



## A Little Bit of History

### Sanctification of the Sunday

By William Wicks, SFO - Historian

Frances and I hope to travel to Germany, in particular to Bavaria, sometime within the next few years. I promised Frances that I would not wear lederhosen.

While scanning through a German tour guidebook recently, I discovered, under the heading, "Practical Information," the admonition, "Visitors must also bear in mind that there is a compulsory and virtually total ban on trading on Saturday afternoon, Sundays, and on public holidays."

Perhaps there is some vestige of intention to keep holy the Sabbath; perhaps it started that way. But it is my personal belief that Europeans relish their leisure time, much more than we Americans do. It would be difficult to enact such a ban in this country at this time; we bestow unjustifiable deference to the false god, "consumerism."

However, at one time, during the fifties, such a program was carried out, by the Third Order, with some success.

At a board meeting held in Lemont, Illinois on September 22, 1953, Executive Secretary, Fr. Philip Marquard, OFM, proposed that the Third Order take up as a project, "Sanctification of the Sunday." All agreed that that was a truly Tertiary undertaking. The project was motivated by an address given by Pope Pius XII in St. Peter's square in March of 1945, in which the Pope reminded those present, "Keep holy Sunday, the Lord's day, as the faithful of Rome, your fathers have given example from the time of the Apostles."

"Third Order Members Seek to Stop Sunday Trade" read a headline in the Cincinnati Telegraph-Register. In Indianapolis, an effective campaign was waged, and the project was supported in the Chicago Catholic Labor Alliance publication.

Articles of support appeared in the publications: Catholic Digest; America; Work; The Register; Our Sunday Visitor; Franciscan Herald; The Way of St. Francis and St. Anthony Messenger.

More than 100,000 window posters, along with some 50,000 stickers, with the slogan, "Stop, Don't Shop on Sunday," were distributed nationwide. Pastors all over the country were asked to promote the campaign from the pulpit.

The campaign was particularly successful in the Chicago neighborhood known as "Back of the Yards," then, a square mile community with some 18 Catholic churches, approximately 100,000 residences, 95 percent of them Catholic.

In Cincinnati, the meat cutters union and the retail clerks union took up the cause. A bill was brought before the Illinois state legislature that would prohibit shopping on Sunday. In Cleveland, the diocese weekly began to pressure the city fathers about enforcing a local ordinance against Sunday shopping. Cardinal Mooney of Detroit, Cardinal Spellman of New York and Cardinal Stritch of Chicago issued pastoral letters.

The Third Order "Sunday" campaign lasted until 1962; it was a success in its time. But as you can see, it did not have a lasting effect.

But, what if today...?

I am sure that when we do get to Germany, the Sunday will be sanctified with visits to the many Baroque Bavarian churches, and the beautiful German Alps. They should be open for business on Sundays.