

WEAPON FOR DEFENSE

When Your Name hung like ripe cherries on my love
Or ran in smiling rivers down my thoughts,
I learned angelic alchemies to make
Of fluid space a thousand violins,
Sweet Jesus, and to rouse full-blossomed springs
Out of the wizened winter with casual ease.

But now the hour for sterner miracles
Is struck. Catch up the honey-flowing whisper
Of: Jesus! Jesus! on the tongue, and neatly
Fold up the lovers' private thaumaturgy
Of spring and song.

Long, loose-boned winds are flapping
Around a mirthless world. Now is the hour
To tame the snarling atoms with Your Name,
Command the chattering cannons with a Word.

Even if the ultimate quivering bird-call
Goes crying down the bomb-talk, if the last
Flower unravels into an anguish of perfume,
I keep my single power, own Your Name,

My Jesus, for a slender shining weapon
Greater than all the factories of hell
Have manufactured out of blood and curses . . .
See how the smear of planets jumps to obey

The Word my frail throat hurls into their quarrels!
Heaven and earth and hell are mine to sway
With lightest sound of, Jesus! See my power
To fling the stubborn universe, unknowing, to its knees.

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OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Spiritual Childhood

In the Gospel of Saint Matthew we read that the disciples came to Jesus on one occasion and asked Him: *Who then is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child to Him, set it in the midst of them, and said, Amen I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven* (18, 1-4).

These words of our Lord recall to mind the Catholic teaching on spiritual childhood. And this teaching takes on a special significance just now. For we are in what we might call the season of childhood. This entire month is dedicated to the Infancy of Christ. The newly-recounted story of His birth lingers on and keeps thrilling our hearts. Memories of Bethlehem, Egypt, and Nazareth cast a spell of enchantment over us. Certainly, now is the appropriate time to reflect on those words of Christ, to search them for the divine message they contain for us. Let us, therefore, spend a few moments meditating on the Christian concept of spiritual childhood.

To begin with, we should note well that our Lord doesn't tell us to *be* little children, but to *become like* little children. We are religious. And if any vocation in life calls for maturity, for full adulthood, it is the religious state. The only religious who gives promise of genuine success is he or she who has a man-size or woman-size share of healthy independence or self-reliance, of emotional control, of genuine self-forgetfulness, of the ability to face reality, and of the capacity to "take it." Such a one, I say, "gives promise" of success. After all, it is God's grace which insures success. But it remains true that the religious with the qualities just noted will, as a rule, respond to, and co-operate with, grace much more fruitfully than the religious without such qualities. So, spiritual childhood simply means being a real man or real woman with the *spirit* of a child, or, to use the old cliché, being *childlike*, not *childish*. That is the only view which explains satisfactorily these words of Saint Paul: *When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away the things of a child* (1 Cor. 13, 11). Without doubt, this great lover of Christ heeded the command of his Master to be like a little child. And yet he clearly understood that the divine command had nothing at all to do with the external and superficial qualities of a child—its babbling talk, its wishful and fanciful

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thinking, its fairy-tale type of conduct—but referred only to the underlying spirit of a child. The former he had long since decisively put aside; the latter he had faithfully preserved. We must do the same.

To preserve, or to recapture, the true spirit of childhood, however, leads to the question, In what does this spirit consist? If we view it in its totality, I think we shall have to say that it includes all the virtues necessary for salvation. That is evident from our Blessed Savior's remark that those who do not become like little children shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. In other words, if we want to be saved, we must be like little children. In this totality-view, then, the spirit of childhood is equivalent to a good life, a God-pleasing life, a heaven-winning life. But surely Christ wanted it to mean something more specific than that. Otherwise why did He insist upon it in such an impressive and dramatic manner by using a little child as a living model to illustrate His words? What special feature of the program of salvation did He thus wish to emphasize? What may be regarded as the essence, the root, of this spirit of childhood? The answer is—*humility*. However, I do not mean to say that humility and spiritual childhood are exactly synonymous. No. Spiritual childhood, as mentioned above, includes much more than humility. Especially associated with it in our minds are unquestioning faith, complete confidence, and unaffected simplicity. Hence, while these virtues are not specifically considered, there is no intention to deny them a close relationship with spiritual childhood. This conference is interested only in humility simply because it wants to underscore what seems to be the fundamental, the outstanding, element in spiritual childhood. That such is the case is quite clear from the very words of our Lord Himself: *Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child . . .* Moreover, the immediate antecedents point to humility, for, according to Saint Mark (9, 32-36), the disciples had been disputing among themselves who was the greatest. And Jesus took occasion from this incident to drive home to them a telling lesson on humility.

Therefore, the principle of spiritual childhood points primarily to a divine insistence on our need of genuine humility. There are many definitions of humility, some long and complicated, some short and simple. Among the latter I especially like the one of Saint Theresa of Avila. By the way, the same definition was used by Saint Theresa's spiritual daughter, the Little Flower. According to these two mystics, *humility is truth*. If only we were honest about what we are in relation to God and to our fellowmen and acted accordingly, then indeed we would be humble. How strongly our holy Father Francis stresses

this point in his famous *Admonitions*: "Blessed is the servant who does not regard himself as better when he is esteemed and extolled by men than when he is reputed as mean, simple, and despicable: for *what a man is in the sight of God, so much he is, and no more.*" Yes, the mark of genuine humility is the truthful admission that of ourselves we are nothing, we have nothing, and we can do nothing. "Hold on," someone will fairly shout, "let's be sensible in this matter! After all, Christ did not die for an airy nothing. And only think of the many and varied talents which human beings possess. Look and see what amazing things they can produce. Let's stop all this pious make-believe about being, having, doing nothing!" The only thing wrong about this objection is that it is so typical of human thinking about man's dignity and power. It emphasizes what every commonsensical person admits (our tremendous importance), and overlooks what so many don't bother about (the source of our importance). In other words, it is only partially true and therefore wholly false, as far as being a norm of conduct for us. Surely we are of inestimable worth. But we must keep reminding ourselves that our worth is God-given. That is what we tried to bring out before when we said: "Of ourselves we are nothing, etc." What we so often disregard is that qualifying phrase of *ourselves*. This truth is confirmed by that pointed and penetrating question of Holy Scripture: *What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it?* (1 Cor. 4. 7).

Right here, I believe, we touch the very nerve center of spiritual childhood—the humble acknowledgment of our total insufficiency in the supernatural order. There is perhaps nothing in creation more helpless than a little child. It needs almost constant attention. If left to itself it will surely perish in a short time. Now, until we admit that, in the spiritual life, we are like little children—helpless, weak, dependent—we certainly have not acquired the spirit of childhood, and there can hardly be a question of *salvation*, much less of *perfection*. *Unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* That's how basic this attitude of humility, this truthful acknowledgment of our littleness, is in the spiritual life! Never do we stand so much in need of God as when we're convinced we can get along without Him. And never are we more sure of His condescending help than when we are least sure of ourselves. God doesn't want us to reach heaven by ourselves, by our own strength, our own virtues, our own industry. He Himself wishes to get us there by His grace. Our best efforts are required, true. But they are only a sign of our good will, of our eagerness to do what in us lies, fruitless though it is. And when God judges

that we have given sufficient proof of that good will, His grace brings about the accomplishment of the deed, whatever it might be. *Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the growth* (1 Cor. 3. 7). Thus, our eternity will be spent, not in admiring what we have done, but in singing the mercies of the Lord.

This concentration on the truth that of ourselves we are worthless and useless in the spiritual life is not appealing to us. But if we are really honest with ourselves we shall have to admit that such is the case because this view is not very flattering. Thereby we simply betray how far we still are from genuine humility! We may page through any book of private revelations (at the moment I am thinking of *The Way of Divine Love* by Sister Josefa Menendez) and we shall find over and over again how our Lord reminds the chosen soul of its insufficiency, its weakness, yes, of its vileness or sinfulness. Christ, as it were, wants to rub the creature's nose in the dust out of which it is made. Painful as it may be, that sense of our littleness and helplessness is a "must" for us. We had it once—when we were little children. But then we began to grow strong, to acquire knowledge, to develop abilities, to accomplish things. And, unwisely admiring these gifts, we lost sight of the Giver. We saw ourselves as the author of these things; we were their *beginning*. We sought praise because of them; we were their *end*. In other words, we made ourselves the beginning and the end of our accomplishments, we set ourselves up as little gods in our own world! What we need is to get back to the truth, to become humble, to begin, in a good and spiritual sense, our second childhood.

It shouldn't prove too difficult for us to carry out our Lord's behest and become like little children. Our very condition as creatures, as religious, and as Franciscans offers us fundamental and powerful motives to keep us striving towards this goal.

As *creatures*, what are we but refugees from nothingness? We didn't have a single, blessed atom of our own with which to begin life. Where we would one day be there was just a void, an emptiness. The only reason we began to exist at all is that God so willed it. And should He ever cease willing it, we would vanish into our original nothingness without leaving the slightest trace. Recall the inspired words of the courageous mother of the Machabees to her youngest son: *I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth, and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also* (2 Mach. 7,

28). And the fact that this truth, in its totality, applies directly only to Adam, while to us it applies merely indirectly, doesn't change our status one bit. That circumstance indeed enhances the creative power of God, but it leaves us as we were before—literally "fiat beings," that is, beings whose sole basis for existence is an authoritative decree of God. Hence, everything that we possess, is, directly or indirectly, a gift from God. And that holds for our will also, on account of which we foolishly claim so often that we can do as we please, that we are independent!

As *religious*, we are in a position quite similar to that of little children in a family. Like them, we have our life regulated for us rather minutely: our comings-in and goings-out are all counted; our rising and retiring are definitely set; our time of work, and of prayer, and of recreation are fixed. Like them, we are largely dependent upon superiors: we must ask for the things that we need; we must get permission for many things that we do. Like children, we are freed (unless drafted into the office of superiority) from the responsibilities that are considered typical of adulthood. Now, the all-important question is, how are we going to react to this program of life which more or less puts us on a par with little children? Shall we follow it grudgingly and only because we have to? Shall we rebel against it on many points, determined not to let anyone make babies out of us? Shall we observe it faithfully and willingly, as the way of life freely embraced for the love of God? Obviously, the last-mentioned attitude is the only one worthy of religious. And if we try, day in and day out, to maintain that attitude, our very vocational duties will offer us a golden opportunity of building up within ourselves the true spirit of childhood.

As *Franciscans*, the notion of spiritual childhood should have a special appeal for us. Perhaps the cardinal feature of Franciscan spirituality is the Fatherhood of God. We need only think of Francis' public acknowledgment of God as his Father before the bishop of Assisi; of his frequent exhortations to pray the *Our Father*, even obliging his lay brothers to recite it at least 76 times a day; of his familiar and reverential attitude toward the world with all its creatures—his Father's earthly estate; of his *Praises*, extolling the glory of his heavenly Father with incomparable simplicity. To him there was no privilege more glorious, more thrilling, than to be the child of God the Father. He burned with the desire to proclaim this good news to all mankind. If we claim to be true followers of Saint Francis, we shall be charged with his enthusiasm regarding this beautiful doctrine. We, too, shall marvel at the sweet condescen-

sion of God to have us as His children. Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; and such we are (1 Jo. 3, 1). Like our holy Father Francis, we shall not rest satisfied with the fact of being children of God by sanctifying grace, but we shall strive with all our energy to show forth that marvellous relationship in our attitude and conduct. And we shall make it a point to carry this consoling message of Christian childhood, by our words but especially by our example, to the world around us, a world sick unto death with sophistication, sham, and artificiality.

We'll never lose out by acknowledging our insufficiency, by becoming like helpless little children, in the spiritual life. On the contrary, that's the only guarantee we have that we shall ever amount to anything at all! Who received the greatest blessings, the most help, the tenderest care from the Savior as He walked this earth—the blind, the lame, the poor, or the conceited, self-sufficient Pharisees? And it is exactly the same today. The more we confess our littleness and weakness, the more we shall win for ourselves God's loving care. Didn't Christ say: *Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted?* (Mt. 23, 12). If we could only realize, as did the Little Flower, the surpassing value of being like a little child in the spiritual life. In her *Autobiography* she makes this remark: "The greatest thing that the Almighty has worked in me is to have made me see my littleness and my powerlessness for all good." One of our ever-recurring and most fervent pleas, as we kneel at the crib these days, should be that the little Christ Child would graciously grant us the same grace.

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Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.



Solidly virtuous Christian souls are animated with a living faith in, and filial love and profound respect for, the Catholic Church and for the ministers who represent her, from the Sovereign Pontiff to the most humble priest. They manifest this faith and veneration in their relations with the priests, regular and secular, with whom they come in contact; but especially with their confessor or director, in whom they see Jesus Christ and in whom they respect His divine authority.

Madre Angeles Sorazu

SAINT FRANCIS AND THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

The importance of the Scriptures in the life of Saint Francis is universally recognized. We find an instinctive and intuitive dependence upon the word of God in moments of crisis—as in that moment of finding his vocation—in the imitative evangelical character of his preaching, in the very wording of his vocal prayer, in the enthusiasm and respect of his devotion to the text itself of Sacred Writ: "And His most holy names and written words, wherever I shall find them in unfit places, I wish to gather up; and I ask that they be gathered up and be put in a decent place. And we should honor and venerate all theologians and those who announce to us the most holy divine words as those who minister to us spirit and life" (*Testament of Saint Francis*). It is not without significance that almost in their entirety his writings are Scriptural quotations, felicitously adapted to his thought and sentiment.

Certain attitudes and convictions are to be found in the approach of the Poverello to the word of God. There is an air of confidence and assurance that the Gospels particularly, and Scripture as a whole, will sanctify the individual and are meant for everyday use by him who would know and love God. He encourages an intense familiarity with the sacred text, one that is as extraordinary for his own day as it might be for ours. For the most part, the Scriptures had become the "Sacred Page" worked over by the scholars; Francis had no little influence in making it a prayer-book as much as it was a handbook. In taking the Gospel literally, his seraphic insistence emphasized the right, need, and duty of *searching the Scriptures* (cf. Jn 5, 39).

Knowledge, however, is not the objective of Saint Francis in his use of the sacred writings. Observance is his goal. In them he seeks out the directives, the pattern, the virtues, needful for following Christ and living with God. The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Rule are synonymous to him and should be to all those professing the same. Perhaps the most telling thing in the many marvels about the sanctity of Saint Francis is not the realism he gave to evangelical poverty, but rather his powers of penetration and effective application that could render the likeness of Christ in his own soul and in the souls of those who followed him. The miracle of the Stigmata supposes a soul dedicated to literal observance and complete absorption with the word of God. The experience of Saint Francis has made the inspired cry of Paul, *I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me* (Gal. 2, 20) far more intelligible, far more concrete, far richer in content.

There is reason to believe that the deliberate provision in the holy Rule

for the divine office was fundamentally prompted by his endearment to the inspired word. He was quite certain that the Rule would then have a font of daily contact and stable attachment to the Scriptures and especially to the psalms. We find the words of the precept quaint today in their recommendation of reciting the "divine office according to the form of the holy Roman Church, except the Psalter". They token, however, his appreciation of a particular Latin translation of the psalms and the more popular one in circulation.

Though it was convenient and diplomatic on the part of Francis to have his friars given a signal when visitors should be withdrawn from his presence, the tactic employed by the Seraphic Father was born of his deep affection and fascination with the word of God. Francis counselled his brethren that whenever they would hear him pronounce the psalm verse, *Thy words I have hidden in my heart, O Lord, that I may not sin against Thee*, (Ps. 108, 11), they would know that he was anxious to be by himself. The text is more than appropriate to the circumstances; it infers a companionship with the Scriptures.

In the wealth of quotation that suffuses his writings, texts from the Epistle to the Romans happen to be in the majority. No one is surprised that the theme of salvation and redemption should be attractive to Francis. There is, however, astonishment at his knowledge and appreciation of the best expression of it in the New Testament. We might have thought the Gospels the limit of his interests.

The prayer of Saint Francis has been rightfully described as essentially affective. Love and praise of God constitute its formalities. Here the little Poor Man made the Scriptures his treasury. In the little offices he composed of the Passion, of Our Lady, in the *Laudes Dei*, in his admonitions, the only thing adequate for his intensity of feeling is the literal word of the inspired writings. More than that, there is a consciousness that all of Scripture is holy and therefore applicable for compelling trends of thought, of feeling, of sentiment. This is but an extension of the apt reverence he demanded of his followers towards anything that they might find in writing concerning God. There is no hesitancy in his culling excerpts from the Old Testament, no fear of making it a most serviceable instrument in the task of personal sanctification. The very fluency he bestows on the diverse texts which he deems most expressive for his acts of praise, adoration, thanksgiving, and petition bepeaks a profound sensitivity, if not intuitiveness, for their mystical meaning.

The paraphrase of the *Our Father*, made by Saint Francis demonstrates some of his ability in expounding the Scriptures. The method he adopts is strictly

in line with the medieval spirit of exposition. We find the technical threefold traditional senses of Scripture unconsciously motivating his carefully constructed spiritual interpretation as drafted for the daily use of his brothers. It is not that we would suggest scholarship in Francis, but we cannot fail to see his appreciation of the need of more than a simple perusal or reading of the Scriptures.

It is strangely perplexing to find him abandoning the Gospels, as it were, and borrowing texts from the rarely quoted Book of Numbers in the Old Testament for the wording of what we now call the Blessing of Saint Francis (Num. 6, 24-26). The choice has proven a marvelously acceptable one with its splendid vision of the Face of God; it makes us realize the force and impact of the word of God upon Francis himself.

The following episode belongs to the closing years of his life and is demonstrative of the dependence Francis had upon the Scriptures. "Father", a Brother said to him, "you have always had recourse to the Scriptures, and they have not failed to console you in times of suffering. Let it be your wish then that I read to you some passage from the prophets; perhaps it will help you to rejoice and exult in the Lord".

To which the Saint gave answer: "It is good to read the Scriptures and to seek there the Lord, our God. For my part I have made such use of the holy writings that it suffices for me to meditate in my memory on what I know of them".

An experience of the Scriptures as described makes the praying of Psalm 141, *Voce mea ad Dominum clamavi* by Francis, as he lay dying, a natural and spontaneous act. There is nothing forced about it and very much that is original. It exalts the appreciation of the Herald of the Great King for the word of God.

