

How the Dominican Order Faced Crises (William Hinnebusch, O.P.)

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History demonstrates that institutions like events influence one another. A cross-fertilization is always taking place. This is also true of religious orders. Through the centuries of monastic history, they have constantly affected one another. Moreover, a continuing leveling process has been at work among them. They tend to become more like each other, at least in their apostolates, doing work for which other orders were specifically founded. Because of these factors, they can learn from the experiences felt and the vicissitudes suffered by their fellows. A review of the crises that challenged the Dominican Order during its long history of 750 years can be especially instructive. Most of the orders are apostolic, active in the ministry. In addition, Vatican II called upon all religious to be both contemplative and apostolic just as the Church itself is both. The Dominican Order was the first of the contemplative apostolic orders. It incorporated an active ministry into the way it lived the religious life, not as an appendage tolerated, but as an integral part of the life. A Dominican worked simultaneously for his own salvation and that of his fellow men.

Amazingly instructive is the durability the order has exhibited during the centuries. Some of the crises that faced it reduced it almost to the point of extinction. Yet preserved by Divine Providence, it has always sprung back to new life. Accompanying the action of the Spirit was the good will of many men who constantly called the order back to the roots from which it had sprung. Though today it is smaller than it was during the Middle Ages and most of modern times (it is a small order compared with some of the others), its influence in the Church and the world is out of proportion to its membership. Part of the order's strength comes from the unity that characterizes its unity deriving from a clear understanding of its mission, strong constitutions, a vigorous liturgical and community life, its Thomism, and a conviction that its ministry, the ministry of the word, will always be needed. The record contained in the following pages can offer hope and consolation to other orders as they struggle to meet the current crisis, perhaps the worst they have ever faced.

Dominican history also demonstrates another experience of monastic orders — the religious life cannot die when it mirrors the life of Christ and the Apostles. The testimony of religious is badly needed in the world today. When they consecrate themselves to Christ by pronouncing the vows, they set up a strikingly visible sign that they have declared themselves for Christ and that this is what all men should do. Rather than losing confidence at the attacks being made on the religious life and its viability, religious should take courage. Turning to the pages of history, they will learn how their predecessors have faced great crises and weathered them.

A Strong Sense of Identity

St. Dominic did his work so well that his order has always had a strong sense of its own identity. He himself was marked by a deep spirit of prayer, great love for the Scriptures, an intelligent understanding of the value of theology, a strong thirst for souls, and a wide experience as religious, itinerant preacher, and founder. All these qualities imprinted themselves on his order. It is a contemplative apostolic order. From its origins, it has united consecration and ministry.

When Dominic died in 1221, the order held a preaching mission from the Church, authorizing it to preach anywhere in the world, possessed its clerical character, had an apostolic spirituality based on the word of Scripture and tradition and a consciousness that it shared the mission of the Divine Word, and practiced an austere gospel poverty. Dominicans were gospel men following a gospel spirituality. The order boasted its own government, constitutions, and academic organization. It was established so strongly and had such a sense of its own identity that it has always been characterized by a sense of direction. During 750 years it has constantly reiterated that it has been founded for preaching the word of God and the salvation of men, a purpose that can only be realized by a strong, prayerful community life, and a study of revealed truths. The order has never parted from these basic elements of its life, from the contemplative approach to its mission to preach the word. There has been development, especially in the understanding and diversification of its apostolate. Some developments came logically from the ideas and principles laid down by Dominic; others came in answer to crises and changes in the life of the men of the times. Like every institute, the order is closely linked to the history of the times. Usually its reactions reflect those of the Church. When the Church has been slow to react to a historical development, such as Rationalism, so has the order, at least since its pioneer days. The best developments have been those closely linked to preaching and study.

