

## RESUMEN EN INGLÉS

This thesis intends to deepen in the knowledge of a brotherhood of the Third Secular Franciscan Order that, in the shelter of the San Francisco convent in Madrid, arises in 1609 during the reign of Felipe IV. We believe that this work can shed light upon previously unknown data on religiosity, society and charity, being that the stated Institution was of a secular religious nature.

The Third Secular Order —also known as the order of Penance— first saw light in Italy in 1217, founded by Saint Francis of Assisi. This order was founded after those of the minor friars and that of the *Clarisas* poor ladies order. In order to know the roots of the Third Order it is necessary to move back to the moment at which a congregation, eager to carry a life of extreme piety, went to the Italian saint to express their spiritual eagerness. Saint Francis considered that it was necessary to establish a foundation that would welcome all those lays who were willing to follow the path of the love of Christ and devotion to the fellow.

The work of Saint Francis of Assisi is universally well-known, yet for most of the devotees of the Saint, his third foundation is greatly unknown. For this reason, we consider that it is of interest to explain the causes that inclined the Saint to create the third foundation, and also, the path followed by the first Third brothers which led them to a honourable position in the core of Christianity —thanks to their piety, devotion to the fellow and constancy— and made them part of the militant Church and to the service of the Papacy.

After the fracture underwent by Christianity in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century with the denominational conflict, the dissidence and the doubts on the certainty of Tradition, the Church has to offer models of perfection if social impact. After Trent it was necessary to reconstruct the Catholic unity, greatly affected by the religious rupture. In the process, the Church had to serve itself of religious institutions that could effectively and persuasively watch over the consciences of the congregation. It was a cultural, social, religious, and political conquest and a task in which the people became the receptive subject of a control doctrine in the hands of the power.

The Venerable Third Order of Madrid, present in the city for almost four hundred years, has been a scarcely studied subject up to this moment, as have been the circumstances of its foundation and the process of deep transformation that it suffered throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, from its simple yet difficult beginnings up to its conversion into a dynamic and prestigious institution. The approach that we aspire to give in this research will not only deal with the constitutional, religious and social spheres, including its structure and government. Once we successfully complete this objective and taking the posed hypotheses as a starting point, we will emphasize on the behaviour of the brothers of the Third Secular Order and of its main benefactors.

Within the study of this Institution, that starts in 1609 with the explicit intention on the part of the Franciscan hierarchy to revive the faith between the congregation, we will focus our work on the analysis of its foundation, evolution, objectives, permanence and the space that it occupied within the Catholic orthodoxy. Beforehand, we know that it was a corporative organ that was totally identified in the social weave of the moment, able to offer integration and recognition capabilities to an unprotected population eager for identity.

With the Venerable Third Order of Madrid a space of being able and religious and social control was created, a place of socialization and discipline in which its members —the brothers— received spiritual services, social recognition and welfare aid. Due to its interclass nature, it created elements of fusion between the diverse social sectors —by converging the elite and the masses in its sine— and, due to its religious-secular character, it raised feelings of faith, by considering itself receptacle and legitimate heiress of the Christian and Catholic tradition.

As an Institution of charity it developed an ample welfare work, additionally offering social integration to people of almost marginalized groups who were interested in finding an own identity that could allow them to subsist, since they lacked any type of privileges. Nevertheless, the order was always in service of the orthodox unity, due to the pious criteria on which it based its roots.

Our work will try to faithfully reproduce the way of life of this religious secular Franciscan community, the only one of such characteristics that existed in Madrid in those times under the direction of observant friars. We state this because, if we take as a fact that there could have been tertiary Franciscans in the city at previous times, it has been impossible to find trustworthy data that would allow us to think that, in the case

that they indeed previously existed, they were constituted and organized like an authentic brotherhood.

After reflecting upon the foundation of the three Franciscan orders by the Assisi Saint in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, we have defined the temporal coordinates of this work and we believe that this has been convenient and necessary in order to later show the principal object of the thesis.

It is noticeable that although the First and Second foundations of Saint Francis of Assisi (Franciscans and *Clarisas*) are widely treated by the historiography —both in the spiritual and cultural planes— and different authors have dedicated their works to the orders' communal life, welfare work, or to the figure of some of their monks and nuns, there is a notorious emptiness on the Third Order, in spite of being a field on which it would be possible increase the knowledge on religious and social values. Franciscan historiography barely studies it, excusing itself in the privacy and independence that always was searched from the brotherhoods, reluctant to the interference of the friars of the First Order.

