

On October 10, 2013, in the Paul Ricoeur Auditorium of the Institut catholique of Paris, the long-awaited defense of Fr. Dominique Greiner's thesis took place. Long-awaited because in the middle of his studies he was named the religious editor-in-chief of the Assumptionist-sponsored daily newspaper, *La Croix*. This heavy responsibility considerably slowed down Fr. Dominique's research, understandably. Long-awaited as well because the topic was so original and relevant.

At first glance, his thesis might not seem to have been too engaging. One could have looked at the title and thought it to be a paper about some relatively unknown, German-speaking Protestant theologian. However, the presence of some 50 journalists, university students, and Assumptionist brothers indicated otherwise. In his brilliant defense, Fr. Dominique took care to explain his choice of Helmut Thielicke whom he considers to be the precursor of "applied ethics" (*l'éthique sectorielle*). As a matter of fact, this great university professor was actively involved in the hot-button issues of his day: the economy, politics, the family, and even biomedical questions.

But just how is "this theological perspective capable of shedding light on the way Christians are to behave?" This was the question that Dominique asked himself and that led him to choose this particular theologian as his principal interlocutor on his rare free nights over the past 10 years. Dominique had to face a real trial early on --- Thielicke's admission that he was unable to prove how helping the Jews under the Nazi regime was a good thing. Domininque, nevertheless, wanted to write his thesis to show why "the soldier Thielicke should be rescued." Alluding to this failure, Dominique went on to explain how Thielicke immersed himself in the thick of world problems and sought to answer them from the viewpoint of his faith in Christ,without overlooking the impasses of the doctrine of justification or that of the 'imago Dei'. Dominique became obsessed with the author and his work. His remarks were a challenge to anyone today who is questioning the true foundation of moral and dogmatic theology. Is it useful to do theology? Is the theologian capable of getting close enough to the issues of the world to make his thought relevant?

It was a wonderful afternoon, characterized by a touch of intellectual suspense, that allowed Dominique humbly to expose the work of his chosen author, but even more so that author's theological significance.

It was evident during the presentation how Dominique himself as journalist and religious editor-in-chief of *La Croix* has be influenced by Thielicke.

After the initial presentation, the exchange that took place between the jury and the candidate was very clear and of the highest level; it revealed a real professional appreciation of Dominique's work. Everyone present later understood why the choice of Thielicke was spot on. Both Thielicke the soldier and the theologian were rescued!

Fr. Vincent Leclercq, A.A.