The Pastoral Crisis of the Early Years

The first crisis the order faced can be called the pastoral crisis. It developed out of the order's preaching mission. The first expectation of Dominicans and Franciscans who both had received authorization to preach was that they would cooperate with bishops and pastors; indeed, this was the papal intention. Many bishops and pastors welcomed them, but it was not long before animosity toward the friars developed among the secular clergy. It is first in evidence after 1240, and can be related to two factors: the increasing numbers of friars (there were about 13,000 Dominicans by 1256) and the organization of the preaching apostolate. With increasing numbers and a well-organized apostolate, friars were soon swarming all over the heart of Europe. Soon the opposition of the pastoral clergy reached crisis proportions. An attack began that threatened the very life of the two friar orders.

When bishops and priests realized that the friars exercised an apostolate which was beyond their control, many of them severely hampered the ministry of the friars. The controversy revolved mainly around two poles: mendicant exemption from episcopal control and mendicant privileges, especially with regard to their preaching ministry and the financial rewards it brought. Both exemption and privileges had been building up since the 1220's. If the attack had succeeded, the orders in their originality would have been destroyed and the development of the religious life would have been set back for centuries. The response to this danger was recourse to the popes who willingly supported the friars. Rome had created these orders and found them a valuable arm in furthering papal policies. Many times through the Middle Ages, the friars had to have recourse to the popes, and repeated bulls and instructions tackled the question. The controversy was not finally solved until the Council of Trent.

The danger became acute when the University of Paris joined the conflict, seeking to terminate the teaching of the friars. The mendicants enjoyed full papal support until November 21, 1254, when Innocent IV, acting at the prompting of William of St. Amour and delegates from the University, revoked the friars' privileges and subjected their ministry to the local clergy. However, the victory of the secular clergy had a short life. Two weeks later Innocent IV was dead, and the friars claimed they had prayed him into his grave. Alexander IV canceled the bull of Innocent IV one month after it had been issued.

The controversy over hearing confessions went back and forth until 1281 when Martin IV issued a bull explicitly granting Dominicans and Franciscans, licensed by their superior, power to hear confessions everywhere without seeking further authorization. The bull not only sustained the apostolate of the friars but for the first time officially approved the liberty of the faithful to confess to any priest who had jurisdiction. It was

an advance toward greater freedom of conscience and a more fruitful use of the sacrament of penance. Nevertheless, the controversy continued unabated. In 1300 Boniface VIII made a statesmanlike compromise which solved some of the pressing problems of the conflict, conceding something to each side. The friars might preach without hindrance, except at the hour when a bishop was preaching or a sermon was being delivered in his presence. For hearing confessions, the friar superior must present to the bishop priests capable of administering the sacrament. Should he refuse to accept these friars, they might nevertheless proceed to preach and hear confessions. In neither case did the bishop delegate jurisdiction; it came from the Roman Pontiff. The procedure was required for valid use of the jurisdiction granted. This settlement endured until the Council of Trent established the present law. It was an uneasy settlement; conflicts between the two parties continued during the rest of the Medieval period.

Good Results of the Pastoral Crisis

The conflict with the secular clergy was, in a sense, necessary. Had not the clergy threatened to incorporate the friars into the parochial system in a dependent fashion, the mendicant orders would not have become as strong and useful as they did. Their expanding exemptions gave them an efficiency, mobility, and flexibility which they did not have when they were first founded. Under attack a complexus of rights and privileges was gained that freed the orders from episcopal control and, to a great extent, regulation of their ministry. The preaching and confessional work of the friars and the counsel and help they gave the faithful were removed beyond the interference of the secular clergy. As ultimately developed, mendicant privileges extended to the following points: direct dependence on the Holy See and total exemption of the internal affairs of the order from episcopal control; the right to erect churches and public oratories; the privilege of burying the faithful in the order's cemeteries, dispensation from paying imposts and tithes on legacies, funeral fees, and gifts to the pastor; the right to teach theology in their own priories and at the universities; the mission to preach; jurisdiction to hear confessions when licensed by the bishop.

