

# ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS

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An attentive study of the origins and history of religious orders reveals that there are two primary currents in religious life--contemplative and apostolic. Vatican II gave clear expression to this fact when it called on the members of every community to "combine contemplation with apostolic love." It went on to say: "By the former they adhere to God in mind and heart; by the latter they strive to associate themselves with the work of redemption and to spread the Kingdom of God" (PC, 5).

The orders founded before the 16th century, with the possible exception of the military orders, recognized clearly the contemplative element in their lives. Many of them, however, gave minimum recognition to the apostolic element, if we use the word "apostolic" in its present-day meaning, but not if we understand it as they did. In their thinking, the religious life was the Apostolic life. It reproduced and perpetuated the way of living learned by the Apostles from Christ and taught by them to the primitive Church of Jerusalem. Since it was lived by the "Twelve," the Apostolic life included preaching and the other works of the ministry. The passage describing the choice of the seven deacons in the Acts of the Apostles clearly delineates the double element in the Apostolic life and underlines the contemplative spirit of the Apostles.

The deacons were to wait on tables; the Apostles were to be free to devote themselves "to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). This is the text of an address given to the annual meeting of United States major superiors of men religious held in June, 1968, at Mundelein, Illinois. I use the words, "order," "monasticism," and their derivatives in a wide sense to include all forms of the religious life. In its strict sense "monasticism" applies only to the monks and does not extend to the friars and the clerks regular. There were, however, exceptions to the general rule that monks did not engage in the ministry.

An Eastern current of monasticism, influenced by John Chrysostom, viewed missionary work as a legitimate activity of the monk; and, as we shall see, many Western monks shared this conviction. Nevertheless, missionary activity did not become an integral part of monasticism. Even after most monks became priests, they considered their vocation to lie within the monastery where they could contemplate and dedicate themselves to the service of God. Since the clergy did

not embrace the religious life, with the exception of those of Eusebius of Vercelli and Augustine of Hippo, the ministerial element remained generally absent from the religious life until the development of the canons regular. In itself the life of the monks was exclusively contemplative. "Tradition assigns no other end to the life of a monk than to 'seek God' or 'to live for God alone,' an ideal that can be attained only by life of penance and prayer. The first and fundamental manifestation of such a vocation is a real separation from the world."

Yet in the thinking of the monks and of the friars, who integrated apostolic activity into the religious life, their prayer, contemplation, and example were mighty forces working for the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. Foundation of Monasticism Though other Scriptural elements contributed to the origin of monasticism, the concept of the Apostolic life was the decisive force. This truth has been demonstrated by historians who have been studying this point for over half a century; it has recently been discussed scripturally by Heinz Schiirmann, professor of New Testament exegesis at Erfurt.

The historians show how the life of the Apostles and the primitive Christians influenced the origins and growth of monasticism; Schiirmann makes clear that the constitutive elements of the religious life were taught to and demanded of the Apostles by Christ. Religious life is rooted in the key Biblical texts that record the calling and formation of the Apostles. These passages determine the character of the Apostolic office and the relationship of the Apostles to Jesus. They are to be with Him, listen to Him, and follow Him. His call is rigorous and imperious. He demands commitment without reserve. Negatively, this requires a complete break with one's previous life: family, wife, home, and occupation; positively, it establishes the Apostles in a state of total availability.

Abandoning their possessions, their means of livelihood and, like the lily and the raven, trusting completely in divine providence, they follow Christ, putting themselves in a student-teacher, servant-master relationship to Him. All the features of their new life with Him are already conveyed in brief in Mark's account of their call: And going up a mountain, he called to him men of his own choosing, and they came to him. And he appointed twelve that they might be with him and that he might send them forth to preach (3:13-5). In this text, too, we find the first statement of the contemplative and apostolic elements that reappear in the religious life. They are "to be with him." Here is the contemplative element. They are "with him," devoting themselves to the "one thing necessary"--listening to His word. Yet in hearing and learning they are made ready so "that he might send them forth to preach."

As Schiirmann summarizes it: First they hear and learn, then they teach and act: "Preaching is only one part of their life and its follows from the other." The Apostles enter irrevocably into a community of life with Jesus. They share His life and destiny: eat with Him, walk the dusty roads with Him, serve the people with Him, undergo His trials, conflicts, persecutions. They must be ready to hate and even to lose their lives for His sake. He wants total obedience, one based on their "faith in Him who calls and proposes the word of God in an entirely unique fashion. Their following of Christ becomes understandable only as a permanent state of profession of faith., fit] opens up a new possibility of existence, a new manner of being-in-the-world, a new 'state' of life." Though the Apostles take no vows, their life is that of the three counsels.

Christ imposes no greater moral demands on them than on all the other believers, but they alone live this close community life with Him. Not all who declare for Christ are chosen by Him to follow Him in this intimate, permanent way. Obviously Mary, Martha, and Lazarus do not. Others asked to be admitted into the group of disciples but were not accepted. Mark (5:18-19) describes one case: As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been afflicted by the devil began to entreat him that he might remain with him. And he did not allow him, but said to him, "Go home to thy relatives, and tell them all that the Lord has done for thee, and how he has had mercy on thee." (See also Mt 11:28, Mk 3:35, Lk 12:8-9, 10:38-42, 9:61-2.) Being with Christ constantly, hearing His word, completely obedient to His wishes, separated from family, home, and occupation, the Apostles enter a new form of existence that signifies.

The prime purpose of their specialized following is to declare themselves openly for Him, so that all might come to believe in Him. In a strikingly visible way their intimate following proclaims to the Jewish world that the one thing necessary is to hear the word of Christ and to keep it. Their visible, stable following becomes a sign to the world. Only after they have made this permanent commitment are they sent out to preach and to act. At every step in monastic history, whether in its origins, renewals, or creation of new forms, the Apostolic life taught by Christ to the Twelve, and by them to the primitive Christian community of Jerusalem, was the leading and most powerful influence.

The Gospel texts and those in the Acts of the Apostles that describe the primitive community were decisive in creating the concept of monasticism and in fashioning its life and usages. In the Jerusalem community we find fraternal unanimity, common ownership of possessions, fidelity to the teachings of Christ, common public prayer, intense private prayer. The following passages embody all these features: Now the multitude of the believers were of one heart and soul, and not one of them said anything he possessed was his own, but they

had all things in common (Acts 4:32). And they continued steadfastly in the teaching of the apostles, and in the communion of the breaking of bread and in the prayers... And all who believed were together and held all things in common... And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread in their houses, they took their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and being in favour with all people (Acts 2:42-7; see also 1:14, 3:1, 6:4,34; Mt 10:ggf). The ministry of the word, evangelical preaching of salvation, was carried out by the Apostles (Mk 6:6-13; Acts 6:4), a mission that entailed indefatigable journeying (Mt 10:7if; Mk 6:6-13; Acts 6:4). Only the predominately lay character of early monasticism delayed the full realization of the ministerial mendicant orders. For centuries monks examined and lovingly scrutinized the texts. The power that they exercised over monastic founders is illustrated by the passage where Athanasius describes the origin of Antony's vocation in his Life of Antony:

As he was walking along on his way to Church, he collected his thoughts and reflected how the Apostles left everything and followed the Saviour; also how the people in Acts sold what they had and laid it at the feet of the Apostles for distribution among the needy; and what great hope is laid up in Heaven for such as these. With these thoughts in his mind he entered the church. And it so happened that the Gospel was being read at that moment and he heard the passage in which the Lord says to the rich man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor; and come, follow me and thou shalt have treasures in heaven," As though God had been speaking directly to him, Antony left the church, sold what he had, gave it to the poor, and went into the desert.

During subsequent centuries the Scriptures lost none of their influence over monasticism. The Apostolic texts led to much more than the abandonment of riches and fleeing the world; they provided a complete program of life in community. Explaining the origins of monasticism about 1122 A.D., Abbot William of Saint-Thierry shows how the meditation of hundreds of years had systematized the Scriptural influence: We come to this spiritual society of which the Apostle Paul spoke to the Philippians (2:1-5; 3:17) in praise of the regular discipline and of the sublime joy of brothers living together in unanimity. To do justice to this discipline it is necessary to return to its beginning in the time of the Apostles, since it was the Apostles themselves who instituted it as their own way of life, according to the teaching of the Lord.

Unless it was the grace of the Holy Spirit which gave them power from above to live together in such a way that all would have but one heart and one soul, so that everything would be held in common, and all would be continually in the temple in a spirit of harmony. Animated by a great love for this form of life

instituted by the Apostles, certain men wished no longer to have any other house or any other lodging than the house of God, the house of prayer. All that they did they did according to a common program, under a common rule. In the name of the Lord they lived together, possessing nothing of their own, not even their bodily strength, nor were they even masters of their own will. They lay down to sleep at the same time, they rose up together, they prayed, they sang Psalms, they studied together. They showed the fixed and changeless will of being obedient to their superiors and of being entirely submissive to them. They kept their needs to a minimum and lived with very little; they had poor clothes, a mean diet, and limited everything according to a very precise rule. Influence of [Cassian Soon after Antony went into the desert, the influence of the Scriptures on monastic origins was enhanced by a misconception of Eusebius and Jerome, who mistakenly believed that the Apostolic life of the primitive Jerusalem community was followed in Alexandria, Rome, and other centers. Writing a century later, Cassian developed this misconception and found in it the explanation of the rise of monasticism.

The conversion of the Gentiles forced an abandonment of the Apostolic way by the majority of Christians, even by the clergy. More zealous souls refused to give it up and founded communities to perpetuate it. This theory was very fruitful in its effects when it was coupled with the example of Antony and Pachomius, the founder of the cenobitic life, who were inspired by the Scriptures alone. This fusion constituted a powerful cooperative force in the development of monasticism for many centuries. Scarcely any monastic 'author was read so continuously as Cassian. As late as the thirteenth century, St. Dominic was reading his Conferences. Constantly read and reread, Cassian's books [fashioned the medieval--and our own monastic life. The Holy Spirit at Work in the Church The truth underlying Cassian's error is the almost simultaneous appearance of the religious life everywhere that the Church took root. The origin of the monastic life was a spontaneous manifestation of the Holy Spirit impelling Christians to live the life of the counsels taught by Jesus.