A Franciscan use of the Scriptures takes its orientation from its founder. Wide familiarity with the sacred writings is as fundamental to Franciscan living as it was to Francis. Though the Seraphic Father is not singular amongst saints in this regard, there is need of insisting upon it because of the prevailing tendencies to overlook this important feature of the spirituality of the little Poor Man. None can deny him to have been almost a precursor in defending the literal sense of the Scriptures. Nor can they fail to see that his use of the Scriptures was eminently practical, something that needed constant expression and integration into daily life. This is the principle that has given Franciscanism its evangelical quality, constituted its genuineness, and accounts for its versatility.

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THE FIVE FEASTS OF THE CHILD JESUS (II)

(The Quinque Festivitatibus Pueri Jesu of Saint Bonaventure)

THE THIRD FEAST

*How the Infant Jesus may be spiritually
named by the devout mind.*

In the third place, we should consider how this most blessed little Infant is to be spiritually named. I think that He can not be given a name more befitting than the name of Jesus, because it is written that *His name was called Jesus*. This is the Most Holy Name foretold by the prophets, announced by the angels, preached by the Apostles, desired by all the saints. O mighty Name! O Name full of grace! O joyous Name teeming with delight, replete with glory! This Name is mighty, because it conquers enemies, replenishes our strength, revives our minds. This Name is full of grace, because in it we have the basis of our Faith, the strength of our hope, an increase of charity, the perfecting of justice. This Name is a joyous Name, because "it is a shout of joy in the heart, a melody to the ear, honey in the mouth," a radiance in the mind. This Name teems with delight, because "it nourishes the thoughts, softens the spoken word, confers unction upon the prayer," refreshes what is written, gives meaning to what is read. This Name is truly replete with glory, because it gives sight to the blind, to the lame it gives the power of walking, to the deaf their hearing, words to the mute, life to the dead. O blessed Name, to show so greatly the effects of its power! O soul, whether you write or read or teach, or whatever else you do, let nothing content you, let nothing please you—except Jesus. Bestow, then, upon that little Infant, born spiritually in you, the name of Jesus, which means Savior—a Savior in this life's exile and wretchedness; let it save you from the world's vanity that harasses you, from the devil's treachery that plagues you, from the weakness of the flesh that tortures you.

O devout soul, in the midst of this life's many scourges, cry out, "O Jesus, Savior of the world, save us, Thou Who hast redeemed us by Thy Cross and Blood; help us, O Lord, Our God. Save us, O most sweet Savior Jesus, by strengthening the feeble, consoling the sorrowful, helping the weak, supporting the inconstant."

How often did the Virgin Mary, that happy natural mother and true spiritual mother, feel the sweetness that followed upon the conferring of this blessed Name, when she saw the demons expelled in that Name, when she saw the number of miracles increase, the blind given their sight, the sick cured,

the dead brought back to life! Surely you, O soul, a spiritual mother, should rightly rejoice and exult in the same way, when you see in yourself and in others that your blessed Son, Jesus, puts the demons to flight in the remission of sins, gives sight to the blind in the inspiration of true knowledge, brings the dead back to life in the conferring of grace, cures the sick, heals the lame, raises up the paralyzed and the crippled in the spiritual strengthening, so that they, who were feeble and infirm through guilt, are now become strong and powerful through grace. How fruitful and blessed this Name, that merited to have so much power and effectiveness!

THE FOURTH FEAST

*How the Son of God may be spiritually searched
after and adored by the devout mind
in company with the Magi.*

Then follows the fourth solemnity, which consists in the adoration of the Magi. For after the soul, through grace, has spiritually conceived, given birth to, and named this most sweet Child, the three kings, that is to say, the three powers of the soul—and they can well be called kings, for they reign over the flesh and are masters of the senses and, as is fitting, are engaged solely in searching out divine things—the three kings come to the conclusion that they must look for the Child Who has already been revealed to them through a multitude of signs in their kingly city, that is, in the edifice of the whole world. Therefore, they look for him in meditation, they search through their affections, in their devoted reflections they ask, *Where is He Who is born? We have seen His star in the East; we have seen His light glowing in the devout mind, we have seen His radiance glimmering in the recesses of the soul, we have heard His voice and it is the most dulcet of voices, we have tasted His sweetness and it is the most delightful of flavors, we have sensed His fragrance and it is the most pleasant of odors, we have felt His embrace and it is the dearest of caresses.* Come now, Herod, give an answer, show us our beloved, point out the little Infant of our desire. Him do we desire, Him do we seek.

"O sweetest, O most loving eternal Child, aged Infant, when shall we see Thee, when shall we find Thee, when shall we come before Thy face? Without Thee, rejoicing is a weariness; with Thee, rejoicing and weeping are delights. Everything opposed to Thee is offensive to us; Thy good pleasure is our unwearying desire. If it is so sweet to weep because of Thee, how sweet it would be to rejoice because of Thee." Where art Thou Whom we seek? Where art

Thou Whom we have desired in all things and before all things? *Where art Thou, Who art born the King of the Jews*, the Law of the devout, the Light of the blind, the Leader of the wretched, the Life of the dying, the eternal Salvation of all who live eternally?

Upon this, there follows the proper answer: *In Bethlehem of Juda.* *Bethlehem* means "the house of bread", *Juda* "a confessor". For Christ is found where, after the confession of sins, the bread of heavenly life, that is to say, the teaching of the Gospel, is heard, pondered upon and stored up by the devout mind, so that it is fulfilled in deed and set before others to be fulfilled by them. The Child Jesus, together with Mary His mother, is found where, after tearful contrition, after a fruitful confession, the sweetness of heavenly contemplation, and sometimes of consolation, is tasted in the midst of the most abundant tears, when prayer leaves joyful and possessed of some forgiveness the one whom it has found almost in despair. O fruitful Mary, by whom Jesus is conceived, from whom He is born, and with whom Jesus is found so sweetly and joyfully!

But you, O kings—who are the natural powers of the devout soul—make search with the kings of the earth, so that you may adore and offer gifts. Adore with reverence, because He is the Creator and Redeemer and Rewarder; He is the Creator in the formation of the Natural Life, the Redeemer, in the reformation of the spiritual life, the Rewarder in the conferring of eternal life. O kings, adore with reverence, because He is a most puissant King; adore with propriety, because He is the wisest of masters; adore with gladness, because He is the most gracious of princes.

But adoration would not suffice for you, if it were not accompanied by offering. Offer, then, the gold of the most burning love, offer the frankincense of the most devout contemplation, the myrrh of the most bitter contrition; the gold of love, because of the good things bestowed; the frankincense of devotion, because of the joys even now readied for you; the myrrh of contrition, because of sins perpetrated; offer the gold to the Eternal Divinity, the frankincense to the sacred Soul, the myrrh to the suffering Body. In this way, then, adore, O souls, and make your offerings.

THE FIFTH FEAST

*How the Son of God may be spiritually presented
in the Temple by the devout mind.*

In the fifth and last place, let the devout and faithful mind consider how the little Child, born through the consummation of divine works and given a

name through the tasting of celestial sweetness and searched for and found, adored and given honor through the bestowal of spiritual gifts, may be presented in the Temple and offered to God; and this through the devoted and humble rendering of thanks.

Therefore, after the fruitful Mary, the spiritual mother of Jesus, is purified through penance while the conception of this blessed Son was taking place, after she is strengthened somewhat through grace during the nativity, after she is intimately consoled through the imposing of the blessed Name, and finally is divinely fashioned in the adoration in company with the kings, what else remains but to carry God, the Son of God and of the Virgin, to the celestial Jerusalem, up to the Temple of Divinity and there present Him?

Go up, therefore, O spiritual Mary, not now into the hill country, but into the dwelling of the celestial Jerusalem, into the palace of the city on high. Here, before the throne of the eternal Trinity and the inseparable Unity, humbly bend the knee of the mind; here, as it was done of old, present your Son to God the Father, by praising, glorifying and blessing the Father and the son with the Holy Spirit. With a cry of joy praise God the Father, for through His inspiration you have conceived the good intention. Glorify in praise God the Son, for through His fashioning you have brought to perfection in work the intention that was conceived. Bless and hallow God the Holy Spirit, for through His consolation you have persevered thus far in the good way of life.

O soul, glorify God the Father in all His giving and your receiving, because He it is Who summoned you from the world through His hidden inspiration, saying, *Return, return, O Sulamitis . . .* Magnify God the Son in all His saints, for He it is Who freed you from the slavery of the demon through His secret fashioning, saying, *Take my yoke upon you*; throw aside the yoke of the demon. His yoke is the bitterest of all, Mine the sweetest; his yoke will be followed by eternal tortures and torments, Mine by the sweetest fruits and the most productive rest. If his yoke occasionally evidences a sweetness, this is false and momentary; when my yoke confers joy, it is real and salutary. He gives a little support sometimes to his slaves, in order to confound them in eternity; but whoever pays me honor is humbled to the same extent but momentarily, in order to reign and be glorified eternally.

That was the teaching by means of which the Son of God fashioned you, sometimes by Himself, sometimes through His teachers and friends; that was

the teaching by means of which He freed you from the demon's lying persuasions and the world's soothing illusion.

O soul, ever bless and hallow God the Holy Spirit, Who strengthened you in goodness through His sweet consolation, saying, *Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest*. For how, O pliant and delicate soul, steeped as you were in the world's delights, drunk with the joys of this age like swine on the lees of wine—how could you have persisted in the good work in the midst of so many wide-flung snares of the old enemy, in the midst of so much bad advice, in the midst of such diverse hindrances, in the midst of the innumerable levelled javelins of friends, blood kindred, and other relatives, who have sought to draw you aside from the way of love and wound you? How could you have advanced in the good work, bound down, as you were, by the ropes of sins, if you had not been mercifully aided and sweetly consoled and refreshed again and again by the grace of the Holy Spirit? Ascribe to Him, therefore, all your works; keep no credit for yourself.

Say these words with a pure and devout intention of mind: *Lord, thou hast wrought all our works*; in Thy sight I am nothing, I can be nothing; it is owing to gift of Thine that I hold firm, without Thee I am able to do nothing. To Thee, O most compassionate Father of mercies, I offer what is Thine; to Thee I entrust, to Thee I give what is Thine. In humility I acknowledge that I am unworthy, and ungrateful for all Thy gifts bestowed by Thee upon me.

To Thee be praise, to Thee be glory, to Thee be thanks, O most blessed Father, Eternal Majesty; for out of nothing Thou hast created me through Thy infinite power.

I praise Thee, I glorify Thee, I thank Thee, O most blessed Son, Splendor of the Father; for through Thy eternal wisdom Thou hast freed me from death.

I bless Thee, I cry Thee Holy, I adore Thee, O most blessed protecting Spirit; for through Thy blessed compassion and mercy Thou hast called me from sin to grace, from the world to the religious life, from exile to my country, from work to rest, from sorrow to the sweetness of the happiest and most exquisite fruition of blessedness; and this may Jesus Christ, the Son of the Virgin Mary, grant us; Who, together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

Christ the King Seminary

Fr. Columban Duffy, O. F. M.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (I)

Origin of the Third Order Regular

If asked to sum up the history of Franciscan Tertiariism in a single line, we might say: "The cloister went out to the world; but a rejuvenated world reentered the cloister." For if the first half tells the story of the Third Order Secular, the second is the saga of the Third Order Regular.

The cloister went out to the world. Not inaptly has the Third Order Secular been styled the "cloister in the world." For if the cloister be taken as a symbol of the religious life, then indeed the Tertiary lay movement is just that. In a broader sense, Francis' own mode of life was typical of a new age in the history of the Church. Monk and hermit made room for the friar as a symbol of religious life. We know something of the personal struggle in the soul of Francis as he made the choice of a way of life that would become a model for his friars. Drunk with the sweetness of contemplation, Francis was tempted to renounce his role as Herald of the Great King, to retire from the world, to indulge in a life of prayer and solitude. In Saint Bonaventure's dramatic account of the incident, Francis is portrayed as a medieval theologian who has raised a scholastic question and now listens patiently to the array of weighty arguments marshalled by the opposition. In every respect, it seems, the life of prayer outweighs the active apostolate. But when all their reasons have been heard, Francis levels one devastating counterproof. "But there is one argument to the contrary that seems to outweigh all of these in the eyes of God—that His only begotten Son, who is Highest Wisdom itself, descended from the bosom of the Father for the salvation of souls . . . And because we should do all according to the ideal we see reflected in Him as from a mountain peak, it seems more pleasing to God that we abandon our solitude and go out to meet the work that lies before us." (*Legenda Major*, ch. 12). And as Bonaventure goes on to tell, through Brother Sylvester and Sister Clare, God confirmed Francis' mission. He is to go forth to preach as Herald of Christ. And that he did in the most effective way he knew—through his example. In a more literal way than perhaps even Saint Paul dreamed of, Francis put on Christ. The magnetism of the divine personality Francis mirrored not only swelled the ranks of the friars and the convent of the Clares. It laid irresistible hold on the hearts of men and women in the world as the charming incident recounted in the Fioretti reveals.

Even the birds and the beasts seemed to discover in Francis the image of the

AN EXPLANATION OF RULE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (I)

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Man in whose likeness they were created. When Francis entered the little town of Savurniano, the excitement of the swallows reached such a fever pitch that they drowned out the words of the saint. With a word, he silenced their chatter and began to preach to the people. So great was the spell cast by his words, that when Francis came to leave, the townsfolk left behind their homes and families and followed him out into the road. "Be not in such haste," he warned them; "leave not your homes." And then and there he explained how they might practice something of his own life of penance within the confines of their own home. He gave them the rule of the Third Order.

Whether we choose to give credence to this account or not, the Fioretti—like all great myths or legends—has its own truth value. And as we know from other sources, this incident typifies the spontaneous mass reaction to the Poverello's preaching that gave birth to the Third Order. That Francis, with the help of Cardinal Hugolino, did compose a rule of life for layfolk we do know. And with the Bull sent by the Holy Father to Mariano of Florence, Dec. 16, 1221, the Third Order received full Papal approval. The cloister had gone out to the world. It embraced the family and home.

But if the cloister went to the world, no sooner did the world breathe in the spirit of Francis than it developed a nostalgia for the cloister. As Tertiaries grew in the love of Christ, like Francis they too felt something of that sweetness that tempted the Poverello to abandon the world completely and seek refuge in contemplation. As the Gospel became a living ideal, the evangelical counsels seemed to be more and more a symbol, as well as a means, of attaining that more perfect life towards which they aspired. Saint Elizabeth of Hungary took vows two or three years after Francis' death. In the second half of the thirteenth century, we find more and more Tertiaries imitating her example. Many, no longer bound by marital or other social ties, turned their meeting houses into convents and devoted themselves exclusively to the service of God and their fellowmen. Many of these lived a common life without taking public vows. Others received permission to add to their Tertiary profession the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. And so the return of the world to the convent began.

And thus the Third Order Regular was born. During the formative thirteenth and fourteenth centuries these spontaneous and mutually independent movements lacked any common organization, but in the fifteenth century single well-ordered communities with solemn vows and a common head began to appear. In 1428, Martin V attempted to unify these isolated groups by putting all

Tertiaries, both secular and regular, under the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. But such a union at his stage proved impractical, and his successor, Eugene IV, revoked his decrees. Numerous independent male congregations of Regular Tertiaries with solemn vows mushroomed into existence in Italy, France, Dalmatia, Germany, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands. Similar congregations of Sisters began to appear. They devoted themselves especially to the care of the sick, the orphans and the poor.

In order to introduce some uniformity among these many Third Order congregations, Leo X in the Papal Bull *Inter Cetera* (Jan. 20, 1521) revised the rule approved by Nicholas IV. Among the most important additions were the incorporation of the three essential vows and the insistence that the Minister or Mother General of the congregation be directly subject to the authority of the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. This last clause in particular prevented some congregations from adopting it, but for four centuries it served as the basis for the greater portion of Franciscan congregations.

With the introduction of the new code of Canon law, which standardized many common features of religious orders and congregations, the Third Order rule of Leo X became obsolete. Pope Pius XI commissioned the Sacred Congregation for Religious to revise it and on the close of the seventh centenary of the death of Saint Francis, Oct. 4, 1927, he formally approved the new rule. As he explained in the accompanying Bull, *Rerum conditio*, the new rule "is more thoroughly pervaded with the Franciscan spirit and in harmony with the modern law of the Church." Its greater simplicity and flexibility made it an ideal basis for Franciscan congregations whose specific aims and active apostolate differed widely. For that reason it not only supplanted the rule of Leo X in those congregations with solemn vows known as Tertiaries Regular, but was also extended to "the many other religious families with simple vows which, in some way, have Saint Francis as their Father, in so far as they have chosen the spirit of Francis as the spirit of their Institute and are known as Franciscans" (*Rerum conditio*). The goal at which Leo X aimed four centuries earlier was finally attained. The host of varied Franciscan congregations now enjoyed a common rule. After seven centuries of growth, the Third Order Regular had reached maturity.

The cycle was complete. If the cloister went out to the world, the world had returned to the cloister. But it was not simply a wasted movement that ended up where it began, but a genuine progressive development that brought Francis-

canism itself to completion. The First Order, while combining the active and contemplative ideals, found its apostolate confined almost exclusively to the spiritual care and direction of souls through the work of the sacred ministry. It was the Second Order that came to realize the pure contemplative ideal that had always tempted Francis so strongly. But the other spiritual and corporal works of mercy that played such an important role in Francis' own life became the special legacy of the Third Order Regular. What a single congregation or order could not hope to achieve with any measure of success without sacrificing something of its more universal character, the host of independent congregations of Tertiaries Regular could carry out effectively. Each group had its own specialty. Each in its own way reflected something of the life of Francis himself. The Francis who set out to convert the Sultan became the model of missionary workers. The young man who sought out the social outcasts and cared for the lepers with his own hands became the ideal of Franciscan hospital sisters and social workers. Education of the young, care of the orphans, the poor, the aged, housekeeping and sacristan work, these and countless other tasks taken over by Third Order congregations of men and women make us realize something of the richness of the Poverello's charity—he who was so many men in one because he came so close to imitating Christ. To each of his followers he has left something of his Christlike love, the love that prompted him to repair the crumbling walls of San Damiano, to cook a bit of broth for a sick brother, to sweep out abandoned churches and burnish the tabernacle, to kiss the leper, to direct the career of young Angelo of Tancredi as he stood deliberating at the cross roads of life. When we realize all this, we can begin to understand why with the rule of Pius XI it was not only the Third Order cycle that had reached completion, but Franciscanism itself that had found its full stature.