The controversy served another purpose. The secular clergy acted as a counterweight to the mendicant movement. Without such a balance, the new orders might have completely disrupted the ecclesiastical organization. They had to be assimilated but not in the way the clergy intended. The native strength of the mendicants, together with papal support, was dynamic enough to withstand the assault. By forcing the friars to rely on the papacy, the opposition prevented them from drifting toward extreme doctrinal positions that had carried other movements, such as the Humiliati, Waldenses, and Fraticelli, into heresy. In summarizing this first great crisis, the following factors should be noted. The order relied on prayer. The general chapters ordered litanies and prayers to be recited during the height of the controversy with the University of Paris. The order sought to establish closer collaboration with the Franciscans, to have the friars use their privileges moderately, to make local agreements with the clergy, and to work in close dependence on the Holy See.

The Second Crisis: Internal Decline

The order shared its second crisis with the Church and other orders. The thirteenth century was succeeded by a century marked by the decline of scholasticism, deterioration of morality, and crumbling of society. This decay was brought on, and aggravated, by war, famine, and natural disasters. Moreover, men of first rank no longer appeared in the Church and in the orders. After 1285 Dominican masters general were no longer of the caliber of Dominic's early successors.

The signs of decline began to appear in the order about 1290. They became notably worse by 1325 and reached their peak after the Black Death, 1348-1349. The evidence is found especially in the ordinances which strike out against prevailing abuses. Their number and scope increased after 1325. By mid-century they had become very long, covering complete pages of the printed text, regulating major and minor points of the religious life. It is clear that the dedication of the brethren to common life and study grew progressively weaker until it broke

down completely. Choir, refectory, and classroom stood empty, or the refectory was attended only by poor friars who could not otherwise provide for their food and drink. Later still, tradesmen wheeled their carts into the refectory and peddled their wares to the friars who could pay for them. The fasts and abstinence ceased to be observed. Private life had begun.

Priories began to acquire properties, rents, annuities, and fixed incomes, a practice that began when the order increased in numbers, the curriculum expanded, and freewill offerings slackened. It became common for friars to look out for their own clothing. Vanity in clothing appeared. Habits were made of better cloth, of ampler cut, and were often decorated with wide cuffs, rows of buttons, pleats, and sometimes trains. Friars with incomes preempted space in the dormitories and closed off cells, turning them into private rooms, or apartments with their own entrances through which servants, friends, and women could enter. Cells were lavishly decorated and frivolous recreations took place in them. Friars vied for the degrees of preacher general and master of theology and the advantages they brought. These men received the better assignments. Naturally, perquisites followed.

Study was neglected; lectors did not meet their classes, and students did not study. The apostolate was often neglected or carried on for unworthy motives. In rich countries like Italy, priories were richly decorated or enlarged by the aristocracy. Writing a treatise on poverty at the end of the fourteenth century, John Dominici summarized the state of affairs that made reform necessary: "Let them first refrain from unnecessary buildings, reintroduce the common life, give up superfluities, spend no money at the curia in their private interest, and then, after the example of Dominic, let them go two by two to preach and collect alms."

Reform Movements

Two attempts were made to halt the decline; one about 1310, the other in the 1360's. Raymond of Capua, master general in the Roman obedience, began a reform in 1389 that proved to be lasting when he called on the provinces to establish at least one house of observance. He hoped that the reform thus introduced would radiate throughout the provinces and ultimately the order. This expectation was only partly realized. All during its history the reform relied on the popes.

As the reform progressed, reformed priories were organized into semi-autonomous congregations, owing to the hostility of the non-reformed friars. Such congregations had been used only once before. In 1300, missionary friars working in the East were organized into the Congregation of Pilgrim Friars. Congregations were founded in most of the provinces. The two most successful were those of Holland and Lombardy. They cut across provincial lines and developed a form of government with statutes, chapters, and vicars general, who were elected. In modern times the congregation has been widely used in the order, usually as a preliminary step in the formation of a new province, as in the U.S. Far West. This happened in the reform too; the Congregation of Holland became the province of Holland in 1515. In Spain, Germany, and Lombardy, reformed Dominicans were able to capture control of the provinces. Thus by the early sixteenth century the order was largely reformed, though pockets of non-reformed priories persisted. The friars also succeeded in reforming monasteries of Dominican nuns. History bears witness that the state of the friars is reflected in the state of the nuns, a fact demonstrating the influence for good or bad the men of the order can have on the nuns and sisters and underlining their responsibilities toward them.

