
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR

THREE MILESTONES THAT ALLOW US TO CONNECT CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARIZATION THROUGH THE AFFIRMATION OF ORDINARY LIFE

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to establish a series of continuities between what Charles Taylor calls ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ and Christianity. The general theory of secularization was articulated on the basis of the differentiation between the religious and the secular, but an in-depth analysis reveals clear continuities between the two. Thus, our work will focus on analysing three milestones that will help us to exemplify how Christianity contributed to the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’, one of the main basis on which what we know as secularization processes will be articulated. The first of the milestones will focus on analysing a series of measures aimed at modifying the inappropriate behaviour of the secular clergy taken during the reign of Isabella I of Castile (1474-1504) and their effect on religious action in the world. In a second moment, we will focus on investigating the impact on the intramundane that the theological turn introduced by Calvinism had on the doctrine of Protestant predestination. Finally, we will analyse the Catholic action developed by the Jesuits and Opus Dei in specific areas of social life such as education (Jesuits) and professional life (Opus Dei and its idea of sanctification of work), a model that mixes intramundane asceticism, but without renouncing the pre-eminence of the Church understood as an institute of salvation.

Keywords: affirmation, ordinary life, secular clergy, intramundane asceticism, Catholic intramundane asceticism

1. Introduction

In 1991, Merlin Donald published *Origins of the Modern Mind* [1], a work that was to have a great impact on the understanding of the evolution of cognition and culture throughout the history of societies. Donald questions the basis of the evolutionary views defended by authors such as Herbert Spencer [2]

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or Auguste Comte [3], who focus on discontinuities, on the elements of rupture that help to functionally differentiate each of the evolutionary stages. His proposal (Donald) focuses not so much on the inter-stage ruptures, but on the continuities that inevitably lead us from one phase to another of evolution. Thus, his proposal does not focus so much on evolutionary hiatuses (without denying them, of course) as on diphthongs, in the understanding that this continuing view of evolution can offer us a clearer and closer approximation to social reality. As Donald himself points out, the model he proposes is “a cascade, or cumulative model: previous adaptations are preserved, following the principle of conservation of gains. Top or governing representations were thus not the only cognitive-cultural representations circulating in the human matrix as evolution moved forward: there were the ones with the most influence at that stage.” [4]

In *Religion in Human Evolution*, Robert N. Bellah summarizes magnificently the methodological advance implicit in Donald’s theory [5]. For him in the evolution of culture and religion: “Nothing is ever lost” [5, p. 13]. This implies that the genetic code of the adaptations or new forms that appear in the later stages of evolution is shaped, in part, but intrinsically, by previous adaptations. In Donald’s proposal this is evident from the moment in which the human being abandons his primate condition and becomes a cultural being [1, 4]. From that moment on, humanity has gone through three phases: the mimetic, the mythical and the theoretical. In each of these phases or stages, the subject necessarily relies on previous evolutionary achievements. One of the keys to Donald’s theory is that without the preterit stages - without their presence - neither the emergence nor the development of the subsequent stages is possible. Likewise, hegemonic representations of past stages may continue to have their courses or acquire mixed or hybrid forms in future manifestations of evolution. Even if we, the inhabitants of societies at the beginning of the 21st century, are in the theoretical phase of evolution according to Donald, this does not imply that we cease to develop behaviours of a mimetic or mythical type.

If we have brought up Donald’s theory, it is because it serves as a methodological framework to develop the task at hand in this paper. Our reflection intends to question -as outstanding authors such as José Casanova [6], Hans Joas [7] or David Martin [8, 9] - the general thesis of secularization - Acquaviva [10], Berger [11] or Wilson [12, 13], among others - that identify this macro-social process exclusively from the perspective of the necessary rupture with religion or with religious. If Donald is correct in his analysis of cultural evolution - and, indeed, this is what we defend in this paper -, no process of change emerges as a *tabula rasa* with respect to previous stages or previous social experience. This simple reflection implies that it would not be unreasonable to think that certain religious representations could have played a fundamental role in the advent of secularization (understood as a macro-social process) or of secular societies (understood as a product of the action of secularization on social interaction), that is, that certain dynamics articulated in the religious system could have an important role in both the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ and the consolidation of the ‘immanent framework’, two of the

main concepts on which Charles Taylor articulates his analysis of the *Secular Age* [14].