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O. F. M.



At the time of my first conversion I encountered no difficulty in the practise of the virtues. Grace aided me in the virtuous works I performed. But it was not so during the period of my purgation, when everything pressed upon my soul like a crushing weight. In spite of humble and perfect resignation to the will of God, I had to row against the current of my vitiated human nature which protested against humiliation and mystical death.

Madre Angeles Sorazu

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

There is a distinctly Franciscan attitude toward our neighbor, and it is reverence. We are all children of God, all members of a royal family; all bear on our soul the image of our Heavenly Father, and we are all reborn to the supernatural likeness of His Son, the King of Kings. We are of royal dignity. Our Father Francis recognized this dignity even in the most wretched human being. For that reason he insisted that the brother who had brusquely turned away robbers go after them and ask pardon for his abusive language and offer them food. Reverence requires that we see the dignity of every man that we honor and acknowledge it, that we respect it and refrain from touching it or detracting from it. This is reverential fear. Reverence also requires that we rejoice in this dignity and love it. This is reverential piety. No other scholar or philosopher so much emphasized the dignity of the human person and the distinctive character of that dignity which is essential to personality as did the Seraphic Doctor. In this he simply translated into technical language the heritage of our Order, the heritage of respect for the individual. It is from this point of view that Saint Bonaventure intends us to examine ourselves on the question:

DO I PRY INTO THE SECRETS OF OTHERS?

Every man has his secrets, and that with full right. They are a part of his personality. What is in our heart, our conscience, our mind, belongs to us and to no one else. We are obliged to give this to God, but not to man, excepting insofar as man represents God in the Sacrament of Penance. The Church has recognized this inalienable right by forbidding any attempt to pry into the secrets of other religious, Superiors, therefore, and those who are in charge of the spiritual training of young religious, should be especially careful to observe the laws of the Church in this regard. In general, some of the following questions may be to the point. Do I encourage or even try to force persons subject to me to the disclosure of personal secrets or to the manifestation of conscience? Do I realize that such practice is in direct violation of the natural and ecclesiastical law? Unless I am a priest, do I rather discourage such manifestations? It may well be, of course, that a religious has certain qualities that inspire the confidence of others and is really capable of imparting valuable advice or consolation. Such a religious should give freely of the gifts God has given him. But—and this is the best of all tests—the religious who is really sincere in this matter always accepts such disclosures or confidences with genuine reluctance. Let us, then,

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ourselves: Do I willingly hear the secrets of others, or do I receive them with wholesome fear and reverence? Do I ask unbecoming questions? Do I try to induce others to tell more than necessary just to satisfy my curiosity—or for worse reasons? Am I truly cautious about the kind of person I accept as a spiritual friend, and about the nature of the friendship? If others approach for advice, do I consider whether or not I am really qualified to give it? Is my own spirituality so deep, my own experience and knowledge so wide, that I feel I have something to impart to others? Do I fully realize the tremendous responsibility of accepting confidential disclosures from others, or of offering advice and guidance? Do I fully realize the harm—perhaps the irreparable harm—that I can do in guiding others, unless I myself have a sound spiritual life and sound spiritual principles? It is only natural that we should be flattered by the thought that others are willing to confide in us, that others admire and respect us sufficiently to seek our advice. But we must always be extremely cautious in this, and unless we are legitimately appointed to care for the spiritual training of others, it would be well to ask the advice of our own confessor before we begin advising others.

Everyone has the right to demand respect for whatever belongs to his personal sphere. Questions such as the following are pertinent to the external sphere: Do I pry into the family history of others? Unless I have sound reasons, connected either with my office or dictated by sincere charity, do I try to secure information about my fellow religious—their home, their parents and relatives, their material situation, their occupations in the world? And if, through confidential disclosure or visits to their home, I obtain information that may not be wholly to the advantage of my fellow religious, do I consider myself bound by the law of reverence to keep that information secret? Or do I, on the contrary, have the ugly habit of spreading such information, or of using it to injure the reputation of a confrere? Nothing is more despicable than to cast slurs on the family and background of a fellow religious. Superiors, who as a rule know more about the private affairs of their subjects than is generally known, must be especially careful not to divulge their knowledge. The secrets of others are sacred, and no superior is ever privileged by his office to overlook this point. This applies as well to nurses and infirmarians or those appointed to care for the sick in the community. A charitable inquiry about the condition of a sick confrere is entirely commendable; curious prying is not.

We should also refrain from prying into the reason for another's sorrow. True sympathy is never inquisitive or tactless, and silent sympathy is often much more consoling than empty talk.

It is well to point out that the friendships of a religious are also part of his personal sphere and are not to be pried into. In regard to this we may ask: Do I watch my confreres to find out with whom they associate? Do I try to find out whom they see in the parlor, even though I know perfectly well it is not of my business? Do I ask impertinent questions? Am I guilty of the mean habit of eavesdropping? Do I try to find out with whom my confreres speak over the telephone, or perhaps even go so far as to listen in on a conversation? What about letters? Do I try to find out with whom my fellow-religious correspond? Do I make it a hard and fast rule never to try to read or even to touch letters addressed to others? Do I realize the irreverential and utterly detestable nature of prying into the personal correspondence of another? If superiors are permitted by virtue of their office to read the letters of their subjects, they should remember that it is only a right, not an obligation, and they must realize the heavy responsibility the use of this right entails. We should also ask ourselves how we respect the personal books of others. There is no question here of the strictly personal spiritual notebooks of a religious; the very least sense of decency would rule out prying into such things. But do I look through the prayerbooks of others, their breviaries, their missals? Do I try to find out what pictures they keep in their books, who gave them the pictures, what personal secrets they may have hidden in their books? We are always quick to resent the curiosity of others in regard to our personal affairs; justice demands that we give others the reverence we expect from them.

The office or employment of a religious is another part of his personal sphere. It may be that our work has to be done independently, but not so independently that superiors have no right to know what is being done. Aside from the superior's legitimate inquiries, however, we have the privilege of doing our work without informing the entire community of all details. If we have the right to privacy in regard to our work, we must remember that others have the same right. Here let us ask ourselves: Unless justice or charity demand otherwise, do I refrain from butting into the affairs of others? Do I try to find out what my confreres are doing, how or why they are doing it? Do I wonder and perhaps carry my wondering into actual inquiry, why a certain confrere was given or relieved from a particular assignment or office? Have I really learned the fine art of minding my own business? How much peace would there be in religious communities if we would only respect the right of others to do their work without our assistance, if we would stop talking about it, stop prying into it, stop wondering about it.

Our interest in the interior life of a person as reflected in the external manner is another point to be included in our examination. Do I watch, analyze, judge, or draw conclusions about others without having any special right to do so? Even if I am burdened with the task of educating or guiding others, am I extremely careful in forming judgments, in drawing conclusions about their characters and personalities? Do I realize that nowhere is human judgment more dangerously fallible than in estimating the personality of another? Am I convinced that all such judgments and analyses are doomed to certain failure, if they are made out of "psychological interest" (more properly, curiosity in the garb of science) instead of sympathetic love? It has been said that there is no better psychologist than love itself; this is true if we do not abuse the term, love. We may ask ourselves, then: When I must form judgments about others, what is the underlying principle of my judgments? It is charity? Or is it curiosity? Even though "scientific" curiosity? To the truly reverent religious there is no such thing as "an interesting case". Do I absolutely refrain from suspicious scrutiny of others? From imputing to them evil or perverse intentions? Do I cultivate instead that charity that "believes all things"? Do I always put the best possible interpretation on the actions of others unless I have certain proof of wrong-doing or of evil intention? Even then, do I suspend judgment, realizing that only God knows the heart of man?

Tale-bearing is also related to the personal rights of others. If our position demands it, we must discuss others; but it must always be done with reverence and charity, and there must never enter into our discussion the element of tale-bearing. Human nature is so corrupted that we take pleasure, so it seems, in hearing scandals—the uglier the better. A scandal is something that should rather cause us pain, something we should prefer not to hear, something we should prefer to conceal and not spread abroad. We all have faults, but none of us like to have them publicized. Let us then respect the feelings of others in this matter. Some religious have a seriously faulty conscience about "reporting to the superior." We should have a childlike confidence in our superiors, to be sure, and we should be able to speak freely with them; but we are not permitted to commit sin in this. According to the natural law it is a *sin* to reveal to superiors, without necessity, the secrets or faults of others. As far as we know, there is no Franciscan Congregation according to whose Constitutions the individual members freely relinquish this right guaranteed them by the natural law. The Franciscan spirit is fundamentally opposed to the spy system in any form. With us the natural law prevails, and we are bound under pain of sin to respect it. Let us therefore ask ourselves in all honesty: Have I the ugly and detestable habit

of reporting everything I see and hear and suspect to the superior? Do I consider the possibility that other people have as much right to their good name as I have? Do I realize that I may be guilty of mortal sin by destroying the highest natural value of another's reputation? This is not simply a question of calumny or slander—of lying about another—but of detraction as well. So religious seem to forget that to spread evil reports about another, even if reports are factual, can be a mortal sin if the matter is sufficiently grave. On the other hand, there is an obligation to report the conduct of a fellow religious if his behavior is really scandalous to the community or destructive to religious life, or if there is danger of public scandal or material damage to the community. But if we feel we have to do something about another's conduct, let us follow the instructions of Christ: first, admonish the person privately, then in the presence of another, and finally have recourse to the superior. There would be much more peace, much greater progress in perfection, and infinitely greater happiness in religious communities if every man knew he could trust his confessor and that his secrets would be held sacred.

Perhaps a final remark is called for in regard to the desire for hearing news. Do I restrict my curiosity in regard to the events of the world and to the affairs of the Order? We are certainly bound to keep informed of world affairs, but insignificant news items do us no particular good, and they may cause us to waste valuable time. The same holds for happenings within the Order. Do I try to get "the inside story" of what went on in this or that house, what occurred at the chapter, what transfers have taken place and why? We should have a healthy interest in our Order, in its work and enterprises. But curiosity, prying, underhanded investigating, sly inquiring—none of these have any place in the life of a true Franciscan.

If we must inquire into hidden matters, if we must get at the core of things, if we must scrutinize, analyze, and judge, let us do all these things within our own souls. Then we shall be advancing in virtue instead of burdening our consciences and injuring others. For, as the *Imitation* says, "The deepest and most profitable lesson is this, to know yourself truly and to despise yourself."

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M.



The Fioretti puts us in the position of spying on the heart of Saint Francis.

Father Gemelli, O.F.M.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

"A Good Soldier Of Christ Jesus."

In his book *Three Religious Rebels* Father M. Raymond, O. C. S. O., F. Theodoric of Troyes, father of Saint Robert, on his deathbed, saying the last words on earth: "There is only one mistake in life—not to be a saint." It was because Theodoric was looking at life in the dawning light of eternity that he made that statement. No matter! Shouldn't we always view life in that light? Shouldn't we always be imbued with the conviction that a great failure in life would be—not to become a saint? We were made for that end, and only if we reach it shall we be successful. And this is doubly true for us religious who are supposed to be professional sainthood-seekers.

Anything, therefore, which can inspire us to keep on striving for perfection which can give us a needed boost towards sanctity, is always helpful and welcome. Just such a help is contained in one of the recent *Christopher* publications titled *Careers That Change Your World*. In this little volume there is a story told about a reserve officer in the air force who, on learning of his duties in Korea, sent this message to our military headquarters: "Willing, dependable, expendable. Say where and when." To my mind that statement can be considered a perfect characterization of a true religious, a sure hope for sanctity. Let us look at it a bit more closely.

First, we must be *willing* religious. One of the basic requirements which demand of a candidate for the religious life is willingness or good will. We feel that something can be accomplished with such a person. He may not know very much but he's willing to learn. He may not possess stunning talents and abilities but he's willing to try. The ways of religious life may be new and strange to him but he's willing to be led, willing to co-operate. Like Samuel of old, he cries out in his heart: *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth* (I Kings 3, 10). Or, Like Saint Paul, he asks in all sincerity: *Lord, what wilt thou have me do?* (Acts 9, 6). There is an eagerness, a readiness, about him that does not flinch from anything, no matter how difficult or unpleasant. I remember one day watching a group of workmen landscaping the grounds of a newly-built school. It was about fifteen minutes before quitting time and, quite plainly, the men were tired. Just then the boss, who had been talking with the pastor, walked up to the men and pointed to a sizable tree. He told them that the pastor thought it was out of place in respect to the new building and should come out. He wondered if the men were too tired to tackle the job at once? One of the workers answered with a smile: "Too tired? Never too tired to chop down

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a tree." And they proceeded to fell it in record time. There is a homesickness in the spirit of willingness. That spirit does something to a person. We might say of it what Holy Scripture says of hope: those who possess it shall *renew their strength, they shall take wings as eagles, they shall run and not weary, they shall walk and not faint* (Isai. 40, 31).

So frequently we tend to associate this attitude of willingness with youth and religious. They are the ones expected to manifest a readiness to follow direction, an eagerness for spiritual exercises, a promptness in practicing virtue. It is more or less taken for granted that, as we get older, we outgrow our first fervor and our youthful enthusiasm. With aging bones and stiffening muscles comes a lessening of that spiritual liveness, agility, and adaptability which enter so prominently into the make-up of genuine willingness. How utterly false this line of reasoning is! Willingness, or eagerness, or readiness is the hall mark of holiness. It is zeal for God's service. It is practical love, reminiscent of the words of Saint Paul: *The love of Christ impels us* (2 Cor. 5, 14). Hence, willingness is not something we use merely to get ourselves started in the spiritual life, but it is of the very essence of that life. The Saints never believed that the spirit of willingness should decrease as they advanced in years. Think of Saint Martin of Tours, exclaiming shortly before his death: "Lord, if Thy people should need me, I will not shirk the labor involved." Or, recall the exhortation of our own Father Francis in his last illness: "Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord our God; for until now we have made but little progress." If life only meant to us, as it did to the saints, a consistent growth in willingness of heart, then we would be able to meet death as they did—not with just a few stagnant drops of good will left in our hearts, but with that good will at veritable flood tide, crashing through the barriers of flesh, and carrying our soul up to the eternal shore, there to find our waiting Savior for Whom we were willing to give our all.

But, according to our formula for sanctity, we are to be not only *willing* religious but also *dependable* religious. What does that imply? Above all else it implies maturity. A dependable religious, if he is anything at all, is an adult in the best sense of the word. He does not need the constant attention, direction, and assistance of superiors. Give him a job to do and he'll see it through. Assign him to a certain place and he'll adapt himself to circumstances, measure up to the situation, and make a "go" of it. In this connection there comes to mind spontaneously that immortal essay of Elbert Hubbard, "A Message to Garcia." With a few adaptations it would make excellent material for meditation. Briefly, it is the inspiring story of a man, named Rowan, who was

sent a letter by President McKinley to be delivered to General Garcia, the leader of the Cuban Insurgents, during the Spanish-American War. Three weeks after receiving the letter from McKinley, and in the face of unbelievable obstacles, Rowan handed the message to Garcia. Since then the name of Rowan has been an accepted symbol of dependability.

How readily this historical incident may be applied to us religious! Our "Message to Garcia" is to be genuine religious day in and day out—ever faithful to the prescribed religious practices and to the order of the day, unyielding in our battle against temptation, steady in the fulfillment of our assigned tasks, whatever they may be. These and similar obligations form the commission which we received on the day of our investiture, and are an unmistakably accurate test of our dependability. Fidelity to them proves that we have developed a sense of responsibility, that we have a mature attitude towards our vocation. No longer are we the slaves of childish, capricious whims, refusing to do what we should because we don't feel like doing it, but resolutely measuring up to, and accepting, the demands of duty. We are men and women of principle. We are dependable.

The annals of Franciscan spirituality are replete with examples of such dependability—men and women who could not be anything but dependable because loyalty to Christ and His cause had eaten into the very marrow of their bones. Saint Jane of Valois, Saint Salvator of Horta, Saint Mary Bernadette Soubirous are a few picked at random. Of anyone of these, or of the other Franciscan Saints and Blessed, we might paraphrase the glowing words of Mr. Hubbard regarding Rowan: "By the Eternal! there is a man (or woman) whose form should be cast in deathless bronze and the statue placed in every convent of the land. It is not book learning that we need so much, or instruction about this and that, but a stiffening of the vertebrae which will cause us to be loyal to a trust, to act promptly, concentrate our energies: do the thing—'Carry a message to Garcia.'"

The next requisite of our recipe for sanctity is that we be *expendable* religious. World War II and the current fighting in Korea have made us familiar with the military connotation of this word. Soldiers use it to designate equipment or personnel used up or sacrificed according to plan in order to gain some military advantage. A good example of this military expendability is the case of the Marine sergeant who led his platoon forward into the teeth of scathing fire with the cry: "Come on, you Leathernecks! Do you want to live forever?" This valiant soldier counted life as nothing just so long as he could thereby help his country. Of course, the implication for us religious is evident. We must

be prepared to have ourselves consumed in the service of God, like candles melting down on the altar, or incense burning out in the censer. Hence, we should not be surprised if we are asked to suffer in one way or another. We are expendable. As Holy Scripture puts it: *What is lacking of the sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body which is the Church* (Col. 1, 24). Moreover, there should be no over-anxiety about our health, our strength, or convenience, but instead a joyful readiness to sacrifice these things to further the cause of God. We are expendable. With Saint Paul we say: *I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls* (2 Cor. 12, 15). That was the spirit of Saint Conrad of Parzham. He stayed at his post, faithfully fulfilling the exacting and wearisome duties of convent porter till three days before his death. Then he handed the keys of the convent to his Guardian with the words: "Father, I can carry on no longer." His was indeed a life completely expended in the Master's service.