Aspects of the Reform

During the period of decline and decay, poverty was the key problem. It became very difficult toward the end of the order's first century, owing to factors beyond Dominican control, to live strict mendicant poverty. The abuses already indicated developed before a viable solution was found. In the early fifteenth century individual priories solved the problem by obtaining indulgences to hold property. In 1426 the master general obtained papal authorization to grant this permission. The problem was finally solved in 1475 when Sixtus IV in response to a

petition from the master general, granted the order permission to hold possessions, rents, and other immovable goods. This permission was extended to other mendicant orders by the Council of Trent.

The Dominican reform movement was successful enough to lay the groundwork for a genuine renewal of the order's religious life during the fifteenth century. The eminent men of that century, preachers, writers, and saints, were members of reformed groups. Also, whereas there was a general shortage of vocations, the reformed friars found their numbers increasing. Coupled with an academic and Thomistic revival, the reform prepared the order to enter the sixteenth century with vigor and strength. That century became a great century in that part of the order that did not succumb to Protestantism.

One of the notable aspects of this new life was the Thomistic revival. It was characterized by the substitution of the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas for the Sentences of Peter Lombard as the basic text in the order and in universities which established Thomistic chairs. This development was accomplished by three outstanding men. Conrad Koellin in Germany, Thomas de Vio Cajetan in Italy, and Francis de Vitoria in Spain. Vitoria's work was carried forward by a series of disciples, notably the two Sotos and Melchior Cano. Cano can be called the founder of modern theology. His *De locis theologicis* is concerned with elaborating a scientific methodology. Though trained as a scholastic, he took humanism and its conquests into account: history, editing and criticism of texts, excellent Latinity, and so forth. Psychologically, he was a modern and wished to bring theology up-to-date. Giving full place to rational theology, he noted that it draws value only from its sources. This explains his book's development of the sources of theology. After its appearance speculative theology, Cougar writes, is no longer what it had been in the days of Thomas.

The Dominicans and the Renaissance

The Renaissance period did not present a problem to the order, if we exclude religious change. The order sensed no danger in the new developments, even though as time went on they necessitated many modifications of Dominican attitudes and procedures. This transition period is marked by rediscovery of ancient classical civilization, the rise of absolute monarchy, great progress in the fine arts, growth of vernacular literatures, new scientific developments and discoveries, great economic expansion, resulting in the discovery of the New World, great intellectual quickening, and, ultimately, religious upheaval.

The order adopted no policy regarding these changes, and they created no crisis, if we except Protestantism. Individual Dominicans, however, took personal attitudes toward them, especially humanism. The order was not closed to the new learning. Many friars were influenced by it, became interested in it, or made literary contributions; others were alert to possible abuses, especially John Dominici, St. Antoninus, and Savonarola. The order made no changes in its curriculum. We might be inclined to judge that it failed to appreciate the new currents that were flowing in the field of learning, but we can understand this. Strongly committed to the study of theology, it exists for other than strictly literary and educational purposes.

The Dominicans and the Reformation

Protestantism, which was partly influenced by Renaissance tendencies, was a catastrophe for the order. It destroyed or weakened flourishing provinces and monasteries, disrupted orderly religious life, dried up the sources of vocations, and stripped the order of provinces and members. On the other hand, it stimulated Dominicans to new and fruitful activity in their attempts to withstand the Protestant attack. Protestantism washed over thirteen of the provinces, more than half the order's strength. The injured provinces were able to struggle back to their feet with great difficulty. The province of Germany and its congregation of Upper Germany, Holland, Bohemia, Poland, the four French provinces, and the reformed Gallican Congregation suffered severely but survived and regained strength after varying periods of distress. Ireland took repeated blows of persecution until the nineteenth century. England, greatly crippled, made full recovery only in the

twentieth century. Three provinces perished completely: Scotland, Saxony, and Scandinavia. In 1561 the general chapter laid bare the poignant agony of those years:

