

A comparison of the *typoi* between the IFI and the RCC in chapter six reveals how being a Church of the Poor can be an avenue towards dialogue between the two Churches. It can be said that even if there occurred a divide between the IFI and the RCC in the country, both were molded in the same pot, making it possible for them to arrive at mutual recognition. In this respect, the author claims that despite their differences, they still enjoy a genuine *koinonia* or communion.

The book, which is the outcome of Fr. Magboo's doctoral dissertation in Angelicum, Rome, gives a fine account of the ongoing ecumenical dialogue between the two Christian Churches. On August 3, 2021, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the IFI formalized their mutual recognition of baptism, making the sign of Christian unity more vivid and almost within reach.

Fr. Mabgo has shown in his work that dialogue is made not only through concepts and methodologies but, more so, through the concretized and lived faith of the people who strive to uphold the message of the Gospel on whatever soil the seeds of the Word may fall.

One lesson that should be derived from the study is clear: To be the Church in the Philippines is to be a Church of the Poor. Nothing less will make the faith more recognizable to the Filipino people. A Church that lives out the poverty of Christ does not only serve as a model for Filipinos to identify themselves with — more importantly, it is the primary way in which Christ can be recognized as present in his Church for both the IFI and the RCC in the country.

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Thompson, Augustine, O.P. *Dominican Brothers: Conversi, Lay and Cooperator Friars*. Chicago: New Priory Press, 2017. pp 342. ISBN: 978-1623110567.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/3011pslx183br4>

For many ordinary Catholics, the Order of Preachers is known as a religious order exclusively for priests. Such is the case as the main apostolate of the Order, which is preaching, is notably and publicly associated with the exercise of the role of its priests as preachers during liturgical celebrations such as the Holy Mass. But there exists in the Order a vocation that is not a priestly one — such is the vocation of the cooperator brotherhood. The role and relevance of the vocation of the cooperator brotherhood in the Order has been subjected to countless questions, reflections, and clarifications over the past decades, including by the cooperator brothers themselves. Reflections on such continues to this day, but this time such undertaking focuses on

the historical development of the cooperator brotherhood within the Order. This is proven by the fact that the first congress of the cooperator brothers, which was held in 2013 in Lima, Peru, recommended that a work that records the history of the cooperator brotherhood be written. This exhortation, as well as the request of Fr. Bruno Cadoré, O.P. (former Master of the Order) in 2013, bore fruit with the creation and publication of the monograph *Dominican Brothers: Conversi, Lay, and Cooperator Friars* (2017).

The monograph's contents revolve around this central thesis – that the vocation of the cooperator brotherhood is an indispensable and important part of the Order since the beginning of its existence. This is established through the discussion of the historical development of the cooperator brotherhood vis-à-vis with that of the Order. This thesis is further enriched and humanized by the inclusion of the biographies of cooperator brothers who lived throughout the centuries and the oral histories of some cooperator brothers in the present day. It should be noted that these features of the monograph are in fulfillment of the recommendation of the 2013 Lima Congress. It said that the historical work on the cooperator brotherhood should document the "history, vitality, permanence and presence of cooperator brothers in the life and mission of the Order" and include the "biographies on the Saints, Blesseds, and Martyrs, and personal narratives, since its foundation to the present." The monograph's author is Fr. Augustine Thompson, O.P., a son of the Province of St. Albert the Great (Central United States). He is a historian whose research interests include medieval Church history and history of canon law.

The monograph consists of six chapters, a preface, a prologue, and an epilogue. The prologue ("The First *Conversi*") provides a brief survey of the existing modern historical scholarship pertaining to the brotherhood and discusses the pre-Dominican origins of the vocation of the brotherhood. Chapter 1 ("Early Dominican Brothers, 1216-1300") traces the origins of the brotherhood in the Order, whose members were first called as *conversi* (singular, *conversus*). It also highlights its development vis-à-vis the beginnings of the Order in the thirteenth century. Chapter 2 ("Beyond the Monastery, 1300-1500") discusses the various activities done by the *conversi* both within and outside the confines of the monastery during the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries. It specifically enumerates the activities of the brothers outside the monastery, such as being artists, architects, and engineers. It also discusses the juridical development of the vocation of the brotherhood in response to the crises that the Order faced during the aforementioned centuries. Chapter 3 ("Reformers, Missions, and Martyrs, 1500-1650") deals with the introduction of important reforms in the formation of the *conversi* and the participation of the *conversi*