Finally, our formula for perfection concludes with the words: *Say when and when*. This phrase may be viewed as the embodiment of utter Franciscan poverty of spirit, of perfect detachment. As such, it establishes the work of the entire formula. It would mean very little to be willing, dependable, and expendable religious if we insisted on employing these qualities according to our own lights and good pleasure. They must first be subjected to the sway of obedience and thus lined up with the will of God before they can exert any sanctifying influence over our lives. According to the expressive metaphor used by our holy Father Francis, we must be like dead men before our superior whom he can move and dispose of as he pleases without the slightest resistance on our part. Then and then only will the life of grace superabound in our souls. It's the old story of the Gospel paradox: *Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit* (Jo. 12, 24-25).

When we read the short statement upon which we have just meditated, we are forced to admire the soldier who originally made it. We say to ourselves: "There's a man—every inch a true soldier!" But let us not merely admire him. Let us also imitate him by having, in a spiritual sense, the same sentiments he had. After all, we too are soldiers, soldiers in the most wonderful army in the world. We are expected, therefore, to be the very best of soldiers. That is what Saint Paul exhorts every one of us: *Conduct thyself in work as a good soldier of Christ Jesus* (2 Tim. 2, 3). We shall be, indeed, good soldiers, bringing joy to the Heart of our Captain if, every morning, we appear before Him and sincerely offer ourselves for His work with the words: "Here I am, Lord—willing, dependable, expendable. Say where and when."

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GILES OF ASSISI, THE ECSTATIC KNIGHT

When Brother Leo, the beloved *Pecorello* of Saint Francis, wrote the life of his friend and confrere Blessed Giles of Assisi, he gave us one of the most beautiful and fascinating chapters in the history of Franciscan spirituality. The life of Giles, from the day of his first meeting with Francis to the day of his death, is the story of a soul advancing steadily toward high perfection but never resting every inch of the way.

Leo calls Giles a most holy and contemplative man, yet few of the incidents described in the early part of his life suggest much of either quality. He was a younger and impulsive youth when he sought out Francis on Saint George's Day, 1209, and Francis received him with joy. "Beloved," said the holy Francis, "God has given you great graces. If the emperor came to Assisi and wished to receive one of the townsfolk into his service to be his chamberlain or his familiar friend, would he not rejoice? Far greater, then, should be your rejoicing; for the Lord has chosen you as His own knight and most beloved servant."

Saint Francis was quick to perceive the chivalrous qualities in Giles's soul. "Knight of my Round Table," Francis called him, and in truth his life became one divine adventure in the service of the Great King, though toward the end his knight-errantry was not on the highways of this world but on the obscure paths of mystical life.

For a time Francis and Giles travelled together. Men who saw the hardships they endured wondered at their high spirits. They were laughed at, suspected, stoned, treated as rogues and vagabonds; and their happiness grew with abuse. But when gentler souls began to pity them, Giles grew uneasy. "Father," he said to Francis, "our glory is already waning," Francis, though his heart rejoiced at Giles's high chivalry, assured him with sadly prophetic vision that the hour of trial would never be wanting. On these journeys with Francis, it was the part of Giles to gather the people and tell them that the *Poverello* was worth listening to. Freed from the burden of possessions—how much Giles sacrificed is unrecorded, but it was his all—and freed from the heavier burden of self-esteem, he was enjoying a glorious holiday. But it was only a holiday. Soon his real mission began. Francis, already embracing the world in his magnificent sweep of vision was eager to send the young knight on a quest more suited to his temper and talents. So Giles became a votary of the saints, visiting their shrines, carrying the message of Francis over the highroads of the world.

The plan of Giles's life on his wanderings was always the same. He earned his bread; he gave his services freely wherever he could; he brought the good tidings of joy in the Lord and preached prayer and penance and peace. He was

an effective preacher—pungent, witty, a jester and an actor. His success was great; his converts were many; and the varied human contacts added shrewdness to the natural quickness of his mind. There were even a few miracles to his credit. But he could never be away from Francis for any great length of time; he must always return to Saint Mary of the Angels to refresh his soul with the holiness of his Father.

It may well be that Giles had a restless spirit, that the free wandering life was exactly suited his vigorous mind and body. But the opposite may just as well be true. If Giles loved the roads and the towns and the exotic splendor of distant lands, he also loved the solitude of fields and forests and mountains where prayer came easiest. Perhaps Giles, like Brother Lucido, nourished a wholesome fear of coming to feel at home in this world, and perhaps in his own soul echoed the cry of ever-wandering Lucido: "Not here our home, but in heaven." Whatever the truth may be, Leo tells us that Giles began to grow uneasy about the complete liberty Francis had given him. "Go wherever you will," said the trustful Francis. "But Father," replied Giles, "in such free obedience I cannot find rest." And Francis understood and sent him in obedience to a hermitage in Perugia.

Giles set out at once. The winter was exceedingly cold, but he went barefoot, as always, with only his rough gray habit to protect his body from the freezing blasts. A certain Perugian met him and wondered whether paradise was worth all that. Giles thought it was; and as he considered with tender compassion how Christ had trod rougher roads for him, barefoot and cold and hungry, his near-frozen body grew warm with love.

Although Giles had been sent to a hermitage where he could find peace and solitude for contemplative prayer, he alternated prayer with manual labor. He could do anything with his hands and do it supremely well. Cheerful, capable, always helpful, always ready to give of his physical strength and spiritual richness, small wonder the people clamored for his services.

Meanwhile Francis was planning a mission in Mohammedan Africa. He sent word to Giles that he wished him to join the little band of missionaries. Giles ran to the perilous enterprise as to a feast. The friars reached Tunis and began a vigorous campaign, but a fanatic inflamed the people against them and they preached with knives at their throat. At last Christian merchants seized the brothers and forced them to safety on their ships. It was a bitter blow to Giles. He had fully hoped for martyrdom, considering only his desire and not his possible unworthiness. He went back to Francis humbled because he had been deemed unfit to die for Christ. But humiliation was necessary for him, for

soon to enter the lists with sorrow and anguish, and all the pride and scorn in his soul, all the scorn and contempt, would rise in rebellion and fight the enemy against him. Ultimately humility conquered, but had he lost the battle against pride he would have lost the battle for his soul. It was not for nothing that the devil tempted him to vainglory.

The African episode marked the end of Giles's wanderings. Troubles in the Order had drawn Francis home from the East about the same time Giles had returned from Tunis. The little band of faithful companions, zealous for the purity of their ideal, instinctively gathered around their Father. In his last years Francis suffered indescribable agony of body and soul; and Giles, who loved him so deeply, who was so completely one with him in spirit and desire, could not go far away. If Giles had been merely an exalted vagabond—as indeed some of the brothers had already become—he might have gone on tramping the world, heedless that he belonged to an Order and that the Order was in travail and pain. But the sufferings of Francis were his sufferings, and the growing discontent and ambition among the brothers weighed heavily upon his chivalrous heart. He fought quietly and stubbornly. Then, in 1226, Francis died. The beloved companions awoke from their grief to find the masterful hand of Brother Elias guiding the Order where he would, far from the *Poverello's* ideals.

Elias had the support of the Church—or at least of high ecclesiastics—and Giles would not rebel. Instead he retired to the Perugian hermitage and for the next twenty years, until Blessed John of Parma brought back the Rule of Francis, the battles he fought were within his own soul. He changed much during that critical period. The simple directness of his youth, the high-minded knight-errantry that had characterized him while Francis lived, was replaced by the scorn of the fighter whose opponents are not worth the effort of combat. Sorrow and indignation burned in his heart, but his contempt for the *mitigati* went too deep for controversy. The gentle and tender souls, like Leo, were rushing in on bared knives in defense of what they loved. Leo, the little sheep of God, ran up to Giles in Perugia and told him of the marble vase Elias had set up in Assisi. The people were throwing money into it to build a rich basilica and convent for the brothers. Giles was shocked; he wept with Leo, but disdained to fight. "Let them build a house as long as from here to Assisi," he growled, "my little corner is enough for me." Then he added: "If you are a dead man, Leo, go and smash the vase that sins against holy poverty! But if you are still living, refrain; for the punishments of that Elias will be heavier than you can bear." Leo, dead or alive, smashed the vase. He was beaten with rods and exiled from Assisi.

Giles seems to have remained on fairly good terms with the *mitigati*. He had no affection for their doings, but he kept aloof and caused no disturbance. Yet they knew he was not a man to be bullied, and they feared and respected him—perhaps they even loved him. He was never sullen or sensitive. He laughed, though there was a sting in his wit—and held his ground at ease. He would not have been the true knight of Francis had he not fought with all his strength to possess his soul in peace. After a time he went down to Assisi to pray at the tomb of Francis. He seems to have sincerely admired the basilica—he was generous enough for that—and the brothers were eager to show him their new convent. It was all quite sumptuous and Giles was obviously impressed. Everyone awaited his comment. It came. "I tell you, my brothers," he said suavely, "you lack nothing now—except wives." Of course the brothers were shocked, but Giles was not retreating. "My brothers," he repeated gravely, "you know very well that to dispense yourselves from poverty like this is no more lawful for you than to dispense yourselves from chastity. Once you have cast out poverty it will be very easy for you to cast out chastity."

For all his ardent love for the Order, Giles seems to have had none of those delightfully comforting visions in which the salvation of the Friars Minor was assured and their place in heaven established on angelic thrones. He had seen too much. Once a certain friar came to him in high spirits. "Father," he cried, "I have good news to tell you!" "Tell it, my son," said Giles. "Father, in a vision I was taken to hell, and although I looked most diligently I saw not one brother of our Order there!" Giles sighed deeply and replied: "I well believe you, my son. I well believe that you saw none of our Order there." The brother persisted. "Why do you think it is, Father, that none of our brothers are in hell? Or if they are, why didn't I see them?" "Because, my son, you didn't go deep enough. If Giles had visions, he had no illusions.

The years spent in the hermitage in Perugia were apparently years of spiritual development. It is difficult to follow Leo's chronology, but it would seem that the best stories about Giles—and they are very good indeed—belong to this period. Looking up at the great hills and over the plains, the aging knight found contemplative prayer easier and ever more delightful, and the Holy Spirit to Whom he had a special devotion, was adorning his humbled soul with ever greater gifts. Yet he was not wholly apart from the world. He was still a missionary, a street preacher of wonderful power and appeal, and a most enthusiastic gardener. He seems to have found something of his Father's love of nature. The little creatures spoke to him of God and eternal things; he embraced rocks and trees; much of his wisdom seems to have come from his

close contact with the earth. Flowers loved his care. They not only bloomed in his garden but sprang up miraculously to lend strength to his words. When the brothers of Perugia lacked water, Giles struck the ground with his stick and a lovely violet sprang up showing the brothers where to dig. A Dominican, in doubt about the virginity of Mary, came to Giles with his doubt. "O Brother Preacher," cried Giles, "she was a virgin before giving birth." He struck the ground with his stick and a beautiful lily appeared. "O Brother Preacher, she was a virgin while giving birth." He struck the ground and a second lily sprang up. "O Brother Preacher, she was a virgin after giving birth". Again he struck the ground, and there was a third lily. Giles was indeed convincing.

Though always an ascetic, as he advanced in holiness Giles advanced in mortifications. His wattle hut, his single tunic, his one meal a day no longer satisfied his passion to share in the sufferings of Christ. But he had the strong Franciscan bent against asceticism for its own sake. And he always preferred hard work to mere self-laceration. His scorn for the idle prayerful man, the "Brother Flies" of the Order, was deep and constant. "Do you think," he once said to a brother, "that by doing nothing you are being spiritual?" To Giles, physical work was as indispensable for a healthy soul as for a healthy body.

As the years passed, Giles came to possess ever more of the sweet reasonableness, the understanding tolerance, of the Seraphic Francis. He had learned that whatever might befall the Order, a man could still be faithful to the ideals of Francis. The affairs of others troubled him less and less. He watched and prayed, and avoided the brothers who murmured. Whenever anyone came to him with an evil report, Giles would say: "I do not wish to hear of the sins of others; but take care, brother, that you do not burden your own conscience." In case of real calamity, however, Giles was a marvelous comforter. Tempted men fled to him, the tortured begged his prayers, and his charity never failed. Once a brother priest, driven almost to madness by a violent temptation, cried out in the depths of his soul for Giles to come for him. And Giles did go, not in the flesh, but in a dream; and when the brother awoke the temptation was gone and his soul was wonderfully refreshed. To those who came to him in sincerity of heart, Giles had the tenderness of Francis himself; but to those who affected a stuffy or lachrymose piety, he was disconcertingly gruff. A priest approached him with lugubrious solemnity. "Pray for me, Giles," he sighed. "Pray for yourself," was the retort. A young man announced to Giles that he had decided to give up everything and enter the Order. "Then first go and kill your parents," snapped Giles. The young man clasped his hands in horror and began to weep. "O Brother Giles," he cried, "how can I do such a wicked thing?" Giles called him a simpleton.

Learned theologians and eloquent preachers had to be cautious with Giles. Their holiness of life was not in due proportion to their learning and talent, the keen-witted brother was quite likely to make fools of them.

The last stage of Giles's life seems to have begun with a vision of Saint Francis. It happened at the hermitage in Cetona that Giles saw his holy Father in a dream. "I wish that we might speak together, Father," cried Giles with humble longing. And Francis replied: "Be zealous for yourself, if you wish to speak with me." After this Giles must have doubled his efforts, for his life becomes an almost uninterrupted account of visions and raptures and ecstasies. Leo recounts one especially significant and beautiful incident. Shortly after the apparition of Francis, a certain holy religious living in the neighborhood had a dream in which he saw the sun rise and set over the place where Giles had built his cell. When he met Giles afterwards and noted the change in him, the meaning of the dream became clear. Drawing near to Giles he whispered: "*Porta suaviter Filium virginis*" ("Bear gently the Son of the virgin"). From then on Giles lived in almost constant communion with God; his knightly joustings were now on mystic fields. We do not know what he suffered, but Leo gives us glimpses of demonic tempting and torturing him. Once when Giles left his brothers to return to his cell at night, he spoke of going to his martyrdom. On another occasion a brother heard such terrifying screams issuing from Giles's cell that he rushed to him in alarm. Giles was unharmed; he thanked the brother for coming to him, but sent him away quickly. He had to fight this enemy alone. Yet Giles was supremely happy. He spoke rapturously of the joys of contemplation; but if the brothers questioned him too closely, he fell silent. He could not reveal the secrets of the King.

The transition between the various stages of Giles's life—between the joyous adventurousness of his youth, the deep sorrow and bitterness of his maturity, the mystical experiences of his old age—were doubtlessly not so abrupt in reality as they seem in narrative. Giles was always the poet, always the knight of the Great King, just he was always the contemplative and always the ascetic. His biting humor remained to the end, and to the end he was Giles the unpredictable jester, the disconcerting pricker of bubbles. But most of all he was always the true follower of Francis, his good brother, his gallant Knight of the Round Table.

On the Eve of Saint George, fifty-two years to the day after he had entered the Order, Giles died. He was buried in Perugia, and the citizens put a sculptured tomb over his body and called him a saint. But the Church did not beatify him until 1777.

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AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (II)

The present rule of Pius XI comprises twenty-five articles grouped under eight chapter headings. Let us consider the articles individually to discover, if possible, not only their literal meaning but something of the spirit they were meant to incorporate.

TEXT: *Rule of the Third Order Regular of the Seraphic Father Saint Francis.*

Chapter I: *Sum and Substance of the Religious Life.*

The First Article

The form of life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, chastity and poverty.

A religious order or institute is one precisely to the extent that its members strive for a common goal under a common leadership. It is the rule which determines the goal to be attained and the means to attain it. While one Third Order Congregation may differ from another in virtue of its particular constitution, it is the rule common to all Third Order Institutes that makes their members *brothers and sisters* of the same father, Francis. Character, however, is not simply a matter of inheritance, but includes acquired habits or patterns of acting, thinking, and feeling. For that reason true parenthood involves education as well as generation. Now, it is through the rule and the spirit it embodies that Francis shapes or *forms* the lives of his children. In approving the present rule in the most solemn fashion possible, by Papal Bull, Pius XI gives all members of the Third Order Regular the infallible assurance that their *form of life* is a safe and sure means of attaining religious perfection in the footsteps of Francis.

The above text, however, contains a triple ambiguity, which to explain is to reveal something of the spirit that quickens the letter of the law. The chapter title, *Summa Vitae Religiosae*, as it reads in the original Latin, contains two of these delightful ambiguities. To begin with, *summa* or "sum" has a double meaning. Literally, it means the whole or sum total; figuratively, the gist or substance or heart of the matter. Lest the double meaning be lost, the English translation, "sum and substance", makes the twofold sense explicit. In so doing, it reveals an interesting characteristic of the Franciscan rule. Its essence or heart is literally the whole of the rule. The key to this paradox lies in the wording of

the first article. "The form of life . . . is this: *to observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ.*" This wording, which is Francis' own, is common property of First, Second and Regular Third Order rule. And since there is no substantial difference so far as this point is concerned, we may speak simply of the Franciscan rule. Francis put nothing in his rule that was not somehow in the Gospel; and there is nothing in the Gospel that was not somehow in his rule. That is why the article inculcating Gospel observance gives not merely the substance, but in a very real sense, the sum total of the Franciscan rule.

The second part of the chapter title is equally provocative. *Vitae religiosae*, "of the religious life"! Does this first chapter give the sum and substance of religious life in general as the title seems to say, or only of the Third Order Regular as the opening words of the first article indicate? Once again the Franciscan rule is unique. We need not choose between the two, for both interpretations are correct. Francis was the only founder who made his followers most distinctive by stressing the very point that should have made them most like other religious. And here precisely is the paradox of Francis' rule.

The Gospel is a universal guide for all men, and every Christian is bound to observe its moral law. In a special way the Gospel is the ideal and norm of the religious life. That is why spiritual writers from the Fathers of the Church down to Francis' very predecessors recognized that the religious life by reason of its three Gospel counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience is the only true evangelical or apostolic life. And still, as Bishop Felder nicely puts it, "not a single religious founder prior to Francis based his rule on the Gospel and bound his followers expressly to its observance in the fullest sense. Neither Basil and Pachomius in the East, nor the Frankish and Irish monks in the West, placed this goal before their disciples. The two famous rules which were exclusively in use in the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Benedictine and the Augustinian, in no manner made the Gospel as such the foundation of religious life. Nowhere do they intimate that the Order is based on the Gospel, nor that the individual Religious is bound by his profession to observe the Gospel and to imitate the apostolic mode of life; on the contrary, they expressly exclude very important features of this life." (*Ideals of St. Francis*, ch. 1) And so in giving his Orders the most obvious basis for the religious life, paradoxically Francis made them unique.