The grandeur of our Order is utterly extinct in the most powerful Kingdom of England as in Scandinavia. In the vast realm of Hungary scarcely two priories remain in our possession. Of the provinces of Bohemia, Scotland, Ireland, Greece, and the Holy Land [these two provinces were destroyed by the Turks], would that we could boast of something more than the name. The vastness of our Order in that most popular district of Upper Germany and Saxony is reduced almost to insignificance.

While the provinces of Northern Europe were being destroyed or greatly crippled, the order found new strength elsewhere. The provinces of Spain were at their zenith. Animated by a splendid intellectual and spiritual renewal, the Spanish friars unfolded an apostolate in the New World that gave the Order nine new provinces before the end of the sixteenth century. The Portuguese Dominicans founded the Congregation of the Holy Cross of the East Indies. In the Near East, the Friars-Unitors of Armenia, long under Dominican tutelage, were incorporated into the order as a province in 1583. Of the twenty-five provinces with which the order had entered the century, it had lost two and, early in the next century (1608), would lose Saxony, when its six surviving houses were united to Germany. The order had gained thirteen provinces. At the end of the sixteenth century the roster stood at thirty-six.

Internal Effects on the Order

These events changed the tone of the order. From the sixteenth until the twentieth century, it was dominated by the provinces in the Latin countries. The balancing influence that might have come from the Germanic and Celtic peoples was lost. Only with the rise of the provinces of North America in the early part of this century and the founding of new provinces in Asia in our time has a true international influence again become possible.

Dominicans reacted immediately in counterattacks on Protestantism. Tetzl, who had triggered the explosion, the Saxon Dominicans, and the master of the sacred palace, wrote the first literary rebuttals to Luther. In 1525 the Church demanded from the order its traditional role in the defense of the faith. Writing a strong letter to the electors who were choosing a new general, Clement VII called on them to put aside all personal motives and ambition and elect “a man pre-eminent in doctrine,” who could guide the order to the fulfillment of its customary mission “during times that are brimming over with danger and anxiety.” Here are the qualities he wanted in the new general:

It is our deep concern that you place in charge of the government of the entire Order a man who is distinguished by austerity of life, recommended by prudent counsel, and outstanding in doctrine, so that under his administration and vigilance this beloved Order . . . under an excellent leader [might] play its accustomed role in defending the true religion during these great storms of heresy and dissension.

Clement could not have been disappointed. The chapter elected Francis Sylvester of Ferrara, a Thomist who ranks next to Thomas de Vio as a commentator on the works of St. Thomas.

As the controversy assumed shape, the government of the order, provincial and general, took control. The provincial chapter of Saxony spoke the first word in 1520, dealing with doctrine. The assembled Fathers warned the friars against involving themselves in old or new errors in their preaching or writing, cautioned them against opinions that pope or council had condemned, and exhorted them to preach the gospel according to the true doctrine of the saints. Variations of this theme were to recur over and over again, with greater or lesser explicitness, during the next two hundred years.

Doctrinal considerations form the burden of most of the early legislation provoked by Protestantism. The 1523 general chapter called on friars who excelled in learning and preaching to stand manfully in defense of the faith and the Holy See, using every opportunity to do so. Two years later, and again in 1530, it invoked the memory of Dominic, Thomas, Peter Martyr, Antoninus, and Vincent, who not only gave themselves to prayer and study but were prepared to resist unto blood. The reference to death was not an idle one. The words of encouragement that chapters sent to the embattled provinces from time to time were matched by lists of friars and nuns who met death at the hands of Protestants. Conscious of its doctrinal mission, the order continued to rely on its learned men. The 1564 general chapter, the first after Trent, ordered provincials to concentrate friars skilled in doctrine and full of zeal and the spirit of God in priories adjacent to Protestant localities, so that “they might pose themselves as a bulwark in defense of the Church of God.” The 1622 chapter summoned provincials of provinces bordering on pagan or Protestant lands to advise the master general how they thought Dominicans could work most effectively toward the conversion of these peoples, specifying friars who were equipped to preach, teach, and debate with non-Catholics.