Specifically, the aim of our work is to analyse how three milestones of a markedly Christian religious character - developed within this religious system [15] - contributed to the emergence and development of the 'affirmation of ordinary life' as a consequence of a religious action that gradually converted the world *into* a space suitable for sacredness. In fact, both the hegemonic character enjoyed by Christianity throughout the Middle Ages, as well as the very logic of 'cascade' enunciated by Donald [4] with regard to evolutionary social processes, should already serve as clear indicators that there have been movements within the medieval religious system (in this case Christian) that have necessarily contributed to the advent of secular societies.

In the specific case at hand, our work will focus on analysing three milestones developed within Christianity which, we believe, have had a direct impact on the secular drift experienced by modern societies: first, we will study a series of measures aimed at modifying the inappropriate behaviour of the secular clergy taken during the reign of Isabel I of Castile (1474-1504) and their effect on religious action in the world; second, we will focus on investigating the impact on the intramundane of the theological turn introduced by Calvinism on the doctrine of Protestant predestination; finally, we will analyse the Catholic action developed by the Jesuits and Opus Dei in specific areas of social life such as education (Jesuits) and professional life (Opus Dei and its idea of sanctification of work), a model that mixes intramundane asceticism, but without renouncing the pre-eminence of the Church understood as an institute of salvation.

2. The behaviour of the secular clergy in the late medieval period and the civil and religious attempts to modify them

As Juan A. Prieto Sayagués points out [16], throughout the late Middle Ages a series of tensions arose between what we know as the 'regular clergy' - who developed their religious action apart from the world, fundamentally in monasteries - and the 'secular clergy' - who carried out their religious action in the world, concretely in parishes or in ecclesiastical management and administration, as in the case of the institution of the bishopric. It is not our intention in this section to analyse the late medieval tensions between these two types of clergy, but to use the observation made by authors such as Prieto Sayagués [16] and others such as José Manuel Nieto Soria [17] or Mari Luz Rodrigo Estevan [18] - among others -, as a starting point for an analysis in which it becomes evident that already at this moment in history and within non-reformed Christianity itself a change is taking place that has begun to erode the symbolic system of what Bellah calls the stage of the 'Historical Religion' [19]. Such a symbolic system is articulated through the existence of a clear and marked dualism between this and the other world, and more importantly from the perspective of our argument, through the consequent absolute dependence of the former on the latter in terms of access to the sacred. In this scenario, the

dominant logic for accessing the sacred had been withdrawal or ‘flight’ [20] from the world. In this context the mundane is synonymous with the profane and the impure. Having said the above, we would like to point out that the observation of tensions between the regular and secular clergy leads us to think that this dominant logic is beginning to break down in the late Middle Ages.

In short, we understand that both what we have just pointed out in the previous paragraph and the fact that, according to Prieto Sayagués, at this time the monasteries were trying “to recover the protagonism lost in religious life and in the administration of sacraments” [16, p. 70] can be analysed as evidence or as indicators that the ‘secular’, the ‘mundane’, is ceasing to be a space forbidden to the sacred in this context. It is important to note that at this point we are not yet talking about a secularization of the symbolic system of Christian or late medieval societies, but through this movement of acquisition of relevance of the secular clergy - which we will try to exemplify in the following pages - we can detect something like a first milestone in the socio-evolutionary process that, later and with the passage of time, will develop in the form of secularization. In fact and following the typology of religious evolution developed by Bellah [19], we understand that these tensions already announce a first turn towards what Bellah himself defines as a pre-modern stage of religious evolution, whose symbolic system is characterized by a rupture in the dualism of the previous system of symbols. Thus, although we agree with Bellah in understanding the Protestant Reformation as the milestone from which the transition from the historical to the pre-modern stage of religion is clearly perceived, this does not prevent us from pointing out that within pre-Reformation medieval Christianity itself, ‘tectonic movements’ are already clearly taking place regarding the relationship between the mundane and the extra-mundane in terms of the modes of access to religious salvation. What we are commenting on only reinforces the evolutionary logic that we are defending in this work [1, p. 5-14]. This implies that the Reformation would serve as a milestone, as a symbolic point of reference from which to ascertain a change. However, to understand this change, we must pay attention to the socio-historical dynamics that occur and lead to this milestone. The milestone is always a consequence of the change, never the change itself. As Walter Benjamin pointed out, we can define change as “the same thing always new” [21].