In fact, a return to the Gospel was the keynote of the entire Franciscan movement. The divine mission of God's Troubadour was to become a "disciple of the Gospel in faith and truth" as Celano declared. (*Legenda Prima*, n. 7)

First of all, his own personal life was as literally evangelical as he knew how to make it. To quote Celano again: "He was no listless hearer of the Gospel, but kept faithfully in mind all that he heard, taking care to fulfill all things to the letter." And when his first two companions, Bernard of Quintavalle and Peter Cantanii, joined him, Francis turned to the Gospel to find how they should live. "This is our life and our rule and that of all those who join us." (Celano, *Tres Socii*, n. 28)

Indeed, the first rule Francis gave his friars was little more than a mosaic of Gospel texts. As God revealed to Francis in his famous vision, Bernardone's son had gathered the crumbs of Gospel wisdom in danger of being lost, and had kneaded them into a host which was the Franciscan rule. It is not surprising, then, that Francis adamantly refused to borrow from any other religious order. "I have no wish that you show me any other rule, be it of Benedict or Augustine or Bernard, nor propose any way of life other than what the Lord had mercifully revealed to me." (*Speculum Perfectionis*, ch. 68) And what this revelation was he tells us in his *Testament*: "No one showed me what I should do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the form of the Holy Gospel. And I caused it to be written in few words and simply and the Lord Pope confirmed it for me." No wonder then that Francis dared defend his rule before Innocent III. "It is not I, Most Holy Father, but Jesus Christ, who put the words and precepts in the Rule. Therefore, I dare not and cannot change or efface the words of Christ." (*Declaration of Nicholas III on the Rule of the Friars Minor (Exiit)*, prol.)

This "living the Gospel" was not something Francis intended for his First Order only. It colored his whole apostolate among the people. As Bishop Felder puts it: "The entire Franciscan Movement assumed *its character and individuality from the Gospel*. Francis had no other aim than to lead back all classes of Christian society to the purity and ideals of the Gospel by means of his three Orders. The Friars were destined not only to be the leaders in this movement by their preaching of the Gospel, but more so by living it themselves in the fullness of its perfection. That was the aim of the Poverello, that was at all times his supreme Ideal. Viewed in this light and grasped with such depth, clearness, courage and living force, *this idea was something entirely new*; it was, moreover, peculiar to Francis alone."

If Francis' message to the world was precisely the good news of the Gospel, as his preaching and writing reveal, then the Third Order Secular as the fruit of his apostolate among the laity should also reveal this fact. And yet if we

read the primitive rule or "Memorial of Resolutions of the Brothers and Sisters of Penance living in their own homes" the connection is not so obvious. For the most part, it contains detailed and specific regulations regarding the manner of dress, fasting and abstinence, making of wills, etc. As a matter of fact, however, a great many of these points have some unmentioned scriptural inspiration and represent a very concrete and obvious application of Christ's counsel to the needs of Francis' age. Furthermore this primitive rule must be considered in connection with Saint Francis' *Letter to All Christians*, which is commonly regarded as the primitive charter of Francis' secular followers, and together with the "Memorial of Resolutions" (primitive rule), constituted the Third Order rule of life. Inasmuch as this Letter, like most of Francis' writings, is literally full of the Gospel, we can understand why Leo XIII refers to the original Third Order rule of Francis as consisting "not so much of rules of his own as of passages of the Gospel."

But the "Brothers and Sisters of Penance", as Francis' lay Tertiary movement was called, had another very significant point of contact with the Gospel that is sometimes overlooked. It is generally recognized by Franciscan historians that Francis could not have understood "penance" in the customary sense of the term. He had no intention of founding a religious group whose ideal was penance in the sense that it aimed principally at fastings, scourgings, the wearing of penitential girdles or the practice of other austerities. The truth of the matter is that Francis equated "penance" and a "life after the manner of the Gospel" for the same reason that Christ, Saint John the Baptist and the Apostles did so. Fasting, it is true, did play a large role in all of Francis' three rules for the simple reason that it was encouraged by Christ and sanctioned by His example. But, for the rest, it is the living of the Gospel life and in particular the practice of love of neighbor through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that constitute Franciscan penance. That is why Francis could refer to his conversion to a life "according to the form of the Holy Gospel" with the words "when I began to do penance." (*Testament*). His first disciples when asked to what order they belonged answered simply, we are penitents of the town of Assisi (Celano, *Tres Socii*, n. 26-37). Saint Clare alludes to her life according to the Gospel when she said: "The most High deigned to illumine my heart that I might do penance according to the example and teaching of our Blessed Father Francis." (*Regula et vita sororum pauperum*). Where the friars are prevented by persecution from living their life according to the Gospel, they are counseled to "flee to another land to do penance with the blessing of God." (*Testament*)

Even the Third Order Secular, then, was regarded by Francis as a life

according to the Gospel. But, for all that, the fact remains that so long as the Tertiaries were "living in their own homes" the full Gospel life was not possible. But when the Third Order Regular grew from a lay movement to full religious status by vowing the three evangelical counsels, this obstacle was removed. That is why the opening lines of the new Third Order rule of Pius XI could be written in substantially the same words as that of the First Order rule of 1223 or the Second Order rule of 1253. And on this score alone, Pius XI could claim that the present Third Order Regular rule "is more thoroughly pervaded with the Franciscan Spirit." (*Rerum conditio*)

The third and final ambiguity in these opening lines of the rule arises in virtue of what we have said above. How far is the Franciscan religious bound to live the Gospel? We are not, needless to say, concerned with what every Christian is bound to obey in virtue of Christ's "new testament", but solely with the Gospel *counsels* as distinct from *precepts*. The letter of the rule seems to restrict the Gospel observance to the three evangelical counsels alone. "To observe the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, chastity and poverty." And yet the original formulation of this idea in the friars' first rule as well as Francis' personal interpretation of it clearly indicates he intended to put no limits to the observance of the Gospel. It was the whole Gospel that he "caused to be written in few and simple words" (*Testament*). And his rule, which he called "the marrow of the Gospel", was more to call attention to some of the more practical and obvious application of the Gospel's counsels than to limit the scope of its observance.

The problem in short is this. Is there an obligation to observe the whole of the Gospel or merely the three evangelical counsels? And the answer briefly is Yes. For once again we are not called to decide between two alternatives, but rather to determine in *what sense each is true*.

When the early friars confronted Nicholas III with a similar problem, the Holy Father "to put the consciences of the friars fully at ease" declared that a strict obligation (binding under sin) exists only in regard to those Gospel counsels in the rule that are formulated expressly or equivalently in terms of a commanding or prohibiting precept (*Exiit*, art. 1, n. 3). Nevertheless, he continues, they should observe the other Gospel counsels "more strictly than other Christians, but merely because it is required by the state of life they have chosen."

In similar fashion, we can say that the Regular Tertiaries by reason of their profession have a strict obligation (in sin) to observe the Gospel only in so far as this observance is so enjoined by the present rule. Now in view of the

final chapter, which deals expressly with the obligation of the rule, Tertiaries are bound under sin only where otherwise obliged by human or divine law, or where the three vows are concerned. In this sense, then, Tertiaries are bound only to the three evangelical counsels "by living in obedience, chastity and poverty."

But in another sense there is an obligation to observe the other counsels of the Gospel "more strictly than other Christians", as Nicholas III explained to the friars. Not indeed, perhaps, under pain of sin, but because "it becomes the child most of all to reproduce in itself the image and virtues of its parents" (*Third Order Reg. Rule*, art. 25). Francis felt a special father's obligation to look after the Poor Clares, because, as he wrote to them, "you have espoused yourselves to the holy Gospel, choosing to live according to the perfection of the Gospel" (*Form of life Francis wrote for Saint Clare*). If Christ of the Gospel is not our first love nor the evangelical life our ideal, can we call ourselves followers of Francis? Can we claim him as our Father?

This "living the Gospel" has always been the strength and weakness of the Franciscan movement. Its strength, because, as long as Franciscans are faithful to the words that *will not pass away* (Matt. 24, 35), the Franciscan movement itself will endure. Its very flexibility, its universal appeal, its adaptability to so many tasks lie precisely in the fact that its soul is the Gospel ideal in its fulness.

At the same time, this ideal is its weakness. No other order or religious movement has undergone so many reforms, none has been subjected to so many changes. The reason is this. The Gospel must be lived *in time*, and it is a cliché to say that time changes. In a sense, Francis' own living the Gospel, literally though it seems, had a distinctively medieval coloring. Child of his era, Francis fitted the Gospel observance to the needs of an age of chivalry. As he told Angelo of Tancredi, "Follow me and I will make you a knight in the army of Christ" (Wadding, *Annales*, I, p. 80). He himself was God's "Troubadour" the "Herald of the Great King". He had his own Lady, whose colors he bore—"Lady Poverty." No wonder Bishop Felder who knew so well the ideals of Francis could compose an entire book called *The Knight-Errant of Assisi*. Because Francis interpreted the Gospel to his own age through the rules of his three Orders, many of the specific regulations, especially in the Third Order rule, have lost their significance today. And yet the foundation, the basis of his rule, could never lose its significance—for it is nothing less than the Gospel. Franciscans of each age have the task, the ideal, of living it as literally as

possible. The adaptation proper to one age must itself be modified to meet the needs of the Franciscan apostolate in the next. And since the Franciscan ideal is not merely the Gospel lived in time but lived *by men*, the human element of interpretation enters in. How far can the Gospel mode of life be combined with the evangelical apostolate? It was this human difference of opinion which caused the various reform movements within the first Order and split it into various branches. And if this struggle to preserve the purity of the Gospel ideal has been the source of perpetual unrest within the Franciscan Orders, and to that extent is their weakness, it is also a sign of their vitality. For when it ceases, Franciscanism itself will have died.

For that reason, the adaptation of the Gospel to the present is not merely the task of Franciscanism as a whole, or even exclusively the occupation of a single Franciscan order or congregation. It is a personal challenge to each and every individual Franciscan. They must make its message their own. If Francis brought the Gospel from the study of the theologian to make it the prayerbook of the common man, should not it be the fundamental spiritual reading of all Franciscans, their basic meditation book, their examination of conscience, their guide to growth in Christ? There are few contemporary religious or social problems, that have not a parallel in the Gospel. We shall discover these problems and their answers, however, only if we have something of Francis' own familiarity with the Scriptures.

But, lest our knowledge of the scriptures be purely speculative, let Francis' admonition serve as our final comment to this first article of the rule: "The Apostle says, *the letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth* . . . Those religious are killed by the letter who will not follow the spirit of the Holy Scriptures, but who seek to know the words only to interpret them to others. And they are quickened by the spirit of the Holy Scriptures who do not interpret materially every text they know or wish to know, but who by word and example give them back to God from whom is all good." (*Admonitions*, n. 7)

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O. F. M.

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The greatest suffering in the religious life
is caused by other people's nerves.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According To Saint Bonaventure

Unlike so many of the great medieval ascetics who shunned whatever delighted the senses, our Seraphic Father walked through the world with open and admiring eyes. He loved the beauty of creatures; the sights and sounds and smells of nature filled his soul with joy. He drank deeply and eagerly of the loveliness of the created world because to his pure soul all earthly beauty was but the reflection of the uncreated beauty of God the Father. How, then, can Saint Bonaventure, the faithful follower of Francis, ask us to consider a desire for beautiful things a matter of conscience? Bonaventure himself was a cultured man, noted for his refined aesthetic judgment and discriminating taste; nor was he lacking in that simple child-like delight in natural beauty that characterized Saint Francis. Furthermore, in his own spiritual writings, Bonaventure insisted repeatedly that contemplation of beauty is a step toward union with God. Obviously, then, when Saint Bonaventure would have us ask ourselves:

Do I Yield to a Fastidious Desire to Behold or Possess Beautiful Things?

what he means is simply: Am I infected with the virus of aestheticism? Aestheticism is dangerous for any religious; for a Franciscan it is not only dangerous but diametrically opposed to his vocation. The very meaning of the word aesthetic (from the Greek *aisthetikos*) implies perception through feeling, and when the perceptions of a religious are obtained through feelings and emotions he is in danger of going astray. Aestheticism makes beauty an end in itself; it ignores or relegates to the background the Creator of all beauty; and at best it can produce only a semblance of piety.

We are not to equate aestheticism with lack of mortification or with concupiscence of the eyes or of the flesh; it is rather an over-fastidious avoidance of whatever is not pleasing, and manifests itself chiefly in negative attitudes. In general, then, we may first ask ourselves: How do I react when confronted with ugliness—moral, spiritual, or physical? Do I shrink from it, refuse to concern myself about it, or merely wish it away with exclamations of pietistic abhorrence? That a religious should be pained and disgusted by sin is certainly to be expected. But—and this is crucial—if a religious loathes sin only because it is offensive to his refined feelings, he is moved by aestheticism and not by love of God. Here, then, we should ask ourselves: Are sins and vices, especially perversions, loathsome to me because of their ugliness and for no higher reason? The answer to this question lies in our attitude toward persons addicted to vice. Do I shrink from association with the moral wrecks of the

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community, those whose lives are a public scandal? Do I shy away on the excuse that I have my own reputation to shield, that my position would be jeopardized by contact with them, or similar pretexts, when in reality I avoid them because they disgust me? If I refuse my help to anyone on the grounds of his moral degradation, I must realize that I lack the spirit of Christ and of Francis. The Pharisaical religious or the spiritual aesthete condemns not only the sin but the sinner too, and passes him by with averted eyes. The Christlike religious is willing and eager to stretch out his hand to a fallen brother—even if it means slurs on his own good name. Christ associated with sinners—and He was promptly condemned by the Pharisees. Am I convinced, then, that no matter how sheltered my life, how far removed from the dregs of this world, I must never become so enamoured of purity and moral beauty that I cannot be genuinely moved by the misery of those who are sunk in vice? Do I realize that according to the example of Christ my compassion and patience must be unlimited—or limited only when the rights of God are in jeopardy?

What is my reason for avoiding personal sin? Is it love of God, or could it be that I am so obsessed by an aesthetic passion for virtue that only the vileness of sin prevents me from soiling myself with it? This has bearing especially on our keeping of the Sixth Commandment. Persons of delicate taste may have such a deep abhorrence of sexual sins that even the slightest impurity causes acute pain. To be sure, there is nothing wrong in this feeling, but is feeling the only or main reason for my avoidance of such sins? Am I perhaps so sensitive that even the slightest sin makes me unhappy not because it displeases God but because it is a stain on my beauty-loving soul? What about spiritual reading, conferences, sermons? Do I prefer to read and hear about only the beautiful aspects of life—and that in beautiful language—and do I resent whatever deals with vice as being in bad taste and irrelevant as far as I am concerned? Do I consistently avoid whatever may uncover the hidden weakness and imperfections of my own soul because I cannot bear to acknowledge them either to myself or to others? Aestheticism frequently masquerades as delicacy of conscience, sometimes even as holiness; the acid test always lies in whether the interests of God and our neighbor come first with us, or whether a natural abhorrence of ugliness rules our actions.

Unless we are psychologically abnormal, all of us prefer the company of attractive people. We like to look at a beautiful face, to hear the sound of a melodious voice, to delight in the sparkle of humor or depth of wisdom of a brilliant and well-trained mind. But, what about persons who are not attractive? Do I avoid the company of those who are repulsive to me and do I show my

aversion in any way? Does my conduct perhaps add to the sufferings of persons who are deformed or diseased or afflicted with a physical or mental disorder? Is my nose so delicate that it wrinkles in disgust at every unpleasant odor? Do my eyes habitually turn away from a repelling sight, my hands shrink from a repelling touch? Am I so squeamish in the presence of dirt and squalor as poverty that I hurt the feelings of others? Or do I, on the contrary, sincerely strive to maintain a Christlike equanimity and self-control even in the most trying and disgusting circumstances? Religious persons who by their office or profession are brought in contact with all kinds of people must be especially careful in this regard. Nurses and educators, for example, should ask themselves whether fastidiousness ever leads them to sidestep the duties of their profession. A teacher may ask: Do I show preference for the attractive, well-mannered, intelligent students and ignore or even insult the unappealing? How do I react when confronted with a genuinely ugly problem? Do I turn away in disgust as from something beneath my notice, or do I make a genuine effort to deal with the matter for love of God and the individuals concerned? Those caring for the sick or helpless may ask: Do I leave the more unpleasant services for others to perform? Do I give more attention and better care to attractive patients and neglect the difficult ones? Do I perhaps scandalize secular nurses and doctors by letting them do my work, trying to conceal fastidiousness under the cloak of religious dignity? Let us remember that Saint Elizabeth, delicately reared though she was and of noble birth, always nursed the most loathsome diseases herself, performed the lowliest services, and showed special love toward the most difficult patients. To her servants she left the easier tasks.

Aestheticism betrays itself not only in negative but also in positive ways, all of them at variance with the Franciscan way of life. The Franciscan ideal of poverty demands a certain austerity which, though by no means without beauty of its own, is difficult for the aesthete to accept. As we have already pointed out in previous examinations, love of beauty and softness in clothing, personal effects, and living quarters cannot be reconciled with the form of life we have vowed. What is more to the point here, however is to uncover the roots of aestheticism in our spiritual life. These roots may take various forms such as emotionalism, enthusiasm, sensationalism, liturgicism, and similar malignancies.

As Franciscans we do not rule out or despise emotions. Provided they are truly deep and sound, they are the source of much of our spiritual vitality and energy. But shallow and superficial emotions, especially if uncontrolled by

natural and supernatural truth, quickly degenerate into emotionalism and sensationalism.