The rise of Protestantism also affected the studies of the Order. Despite the heavy emphasis the order had always placed on Scriptural studies in its curriculum, the German province advised young friars in 1534 to have special love for “the science of the Sacred Scriptures.” A few years later the provincial chapter of Saxony urged all friars to devote special attention to Biblical studies, so that they might reply effectively to people who had become Lutherans and were sedulously reading the Bible. In the seventeenth century room was made in the curriculum for the study of controversies, Church history, patristics, and the decrees of the councils.

The Order also had recourse to prayer. The vicar presiding over the election of a new Saxon provincial in 1534 urged the electors to pray to Mary. In 1561, taking an inventory of the havoc wrought in half the provinces of the Order, the general chapter prescribed that priories recite weekly litanies and hold processions for the welfare of the Church.

In Defense of the Faith

Dominican preachers, theologians, and writers turned with a will to the defense of the faith. They were the first to apply Thomism to the doctrines of the Reformers and, besides participating in the Council of Trent, contributed notably to its deliberations. The writers especially have left their books as a testimonial to Dominican work against Protestantism. Tacchi Venturi, a Jesuit historian, states that Dominicans “ran well ahead of other Catholic defenders in point of time, numbers, and excellence of doctrine.” Echard, publishing his *Scriptores ordinis Praedicatorum* in 1721, was able to list 158 men who wrote against Protestantism. Nicholas Paulus, who studied the Dominican counterattack against Lutheranism in Germany, reached the conclusion that “no other religious order produced so many outstanding literary champions as the Order of St. Dominic.” In Italy fourteen of sixty-four literary opponents of Protestantism were Dominicans.

Cardinal Cajetan, who as papal legate confronted Luther in 1518 at Augsburg but could not bring him to recant, or succeed in delivering him to Rome for judgment as he was expected to do, spent the remainder of his scholarly career in writing against Lutheranism. He produced at least two score treatises in defense of doctrines under attack and began his vast translation and commentary on the Scriptures. It is a credit to his theological skill, that he, with Sylvester Prierias, master of the sacred palace, and even John Tetzel, unlike many contemporaries, at once saw beyond Luther’s sallies against indulgences, grasping the challenge to Christian doctrine and the authority of the Church. These men were but the vanguard of an entire troop of Dominican writers. In Poland, Melchior of Misciska, an outstanding preacher, is credited with the return of 22,000 Protestants to the Church. We need not detail the work of Dominican papal nuncios and inquisitors in defending the faith and of friars from other provinces, notably Spain, who helped in the defense and in the restoration of the provinces.

In concluding this account of the Order's reaction to Protestantism, it is well to cite the dictum of a Church historian that the polemic between Catholics and Protestants was largely ineffective. Both sides continued to send up shells, that is, books, treatises, and rebuttals, but they all fell short. Each camp was speaking to itself and feeling very pleased with the results. Only today have the two parties realized that to restore the broken unity of the Christian body they must sit down and talk to one another. Fathers Henry Saint-John of the English Province and Yves Congar of the French Province were pioneers in this dialogue.

The Crisis from 1650 to the French Revolution

The period from 1650 to the French Revolution posed a new crisis for the order, arising this time from royal absolutism, Gallicanism, and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. It was both influenced by and suffered from these events. The Church itself intervened frequently in the order's government, especially through the cardinal protector. The depositions of two masters general, Sixtus Fabri in 1588, and Nicholas Ridolfi in 1642, were only the most glaring of these interventions.