Antony was merely the first to emerge, thanks to Athanasius, from the anonymity that conceals the virgins, celibates, and ascetics who preceded him. The impetus of the Spirit is seen particularly in the early acceptance of the virginal life by both men and women as a prime means of following the Master. From the end of the first century there are references to ascetics who lived continently "in honour of the flesh of Christ." After the third century virgins were looked upon as "the most illustrious portion of the flock of Christ" and were considered the spouses of Christ. Perfect continence, together with voluntary poverty and austerity of life, was a constitutive element of the ascetical life that began to develop in the second century.

Though these ascetics lived in their homes, sometimes holy women, widows, and virgins formed small communities that were marked by considerable personal freedom. The general reverence of the Church for chastity when Antony became a hermit about 300 A.D. accounts in large measure for the immediate wide diffusion of the eremitic and cenobitic forms of monasticism throughout the Christian world. The dynamic power of the Holy Spirit has been constantly operative during the history of the religious life. Here again there is a link with the early community of Jerusalem. These Christians, as we find their record in Acts, were very conscious of the action of the Spirit in their lives and apostolic works. There was a life lived in the ~land of the Spirit, as Vicaire remarks. Immediately after describing the primitive community, the Acts of the Apostles goes on to say: "And great grace was upon them all" (4:33). This grace made itself visible even by miracles: "And many wonders and signs were done through the apostles" (2:43). When William of Saint-Thierry, whom I quoted a few pages back, described monastic origins, he manifested the awareness the monks had that the charismatic power of the Spirit was at work among them.

In William's thinking it was the "grace of the Holy Spirit which gave [the Apostles] power from above to live together in such a way that all would have but one heart and one soul, so that everything would be held in common .... '~ Centuries before, Gregory the Great, writing his Dialogues within fifty years of the death of Benedict, described the great patriarch of Western monasticism as the ideal "man of God," the spiritual father who was entirely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The attention paid to the miracles worked by the founders and great figures of monastic history is not merely a thoughtless emphasis on the secondary but was motivated by the belief that the true monk, living in community, possesses an extraordinary grace for radiating sanctity and contributing to the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. He can even receive from the Spirit the power of working miracles.

The present-day interest in the charismatic character of the religious life and the charismatic founders is a legitimate, more explicit, recognition of the power of the Spirit working through all the years of monastic history. His role in the religious life deserves more attention and should awaken in us a great hope in the future of the religious life. Antony the Hermit Monasticism entered the pages of history close to the year 300 A.D. when Antony, the great hermit, gave away his possessions and retired to the Egyptian desert. The holiness and ordered discipline of his life, characterized by solitary contemplation and a severe but lofty and well-balanced asceticism soon brought other hermits to him for direction. Great colonies of solitaries arose under Antony's direction, especially at Pispis, where he lived, and at Nitria and Scete.

These disciples lived alone like their master. Antony found so many imitators because of his moral greatness at a time of growing wickedness in the contemporary world. When Constantine ended the persecutions and began to favour Christianity, the consequent lowering of the moral level of Christian life stimulated the development of a powerful ascetical movement, inspired by the Gospels, on the fringes of the populated world. Antony became the model of the movement, especially after the appearance of his *Life*, written by Athanasius in 357 A.D., a year after Antony died. Gregory of Nazianzen called it "a rule of monastic life in the form of a narrative." Athanasius, who had known Antony personally and had seen him often, considered "the life of Antony an ideal pattern of the ascetical life." He intended to hold up Antony as the exemplar of the consecrated life and induce his readers to imitate what they saw. The work enjoyed astonishing success and was shortly translated into various languages. Antony, earnestly desiring to die the death of a martyr, went to Alexandria in 311 A.D., when the persecution of Maximin Daja broke out, to minister to the confessors in the mines and prisons, not thinking it justified to turn himself over to the authorities.

When his hopes were disappointed, Antony returned to his desert cell where "he was a daily martyr to his conscience, ever fighting the battles of the faith. For he practiced a zealous and more intense ascetic life." With this short passage Athanasius enriched monasticism at its very birth with a positive view of asceticism and the renunciations involved in the life of the counsels. Antony's life in the desert was a substitute martyrdom and the monk the successor to the martyr, a concept that remains alive to this day. Pachomius the Cenobite The weakness of the hermitical life lay in the minimal opportunity for practicing charity. Pachomius remedied this defect when he formed a genuine fellowship based on the communal charity inherent in Christianity. He composed the first monastic Rule, in it establishing the economic and spiritual bases for the common life and providing for community government.

A younger contemporary of Antony, Pachomius first served an apprenticeship under the hermit Palaemon. Then about the year 320 A.D. he established a monastery at Tabennisi on the right bank of the Nile. Other monasteries soon followed, so that when he died, nine for men and two for women were under his guidance. These foundations were large settlements of monks who were organized into smaller groups according to the kind of agricultural work they did or the crafts they practiced. They lived a disciplined life, practiced individual poverty and detachment in essential matters, supported themselves by remunerative work, gathered for prayers morning and evening, and observed the three counsels, though they took no vows. Numerous biographies testify to the esteem in which Pachomius was held and the extent of his innocence. Basil the Great The eremitical and cenobitic types of monasticism spread quickly both in

East and West. Basil the Great, who benefited from the experience of the previous half century of monastic experience, became the lawgiver of Eastern monasticism when he wrote his Longer Rule, with 313 items, and his Shorter Rule, with 33 items, between the years 358-364 A.D., Basil established a stable and balanced cenobitism in the various monasteries which he founded or guided.

Although he prescribed a strict life under obedience, he gave no encouragement to the extreme asceticism that characterized the hermits and much of early monasticism. He saw asceticism as only a means to the perfect service of God. He imposed the life of the counsels, though he did not conceive poverty as a juridical convention. It was rather a generous devotion of the fruits of conscientious work to the service of the poor. Hours of liturgical prayer, periods of work, and reading and study of the Scriptures comprised the monks' day. The legislation of Basil remains the basis of the principal monastic Rule now followed in the Greek Church. Development of Monasticism Within a few decades after Antony and Pachomius had initiated the monastic movement, religious life was flourishing everywhere in the East, including Mesopotamia. Athanasius carried it to the West in the year 339 A.D.

when he went to Rome to appeal his deposition from the See of Alexandria by the Synod of Antioch. Monks who came West with him awakened such enthusiasm for the religious life that soon monasteries of men and women dotted Rome. Monasticism was not long in making its way to other Italian cities. Even after Athanasius was cleared of the charges against him, the hostility of the Arians kept him in the West for several years. During his travels in Italy and Gaul he promoted the monastic ideal. His influence and the circulation of Eastern monastic literature in translation propagated monasticism all over the West. Forms of it existed in Italy, Africa, Spain, and Gaul before the end of the fourth century. The working of the Holy Spirit that is seen so clearly in the rise of the religious life was felt again in the insights that developed in the West. Through Cassiodorus, a native of Calabria and a contemporary of Benedict, Italy made a significant contribution to monasticism. In early life he had served in the administration of the Ostrogothic kings of Italy; all through life he was an industrious writer and translator.

Upon retiring from public service, Cassiodorus returned to his estate at Vivarium, where he founded a monastery in the year 555 A.D. Moved by a desire to preserve Christian culture and its classical heritage in an age of increasing barbarism, he created what has been termed literary monasticism. Wanting the monks to gain a sound intellectual formation and anxious to have them well versed in the Scriptures, he encouraged them to study the secular authors as a necessary preparatory discipline. His *Institutiones divinarum et*



humanarum lectionura instructed the monks about the theological treatises they would need to read and the liberal arts they would have to study for a comprehension of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church. Cassiodorus went to great expense to obtain books. The scriptorium at Vivarium, his innovation, became a busy place where both pagan and Christian authors were reproduced and Eastern Christian writings were translated.

It was only later that Benedictine monachism turned from its emphasis on manual labour and undertook similar literary pursuits. Literary activity had already entered Eastern monasticism. During the fourth century, after the original opposition of the founders to learning had subsided, the monks learned to appreciate the treasures of culture. Great numbers of them in the following centuries became involved, sometimes fanatically and violently, sometimes on the " side of heresy, in the ecclesiastical politics and theological controversies of the time. They produced ascetical treatises, sermons, hagiographical and edifying works, and made collections of the sayings of the fathers of monasticism.

The unique feature of the program of Cassiodorus was his attempt to establish sound intellectual training as a necessary ingredient of the religious life. Not the exceptional monk alone but all monks should have a rounded knowledge of human and divine learning. This insight did not gain general acceptance. It was to be centuries before the friars incorporated systematic~ study as an integral part of religious life. Spanish and Irish monasticism, though influenced by earlier forms, developed indigenous types that remained mostly insulated from Benedictine influence and maintained their hold for extended periods: in Visigothic Spain until the Moorish Conquest in 711 A.D., and in Ireland until the end of the twelfth century. The incipient monasticism of Africa was wiped out by the Vandal invasions of the fifth century. Though the religious life had spread considerably in the Spanish peninsula by 380 A.D., the first rules that survive were written by Fructuosus of Braga (d. 665 A.D.).

He composed his Regula monachorum for the monasteries he had founded, the Regula communis to help eradicate an abuse which had spread widely in Spain. To share in the immunities that religious enjoyed, whole families with their servants lived in community but refused to be governed by much more than self-will and their own convenience. Fructuosus provided for a double monastery, an institution that had been common in the East and had found considerable acceptance in the West, in which men and boys would live separately from women and girls. Monasticism in Ireland The monasticism of Ireland developed characteristics that foreshadow the medieval and modern apostolic orders: missionary spirit, pastoral work, involvement in education and learning. Perhaps it owed its evangelical zeal to St. Patrick, who introduced the religious life to Ireland about the year 431 A.D.

