, and prayer and things like that, explain more about the Office perhaps and told you more about what the promises were about and went through the rule with you, that was a big thing to go through.

Now the lay Dominicans or the tertiaries as such never did any apostolates or ministries. That wasn't strange because you went to your parish to do that. You went to the Legion of Mary or a youth club or something like that. That's where your ministries and your apostolates came in. But the lay Dominicans never organised ministries or apostolates in that chapter. By the way that chapter, there was a famous Major Mehan you might come across, Madge Green and various people like that I don't remember too many of them now.

Anyway, so why did we go there, what was it? Because [it was] the only kind of concept one had of how you nourished your spirituality, how you worked towards Christian perfection. Because the image of Christian perfection and contemplation was of course through the monastery, the monk, the prior, the priory and things like that.

But perhaps I ought to say that part of our practice was that we would go to the priory, that was very important actually, we would go to the priory for weekends we would go to the priory for retreats, for one or two day retreats, that was extremely important. There was a centre somewhere we went to, and then one of those priests, Hildebrand James, was the chaplain I think, was called a tertiary chaplain.

I was saying about spirituality, that what was understood to be the way you had a spirituality. It's pretty medieval in a certain sense because to reach Christian perfection you had to follow a Rule and that Rule, the principal thing in that Rule was: commitment to the Lady Office. If you were in the monastery, or the First Order of the Dominicans or the Sisters you would say the full Divine Office. So that's how it was understood.

At that particular time too a big interest was just developing and growing, it was exactly those years, in Thomas Merton. Thomas Merton was an icon of holiness and perfection and the rest of it, going into monastery, silences, contemplation, prayer and all that kind of thing. Nobody understood a totally different form of spirituality except perhaps the Legion of Mary's prayers and that was a whole long 'one prayer after the other' and the rosary. So at the Legion of Mary meeting you would say the rosary first at the beginning of the meeting followed by a whole lot of prayers and a handbook, which was in some senses like a Rule and those prayers we had to say at the meetings and the statutes had to be there and how they all came to be, all those details and [what] you took on, how you found out what it was we had to do. Which were always from the priest, we had to ask the priest what was needed and if people got tasks we did them two by two and came back and reported and that was also a tightly organised thing, you always had to report that you had done it and what happened.

So there was a bit of a spirituality there by using the rosary and some of the prayers.

M: Sounds like the spirituality was linked very much into doing the prayers and the things like that but not really focused on things that were action-based. What was the relationship between the tertiary schools and the Catholic Action or organisations that were more involved with working for the good of your neighbour like YCW and YCS groups? Were there some tertiaries involved with social programmes?

A: Well, the only one that I can remember was YCW. Bernard Meager for example, was a Dominican tertiary. His action wasn't in the Legion Mary it was to join YCW. He died of a brain tumour at twenty-one and he was a good person, a holy person but he worked in YCW. But nobody saw that as terribly different as working

in the Legion of Mary or something like that because even the YCW in those days weren't fighting apartheid.

Now that perhaps, you asked about "Why didn't you see this as working for the good of your neighbour?" but we did see it as working for the good of your neighbour but it was for the individual neighbour.

So if you ask: "Well, why not the social dimension?" I think the first thing about it is that people didn't have a social consciousness, so you didn't think in terms of 'what about the social dimensions? What about the social injustice?' I can't even remember that word being used 'social justice' or things like that. It just didn't come in so that your religion and your spirituality everything was so totally individualistic that you didn't even recognize the social dimension and, of course, a lot of people who weren't Christians also didn't recognize the social dimension. The other thing was that even in YCW, I don't think that at that stage the social dimensions were that clear, it was still working to help workers and the individuals really.

M: Were you aware of the changes happening in society in terms of the apartheid laws and their implications? The Cape was a little isolated than Johannesburg, you were still liberal in approach than other parts of the country?

A: But we had some, maybe not as much as the rest of the country but that wasn't the issue. The issue was "that was politics" and politics was not [for the church]. You had to ... you had a choice. If you wanted to be part of that you had to be a kind of a politician in some form or another not a parliament politician but a politician involved in protesting or something like that.

M: Was this considered as part of spirituality?

A: No, no, not at all, not at all. In fact...

M: Or Christian perfection?

A: No. Not at all.

M: Unless it was sort of very pro-catholic movement.

A: But even that had to start around the 1950's, the first time that Catholics in any way spoke up about it was Bishop Henneman in about 1956 or 7. I remember that in the youth club we were planning talks, we used to get together and we wanted to plan a talk, someone would come in and talk about apartheid and the priest said "No, that's politics. You can't talk about politics in anyway" and I remember that we were fed up about that but that's as far as it went. So there was no way in which the tertiaries were going to say anything different. It may be difficult to believe but it was just regarded as a another world...

So the growth of social consciousness for some people was almost always involved or almost always arose through some kind of experience of the suffering of black people because of the system, because of apartheid. So, for myself it would be when we started going into townships, even coloured townships and seeing what was happening there and what the people were staying in but that was all after the 1950's.

M: And were there coloured members on the board of the tertiaries or only white?

A: No, no they were all whites.

M: Even though there was a chapter in Stellenbosch?

A: I don't remember there could've been. Then you have to say which time you are talking about in about these 1950's there was none. You see I'm quite sure that later towards the 60's there must have been coloureds running a parish but this time no.

Not that people were necessarily objective it's a very strange thing to try and explain. I think coloured members would have been welcomed but nobody thought about it, nobody thought that they become tertiaries as well, no black people wanted to become, I don't think, because it was a white group. It's difficult to understand how some of these things were never even averted; we just didn't think about them or question it.

But there's another dimension to it and this is **justice** was not associated with church, Christianity, with faith, with Christian perfection. Justice was another thing; justice was something for employers or people like that.

I can remember later on once saying something about justice to somebody in the audience saying that "How can you as a priest talk about justice - it's a communist word?" It's as bad as justice in a communist. So although at this time there were already social encyclicals people did not know what they were. YCW started with *Rerum Novarum*. So ignorance was a big thing.

M: Do you think that the spirituality of the tertiaries was encouraged when joining the chapter for example because often they used to [receive a talk from the] priests. From what I've read and what I try to understand is that it was very much focused on learning from the priest. There was no, like personal growth or development or a sense of one's own appropriation of the faith or anything like that. An admiration society of the priests, would that be a factor?

A: No, I didn't think that you would say it was an admiration society because we would criticise the priests. It was just that they were the experts who were not thought to be any different from a doctor, they were supposed to be the experts. You could learn some of those things but just in the same way as you couldn't compete with a doctor on medical matters, so in the same way you couldn't compete with a priest in spiritual matters. No. Although we didn't like what some people had said or that some people didn't have answers to questions etc.

That is why we liked the Dominican Order because they did discuss and they did have answers to questions. Perhaps a concrete example of this, I remember going to the parish priests with a question about hell. "How can there be such a loving God but there's a place like hell?" and he said "You don't ask questions like that". Then I went to the Dominicans to ask the same question and they said, "No, no, that's good, let's sit down and let's talk about that etc." So that in my mind was a very big difference between the Dominicans and the secular priests, you could ask questions you could discuss.

So it wasn't an admiration of priests as such. No, this is not true. They were just people who knew about these things and you could go and talk to them and discuss things with them, bring questions to them.

Spirituality was prayer, was discipline, saying prayers and saying prayers. There was mental prayer, oh yes there was that, but not in the sense as today with a mantra or anything of that sort. I remember Thomas Merton was already having an influence. So silence and solitude and those things ... We used to go to Stellenbosch as a priory for silence, for solitude, for private prayer and things like that. So that was already something that was the contemplation that was part of one's holiness and Christian perfection.

M: Now let's move from your experiences as a tertiary to when you were a Dominican in Stellenbosch. What memories do you have of the tertiaries and what contributions did they make to the life of the priory? What was the life of a tertiary in Cape Town as far as you remember? Did they make any important contributions to the life of the church?

A: No, I don't think so. What I just said carried on when I was already in Stellenbosch at the priory. There would've been people who came to visit, came on the weekends and came for retreats and things like that.

[Tape indistinct]

M: Who was a visitor?

A: Oh, OK. It would have been Dougie Wiseman... it was often a stepping-stone to join the Order.

M: What was the understanding of that is it true that many of the tertiaries have, if you could call it an inferiority complex, that they weren't proper Dominicans? That somehow the real life was actually to be a priest.

A: Yes, there was that. Remember you were called the Third Order and to be called to join the First Order was the same thing but much more intensely and deeply and fully.

I remember that at first what I wanted to be was a diocesan priest, or simply a priest, and the way I would of conceived it was because I enjoyed doing the work of the Legion of Mary and the youth club and that sort of thing. But I worked in a bank and I wanted to do ministry and apostolic work full-time. That's how we saw it doing church work full-time and that's what it meant to be a priest. The women amongst us, the girls who wanted to do it full-time, went to the convent to do church work. I wouldn't, by the way, see it as church work only, as simply as that. I mean there was the altar boy and things like that might have been more church work. Actually going to hospitals - even though we were told by the priest, where to go and where we were needed - selling Southern Crosses and all that kind of thing was not really church work. It was serving your neighbour, it was doing good to your neighbour rather than doing just church work. I mean to go visit people in hospitals wasn't like being an altar server being in a tertiary.

M: It wasn't liturgical. So there was a sense of ministry, a sense of apostolate.

A: Yes, yes.

M: Later when you became a provincial, it was in the 1970's in 1976 and they, lay Dominicans, were really battling at that point where they lost some sort of vision about who they were and Vatican II became a major challenge for them. One would have thought it would have encouraged the lay Dominicans because of the emphasis on lay apostolates, but in fact it seemed to undermine them. Do you have any memories with regard to that? What happened at that point that seemed to put the lay Dominicans in crisis?

A: Well, the first was that no young people were joining in, they were elderly and there was a generation gap and the younger people who came into this kind of practice were bored by it and didn't find it... Ja well, they found the old people boring and what the old people talked about was not interesting and all the rest was boring. So there was a generation gap.

M: What was boring, the activities of the lay Dominicans? Because they look actively involved in the activities of the parish ministries.

A: That's right. It wasn't so much that as the old people weren't interesting, the younger people would obviously be interested in trying to change things in some way or another and they would talk about "couldn't we revise the rule" and things like that. Then the old people want nothing to do with that. So there was a generation gap but it wasn't just, that was one element of it. There was a huge chapter it was very difficult. I remember that in Cape Town and here we thought the only thing is to start a new movement for young people. I remember that very clearly and we tried to do that there and we tried to do that here but it didn't work. We couldn't get the young and we couldn't find a priest to chaplain that either. So what happened is you worked with young people who were not interested in being Christians, so you worked with YCS, YCW, NCFS, CASA, CHIRO, youth clubs or something. But none of those were interested, so you had a new generation that might be interested in See, Judge, Act and things like that. They were not interested in a kind of monastic spirituality thing of the lay Dominicans and associated that with old people and pre-Vatican II.

M: Do you think, what would you say was the shift in spirituality? Many of the young lay people in fact had deep desire for spirituality which maybe, in fact, wasn't that different from the people in the 50's. What was the difference in nature of the spiritualities?

A: I think the first thing to say is that they actually gave up on the word "spirituality". When I was.... The YCS and YCW, nobody ever talked about spirituality what they talked about was theology and I think that's an interesting kind of shift. In the lay Dominicans that I first joined you never talked about theology that was a subject you studied in the seminary. But we all talked about spirituality in the form you can call Christian perfection. But later on this wasn't [acceptable], spirituality was regarded as a very individualistic thing, as me and God, and spirituality was the born-again people and they just had to pray about it and problems would go away etc.

Theology was saying how justice was done and that God was on the side of the poor and things like that. So theology was much more [used]... and Jesus, very much so but not spirituality as such. But there was a sort of spirituality as you say, it's just that there wasn't a name there. The spirituality was, I think, the experience people

would talk about would be the experience of singing and dancing at mass, that kind of thing. The excitement of it, the excitement of a conference and planning together, doing things together, that would have been very much spirituality. So if you asked the NCFS people in those days where they found God, if you like, it would be at an exciting Mass.

M: There was also a period where there was a great political awareness than previously.

A: Oh ja. By this time there was, because you jumped to when I was the provincial. Political awareness had grown in time and that's a whole long story on its own too. The political awareness grew too among students, black and white, and there were priests who encouraged that very much in the true fashion of Colin Collins to Didicus Diego, a Franciscan, and people like that. Then I came doing that as well. So yes there was a social consciousness between the lot and at first, aside from Didicus who was an exception, and he had no successor. When I first came to the chaplaincy there was no theology. It was all politics. It was all social analysis or maybe social realities, so that every conference had speakers, none of them were priests. And the speakers would come and talk about the situation about the politics. I introduced theology so that later on priests would even talk about Jesus and theology and you know even some of the older students would do that too but it had been lost.

M: Do you know the reason why... because there were some priests who were still chaplains to the tertiaries or the lay Dominicans but they never really brought See, Judge, Act or their political consciousness into the lay Dominicans? Do you know the reason why that never took off? Was it the nature of the people involved?

A: Yes, I think so. The tertiaries wouldn't have been interested in that.

M: Was there also not also possibly a compartmentalisation of action and prayer? There were people who lived the spirituality in one area went to church and then dealt with... there was no like interrelationship faith and life.

A: That's right but part of what NCFS, YCS and YCW did was precisely to bring faith and life together because they were separated.

M: So in the tertiaries this would never have been brought in, it would never have been reflected on?

A: I didn't know Advocate Vieyra, he was an exception. I remember him but I can't seem to remember any other tertiaries ... Madge Green would have had some sense of it and would have been active.

M: There were also people like Jimmy and Joan Stewart who were tertiaries but never really fitted in to the tertiary mould where their interest was primarily social transformation. They never really were part of the chapter.

A: I think they're a good example of how it was often because they knew Dominican priests and admired some Dominican priests. It was because of that that they would have been tertiaries but not in justice as such, though Dominicans are

open to that kind of thing. There was a scene change in different ways and Vatican II was one very good example of that change. Spirituality, theology and the introduction of justice was one. So there were big changes.

M: What's interesting about that is that it seems to be detrimental effect on the lay Dominicans rather than the encouragement of them. They all seemed to die out and it seemed to throw them into crisis rather than growth.

A: Most of them weren't able to make the adjustment. In the same way convents emptied out and many priests left, for the same kind of reasons, people couldn't adapt so they would drop out.

M: To what extent had it to do with this idea of that it was a religious life that was integral to people's spirituality that somehow you became more spiritual by being religious, a Dominican.

A: By being, but it was also by living that kind of life by the discipline, by the Rule, by the prayers, by the vows, that's just how they made it holy.

M: You saying it wasn't necessary under Vatican II to have the rules and laws to encourage them to have a spiritual life.

A: I think Vatican II opened the windows to freedom and that there were other ways of doing things and other ways living and that kind of thing. That the religious life wasn't a superior way of life and you could still be a saint and married and things like that.

M: Going back to what we spoke about earlier, regarding social consciousness. What does it mean to have a social conscience or consciousness?