In the order itself a new style of administration developed. The masters general, elected from aristocratic families, began to surround themselves with pomp and splendor. When they made visitations, or traveled, people greeted and received them as princes. Likewise, the power of the master increased because general chapters could seldom be held, owing to wars and other political conditions. For the most part, they convened only for elections of a general. The masters general, who seldom went beyond Rome, established a summer residence outside the city. A symbol of their new power was the portraits, real and imaginary, they had painted and hung there. Exaggerated respect for the general prevailed everywhere. In reaction to this kind of absolutist government, local religious, individuals and superiors, often had recourse to the civil power.

Accompanying this development was an unhealthy nationalism, matching that evident everywhere. An intolerance for other provinces arose. Many examples could be adduced, but it is enough to say that the Spanish and Portuguese Dominicans would not allow foreign nationals to serve as missionaries in the overseas possessions of their countries.

Under the influence of Gallicanism and its derivatives in Germany, Austria, Spain, and Italy, the liberty of the order suffered much from interference from secular governments. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, this manifested itself in the suppression of religious houses. The order's membership declined by one third, and it lost most of its political influence in a world of absolutist rulers and anti-clerical prime ministers who had little sympathy for the religious life. After 1765 the courts of Vienna, Naples, and Madrid prohibited recourse to the master general. This tyranny and the spirit of the Enlightenment impeded vocations and cooled religious fervor, so that new reform became necessary. The order was in a weakened position as it faced the French Revolution. Like the Church itself, it took little positive interest in the philosophy of the Enlightenment. By that time both were in the ghetto.

The French Revolution and After

From 1789 to 1850 a series of calamities disrupted the order's government, destroyed or weakened priories, monasteries, and provinces, closed foreign missions, scattered the religious, and brought the order close to extinction. No general chapter convened between 1777 and 1832. Between 1790 and 1819 the houses of France, Belgium, and Germany were closed. After 1808 wars of independence destroyed most of the Latin-American provinces. Suppression of Spanish and Portuguese priories followed in 1834 and 1837 respectively. Russia gradually smothered the Lithuanian, Russian, and Polish houses under its dominion following 1842. After repeated suppressions in Italy during the Risorgimento, only 105 of 750 priories survived. In 1804 with papal consent, Charles IV of Spain separated the provinces of his dominions from the jurisdiction of the master general, a schism that ended legally only in 1872.

As the order faced the post-revolutionary period it was characterized, like the Church itself, by a period of floundering. The master generals were at a loss as to what to do and were hampered by short terms of office, at one point three years (usually it was six). For long periods there was no general; vicars general governed. Because of the schism of the Spanish provinces, the administration was hampered in developing a unified solution to the problem.

The Late Nineteenth Century and the Twentieth Century

Reconstruction began in 1845 when Lacordaire reintroduced the order to France. This brought hope to Dominicans and to all religious orders. Vincent Jandel, Lacordaire's disciple, who served as vicar general and then master general from 1850 to 1872, marshaled the order's internal forces and gave the restoration consistency and strength. His first imperative was to restore religious life. He reorganized and visited the provinces, held three important general chapters, issued new editions of the liturgical books and a revision of its constitutions (the first since Cajetan's generalate), prepared a new *ratio studiorum*, opened new mission fields, and restored the Spanish-speaking provinces to his jurisdiction.

Under Jandel repeated persecutions in Italy disturbed the Italian provinces. Further disasters followed. European conditions were so disturbed during the 1870's that his successor, Joseph Larrocca, had to be chosen by ballots sent through the mail. The French Dominicans were expelled in 1881, and the Germans suffered exile during the Kulturkampf under Bismarck. Nevertheless, recovery of the order was steady. Important progress was made in the intellectual field. Dominicans became collaborators of Leo XIII in the revival of Thomistic studies, took over the theology faculty at Fribourg, reorganized the University of St. Thomas in Rome (then known as the College of St. Thomas), and through Joseph Lagrange began St. Stephen's Biblical School in Jerusalem.