He organized the cathedrals with quasi-monastic chapters similar to those existing frequently on the Continent. More important, he spread monasticism of the primitive type followed in contemporary Gaul. A more advanced monastic life developed in Ireland in the sixth century, during which 100 important abbeys were founded. The rules that were written at this time were very similar, and all of them, as also the Rule of Columbanus which became prevalent in Gaul, manifested the extreme rigorism and asceticism of pre-Benedictine monasticism. The leader of this vigorous movement was Finnian of Clonard (d. 549 A.D.) whom contemporaries called "the teacher of all Ireland." The brilliant young monks he formed, among whom were Columba and Brendan, went out to make foundations all over the island. Columba carried Irish monasticism" to Britain about the year 563 A.D., when he founded the famed monastery of Iona on an island of the Scottish coast. From it there radiated a great missionary apostolate as he and his monks fanned out to evangelize the Scots and Northumbrians.

Irish monks were committed to pastoral work, for their chapels served as parish churches. Monasteries also became episcopal centers. In addition, for six centuries Irish abbots exercised ecclesiastical jurisdiction beyond their cloisters. Almost as soon as monasticism came to Ireland, monks were encouraged to take the place held by the Druids as educators. They became the schoolmasters of the land, and their priestly and educational work gave them a thirst for learning. Skilled in Greek and Latin, the Irish monks developed a deep regard for the classics, which were copied and recopied. The development of the monastic ideal in Ireland, where the monks found no contradiction between the contemplative life and involvement in the pastoral ministry and evangelization of the pagans, seems to be a prime example of the suppleness and inner resources the religious life has always been able to draw on when the needs of the Church demanded it. Continental monasticism, deeply affected by Eastern influences, viewed pastoral and missionary activity as beyond the scope of the cenobitic ideal, which insisted that the religious life must have no secondary purpose.

The monk should remain in his cloister, devoted to contemplation and the observances. The missionary zeal, fervent religious spirit, and rich culture that grew up in Anglo-Saxon Benedictine abbeys (if we may look ahead) was the result of a fusion of Irish, Roman, and native elements. It produced Willigrord, Boniface, Bede," and Alcuin and was not duplicated anywhere on continental Europe at that time. The importance of the Irish contribution to this development is underlined by Aldhelm of Malmesbury, a great teacher in his own right. A generation after Bede had done his great intellectual work, he wrote that it was no longer necessary to go to Ireland for an education. Alcuin

carried this spirit of learning to Frankland during Charlemagne's reign. Boniface, together with his associates, became the apostle of Germany and the reformer of the church in Gaul under Pepin. The work of these giants is too well known to need further comment. Before the Anglo-Saxons came to the Continent, Columbanus carried the missionary and intellectual spirit of Ireland to Europe.

A teacher for thirty years, he set out with twelve companions from Bangor, a cradle of sanctity and scholarship, for Merovingian Gaul where Christian life had deteriorated under the impact of growing barbarism. The monks of Columbanus also opened new regions to the faith. From Annegrays, Fontaines, and Luxeuil, his first abbeys, more than 200 monasteries originated. From Bobbio, where Columbanus died, his influence reached many parts of Europe. His Rule, poetry, and letters are not insignificant additions to the Irish-Latin literature that had a far-reaching effect on the culture of the medieval period. Monasticism in France Gaul witnessed the widest propagation of early Western monasticism. Martin of Tours, who established monasteries at Ligugis and Marmoutier late in the fourth century, Honoratus at Lerins, and Cassian at Marseilles in the fifth, made the greatest impact on the early period. Almost simultaneously with the wide adoption of the Rule of Columbanus in the seventh century, the Rule of Benedict began to come into Gaul. Meanwhile Eastern and indigenous rules continued to be followed all over Western Europe. Pre-Benedictine monasticism by no means manifests the uniformity and stability that we have been accustomed to. The personality of Martin of Tours supplied for a rule in his foundations.

None of these rules claimed to be ordered and practical codes governing life in the monastery but tended to stress ascetical advice to the neglect of juridical regulations. Benedict and His Rule The Rule of Columbanus brought an element of order to Continental monasticism, but it remained for Benedict to adapt the cenobitic life to the capabilities and needs of Western man. He himself began his religious life as a hermit in a cave at Subiaco. However, this very personal experience led him to reject the eremitical life as the one for his followers. In composing his Rule Benedict used Western codes but drew principally on the wisdom of the East, especially the Rules of Basil, Cassian, and patristic sources. Yet he toned down the extreme asceticism that was hard enough in the East but especially so in Northern Europe. His Rule is characterized by wisdom and moderation. Gregory the Great eulogized it as "conspicuous for its discretion." Benedict viewed monasticism as the life of a family in which all members conformed to the rule and life of the community.

He envisioned a self-contained monastery and not a centralized institute or confederation. The spiritual program he established, with its emphasis on

obedience, humility, renunciation, and recollection, was essentially grounded in the gospel. Though Benedict contributed form, order, and steadfastness to Western religious life, he in no wise intended to impose uniformity. Rather, in the Rule he sought to form persons capable of spiritual liberty. He foresaw diversity and allowed flexibility, provided the essential elements of monasticism were protected. In fact, those who followed the Rule in the early days did not believe they were bound to all its prescriptions. The Benedictine Rule has never grown old. No other Rule has ever taken its place among the monks; and even the apostolic orders, friars and modern religious, have preserved many of its observances and viewpoints that are strictly cenobitic. Perhaps the reason for this durability has been explained best by Knowles: "The Rule has impressed readers from the time of Gregory the Great as the reflection of the wise, holy, firm, and paternal character in an author who can combine strict principles with moderation and humanity." The Rule at first spread slowly. Benedict himself extended it to Subiaco and Terracina. The next century it travelled to Gaul and came into England. The influence of papal patronage, Gregory the Great's Dialogues, the missionary zeal of his monks, and the inherent superiority of the Rule enabled it to replace its predecessors by the year 800 A.D., except in Ireland where earlier Rules lasted into the thirteenth century.

Benedictine monks evangelized the Germanic and Slavic peoples. The conversion of Poland and Hungary was largely their work; and they carried the faith to Scandinavia, Bohemia, and Dalmatia. Following the chaos that ensued upon the breakup of the Carolingian Empire and the raids of the Norse, Magyars, and Muslims, the monks contributed greatly to the rebuilding of Europe. The cultural, social, and agricultural legacy they bequeathed to Western man was enormous. Their scholarship, nourished in many famous schools, kept alive the spirit of learning and their scriptoria preserved culture during barbaric ages. The first trend toward federation in monasticism resulted from similar tendencies in society. Because Charlemagne loved uniformity, he intended to impose Benedict's Rule everywhere in his empire. His son, Louis the Pious, took steps to implement this project at a meeting of abbots at Aachen in the year 817 A.D.

A uniform discipline was imposed and Benedict of Aniane was installed as superior general of all Carolingian monasteries. Aniane insisted on complete uniformity of observance, introduced a more solemn liturgy and greater austerity than the Rule prescribed, frowned on extra-monastic activities, and attached little importance to manual labour. His early death and the political troubles of Louis caused the plan to fall short of full implementation. Nevertheless, the idea had been sown that there was a single monastic family looking to a great patriarchal leader; the trend toward "order" in the present sense had begun. The Influence of Cluny The Abbey of Cluny, founded in the

year 909 A.D. by Duke William of Aquitaine, took a more lasting step in the same direction. To ensure maintenance of fervor, Cluny developed a feudal kind of centralization by keeping its daughter houses (there were 1184 of them in the 12th century) subject to itself. The bases of this relationship were the fidelity owed directly to the Abbot of Cluny by all Cluniac monasteries and uniformity of observance.

The Cluny network exhibited all the gradations of prevailing feudalism; not all the houses were so strictly bound to the mother abbey or altogether at one with her in observance. Created in a feudal age, the Cluniac pyramid shared the weakness of feudal administration-it lacked a centralized governing body apart from the Abbot of Cluny. And after 200 years of vigorous life, when the feudal age began to wane, Cluny also began to decline. Reflecting on the great centuries of Cluny, we can see visible sign of the Holy Spirit's action. The loose federation shaped by events and not worked out by set plan was admirably suited to the times. Joined to this was another innovation that seems amazingly miraculous to anyone who knows the history of the age. From the beginning Cluny was exempt from temporal authority and before long it was freed from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction short of the papal. Its whole network shared this advantage.

The final ingredient in Cluny's success was a century-long line of abbots noted for exceptional ability and longevity. These factors account in great part for Cluny's success. During its two great centuries (an almost unparalleled span of monastic fervour and efficiency), Cluny and its daughter houses became centers of high Christian excellence in an age that was witnessing a degraded papacy. Though under the influence of Benedict of Aniane Cluny overstressed choral Office, making it longer and more solemn (a factor in its later decline), it did not neglect literary and cultural pursuits. Indeed, the cultural and artistic activities of the mother abbey was surpassed, at the time, only by Monte Cassino. From the monastery of Cluny radiated the spirit of Christian renewal, and it contributed to the origin of the Gregorian Reform. The authentic monastic spirituality its abbots created in their concern for the interests of the Church and the needs of the time made Cluny and its chain of abbeys, stretching from France into Italy, Spain, Germany, and England, a powerful support for the reforming popes of the eleventh century and indirectly worked toward general recognition of papal primacy.

As the twelfth century opened Cluny began to lose its pre-eminence. New winds were blowing in monasticism as well as in society. Reform Movements within Monasticism A hundred years before Cluny lost its momentum, the religious life again demonstrated its inherent fruitfulness. During the 11th and 12th centuries the single ray of light (to use a metaphor of Knowles) that had thus far

represented monasticism, and still represents it in the East, began to pass through the prism of new times and new needs and break up into its component colours. Since the 11th century charismatic leaders, who have discovered new richness in the guiding ideals of monasticism, have merged to combine these in original ways. They have produced institutes tailored to meet the diversified needs of Church and society that have constantly grown more complex. Romuald, John Gualbert, Peter Damian, and Bruno desired to work for reform in the Church. Gualbert openly opposed simony and clerical concubinage; Peter Damian was deeply involved in the Gregorian Reform.