We understand that the existing tension between the regular and secular clergy in late medieval societies already implies an acquisition of relevance of the former in the management of sacred affairs. The idea that moves us in this epigraph is to gather a series of evidences that, in the first place, allow us to verify the terms in which this acquisition of relevance of the secular clergy takes place, understanding it as a way of promoting the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ [14, p. 144] and of breaking with the symbolic framework of historical religion [19, p 73-76]. For this purpose, we will rely on historiography, specifically, on a set of analyses [16-18] that focus on studying how, throughout the reign of Isabel I of Castile (1474-1504), a series of actions are developed to modify some of the widespread inappropriate behaviours within the secular clergy.

In this sense, the first thing to note is that for the Castilian administration to decide to promote political action to 'improve' the conduct of the secular clergy, a series of negative or inappropriate behaviours on the part of the clergy had to be detected beforehand. These behaviours are summarized by Rodrigo Estevan: "The disinterest, idleness and poor vocation, in some cases, but, above all, the dedication that a large part of the secular clergy lent to matters outside the spiritual magisterium, caused both the breach of their ecclesiastical duties and a whole long series of improper and immoral actions, actively participating in the violent struggles between sides, breaking ecclesiastical celibacy as a rule, falling into simony, practicing usurious lending and fraudulently negotiating (...) with goods belonging to the Church. The panorama reflected by the provincial synods is very significant in this regard. The constitutions emanating from these meetings refer to drunken rectors and clerics who frequent taverns, carry knives and other weapons, have the vice of gambling, make sorceries, incur in crimes of theft, homicide and even abduction of women and participate and meddle in 'secular acts'." [18, p. 1360]

The above quote describes a clear scenario of historical religiosity [19, p. 73-78] in which the secular (including the action of the secular clergy itself) is not a valid mode of access to the sacred. In this context, the regular clergy is clearly the only one that can provide the means for access to salvation. The problem is that such clergy are removed from the world and their action has no impact as far as the governance of the world is concerned. Isabel I understands perfectly well the impact that religion has on society and is aware that this impact can be used as an element of control and socio-political order. But this requires the articulation of an ethic of responsibility [20] which, in the first place, must be internalized and developed in the secular clergy, those who orient their religious action towards the world. Thus, Isabel I and her court consider that the conduct of the secular clergy must be modified, turning their action in the world into an example of virtue and appropriateness. In this scenario, it is essential that those who act religiously in the world submit to the 'rule' without ceasing to act in the world.

Although with some difficulties linked fundamentally with clerical corporatism, with the resistance to change their modes of action in the world and to be judged by civil and not ecclesiastical courts - the crown manages to penetrate the ecclesiastical wall by appointing bishops who represent the air of regeneration and appropriate conduct that Isabel I is trying to establish. The most outstanding example according to the selected bibliography is that of the bishop of Badajoz, Alonso Manrique de Lara, who, after becoming prelate, convoked a synod in 1501 [17] in which the following measures were approved for the regular clergy to comply with: "1. Non-residence of clergymen in their benefices 2. The care and appearance of the habit. 3. Attention to the signs of mourning. 4. The prohibition of illicit games, both in practicing and observing them. 5. The prohibition of swearing in vain while invoking the name of God. 6. The obligation to go to confession and receive communion at least three times a year. 7. The prohibition of clerical concubinage. 8. The prohibition that those who sing Mass for the first time give rise to special celebrations and rejoicings on

that occasion. 9. The requirement of examination prior to ordination. 10. The regulation of what priests should know and what they should be examined on. 11. The prohibition of access to ordination for those who have committed a crime punishable by blood. 12. The prohibition of recommendations (entreaties) for someone to be ordained. 13. Instruction in all liturgical and sacramental practices. 14. The safeguarding of temples from secular uses such as festive and playful, commercial or dishonest activities.” [17, p. 108-109]

This whole set of measures, in the first place, allows us to clearly enumerate a list of inappropriate behaviours developed by the regular clergy, since if these aspects needed to be regulated it is because they were not adequately fulfilled. Secondly, they also reinforce the idea of adjustment to the rule, to the orderly and exemplary behaviours of the regular clergy but in the secular life, as a means of accessing virtue, as a way of approaching the sacred, that is, in this case in and through action in the world, undoubtedly, the novel element that we are highlighting at this point in the writing.