During this century, the order developed work in many new fields as membership increased. Internal life gained strength from the regular convening of chapters after 1891, periodic visitation of provinces, and the splendid encyclical letters of the generals. The foundations of Dominican life were reinforced by revisions of the liturgy (1923, 1964) and constitutions (1935), the creation of the Historical Institute (1929), and the Liturgical Commission (1934). With the restoration of former provinces (Mexico, 1960, Portugal, 1962), and the founding of new ones (Canada, 1911, the province of the Holy Name in our Far West, 1912, Australia and New Zealand, 1950, Brazil, 1952, Switzerland, 1953, the province of St. Thomas in Belgium, 1958, Viet Nam, 1967, and the Philippines, 1970), their number rose to forty-one.

The order's membership increased from 3,474 in 1876, 4,472 in 1910, 6,137 in 1931, 7,661 in 1949, and to 10,150 in 1963. Since then it has dropped to 8,330 (1972). This development took place despite suppression in France, 1903, expulsion from Mexico, 1910, and heavy losses during the Spanish Civil War. After World War II, the communists suppressed the provinces of Hungary and Bohemia. A further sign of progress in our century was the growth of foreign missions. In 1922 Dominicans worked in twenty mission countries; in 1957 in forty.

Lessons of the Crises up to 1650

The order faced its first crisis, the challenge to its ministry of preaching and teaching from a position of strength. It had a strong sense of its own identity, firm unity, confidence in its mission, and increasing numbers. It came out of the crisis stronger than it had been before. Its privileges had been reaffirmed, its exemption widened, and its favor with the Holy See unimpaired.

In response to the crisis that rose from the decline of observance and the decay of the apostolate, the order struggled to reaffirm its religious life, the contemplative base of the apostolate. As the reform succeeded, the apostolate sprang back to life, a new period of intellectual brilliance began, and the order stood forth with new

vigor. Perhaps the reform adhered too rigidly to the principle that it must return to primitive observance as established by Dominic. Probably insufficient attention was made to adapt poverty to the new conditions of the times.

The Reformation crippled many provinces, which sprang back to life slowly. The order's first concern had to be the restoration of the religious life. Also, the Latin provinces have dominated the order since the sixteenth century. One of today's imperatives is that the provinces of whatever race or nationality take a more active part in the direction of the order.

During the Reformation crisis, Divine Providence compensated for the damaged northern provinces through the formation of new provinces overseas. Similar compensation occurred more recently when the American provinces developed strength. This experience should reawaken in the order the great trust St. Dominic had in the protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Individual Dominicans reacted to Protestantism by applying Thomism and developing a new interest in Scripture studies. On the other hand, the order itself seems to have very slowly adapted its curriculum of studies. Finally, the futility of the polemic between Catholics and Protestants in modern times illustrates the great importance of the ecumenical dialogue.

Lessons from the Crises after 1650

The crisis that came after 1650 also has its lessons. Dominicans should never give up, and should use to the hilt, the democratic procedures of their government. They must keep alive and develop the trust in the individual person that was so characteristic of Dominic and avoid the artificial evaluations that marked the recent history of the degrees of master in sacred theology and preacher general (degrees awarded by the order) and the exaggerated respect accorded the master general, provincials, and priors during recent times. Superiors stand first, not above. They are prior, the first among equals. Dominicans should avoid divisions, such as the extreme nationalism that existed in the order before the French Revolution and has not yet completely died. Such separatism should give way to brotherly love.

The failure of the Church and order to respond to the challenges of the Enlightenment teaches the need to read "the signs of the times" and keep in touch with the intellectual and cultural changes of the day.

Conclusion

The way Dominicans reacted to the crises that beset their order demonstrates their conviction that the contemplative and apostolic elements of their life are needed. The revivals that occurred at the end of the fifteenth century, after Protestantism, and during the late nineteenth century, proceeded in each case by the restoration of the spiritual life of the order. Renewal of the apostolate then followed. Dominicans should have utmost confidence in the genius of their order and the necessity of its mission. It was entrusted to them by the Holy See and through 700 years they have had great reliance on, and loyalty to, the Holy See.