Their orders, Camaldolese (ca. 1012), Vallombrosans (1039), that of Fonte Avellana (ca. 1043), and the Carthusians (1048), gave needed witness to the "one thing necessary" at a time when many of the clergy were corrupt. The new founders wanted, in particular, to break monasticism's ties with temporal society and prosperity-- bonds that had led many monasteries away from certain fundamental observances of the religious life. They sought to restore separation from the world, real poverty, and manual labour. The low level of Christian life, especially among the clergy, drove these men up the wild mountain sides just as the corrupt state of society in the fourth century had driven Antony into the desert. Paradoxically, though aiming at ecclesiastical reform, they moved toward the fringes of civilization, returning to the eremitical life. Behind this apparently contradictory action stood the profound belief that the austere and holy life of the man of God works powerfully toward the upbuilding of the Body of Christ. These founders were also coping with the constant drift of monasticism toward formalism, which sets in as the Rule becomes buried with successive layers of customs and supplementary ordinances.

A series of customaries at Cluny had ended by stifling the personal prayer of the monks beneath a weighty burden of prescribed prayer. In seeking renewal, the new founders returned strongly to the contemplative ideal, to the austerity and simplicity of life and liturgy of early monasticism. They considered the solitude of the eremitical life the condition for attaining to the higher reaches of contemplation. The eremitical ideal had always been represented in the West. It had flourished in Italy and Gaul during pre-Benedictine monachism. Martin of Tours and his monks at Marmoutier had lived in solitude and austerity, dwelling singly in caves and huts and meeting only for the liturgy and meals. They had fasted rigorously and prayed long. Even Benedict in his Rule had provided opportunity for the more perfect monks to pass from the monastic to the eremitical life (I, 3-5). The eleventh century founders were influenced by this earlier eremitic element. When Romuald turned toward the hermit life, after a short period in a monastery, Marinus initiated him into its ways.

Bruno left his life as scholar and chancellor of the Archdiocese of Reims to take up the life of poverty and penance as lived in the forests by the hermits called the "Poor of Christ." These founders were also motivated by a conscious searching for ancient wisdom. Romuald was influenced by the traditions of the fathers and the example of the Palestinian *lauras* of Sts. Euthymius and Sabas. Also, with the arrival in Italy of refugees who were fleeing from the Turks in Asia Minor, and the foundation of the Greek monastery at Grotta-ferratta, near Rome, the new movement in Central Italy came into direct contact with Eastern monasticism. To give permanence to their work, the eleventh-century founders brought the life of the hermit into fruitful union with the cenobitic life, and, for the first time in monastic history, provided the eremitic life, which is essentially free and unregulated, with an element of control.

In the East hermits had moved partly in that direction when they clustered around a saintly counsellor or gathered in great *lauras*, like the one on Mount Athos, under a limited obedience and poverty. It remained for the Western genius for organization, that had given the Rule of Benedict to the cenobites, to render a similar service to the hermits. The new founders introduced stability and control into eremitical life by gathering their disciples within monastery-like enclosures. The type is familiar from the Carthusians of Bruno, but Romuald was its originator at Camaldoli. The hermits, who were held together by obedience to the abbot and common customs, lived in cells separated by individual gardens within an enclosure. They assembled only for prayers, meals, and occasional meetings. The Carthusians ate together only on Sundays and chanted only Matins, Lauds, and Vespers daily in choir.. Romuald and Bruno wrote no rules.

Though offshoots of the Benedictines, the Camaldolese and Vallombrosans followed rules and customs suited to the life of a hermit. The monks at La Grande Chartreuse, not following the Rule of Benedict, lived a life patterned on that of Bruno. It was only after other monasteries were founded or affiliated with the original foundations that the new orders formed and statutes supplementary to the Rule were written. The twelfth-century founders made other innovations. The *Vinculum caritatis* of the Vallombrosans provided for the overall jurisdiction of the Abbot of Vallombrosa and for an annual meeting of the abbots of member monasteries that was truly legislative.

The Vallombrosans and Camaldolese also pioneered in sharply distinguished choir monks and lay brothers. Although hired servants, oblates, donati, and a rudimentary kind of lay brother had long been a part of the monastic picture, the eremitic-cenobites incorporated them into the religious life as true monks. The strong return of these orders to contemplation, their consequent sharp curtailment of manual labour, and the changes that had occurred in the status of

choir monks, who were now priests and no longer willing to devote long hours to manual labour, demanded the lay brotherhood.

Romuald developed a further concept of the monastic life, not realizable even in all Camaldolese abbeys, in which the cenobitic, eremitic, and apostolic lives were combined. Before establishing the hermits high on the mountain (1012 A.D.), Romuald had established an abbey of the usual type two miles below. Beginners resided there. When in the abbot's judgment a monk had reached a higher degree of perfection, he might transfer to the hermitage. A hermit who attained an eminent degree of holiness might aspire to evangelize the pagans and hope for martyrdom. The tensions created among the Camaldolese by this double monasticism led in the year 1616 A.D. to the separation of the cenobites from the hermits, a schism that endured until the year 1935 A.D.

Romuald's concept foreshadowed the later mendicant view that a fruitful apostolate must flow from the contemplative life, and appears not unrelated to the attempt to establish houses of prayer that is presently occupying the thought and efforts of many religious and institutes. It testifies to the perennial appeal of the contemplative and even the eremitical ideal. Twelfth-Century Foundations  
The Cistercians, founded during the first decade of the 12th century, are in the same semi-eremitic stream as the monastic foundations of the previous century. Citeaux adopted Benedict's Rule and like the eleventh-century Italian orders interpreted it somewhat more strictly and uniformly than he had intended. The Cistercian life was to be one of poverty, simplicity, and eremitical solitude, achieved by strict silence.

The monks supported themselves by their own labour and that of the lay brothers, whom they admitted in considerable number. At first the Cistercians swept away the overgrown monastic liturgy of the day and returned to the choral Office of Benedict; but before the century was out, by a process of accretion, they had returned to the choral burden of their predecessors. The abbey of Citeaux developed into an order under its second and third abbots, Alberic and Stephen Harding, when it began to found daughter houses. To Stephen is usually attributed the *Charta caritatis*, the Cistercian constitutions. The order was held together by obedience to the general chapter. Uniformity of liturgy and discipline were maintained through annual visitation by the abbot responsible for making a new foundation. Citeaux itself was visited by the abbots of its first four daughter abbeys.

The general chapter, meeting annually, held legislative and juridical authority over all abbeys; otherwise they remained autonomous. The Abbot of Citeaux was not abbot general but merely the agent of the chapter, convoking it and presiding over it. Though the Cluniacs initiated visitation of monasteries and the



Vallombrosians introduced the chapter, the Cistercians, owing to their rapid diffusion (300 abbeys by 1153 A.D. when Bernard died), demonstrated the effectiveness of these agencies of unity and religious regularity.

A noted departure from the Cistercian ideal began to occur through imitation of the career of Bernard. The abbots especially were drawn into activities beyond the scope of the contemplative life. Likewise, as the Middle Ages ended most abbeys were caring for the pastoral needs of the surrounding population. This development prepared for the adoption of the customs and discipline of the mendicants by many reformed congregations of Cistercians in the 15th and 16th centuries. They threw off the influence of Citeaux after the collapse of the central administration of the order. The Cistercians had considerable influence on the military orders, the first institutes to be created for a specific purpose beyond the religious community. Theirs was a significant break with the age-old view that the monk should stay inside the cloister.

Bernard's *Liber de laude novae militiae*, written at the request of the Grand Master of the Templars, gave a powerful impetus to the growth of the military orders and gained immediate acceptance for this new kind of knighthood and new kind of monasticism. Besides the Templars and the Hospitalers, contemporary with the Cistercians, were the Teutonic Knights (1198 A.D.) and the Knights of the Sword (1202 A.D.). The Templars and Hospitalers contributed important elements to monastic organization. They were the first true orders: they had a grand master with extensive authority, regional divisions and superiors, and they were supranational. Their general chapter had legislative and corrective power, and electors chose the grand master. The movement of their members between Europe and houses on the military frontier heralded the mobility and flexibility of the mendicants. Military Orders

The wars against the Moors caused a proliferation of military orders in the Iberian Peninsula. The Cistercians directly affiliated the Knights of Calatrava (1158 A.D.) and most other Iberian orders indirectly, to themselves, looking on them as an active arm of their own order. The Knights of St. James are especially interesting. Originating when a group of married knights pooled their goods with the Canons of St. Eligius, who were to serve as their chaplains, they formed an order. New Knights were permitted to marry under certain conditions. The Mercedarians, now a clerical mendicant order, were founded by Peter Nolasco (1218-23 A.D.) as a military order of knights and priests for the redeeming of captives. They took a fourth vow to act as hostages if necessary to free captives who were in danger of losing their faith. United under a master general they were organized into provinces under provincials. The general was elected by the provincials meeting in a general council, and the provincials by local superiors convened in provincial chapter.

The Mercedarians became entirely clerical in 1318 A.D. when John XXII decreed that the master general must be a priest. The knights thereupon left the order and joined the Order of Montesa. The Mercedarians are now dedicated to educational, charitable, and social work. The only other military order to survive is the Hospitalers who, in addition to their military duties, had always remained true to their original function of caring for the sick. The Trinitarians, who preceded the Mercedarians, were founded by John of Matha (1198 A.D.) for the redemption of captives in Spain, North Africa, and the Near East. They also provided hospices for sheltering those ransomed and served the sick and dying. They followed a Rule of their own that provided [or a contemplative-active life and contained the generous provision that one-third of all income was to be used for ransoming captives, the last of whom was redeemed in 1855 A.D.