The absence of theoretical support, which prevented us from having an initial reference, made the research in the archives very valuable to us. The starting point and main source of information for the organization of our work has been the Archives of the Venerable Third Order of Saint Francis in Madrid, a private archive owned by this Brotherhood. The Archives have been enriched with time since it not only shelters those documents produced by the Institution or its Franciscan entailments, but also includes exogenous documentation thanks to donations and inheritances with which the benefactors favoured the Order.

Its books of agreements and bundles, with information and documentation that date up to the present time, and the chronological sequence that they display has constituted the basis in which we have supported this thesis. All the information —both handwritten and printed— has helped us to establish criteria and find answers for many of our hypotheses. The interpretation of many of examined documents has lead to us to the necessity to extend data and knowledge, with the purpose of giving the examined documentation the necessary dimension and valuation.

Documents of equal importance have been analyzed in other Archives: the Historical Archive of Notary Protocols of Madrid, in which testaments have been

consulted, as well as inventories, goods requests, prenuptial settlements, lawsuits and others, all of people who were closely related to the Venerable Third Order of Madrid; the National Historical Archive, where we analyzed the files of monks from Military Orders, from relatives of the Inquisition, members of the Councils, all of them brothers who belonged to the Institution. The Municipal Archive of Madrid, the Archive of the Franciscan Studies Institute, and the Archives of the Archbishopric of Madrid have been of equal value for our work.

Our immediate goal was to learn about the origin and evolution the Institution, doubly singular for having been located in the Court and for being the oldest Franciscan brotherhood of thirds officially recognized and constituted in Madrid. We have seen the solidity of its structure; the existing cohesion between the brothers and their dependency on the Franciscan hierarchy. The documents have shown how, always from the most absolute of loyalties, the Institution has tried to separate from some of the servitudes it carried along, which testifies the difficulty involved in the introduction of changes within corporations in which tradition constitutes one of the main sources of legitimization.

Now we can establish some conclusions that have confirmed great part of our hypotheses:

First, that with spirit of evangelical renovation, the Venerable Third Order of Madrid appears among the Madrilenians as an instrument of confession and socialization, to the service of the Church and the Monarchy, as a space of social uniformity and obedience.

Second, that although —and according to the study that we have conducted on the behaviours of some of its members— many of them were only motivated by their beliefs and religious fervour, there were also some who sought a needed material aid and hospital attendance. This was so since one of the welfare competencies assumed by the Brotherhood of Madrid was that of assistance to ill brothers, firstly by domiciliary visits of doctors and nurses and later, after surpassing the 1670 threshold, by the construction of a hospital, due to the insufficient services given with respect to the incessant entrance of brothers demanding sanitary care.

The construction had much to do with the generosity of the devotees of Saint Francis, great number of them anonymous people who saw in the construction a way to give charity to poorest.

The hospital consolidated the identity of the Third Order of Madrid as a Franciscan Institution of aid to the poor and the ill. For the Madrilenians who sought refugees there, the hospital became a space where the body could be healed and simultaneously the soul would be comforted. For four centuries this hospital has survived wars, governments, and even to confiscations in spite of its religious character, because above all ideologies and particularities its work in favour of the public well-being was valued.

Finally, it has attracted our attention how from its simple beginnings, a group of men—above all differences of social and personal interests—agreed in carrying along the goals of devotion and charity, through spirituality and love to the fellow, and as a result of their work they were able to gain the esteem of the Madrilenians and a recognized social prestige in a few years.

Such success was made possible due to the attitude showed by the brothers who composed the different boards which were responsible for the government of the Institution. These were men related to land servitudes serving the Monarchy, bureaucrats or bachelors who did not doubt in giving part of their time, efforts and, even properties to the administration and government of this Institution from which they only received spiritual grace.

Several centuries have passed since Francis of Assisi gave his brothers the gift of receiving them under the Third Order, yet in spite of the time passed, the spirit of the Franciscan Founder has remained alive in his work. The postulates of long ago, present in the Venerable Third Order of Penance, were before and are now valid for the time we live in, as long as poverty and injustice still persist in the current society.