A: The social conscience, generally speaking, affects the people who are trying to be spiritual as well because they can be blind to it. But you are not blinded simply by your spirituality as such, you are blinded by the lack of social consciousness and you don't see social problems.

One way of putting it, when people suffered they didn't see that there was a possibility of changing the structures of society. There was no concept of structural change. So for example if you take slavery, obviously slavery was not Christian, it was against the faith but for Paul there was no possibility of changing slavery as a structure of society. It was unthinkable it was unimaginable. So, he didn't do it or say this has got to change because it didn't enter anyone's head.

It was only later with Wilberforce that it was seen that it is possible to change that structure so there isn't slavery. So there are lots of examples of that, the whole struggle for social justices develops out of things like the revolutions, the French revolution, the American revolution, the Russian revolution. What ever you may say about them they showed that the structures of power can be changed and before you could only change the person on top of the structure, the king, and the dictator but you couldn't change the whole system it was unthinkable and even for Thomas Aquinas it was unthinkable. Justice meant the prince had to be just, but to have no prince was unthinkable, unimaginable and impossible to do. If you imagined it there was no means or power to do that.

M: So, in some senses when we talk in a Christian light in terms of contemplation because contemplation the way I understand it is to come to a new awareness or a new awareness of your consciousness and to come consciousness beyond the limitations of our society at the present moment. In a sense spirituality doesn't always allow you to do that, come to that new consciousness, spirituality in a sense even limits us in consciousness.

A: No. Spirituality should help us open and should make us want to get beyond selfishness etc but we may not see the way beyond that socially, and there may not be a way beyond that socially.

M: At that period? Like ecological for example, recently there was an ecological consciousness, the whole new paradigm of the universe for example.

A: Yes, that's right and until you had trade unions and things like that workers were in a hopeless situation. To get to the point of the Dominicans not having a social consciousness, not having a social consciousness, we never imagined that apartheid could change. Apartheid was the reality. In the thinking of some people, the individual thinking of some people, the idea that you could have a structural change came about.

M: What is different though is that there was a small church that did develop a social consciousness? Why is it that they developed social consciousness like YCS, NCFS and not groups like tertiaries for example? What is it about their make up or their spirituality or their organisation that didn't allow them to develop?

A: The process by which those people who did stand up got to it was conscientisation and it was making people aware of things and making people aware of the suffering that was happening, making people aware of the fact that it can change. Now that didn't get through to most older people, black and white and it didn't get through to tertiaries certainly. It was more likely to get through to younger people in universities, who were suffering already perhaps. So the new thinking didn't reach tertiaries, but I think what most can immediately say is that in so far as it did start seeping through and that's my experience certainly. Then its link with the gospel became obvious to some people immediately but then we had to have the social consciousness as well as the gospel to link it.

M: To what extent was there also a limitation in the use of scripture to help people understand it because from what I hear there was talks given by priests that was often not helping them. Then the consciousness of priests was limited to not seeing that their role was to try and help people come to their new consciousness or awareness of themselves through scripture, like a lot of these youth groups they practiced scripture.

A: That's right because when you went back to scripture and Jesus and gospels and all the rest you saw that justice was relevant. No, the kind of talks as you said the priests gave about was pietistic, devotional or speculative theology is the other word, questions about hell and other expert opinion of biblical movement of reading the Bible became important and things like that. I remember even at Mass we had the gospel, well, if you were a bit more conscientious we would call it scripture.

Ja, so it was... to finish what I was going to say is that my mother was very good and kind and all that kind of thing to black people, to poor people and all that kind of thing and felt very sorry for them and their plight. Actually I remember the words very much, she would say "One day there's going to be a civil war about how they are treated etc... but remember don't mix with them." It was a total contradiction of course but not mixing, that was the society, that was the custom, that was the social thinking. It would've been a bit like being sympathetic towards prostitutes who were also in our streets. But you weren't allowed to mix with them.

M: Thank you very much.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MR DENNIS SWEETMAN

on
20 September 2005

at
15.15

at
69 GERMAINES ROAD

in
BRAKPAN

by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Mr Dennis Sweetman in Brakpan
on 20 September 2005**

M: Dennis, you were telling me about your chapter in Brakpan.

D: You see, Father Maurus Revill, he got the Chapter going in Boksburg when he was parish priest of Boksburg. When he came to Brakpan in the early '40's, I think. I'm not quite sure when he came, but he then inaugurated another chapter in Brakpan which was the mixed chapter. When I became a postulant there in about 1956, it had a good 15 or 18 members... but the younger people resisted joining the older group. I clung to the mixed group and then he said, "You must do something about it and start your novitiate and get on with it." So it was about in '56 when Father Francis Middlewick started the brothers' chapter in Brakpan of which he had good twelve members of young men from the parish. I continued with that brothers' chapter until going to Durban in 1958 where I joined the Durban chapter.

M: Let me ask I noticed in Cape Town, Johannesburg even in Boksburg and in Brakpan as well, there was this emphasis in having sisters' chapters and brothers' chapters. Do you know why there was an emphasis at the time on splitting the chapters into men and women?

D: There was but it wasn't explained to us. As I say our first chapter in Brakpan was a mixture of much older people, it didn't attract the young people at all. They just felt that it was not for them, I think the profession for life put a lot of younger people off and they didn't want to commit for life so ... but that's when Father Francis Middlewick, I think, encouraged us to be professed for life. I was professed for life in '58 so it was still going then but latterly they took a simple profession and final profession after three years. I think that's what happens now, its something similar?

M: Yes. So the men's chapter, the younger chapter they didn't take profession?

D: I think I was the first of that group to be professed in '58. The others were then still doing their novitiate and what have you. Who made our habits, I don't know but Father had them made for us and we all wore habits. We used to meet twice a month and pray on the sanctuary saying our Office *chorus contra chorum*. What Office we used I can't quite recall but I've got a feeling it's this one, (indicating to the manual) because it's marked in here. I think this is the one that Francis Middlewick decided to use because it was the proper Office book and the manual. It's got everything in it about the administration of a chapter and the talk about priors, which they don't use today, they use much more president or chairman at that time was a prior and you had to have a novice master. So it was maybe a watered down version of the First Order, I don't know, we designed it on that or it was designed that way in the manual. It worked very well, simply because the rules and everything were in one book.

M: You said in 1958 you went to Durban?

D: Durban, yes.

M: And that group existed already?

D: Yes, yes it was well established by then with about 12 members, and well - Brouckaert, you know him?

M: Yes.

D: Margaret Maytom who was the mayor of Durban was a very staunch member of that chapter and prioress.

M: She was mayor?

D: Yes, Margaret Maytom was actually the mayor of Durban at one stage and a very staunch active member of the tertiaries. She gave a lot of time and considering she was in public office too and was an excellent tertiary member.

M: What was her background? How did she get interested in the Dominicans?

D: That I don't know because it was already going and established, I joined a live wire chapter actually. As I said the Office was then said Latin and I had to start all over again and brush up my Latin.

(Laughter)

D: Because the congregation of sisters who lived in community, they were so well versed in it. They'd come from Magaliesberg, I think. They were Oakford sisters but they didn't come from there they were at Boys' Town ... There was a dispute at the time and four of them left but they never gave up living in community and doing everything as a community and working very hard in various parishes. They were involved in parishes, you know, here and there and everywhere. They were very good tertiary members, of course. Our meeting place was St Augustine's hospital and our first spiritual director, when I joined, was an Oblate.

M: Father Vincent Hill?

D: Sounds very much like it yes.

M: Because he was the one who started with them, I don't know how many years he was there.

D: The Oblate father. Then we had a Franciscan father for a while and then Father Dellaert who was at Oakford, attended to our spiritual meets for many years.

M: You were in Durban until?

D: Until 1969.

M: And then you came back here.

D: I was sent back company-wise so I came back and then immediately joined what was the East Rand chapter. I don't think they had a Brakpan chapter at that time

I think it dissolved by then. I don't remember, who took over from Francis Middlewick?

He had gone when I came back and we had a number of Dominicans help us, Damian came, Oswin even helped us, Esmond Klimeck helped us, Peter Paul Feeny helped us - so we had many, many Dominicans who were transitory you might say. They weren't established here for all that long. Then, I think, Joe Falkiner it must have been was the first permanent chap we had. Oh, Bernard came wasn't it?

M: Bernard Brown.

D: Yes, Bernard came and he was the first permanent post, I think, as parish priest.

M: What was the...

D: But Egbert Cole was here too, then Bernard Brown followed Egbert Cole. He was not well at all at the time and then Joe took over from Bernard.

M: You said that the chapter in Durban and Brakpan was very active. What was the reason do you think that people joined? What was the reason that they were interested in joining the tertiaries?

D: You see if we took Durban, for example, those ladies were so steeped in Dominicanism that anybody that they came in touch with, they would encourage to join the tertiary group. How a person like Dr Brouckaert got involved I don't know. When I say they were active, we didn't do many things, we all worked in our parishes yes, but we didn't do many things as a tertiary group other than going to an annual retreat, which was normally a three day retreat. We tried very hard to always have that retreat annually. It was in our manual that we were always to have an annual retreat and in that chapter always did.

M: Looking back on it now how do you think being part of the tertiaries has helped your own formation as Catholic, as a Dominican, in your own spiritual life?

D: I think in some ways it has made it more difficult I don't know whether it's assisted but it's made me think more (laughter) and I find it quite difficult in many ways. I've always found my own Catholic life to be a rocky road. I've never left it, I've always been quite loyal but I find it difficult to grow as a Catholic. But from that point of view being with a group of the Dominicans it helped me spiritually in a lot of ways because I think I quite enjoyed, for want of another word, I enjoyed the monasticism of it. I quite liked that and the way we used to say the Office I enjoyed that. As a matter of fact, I thought quite seriously of joining the Dominicans because of my tertiary involvement. I had thought on many occasions to become a Dominican but I'm scared of studies. I was never that much of an academic. But I have thought seriously of it a number of times.

M: Do you think that was common with a lot of those who joined the tertiaries? They considered religious life.

D: I think they were cajoled a little bit by Francis Middlewick to think about it more deeply and give it a try and I think he shoved them quite a lot. But it was good, they did try and they were good Dominicans for some years. Why they left later, that I don't know. But they all still work in the church. The ones I know, I think, Michael O'Brien is still involved somewhere. Certainly Andrew Prior is very involved and Llewellyn Blumfield's still very involved. Andrew Prior was an ordained in Fribourg overseas, not here. He was, I think, because he, of that group, he was considered very sound academically. He was a brain box and he was studying overseas and he was ordained in Fribourg. What have we got in Fribourg?

M: It is a University faculty that the Dominicans run in Fribourg.

D: Yes, that's where he was ordained. His mother incidentally was a very staunch tertiary, him and Ivy Andrew, her sister.

M: Who was his mother?

D: Eileen Prior and Ivy Andrew. Did you know of Ivy?

M: Yes, I have heard of Ivy Andrew.

D: She was magnificent really - they were sisters. Ivy and Eileen were sisters and two boys. Ronnie still works, does a lot of work in the parish. Ronnie Prior, the elder brother, there was just the two boys. Ivy was never married, she was the matron of Boksburg /Benoni hospital and she really kept all our records together. They disappeared, I think, when Bunty accepted the secretaryship after Ivy died. You don't know her, I don't think, and she had tried to be an Oakford Dominican but couldn't get through but she was a very good tertiary but thereafter she stayed close to the Dominicans although having tried, it wasn't for her. She moved often, she had a little place and probably couldn't afford it and had to move and so on, and our records just disappeared when she died. We didn't even know where she was for a while, you know, it was a pity.

M: These things happen.

D: They moved her around, I suppose she had lost jobs and was retrenched. I think she was with her sister and those records were just lost. Those perfect records that Ivy left were just lost; she had everything right under control because she was an inaugural member of the mixed chapter under Father Revill so she had everything right from the word go for the Brakpan chapter anyway.

M: Talking about Ivy Andrews, I came across some stuff. Brakpan at one point was editing the tertiary newsletter in the early '60's. Was it still active when you were there?

D: Yes, because I think Ivy was on the provincial body, which I was later with Audrey Kelf and John Harvey, we were on the sort of council, you know.

M: Do you remember which year you started as a representative on the National Council?

D: It must have been when I came back, so I would say the early '70's, maybe '71. I was asked by my chapter to represent the mixed chapter, the Brakpan chapter at that time, on the body because John was also in the East Rand chapter and two of us went from the East Rand, John and myself.

M: Had the Brakpan chapter got smaller by this stage?

D: I seem to think that when I came back, yes it was disappearing and we got so small we started to have an East Rand chapter because Boksburg was dwindling and Springs pretty well vanished actually and so we decided to have a group sufficient to say Office and so on to amalgamate and its been like that ever since. Now the actual date of that amalgamation, that was already ... I think when I had come back. The brothers' chapter had disappeared with Francis leaving, I think Francis kept them together by his sergeant major activity, and he was quite tough. (Laughter) You know, they had to get to meetings and he was pretty tough as I can recall but they seemed to enjoy it. In those days Francis even made us do the *venia* as his tertiaries. (Laughter). It was monasticism, wasn't it really? It was proper Dominican life in a priory. It didn't often happen but I think if we deserved it, then we had to do a *venia* (laughter). Did you ever, were you ever affected by it?

M: We did it for professions, when professed, not when we had made a mistake.

D: We had to do it. A fault to the rule, being late. He used to knock us up, you know. (Laughter)

M: I've only ever heard stories of that, how some priors used to leave people if they were angry with them lying on the floor for quite a while.

D: Prostrate, yes. Francis also for Easter and so on, he used to use all of those brothers and, it again appealed to me a little bit, that group of brothers in their *cappas* and so on. But they used to take it off at the Gloria and they used to disrobe the black and just stay in white, it was quite effective. I quite liked it anyway. Not that it helped me at all, I think it affected me; it used to be quite effective.

M: Was it a way of praying? Did you see it as a way of praying?

D: Yes, I did. I used to find that participation very prayerful because we were always doing something actively in prayer.

M: How did you feel then with the changes with Vatican II when people stopped wearing habits and speaking Latin?

D: It didn't concern me terribly, I just saw it as going forward. By the way, we used to wear the scapular always at that time.

M: Underneath your clothes?

D: Yes, underneath our clothing. We always got the scapular, when being clothed. We were clothed with a scapular. They were horrible little things, I think they

were made out of wool and they used to shrink when you washed them and my scapular ended up being a little ball of fur, of felt (Laughter).

M: Not very practical?

D: They were not practical because they had these long tapes, you know you just wore it over the shoulders and it was a square, always woollen material. I think the habits were always wool and it was not supposed to be scratchy material and our scapulars were always quite scratchy.

M: It was like a hairshirt.

D: It wasn't practical Father, and it would hang out of your clothes. It used to sort of come out. "What's that thing sticking out of your neck here?" and to try and explain a scapular to a crowd at work was not that easy. You'd say: "It's a badge of a religious thing I belong to." They would go away saying that bloke's mad or something. (Laughter)

M: "He's a religious nut!"