The Trinitarians are now engaged in teaching, giving missions, and serving in parishes, hospitals, and prisons. As the 12th century drew to a close, monasticism could look back upon 900 years of magnificent service to the Church and Christian society. The Holy Spirit had guided His own creation, keeping it alive when it faced extinction, bringing to the surface, through charismatic leaders, all the latent richness of the religious life. The founders had faced immediate problems and needs. Experiencing the weakness of complete autonomy for each abbey, they had moved toward confederation and centralized control. Sensing the needs of the Church, some had become pastors and missionaries, or had turned to scholarship; others had placed their energies at the service of the reforming papacy. Another group of founders, returning strongly to contemplative prayer, silence, and solitude, had testified to these essential Christian values.

At the very end of this first period of monasticism, the military orders discovered that the religious life might combine a purpose beyond the monastery as an integral element of their vocation. The following tribute is well deserved: The monks brought the Church an ideal of asceticism, forms of prayer, such as the use of the Psalter, a rich experience of inwardness, and new literary forms. The movement became a triumphant power that, despite its resistance to cultural changes, was to give a distinguishing character to the Middle Ages.

The Canons Regular and the Friars The attractive power of the life followed by the Apostles and the primitive Christian community so decisively operative in the origin of cenobitic monasticism began to work also toward the fusion of the contemplative and the priestly lives--a fuller realization of the Apostolic life. The first move in this direction was largely abortive, even though the name of Augustine was behind it. Eusebius of Vercelli was the first to see the possibility of such a union. About 344 A.D. he established the common life for his

cathedral clergy. Later in the century, Augustine, who had organized a community before his consecration as bishop, wrote his rule for the clerics of his episcopal residence. They continued their clerical purpose and ministry. The ideals of Augustine are one of the purest expressions of Christian unanimity, the central inspiration of the Apostolic life. That the primitive community at Jerusalem was the source of Augustine's inspiration can be seen clearly in the opening paragraph of the rule: "The first purpose for which you have been brought together is that you dwell in unity in the house and that you have but one soul and heart in God. And call not anything your own, but let all things be common... For thus you read in the Acts of the Apostles." The constant justification for all its prescriptions is an appeal to charity. The love of God and neighbour, the common life, the three counsels, and abstinence are its essential ingredients. The ideal of Eusebius and Augustine died with them and did not revive until the mid-eighth century when Chrodegang of Metz prepared a rule for his cathedral clergy.

Though devoted to the common life and the liturgy, these canons continued their clerical duties to the faithful. Louis the Pious, pushing forward the drive toward uniformity initiated by Charlemagne, published a *Regula canonicorum* at Aachen in 816 A.D. for the canons of his kingdom. It prescribed strict observances and obedience but did not impose renunciation of private property. Toward the end of the 10th century the magnetism of the apostolic life that had been so decisive in the origins of monasticism and had drawn Augustine began to work among the canons. They had not felt its force during the Carolingian age. The new type canon regular of the 11th century, like the eremitic-cenobitic orders, emerged during a time of Christian crisis that was probably unmatched before then in its acuteness.

The Church was fighting to reaffirm the papal primacy, reform the clergy, and free herself from lay ascendancy. Furthermore, a new city civilization was developing in Italy and in Northern Europe. A mainly rural clergy and isolated monks were unable to reach these new urban centers, Hildebrand, soon to become Gregory VII, saw one solution to these problems in a return of the clergy to the common life of the primitive Christian community. At the Roman Synod of May, 1059 A.D., he vigorously advocated its imposition on all clerics. Though the decree that was passed fell short of what he wanted, it did require all chaste clerics to have their own refectory and dormitory, to "possess in common all they had received from the Church," and to "strive with all their strength to achieve an Apostolic common life." This decree spurred on the development of the canons regular.

Always devoted to the pastoral ministry, they now perfected their life, vowing themselves to the common life and poverty of the Apostles. The thinking behind

this movement is reflected in a letter that Urban II wrote to a chapter of reformed canons in Bavaria: We give thanks that you have resolved to refiew among yourselves the admirable life of the holy fathers of the Church ... those who by divine favour abandon the things of the World are...divided into two groups whose religious purpose is almost identical, that of the canons and that of the monks. The latter way of life, greatly aided by the divine mercy, flourishes in the entire universe; the former, on the contrary ... has declined almost everywhere. Yet this is the way of life instituted by Pope Urban the Martyr, which Augustine organized by his rules .... who can think that there is any less merit In reviving this primitive life of the Church ,under the inspiration and enduring impulse of the Spirit of the Lord than in preserving in vigour, by perseverance in the Same Holy Spirit, the observance of the monks.

In his sermons Peter Damian, for whom poverty in common and preaching were the very essence of the life of the Apostles and the primitive Church, developed new insights: the common life and Apostolic poverty give the cleric freedom and are a direct preparation for the ministry of souls. In one sermon, after describing the fraternal life of the primitive community of Jerusalem, he remarked that the Apostles "with great power gave their testimony to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." Peter's preaching had much to do with the adoption of the rule of Augustine. The first major signs of its acceptance came during the reign of Urban II. By the second quarter of the next century it was in almost universal use among the canons. The new canons regular settled in the towns and took up the care of souls; but in the 12th century, the period of their greatest expansion, they fell under monastic influence and preferred the country or the "outskirts of the cities. Veering away from a pastoral ministry founded on poverty, they concentrated on community life and a heavy liturgical burden.

The Canons of St. Victor are an example. Founded in 1108 A.D., they at first sought to reform the clergy by persuading them to accept the obligations of the religious life. Though some of the Victorians served country parishes, opposition soon forced them inward on themselves and they began to accentuate the monastic side of their life. In this way much of the promise of the canons regular, and their effectiveness as evangelical ministers disappeared precisely when the problem of the cities was becoming more acute. The Gregorian Reform blossomed in several other ways that had an effect on both the canons regular and the mendicants. Gregory VII had enlisted the laity in his drive against the lax clergy. Toward the end of the century, penitential brotherhoods of men and women of all classes began to form. They were moved by the ideal of Apostolic poverty, passion for reform, and scorn for unworthy priests. Many of their members went about preaching.

Centering in Lombardy and Southern France, these groups were often dominated, sometimes formed, by itinerant preachers who were not always clerics. Inspired by the example of the Apostles, these evangelists wore poor clothing, travelled on foot, and begged their bread. Robert of Arbrissel and Norbert of Xanten gathered their disciples into abbeys of canons regular. Robert's abbey at Fontevrauh (ca. 1101) and Norbert's at Promontre (1120) gradually developed into orders as older monasteries affiliated with them or reform minded bishops and nobles helped them to make foundations. Pr~montr~ began to develop into an order under its first abbot, Hugh of Fosse, with adoption of practices and rules that were Cistercian inspired.

This strong turn toward contemplation, the early acceptance of parishes, and involvement in the training of the clergy, prevented the Premonstratensians from giving themselves as assiduously to preaching as Norbert had hoped. Many German abbeys adhered more closely to his plan and remained outside the federation. By 1177 A.D. the Norbertines had a well-organized government, headed by an abbot general with true authority and an annual general chapter. A system of visitation and the Premonstratensian rite preserved the unity and customs of a decentralized institute composed of largely autonomous abbeys. They were grouped into regional divisions under vicars general. Influenced by the composition of the groups that formed around their founders, the Orders of Fontevrauh, Prdmontr6, and the English Order of Gilbertines (1148 A.D.) resurrected the double monastery, an institution that had been common in East and West during the first centuries of the religious life.

Norbertine nuns assisted in caring for pilgrims, the poor, and the sick in the hospices attached to Premonstratensian abbeys during the Order's early days. The Canons of Fontevrauh devoted themselves entirely to the welfare of the nuns. The mendicant orders were Apostolic brotherhoods founded to reintroduce the indefatigable journeying of the Apostles for the sake of the gospel. International and centralized bodies divided into provinces, they elected or appointed their superiors according to a recognized constitutional system. Their masters general and general chapters held full jurisdiction over every house and friar. This unified command and the abandonment of monastic type stability gave the friars a flexibility and mobility that were completely new in monastic history. Founded when the papacy had reached the zenith of its influence, the mendicants were also strongly marked by loyalty to, and reliance upon, the Holy See.

They became effective arms of papal policy. The friars brought together in fruitful harmony elements that had been channelled to them through nine centuries of the religious life. They were the beneficiaries of the experience and innovations made by monastic figures during all those years. Francis and

Dominic did not appear from nowhere. Yet they added insights of their own, putting the ancient elements together in a dynamic union that made their orders something new. They were designed to meet the problem of the cities which had become more acute. The town rather than the lord's chateau, the artisan and merchant rather than the serf and knight, had become important. Yet the Church was still rooted in the old feudal regime. Often ignorant and degraded, the clergy imperfectly served the people of the towns. The monks and the canons regular lived in isolated places and were oriented toward a rural and agrarian society. Many cities were not yet bishoprics, and bishops did not understand the import of the changes that had taken place.

The work of Francis was first in time and more personal; that of Dominic was more skilled and better organized. Both harnessed forces unleashed by the Gregorian Reform more efficiently than the 12th century had done. Both founders brought out more of the potential of these forces. The power of the Gospels and the appeal of the Apostolic life were powerfully operative in both men. In Francis, Antony seems to have come back to life. In 1209 he heard the Lord speaking to him from the pages of Matthew 10:7-13, and he understood that he was to live the gospel and be the "herald of the Great King." It was a purely personal experience. He had no thought of founding a brotherhood, much less an order. But the holiness of his life attracted disciples to him. When he and his first two companions consulted the Gospels, they found three texts that directed them to the Apostolic life of poverty, penance, and preaching (Mt 16:24, 19:21; Lk 9:2-3).

