

## THE THIRD ORDER AND FREEMASONRY

*From the French by Mary Craven McLorg, Tertiary*

“THE soul of the anticlerical war of which we are witnesses to-day—the facts speak so plainly that it is not necessary for us to stop to prove them—are the secret societies.” This statement was made by one of the speakers at the Tertiary Congress at Roubaix, on November 3, 1907. Now, we ask what organization could be found that would be more radically opposed, more directly hostile, and more formidable to these secret societies, especially to Freemasonry, than the Third Order of St. Francis? Let us compare the two.

Freemasonry embraces all classes; it casts forth its net to ensnare the young and old, the woman and child, the soldier and statesman, the workman and his employer. In like manner, the Third Order receives into its ranks the man of letters and the magistrate, the rich proprietor and the humble artisan, the young girl and the married woman, the father of the family and the youth.

Freemasonry has its ridiculous and criminal tests, its horrible oaths of hatred against God, and hostility toward the Church. The Third Order has its wise term of probation, the novitiate, during which the Tertiary is trained in the practice of Franciscan virtues; it has its ceremony of holy profession with its solemn promises of fidelity to the law of Christ and to the Third Order Rule.

Freemasonry has its symbolic emblems, its strange rites, its passwords. The Third Order has its distinctive habit, its office. Freemasonry has its membership fees, its so-called benevolent aims, its treacherous, and violent measures to bar the priest from the bedside of its dying members; it has its funeral orgies, its civil interments. The Third Order has its common fund, its alms for the relief of the poorer brethren, its charitable visits to the sick, its consoling services for the departed.

Freemasonry has sworn a war to the death against the Vicar of Christ on earth; it strives to de-Christianize the woman and child; it propagates, especially by means of the press, the corruption of its independent morality and free love. The Tertiary, on the other hand, professes an absolute and unreserved submission to the Roman Pontiff; his morals must be pure, his life untainted by irregularities against the moral law; he must banish from his family, together with bad newspapers, books, and pictures, all impiety and scandal.

In his lodges, the Freemason plans the ruin of immortal souls and the destruction of the social order, he has his own hierarchy, his areopagus, his secret councils; he has his sacrilegious ceremonies, his diabolical sacraments, his agapes where he imbibes with hatred the thirst for vengeance and assassina-

tion. The Tertiary has his superiors and his ministers; his assemblies and monthly meetings, where he invigorates himself by prayer and evangelical brotherhood; he has the divine Sacraments and frequent Communion to support his courage and to enliven his faith.

In a word, Freemasonry is the secret bond that unites all the groups of anti-Catholic associations; the lever that puts into action all impious and revolutionary movements throughout the world. In certain countries, especially in France, Freemasonry has become a State within a State.

Unhappily, in the face of this formidable organization, Catholic Christians, divided in their opinions and sympathies, exhaust their energies in miserable disputes. Instead of presenting a solid front to the battalions of evil, which grow more audacious each day, the efforts of Catholic associations, without unity of action and tactics, waste themselves in divergent efforts, and thus remain unfruitful. Thus we perish for lack of concord and for want of federation.

The Third Order and the Third Order alone can and ought to bring about this much desired federation of the great army of truth and justice by serving as a binding link between the various groups of which it is composed, animating them all with the self-same spirit, and forming of them an invincible union. This would be possible, if the best use were made of its energies; its field for the works of charity, piety, and combat, that it has

in common with other associations, would win over their zeal and strength; and thus the Third Order would be in the midst of these different organizations, the organ which while leaving to each its autonomy, would establish friendly communication between them, facilitating mutual recognition, and preventing deplorable rivalries.

That at the present day this is possible for Tertiaries, Freemasonry itself well understands. Witness the denunciations filled with rage with which in the name of the lodges M. Lafferve some time since made the French parliament reecho. The Third Order, whatever our adversaries may say, has neither plots to hide nor mysteries to conceal nor plans to keep under lock and key, as have the Freemasons, It is in the broad light of day that it pursues the triumphant conflict of morality and faith and true Christian liberty.

From all this it is evident that Monsignor de Ségur was right when he said, "To sum up, the Third Order is to the Church what Freemasonry is to the Revolution." And he continues, "The sectarian Revolution propagates to the utmost her dark and impious 'third order'. May our holy Mother Church have the joy of seeing her pure and beautiful 'freemasonry' expand on all sides and everywhere revive zeal and charity. The Third Order is of all associations best fitted to defend present-day society effectually against the enemies of Christianity."

If this statement and authority

are not sufficient to prove our point, we can cite a still higher and more august authority, the Vicar of Christ himself. Pope Leo XIII says in his encyclical, *Humanum genus*, "We are anxious to insist on the recommendation We have already made in favor of the Third Order of St. Francis. The greatest zeal should be employed to propagate and to strengthen it; for by means of it the contagion of the secret societies, these detestable sects can be overcome. May this

holy association then daily make further progress. Among the many advantages which may be expected from it, there is one, indeed, which surpasses all the others—it is a true school of liberty, equality, and brotherhood—not in the absurd sense in which Freemasons understand these things, but such as Jesus Christ has been pleased to bestow on the human race, and as St. Francis put into practice."—*Revue du Tiers-Ordre*.

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### The Two Worlds

Hallel, O Lord, and on us shine  
 In glory and in grace;  
 This gaudy world grows pale before  
 The beauty of Thy face.  
  
 Till Thou art seen, it seems to be  
 A sort of fairy ground,  
 Where suns unsetting light the sky,  
 And flowers and fruits abound.  
  
 But when Thy keener, purer beam  
 Is pour'd upon our sight,  
 It loses all its power to charm,  
 And what was day is night.  
  
 Its noblest toils are then the scourge  
 Which made Thy blood to flow;  
 Its joys are but the treacherous thorns  
 Which circled round Thy brow.  
  
 And thus, when we renounce for Thee  
 Its restless aims and fears,  
 The tender memories of the past,  
 The hopes of coming years,  
  
 Poor is our sacrifice, whose eyes  
 Are lighted from above;  
 We offer what we can not keep,  
 What we have ceased to love.

—Cardinal Newman.