D: I think I saw ecumenism as something, to me, marvellous. Simply because I knew good people who were not Catholic and I always felt that they were in some of the ways they were a lot better than ... Our people used to say there's only one church and one way and I used to find that difficult. So when ecumenism came it was an opening for me. Well, other people did too but to me it was very acceptable. The fact that I didn't wear my habit again could've been very useful when I was assisting at Mass instead of an alb because to wear an alb was not really correct. When you used to help as a minister on the altar, I don't think an alb was really meant for the laity whereas my habit would have been useful. I left it in Durban. You say you've inherited a piece of that?

M: I think I actually have. I got your *cappa* - Brother Thomas. I wanted to ask you about some people I've come across one was Anthony Goosen, was he member of this Brakpan chapter?

D: No, I think he was a member in Boksburg.

M: Was he in Boksburg?

D: Yes, I'm just wondering if Anthony is not on that photograph because that photograph was not purely the Brakpan chapter. It was a retreat at Springs and that Derek, a Springs chap, he was a crippled fellow and he is on there.

M: Oh Derek [Matthews], I know who you mean, he just died recently about a year ago.

D: Is that so? He's on that photograph. I'll show you later. Derek was on there and I think Anthony, well there's another chap I don't recognise, well quite a few of them I can't remember anymore. It's quite a while back; it's getting on 50 years ago.

M: Do you know of a man called Cyril Silberbauer? Was he in Brakpan?

D: No.

M: He was quite active, wasn't he on the National Council at one stage? Did you ever meet him?

D: It might've been before my time on the National Council. There was a man in Boksburg, very staunch. As a matter of fact he helped get Brakpan going with Father Revill, and he came over at the time.

What I could never understand is why Father, it was almost like a mystery it was "Oh yes, there's a meeting of the tertiaries this afternoon at 3 o'clock" or something, that was all we ever heard about. Father Revill never used it as an opportunity to encourage. It had to come from us somehow, it had to be almost like a vocation and if people knew nothing about it, it wasn't the priests who encouraged us. It was the lay people who said "Come to a meeting" or something. That's what those women in Durban did, they encouraged people because we didn't have a Dominican priest so he would never encourage us or encourage people to join the Dominicans. That's what we did; we were recruiting here for the Brakpan chapter at one time. We wondered if we could put something on the church doors to say there's a Dominican chapter and the Franciscans were very unhappy with us in Boksburg because they had taken over that and they had a Third Order of their own and they were obviously trying to encourage Franciscans - not to say there's a Dominican lay group. But it worked, that's how we got Louis Beretta. That's how Louis came out, but Louis was open for it somehow, it came at the right time and Louis and Fay joined us. What date, I think Louis can tell you; it's a long time back. They've been very staunch members. Then we had Father Highland's mother and sister, was it Father Highland?

Who was the priest that was killed in a car crash?

M: Yes, Heighway, John Heighway.

D: Oh not Highland, Heighway. We had his mother and sister in the chapter.

M: Margery...?

D: Yes, then they left to join the Johannesburg chapter but they couldn't get on with the Jo'burg people at all. I think they had better ideas and more advanced ideas. Jo'burg was a little bit a stick in the mud at that point, like all of us that get old you get stuck in your ideas and new ideas are not always acceptable, I suppose.

M: What do you think accounts for something of the decline of the lay Dominican groups and fraternities because there were many groups who were very active in the '50's and '60's. Why do you think it declined?

D: Well, from a National Council point of view we mused over that for hours to try and get life back into it somehow. What could we do that would be more acceptable. What could we do that got away from what they thought was a stick-in-the-mud attitude? We never won that battle, when the decline came, people didn't leave us they died off. They were all old people and most of our decline came from...

(Discussion of photographs and documents on the computer)

M: I wanted to ask you about the different retreats you had every year. You mentioned earlier about the one you had at St Benedict's. Often there were the participants there were both the ones from Brakpan and the white parishes and then there were some from Kwa Thema and the black parishes. How did the racial relationships work in terms of the different groups?

D: Excellent, Sixtus wrote to us to Audrey Kelf for years from the South Coast. He even used to send money because she used to send him a little bulletin and he, old Sixtus, used to send her something to cover the postage. He kept in touch and Audrey kept in touch with all lone lay Dominicans, she was excellent that way. We had them all over the place; they used to write in. We even have requests now from lone lay Dominicans in Swaziland and so on but it's just something that has fallen apart. They are quite a strong, only a brothers' chapter in Springs under which Dominican I don't know.

M: Probably Joe Falkiner.

D: I think it was much earlier than that because I'm talking about when Sixtus used to come to our retreats in Brakpan and in the earlier days Falkiner was not involved in Brakpan, he could've been involved in Springs.

M: I think it was in Kwa Thema.

D: Would he have been quite keen to encourage them too?

M: Yes he was.

D: Well it could've been Joe, I don't know.

M: There was on one occasion they were talking about starting a separate movement of black lay Dominicans and white lay Dominicans. That never came through?

D: That never came up, no. It never came up as you can see our retreat there had all races really and we never thought about it. I don't think it would've gone down too well with the powers that be at that time, we never thought about that and the sisters at St. Benedict's were quite open to it.

M: Did you share the same accommodation? You all lived in the same retreat house, the Africans didn't have to go and live in separate quarters or anything?

D: No, they had rooms and they were quite good.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
PROFESSOR AUGUSTINE SHUTTE

on
17 October 2005

at
17.00

at
GRIMLEY HOUSE

in
CAPE TOWN

by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Professor Augustine Shutte at Grimley House,
Cape Town on 17 October 2005**

M: I think reading through this, what made me think was, what was it that led you to want to start a group like the Dominican family at that period, 1981-82? What were you looking for? What was happening in your own life?

A: Well what I write in that document, why I wanted to be a member of the Dominican family were my own personal reasons but I just, I wrote that because people wanted to give something to their friends to explain why they were going to the meetings. But those were my reasons.

M: One thing I noticed about this was that there was quite a bit about, the whole thing you talk about being a member of God's underground. There's a whole emphasis on the prophetic, living your faith as a more serious Christian. All these themes seem to come through quite a lot.

A: The idea of religious life has been just the ordinary Christian life but lived for the sake of other Christians, in a prophetic way. So that other Christians would understand more about what it was to be a Christian and to also be supported or enabled to do it.

M: Was it just because you didn't experience that in the parish environment that you wanted this identification with the Dominicans?

A: Yes, as I say the parish is too small. See the Dominican Order is worldwide but the parish is also too big. I mean if you take the parish as everyone who comes to Sunday Mass it would be difficult to engage in a really meaningful form of contact with everyone. So you want to have a smaller group.

M: And if you wanted it around a particular focus like the Dominican life as a way of religious life...

A: The religious life, I think has this function that it's there to somehow inspire other Christians. Religious exist for Christians and Christians exist for the world. So religious life has a church focus was sort of prophetic for the church and the church was prophetic for the world. My experience of religious life gave me that feeling and I felt that when I was a religious I needed lay people as the people who I was supposed to be serving. When I became a layperson I needed religious to remind me and keep me in touch with the essentials of the Christian life. So I think that there is that two-way purpose and I'm sure that this is how Dominic saw the Order and it's certainly the way, I think classically the Dominicans functioned in this way. This is why they had tertiaries.

M: You mentioned here about the churches opposition to apartheid and the sisters involved in the different schools, was that a major part of why the group came together and the type of people who came together into the group? That they wanted some sort of prophetic Christian life that's focus was not just on churchy things but also on what the church had to say in terms of apartheid.

A: I think this is what the people liked about the Dominicans' spirit, that prophetic element and the people who were all contacts of mine and had contacts of those contacts. So it formed itself in an organic way around those ideas, which were typical of the Order and the sort of function, and role played by the Order in South Africa.

On the other hand, all the people who came to our group were people who were actively involved in that kind of thing in their own lives, in their work. Teachers or whatever ...

I was saying that people, who joined the group, were people who were pretty involved in all sorts of social and other activities, very busy people. And so the group was in no sense adding another cause or another project to the projects that we were all involved in anyway. It was a group that was formed to support us and enable us to do these projects better and our ordinary involvements more wholeheartedly.

M: And so you structured your meetings around certain themes or for what purpose did you come together?

A: Well I suppose mutual criticisms and support in the Christian life but the meetings would always have some input. In the sense of somebody giving some ideas and maybe a discussion. So there was a study element and they would always have an element of worship or prayer, which would take different forms depending on who was leading at that time. And then it would also have, I suppose you could call it sharing, where people would be talking about issues that they were thinking or worrying about or working on and sometimes an hour of our meeting would be devoted to an issue that one member of the group had introduced and we had discussed. There would also be a recreational element, just socialising, eating, and drinking, sometimes a group of just a party would say on Dominic's feast. I suppose those four elements. The function of the group as a whole would be to critically evaluate and support your attempt to live a Christian life.

M: Were there any reflections about your being part of the Order of Preachers, and was preaching a focus in any way?

A: Yes. Often people would introduce aspects of the Order, which interested them and talk about that. That would be one of the things.

M: How did you see yourselves as different or was it complementary to the more traditional lay Dominicans in Cape Town?

A: Well my idea was that of a Dominican family, which was also the expression used by the Master General at the time and the idea that the Dominican Order would include priests, contemplative sisters, Third Order sisters, lay people, lay Dominicans and they all form part of the Dominican family. So even when I was in the Order, in the First Order I was very conscious of the fact that even within the First Order clerical novices and lay brother novices recreated in different places, brothers and fathers recreated in different places and I wanted to get over that so that everybody would be all together in the same place. So I particularly wanted to stay in touch with nuns and sisters and brothers.

M: Because the lay Dominicans are in a sense laity in themselves?

A: Right.

M: There was not that much interaction between the layers of the Dominican family.

A: Precisely, right. For me that was crucial and it's not enough, I don't think, just to have somebody sent out once a month to give a talk to the tertiaries, you'd say compline and then we would have tea and go home.

M: So what you say is that what was unique about this Dominican family was precisely that interaction of all the different levels.

A: Exactly that. But unfortunately that was one of the things that was very difficult to organise because we were in Cape Town and there were no male Dominicans of the First Order in Cape Town. Occasionally people came down here, some of them had family here, they would come here for holidays and then they would come and join us. But it wasn't a regular thing. We had priest members too, Roger Hickley was a member, I'm trying to think if he was the only Priest member, I think Noel Stanton also came a couple of times. But Roger certainly was a member of the family but no First Order males.

M: Because by that stage most of them, Stellenbosch was closed down in 1980?

A: Yes.

M: What do you think accounted for the reason for the group fading away? When did you think it started? Was it 1982 or 1981?

A: Probably a little before that, the late '70's. I went on sabbatical to England in 1979, I suppose it probably started in the beginning of the '80's and lasted as I say into the early '90's. There were still meetings in 1992 but by then there were probably only about 12 people in the group. And then I was unable to continue to organise, I made some attempts, in fact, I made quite a few attempts to various points to delegate organisation of the meetings to other people and to sisters in particular. Somehow it never really worked. So when I stopped doing it, the meetings stopped. You have to have somebody who is going to be persistent.

M: Somebody who keeps it together in a way?

A: Yes.

M: Was there any attempt, did you have any interest shown in this idea being started in other places in the country?

A: I seem to remember that we had a visitor from Jo'burg, somewhere up north and I think Margaret Fogarty, didn't she start a group up there?

M: I was actually going to ask you who Margaret Fogarty was because I saw in the notes the reference to her but I never met her.

A: She had been a sister and had left the Cabra sisters but I think she started some sort of Dominican family group up there. Have you heard of Steven Withers? He was a Dominican student.

M: I have heard the name.

A: He was a student with me but he left while he was still a student. And she was a friend of his; I think they started something up in Johannesburg or on the East Rand.

M: No, I never got to hear about it. There were even Lay Dominicans involved, like Barbara Versfeld.

A: Oh yes and Madge Green.

M: So it wasn't like trying to set up something completely different?

A: No, not at all.

M: It was trying to bring everybody together.

A: Yes, all the categories.

M: Was Barbara Versfeld related in any way to Martin Versfeld?

A: Oh yes, his wife.

M: Was it his wife?

A: Yes.

M: Because they were quite involved in Stellenbosch, the priory. Was that where you would have known each other?

A: Oh no. Martin Versfeld was my professor when I was a student at UCT in the '50's. So I have known him for donkey's years.

M: So he wasn't at Stellenbosch, he was at UCT?

A: Yes. He had no real connection with the priory, it was his wife who had the connection, and she was the Dominican tertiary.

M: That's part of the history; I just assumed because everyone has spoken about Martin Versfeld, I just assumed he had lectured at Stellenbosch.

A: No. He was at UCT. He was an Afrikaner by birth, but had become a Catholic. He was sort of devotee of Kolbe and Smuts and all that.

M: But he was dead by then?

A: No.

M: He was still alive?

A: Yes. He died probably round about 1992, somewhere around there.

M: Shows how it's just a blank in my notes.

The contribution as a lay person and being, as you were saying in the church, but wanting this identification of the Dominican Order, did you find that this ability to bring the different groups together in a way helped them establish a different type of identity ... What I'm really trying to ask is how did it help in your own faith, growth and development and your own understanding of the church and how the church is to be and what it is to be a practising believer or a serious Christian in the church? How did you find your own faith to do all this help?

A: Well, me organising this group already was, if you like, my Dominican thing. This was my apostolate if you like. And that's what I felt and of course having a group which one is part of, does give you that support and inspiration and a critical self-evaluation. I was brought up as an Anglican and I realised that I, you know, I thought that when I became a Catholic I would cease to be an Anglican. But now in retrospect I see, no that I didn't. It's like an onion, you know the inner core was Anglican and then I became a Catholic but didn't cease to be Anglican, and then I became a Dominican but didn't cease to be Catholic and then I became a lay person but I didn't cease to be Dominican. It just added another ring on the tree, if you like or a layer on the onion.

M: The challenge is the integration of bringing all those different things together.

A: Right, yes. No I find it very satisfying running those groups and also getting something out of the group. I think that if you are a parish, you do need something more intimate but on the other hand the intimate thing is good if it is somehow connected to the universal church. And this is what the order does. If you belong to the order, then the whole world is your parish. You are exempt, you don't belong to any diocese and that's a nice idea, I like that.

M: You can move between dioceses.

A: Yes, that's right.

M: Maybe just a last question. Do you remember any of the sorts of themes or topics that interested you at that time over that ten-year period? Was there any progression in terms of what you talked about? Do you remember any of those talks?

A: Not really I must confess. Probably, inevitably there was a lot of concern about this or that aspect of Apartheid but it would be wrong to think that the whole group was being focussed on Apartheid. It wasn't. My own thinking went on as it were outside the group, doing philosophy and theology, I ran with the Kolbe school of theology, for me it started getting big and gradually and gradually started getting

smaller until I was the only remaining staff member. And all I could do at that stage was organise the Kolbe Lenten lecture series.

M: That was in the 1980's?

A: "80's, 90's it was very, very popular. We used to have audiences of about 300 coming to these lectures.

M: I remember when I used to come to Cape Town, I used to see it advertised "Kolbe Lectures" but I just assumed it was organised by students.

A: No, it was organised by me as part of the Kolbe School of theology's outreach, extra-mural activities.

M: So that's completely stopped now because it was quite popular in the '40's and '50's and through to the '60's where we would have winter schools with a number of talks for Catholic intellectuals.