(specifically the non-Spanish brothers) in the missionary activities of the friars in Asia and Eastern Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It also highlights the martyrdom of some of the brothers in Ireland and Eastern Europe. Chapter 4 (“Iberia and New Worlds, 1550-1700”) focuses on the life and roles of the *conversi* in the circumscriptions and convents established in Spain and its colonies including the present-day Philippines. It is in this chapter that the lives of St. Martin de Porres (who is a *donatus* or a member of the Third Order and not a *conversus*) and St. Juan Macias are featured. Chapter 5 (“Revolution and Restoration, 1700-1960”) discusses the life and activities of the brothers amidst turbulent historical events that severely affected the Order from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. It should be noted that during the period that is being discussed in this chapter, the term used to refer to the brothers has changed from *conversi* to “lay brothers” (from the nineteenth century to 1958), and eventually to “cooperator brothers” (from 1958 to the present). Chapter 6 (“The Brotherhood in the Age of Vatican II”) traces the developments that led to the shaping of the vocation of the brotherhood in its present form. It highlights the actions (or inactions in some cases) of the General Chapters convoked during the years following Vatican II which attempted to address problems concerning the vocation of the brotherhood such as the dwindling number of brothers and the role and participation of the brothers within the Order. It also features the opinions and views expressed by the brothers themselves through the commissions and meetings that were formed during this time. Finally, the epilogue (“Brothers of the New Millennium”) highlights the present-day views of the brothers concerning their identity and role in the Order. Such views were extracted from the Executive Summary of the general meeting of the brothers in Lima, Peru in 2013 and from the answers of the brothers from the United States, Poland, and Vietnam who were interviewed by the author.

The monograph is a welcome addition to the existing body of work concerning the history of the Order primarily because it presents an informative narration of the development of the cooperator brotherhood since its conception in the 13th century to the present. Its presentation of the history of the cooperator brotherhood, especially in the first four chapters, is clear and concise. Conscious of the peculiarities of the different periods in the history of the cooperator brotherhood, it features terms appropriate to the time period that is being discussed in the chapters. In particular, it uses the different terms referring to the cooperator brothers throughout its history (*conversi*, “lay brothers,” “cooperator brothers”). Its inclusion of the life and works of cooperator brothers (both past and present) other than St. Martin de Porres and St. Juan Macias not only sheds light on their deeds, but also introduces them to readers

who are unfamiliar with them, enabling them to learn from their example. It is also notable for its inclusion of statistical data on the number of cooperator brothers from 1876 to 2016.

It should be noted however that problems pertaining to the contents of the monograph, particularly in its last two chapters, are observable. Some of those problems were noted by the author himself. Although in general it is clear and concise, the monograph is not comprehensive as it is unable to provide a thorough discussion on the history of the cooperator brotherhood in the decades following Vatican II. The author himself considered the information that he has written in the sixth chapter of the monograph as “provisional.” It is also unable to provide an inclusive presentation of the perspectives of the cooperator brothers in the present as only brothers from Poland, the United States, and Vietnam were interviewed. It is noticeable also that in the discussion in the last two chapters, particularly on the general experience of the brothers in the years after Vatican II, the life and works of the brothers in the United States is overly if not excessively highlighted, while only some of those of non-American brothers are included. As a result, it appears that the experience of the American brothers is generally the experience of the other brothers as well, which is of course untrue.

Reading the monograph made this author reminded once again of the importance of the cooperator brothers in the Order. Such importance is not only grounded on the responsibilities accorded to them by legislation or the nature of their vocation that was defined and redefined throughout its history. Such is also based on their very lives – their works and witnessing in particular – which are constant reminders for all friars that the Dominican vocation is not solely for the intellectual, but for all those who desire to share in the preaching mission of the Order. Since it is not solely for the learned, friars in turn should not think that being intelligent is the only end-goal of becoming a Dominican.

In closing, *Dominican Brothers* is a concise and reliable backgrounder on the development of the vocation of the cooperator brotherhood and the lives of the brothers who lived throughout its long history. It is highly recommended for all Dominicans who wish to know more about that particular aspect of the Order’s history. It is also highly recommended for ordinary Catholics, especially for those who are discerning on the vocation that they intend to pursue in the Order.

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