First of all, let us look into the source of our zeal. Do I, in the words of the *Imitation*, "seek more the sweetness of the Lord than the Lord of all sweetness?" Do I, in consequence, neglect the religious exercises when I find no pleasure in them? when I feel weary, dry, bored? Am I the kind of religious person who maintains a constant flow of prettily pious sentiment, who strikes attitudes intended to edify and impress others, but who shrinks back when real sacrifices are demanded and rebels or breaks down in the face of real difficulties? In other words, is the source of my zeal the esteem in which others hold me, or the satisfaction I feel in my own supposed moral beauty? What about my efforts in striving for perfection? Do I make sporadic starts, punctuated by emotional states? When something goes wrong, does everything go wrong and do I sink into despondency? Or, is my zeal determined by my love for persons—spiritual directors, confessors, superiors—and when removed from contact with them does my zeal weaken or vanish entirely? Do I neglect prescribed spiritual exercises and penances to indulge in those of my own choosing, those which have more emotional appeal?

As religious, we are all concerned with the works of charity in one form or another. Here (too, emotionalism may very easily creep in. Perhaps we can talk sweetly about our dear Lord and about the saints and about the wonderful beauty of the religious life, but when there is question of charity that demands personal sacrifice, how quickly the ugly selfishness of our emotionalism comes to the fore. Let us ask ourselves in all seriousness: Am I careful to observe the externals of the religious life, to cultivate a correct and perhaps admirable outward appearance, and yet rest content with a shallow and unstable spirituality? Have I reason to fear that I may be like the Pharisees whom Our Lord called "whited sepulchres", fair to behold but full of rottenness within? Why do I perform the works of charity? Is it because I wish to be considered kind, or rather fear to be considered unkind? Am I more tender and loving toward my charges when I am observed by others? Do I play to the gallery? Do I seek the pleasure of being esteemed for my charity? True love does not seek its own but always and only the good of others. Any form of weakness or emotional instability vitiates love—for by nature it is strong and hard: *Dura aut mors est dilectio*. Hence we should ask ourselves: Can I, and do I, perform the works of charity even at great cost to myself, and am I motivated only by love of God and my neighbor? Can I deny favors even to those I love most when I know that to grant the favor would be wrong or harmful? Or do I, on

the contrary, commit serious sins rather than risk the possibility of losing a friend's love? Teachers especially should examine themselves carefully on this point. It is not always easy to deny a favor or refuse a request when to do so will probably call forth the verdict of a meanness or severity or result in loss of affection. But it is just under such circumstances that the true nature of our charity manifests itself.

Enthusiasm is another form of aestheticism which may endanger our spiritual life. There is, of course, a sound and healthy enthusiasm which we should cultivate. It was this kind of enthusiasm that gave birth to the Franciscan "revolution" and in fact to all the great movements within the Church. But there is also a dangerous and unsound enthusiasm which gave birth to all the great heresies. It is this kind that we must watch for and avoid. For example, when certain new devotions or spiritual exercises or religious ideas are brought to my attention, what is my reaction? If they appeal to my taste, do I adopt them and propagate them with blind enthusiasm, or do I first submit them to the judgment of my spiritual director or wait until the ecclesiastical authorities have approved and recommended them? Do I go in for the more sensational type of religious books—revelations dealing with purgatory and hell, for example, or prophecies dealing with the fate of the world—and neglect the sober and mature books that would really help me to know myself and advance in perfection? Is my enthusiasm quickly aroused by every report of miracle or vision or revelation? Do I cast myself headlong into new movements, take up the defense of "holy causes" without ecclesiastical sanction, or become a devotee to everything extraordinary? Over-enthusiasm, even for things intrinsically good, can become seriously harmful. Our Order has had sad enough experience with over-enthusiastic zealots. Let us remember that the Spirituals and the Fraticelli and many others were enthusiasts, in love with the ideal of poverty and the strict observance of the Rule. But because their enthusiasm was not checked by charity and obedience, it plunged them into disaster.

Finally, aestheticism may be at the root of an exaggerated love of the liturgy. Franciscans surely have a right to love the liturgy, to enjoy its beauty, to participate in it fully with the Church. But if we look for natural satisfaction in this rather than our spiritual nourishment and growth, we are treading on dangerous ground. For example: Am I so fastidious about the liturgy that I avoid saying the Office with the community because my fellow-religious chant badly, because they offend me by their discordant voices, lack of rhythmic mispronunciations, awkward movements, and similar enormities? Do I work

against the time-honored practices which have been blessed by the Church and which are contrary to my sense of liturgical correctness? For example, do I protest against such practices as offering Holy Communion for others, or saying the Rosary during Mass, or do I denounce certain devotions, such as the Stations of the Cross, as being unliturgical? Do I carry my taste for liturgical art so far as to confuse or bewilder or even shock simple and uncultured souls? The religious who indulges his taste for the liturgy to such an extent is unquestionably a victim of the disease becoming known as *liturgosis*. That there are dangers from an exaggerated love of the liturgy has been pointed out by our Holy Father. There is a definite need for a return to more liturgically correct forms of worship; that no one will deny. To participate in the liturgical movement is entirely in keeping with the Franciscan spirit, and should be encouraged in our own convents and monasteries and churches. But our zeal must always be tempered by charity toward others, by reverence for tradition, by tolerance, and above all by humble and submissive following of the directives issued by the Church. *Only let all things be done properly and in order* (1 Cor. 14, 40).

Admittedly, life in a religious house is not always easy for persons of refined taste and delicate sensibility. But, if their will is firmly set on self-conquest, there is abundant encouragement and inspiration for them in the example of Saint Francis himself. Few, if any of us are more squeamish or fastidious or beauty-loving than the youthful Francis. Yet he forced himself, for love of Christ, to embrace and kiss a leper. We may not be called to a literal imitation of our holy Father in this, but we are surely called to an imitation of his spirit. Let us, then, be true Franciscans, loving the beautiful but accepting the ugly according to the will of God.

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Holy Scripture has been given for directing man in the art of knowing and accomplishing things with a view to eventually attaining the truly desirable.

Saint Bonaventure

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

"WHOM MY SOUL LOVETH." Benedict Ballou, O. F. M. Paterson, New Jersey: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1950. Pp. 316. \$2.00

Drawing upon years of experience in dealing with the needs of religious and priests, Father Ballou has compiled a useful and inspiring handbook for the monthly holy hour. The meditations and prayers are directed, as the title of the book indicates, toward a deeper consideration of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament through adoration, reparation, petition, and thanksgiving. Simple and clear both in style and arrangement, the book is well adapted for use at the community holy hour.



BELLS ABOVE THE AMAZON. Arthur J. Burks. New York: David McKay Company, 1951. \$3.00.

This is the story of a Franciscan missionary of our own times. Hugo Mense was born in Paderborn, Westphalia, 1879, and died in Brazil, 1944. He began as a blacksmith, suffered an accident that brought him to the hospital, fell in love with the sister who nursed him, and as a result realized his own vocation to the religious life. He became a Franciscan and for thirty-four years spent to the full his enormous physical strength, his learning, and his all-embracing love on the savage Indians of the Brazilian jungle. In 1911 he founded Saint Francis Mission on the Cururu River, where for twenty-seven of the thirty-four years he labored to bring the fierce black-faced Mundurucus to the knowledge of Christ and to a better way of living.

The story of Father Hugo's life and work among the Mundurucus was first given to Colonel Burks by "Father Sereno" (Father Placidus Toelle, O. F. M.), Father Hugo's intimate friend and successor at the mission.

Making a second trip to Brazil, Colonel Burks did the actual writing of the book at the mission where he was able to catch the sights and sounds and smells of the lush green jungle and observe for himself the simple life of the Mundurucus—their customs and habits, their constant struggle against the heat and the rains, famine and disease, deadly animals and torturing insects. Although not Catholic, the author writes with sympathetic understanding of the priestly vocation and profound appreciation of the missionary ideal; and he frequently betrays something of the missionaries' own respect and predilection for the Mundurucus.

The book is vividly descriptive but it is neither documented nor complete, or even clear in detail where persons other than Father Hugo himself are referred to. This unquestionably detracts from the value of the book as mission history, but since most of the persons concerned are still living and duly reluctant about having their names and work publicized, the author was obliged to be vague. He did, however, succeed in recording a phase of mission history that is rapidly passing from the scene. With the advent of air transportation life in the jungle missions will soon become quite different from what it was twenty or thirty years ago. In any case, as fictionalized biography, BELLS ABOVE THE AMAZON remains an inspiring and essentially truthful portrait of a very human and very lovable missionary.

It may be of interest to note, in passing, that when he came to the United States in 1922 Father Hugo spent a few days at Saint Bonaventure where Mother Immaculata, foundress of the Congregation whose sisters were working at the Mandurucu Mission, had just taken up her residence. The Mandurucu Mission was the second foundation made by the then two-year-old Congregation.

THE LISTENER

Mary was full of listening
And the Word
Was uttered in her silence
Like a bellstroke.

In Mary was no threat
Of clangor. She was still
As summer skies
Wide-armed to wait the Sun.

Mary was full of stillness.
Thus she heard the Ghostly overshadow
Quiet as power,
Fall like crescendoing thunder
On her soul.

Only a word,
A brave consent low-spoken,
But every stone in hell
Went limp as rag.
The heavens shot up in flame.
There was no hindrance
In Mary, quiet as humility.

The soft-strung Word
Lost in negotiation,
Pierced Mary's bosom
Like a clarion.

In her there was no din,
There was no traffic.
Mary was full of listening,
Full of grace.

*Poor Clare Monastery of
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Roswell, New Mexico*

Sister Mary Francis, P. C.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Story of the Crucifix

When Saint Philip Benitius lay on his deathbed, he called out in a feeble voice to his brethren kneeling at his side: "Give me my book; give me my book." For a moment there was puzzled inactivity in the room. Then one of the priests offered the Bible to the dying saint, and another handed him the writings of the beloved Saint Bede. But Philip gently pushed them both away. At that moment it was noticed that the saint's eyes were directed longingly to the crucifix on the desk. And when it was brought over to the bed, Philip grasped it eagerly in his hands and pressed it lovingly to his heart. "Yes," he said, "this is my book. From it I learned how to live and with it near my heart I wish to die."

During this holy season of Lent we would do well to foster in our hearts the love of a Saint Philip Benitius for the crucifix. It should be for us, too, our favorite book on which we frequently meditate and in which we shall find a story of suffering, ingratitude, and love without parallel. Following the example of the pious old lay brother we might imagine that this story is written in letters of red, letters of black, and letters of gold.

The letters of red speak of the indescribable sufferings of our Lord—of the mental anguish in the Garden of Olives, the quivering pain of the brutal scourging, the stabbing torture of the devilish crown of thorns, and the exquisite agony of the inhuman crucifixion. Of course we can never hope to get an adequate idea of those horrible sufferings. They were the sufferings of a God-Man, of One Whose divine nature gave extraordinary endurance to His human nature, making it capable of a degree of suffering far beyond the grasp of our puny minds. And yet we should not on that account hesitate to contemplate the Passion of our Lord. Let us meditate on it as best we can, making up by our devoted love for our lack of complete understanding. Jesus is so anxious to have us compassionate Him in His bitter sorrow. *I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort me, and I found none* (Ps. 68, 21).

Our reflections on the Passion should be impressive and fruitful. We can make the Passion truly impressive by picturing it to ourselves as vividly as possible. Let us not look upon it as a mere historical fact, accomplished nineteen centuries ago and finished once and for all. Rather, let us see in it the ever-present reality. As Saint Paul says, Christ does not belong to one age only but to all times: *Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday and today, yes, and forever*

(b. 13, 8). Day after day, therefore, Christ re-enacts His Passion sacramentally in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. *As often as you shall eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes* (1 Cor. 11, 26). Day after day Christ continues to suffer and to die in His Mystical Body. *What lacking of the sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body, which is the Church* (Col. 1, 24). With these constant reminders before us, it should not be too difficult to relive the scenes of the Passion in a realistic and impressive way.

It is likewise easy to make our meditation on the Passion fruitful. All we need do is concentrate on the marvellous example of virtue which our Savior gives us in His sufferings. Without doubt, every lesson of perfection is found in full perfection there. And, for the sake of a refreshing variety, it would be good to consider, every few days, a different virtue of our suffering Savior. In this way we can better realize the whole purpose of our meditation on the Passion, which is, as Saint Peter of Alcantara says, the imitation of Christ leading to our transformation into His likeness.

Besides the letters of red in the book of the crucifix, we also find letters of black. These represent the shameful, sinful role which we have played in the drama of the Passion. Perhaps this part of the story can be recounted most effectively by means of a lovely old legend. One day a young man, named David, approached Saint Joseph and eagerly asked to be taught the carpenter's trade. After agreeing to help him, Saint Joseph inquired why he was so interested in becoming a carpenter. The man's simple reply was: "Maybe, if I become an expert carpenter, I shall be asked someday to make a throne for a king." David was an apt pupil, and learned quickly and well. Soon he was ready to return to his village and open his own shop there.

The years flew rapidly by. David was now an old man and a master craftsman. On one occasion, when he made his pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the solemn feast of the Passover, he found the holy city fairly bristling with excitement. He asked for an explanation, and was told that two thieves and a third man were about to be crucified on the hill of Calvary. The crosses for the thieves were already prepared, but that for the third man was not. David mentioned that he was skilled in wood-fashioning, and that he would be glad to make the third cross. Quickly and deftly he finished his task and delivered the cross to the proper authorities. Then he sought to find out who the third man was, for whom he had made the cross. He was informed that the man was Jesus of Nazareth. David

started at the name and wondered if he could possibly be the same Jesus he had known in the house of Joseph long ago.

Anxiously he questioned one after another and was soon convinced that it was the very same Jesus. David was horrified at the thought and asked the people what on earth Jesus had done to be judged guilty of death. An elderly man answered: "I was blind and He caused me to see. I know only the good that He did." And a woman spoke in like fashion: "One day I touched the hem of His garment and was healed. I, too, know only the good that He did."

David then hastened out to the hill of Calvary and stood before the cross of Jesus. Through tear-dimmed eyes he read its inscription, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." "Good God," he moaned within himself, "is this the way my dream is to come true? Is this the throne I longed to make for a king? The cruel irony of the whole situation overwhelmed David. The skill, which he had learned from Joseph, he had just now used to fashion the instrument of death for his old master's child! And sinking to his knees, he implored forgiveness for his deed, and pledged himself to do whatever the Crucified One would ask of him. Thus was fulfilled, in a way he could never have anticipated, the ambition of his heart. For the cross he had made was indeed a throne, a throne of the King of kings, Who at that very moment won the undying loyalty of another soul—the soul of a poor old carpenter!

I remarked before that this is only a legend, and yet I wonder . . . Is it rather the actual story of our own life? When we gaze upon the crucifix, can we not say with even more truth than did David, the carpenter: "We made the cross for Christ. We used the very talents and gifts He bestowed upon us to cut and trim and fashion the tree that was to be His deathbed. We were the ones who drove the nails through His sacred hands and feet."? And if we ask, "How could we ever do such a thing? What evil had Christ done to us that we should be anxious to punish Him?", must we not also acknowledge that all we know of the good that He did? Can we not recount an endless series of blessings, tokens of His love after another? In vain do we search for even the slightest justification of our unseemly conduct.

Such is the message of the letters of black in the book of the crucifix—the message of base ingratitude to our Savior. It is something of which we can only thoroughly ashamed. It is something which should cause us to cry out in words similar to those of Jeremias, the prophet: *Who will give water to*

head and a fountain of tears to my eyes, and I will weep day and night for my sins which have crucified my Lord (Jer. 9, 1).

Finally, we come to the pages in our book which are written in letters of gold. There can be no doubt about what they signify. They tell us of the strong, ardent, and boundless love of our Savior. No matter what divergent opinions men may have regarding Christ—and there have been many contradictory views—all are forced to agree on this one point, that His Heart was filled to overflowing with self-sacrificing love for us poor mortals. A single glance at the crucifix is enough to convince anyone of this truth. One particular prayer for the twelfth station of the Way of the Cross expresses it beautifully: "Behold Jesus crucified. Behold His wounds received for love of us. His whole appearance speaks of love. His head is bowed to kiss us. His arms are extended to embrace us. His heart is open to receive us. Oh, what love!"

Holy Scripture calls it a *very great love* (Eph. 2, 4). Yes, it is an excessive love. The wretched cave of Bethlehem would have been enough to prove His love, but Christ wanted bloody Calvary, too. *Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends* (Jo. 15, 13). One sigh from His sacred Heart would have sufficed to redeem us, but Christ chose to become *despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows who was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins* (Isa. 53, 3-5). Even human love—if it is true—never thinks it has done enough. What then must we say of infinite, divine love!

And a feature of this divine love which we dare not overlook is this, that it is something personal. Christ thought of every one of us individually as He suffered and died. Willingly, gladly, would He have borne all, even though you and I had been the only ones that needed redemption. Every one of us, therefore, can truthfully say with Saint Paul: *The Son of God loved men and gave himself up for me* (Gal. 2, 20). This personalized aspect of Christ's love gives it a particularly appealing character. It writes, as it were, a charming and touching conclusion to "the greatest love story ever told."

In this conference we suggested a few simple reflections on the crucifix by comparing it to a book in which are found three different kinds of lettering. There are letters of red—symbols of Christ's sufferings; letters of black—reminders of our ingratitude; and letters of gold—tokens of Christ's love.

In our meditations on the crucifix during this season of Lent, no doubt there will rise before our mind's eye almost spontaneously the vision of rugged

but beautiful Mount Alverno. On its lofty heights we shall spy the wasted figure of a brown-robed man, kneeling in prayer. He is without doubt one of the "most desperate and daring lovers" of the Crucified the world has ever known. With all the ardor of his soul he is begging his Savior for two extraordinary graces; first, that he might have in his heart, in as far as it is possible, the love for mankind which filled the Heart of Christ as He hung upon the cross; and second, that he might experience in his flesh, in as far as he is capable, the intense suffering of his Lord's Passion. His fervent prayer is rewarded with the agonizing yet sweet embrace of the Crucified One. It lasts but one blissful moment. Francis can stand it no longer. But it is enough, for, when that moment is over, Francis finds his body stamped with the five-fold royal insignia of the cross. From then on he is known as the stigmatized Poverello of Assisi!