A: You had something called the Kolbe Association, which was for Catholic intellectuals and then the Kolbe society, which was the student society.

M: Were any of the Dominican family group, other than yourself were involved in the Kolbe Association?

A: The Kolbe School of Theology?

M: Yes.

A: Well, the Kolbe Association was something different, people like Madge Green and I would say a lot of the people would be members of the Kolbe Association. The Kolbe school of theology was something different.

M: That you were doing later?

A: Yes, I took it over. Albert [Nolan] and Brian Gaybba started it and Timothy Mc Dermott was selected and then Albert was moved away and Brian Gaybba ran it. Then Brian moved away and I ran it, and at that stage it still was a three-year course in theology.

M: Oh I see.

A: But I used to use different people to come and do some lectures but that didn't last for very long, and then it became just, I would run specific courses often through the university. Ten or twenty lecture series through the extra-mural studies department but it would be advertised as Kolbe School of Theology.

M: It was for Catholics?

A: No, anybody who was interested.

M: I didn't realise that.

A: But then it dwindled away and all that was left was the Lenten lecture, which carried on to the '90's.

M: One of the people prominent people that I come across all the time is Madge Green. Do you know about her involvement in the church?

A: Oh yes, intimately. She was a librarian; she was in the school of librarianship at UCT and was very thick with the Dominicans even before I was a Dominican. She was a funny little woman, she lived with a person who was also a librarian who became UCT's head librarian, Elizabeth Taylor was her name. Elizabeth Taylor was a huge, sort of boat of a woman, and Madge was a tiny little mouse. These two maiden ladies, I mean they weren't lesbians; they just lived together for about 50 years I think in the same house in Wynberg. When my daughter was born, and we were very close; they always had one famous part on the day of Epiphany. They had an Epiphany party and they would invite all their friends, about 40 people and they always had the most wonderful food and drink. Their house was up near Springfield convent. When my daughter was born, Anna, we asked them if they would be her godparents and they were delighted because they had no children of their own. They kept very close watch on Anna through her early years; when she had her first holy communion they gave her wonderful little presents. Then, I'm not sure; Anna must have been 8 - so it must have been 1989, both of them died within 6 weeks of each other and left everything they had to Anna; the house, all their shares, everything. She became a millionaire overnight.

M: Your daughter?

A: Yes. They obviously just focussed on her as a child they never had.

M: I have often heard of Madge Green and it seemed to be larger-than-life type of person from what others have talked about.

A: She was a very quiet, persistent very strong person; both of them would sit and say the breviary everyday.

M: She was a part of the Lay Dominicans in the '30's.

A: That's right, she really knew all the old sort of founding fathers of St. Nicholas Priory.

M: I said it before - one last question - I was looking through the history of the names of the Men's chapter of Lay Dominicans and there's a reference to Shutte in 1964. It wasn't you by any chance?

A: Shutte?

M: I think it was Shutte, it could have been Schutte.

A: In '64? Wait a minute, as I said I was brought up an Anglican and I was sent to Oxford to train for the Anglican priesthood and I finished my training and started working as an Anglican curate, a deacon. At that stage I decided I wanted to become a Catholic and I came back to South Africa in 1963. The Dominicans said that I had to be a Catholic for two years before they would receive me into the novitiate and so I taught in a school during 1964.

M: Do you think you had gone to a meeting or two?

A: I might of yes.

M: Let me see if I still have that reference.

A: Yes I'd like to see it.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
FATHER WILLIAM D'ARCY
on
19 October 2005
at
10.005
at
GRIMLEY HOUSE
in
CAPE TOWN
by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Fr William D'Arcy
at Grimley House in Cape Town on 19 October 2005**

M: Thanks for this interview, helping me with this. I've been going through all the different books that I have come across like this one about the history of the lay Dominicans in Cape Town and one of the things that has not been clear to me is that there was a Stellenbosch chapter of men and women, it seems, and there was a Cape Town chapter of men and women. How did that develop or evolve?

W: I think that it was only one chapter of men and women which eventually split into a men's chapter and a women's chapter. At what time I'm not sure.

M: So there was one chapter in Stellenbosch and one chapter in Cape Town.

W: Well, it was the Stellenbosch chapter that met in Cape Town. Occasionally we would go to the priory of course for meetings but only occasionally. We would go there for days of recollection or special meetings. But it really was only one chapter.

M: It was called St Thomas?

W: That I didn't know until I saw the document or I had forgotten it. The Fathers used to come through from Stellenbosch and always bring old Mr Shaw. I can't remember his first name - he was from just outside of Stellenbosch. He was a very strong member of the chapter, a great supporter of the priory. I can't remember his first name, Edward I think.

M: These are all the names I haven't come across before.

W: There must be some mention of him there somewhere.

M: Did you know any of the earliest members of the Cape Town chapter? I came across reference to Mrs Patricia Harrison, Catherine Harrison's daughter. Sylvia Simmons, Sr. Mary Magdalene.

W: No, I knew of Mrs Harrison but not well, I just remember the name but I can't remember anything about her.

M: She joined in 1938.

W: Oh really.

M: Yes. The first reference of her is in a tertiary in Cape Town.

W: Really? Gosh I didn't know that. And who else what other names at that time?

M: They don't list them all but there was an Fr Swan.

W: Fr. Jack Swan, yes, I knew him very well.

M: And there are four others, four other priests in the tertiary. And also seven or so lay Dominicans in 1941. Five lay tertiaries and five priests in Cape Town - Fr Swan is one of them.

W: I would help you with some of those people. Fr Swan certainly was a lay Dominican but in my day, which dates to about 1946, he certainly never came to meetings. I think that Fr Louis Stubbs' was a lay Dominican, he is also dead, of course.

M: He was the editor of the *Southern Cross* for a while.

W: I'm almost certain that he was, but again he never came to meetings. I didn't know of other priests in Cape Town.

M: I only knew of subsequent ones like Fr Donald De Beer in the '50's. He is much later, they don't mention it in any of the...

W: Is there mention of Alec Mehan, Major?

M: Yes.

W: Yes, I was sure there would be.

M: Was he there before you joined?

W: Yes he was. In fact I think I met him when I joined and people like Madge Green were already there.

M: Was she there as well.

W: Yes.

M: By 1946?

W: Yes, I think she moved to Cape Town from Johannesburg at about that time because I was introduced to her - effectively through David Teasdale who happened to be here on holiday at the time. I was introduced to him by Mrs. Mecas, mother of our Sister Mary of the Trinity at Carmel. '46 was my first year out of school and I was looking for some sort of form for my life to take, and with the priesthood at the back of my mind. I spoke to Mrs. Mecas about this, a real saintly woman in my parish in Wynburg. She said, "Oh, you must become a member of the Third Order, that's the way to go," and she said. "David Teasdale is in Cape Town on holiday, he is staying with Madge Green and Madge is a Third Order member and David is too." So I phoned David and arranged to meet him, went to his house, met him one Sunday and that's how my interest in lay Dominicans began. I joined their Order, went to see Fr. Ninian at some convent. You had to see him by arrangement and that was somewhere in 1946. Much at the same time I met Kevin Kunderlin who had just come out of a problem, who had just moved into my parish rather in Wittebome and spent six months as a student for the secular priesthood at the priory in the first half of 1946. He told me that he was going back two years later as a Dominican student and that stirred

my interest even more in the Dominicans and then we entered together in 1948 at Stellenbosch. But one of the conditions of entry is that during the year 1947 we had to go to Third Order meetings and visit the priory at least once a month and be discerned, so to speak. In those early days of the Third Order, other people that I remember would be Mary Singleton, who wrote a column in the *Southern Cross* for years and years and years; Rosemary Pierce and Regina Desonia who died a couple of years ago. Rosemary you said you saw.

M: I saw her; she's still a member in Rondebosch.

W: Yes, that's the sort of result of our former chapter, but it disintegrated for a while. I don't go to meetings anymore. But it flourished, the chapter flourished in those early days of the '40's and '50's and '60's.

M: Why do you think it flourished at that time? What was happening in the Church? Why were people interested in being in tertiaries?

W: I think that 1950, that was a year of great Catholic involvement. It was the year in which we prepared for the centenary of the Cathedral in Cape Town in 1951 and lots of things were happening in Cape Town at that time. A Eucharistic Congress was planned, there was the daily edition of the *Southern Cross*, when the celebrations actually took place. There was a whole series of lectures to which people flocked. Everyone was looking for something to strengthen their Catholic practice. We met faithfully, though we had some absentees, once a month here in St. Mary's Convent in the chapel and the school library and it really was successful. People were enthusiastic about just being a member of the Order, praying the office, not doing any particular apostolate. The thrust was that we should pursue whatever we did in our parishes better because we were tertiaries involved in the parishes rather than doing things as a chapter. I think that worked quite well actually, we were all involved one way or another.

M: What type of things were people involved in?

W: I was involved in the youth work mainly, we had a lot of youth movements going to the diocese at the time and there was a youth council to which all the clubs were affiliated and I was the secretary of that body for quite a long time. There were lots of young people's activities going on then, dances, clubs, meetings, and all manner of things really, things that were of interest to the youth. I'm not sure what else we used to get up to, my memory is not all that good anymore.

M: Do you think it was just as you saying part of the culture at the time? Why do you think that people would be interested in specifically in the Dominican tertiaries? Was it because the Dominicans were new at the time?

W: Well, I think the Fathers here were prominent in the diocese in that they used to be quite numerous to start with and they used to be seen in and around Cape Town because they all preached conferences to the convents. So they were seen here around Cape Town often invited as guest preachers of parishes and so on. We had a range of some wonderful priests at the time, marvellous men: Oswin Magrath, Ninian, Bonaventure Perquin, Hildebrand James, Brendan Maginty, subsequently there was

also Ceslaus [Velecky] and Timothy McDermott who was very highly respected and revered. Who else was there? Francis...

M: Middlewick

W: No, Francis was in Johannesburg. Not Francis, somebody else. He went back to England and became a diocesan priest.

M: Oh yes... Moncrieff.

W: Moncrieff yes that's right. Who else did we have? Geoffrey Lynch was quite well known here also. I'm trying to remember the others as well, and Guy Braithwaite was popular out here. Was it Ferdinand? No, Valentine Wood ... I am just checking my notes.

M: I was also interested to know within the context of your meetings what would you be discussing? Was it a time for prayer and there was business?

W: Very little business actually. Our meetings mostly comprised of praying the office, the chapter prayers. I'm not sure what part of the office we used to pray, probably vespers. Subsequently when the chapters split, into a women's chapter and a men's chapter, the men met in the evenings and it was still the same meeting. I think much didn't change in terms of our meetings. Our meetings were not long.

M: About an hour or two?

W: Yes, about an hour and a half. We had a small library so we could exchange books and that I kept the minutes indicate more what we did.

M: In the meetings and in the discussions, it seems to me from reading the minutes that time really was focussed on your own personal faith development and growth.

W: I think that's really true, not in such terms but we spoke about our problems or difficulties we might have had. It was very much centred on the talk that had been given by the priest at the meeting in the course of the chapter meeting, chapter prayers which is the same as the First Order chapter prayers, as far as I remember, excluding any admission of faults.

M: No chapter of faults?

W: No

(Laughter)

M: That was confessional material.

W: Yes. We didn't have that.

M: There are also the structures within the group, for example it emulated very much the priory structure; you had a prior and you had a sub-prior and you had a novice master. Why was that chosen?

W: Oh that was part of the Rule. Have you ever seen any of the old tertiary manuals?

M: I've got a copy, yes, in Johannesburg.

W: How old would that be?

M: Probably about 1950 or so.

W: I had copies of these, they are all constitutions (indicating to documents) and we had to have these things. I remember one other sideline that earlier on, probably Emil Blaser wanted to join the Third Order. I'm not quite sure why; I'm not sure he himself knows but he always wanted to be a Dominican he said. And he was still at school at Salesian College in Lansdowne and he was too young to in terms of the rules of the constitution to join the Third Order even to become novice but he nevertheless came to meetings, faithfully for about two or three years, before he was even able to become a postulant. He followed the same six month postulancy, year's novitiate and made his promise, a life promise. He was marvellous, he was so faithful and he never really looked back, has he.

M: That's right.

W: He impressed most of us at the time because of his faithfulness to meetings and to the office and everything even though he was not yet of the age to join.

M: What was the age that you were allowed to join?

W: I think it was 17. So he had virtually been near the end of his schooling before he started. I can't remember correctly what year.

M: Do you remember any other prominent members of the chapter that stand out for you over the years?

W: Well, yes I think I can certainly remember quite a few. Madge Green certainly stands out as a very prominent member. She was a librarian at Jagger library at UCT. She shared a house with a friend Elizabeth Taylor who also became a Catholic eventually. Elizabeth was a convert, became a Catholic and then became a Carmelite Third Order member, as far as I know. They were never both Dominicans, they were both librarians both worked for Jagger but Madge was prominent in the Catholic world in many ways because she also a member of the Kolbe Association. Kolbe Association was an association of post-graduate people who were interested in discussing things Catholic at a university level. I went fortnightly to listen to a lecture once a fortnight. Wonderful things were going on in Cape Town one would of thought very much of her.

Mary Singleton was a very prominent Catholic and was a columnist with the *Southern Cross* for donkey's years. She also was a member of Kolbe and she was prominent, very well known in Catholic circles in Cape Town.

Major Mehan was widely known also. He was a prominent businessman. Alan Herbert was a businessman who became a Third Order member and some years after joining the chapter and after being a prior for quite a long time, he and his wife went to live in Ireland. He eventually came back to the country and then became a deacon in Rondebosch parish for a few years and then died of cancer two or three years ago. I'm also not sure that they were prominent outside of the Catholic world.

Guy Ruffel eventually became a priest, Albert Nolan became a priest. Guy studied with the Dominicans for some years first and then became a diocesan priest. Albert went right through. Bernard Brown was another one I remember at the time, I think he and Guy were in the same novitiate in the priory. Bernard, as you know, left the Dominicans, came back to the Dominicans and then left them again and became a diocesan priest. He has just had cataracts removed from his eyes and has new vision. He is very excited about it. He is a wonderful priest, a holy, holy man.

Who else, jog my memory a bit, Mark?

M: I was wondering about some of the people I've come across and I don't know about them but ... Barbara Versfeld?

W: Oh yes, very prominent. She was a member of the chapter also.

M: Is she still alive?

W: I think so, Martin died, her husband died. But I think Barbara is alive. If she is living in Rondebosch parish, she might be somebody to get hold of. The parish priest in Rondebosch, Harry Hovers, or the sisters might know her there.

M: I asked Claire Harkin yesterday, she was sure she was still alive but not sure where she stays at the moment.

W: The sisters at Rondebosch should know. They changed quite dramatically too. Many have died.

M: I was also interested about things like for example, what I was interested to see was like in Cape Town for example from the first time that the chapter began there was no racial discrimination at all, whites not having blacks. It was throughout the history chapters were mixed.

W: In fact, one of the earliest members that I heard about was Cecilia Fortes whose sister became a Dominican, Sister Dominic. She was at Rondebosch. Cecilia was a helper in the chapter. Now she is Cecilia Manshon, she got married. Have you heard of her?