The question we are interested in analysing is not so much why and for what purpose the crown wanted to develop this type of dynamic or exemplary behaviour, but rather the social consequences derived from it, that is, how they influenced the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’, that is, how they contributed to what would later be developed in terms of the process of secularization. As we have been able to observe in the previous pages, before the action developed by the Castilian crown, some generalized behaviours of the secular clergy did nothing more than reinforce the existing dualism between this and the other world defined by Bellah [19] as a characteristic feature of the historical stage of religious evolution. The secular clergy existed, but it was not an instrument oriented towards salvation or towards the acquisition of sacred status. *Let us say that the secular clergy was more secular than clergy in a context in which the secular was not a space endowed for the articulation of the sacred.* We consider that the measures developed during the reign of Isabel I of Castile - beyond the fact that they reinforced royal authority and order, as we have previously verified -, had a clear impact on the rupture of the existing dualism between this and the other world: firstly, *because they sought to make the members of the secular clergy more clergy than secular.* Secondly, *because by developing this ethic of responsibility in terms of exemplary action, the logic based on that to access the sacred one had to separate oneself from the world began to break down.* It could be said that the very existence of the secular clergy already announced “the possibility and obligation of the secular priest to sanctify himself in the performance of his specific ministry” [22]. We will not deny the major, however, we consider that the action developed to modify these inappropriate behaviours of the secular clergy necessarily contributes to create the breeding ground for the sanctification of the secular priest. This clearly implies the consideration of religious action within the world as a type of action suitable for the acquisition of sacred status, laying the foundations for the re-sacralisation of the worldly space developed by Protestantism and for the emergence of secular sacralisations from the arrival of modernity, a moment in which, as Stephen

Monsma [23] points out, sacred and secular mix. In short, the demand for the development of exemplary behaviour on the part of the secular clergy during the reign of Isabel I of Castile turns into action what was already in potential with the emergence of this collective: that the world emerge as a space suitable for the sacred.

3. Protestant intramundane asceticism and salvation in and through the world

The Protestant Reformation provoked an earthquake in the late medieval and/or Renaissance Christian religious reality. It is undoubtedly the most important split in the Church since the 11th century when the Eastern Schism (1054) divided Christianity into Roman Catholics - under the authority of the Vatican Supreme Pontiff - and Orthodox - under the orders of the Patriarch of Constantinople.

For Bellah, as we have already noted in the previous section, the Protestant Reformation is the event that brings about the transition from the stage of 'Historical Religion' to that of 'Early Modern Religion'. It reveals itself as a milestone in the evolution of religions. In this early modern phase occurs "the collapse of the hierarchical structuring of both this and the other world [...]" Under the new circumstances salvation is not to be found in any kind of withdrawal from the world but in the midst of worldly activities" [19, p. 76]. In this new scenario, according to Bellah's approach, religious symbolism concentrates on the relationship between the individual and the transcendent reality, religious action coincides with the totality of life (of the actions carried out throughout life). As far as religious organization is concerned, a new religious system appears based on two types: the elect and the reprobates, with the specificity that these elect and/or reprobates have to prove their status as such in the world. Finally, the social implications are intimately related to a series of developments ranging from economics to science, from education to law, that is, rooted in the *saeculum*.

As far as our analysis is concerned, from the description of the characteristics of the Early Modern Phase, we have three questions that are crucial for understanding how this milestone in the evolution of religions can serve as an example to certify the existence of continuities between Christianity and the 'affirmation of ordinary life': the first of these is linked to the religious organization and the differentiation between the elect and the reprobates; the second has to do with the religious action that takes place in this phase, which coincides with the totality of life; and the third is related to the firm commitment to the intra-mundane, which results in the rupture of the existing dualism between this and the other world characteristic of the Historical phase of the evolution of religions.

As far as religious organization is concerned, we might be tempted to focus on the study of the tension existing between the two institutions characteristic of Catholicism and Protestantism, that is, between the Church - in the first case - and the Sect - in the second. Although it is still an open subject

and worthy of analysis, to obtain an in-depth look at this question we could turn to the work of such relevant authors as Max Weber [20], Martin Marty [24], Ernst Troeltsch [25] or Bryan Wilson [26]. But this is not the element on which we wish to focus, but rather on the differentiation between the elect and the reprobate (something that undoubtedly has a direct impact on sect membership in the Protestant case) and, above all, on the ways in which the theological turn introduced by Calvinism around the doctrine of predestination will have a direct impact on the religious revaluation of the *saeculum*.

The doctrine of Protestant predestination is based on the idea that only God is free and that between him and human beings there is an abyss that, by definition, is unbridgeable. As we see, without the Calvinist-Protestant twist, this doctrine places us in a scenario of dualism characteristic of the historical phase of religious evolution. In this context in which the theological nuance has not yet been introduced in the doctrine, there are only two questions that we can know with certainty: 1. only a part of the people will be saved and 2. through action we are not able to modify our condition of saved or condemned, since this decision has been taken in a sovereign and previous way by God outside of space and social time. As it was presented in its original format, the doctrine of predestination did nothing but stifle human action, not favouring in any way the rupture of the dualism of the historical phase of religious evolution, nor generating a space for the re-sacralisation of the mundane.