As that vision fades from view and our eyes become focussed once more on our crucifix, the thought strikes us that this crucifix can readily be for us our Mount Alverno. For, as often as we take it reverently into our hands, or piously press our lips to it, or cast a loving glance in its direction, we can pledge ourselves together with Saint Francis, to love and to suffer for Christ. We can offer our feet to carry us to the post of duty He has assigned to us; our hands to work for Him and to serve Him in others; and our heart to be faithful to all the demands of convent life. And we can do this with a consistency and a devotedness that will prove wearisome, that will call for sacrifice, that will really hurt. Thus, in a sense, we shall be wounded in our hands and feet and heart, and become, so to say, stigmatized men and women, living images, like our Father Francis, of the object of our love—the Crucified One!

Westmont, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.



Unless a man prepareth a place for God within himself, he shall never find a place among the creatures of God.

Brother Giles

SAINT ANTHONY AND THE USE OF SCRIPTURE

The appropriateness of designating Saint Anthony of Padua a Doctor of the Church has been universally acclaimed. Though it has been a matter of centuries before the honor actually has materialized, none the less there has been the wisdom of the ages hovering around the gesture. Of all the possible titles descriptive of his vast learning and scholastic achievement, that of *Doctor Evangelicus* is particularly in accord with his personality, his temperament, his writings, his apostolate, and his spirituality. More than that, it focuses attention upon the use of Sacred Scriptures and emphatically demonstrates the primacy of the latter in Franciscan learning and experience.

The letter addressed by Saint Francis "to Brother Anthony, my bishop", commissioning him as the first lector within the Order of Friars Minor, is a document worthy of the Franciscan ideal. Recent literary criticism has restored its rightful validity as genuinely from the hand of Francis. The obedience thereof sent into the Franciscan study house of Bologna a professor and master remarkably competent for avoiding the pitfalls of extinguishing "the spirit of prayer and devotion". This was the friary upon which the Poverello had recently put a curse and there are those who feel that the arrangement of Saint Francis was not unlikely intended to counteract the academic program Peter of Stacia had in mind for the Friars studying there. Theology at this moment in the Middle Ages was in a state of being encroached upon by legal studies. Two inherent evils in the novel study programs of the day could threaten Franciscanism spiritually; economic security was possible in the practise of the juridical sciences, and worldly distractions all too readily available in manifold ways. This explanation sharpens our appreciation of the administrative wisdom of Saint Francis; it certainly extols the character and attributes of the assignment given the Wonder-worker.

When Anthony stepped into the classroom at Bologna, the many months of quiet solitude at Montepaolo had just passed. Prayer and contemplation exercised in that remote *retiro* was a perfect complement to the scholarly learning already acquired in the university halls of Coimbra. In so many ways, this experience of teaching the first Franciscan theologians would prove a culminating preparatory phase for his apostolate. For the student of theology there was but one manual, that of the Sacred Scriptures. The method of Anthony was to be the traditional one and any novelty he would bestow on it would well from his own fervor, piety, and intellectual acumen. Reverent emphasis would be given the opinions of the Fathers of the Church; the precedence of theology would

be consistently maintained and nothing extraneous to what was in line with the dignity of the sacred text would be tolerated. Though an interest in the natural sciences was beginning to be utilized as subsidiary towards expounding the inspired word, Anthony would be cautious in promoting it. Like his seraphic father Francis, he would concentrate upon what might be called the realities underlying the Old and New Testaments. Even more than Francis, had Anthony been impressed with the realization that there is a providential harmony and unity amongst all the books of the Bible by the very fact that each and every one of them has God as the author. For that reason we find him tapping them almost indiscriminately, whether his objective be doctrinal clarification or moral incentive. This very feature of his approach to the sacred writings crystallized in the name *Ark of the Testament*, which Gregory IX has honorably recorded in the Bull of Canonization, a tribute not only to the extensive knowledge of the Scriptures which his contemporaries credited to Anthony but also testimony to the incalculable treasures of his prodigious memory. While the volume of his writings is indeed relatively small and decidedly homiletic in character, they reveal an erudition that is comprehensive as far as the Scriptures are concerned.

Too often we are inclined to identify learning and wisdom with the books that crowd our libraries. Books are but products of minds. Knowledge is basically a virtue and though its communicativeness is predominantly achieved through the written word, there are other means of enlightenment as intensive in the results. In this way Anthony is a singular Doctor in the Church. His is the learning that fired enthusiasm and envisioned truth as a living flame rather than the precious lustrous diamond that must be mined and chiseled and fashioned so that its brilliancy might prevail. Upon the death of Anthony there was universal and unanimous recognition of the greatness of his intellect. Any picture of him from those centuries close to him depicts the Scriptures as his distinctive possession. Gradually, it is true, the faithful let their fervor lose itself in the attractiveness of his mystical union with the Infant Jesus. None the less, rarely are the Scriptures entirely eliminated from modern paintings and statues representing Anthony. The important fact is that holy writ remained the focal point in the matter. The core of his thought, of his preaching, of his writings and of his counsel, is the Scriptures.

A preacher leaves more than the written record of his sermons. If he has been anything of a success, he will have given his times a new spirit. This is exactly what Anthony accomplished. The Albigensian heresy was then threatening the souls and minds of men. Not the least of its errors was that of deny-

the Old Testament to be the word of God. Doubtless this accounts for the almost exaggerated use of the Old Testament in the sermons of Anthony as the only tactic left for one who set out to be a *Hammer of Heretics*. It is equally understandable why Anthony quotes the book of Isaias so frequently, whose lovely chapters not only enshrine and envision Christ prophetically but have all theunction and deep mysticism to fascinate a man and a saint like Anthony.

Among the varied methods of interpreting and expounding the sacred text Anthony preferred that technically known as the moral sense of Scripture. His explanations constantly utilized types, verses, expressions and adaptations suitable for inculcating the practise of virtue in daily life. The Book of books held for him secrets conducive to the proper regulation of human conduct. Some idea of his approach and its versatility can be gathered from the following passage on the degrees of perfection and the patterns he finds of them in the sacred writings.

"The state of perfection is threefold in character, namely, that of beginners, of those making progress, and finally of the perfect. Fortified as they are with freely given graces, beginners *eat the things that spring of themselves* (Is. 37: 30), as the Lord intimates in the prophecy of Osee, *I will love them freely* (Os. 14: 5). Of themselves they had been nothing and only the kindness and favor of God has enriched them. It is this thought that prompts the remark of blessed Bernard: 'Sometimes the disposition for pure prayer and the sweetness thereof is found lacking; yet it eventually appears, as it were, without seeking, without knocking, nay without asking, almost like unto a group of slaves, however rude, admitted to banquet with the children of the family. Grace comes unconsciously to a soul and despite its being only in the early stages of perfection an attraction for prayer is acquired such as is ordinarily reserved by way of reward for the perfect'. Similarly, those making progress can be likened to them that *in the second year eat fruits* (Is. 37: 30) of good works, as may be seen from the well-disposed will which, previously content with an affection for good, now effectively accomplishes good. By way of contrast the perfect are *in the third year* (Is. 37: 30), reaping the abundance of plenty in every possible way and quite as the Psalm tells us: *Thou shalt bless the crown* (namely, the life of the perfectly just) *of the year of thy goodness; and the hills shall be girded about with joy* (Ps. 64: 12).

"The state of beginners may be paralleled with those who should be celebrating the Pasch with the new dough of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5, 7-8) and

eating the Lamb with wild lettuce that in its bitterness is symbolic of their (Exod. 12: 8). Those making progress are people who *sit in the tabernacles of confidence* pointed out by Isaias (Is. 32: 13). As, in the Book of Numbers Balaam is said to have cried out, their tabernacles *are beautiful as woody valleys* (Num. 24, 5-6) wherein the lowliness of poverty offers them a protecting shield against the heat of worldliness so that *as watered gardens near the rivers*, grace will be poured into them (and replenish the parched soil of carnal concupiscence).

"Beginners should present their bodies *as a living sacrifice*, those making progress should present them as a holy sacrifice; the perfect as *pleasing to God* (Rom. 12: 8). In the Book of Leviticus you will find agreement upon the sacrifices where mention is made of three kinds of offerings. The first concerned cattle (Lev. 1: 2), the second, birds (Lev. 1: 14), while the third consisted *flour tempered with oil* (Lev. 2: 1) done in three ways, namely, either in the oven or in a frying-pan or on a gridiron (Lev. 2: 4-7). Beginners offer the first mentioned sacrifice, inasmuch as the sinner at the outset of his conversion should lay on the altar of his heart the sufferings of Christ, the scourgings, the mockery, the insults, the cross, the nails and the lance; thereupon he is expected to confess his guilt, acknowledge the single details minutely, accounting for their origin, the pleasure taken as well as the attachment given them; in the flow of his tears he should then cleanse away the filthiness of thought and deed. If he will he can be so disposed and arranged everything in union with the Passion of Christ, When Christ is Himself the High Priest, the entire oblation will have the *fire of His love* descend upon it and consume all sin therein. The penitent will make of himself so completely an inflamed holocaust as to leave nothing of self therein, but rather transforming all for God, letting the sweet odor of Christ permeate everything round about and presenting your body as a living sacrifice, a victim of every sense of the word because wholly dead to sin, a living something because it will have the life of justice that the Apostle speaks of: *It is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. 2: 20).

"Those making progress offer the second kind of oblation described in Leviticus, *the oblation of a holocaust of birds to the Lord* (Lev. 1: 14) inasmuch as the just man is indeed winged in virtue because of a chastity in him, very much like that of turtle doves and young pigeons, whose cooing, which resembles the cry of penance that is to be heard on the paths leading from vice to virtue. Whatever will have become good intention in him, is certain to follow through into act. Progressing daily, ever more in virtue, the just man should himself set flame to the holy victim upon the altar and, like the saintly Father

of old, in a fire of holy devotion gained from imitation of the Passion of Our Lord be able to render *a holocaust and oblation of most sweet savor to the Lord* (Lev. 1: 17).

"The perfect amongst men offer the third type of oblation mentioned in the Book of Leviticus as that of *flour tempered with oil* (Lev. 2: 5). Cleansed as it is and perfectly white, flour really signifies the life of the perfect man with nothing in it of the coarse outer shell of worldly vanity, purified in chastity and anointed with the oil of piety (Lev. 2: 4). All this is prepared in the oven of poverty, fried in the pan of dire necessity, roasted on the gridiron of the Passion (Lev. 2, 4-7). Truly then does the victim become pleasing unto God".

These excerpts are drafted from the sermons of Anthony. No one will gainsay the richness of his learning nor minimize the splendid and profound appreciation he had of the word of God. These thoughts come from a full heart and from a tongue perseveringly miraculous, reminding us that the spirit of Anthony is that of Francis in its reverence for the holy Scriptures.

Christ the King Seminary

Fr. Eustace J. Smith, O. F. M.



"To sum up then, the Holy Spirit goes about cleansing souls in the following way, by enlightening the soul with the knowledge of truth, purging it of ignorance, enkindling it with the love of God, razing the evil of concupiscence, and invigorating the soul for the work of Perfection. In triple fashion does it act unto good: by suggesting that one think of what is good and therein dispel any slothfulness, by guiding the mind how to realize goodness in life and avoid any imprudence, and by driving the will to wanting to do good and eschew carelessness."

Alexander of Hales

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (III)

The Second Article

The Brothers and Sisters, following the example of their Seraphic Father, promise obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope and the Roman Church. They are bound also to obey their canonically established Superiors in all things that pertain to the general and particular aim of their respective Institute.

Completing the first chapter on the "Sum and Substance of the Religious Life", this second article stresses a second point which the Third Order Regular Rule has in common with that of the First and Second Order—a chivalrous loyalty to the "Lord Pope" and the holy Roman Church. Two essential characteristics of the Franciscan movement were the return to the Gospel and complete submission to the Church. If the first differentiates the Franciscan order from other religious movements in the Church, it is the second that distinguishes the true followers of Francis from other back-to-the-gospel reforms that ended outside the Church. Francis, it is true, has been hailed by many non-Catholics as the "first Protestant". But then Christ himself has a great many part-time followers, who call themselves "Christian". And so it is not strange that the "Mirror of Christ" should also have a following among those who single out but one or the other of his admirable traits, for after all, he is "everybody's Saint Francis". And yet this, "Fourth Order of Saint Francis", as his non-Catholic following has been called, must close its eyes to one of his most childlike virtues—his loving obedience to his "mother, the Holy Roman Church" and to the Lord Pope, who was his "father".

History tells of various religious reform movements that waxed strong especially in France and northern Italy around the time of Francis. As the Church grew, its government inevitably became highly complex. Force of circumstance had not only thrust the temporal rule of the Papal States upon the Holy Father but in general the higher clergy belonged to the nobility and were temporal princes charged with the administration of feudal estates. Too great concern for political and financial matters, prevented them from devoting the proper care to the spiritual welfare of the common people. As the worldliness of the clergy increased, licentiousness grew among the people and began to infect all classes of society. Not only did this condition provide a fertile soil for the nefarious Manichean heresy imported from the East whose followers were known as the Albigensian sect, but it gave rise to many sincere reform movements advocating

return to the simplicity, poverty and humility of the Gospel. Such, for instance, were the followers of Peter Waldus, the Poor Men of Lyons and of Lombardy. But the Waldensians and Humiliati soon came into conflict with the Church, and drifted into heresy.

Following the example of their Seraphic Father . . .

Guided by God, Francis avoided the mistakes of these reformers. As his little band of followers began to form, he instinctively led them to the feet of the Holy Father, for as he put it, "without the Pope's consent and approval, it seems to me nothing can be stable or good in matters of faith or religious life. Let us go then to our mother, the holy Roman Church. Let us make known to the Pope what our Lord has begun to do for us. We will then continue our work according to his will and his commands." (*Tres Socii*, ch. 1) No wonder that Pope Innocent III could say of Francis: "This is indeed the pious and holy man through whom the Church of God will be raised up and sustained." (*ibid.*) As Francis' early biographers go on to tell us, when Innocent had given his oral approval to Francis' rule, the holy Patriarch made his profession into the hands of the Pope himself, at the same time solemnly vowing obedience and reverence to the Holy Father and the Roman Church. According to feudal customs, individual knights and nobles did not pledge their loyalty directly to their king or ruling prince but to their immediate liege lord. He in turn pledged not only his personal loyalty to his prince, but that of all who had avowed their allegiance to him. That is why expositors of the rule could say that Francis not only pledged his personal fidelity to the Lord Pope, but vowed obedience and reverence in the name of all those who would call themselves his followers. Which is why he could write in his first rule for his friars: "Brother Francis, and whoever may be at the head of this religion, promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Innocent and to his successors. And the other brothers shall be bound to obey Brother Francis and his successors."

But Francis could not forget that papal approval at the beginning of his order was not enough to keep it from drifting astray. He need only recall the example of the Waldensians, who had the approval of Alexander III. Consequently, he studded his rule with warnings lest anyone be taken into the order, or be allowed to preach, "contrary to the form and institution of the holy Roman Church." And "let all the brothers be Catholic and live and speak in a Catholic manner." As a final precaution, he petitioned the Holy Father for a special Cardinal Protector to be the "governor, protector and corrector of the fraternity" and commissioned his successors in holy obedience to do likewise. Why?

"So that always subject and submissive at the feet of the same holy Roman Church, and steadfast in the Catholic faith, we may observe the poverty and humility and the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as we have faithfully promised." (*Reg. bullata*, ch. 12) No wonder the liturgy for his feast day opens with the words: *Franciscus, vir catholicus, et totus apostolicus, Ecclesiae tenet fidem Romanae docuit, presbyterosque monuit prae cunctis revereri*. Here indeed is the keynote of his life.

Promise obedience and reverence to the Lord Pope . . .

Not only did other religious orders follow the example of the Franciscans in adopting a Cardinal Protector so that it has become a general practice in our day to do so, but Francis' recognition of the Holy Father as the highest religious superior has found expression in the new code of Canon Law. "All religious are subject to the Pontiff as supreme superior and are obliged to obey him also by reason of their vow." (Can. 499) The reason lies in the fact that the promise of obedience made by a religious is a public vow, accepted by the legitimate superior in the name of the Church, and therefore in the name of the Holy Father. It is generally admitted, however, that a Franciscan religious has a greater obligation to obey and reverence the Pope than other religious have, owing to the fact that this point is explicitly incorporated in the Rule. This does not mean that an act of disobedience to the Holy Father, if he were to command a religious under vow, would so differ in the case of a Franciscan as to become a numerically or specifically different sin.

Even in regard to the Pope, however, this vow of obedience is not unconditional. Like other religious superiors, he can command only such things as pertain to the primary or secondary aim of the Institute in virtue of the vow. In addition of course, the Holy Father can command religious as he can the rest of the faithful in virtue of his universal jurisdictional power. Even though he commands something that could fall under the vow, the Pope is not presumed to be doing so unless he implicitly or explicitly expresses this fact.

And the Roman Church.

The Pope can delegate this power over religious to others, for instance to a delegate who acts as Visitor, or to the Roman Congregations. Ordinarily, however, only the Congregation for Religious has this power to command religious by reason of their vow. The rule adds "and to the Roman Church." This is primarily understood to refer to the College of Cardinals, who rule

the Church when the Holy See is vacant. And so far as the vow of obedience is concerned, they exclusively are meant.

But what of the obligation of reverence? Can anyone regard himself as a true follower of Francis without having something of that loving respect which the Poverello manifested towards the Church as a whole and in particular towards the members of the clergy? As he put it bluntly to his friars: "The Lord has called us for the help of his faithful people, of the clergy and prelates of the holy Roman Church. Hence, by all means in our power we should always love, honor and reverence them. For we are called Friars Minor that both in name and in deed we may set a constant example of humility to all. At the beginning of my conversion, the Lord placed his word in the mouth of the Bishop of Assisi that he might advise and confirm me in the service of Christ; for this and many other excellent things I honor and respect not only bishops but also poor priests, desiring to love and reverence them and to look upon them as my masters." (*Speculum perfectionis*, ch. 10)

They are also bound to obey their canonically established Superiors . . .

The Pope, the Sacred Congregation for Religious, and the Bishop—in the case of non-exempt religious who take a vow to obey him—are sometimes referred to as external superiors in contradistinction to the internal superiors, who are members of the Institute. The internal superiors of a given Institute include the religious chapter (collegiate authority) and the persons properly designated as superiors, both major and minor. The Superior General, Provincial Superiors, their Vicars, together with those who have the authority of a Provincial, for example, the Provincial Visitor, are considered major superiors. The local superior, on the contrary, is a minor superior.