M: I've seen references to her.

W: The men's chapter, John Smith. I remember a really funny moment about John Smith. Ninian, once, making a meeting - I don't think he was our chaplain at the time he was standing in for someone else - so he asked everybody's names. He came to

John Smith who said, "I am John Smith". And Ninian said: "How incredibly singular!" (Laughs). He couldn't believe that anybody could really be called John Smith (laughter). John Smith was a teacher and he subsequently emigrated to Canada, he and his wife. His wife died and he married somebody else from the States, he came back to South Africa for a short while. He was here on holiday recently in my parish actually. He was in an old Evangelisation centre, but I don't think he was involved in Third Order any longer.

Andy Bergram, who was still around somewhere, was also a teacher. He is an old man and his sister was a Holy Cross sister. His wife is still around, living in Mowbray parish. She is at one of our tertiaries over at the parish didn't know much about her. Alfred was unfortunately out to get her at that time, it was very sad.

M: Would that have been in the '60's?

W: That would've been in the '60's, yes.

M: Because there is a reference to him in a reading.

W: He was a marvellous person, something went wrong. I don't know much detail. I think he is now married to her with children.

John Brand who is a cousin of mine. Who else? I don't think many of these minutes will reveal anything startling.

M: No, they don't. They just give the bare bones of what happens in the meeting and sometimes it's a bit tantalising because you want to know; somebody gave a talk about that but what did he say. There's no record of what he spoke about at that time. One of the things that seem to be the beginning of the undoing of the lay Dominicans seems to be around Vatican II.

W: Well, I think that the Third Order chapter started disintegrating when the priory started disintegrating because that also happened at the same time. I think the priory was given the task, I don't know if it was official, of experimenting with liturgy and so on and so forth for the diocese. But I think somehow it went wrong. When there was *Humanae Vitae*, that was '62 or was it '61.

M: '68.

W: Was it after the Council, I am not sure myself? Then a statement was made by the priory which was more or less in defiance of *Humanae Vitae* which got bad publicity in Cape Town. There was a lot of change going on at the time, the whole church suffered really and the students left in the priory, I don't think that Guy was there; he must have gone then. He was ordained in '66, he left the priory in '62. His year was, I think, the biggest novitiate they had in the priory with Michael O'Brien, Andrew Prior, Matthew and Christopher...

M: Was it Blumfield?

W: Yes, that's right. Guy Ruffel, Bernard Brown, 2 or 3 from other parishes. I think about ten altogether. Practically it didn't work, Andrew and Michael were ordained, but subsequently left. There was somehow a huge disintegration in the

whole Order, and it rubbed off on the Third Order. Priests were gone and Stellenbosch disintegrated. It was unfortunate, and that saddens me. We couldn't really come back together as it used to be because the priory wasn't flourished at that time.

M: Not like 1950?

W: Oh, what a marvellous period. So many people valued its presence in the diocese. It was wonderful, very special people.

M: When did your participation in the Lay Dominicans come to an end?

W: You know I was thinking of that on the way here and I can't remember. I went to the seminary in '53 and '54 at John Vianney and I certainly went back to the leadership of the chapter after that because I was here in the '60s. I can't really remember, I'm not sure why. But I think the chapter more or less disintegrated had to do.

M: There was, about in 1970, I saw that in the women's chapter there was mention to the fact that the men's chapter had closed down and only Heinz Beerman occasionally came to the women's chapter.

W: Is that so? I can't really account for that.

W: I learnt more in that time than I had ever.

M: In Stellenbosch?

W: In Stellenbosch yes, it was tough but it was marvellous and I think of it as the most valuable ten months in my entire life. Despite any subsequent changes, it was my foundation and it was marvellous. And I put that largely to the people I got to work with, my novice master and Brendan Maginty who taught me all I'll ever know about bank drafts, he was a wonderful man, he was, and Hildebrand James, who was my prior, he was very good, very kind to me. He had a wonderful rose garden in Stellenbosch; he liked roses. What more can I tell you about this, I wrote down a whole lot of names. There was another lady who was quite prominent in the chapter Elizabeth Serfontein who became Sister Elizabeth with the Notre Dame sisters. Bernard Meager, he was a good member of the Third Order as well but died as a very young man, 26. He was a good friend of Albert Nolan, he developed a brain tumour and didn't survive surgery. He was a great friend of Albert and the Guy's, we knew him very well.

M: What was he doing? Was he a student?

W: No, I think he was just in a very ordinary job, he was a motor mechanic, an outstanding person. You know you heard all sorts of stories about him, after he died. He had undertaken to give up smoking if a colleague of his would stop swearing. He did all these things, we never knew about any of this we knew he had given up smoking but we never knew why. It sort of only emerged after his death.

M: It was like a personal spirituality?

W: Yes, very good spiritual man ... You must know Sister Rose Dominic next door?

M: Yes.

W: Now one of her brothers was also in the Rondebosch chapter, Adrian Le Ross.

M: Yes, I met him in fact the other day, if it's the same one.

W: Archie?

M: I'm not sure. He lives in George.

W: That's right. Was he here?

M: Yes, he came to visit Rose Dominic and I happened to be in the dining room when he arrived.

W: Bernard Pothier, Barbara Versfeld. Rosemary Brown, have you heard anything about her? She was a very fine woman who was the wife of the Anglican priest, Anglican pastor, when she became a Catholic the Anglican Church authorities seconded him into the army to simplify the affects on his life and he became a chaplain and was moved to 1 Military base in Cape Town and so she came to join the local chapter.

There's so much, mostly names that I wrote down. We all wore habits in those days.

M: Did you participate in the diocesan *Corpus Christi* processions?

W: Yes we did in habits. But the Franciscan Third Order use to do the same as well. [Tape indistinct].

M: Was there any contact between yourselves and the other tertiaries?

W: Contact or did you say conflict?

M: No, contact.

W: Not really, not that I know of.

M: You never had joint meetings or anything?

W: No, just I remember is St. Dominic's day at the priory, all the Franciscans used to come there, the Franciscan Priests, the Capuchins.

There is this other stuff, notes I made about my own experience in the priory. I was lucky enough to be a novice when the priory was officially canonically erected on the 1st of May 1948. I think it was at that date that the first novitiate ended, the novitiate of Dominic, Francis and Benedict. They started their novitiate late in 1947,

and ended in May or the end of April. And ours had begun in February of that year. So we had an overlap.

M: They were professed on the 1st of May 1948.

W: It was the same day that the priory was officially erected by Hilary Carpenter who was here with, I think, the provincial bursar a man whose surname was Donohue at the time.

M: David O' Donohue.

W: He was the man who was at Kingwilliamstown for years, a marvellous priest.

M: Wasn't it David O' Donohue?

W: He succeeded the man or preceded the man; he was certainly was at King for a long time, subsequent to being the provincial bursar. But the other man?

M: Laurence Shapcote. He had probably gone back to England by then.

W: Was he here at one time?

M: Yes, he was the first Dominican to come out in the 1917 but he was mostly up in Boksburg and Newcastle.

W: Oh I see. Of course, Bede Jarrett came in the 1930s.

M: He was the one behind the whole establishment of Stellenbosch.

W: Yes, I read that little piece. He was quite well-known. I remember on the night of the 1st of May 1948, the entire community joining in, I think, we had Vespers and coffee shortly after lunch and then anticipated Matins and Lauds for the next day, which we usually did at night because we had all been invited to celebrate this huge event at a spa in one of the other valleys on the other side of Stellenbosch. We had a marvellous braai there that night, the prior was happy because he didn't have to do the braai-ing at all. In the living room there was a marvellous grand piano in the one corner - it was something to remember, a lovely occasion. Mark I'm not sure what else I can help you with.

M: No, that's looking great, thank you.

W: I'm still looking at the names here.

M: Peter Hancock, did you know him?

W: I remember the name Hancock; I can't place him very well.

M: He was an architect and I got to know him when I was in Lesotho, he was working in Lesotho as an architect. I was just interested to see his name there.

W: I don't really quite remember him at all.

M: One thing I was interested in is about Major Mehan and something of his life story if you know anything.

W: Yes, I don't know too much about it. He was a remarkable, he had great interest in history, and he used to write us long letters when he was prior about all sorts of things that were of Catholic interest. They were always typed out by him, very badly typed and photocopied here on some old machine that didn't work very well, but we used to bother our way through things because it was his way of keeping in touch with all the members. He was faithful to this, it was a sort of private apostolate of his. But he died, I think, a lonely old man. He had married a woman, much younger than himself, the marriage didn't work out and they eventually divorced but they had one child and his wife was not a Catholic but she got custody of the child. And he fought a court case to ensure that the child would be brought up a Catholic. He won the case. He fought a long legal battle over this, he was determined that she should be brought up a Catholic. He took great interest in her upbringing. She must have been quite young at the time of the divorce and he used to see her regularly and so on but in that time, I think, he became quite lonely. He lived in a flat in Rondebosch and lived by himself. He was a strong practicing Catholic and very knowledgeable Catholic. Eventually he contracted Parkinson's, I think it was, and he was not well in his latter years at all. He had prostate troubles and he had Parkinson's and he had medication for this and if he didn't take the medication he'd become quite odd and there were times when he would just disappear for days. He eventually died.

M: When would that be 1960?

W: Not 1960, after that. I worked for the bookshop between 1961 and January '65. I think he died when I was in the bookshop ... I remember clearly in the last part, you know the bookshop moved and when it was in its new premises in the last two or three years, I got a phone call for Nazareth House telling me that Major had disappeared, "Had he come to the bookshop?" We set a search in motion. So if he were still alive, I would say in '66 or '67. But I don't have a card or anything.

M: Yes, it's always difficult to trace, at least we with priests we have cards and things at the end of the day and there is somewhere where the record is kept with family because we lose track.

W: Actually, I think he's got a sister who is still alive in Cape Town. I'm not sure where she is, she lived in this parish for a long time. She was quite odd, there was a streak in the family of oddness. I don't know what it was. She lived in a flat down here and she used to tell everybody that there were people peeping at her through holes in the ceiling ... She then moved to Nazareth House and I had an elderly aunt living close by so she and Connie became quite friendly. She used to say the same thing to my aunt and my aunt said to her one day "Don't be ridiculous, which would want to look at an old duck like you?" (Laughter)

M: Did they remain friends I hope?

W: Yes. I don't have a clue where she is now.

M: Did you have as much contact with other lay Dominican groups or tertiaries in Johannesburg, Durban around the country?

W: I don't think so. I can't recall anything. As I say sometimes we had visits from other tertiaries but nothing official.

M: Because in 1964, there was talk about setting up a secretariat at the beginning of the whole National Council that developed later and they produced a tertiary newsletter in Brakpan for years.

W: I can't recall that as well.

M: They were trying to get articles people to write different things. You didn't have any publications that you had down here yourselves?

W: Not that I can remember, no.

M: I'm just going to track down if there's anything written.

W: I don't think so and I think that if there had been I would probably have had copies of it because I did keep things like that. I've still got my prayer book. It was beautifully produced we just don't get prayer books like that anymore.

M: Well, thank you very much; you've been a great help.

W: What was it you wanted to know about Pauline Kelly?

M: Pauline Kelly, yes.

W: Pauline Kelly, she was a member of St Mary's Cathedral Parish, somewhat handicapped and very wealthy, all her money handed through a trust, she must have died shortly. Mrs Meiring was a Sea Point parishioner whose son was supposed to try his vocation as a Christian brother and her daughter was in a parish as well. These names all bring things back you see. This - P. Sellicks, Phillipa Sellicks, I think she was. I don't know much about her. Mrs Singleton I told you about her, I see she was Jane of Aza - that's very interesting - she was Dominic's mother wasn't she?

M: Yes.

W: Mrs Singleton as I told you used to write for the Southern Cross and she was a great fan of Kolbe who had been editor of the Southern Cross years before. At the time that I knew Mrs Singleton, the managing editor of the Southern Cross was Roger Rowntree, a very good journalist and could write extremely well. He once gave a talk to Kolbe Association. They had a whole series of talks on Kolbe and Roger was chosen to talk about "Kolbe - the poet" and he didn't speak very highly of his poetry (Laughter) and I remember sitting behind Mrs Singleton at that talk and her hissing several times, "Lovely verse, lovely verse" every time Roger said something against Kolbe. Guy and I were together at that occasion we screamed with laughter. Great

fun. The Church has provided me with lots of amusement, I must say, marvellous at the time.

I don't now who is this (Looking at list). Van Essche, well it must have been Maurice van Essche's wife?

M: Yes, there was a Margaret van Essche.

W: This is a Mrs L. van Essche. She was Margaret of Hungary.

M: Yes, that right. Margaret, that was her religious name.

W: I see Mrs Meager is here also. That was Bernard Meager's mother. He was a young man who died. Gwen Boyd, Gwen is still around, do you know her?

M: No.

W: She lives in Claremont. She is in her 90s, I think. Julie Atkins has died. Mrs Williams has died, can't remember when her funeral was.

M: There was one interesting comment about one of these ladies, I don't know if it was Miss Atkins... she only came to one or two meetings and she put in a request to be dispensed from future meetings because she had taken up hockey. She couldn't play and come to meetings the whole winter season because the hockey matches were at the time of the meetings, on a Saturday afternoon. The people of the chapter were not quite sure what to do, as this was a unique situation. (Laughter)

W: Some of these names I really don't remember.

M: Yes, I think they probably people that came once or twice.

W: Yes. There were great times, you know. The church was very alive in those days, much more so than now. I think we lived according to a much stricter discipline somehow. I think relativism has hit the church in many, many ways and we have become stuck. People are not committed anymore, although our archbishop would disagree with me on that score.

TRANSCRIPT
of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MEMBERS OF THE JORDAN OF SAXONY CHAPTER

on
23 October 2005

at
16.30

at
DOMINICAN SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

in
WITTEBOME, CAPE TOWN

by
MARK JAMES

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**Interview with members of the Blessed Jordan of Saxony Chapter,
at Dominican School for the Deaf, Wittebome, Cape Town
on 23 October 2005**

Those interviewed were: Mrs Margaret "Nicky" Nicholson (NM), Mrs Ruth West (R), Mrs Natalie Frieslaar (N) and Sr. Madeline Corcoran (Sr. M)

M: I'm doing some research about the history of the lay Dominicans in South Africa and I was particularly interested to hear that as a group many of you joined in about 1986 or so and we have spoken a bit about the fact that you came together and many of you were teachers at Dominican schools and you were called together and asked if you wanted to be lay Dominicans. How did this happen?

R: That was Sister Marian's doing¹ and Sister Marian's had sent an invitation to everybody at all the Catholic schools and we were invited through our principals to attend one of the meeting in a Cape Town Convent, St Mary's and that's where we all met up. How many do you remember? 24 ... 24 teachers were there roughly and that's where we all heard of Sister Marian's dream of establishing a lay Dominican group of teachers teaching at, I think I'm right in saying, at Catholic schools and not specifically Dominican schools, I'm not sure about that.

MN: Many from Dominican schools were represented. I looked around and I could see people from Cape Town, from Springfield, from St James, Simon's Town.

M: Can you say more about what her dream was? Why did she have this idea?