What has been explained so far does not allow us to understand why this doctrine of predestination favours the emergence and development of intramundane asceticism. In fact, we could consider that the absence of voice and vote of the individual with respect to his state of salvation could be understood as a regression, as a kind of regression with respect to the Christian religiosity of the Church, which had already established the differentiation between regular and secular clergy. In the same way, a question necessarily arises: how to activate the subjects with respect not only to their salvation, but also to their action in the world? Here we will find the explanatory key that Weber uses to connect this doctrine with the emergence and development of intramundane asceticism.

Thus, to avoid that the doctrine of predestination could derive in nihilism, moral relativism, anarchy or absence of motivation for action in social life, Calvinism proposes a fundamental theological turn that can be summarized in the following argument: *God wants his children to act in their daily life for his greater glory*. The first manifestation of this principle will be “the fulfilment of professional duties imposed by the *lex naturae*” [27]. Thus, by acting in daily life, by being exemplary in professional life, the faithful could acquire *indications* of their state of salvation or condemnation. The term indications is key to understanding the permanence of the idea of predestination. With the Calvinist theological turn salvation continues to be pre-assigned [19, p. 76-78] by the divinity. The Calvinist can never obtain salvation through their actions in the world. This is an attribute he does not have.

“Incessant professional work was inculcated as the only way to drive away religious doubt and to obtain the security of one’s own state of grace.” [27, p. 91-92] For Weber, here would lie the religious origins of the spirit of capitalism. To us, with this theological turn of the screw, the Calvinist opens a space for action oriented, not so much towards the acquisition of salvation by his own hand, but to the obtaining of indications of a salvation decided beforehand by the divinity. The way to obtain indications will be through action in the world, primarily through the exercise of the profession, something that will later lead to professional action in the world being covered by a veil of sacredness independently of its relationship with the logic of divine action. It is important to emphasize the nuance we have just introduced: the theological turn that Calvinism infuses into the doctrine of predestination does not imply - at least at this early stage - that the subject is responsible for and the repository of his salvation. However, this doctrinal turn is key to understanding how, in the modern phase of religious evolution, the individual is freed from his dependence on the divinity and becomes the axis around which a secularized collective imaginary is articulated that develops around what Peter L. Berger defines as the ‘Heretical Imperative’ [28].

Purely Reformed religiosity thus introduces a novel element: the certainty of salvation or damnation is obtained only “by the *verification* of a specific type of conduct that is unequivocally distinct from the lifestyle of the ‘natural man’; from this follows for the individual the impulse to methodically control his state of grace by his way of life, and consequently to imbue it with asceticism. But, as we have already seen, this ascetic lifestyle meant a rational modelling, oriented to the divine will, of one’s entire existence. And this asceticism was *no* longer an *opus supererogationis*, but a realization demanded of anyone who wanted to be certain of his beatitude.” [27, p. 134] It implied, then, a *rational modelling of the whole of existence*, that is, of secular, daily life. As we can see, the answer to the double question posed by the faithful Calvinist: Have I been chosen and how can I be sure of it, gives us a *rationally oriented* answer based on *methodical control* (that is, on rational order) and on *asceticism* or the search for virtue (in this case of a spiritual nature) *in the world*. Only through a “systematic method of rational conduct of life” [27, p. 100], of his worldly life, can the reformed faithful *acquire solid indications* of his state of grace.

The reflection with which we concluded the previous paragraph has a direct impact on religious action, the second element that we rescued from Bellah’s analysis of the early pre-modern stage of religious evolution [19, p. 76-78], since any action of daily life becomes a fertile space for obtaining signs of salvation. Undoubtedly, this turn has a clear effect on the organization of social life and, as developed in the Protestant model, acts in favour of the logic of *Entzauberung der Welt*. Now, for our argumentation what is really significant is that life, or, rather, action in the world becomes an environment suitable for the religious and for the sacred. *That is, just as regarding the means of access to the sacred there is a clear Entzauberung der Welt, regarding the profane or sacred character of the mundane, there is a clear transition towards its re-sacralization* [29].