Francis wrote a first, rudimentary rule embodying these texts and prescribing the vows and the common life. The life of Francis and his brothers was to be a literal imitation of the God-man. They were to be little, friars minor, in their detachment from self, wooers of "Lady Poverty" in their detachment from creatures. "Strangers and pilgrims in this world" (Rule, ch. 6), they were to live simply as Jesus had lived and mirror Him to their contemporaries. The early Franciscans were wandering preachers. Like Paul they practiced their trades and accepted the hospitality that was offered to them as they went about preaching their simple sermons and caring for the sick and poor. Begging was to be a last resort when work and hospitality failed to meet their needs. Resurrecting the ideal of the hermit, they retired from time to time to caves and huts to pray. Francis and his followers relived the experience of the penitential, Apostolic brotherhoods of the previous century who had professed the same evangelical ideals as Francis but lacked his sanctity. His holiness rescued their movement, which still had its representatives, from the disobedience and error into which the "Humiliati," the "Apostolici," and the Poor Men of Lyons had carried it.

Asserting that the imitation of the Apostles was the sole basis for preaching, these groups had rebelled when the Church restricted them to moral persuasion. Only reluctantly did Francis amplify his rule. He was deadly intent on maintaining the perfect liberty of the gospel. By 1221, however, his personal leadership was no longer enough to control a brotherhood that had grown to 3,000 members. Removed from his immediate influence, many brothers began to lead undisciplined lives or make innovations contrary to his spirit. The sad experience of the earlier Apostolic movement seemed to be repeating itself. The spiritual heroism of Francis, required for a responsible enjoyment of full evangelical liberty, could be found only in the few. Friars of learning and legal training persuaded Francis to amplify the rule and provided some structure. This new, expanded rule, in a somewhat altered form, gained papal approbation in 1223. But legal texts could only imperfectly express the sublime and heroic ideals of Francis.

Even during his lifetime the friars disagreed on how they were to be lived. Moderates and zealots contended with one another. In 1261 Bonaventure, often called the second founder of the Order, attempted to establish peace. He organized the Order by drafting the first Franciscan constitutions. His prudent legislation aimed to give the Order a solid juridical structure that would not destroy its inner spirit. Bonaventure's leadership did not end Franciscan troubles. The zealots remained intractable. Bitterness and harshness, so alien to the spirit of Francis, were found on both sides of the long struggle that ended only when the zealots were crushed in the early 14th century. Even before 1261 the Franciscans had assumed the characteristics of the mendicants. The clerical element in the Order gradually outnumbered friars who were not priests. Pope Gregory IX enlisted Franciscans for the same kind of service he entrusted to Dominicans. Alexander of Hales irrevocably committed the Friars Minor to the pursuit of systematic theology.

Nevertheless, the warmth and appeal of the person and spirituality of Francis gave all the branches of the Franciscans a spirit that is very attractive. The Dominicans Dominic travelled a different route than Francis. He had about ten years of life as a canon regular and nine of evangelical preaching behind him when he founded the Order of Preachers. Endowed with a charm and compassion that drew both men and women into the orbit of his love, his dominant trait was a priestliness that was marked by a profound love of Christ and the Eucharistic mystery. The deepest forces of his natural and supernatural being drove him from the contemplative leisure of the canon to the labours of an evangelical man. He burned with zeal for souls, both Christians and pagan, and thirsted for martyrdom.

He buttressed his preaching With severe penances and prayer that lasted long into the night. His friend Gregory IX judged that he had "lived the Apostolic way completely." Two providential journeys across the Pyrenees with his bishop in 1203 and 1205 brought Dominic into contact with the need of the people in Cathar-infected Southern France. When the bishop's mission terminated, he and Dominic remained in France to preach. They travelled on foot without pomp or retinue, in humility, poverty, and austerity of life. They wore simple clothing, begged their bread, evangelized the faithful, and debated with the Cathari. They were "fighting with fire," as the bishop explained to discouraged papal legates. The Cathar leaders, displaying an amazing zeal for preaching and an uncommon knowledge of the Scriptures, wore clothing of the plainest, ate sparingly, fasted strictly and often, and went on foot. When the bishop died after just a year, Dominic became the leader of the mobile clerical bands that had developed. Early in 1215, he organized them into an Order of preaching brothers.

An episcopal charter of approval underlined their poverty and described their work as preaching against error, uprooting vice, teaching the rule of faith, and instructing the people in sound morals. A year later Dominic and sixteen disciples chose the rule of Augustine and adopted the first part of the constitutions. This instrument borrowed the religious observances of Prdmontr~. Although Dominic shortened and made changes in the Premonstratensian text, he kept its prologue intact. Its opening lines explain his reason: "Since the rule commands us under precept to have one heart and mind in the Lord, it is fitting that we who live under the same rule.., should want to be found uniform in the observances of our canonical order."

At this point many forces began to converge--the life of the primitive church in Jerusalem, the contemplation of the monks, the governmental structure of the military orders and the Cistercians, the clerical state of the canons regular, the mobility of the itinerant preachers, the poverty and evangelical spirit of the lay penitential brotherhoods, the education and theological skill of the Cathari, the personal experiences of Dominic. In December, 1216, Honorius III confirmed the Order and a month later entrusted to it its preaching mission. At the first general chapter in 1220, Dominic added a completely original second half to the constitutions.

It regulated preaching, study, poverty, and the structure of government. A shorter addition to the prologue stated the preaching purpose of the Order, underscored the importance of study, and gave superiors power to dispense from observances especially when they "impede study, preaching, or the good of souls." This text added to the prologue pointed to the revolutionary innovations that Dominic made: (1) the choice of preaching as the primary work



of the Order; (2) the substitution of systematic study for manual labor and lectio clivina; (3) a broad power of dispensation; (4) freedom from involvement in pastoral responsibility by Dominicans were not to accept parishes; (5) a poverty full of reliance on divine providence since it precluded manual labour and personal or corporate property; (6) the abandonment of monastic stability; (7) a form of government that gave expression to the 13th-century respect for collegiality.

It provided for strong but elected superiors, for their control by annual general and provincial chapters, and for an ombudsman-type visitor sent out by the chapters, over and above prescribed visitation by superiors. The master general was elected for an unlimited term and was responsible only to the general chapter. (8) Dominic's most fundamental innovation was to safeguard the liberty of the sons of God by his declaration that the rule and constitutions do not bind under sin. Dominican legislation wedded the contemplative and apostolic elements of the Apostolic life into an organic unity. The preacher moved out from, was sustained by, and returned to his community.

The Scriptural inspiration of it all is enshrined in the constitutional instructions for sending out preachers: Then receiving a blessing let them set out. They shall behave everywhere as men who seek their own salvation and that of their neighbour, as men of the Gospel who follow the footsteps of their Lord and speak with God or of God between themselves or with their neighbour .... In thus going forth to exercise the ministry of preaching or in traveling for any other reason, they shall not accept or carry with them gold, silver, money, or gifts but only food, clothing, books, and other necessities. Dominic died in 1221, six years after he had founded the Order. Under his presidency the chapter of that year had carved out eight provinces and sent bands to begin those not yet in existence. Included were frontier regions: Scandinavia, Poland, Hungary, Greece, and Palestine, from which the ministry of the friars could reach into pagan lands.

During succeeding decades of the century, the latent potential of Dominic's ideas developed, for example, missions to the pagans, the doctrinal apostolate. A series of five able successors, extending to 1283, carried Dominic's work forward in such fidelity to his spirit that the Order has been spared some of the tensions and problems that tore apart more than one religious family. The Carmelites, Augustinians, and Servites, evolving from semi eremitic groups in the 13th century, and the Minims, founded in the fifteenth, are the other surviving mendicant orders. This form of the religious life remained the dominant type during the late Medieval period. The Modern Development of the Religious Life From the days of the Renaissance, Western society has

grown continuously more complex and has presented the Church with an increasing variety of problems.

The perennial need to supplement the ranks and effectiveness of the parish clergy, the demand for institutions to care for orphans, the sick, and the aged, the growing educational needs of Catholics, the opening of new areas of the world to European influence, the French Revolution, and the development of new nations on the American Continent, posed challenges that have rarely been exceeded in magnitude and severity. Guided by the Holy Spirit the Church responded by expanding the forms and increasing the number of religious institutes. The 16th century gave the Church the clerks regular. They approached the religious life from a different direction than the friars. Though the friars chose a priestly apostolate not limited by national or continental boundaries, they still remained at bottom monks, that is, the contemplative life was basic to them. Their ministry grew from this monastic soil. The Friars Preachers, canons in origin, had extended the ideal of the canons in the direction of evangelical preaching.

The clerks regular took up where Dominic had left off and chose the full priestly ministry, pastoral and evangelical. Except for the Society of Jesus, however, the clerks regular were only potentially universal. At their foundation they aimed at the solution of local problems. The Theatines worked for the reform of the clergy; the Barnabites, for the improvement of the quality of Catholic life by preaching missions; the Somaschi taught Christian doctrine; the Piarists engaged in elementary education; the Camillians nursed the sick and dying.

The Society of Jesus, The Theatines, Barnabites, and Somascans? preceded the Society of Jesus, but the Society became the force that activated the unsuspected potential of the union of the priestly and religious lives. Like the friars, the Jesuits chose an apostolate that had no geographical limits. Ignatius of Loyola founded an Order that responded to the mentality of a new society as radically different from that of Dominic and Francis, as the latter had been from that of Romuald and Bruno. He met the needs of the church when she was struggling with a widespread corruption of morals and a rising Protestantism. As most founders had done in establishing their orders, Ignatius stamped his personal spirit and experience indelibly on the Society of Jesus. Like Francis, he experienced a personal conversion, gaining from it an appreciation of the heroism of sanctity. During a succeeding period of solitude and prayer he vowed perpetual chastity, dedicated himself to the spiritual life, and began the Spiritual Exercises.

Then followed a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and eleven years of study, at the end of which he graduated as master of arts at Paris (1534). Then he and six companions vowed a life of poverty and chastity and resolved to go as evangelists to Palestine. Should this prove impossible, they would offer their services to the pope. This is what they did in 1538 in the hands of Paul III, who approved the draft constitutions of the Society the following year. Ignatius was elected first superior general in 1541 and guided the growth of the Order until his death in 1556. He elaborated its constitutions, developed its spirit, nourished its spirituality, and particularized its purposes and ministries. The masterful accommodation of the religious life to modern society that Ignatius made, the many novel changes in the style of religious living that he introduced, the absence of strong opposition to these novelties in the Society's first days, the fading away of later papal opposition to them, the defeat of certain Jesuits who sought to alter the constitutions radically, and the vigorous revival of the Society after its 18th century suppression, all appear as signs of the working of the Holy Spirit in the achievement of Ignatius.