R: I think, Father, she said she had this feeling that she needed to establish a group of vibrant lay people connected to carry the whole Dominican charism through the schools. I think that's what I sort of remember her saying at the time.

MN: I must say the reason why so many people left after that was because they thought it was more for fundraising clubs, youth clubs dealing with fundraising and that type of thing. But when they actually heard what it was about they didn't want to be committed to that. They were committed to a club like sewing clubs or teacher clubs, yes.

R: But then we dwindled, I think we all started dwindling. I remember us being about 10 or 12, Springfield Convent's present principal and vice ... and we were four here.

That was Melanie Bruce, she was a former member and her deputy was Bernadette Keeson. She is presently in Vanderbijlpark in the novitiate. But when we came to the commitment, I think, it was Sister Genevieve who took us over. I can't remember how it happened but suddenly Sister Genevieve appeared and she started forming us, and no commitment was made. We just got together, we heard about prayer and scripture, especially scripture. We had meetings especially at Rondebosch. We were

¹ Referring to Sr. Marian O' Sullivan the regional prioress of the Cabra congregation at this time.

about 7 or 8. We stayed that group and then I think we were about 7 or 6, I can't remember Father, sorry ... about 7 or 6 when we made our first commitment.

MN: Yes. (Counting of names)

R: We were 7 and we kept strong, the 7 of us. We kept going, going and Sister Genevieve kept us going. She was actually very strict with scripture and she demanded from us when we came for a meeting: "What did you do? Do you remember this? Did we put into practice what she said?" We just loved that stillness about her and I think she kept the group together. We actually made our first, was it our first promises, in Cape Town?

MN: Yes, that correct? In 1988.

R: In 1988, we made our first promise and I think from there we became stronger and more committed over the years and we also were supportive of each other.

[Tape indistinct]

MN: We had meetings with them.

C: Sometimes we did ~~yes~~. Sometimes we combined at St. Michael's, Rondebosch. I think, after that the group started feeling one-sided and then we, I think, broke away and the late sister... What was her name?

N: Sister Fabian.

R: Fabian took over St Catherine of Siena's group and then Sister Genevieve took us over. Then I think Rhoda (Judith) Boswell ...

M: Do you know in what year that was?

R: Nicky, were you part of us then?

MN: No, not yet. It was when Rhoda passed on.

R: Yes, Rhoda. Father, at that time we just one group, not divided yet, we had that ... Father Carel came into the picture and he called us to Koinonia in 1994. We were summoned to Koinonia by Fr. Carel. It was the first time we met him and then I think the then Council in Johannesburg was Audrey Kelf, John Harvey. They were, I think, aged and thought that they were not capable to carry on in their work for lay Dominicans and then we asked at Koinonia whether we would want to take over. There were "groot" brothers and sisters and priests there and that's what made us just say yes. (Laughter) We didn't even have a chance to decide. Sister weren't you with us by that time?

Sr. M: Yes, that's right.

R: Then when we came back, we were then running as the Council for lay Dominicans and Helen was our president. I was then secretary and we had to liaise and I think we did very well. We were a bit green, green horns trying to do a big job.

At that time KwaZulu-Natal were not established yet, they didn't feature then. It's coming back when I started working as secretary. Audrey Kelf, she started giving me advice through correspondence, what to do, how to send out letters and when to send them out. She was very strict in that way. Every term she even gave me the 1st April, the first term then the next 1st June - the next one. All those things had to go out. John Harvey used to phone to find out "How you getting on? What is it that you need?" I think he passed on all the crosses and books and things to Helen at the time in case we needed them. I think from there, Fedosa stepped in after that, somehow Fedosa featured and we were asked to make a decision so that we could come and report back. Sister now I'm not so sure, who took over then?

Sr. M: I thought it was '93, Ruth. I think it was in 1993 when I went to Woodstock. I've lost that book, and I must find it. I'll check up and see if I can find it. It had the dates of the talks I gave. It had information about where was the meeting, who was doing what at the time. We had a change of secretaries hadn't we?

M: But also sister, when Sister Fabian died then Sister Genevieve took over St Catherine's again and then you came to us.

Sr. M: Yes, she asked would I take over.

R: She wanted to keep that group going. There were older members. I think after that, there was a change as we started to grow in numbers through Rhoda Boswell. And because of that they were actually also combining with St Catherine's at that time. They came to Rondebosch for their retreats because I'm not so sure who took them over - who was their spiritual promoter but I think Sister Genevieve tried to promote them.

M: When did the Jane of Aza group start? Do any of you remember?

R: You know Father what I need to do, I need to actually just go through, I've got a thick file at home that I was trying to find.

M: Would it be after '94?

R: After '94.

N: Because Rhoda was ill when I joined and I never got to meet her. She passed away shortly after I met Una and Una was part of my Dominican life. And then it became Lydia who was out in Crossroads. She was coordinating us from there.

M: That's in?

B: She was the only one who used to join us sometimes from there.

N: But how I got involved was that we had an invitation to past pupils of Dominican schools, or anybody who had wanted to come was round up on St

Dominic's day. Sister Rosemary did a presentation and a slide show. They had come to listen to this and be part of it and that was when I decided that this is something that I would feel comfortable to be part of. I was brought up in a Dominican school, I always had Dominican sisters around me and it was like a circle coming round and from that moment on...

R: Can I just come in here? Did you join us before we had that thing? Yes you did. We had that call and we were summoned to Welkom to the complex - it was a mining camp or something.

N: I didn't go I had just joined.

B: We had to give an account of how we were running the lay Dominicans and that's when I think the year before that KwaZulu-Natal had come into the picture. They were already a group but they were actually called Rose of Lima group at one of the Koinonia meetings, they were labelled.

M: Let's just go back a bit to when you were first started in 1986. What was happening in the Catholic schools at the time that Sister Marian had this idea to bring together all the teachers to see if they would join the lay Dominicans in order to continue the Dominican ethos in the schools? What was happening?

MN: I must say that our school and we had Catholic teachers and teachers from other faiths. We had also had the working staff, the hostel staff and the day staff. They were people from all kinds of denominations. I know because I'm the kind of person who talks to everybody, you don't have time for yourself. There was always new people coming in and some of them never really understand what the Catholic faith or the Catholic school was about. Very often I remember we used to have Mass and the children would go to Mass and the teachers would be there. They would come and talk to you afterwards about the Mass and things like that. It was always like a tug-of-war, sort of. I'm talking about my own experience now. Then I also do know that we do have assemblies every Monday morning and that was the highlight of the week. It was easier for me to stand up and to speak at an assembly than it was for me to speak in the staff room because I felt better before big crowds or whatever. But in smaller groups, we had smaller groups I would say that some people found that easier. So I think that was part of it.

M: People you are referring to are teachers?

MN: Yes.

Sr. M: This coincided with decreasing vocations. I can't say now off hand when Sister Marian had this idea but then she became vicar and she was several years vicar, by common consent almost. Then she was elected at a provincial chapter and then she went overseas and was elected General and this kind of thing that happened. There were no young nuns coming up to teach in schools. There was no one to teach Latin after me except Bernie Keeson, there was no sister in sight. And people like Jennifer Alt, she was a very good history teacher and English teacher but she didn't want that line. She had thought about it. I know I had been looking after her English or history class and we were down on our knees or sitting on the floor and I was telling about

where exactly I had got with Standard 9 and she used to take it on to matric. But then it was shortly after that, I think, that she started to talk about doing psychology. She went to Cape Town University. So there was that movement there - of a sense of individual vocation outside teaching. There was a line somewhere in the acts of one of our chapters, where this was certified: do we keep to teaching education only or other avenues? The decision was follow other avenues. So I think there was kind of a niche there - of a sense of being able to call, certainly they won't be from Ireland anymore and we only have a handful of younger South Africans, who are now in their 50s.

We just couldn't see the Catholic stamp. The stereotype we depended on all the years. She certainly was aware of that and it was amazing. The foresight she had about schools and changing schools, and getting rid of schools, but she had that drive and that wisdom to see what was going to happen. So I put all these things and tie them together but I can't give you direct lines of dates now.

R: Another thing I could add as a third thing there was also the teaching of catechism in the schools, was also not going anywhere and I think that was a big concern to the owners of the school and the Dominican Order as well. Because as Nicky said there was only a handful of Catholic catechists, that was also something that was a big concern. For myself also when I came into the school in 1983 because I could see as a young teacher then, a new teacher in the school what goes on the school and I used to come and tell Sister Sally, my principal and Sister Jacinta as well: "They not teaching catechism, what can we do about it?" you know that type of thing. I think that was also what worried Sister Marian a bit.

MN: I remember Sister Martina now; she came in to address the staff, to speak to us, I think one year she really 'dondered' us, you know, to give us direction.

Sr. M: The new catechetical booklets they were trying to get them on the market, to get them published. I remember when I came back to Springfield, I think, I was in Std 9 and the book was very good the one called "Connections". It was divided into portions, there was dogma, and there essentially were great short stories that could be used for moral teaching. There were great things that you could do but you had to use it. I remember saying "Alright, they'll be getting a little bit of dogma from me for a certain length of time". Then one day a week they would have something else. I remember speaking one teacher and she said to me "Sister, I'm a convert and I honestly don't know my faith well". So she used to spend a lot of time with the stories for the morality of it. But there was that problem, we've been speaking about, the problem where you didn't have enough people to teach. Quite difficult.

M: With regards to you being called to live the Dominican charism, how do you see that having shaped you as lay people in the school environment? How did that help you in doing that work, being a teacher, being a principal or being a secretary? How did that form you or affect how you run the school, what affect did it have on your own spiritual life?

R: Well Father, I can just tell you that I became one to enforce the ethos as I should as the principal by being very strict about the assemblies and keeping to our Mass times and also going around and asking Catholic teachers to get them together to help one another with the RE. Since then I've got a very good RE co-ordinator, she was a very good Catholic, a good woman, and I think Sister Jacinta after she left the

principalship here, I have called her in to help as well. I must say I look forward to my meetings because I come back very energised, for the week ahead or the month ahead. I think we were three lay Dominicans here in this school. I'm the only one left but we were always challenged and I'm happy to say we were able to respond very well to the training and formation that we gained through our spiritual fathers. And when people challenge, I try to explain what is the way forward for the school, as Catholic school and we take it from there. So we have come to the challenges I think and that has been part of the Dominican way for the Sisters. I would probably go forward from here.

MN: I'm now retired for 2 years. I must say that the feeling that I get is that we have the respect, the respect you can see not because I was admired but I do know that as teachers we got a lot more respect.

R: Even the children sign us that, they would say you are the same as the Sisters. So that respect that she is saying, yes. Even when we have Lent they normally call on the lay Dominicans to do the reading or do the ashes then we stand the three of us at the doors. So it's true what you saying about that respect for us. They know we followers of the sisters, so when the sisters come here, they come to look for us. So it has done wonders for us. I am happy to be a lay Dominican.

N: As a child I had always been in a Dominican school, I attended several schools and knowing that the Sisters were getting old and there are no more young sisters coming up. So when I became a lay Dominican I felt a special challenge, I was so grateful for the input I had that I didn't realise as a child that I was getting that I felt an obligation now to continue what they had given to us. Because it was given to us I had to take it carefully and to ensure that I do use it, and that I do help and carry on the lay part of that school. As a secretary I would try my best to do it in the life of the children, in the office, in school, in the classroom to teach them the motto of truth. Helping them to keep an upright outlook on what they are doing on the playground. A lot of children came to talk all the time and give them opportunity to know themselves.

Sr. M: We were looking out for them all the time, what happened here and what happened there and they were never alone, so we handed the school over to someone and thereafter we became redundant. There is nothing like that. There is a warm relationship and we are Dominicans together. Even the small thing we were involved in and I think there was warmth that came to us for that, I think they became very fond of us.

N: And respect for the Sisters, we are very fortunate that we have the convent on our premises. Respect. Whatever notices go out, whatever information goes out we always used to get a copy. The sisters were always aware; when we had special teas or fundraisers we were always there. Although there are fewer sisters they are still very much visible and present.

MN: Sister Margaret passed away and that was when I had to make up my mind and I always have to succeed so I chose this.

M: Maybe just one last question. In relation to the work that you have done as a group, the lay Dominican project for quite a number of years as the National Council, what were the one or two significant things that you think consolidated your identity as lay Dominicans in this area of the Western Cape?

R: Well I think Father that we wouldn't have survived without the sisters because they kept us going, they worked with us and that's what made us stronger. When we had celebrations we were always invited. Sister Margaret Kelly always saw to that, when anyone else was being received we would come together as a group and she would always phone now and again "How you getting on? What are you doing on St. Dominic's day? Because we are going to have Mass" and that type of connection. And I think that has made us what we are.

Sr. M: At some chapters the lay Dominicans were invited and were there.

MN: I also think it was the respect that we had for each other in the group itself. The fact that we had perhaps a problem at home that we would like to share. We can share openly in the group, receive prayer support and so on.

N: I think that we recognised the strength of each one. We all had functions, doing the writing down, Sister does the spiritual input, if we have a day Nicky could always arrange a prayer or a song and I would do the typing, you know. We each had different strengths and when needed they were pooled. I think that we never ever had a cross word between us, never ever.

Sr. M: We had conferences that were organised by each chapter up country. The organisation I thought was outstanding. Everybody's needs was catered upon, everybody was made welcome and all together, they were very good conferences. They had family spirit.

M: Let me ask one more last question (Laughter). I wanted to ask about the conference in 1994, that you went to at Koinonia. What was it about that conference that really, you mentioned already that you agreed to take it on because you felt a bit intimidated, what was it about the conference? What was the theme, what was the environment of that conference that stays with you to this day about your whole experience of being lay Dominicans? Are there any one or two things that you can say stands out in your mind?

R: I think it was the gathering of the priests and nuns that made an impact and then this whole terminology of Father Carel's- "the mixed salad" - and what we are still doing though we are all different. I think the beautiful talks we had, Sr. Therese gave us a beautiful talk on St Catherine of Siena and then I made up my mind and Sister Genevieve offered to be my spiritual advisor. I think the meaning of St Catherine's came out there for me.

Sr. M: What about the other sister?

R: Oh yes, Sister Patricia. Excellent. Of course, Father regularly gave us time-out to think about it. He didn't just say take it up and we were left to it. They gave us a night and then before we closed, they called us together. I think it was the night before

we left and he said: "Now we know that you have accepted and I will be there to support you."

MN: Yes. I liked, there was a part in the gathering when I looked at all the faces and I realised I had become a Dominican and I also remember the Saturday night when there was a party, concert. Do you remember that? (Laughter)

N: When I was professed, I can't remember the dates, I was very fortunate that Fr. Emil was in Wynburg and we had the most wonderful Mass and Sister Margaret Kelly was there and we invited all the chapters in Cape Town and they all turned up - St Dominic's was full. And I invited my friends from school and they felt so uplifted and they were so honoured to be at this function and I felt with St. Dominic and the Dominican environment. That was a very special occasion where the rest of the chapters had the opportunity of having this Dominicans priest, I don't know if we had one in our presence at that stage.

M: That was in '94?