Finally, the Protestant Reformation (or the changes that take place during the Early Modern evolutionary phase) necessarily contributes to the collapse of the existing dualism between this and the other world (third element of the analysis that we wanted to emphasize) of which Bellah speaks as characteristic of the Historical phase of religious evolution. It is important to note that the intention of the Reformed is not to question the predominance of the other world over this one (that is, their intention is not to break the dualism). However, their way of solving the theological problem linked to the doctrine of predestination provokes an unintended consequence that is articulated in the form of a clear opening to the re-sacralisation of the worldly oriented through asceticism: “The most important thing is, however, that this special life, distinct from the ‘natural’ life, which religion demanded of the saint, is no longer developed in monastic communities external to the world, but *within* the world and its organization” [27, p. 134-135].

4. Intramundane Catholic asceticism - Jesuits and Opus Dei

Although Catholicism’s first reaction to the Reformation was one of withdrawal, confrontation and rejection of any form of heterodoxy in its midst, the social impact of the movement initiated by Luther was so important that it was felt in some of the Catholic religious communities that emerged after the publication of his theses on the door of the Church of Wittenberg in 1517. Two of the religious-Catholic movements most influenced by Protestant intramundane asceticism are the Jesuits - founded in 1534, only 17 years after its inception - and Opus Dei - founded much later in the twentieth century, specifically in 1928.

As we have just pointed out, the Jesuits and Opus Dei are two of the most ‘Protestantized’ Catholic religious communities, and in which elements such as the intramundane asceticism or the sanctification of work can be perceived most clearly. However, the fact of having developed some Protestant traits does not imply that these communities have ceased to be Catholic. This circumstance and its possible impact on the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ is the reason why we will dwell briefly on these movements in this section. The idea that we want to develop is that the mixed model of Catholic intra-mundane asceticism that they propose is configured as the third milestone that we are going to analyse in the continuities that we are studying between Christianity and ‘affirmation of ordinary life’.

We want to insist on this idea: we consider that linking exclusively the contribution of Opus Dei and the Jesuits to the re-sacralisation of the worldly with its Protestant elements is a mistake. Our starting hypothesis is that what makes it a distinct milestone with respect to the two previous ones is its hybrid character. In fact, its impact on the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ [14, p. 144] is felt not so much on Protestant culture, but on Catholic culture, which, with the passage of time, will also experience a clear process of secularization, which, as we have been arguing, is not only the product of the Protestant rupture.

Thus, we cannot affirm that Jesuits and Opus Dei are Protestant movements, nor that they are pre-Reformation Catholic movements. Both are the fruit of a socio-religious reality that has undergone an evolutionary transformation, articulating themselves as religious communities with Protestant traits and elements, but which, at the same time, maintain their attachment to the Church as an institute of salvation, as “administrator of a kind of trust of the eternal goods of salvation that are offered to each one” [20, p. 895]. Undoubtedly, in this case the logic enunciated by Bellah that in the evolution of culture and religion “nothing is ever lost” [5, p. 13] works perfectly. Even Opus Dei, which has developed an institutional model that could easily be ascribed to what Joachim Wach called *ecclesiola in ecclesia* [30], articulating an alternative or novel formula of institutional integration not without complexity [31], has never renounced the primacy of the Institute (of the Church) over salvation, a clearly and genuinely Catholic trait.

Having pointed out the above, we would like to comment that in this section we wish to analyse how the Jesuits and Opus Dei contribute to the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ [14, p. 144] within Catholic societies, that is, how they participate in the development of secularization through the re-sacralisation of religiously oriented action in the context of daily life. To achieve our aim, we will focus exclusively on two aspects - one from each of the two selected religious communities, namely: the commitment to education in the case of the Jesuits and sanctification through work in the case of Opus Dei. What we have just pointed out does not imply that Opus Dei has not carried out educational activities (something it has done and continues to do through its network of schools that cover the entire educational structure or its network of universities); nor does it imply that the Jesuits have not carried out something like a sanctification of work (as demonstrated by the proliferation of professional schools such as, for example, ESADE). In fact, as we have analysed elsewhere [32], both are concerned with moral-religious education and with the formation of professionals as modes of religious action in the world, as modes of transmitting a form of action in the world to be developed by both clergy and laity. In short, we will focus on each of these aspects to exemplify how this model of Catholic intramundane asceticism allows us to connect Christianity and affirmation of ordinary life.