The purpose of the Society of Jesus is to work for the promotion of God's glory and to teach men to know their destiny and how to attain it. To these ends it accepts all kinds of apostolic endeavour in any part of the globe. The Society commits itself to the missions for the advance of Christ's kingdom; it undertakes general educational work as an apostolic labour. Ignatius forged a splendid instrument to achieve these ends. Though he borrowed much from pre-existent monasticism, he introduced a battery of highly original features. In keeping with the spirit of the times, he developed a centralized government that is authoritarian and monarchical. The superior general alone is elected to office. He appoints all superiors and is responsible solely to the general congregation, which has usually met only for elections. His lifetime term and his quasi-freedom from all control is designed to assure vigorous administration and continuity of policy. But the impression should be avoided that Jesuit superiors are despots. The obedience that renders every member of the Society highly responsive to their authority is not blind or military but religious. Strong government and ready obedience were introduced by Ignatius to lend flexibility and mobility to the Society so that its members might labour most effectively in the service of God and souls.

Ignatius gave his Order further mobility and effectiveness by the revolutionary abandonment of a uniform garb and choral Office. To the same intent he prevented a drain on personnel by forbidding his sons to accept ecclesiastical preferments or undertake a permanent ministry to religious women. He refused to establish a female branch of the Society. Jesuit freedom of action demanded a better type of formation for young religious. Ignatius adopted a two year novitiate, a period of simple vows, an apprenticeship in the apostolate, and a

second novitiate or tertianship. Only after personal responsibility for one's own spiritual life had been learned might the religious pronounce solemn vows. Finally, not satisfied with the link that the vow of religious obedience forges with the papacy, Ignatius forged stronger bonds by prescribing a fourth vow binding those in solemn vows to direct obedience to the pope. The Society of Jesus came at the end of a long process of monastic development. At the risk of oversimplification it might be said that the abbey of early monasticism looked inward toward the sanctification of the community. The friar orders looked in two directions: inward toward community sanctification, outward toward the salvation of neighbour. The Jesuits looked upward, outward, and inward: upward toward the glory of God, outward toward the apostolate, inward toward personal sanctification. The kind of religious life developed by Ignatius influenced most modern institutes.

Not a few of them take additional vows, for example, Camillians vow to serve the sick; Christian Brothers, to persevere in their vocation and to teach the poor gratuitously. With few exceptions, modern institutes wear simple clerical garb; most elect only their highest superior; some have a second novitiate. The Passionists and Blessed Sacrament Fathers, on the other hand, are among the few modern groups that have choral Office. Societies of Priests and Congregations of Brothers In addition to the clerks regular, the 16th century introduced the society--an organization of priests living in community without vows. Philip Neri originated this form of life when he founded the Oratory at Rome in 1575. Its members sought their sanctification by following the evangelical counsels and by engaging in the priestly ministry. The Institute of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri that has sprung from the inspiration of this original group is made up of individual foundations of oratories that are united only by the bond of fraternal charity, common constitutions, and general statutes.

Other early societies of priests are the Vincentians, founded by Vincent de Paul in 1625 for preaching missions to the rural poor, and the Paris Foreign Mission Society (1660) that chose Asia as its field of labour. Other early societies, such as the Sulpicians (1642) and Eudists (1643), were founded to provide seminary training for the clergy. Recent societies, for example, the White Fathers (1868), Josephites (1866), Society of the Divine Word (1875), Maryknoll Foreign Mission Society (1911), Paulists (1858), devote themselves to the foreign missions or home apostolates. The Christian Brothers (1680), the earliest of the congregations of brothers, were preceded by orders of brothers who took solemn vows: the Antonines and brotherhoods who worked in hospitals from the 11th century onward; the Alexian Brothers, who evolved from groups who cared for the sick and buried the dead during the Black Death; and the Hospitallers of St. John of God, who were founded in the 16th century. The

contribution of the 18th century to the religious life was the development of the religious congregation of priests or brothers who pronounce simple vows. The Passionists (1720), Redemptorists (1732), the Fathers of the Sacred Hearts (1800), and the many 19th century congregations devoted to Mary seek to revitalize Christian living by appealing to fundamental Christian mysteries.

This was an important development of apostolic method. Nineteenth Century Developments No previous century witnessed such a proliferation of religious institutes as the 19th. Seldom before had the position of the Church been so critical. She was not only faced by radical unbelief, the passing of the old social and political order, the dechristianization of society, but had also lost some of her traditional agencies. The French Revolution, the secularization of ecclesiastical property in Germany, and the suppression of religious institutes that followed soon afterwards in Latin countries destroyed the religious life nearly everywhere in Western Europe and Latin America. The Church had already been deprived of the services of the Jesuits in 1773. Where the orders survived they were weak and ineffective. This loss impoverished Catholic life in many of its manifestations. One example will suffice: the almost total disappearance of the canons regular and the monastic orders (only thirty Benedictine abbeys survived the Revolution and the subsequent suppressions) drained away the richness of the liturgy and the solemn public worship of the Church.

A great number of new congregations and societies rushed into the vacuum thus created. The Fathers of the Sacred Hearts were founded in 1817 precisely to continue the work of the communities suppressed during the Revolution. For a time the older orders were non-existent or paralyzed; it was easier to begin a new institute than to revive an old one. New organizations usually began, just as orders have always begun, with a small nucleus of men who saw that something had to be done to save Christian life and banded to save it. Responding to local needs, they created a bewildering variety of congregations that were often very close in character, organization, purpose, and time of foundation. The differing spirit of their founders or the emphasis of their spirituality alone seemed to give them a discernible difference. A levelling process also went on. The new orders soon transcended immediate needs and took up new work, sometimes quite removed from the original one. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate were established in 1816 to preach missions in rural areas. They went into seminary teaching in 1824 and into the foreign missions in 1831.

Then they began to engage in shrine work, teaching, and the parochial ministry. Such broadening of apostolates was an easy one to make. Except for the orders of brothers and sisters, the new institutes were clerical. Approaching the religious life By-way of the active ministry, they could choose apostolates as

extensive as the priesthood itself without seriously violating their founding spirit. Being new, they likewise had no need to be worried about traditional modes of operation. The great number of orders of priests, brothers, and sisters that were created during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and into the 20<sup>th</sup> to meet a variety of needs demonstrated the flexibility and inherent vitality of the religious life. The founding of the Little Brothers of Jesus in Algiers in 1933 to implement the ideals of Charles de Foucauld shows that the religious life has not lost the ability to respond to new situations. Foucauld worked in the Muslim world but the Little Brothers are carrying his technique, of "pre-evangelization" into every area where life has been de-Christianised. To reach the workingman and to witness to poverty in an affluent society, the brothers conform to the economic and social milieu where they live and take jobs in factories, fisheries, or mills. They also go among the lepers and primitive peoples. The earliest post-Revolution congregations, seeking to revitalize Catholic life, turned to the preaching of parish missions and retreats.

In quick succession the Fathers of Mercy (1814), the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (1816), the Marianists (1817), and Marists (1822) were founded. A great number of institutes were created for teaching on all levels, for example, the Marist Brothers (1817) and the Xaverians (1839). In 1820 the Brothers of St. Joseph (later Brothers of Holy Cross) began teaching in rural primary schools. The Assumptionist Fathers (1845) aimed to rehabilitate learning at its higher levels in accord with the principles of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The Poor Brothers of St. Francis (1857) undertook the care and education of neglected boys. Many brothers, like the Christian Brothers, went into the field of technical and vocational training. At St. Mary's Industrial School in Baltimore, opened in 1866 at the invitation of Bishop Spalding the Xaverian Brothers pioneered in rehabilitation work and vocational training.

In the earlier centuries of the religious life, feminine orders paralleled their masculine counterparts. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which might be called the century of the religious sister, communities of women sprang up in far greater numbers than did clerical and lay institutes of men. They took up every kind of apostolate. The great apostolic potential of the feminine branch, so long stunted in its growth, at long last began to be actualized. Twentieth Century Foundations In the 20<sup>th</sup> century religious institutes have broken new ground and developed new methods. Youth centers, summer camps, Christian Doctrine programs, adult education classes, and Catholic Action work characterize their efforts. Father Vincent Pallotti in the judgment of Pius XI, "anticipated Catholic Action in essence and in name" when he founded the Pallottine Fathers in 1835. They labour for the renewal of faith and rekindling of charity. The Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity springing from lay groups in 1921, have been zealous in training the laity to aid the clergy.

Paulists pioneered in enlisting the press as an instrument of their work. The Society of St. Paul was begun in 1914 specifically for disseminating truth through the press and other mass media. During the 19th century, as intolerance began to wane, the orders began to develop an ecumenical interest. Barnabites, Marian Fathers, Redemptorists, Franciscans, Assumptionists now maintain residences or provinces of the Eastern Rites. Father Paul organized the Friars of the Atonement precisely to foster Christian unity. Alphonse Ratisbonne, favoured with a vision of the Blessed Mother in 1842 while still a Jew, instituted the Fathers of Sion to labour for the conversion of his people. The Mekhitarist Fathers, dating from 1696, are vowed to work for the spiritual and intellectual development of the Armenian people. They work in the Near East, the Balkans, and the United States.

Dominicans have established institutes in Paris and Constantinople to foster study of the Eastern churches and another in Cairo to pursue Muslim studies. Developments in the Americas The 19th century presented the Church with the problem of providing for emigrants, Indians, and Negroes in the United States and the faithful of the Latin American nations that had won their independence. Only in our lifetime, however, have Catholic authorities realized the acute need for priests and religious in the Latin countries. Religious bodies in the States are especially aware of their responsibility toward their neighbours to the South. North America experienced the same acute need 100 years ago.