D: Yes. And we had the reception in the old library and we went out and Fr Emil with his camera taking such beautiful photographs of Sister Genevieve and Sister Philip. I try to say that when ever we have a gig together let the outside know, put it in the papers, let them see that we are alive and flourishing although the numbers aren't so great but we still there. Because that Southern Cross is all over Southern Africa and if we can just spark, somebody can contact us. Just letting people know that the lay Dominicans are there.

M: Thank you.

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of
INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
with
MR PETER SADIE
on
16 January 2007
at
17.10
in
LINKSFIELD, JOHANNESBURG
by
MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

**Interview with Mr Peter Sadie in Linksfield, Johannesburg
on 16 January 2007**

SACCL - South African Council for Laity

M: Peter, I just wanted to ask you what were your memories of your involvement in the Laity Council? When did you begin and what were the issues and memories you have of your involvement?

P: My first experience, I remember was in the early 80's when I represented NCFS at the Laity Council. It was quite an interesting experience because by that time the bishops had already begun to take a more progressive stance on issues like Namibia. The laity generally were a lot more conservative and were not too keen on the political side of what the church was doing. When I went to that first one the 'left' were a very small grouping who were basically trying to encourage support for the Bishops' position. Most of the white laity who were well represented through the dioceses as well as through the lay movements, like the Knight of da Gama, the Catholic Women's League, were very much the leadership within the Laity Council and their position was much more one of, 'It's great that we all belong to this Catholic Church and that we are different, somehow better - a liberal position - because we have black and white together. But they were not too keen on taking a direct anti-government position in the sense that the bishops were already taking. So, I think, the way in which the challenges would come up was that the small group of left-wing people within the church would try to get resolutions passed at the end of the Council where all the resolutions for the following few years or whatever it is, every Laity Council wasn't an annual thing at that point, I think it was perhaps every second year, a bi-annual conference. They would try to put forward progressive resolutions and some of them got passed and others of them got blocked. It was definitely black Catholics who were involved in sodalities and some came through the dioceses as well. Where they were generally more pious and quieter and certainly there were very few who pushed a strong anti-government position. The interesting thing is that whilst the laity... That was my first experience in the early 80's and then what happened...

M: Talking about the early 80's still. Would none of the black members have been influenced by Black Consciousness?

P: Yes, there would have been, especially through CASA, the Catholic tertiary Black students' grouping, as well as YCS, which was just beginning at that point in the late 70's but I think they were also part of that small left-wing within the church. So there were small smattering of progressive Catholics at these laity councils who were trying to influence the predominant position which was generally about focus on church and not too worried about what was happening politically.

M: Do you remember any of the black church organisations?

P: Yes, there was the Sacred Heart and the *Basadi ba Anna*.

M: Was the Catholic African Union part of it?

P: I don't remember that. There was Chiro, for the youth. So there were a number of those groups present but generally speaking they were I would say liberal, in the sense that they were quite happy that they were all together - Catholics, black and white. There wasn't a political consciousness at the time that said that we should be more anti-government and more united behind the bishops and that was the kind of position that was beginning within the Bishop's Conference and I think the progressive wing within the laity was trying to encourage support for the Bishops. Now in that early conference within the 80's, it wasn't very pronounced, it was just there. It was a little attempt. Then what happened in the next Laity Council, in the mid 80's, I remember I was representing YCS at that one and I got elected onto the Executive and that was a very ... the country was in a state of emergency. There was intense conflict within the country and that conflict began to spill out into the Laity Council. The form that it took was that on the Laity Council there were black people who were tired of being dominated, who were from a little bit of a Black Consciousness background, who were tired of being dominated by some of the conservative white types. Then there were also progressive youth movement representatives who were also struggling to get more of a voice in the Laity Council. I think at that time we were still a minority in the overall Council. Remember, there was a guy, Noel Pistorius, who was the head of the Laity Council at that time and I remember we had this meeting in Garankuwa and because of what was happening in the townships at that time being the state of emergency, Catholic lay people were quite vociferous, and angry about what the government was doing and he was trying to keep a lid on it and trying to block all the progressive resolutions from coming through from the floor. But the progressive grouping was very organised and they started to actually tilt the balance, for the first time, so that the Laity Council began to make clear political statement in support of the Bishops and in a way undermining the conservative lay Catholic members in saying that they were being disloyal to the bishops. They are not following their direction. So what happened after that Laity Council there was a new bishop appointed and there was a very funny experience for me because I had gone to talk to Bishop Fritz Lobinger, he wasn't a bishop when I had first spoken to him at Lumko. I said to him, 'Don't you think we can change things in the laity through the Laity Council and work through it?' Because I was on the Council at that stage and things were coming to a close with the previous bishop and he said to me: "I don't think it's worth it. I think it's a waste of time, you are not going to achieve much". The next thing he was appointed a bishop and immediately after he was appointed bishop to the Laity Council. So it was a funny experience and I must say with his kind of leadership he was able to help us develop a much more progressive position within the Laity Council as a whole and the conservative grouping basically no longer held hegemony within the Laity Council. Simultaneously, in the late 80's Bishops initiated the Pastoral Plan and I think with that there was a big push towards lay involvement through Renew and through small Christian communities. That also changed the balance because then there was a move to not so much a Laity Council but a diocesan council, an Inter-diocesan Council, where the church, meaning laity and priests, sisters and bishops would all come together and speak with one voice and that's basically all in the early 90's. We had the first Inter-diocesan Council based on the 1989 pastoral plan and that actually ushered in an era where there was a much more progressive direction coming through from the Catholic Church as a whole. I must say around the time of independence there was a very strong unity within the Catholic Church and a very strong overlap

between Catholicism in South Africa and the democratic movement. Certainly there were lots of activists who were involved in the struggle and were recognised as Catholics, it wasn't as if there was any tension between their Catholicism and their commitment to justice. So I think that was something of a shift that took place in the ten years from 1984 to 1994. Unfortunately, since then I think what happened is that the Inter-diocesan Council, after independence, it as back to church work. Back to church and doing church work, I think the laity structures were also in some ways worked out because of the Inter-diocesan Council where laity was represented through their diocese once again. In a sense youth movements and progressive voices no longer had a forum through which they could actually speak and challenge what was going on.

M: So those organisations themselves....

P: Also diminished in strength and actually became a lot smaller. I think progressive Catholics are still around but they are very much little islands, they no longer in the centre of the church. That was a bit of an unfortunate shift.

M: How would you account for the fact that, you mentioned that there was a bishop and many of the small groupings committed to justice started to have a greater effect in the whole Laity Council, but how did that shift happen? What were the people doing in order to allow that transformation to take place amongst laity?

P: I think that shift was gradual in the sense that those small grouping began to become more vociferous and began to work together far better and be coordinated far better. I think within the Laity Council also the fact that there were. I remember that there was Tony Chetty from Cape Town, who was on the Laity Council, he was deputy or vice chairperson, vice president I think it was called. There was Molebatsi from Garankuwa from Fr Smangaliso's parish and there was myself. And the three of us on the executive of the Laity Council formed a bit of a core. Then there was the elderly woman from St Anne's, I can't remember her name, but she would be sympathetic and supportive of us although she was a very pious Catholic. She would see what we were doing and would obviously as a black person also want justice and I remember somehow, that kind of quorum of people became stronger and whereas initially when I was on the Laity council in the early 80's I felt like I was a lone voice, there was no solidarity between us and that I got knocked down every time by the conservatives. Every time I tried to put something forward, they kind of outmanoeuvred me and blocked me. Now suddenly, we had worked over a period of time to develop a unity and develop a sense of solidarity and we were beginning to influence not only the Laity Council but more broadly the laity through the Pastoral Plan. At the next Laity Councils we were putting issues, I remember we were debating the Constituent Assembly and some of the members from Kwa-Zulu Natal diocese said 'No we haven't discussed this in IFP yet and we cannot come up with a position on the constituent assembly,' whereas the bishops, bishop Hurley had already called for constituent assembly and it was very clearly the position that the ANC was also pushing for and we felt that it was a good position to debate and decide on prior to 1994. So there was a lot more political education happening in a forum like the Laity Council whereas previously it was like small groupings trying to get the issues onto the agenda and being blocked. And now in the mid 80's towards the late 80's that grouping definitely moved into a leadership position. I must say in the late 80's

actually we elected black presidents for the first time. Well, I don't know if it was the first time and those presidents were quite progressive. Tony Chetty first of all and then subsequent to him there was a guy Phindile from the Eastern Cape. And both of those guys were, and Edson Williams who was from Lenasia and all of those guys were very clear that they wanted to bring the church into the struggle. I remember at one meeting, we were meeting and we said to the bishops that there's this march and we can't miss the march, we need to be part of the march. It was a march to protest about detentions and the banning of organisations and calling for the un-banning of the ANC and PAC, it was in the late 80's. We had Archbishop Hurley who was meeting for a justice meeting, we had bishop Lobinger and we had or two other Bishops, I think Bishop Napier could have been there. All of these bishops marched in a mass march protest in the front of the march and I remember the communist flag was behind them but that was very much the kind of laity initiative where we were able to say to the bishops that we need to stop the meeting because this was an important march and we need to be present and we want you guys to be walking with us. It's a very important statement from the church and they agreed. They could see obviously there was a lot of flack after that because the Communist Party flag was held and whoever took the picture got the bishops just in front of the Communist flag. (Laughter) But, I remember we even tried to edit out the hammer and the sickle from the picture. Ultimately, the truth was that there were many people who were opposing apartheid and the bishops and the Communist Party and many others were part of that protest action and the obviously right-wing Catholics took advantage of the fact that their bishops were walking with the communist flag but that didn't mean that they were in any way, under the communist flag as it were.

M: Peter, I wanted to ask you, your period of involvement in the Laity Council and also what was your contribution in the Council?

P: Well, I started off as I said in the early 80's which as just as a representative to the Laity Council which was a biannual meeting. Then I was elected onto the executive of the Laity council in the mid 80's, I think it was around '84. Then from there a position was created because they wanted to dovetail the laity initiative with the Pastoral Plan, that was the bishops' aim, to get the laity behind the Pastoral Plan. They created a post, which would be Laity Co-ordinator which was a full time post, or laity secretary, that what it was called, but they would also link that post with the Pastoral Plan. Ken Smith at the time was a full-time Catholic worker from the German Archdiocese who had been there for many years, and Noel Pistorius was his close friend from the Knights of da Gama, saw and created this post and lobbied for a position within the Bishops conference that there should be a full-time coordinator. Sadly, Ken died shortly before the post was filled. After his death, it was vacant, he hadn't taken the post but the position had been created by then and I applied for the post and was accepted. And I think once I was a full-time employee in the Bishops' Conference I was able to make a much greater impact in terms of organising the laity to support the Bishops' position, which was a much more, not all the bishops by the way, but the left of the bishops who were led by Archbishop Hurley, which was much more prophetic tradition within the Catholic Church. What was interesting for me though was, we linked up the Laity Commission to the Pastoral Plan, they initially called me a liaison officer which was a very strange name, don't think they liked to give you titles which would encourage too much of a serious position but anyway the thing is we were coordinating this Pastoral Plan which was actually all about getting

lay involvement within the Catholic Church, especially through Renew and Small Christian Communities. Lots and lots of lay people started to become involved and therefore a leadership had started to emerge. People who had previously been progressive in their work lives through trade unions, through student organisations or community organisations were now able to link up that side of their lives with their faith whereas previously they were Catholic and they were progressive but they didn't necessarily bring the two together so closely. During the time of the Pastoral Plan the political agenda was much more squarely within the church structures so the issues that they were discussing within the Small Christian Communities were about revitalizing the church but they were also about the tax on communities, Third Force and all kinds of other things. We had these Small Christian Community notes which got people to reflect on those kinds of issues and there was a massive education process which was happening. By 1992, we had organised 5000 small Christian communities across the country and there was definitely a lay voice which was coming through within the Church. One of the key things we struggled for was we didn't like the parallel structures of the Catholic Church, where the laity would be here and the religious would be there and priests that side. Everybody had their own structure and the only central structure was the Bishops and we had pushed for the concept for the People of God, where all of these groups could be kept together based on the model of the parish as a community of communities. Within that we saw that the Pastoral Plan and the Inter-diocesan Council would be the right place for the Catholic Church as a whole to meet. We moved strongly towards that position, I think Bishop Lobinger was very keen on that position and so where we as lay people. We moved towards that position from the late 80's to the early 90's and it became accepted. The only problem then after independence is that a lot of the progressive Catholics went and got involved in the government and in work in other areas and left behind the church structures which at that point were actually quite open to lay people and quite progressive but the people who were involved in that area were the normal kind of old Catholics who were actually more pious and followed... And also the bishops themselves under new leadership moved much more to a back-to-church business kind of approach and sort of leave the politics to the politicians kind of thing. In a sense the momentum had built up quite well towards independence but post-independence that momentum just got lost. I think when I look back at it that's something that I feel quite sad about, there was all that goodwill and positive energy in terms of moving the church and shortly after that it was gone.

M: So the idea of the Laity Council wasn't just to transform society. There was an element that through establishing small Christian communities that you were affecting the way that the church was working too.

P: That was very much our vision. We wanted to be a community serving humanity. In that kind of phase of the Pastoral Plan you see the two dimensions, one the one hand a different kind of church for a different kind of society. Unfortunately what I think happened is that we helped to create that new society quite strongly and on the other hand it was back to old church style approach after that. Where the church leaders didn't worry that much about what was going on in society, or less. I think it's changing now, where church leaders are seeing a need to be more prophetic once again. Although often the issues that they are picking upon are more conservative issues such as abortion and I'm not saying that those are not important but only those kind of related to personal morality, not so much on the social morality

of poverty and justice and the issues that we had been mobilising around in an anti-apartheid direction.

M: Do you remember the early history of the establishment of the Laity Council and how it began and who was involved with it?

P: I think the early beginnings were related to the bishops making statements somewhere around 1976 that apartheid was somehow wrong. And the fact that people were critical of the bishops in saying: 'But they don't really represent anybody'. There was a move towards getting a voice for the laity within the Catholic Church and the Laity Council was to try and bring that together through representatives from the dioceses, each diocese having a lay representative, as well as each lay movement within the church being represented. So I think initially it was very much about representation of lay people though the Church and I think the initial position was very much one of, you know we as Catholics are an alternative to the society - look how we come together, look how we are better than the apartheid society kind of set-up. But gradually as more progressive Catholics came into those structures the shift was much more to transforming the church and transforming society. What happened is that we succeeded with the one of transforming the society partly by creating a democratic South Africa but we didn't do that much in transforming the church. Because after the initial period of Renew and small Christian communities that momentum was to a large extent lost and things went back to what they were previously.

M: With regards to the groups that were involved, do you have any recollection of the lay Dominicans or any other tertiary groups like the Franciscans or any other of those third order movements being part of the Laity Council?

P: Yes, I do. I'm sure what happened was that those people who I met when I was a young person coming in, had probably at some point been young people themselves who joined these lay movements but when I met them they were all elderly people. I couldn't quite work out how they fitted in. There was the Legion of Mary, the Sacred Heart sodality, the *Basadi ba Anna*. The lay Dominicans, the lay Franciscans and that kind of small groupings on the periphery, I think what was different with the youth is that they tended to speak more with a common voice whether they were from CASA or CATHSOC or YCS or CHIRO. There was a sense that what was happening in the country was wrong and that as young people we wanted to bring about change. In that sense, there was a sense of collective, people wanted to get young people onto the leadership and that's why I got on. There wasn't a sense in which those groups had a common concerted direction in terms of transforming the church or the society.