4.1. *The educational action of Jesuits*

To understand the contribution of the Jesuits to the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ through education, the starting point has to be the analysis of the *Exercitia* of Ignatius of Loyola (co-founder of this religious community). These are a series of activities oriented as an instrument to find the divine will [33] that can be performed by both clerics and lay people. In the development of these spiritual exercises, the role of the ‘mediator’, who acts as a guide in their realization, is key. This guide is always a representative of the Church. Here we can clearly perceive the mixed character of the Jesuits’ proposal of Catholic

intramundane asceticism. On the one hand, the worldly is enhanced, both with regard to the recipients of the ‘exercises’, who need no longer be exclusively priests, and with regard to the fact that daily life is configured as a space suitable for the religious action of salvation: “daily life itself is assumed and lived as a properly spiritual experience” [33, p. 20]. At the same time, and on the other hand, everything is carried out under the supervision and mediation of the Church, which remains the exclusive institute of salvation. As we have pointed out elsewhere: “Communion with God is no longer a gift exclusively for those religious who withdraw from the world, but is open to the laity as a whole, providing them with the ascetical means that were previously the exclusive domain of monks, albeit always under the indispensable supervision and guidance of the Church” [32, p. 258].

The question that arises after having carried out the analysis exercise of the previous paragraph is: How to connect Spiritual Exercises with the educational formation given by the Jesuits in their schools and universities? The ideal of ascetic virtue contained in the Exercises is going to become the pedagogical ideal transmitted in the centres run by the Jesuits. That is, the ascetic educational action transcends the walls of the religious system - of the religious practitioner - to become a religious pedagogical ideal of citizen formation articulated around the intra-mundane asceticism. *What we want to emphasize is that through their educational action in the world and for the world, the Jesuits contributed to the re-sacralisation of the world itself through the importance given to religious action in the saeculum understood as a means of access to salvation, turning it into a space to be oriented Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.* The ideal of ‘virtuous formation’, the driving force of the *Exercitia*, was transferred to the classrooms, transmitting itself to the laity formed in this type of centres: “this implication between both, formation and virtue, presided over the pedagogical ideal of the Jesuits. First for its own members. Then for the many students who passed through its classrooms, without the need to become Jesuits” [34]. These students would reproduce these elements of socialization in their lives as spouses, children or professionals. “The Jesuits wanted to imbue the world with their religious vision of play by forming *saints in and for the world*” [32, p. 258].

Thus, the formation imparted in the Jesuit centres went a step beyond those given by both the crown of Castile during the reign of Isabel I (first milestone) and the Reformed (second milestone). In the first milestone, it is the members of the secular clergy - exclusively - who have to modify their behaviour, imbuing their action in the world with religious exemplarity; in the second, it is the members of the Protestant sect who can obtain signs of salvation through their intramundane ascetic practice; here (third milestone), the message that at first and in the context of the *Exercitia* is only for the initiated (priests and lay people who perform the exercises), acquires a greater relevance in terms of impact on society in general by extending to all students educated under the Jesuit ideal of Catholic intramundane asceticism.

4.2. The sanctification of work from the perspective of Opus Dei

Beyond the elements of analysis centred on its juridical status - the character of *ecclesiola in ecclesia* of which we spoke previously - or the debate around the role played by secrecy [32] or paradox [35] in its action in the world, Opus Dei is articulated as an “association of lay men” [31, p. 260-261]. What we have just pointed out has a double impact, since, on the one hand, it makes it difficult for it to fit naturally into ecclesiastical structures - due to the fact that it cannot be considered either a religious community, an order (whether regular or secular) - but, on the other hand (and this point of view is the one we want to develop in this section) implies a clear movement of opening from the religious to the lay. As we will see, the sense of this movement is oriented towards asceticism and exemplarity in daily professional action.

At this point in the analysis, we might be tempted to link this type of asceticism developed by Opus Dei with that which originated in certain Protestant sects, and which Weber links with the rise of capitalism [27]. This link (although it would not be entirely incorrect) would make us forget the Catholic character of Opus Dei. For this reason, we would like to point out that there have been thinkers who have established a clear link between Catholicism and economic life, such as, for example, Ramiro de Maeztu, who in his work *El sentido reverencial del dinero*, affirms that: “the economy is spirit. Money is spirit” [36]. Therefore, it would be necessary to evaluate (although this is not the place), to what extent sanctification through the exercise of the profession is an exclusive feature of Protestantism. Undoubtedly, it is possible to trace, as Weber [27] did, a link between Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. What we have questioned here is whether it is in terms of exclusivity.