Despite their own grave problems, old orders and new in Europe generously made establishments in the United States and Canada. Dominicans coming to our country in 1804 from England sacrificed their own intellectual development and numerical growth when, at Bishop John Carroll's request, they abandoned their hopes of settling in Maryland and went to the Kentucky-Ohio-Tennessee frontier. England made another significant contribution to the United States when in 1871 it sent the Mill Hill Fathers. Herbert Vaughan had organized them in the belief that English Catholicism, weak as it was, should share in the foreign mission burden. They were the first religious group to devote themselves specifically to the service of the Negro race in America. At the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1866, our hierarchy had begged Europe for priests for this apostolate.

When Vaughan asked Pius IX for a mission for the Mill Hill Fathers, the Pope sent them to the United States to work among the more than 4,000,000 newly emancipated Negroes. In 1893 the American group, thenceforth called Josephites, separated from the parent organization. The Holy Ghost Fathers, Society of the Divine Word, and Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity are heavily committed to work among the coloured. The Verona Fathers work

among Negroes and the Indians. European immigrants were a cause of major concern for the American Church. Redemptorists met this problem by conducting foreign language missions for people of German, French, and Bohemian extraction.

The Holy Ghost Fathers accepted parishes for French, German, Polish, Portuguese, and Spanish-speaking Catholics in States of the East and mid-West. The Scalabrini Fathers have laboured among Italian emigrants. Father Isaac Hecker founded the Paulists to bring the message of Catholicism to American non-Catholics. New congregations endeavoured to meet pressing local problems in the British Isles. The Irish Church produced the Irish Christian Brothers in 1802 and the Brothers of St. Patrick in 1808 to cope with the ignorance that English oppression had induced among Catholics. In England the Oblates of St. Charles (1957) pledged themselves to work for the conversion of their country. Missionary Activity The building of the 19th century colonial empires occasioned a great development of foreign mission activity, especially in Africa and Oceania.

The Holy See entrusted territories to every order of any size. As older orders returned to vigour they again took up the missions. Various congregations, though originally pursuing other goals, made foreign missions a major work. The Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Marists, Holy Ghost Fathers, Society of the Divine Word have distinguished records in the mission field. New institutes were established for foreign mission work, notably the African Mission Fathers (1865), the White Fathers (1869), and the Maryknoll Foreign Mission Society (1911). The Mariannahill Missioners have an interesting history. In 1882 some Trappists founded a monastery at Mariannahill near Durban, South Africa, to work among the Zulus. Before long 285 religious were manning 22 mission stations. In 1909 the monks formed themselves into an independent congregation with no Cistercian connections.

They have houses in the United States, and many European countries.

Conclusion The history of the religious life ends on a note of hope. It cannot do otherwise because it is the story of a sword that the Holy Spirit placed in the hands of the Church. The hope has always been in monasticism, as even its darkest periods show. I shall enumerate my conclusions. (1) It does not take a profound reading of the record to realize that when the Christian people faced a crisis the Holy Spirit raised up charismatic leaders to found new religious institutes. These crises always produced doubt, confusion, and dismay. The leaders appeared only after a period of waiting. The declining fervor of the early Church ended with the creation of the religious life. The reaction to the decay in Christian living that set in about 850 produced first the eremitic cenobitic orders, then the Gregorian Reform. For its inspiration the Reform returned to the Scriptures and the early Church. From it came the trial and error of the



itinerant preachers, the canons regular, and the penitential, Apostolic brotherhoods. Both saints and heretics came from these last, and, after a century of experiment, Dominic and Francis.

The stagnation of the late Middle Ages resulted not only in Luther but also in Ignatius. The ruin and problems that the French Revolution brought in its wake occasioned one of the greatest ages in monastic history. If it is true that history repeats itself, we should be on the eve of a breakthrough that will create new forms of the religious life, perhaps richer than we have ever seen before. In this connection the secular institutes deserve a mention. Even though they are not religious institutes, they follow the evangelical counsels. They imitate the life of Christ and the Apostles. (2) Down the ages since Antony went into the desert, the religious life has gone through two great phases. An inverse process of growth took place in each. From Antony to' Dominic the community constantly gained at the expense of the individual religious.

Moving from the complete liberty of the hermit to the first community under Pachomius, monasticism constantly progressed toward ever greater control over the monk. Since the thirteenth century, on the other hand, the individual religious has gained greater freedom and mobility at the expense of the community. The military orders and the canons regular slackened the ties of community enough to permit a limited apostolate. Dominic and Francis threw the door wide open. The friars carried the religious life out into the world. They took as their boast what Matthew Paris, an English Benedictine chronicler, said of them with scorn: "The whole world is their cell and the ocean their cloister." With Ignatius this loosening of the bonds of community was tremendously accelerated. Freedom of movement became the symbol of modern religious life and permitted the great blossoming of apostolates and institutes that we see today.

The opening of the doors that kept the monk in his monastery began when the priestly and religious professions were united. Until the rise of the canons regular, monasticism was predominantly a lay institution, even after its choir monks became priests. But it took 200 more years before the friars broke the shackles that bound the canons to a single church. Since then the clerical orders have brought to mature development the two elements of the apostolic life, the contemplative and the apostolic. Nevertheless, all the gold of the religious life had not yet been mined. The possibility of an active apostolate for lay religious had not been fully brought to light. After the Alexians, Hospitallers of St. John of God, and the Christian Brothers had been founded, the lay religious life stood in a stage of arrested growth. Only in the 19th century did it come into its own. Today the brotherhoods and sisterhoods are numerically superior to the clerical arm of the religious life.

These Congregations anticipated the insight of Vatican II that all religious, even the most contemplative in spirit, even women in cloistered monasteries, might be actively Apostolic. Here again there was a return to the spirit of the early Church and early monasticism. For them prayer and asceticism were Apostolic functions. The brothers and sisters have made a weighty contribution to the rescuing of the word "apostolic" from the narrow interpretation that it has borne in modern times. They prepared the way for the assertion of the Council that apostolicity is a duty of all Christians. (4) In monasticism a continuous levelling process has been at work. Regardless of the originality of an order in its first actualization, inevitably it is influenced by contemporary society and institutes. Perhaps this is no better seen than in the case of the Franciscans. Also, the free-wheeling, unsystematized spirituality of the medieval orders was greatly influenced by modern spiritual practices: spiritual retreats, systematized meditation, examination of conscience. For this reason it is hard to explain to a young religious how his order differs from another.

How does a Dominican differ from a Franciscan? We all preach, teach, go on foreign missions, run parishes. Vatican II provided the answer, and probably the solution to many of our other difficulties, when it emphasized the importance of the founder's spirit and called on orders to preserve their original character and genius. (5) The most heartening characteristic of the religious life is its amazing durability. Father Bede Jarrett penned some fine lines in comment on this fact: Christianity has always been vital enough to throw off new rules, new austerities, new forms of asceticism. Yet in doing so the older forms do not die; the Christian Religious Orders practically all survive. Indeed have they not their fashions?... There are times when some older type comes back into prominence, holds public interest, attracts souls, teaches a generation till its place is supplied by another. Certain it is that of all the religious Orders of the West, hardly one of any importance for the last 1,000 years but still holds its own, not perhaps with its old width of dominion, but attracting and holding some souls who find in it alone the conditions required for their genius of holiness. The near extinction of the Society of Jesus after 1773 has been so completely reversed that the Order is stronger in numbers and influence today than it was before Clement XIV suppressed it.

The Order of Preachers, described by Newman as "a great ideal now extinct," sprang back to life under the inspiration of Lacordaire precisely when that gloomy judgment was being written. There is also the surprising growth of ancient contemplative orders in our country the last twenty years. Each order, founded at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, continues to fill a need of the Church long after the particular historical period that called it into existence has passed. The contemplative orders, for example, are urgently needed in our time, an age that lives so much on the surface of life and is distracted without end. By

their mere existence these venerable institutions cry out for the pre-eminence of prayer.

They protest against those who would drain Christianity of its supernatural content on the plea that they are serving the world. The contemplative monastery is the prime commentary on the words of Vatican II: It is for the good of the Church that each religious institute should have its own particular character and work. Therefore they must acknowledge and preserve the spirit and intentions of their founders, together with those sound traditions which form the heritage of each institute (P.C. 2b).

The staying power of the religious life is all the more convincing when we remember that it has been under many massive attacks before today. The Lombards razed Monte Cassino as completely as did the bombers of World War II. The Vikings almost killed monasticism in Ireland, England, and on the Continent. The friars came under hot fire for three centuries. The masters of the University of Paris staged the first attack in the 1250's when they contended that religious belong behind cloister walls and had no right to preach and teach. Aquinas and Bonaventure won that battle. John Wyclif bitterly challenged the friars. Erasmus and the humanists satirized the peripheral elements of monasticism: They think it the highest piety to have so shunned learning that they are not even able to read.

Then in the churches they roar out with their asinine braying of Psalms, counted indeed but not understood, and deem the ears of the saints will be sweetly soothed thereby. There are some of them who make a good thing of their dirt and mendicity, and beg for bread at our doors with great bellowing... And so the way was paved for Luther. The philosophers of the Enlightenment so questioned the relevance of the religious life that many religious began to doubt their vocation too. So it has always been. The religious life cannot die because it mirrors the life of Christ and His Apostles. The most decisive factor in the history of the religious life is the influence that the Apostolic life has had on religious, especially on the key figures. Now that Christ no longer walks the earth visibly, following Him has become a matter of faith and imitation.

All Christians are called to do this. But as Schiirmann writes: "There is lacking in this general discipleship of the faithful one trait characteristic of the group of disciples of Jesus: its value as a sign." The true meaning of the life of the Twelve with Jesus, he claims, was its sign value. They declared themselves for Christ in a strikingly visible way. The Lord "viewed their life as a sign that preached to all Israel." His last word to the disciples was: "You shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