M: Was Emilia Charbonneau still involved in the Laity Council when you were on it?

P: Ja, I took over from her as the secretary of the laity, she had been the previous secretary. She in fact taught me how to start off. She trained me in my role as I was taking over from her. Under her leadership, as I say, the laity was much more a secretariat where it was just another part of the church which was parallel to the priests and the sisters and all the other groups within the church. And somehow their

voice also needed to be heard, through the bishops. So it was all these different groupings, going to the bishops and reporting and the bishops being the decision-making body. What changed with the Inter-diocesan Pastoral Plan, it was much more a thing of the church coming together to speak and lay people being part of that. Not separate from or under, but very much alongside the priests and the sisters and the Bishops.

M: So initially what you saying is that the Laity Council worked more as a sort of consultative body, rather than as having any executive power of its own?

P: Yes, that's the way it was, when we started it.

M: What were the shifts of the Laity council? Did it start off as a Council, how did it develop into an Inter-diocesan Pastoral Council?

P: There were three phases. The first phases as a Laity Council, which was a consultative body to the Bishops Conference and that was from its beginnings in the 70's to the mid 80's, then this shift to where it became a Commission of the Laity rather than simply a Laity Council. The Commission of the Laity still coordinated this biannual conference of the laity, but it was a standing committee of the Bishops Conference and it had a full time staff. Both for youth as well as for lay leadership and especially moving towards the Pastoral Plan, that was the second phase. The third phase was really when it moved into the Inter-diocesan Pastoral Plan; where lay people would be represented through their local church structures, both youth movements, other movements as well as diocesan structures through the deaneries. I think the weakness was that whereas previously there was a voice for the laity, I think somehow with the changes in the country that voice was diffused and no longer really had a clear standing on its own. So I think these were the three phases of the Council.

M: Was the Laity Council involved at all with the training of the laity?

P: When it was initially started I think there were very few ways of doing that because it had this Council and that was the main event. It was a weekend, or a long weekend event, where laity came together and they discuss all the issues and they made resolutions. But it was difficult to implement these resolutions because everybody was meant to go back to their diocese and make these things happen and there wasn't the structures necessary to make these things happen. I think what changed with the Laity Commission is that there was a full-time staff and also more broadly there was this Pastoral Plan which lay people were more highly active in making happen. So I think there were some of the big shifts in changing it from merely a consultative body to a body that was now taking responsibility for moving things forward.

M: How was the Laity Council involved with *Khanyisa* in Mariannhill?

P: The youth structure and the Home and Family life structures were based there for a number of years. That was an important part. We used to have our meetings regularly at *Khanyisa* but *Khanyisa* was a training centre for the Church. I remember sometimes we had a big youth council where we brought young people from every diocese as well as all the youth movements for training and we started to have annual

councils for youth where all the Catholic youth came together. So it was during those periods that there was a sense of 'we are going somewhere' as a Catholic youth and as part of something broader being Catholic laity as well as a Catholic church in terms of the hierarchy as well.

M: Were there any prominent lay people involved in the laity structures that you found made an important contribution?

P: Let me just say that there was a number of black Catholics and white Catholics who were previously involved in the struggle and also Catholic. What happened as the Laity Commission began to do its work and show people that their faith and their lives didn't have to be unrelated but they could in fact be integrated. There was a clear shift where a lot of the progressive Catholics began to move more into the church structures and to see that they had a place there. For example, Phindile Manele, was the man's name from the Eastern Cape was very active in the Eastern Cape as well as Edson Williams was involved in the Department of Education challenges especially in the new government and Tony Chetty was involved in the Western cape. All of these people as well as many young people, Robbie Water which comes to mind began to see that they could integrate their faith and their life and that there was no gap in-between the two and that they could be proud of being Catholic and in the struggle.

M: You spoke a bit about the laity and their involvement. How did it come to be that they supported the bishops more and more?

P: I think over that period of from the early '70's to the late '90's maybe about 20 years. There was a major shift where previously the Catholic Church was no different to any other church, as far as its members were and as far as the leadership were, but maybe you could call it the Holy Spirit. There was a definite movement from within the leadership which in some ways made them vulnerable because the critique and the criticism from the government and the right wing was that these bishops represent nobody except themselves and they speak not on behalf of anyone else. The bishops had an incentive to develop lay structures which could in some way be echoing what they were saying. But on the other hand progressive lay people had a major impact in terms of shifting the bishops, organising study and awareness days for the bishops, challenging them to call apartheid a heresy in line with the international World Council of Churches and so on ... But although the bishops didn't agree to everything that the left in the church were saying the small group who were quite articulate and highly organised in a short space of probably twenty years moved the church to a position where the bishops and the laity spoke with only one voice. The voice was actually very strongly on the side of the liberation struggle and I think it had a major impact in terms of influencing civil society broadly where suddenly other Churches began to look at the Catholic Church as a role model. And saw that the Catholics were far better organised than any of their own structures, in terms of taking a radical position against apartheid and organising within its own structures to actually support that position. Definitely by '94 the Catholic Church was seen as part of the struggle whereas in the other struggles internationally it was seen as a conservative and reactionary voice. In South Africa it definitely shifted to a position where the broader liberation movement recognised the Catholic Church because there were many members of the Catholic Church who were active in the structures of the struggle.

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by

MARK JAMES

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, PIETERMARITZBURG

Telephone interview with Fr S'mangaliso Mkhathshwa
16 March 2007

M: I just wanted to ask you about the time when you were studying at Pevensey and I came across some papers that said that you were a prior of the tertiaries there.

S: Yes.

M: That was the only information that I had, there's nothing in the documentation about what happened in the group there and I was keen to know, how did it start and how did you get involved in it?

S: Alright, I can't remember all the specific details but what I do remember is that a number of seminarians, you know students, were obviously very interested in the work of the Dominican fathers and were very impressed with their scholarship and so on, but also the motto of the Dominican order.

M: Yes.

S: But also just a sort of very personal example of the guys who were there at the time, then we said okay fine, maybe we haven't got the vocation to go right up to the top to become Dominican monks and to join the First Order. However on inquiry we were informed by a, what was his name...there was an American priest who was teaching what was then called dogmatic theology.

M: Yes.

S: He was very interested in helping those students who showed interest in joining what was then called the Third Order and that's how we joined. He was then our spiritual advisor giving us guidance. From time to time we used to get together for reflection but also to better understand the whole history of the Dominican Order and what it was we could do in terms of our own spiritual growth and so on. Also to what extent we could contribute to the work of the Dominican Order without being members of the First Order.

M: Had many of you wanted to become members of the First Order or had you just wanted to be aligned through the Third Order?

S: Actually, I think at the time, if I can remember, there was probably around ten of us. Those were people, as I say, some of them were second year students, others were higher up nearing completion of their own studies and so on, so it was a mixed bag. But I do remember that the majority of those who did join were probably my classmates and that's how I became the prior, a title that I treasured very much.

(Laughter)

M: No, that's great. Which year did you begin?

S: Now that's a good question. I think I don't know if you can find out when that American he was the only American Dominican. It was more or less during that time ... I think probably around 19...

M: Because you were ordained in '65.

S: '65 yes. That was before that.

M: It was before that?

S: Yes.

M: And you spent about seven years at Pevensey?

S: Yes.

M: It would be Hammanskraal after that in '63.

S: Yes, that's correct. We continued at Hammanskraal.

M: Oh, the lay Dominican group continued there?

S: Yes.

M: Because I have a list of names here of those who were professed with you in that group. It was Remy Mokoka...

S: Okay. Yes, I knew him very well.

M: Martin Molefe, Alexander Mohlalisi ...

S: Oh, the big guy from Orange Free State.

M: I wanted to ask: Remy Mokoka, his name comes up very often, he kept ongoing contact with the group even into the early '70s.

S: Okay.

M: Was he teaching there?

S: He did definitely, he was ordained but I think at some stage he probably discontinued or something like that.

M: Is he the same person as Clement Mokoka?

S: Clement, they were brothers.

M: They were brothers. Clement, yourself and John Louwfont were very involved with the St Peters' Old Boys Association and the Black Priest's manifesto?

S: That's correct. These are naughty boys you are talking about...

(Laughter)

M: Ja, you kept the bishops on their toes.

(Laughter)

S: So they are having peace now.

(Laughter)

M: Yourself and John Louwfant were both members of the tertiaries but Clement wasn't?

S: I don't remember Clement joining us.

M: Do you think being a part of the tertiaries contributed anything towards your own conscientisation in terms of Black Consciousness and wanting to assert African leadership within the church?

S: Well, most certainly. I tell you why I think so. Looking back now at the information and training we went through under the leadership of the Dominican friars and so on. I really get the distinct impression that we got the training that prepared us for the post-Vatican church. We could say post-Vatican because the teachings and the policies, the spirit of the Second Vatican Council seems to some extent received a bit of a knock. I don't see too much evidence, in fact I see some sort of retrogression. But I would say that when I look back now I can see that the methods that was used by the Dominican fathers to prepare us for the pastoral ministry, was quite advanced. The early basis for future, political consciousness and involvement in social issues and struggles, I think was really laid by the kind of system of theology, the way we theologise. I remember looking back now, the way history was taught was not just a set of dates and so on, it was a sort of very, very, very inclusive in the sense that we looked at the political situation of a certain era; the economic environment of the time, those kinds of things. So the approach was very progressive and advanced. In a sense after my ordination, when I started working now in the parish and so on and then in much broader society, I could actually see why one immediately got involved in the struggle for human rights. Particularly in the final analysis for justice, and the human rights and so on and so on were for me derived from the basic principles of justice and the struggle for the concern for the common good of the people and so on. So I'd say the kind of training we received and the theological approach, but also remember at that time when we were training we were actually right in, almost at the time when the Second Vatican Council was unfolding and were therefore able to follow developments in the Council. People like Archbishop Hurley who were quite active, we read a lot, we read about Hans Kung, even about Ratzinger, when he was still Ratzinger and he was a fairly progressive theologian then. I must say just to mention a few names – Karl Rahner and all those people and I remember now we read a lot and of course for us it was a very exciting period and so when the Vatican Council ended it was more of a culmination of our own training in the ministry.

M: So it was a very challenging time but also very exciting time?

S: Very fascinating really. But it really opened our minds and as John XXIII said "Let in a bit of fresh air into the corridors of the church". That's why I say, we were therefore, in a sense one could also understand that we were very much a product of that period. Which in many ways, as I say really was exciting because it was bringing the church into the world and vice-versa? And we were very progressive in outlook of the Dominican fathers that were our teachers then, they played an important role in assisting us to think in a much more open-minded way.

M: Did the tertiary group, I just want to go back a bit to the question about the St Peters Old Boys' Association and the Black Priests' Manifesto. Did they support these initiatives?

S: Do you mean the Dominican Fathers?

M: No, the lay Dominican group.

S: Yes, obviously, most definitely.

M: Often what has been part of the problem is that sometimes lay groups or tertiary groups have just been seen as prayer groups and having no real conscientisation or involvement in political issues or even church issues. But that was very different for the group at Hammanskraal and Pevensey.

S: That was quite different. But as I say it was quite honestly the mood, the environment that prevailed at the time. We were encouraged to think critically and the kind of training that we went through was very different, I'm told from the training from the Mariannhill fathers, the Trappists and so on because they ran the first seminary. It was very different, well I never fortunately or unfortunately, studied under them but I am told from the priests who did actually do some training under them that the difference in outlook and approach and training was like chalk and cheese.

M: Thank you. Are you in touch with any of the other members that you studied with? I'm just wondering of there are some other people, like Remy Mokoka that I can contact to get information...

S: To be honest Father, I must say that you know how it is. We are all involved in different things and we move in different directions.

M: Ja, we loose touch, that's right.

S: But I could try and... I think some of them might have passed on. People like Mohlalisi, for instance, if I am not mistaken. I think he has since passed on. Some of the others, I would really need to try and track them down.

M: Right.

S: Who's on your list by the way, just to refresh my memory.

M: Yes.

S: Who do you have there apart from Mohlalisi, John Louwfant and myself?

M: There's Lucas Saliwa.

S: Yes, unfortunately, he has passed on.

M: Cosmos Gebashe.

S: Also passed on.

M: Pius Nyeza.

S: I don't know what ever happened to Pius. I know eventually he got ordained but I must confess I have no recollection of what ever happened to him.

M: Lewis Marshall.

S: I think he's still around somewhere in the Eastern Cape, I might imagine.

M: Is he still a priest or do you think he has left?

S: As far as I know that last time I had met him he was still I think in some parish somewhere.

M: There's also two others, James Mafuna.

S: Oh, yes. That one is very interesting he eventually landed up in France for a while, probably 15 or more years. But I'm told he is back home now, somewhere in Soweto.

M: And there is one last name, Simon Nzazeka or Nzageka. I'm no sure that handwriting isn't that clear.

S: That doesn't ring a bell. I don't know how far he went in that actual training.

M: Yes, some people stayed for a year and then you never saw them again.

S: Yes, I don't remember that name. The others I do remember.

M: You don't know how long that group continued for?

S: Honestly, after I left the seminary, I cannot tell how long it did. But it certainly did continue, I am sure. What would be interesting would be to try and find out for instance who took over from me because it may well be it was someone my junior. In which case then he might have continued for a while.

M: The only name I have is Remy Mokoka, so maybe I can try and contact him.

S: Yes, I don't know him because I think he was ordained a year or something like that after me.

M: You continued in the tertiaries group until your ordination here?

S: Yes, indeed.

M: And you never joined another group after that?

S: No, as a matter of fact, I tried to make some inquiries but I didn't get very far and I think the reason was that I worked in the diocese where there weren't any Dominicans, apart from sisters.

M: Yes, thank you. The last we hear about it was Hammanskraal closed and I think it was '72 or '73. That's the last reference we have to the group. Some of the people, actually it's back in '68, some of the people involved was Florian Makoro, he might have been there when you were still there.

S: Well, Florian has passed on. I remember him very well because I went to the University of Leuven with him. We were students together.

M: When did you do your studies in Leuven?

S: Yes, in Leuven.

M: No, thank you very much for your help.

S: No, Father it's a pleasure. If I do suddenly remember anything of interest to you I will certainly get in touch with you.

M: Yes, and you don't have any documentation or anything still with you from that time?

S: If I do have it must be hidden somewhere in some sort of ... I do have some of my documents and such hidden somewhere in, not really hidden but kept somewhere. Kept safe. Obviously when I start to do some work on my own *memoires*, I think I'll be able to retrieve some of that stuff but from time to time I do go back, just open some of the boxes and find something of interest.

M: Thank you, if you do find something that would help it would be much appreciated.

S: Yes, I will most certainly do.

M: And thank you for your time I do know that you are very busy and I greatly appreciate your making time for this interview.

S: No, it's a pleasure jogging my memory about a very pleasant past.