Maeztu presents economic action as sacred action [36]. Opus Dei members do not go as far as Maeztu in developing a fundamentally secular creed, that is, they do not develop a sacralised version of economic action independent of the Church. The ascetic-professional action developed by Opus Dei does not go even remotely as far because, in the first place, it (professional work) is not considered a religious end, but a means to achieve the work of God (translation of the term Opus Dei) in the world. In the same way, the sacred element in Opus Dei’s view is not work or money, but the Catholic divinity itself. As the founder of this movement, Jose Maria Escrivá de Balaguer, pointed out: “Give a supernatural motive to your ordinary professional work and you will have sanctified the work” [37].

Thus, through the execution of the work (*opus*) of God in his daily-professional actions, the member of Opus Dei acts in favour of the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’, of the consideration of the world as a space not only apt for the sacred, but capital, substantial. Without it, the work of God remains incomplete. This is the turn that it introduces with respect to what contributed to the first two milestones. In the same way, and unlike the Protestant, the professional action of the members of Opus Dei (or the success in it) does not bring him indications of salvation, but the *certitudo salutis*, that is, the certainty of being saved, of having been chosen. This implies going a step beyond the theological doctrine of

predestination revised by Calvinism, since it implies the possibility of obtaining salvation in and through the world, endowing the human and its action with a value unthinkable in the historical dualistic logic and in the Protestant logic oriented by the doctrine of predestination.

In short, Catholic intramundane asceticism (developed by Jesuits and Opus Dei in the terms analysed) implies a further step in the development of the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’, with respect to the two previous milestones in a double sense: in the first place, it tries to impregnate this ordinary life with sacredness; in the second place, religious action becomes a formula for acquiring salvation, not only for obtaining indications of it. The next step will become the sacralisation of the mundane, but this is no longer the subject of this paper.

5. Conclusions

Throughout this work we have carried out an analysis that has attempted to present a series of milestones that serve as elements of continuity between the religious and the secular, more specifically, between the religious-Christian and ‘affirmation of ordinary life’ in a scenario of Secular Age [14, p. 144]. In this sense, the three milestones studied have provided us with sufficient substrate to confirm that some movements that arose within the Historical religion of Christianity are absolutely key to understanding the essence and impact of what we know today as the process of secularization. The changes that these milestones imply in the logic of religious action and, subsequently, the influence they had on other systems of social life such as, for example, labour or economics, as studied by Weber [27], allow us to establish a clear logic of continuity between religious and secular, questioning the classical conception of the general theory of secularization that was articulated through the necessary opposition of one and the other. Talal Asad points out that “establishing a rigid division between the sacred and the secular surely means impoverishing both” [38]. Along the same lines are Gordon Lynch’s analyses of secularization [39].

In short, we consider that the three milestones analysed draw a scenario in which the progressive rupture with respect to the dualism of the symbolic system of Historical religion and the also progressive and co-extensive acquisition of religious value and meaning by the mundane provoke a fertile space for the ‘affirmation of ordinary life’. Subsequently, with the passage of time, a double process will take place: in the first place of differentiation of the secular spheres of action with respect to the Historical religious ones. In this sense it is crucial to point out that the logic of action of secularization as a socio-historical process is not differentiated with respect to religious in general, but with respect to the particular Historical religious [19], fundamentally with respect to the moral hegemony it had enjoyed throughout the Middle Ages [40]. Secularization feels the need to differentiate itself, not with respect to religious, but with respect to those religious materializations that had dominated the medieval collective imaginary. Therefore, the key to differentiation lies more in the position of power held by Christianity than in the apparent incompatibility between

religious and secular, which, as we have seen, need not be so. Secondly, and once this process of differentiation has taken place, the religious does not disappear from the secular world, but rather, as Émile Durkheim states in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* [41], acquires new masks in secular societies which, as could not be otherwise, are directly related to the values and options of meaning available in social life. In this scenario of rupture of the symbolic-religious dominance of Christianity over social life, religious does not disappear - among other things, because the worldly space (thanks, as we have analysed, to the action of Christianity) had already been re-sacralised, as we have seen in the previous pages - but acquires new and plural forms, and as Berger [42] argues, it is professed on many altars.

Thus, contrary to what has been argued by the general thesis of secularization, articulated around the equation analysed by José Casanova: “The more modern a society is, the more secular, and the more secular, the less religious” [43]. Modern societies continue not only to profess creeds developed in other evolutionary phases, but also new forms of religiosity such as those that have been erected around the revolution [44], around the human person [7, 45], around the civil [46] or around the public [47]. In short, we think that to understand the current post-secular religious scenario [48] it is necessary to keep in mind the work done over time by Christianity in considering the *saeculum* as a space suitable for the sacred.

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