"Canonically established" in this connection means simply that the superiors are appointed or elected in accord with the rules or canons of the Church and their respective Institute. Practically, the constitutions determine the procedure to be followed for the valid election or appointment of the various superiors.

External superiors can command a religious under the vow by reason of their jurisdictional power, whereas the internal superiors ordinarily enjoy only domestic power over their respective subjects. Jurisdictional power is a public power to make laws, set up courts of law, impose censures and vindictive penalties, etc. Domestic power is the type of authority a father of a family has over his children, the domestic servants, etc. Only in clerical institutes that are

exempt does the superior have, in addition to domestic power, true jurisdiction and this only within the limits determined by Canon Law and the rule and constitutions. Jurisdictional power, however, is never granted to women superiors, even though they have the power to give strict precepts or commands that bind under the vow of obedience.

Unless otherwise expressly determined by the constitutions, the power of command by reason of the vow is restricted to the Chapter, the major superior and the local superior, each within the limits of his respective office.

In things that pertain to the general and particular aim of their Institute.

As indicated above, religious do not vow to obey their superiors unconditionally but only within the limits determined by the rules and constitutions of their Institute. This is made explicit in the present Rule. The general aim of every religious order or congregation is the self-sanctification of its members by a life lived in accord with the religious vows, the rule and constitutions. The particular or secondary aim is the practice of certain corporal or spiritual works of mercy for which the respective Third Order Institute was organized. Such as, for instance, would be the education of children, care of the sick or orphan, missionary work, and the like.

Any external act that directly or indirectly tends to further these aims falls within the scope of the vow of obedience. Hence, the superior could command at any point of divine or positive ecclesiastical law, or of the rule or constitutions under holy obedience. Practically, only such commands of a superior are excluded which are clearly against, above or beneath the rule and constitutions.

A command is said to be *against* the rule or constitutions, if it is opposed to any point that admits of no dispensation. The power of a superior to dispense is specified in the respective constitutions, and except for the case of clerical exempt religious whose superiors have jurisdictional power, dispensations are limited for the most part to minor points of discipline. A command is *beneath* the rule, if it serves no purpose or is utterly ridiculous. A command is *above* the rule or constitutions, if it enjoys something that lies beyond the general or particular aim of the Institute. Thus, for instance, while superiors may command the observance of any item of the rule or constitutions under the vow of obedience, they could not command the practice of heroic penance as a virtue since this is not the ordinary way of striving for perfection that a religious takes upon himself in joining an order or congregation. Likewise, if the exclusive secondary aim of a Third Order congregation is the education

of children or young women, a superior could not command a subject under the vow to undertake hospital work. The superior could, however, command the subject to take charge of the convent infirmary or care for the sick of the community, since this pertains to the normal administration of any religious Institute. Similarly, the internal sentiments or acts of a religious lie beyond the scope of the vow. Thus, a superior cannot command a subject under the vow to meditate or make an examination of conscience, though the subject's external presence in choir during the time of these exercises can be matter for the vow. It should be noted, however, that what is above the rule or constitutions can pertain to the perfection of the virtue of obedience. Thus, a subject who carries out a command while inwardly rebelling, would violate the virtue of obedience but not the vow.

Those superiors who have the authority to oblige their subjects under the vow are cautioned to use this power only rarely and as circumstances warrant. To oblige their subjects under mortal sin or to impose a serious obligation by reason of the vow, two things are required. First, the matter must be serious or grave; secondly, the superior must make known his intention to oblige under mortal sin by using such expressions as "I command you strictly", or "in virtue of the vow", or "in holy obedience", and the like. Otherwise, the presumption is that the obligation is not binding under serious sin, even in the case of a real precept or command. Such a precept or command, it should be noted, always binds by reason of the virtue of obedience and under venial sin at least. Such real precepts or commands should be distinguished from those cases where the superior merely expresses his or her will or wish to have something done, but does not intend to oblige the subject to anything more than the acceptance of correction or a penance for acting otherwise. Deliberate disobedience to such wishes, though not strictly a sin in itself, is always a positive imperfection. That is to say, it involves the neglect of a counsel of religious perfection, which if freely used will make for progress in the virtues proper to the religious state. Usually, such deliberate disregard for a superior's wish involves at least venial sin on some other count, as for instance, because of scandal given, or because the motive prompting the disobedience is sinful, for example, pride, sloth, hatred, and the like.

Where an act of disobedience springs from formal contempt, no matter how insignificant or trivial the matter, the sin is always serious. Formal contempt consists in despising or rejecting authority as such. It is to be distinguished from so-called "virtual contempt" which is based upon a dislike of the person, rather than the authority, of the superior. Such antipathy towards the person of the

superior, however, if not curbed, may lead to serious infractions of obedience and to grave scandal.

Superiors in doubt whether they can command a certain point by reason of the vow should refrain from giving such a command, since the presumption is in favor of the subject. But if it is the inferior who is in doubt whether the superior can legitimately command a certain thing, the inferior is obliged to obey because the presumption is in favor of the legitimacy of the command.

No true Franciscan, however, will attempt to limit his obedience only to such matters as are strictly obligatory. Striving for evangelical perfection, he will recall the words of Francis: "The Lord says in the Gospel: he that doth not renounce all that he possesseth cannot be a disciple and he that will save his life shall lose it. That man leaves all he possesses and loses his body and his soul who abandons himself wholly to obedience in the hands of his superior." Surely a religious will indeed have the blessing of obedience on his every word or action for as the Poverello goes on to say: "Whatever he does or says—provided he himself knows that what he does is good and not contrary to the superior's will—is true obedience." (*Admonitions*, n. 3)

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.



Let us make good use of time. Our steps should be in conformity with the vocation to which God has called us. Let us work out our salvation with fear and trembling; with burning love and zeal. Let us promote the salvation of our brethren and neighbors. And may all the glory be to Our Great God.

Junipero Serra, O.F.M.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

There are various reasons why a Franciscan should curb his natural desire for precious possessions. The basic reason, however, is that this desire springs from evil sources: pride and avarice, sensuality and aestheticism. If uncontrolled, it will inevitably lead a religious to spiritual disaster. Because Saint Francis loved poverty so ardently, and because he saw so clearly the dangers inherent in man's desire for precious things, he insisted that his followers be completely detached from all possessions in both the physical and spiritual order. He even sought to cleanse his speech from the "mine and thine"—the cold word, as Saint Paul calls it—of the worldling. The only transgression that brought a curse from the gentle and tolerant Francis was the transgression against his beloved Lady Poverty. Other lapses he punished with a gentle hand; but when certain friars forgot the dignity and excellence of poverty and began to covet precious things, his hand fell heavily upon them. Because this natural love for precious possessions is so deeply rooted in us, and because in our fallen state it easily leads to grave evils diametrically opposed to the Franciscan ideal, Saint Bonaventure urges that we ask ourselves:

Do I Yield to a Fastidious Desire to Possess Precious Things?

Every branch of the Franciscan family has its own regulations concerning the vow of poverty. These regulations, if slowly meditated upon, offer an excellent guide for our personal examen. And even though the various Franciscan institutes may have a different interpretation of the vow of poverty, the spirit remains the same for all. Logically, then, we should first ask ourselves whether we really know what the spirit of Franciscan poverty is and what it requires of us. Do I study the life and writings of our Seraphic Father so as to understand the kind of poverty he expects of his children? Do I realize that God and the world also expect me to love poverty as Francis did? Is poverty really a lofty and inspiring ideal for me, or do I accept it stoically and unenthusiastically as one of the burdens I assumed upon entering the religious state? Am I convinced that I am failing in my obligation if I accept poverty simply because I entered what happened to be a Franciscan congregation, and make no effort through reading, meditation, and prayer to fill my soul with the true spirit of Franciscan detachment?

To determine whether this spirit is in us, some of the following questions may be helpful: Do I habitually and deliberately violate the restrictions imposed by poverty? Do I cut corners on the vow? on the virtue? If I had my choice, would

I prefer to live according to the standards of the rich rather than of the poor? I envy religious whose Rule does not impose the poverty to which I am bound. Am I ashamed to use things that reflect the poverty of my state? Do I try ways devious or direct, to conceal my poverty from the eyes of the world? For example, do I try to borrow a friend's new Packard because the convent's year-old and somewhat battered Plymouth is hardly suitable for my use? When I take a friend of mine to dinner, do I spend with the easy lavishness of a millionaire instead of the moderation of a religious who really lives on the poverty of the poor? A Franciscan must never forget his obligation to love poverty, to make that love shine forth in every circumstance of his life. Let us keep in mind, however, that imperfection lies not in admiring the beautiful and precious and the luxurious things of the world, but in desiring to have them either for their own sake or for the sake of the prestige connected with possessing them.

Once we have determined our real disposition toward poverty in general, we may go on to examine ourselves more in detail. First, let us look into our attitude toward things possessed by our institute. It goes without saying that every religious should have both the material and spiritual welfare of his community at heart, and should take a just pride in its achievements. But to strive incessantly to secure precious objects for our Order or to add to its material resources, or to win for it worldly fame and honor is to miss the point of Franciscan renunciation. We may ask, then: Do I seek to obtain rare and precious gifts for my institute—statues, for example, curios, paintings, vases, rugs, table service, and similar objects? Do I try to secure such things illicitly, and against the will of my superiors? Do I perhaps commit the ultimate indecency of snaring benefactors into giving us more, or buying articles more costly, than originally agreed upon? Do I insist on their buying the most expensive when the less expensive would serve the purpose as well? Am I aware that seculars—even the most worldly-minded—expect the children of the Poverello to live in houses reflecting at least something of the poverty of their father? Love for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament demands that our churches and chapels be truly beautiful and decently equipped, but the Franciscan ideal demands the beauty of simplicity and austerity, not the beauty of a museum of fine arts. Likewise, respect for guests requires that we receive them in comfortable and suitably furnished rooms, that we offer them well-prepared and properly served food; but we need not try to rival the elegance of a metropolitan hotel.

What is my attitude toward expensive hobbies? It is becoming a general

accepted point that a hobby can contribute much to the mental health of a religious, provided it is not carried to the extreme. Here again the norm must always be set by Franciscan poverty and detachment. It would be an odd sight, indeed, to find a friar a noted collector of Ming pottery or ancient Armenian coins. To be an authority, a connoisseur, is entirely commendable; but the collector of rare and precious objects is usually a man of wealth, and a Franciscan can never be that, nor try to be, nor pretend to be. Let us, then, ask ourselves: Are my hobbies a source of unnecessary expense to the community? Are they of any value, or do they serve merely to keep my mind occupied? Are they in harmony with my Franciscan vocation? If I am building collections of genuine artistic or scientific value for the benefit of my institute, do I keep my heart detached both from the objects themselves and from the prestige of being a recognized collector? As we have already pointed out, to strive within reason for the material welfare of our community is a matter of obligation, and if our institute is engaged in the works of education, we are certainly obliged to help keep it as well equipped as possible. Since scientific and artistic collections are a part of our educational equipment, there can be no conflict between them and our vow of poverty. However, once the heart becomes attached to these things, once collecting becomes an obsession, there is danger not only of violating the spirit but even the vow of poverty. What shall we say of the religious who collected relics with such zeal that he stole—or, more technically, appropriated—relics belonging to his confreres to add to his own collection? Here again we must make a distinction: the danger lies not so much in the intrinsic value of the objects we desire to possess, but in the disposition itself—the pride of possession—that is so contrary to the very essence of Christian perfection.

The desire for precious things need not be limited to material or physical objects; it may—and with religious very frequently does—extend into the spiritual. A true Franciscan is not only poor in spirit, he is virtually a beggar in the spirit. In utter humility he stretches out his hands to God, pleading only for the graces he needs to sanctify his soul and thereby to glorify his Creator. For extraordinary gifts of the spirit—visions, ecstasies, raptures—he has admiration but never desire. On this point, then, we may ask: Do I yearn for extraordinary graces? Am I dissatisfied with the state of my soul because my mediocrity displeases God, or because it displeases my self-love and debars me from the esteem I covet? Am I envious or jealous of my confreres who seem to be spiritually richer than I? Do I, for the purpose of winning the admiration of others, pretend to possess gifts of soul that in reality I do not have?

Intellectual gifts may also be an object of illicit desire. Certainly a religious and especially a priest, should make every effort to cultivate the talents God has given him. The great saints of our Order have proved beyond question that learning and the Franciscan spirit are not mutually exclusive. But to desire talents above and beyond those that are ours, to covet academic titles and honors is to fall into a dangerous pit. We shall indeed have to render an account for talents deliberately abused or neglected; but we shall never be held responsible for talents we did not possess, nor for talents we may have had but which our superiors did not see fit to have developed. Here, then, let us ask ourselves: Do I attach undue importance to intellectual gifts? Do I brag of the accomplishments of confreres and of my Order in general, and belittle the achievements of others outside the family? Do I make a display of my own personal ability? Do I publicize my knowledge or learning? habitually call attention to my academic achievements, my degrees, my reputation as a scholar? If I do not possess these things, do I covet them—secretly or openly? Do I nag my superiors into allowing me to acquire degrees or professional training for which I may not even be qualified? Am I perhaps so far gone that I pretend to scholarship without a solid foundation? If I do happen to possess some academic or professional training, do I permit myself the ultimate foolishness of feeling superior to those who do not? Or, if the situation is reversed, do I make a point of ridiculing or sneering at those who are better educated than I? Sour grapes curdle the Franciscan spirit.

On a still lower plane are certain exterior qualities we are prone to desire: personal attractiveness and charm, influential family and friends, distinguished social position, culture, background, reputation. It is related of Saint Bonaventure—as in fact of most of the Franciscan saints—that he was a man of attractive presence and fine culture. It is quite in the Franciscan tradition to be as attractive as possible; but not to *enjoy* the doubtful sweetness of being loved by men. Our purpose must be that of Saint Paul—to become all things to all men and so lead them to Christ. If we would but pause to analyze the tremendous attractiveness of Saint Francis—an attractiveness that has but grown stronger with the passing of the centuries—we would see that it has its source in his crystalline simplicity, his candor, his wholly realistic acceptance of what he was in the eyes of God. With this in mind, then, let us look into our own soul. Do I accept myself as I am, without attempting to claim qualities I do not possess? Do I give rein to a desire to be physically attractive, and do I make desperate and perhaps futile efforts to become so? If God has endowed me with physical beauty, do I take vain and conceited pleasure in the fact? Do I strive to cultivate an arresting

personality? If so, why? Let us be convinced that the only kind of charm a religious should cultivate, the only kind that can win souls to God, is the charm of humility, simplicity, and reality—in other words, the charm of genuine sanctity.

It may be well, also, to examine our attitude toward family and friends. It is one of the most common weaknesses of the foolish human heart to yearn for the prestige of birth. Few of us, in this country at least, can, or even wish to, boast of noble blood; but we have our own aristocracy of wealth and power and descent, and we take pride in it. God forbid that any religious should be ashamed of family or friends. To brag about them, however, to bask in the borrowed light of their prominence, is vainglory indeed. Let us examine ourselves honestly on some of the following points: Do I take vain pride in my relatives and friends—in their wealth, influence, social position? Am I a snob? If my family and associates afford me little matter for bragging, do I try to surround them with an imaginary glamour, or build them up to an importance they do not actually possess? Do I take pains to conceal my humble origin? Am I ashamed of my nationality? Or, on the contrary, do I bore others by boasting about it? Patriotism is a virtue; chauvinism is not. What about my friends? Do I desire the friendship of distinguished persons? Do I perhaps render myself a little ridiculous in my efforts to secure such friendships? The Franciscan who makes a grand display of important connections—real or imaginary—is a sad anomaly. We would do well to remember the tragic fate of Brother Elias—the proud friend of pope and emperor, and the expendable victim of their political quarrels.

If the Franciscan who makes a display of family and friends is offensive, not less so is he who makes a display of his fine manners and cultivated speech—acquired, no doubt, after entering religion. Such affection is downright disgusting. The first followers of Saint Francis were models of courtesy and chivalry, but their courtesy was an overflow of charity—it was genuine and realistic, and its source was in poverty of spirit. Consequently they were as much at home in the palaces of cardinals and kings as in the hovels of lepers. If they had a preference, it was for the poor and lowly. So should it be with us.

In the last analysis, there can be but one object of our desire, but one good we may strive to possess: the God Who made us for Himself. Or, as Saint Francis wrote to his brethren: "Do not keep anything for yourself, that He, who entirely gave Himself to you, may entirely accept you".

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FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI, Nesta de Robeck. Milwaukee: the Bruce Publishing Company, 1951. Pp. 242, with 8 illustrations. \$3.50.

A visit to Assisi in 1951 so impressed Nesta de Robeck that she became an ardent admirer of Saint Francis and Saint Clare and five years later entered the Catholic Church and the Third Order. SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI, her first book, has been inspired not only by her personal devotion to Saint Clare but especially by her conviction that only through prayer and penance—of which Clare gave such glorious examples—can our troubled world find peace.

Miss de Robeck's treatment of the life of the Lady Clare is interesting, readable, and factual. She makes no attempt to fictionalize or dramatize, and only occasionally does she interpret or suggest. Obviously a labor of love, the book reflects the author's warm sympathy with the Franciscan ideal as well as her intimate knowledge of early Franciscan history. However, it presents nothing new either by way of fact or by way of analysis and interpretation; it simply restates in a brief and simple manner the generally-known events connected with Clare's life. As an introduction to the subject, the book is valuable; but to anyone already familiar with the life of Saint Clare it will seem rather thin and superficial.

Perhaps the author meant the work to be merely introductory, for she has provided a good bibliography for those who wish to read more extensively, and she has also included in five interesting appendices "The Office of the Passion," "The Rule of Saint Clare," "The Testament of Saint Clare," "The Cause of Canonization," and "The Bull of Canonization."

It is to be hoped that SAINT CLARE OF ASSISI will be followed by more substantial and penetrating contributions from Miss de Robeck.

DE SPIRITUALITATE FRANCISCANA, P. Vitus a Bussum, O. F. M. Cap. Romae: apud Administrationem Analectorum Ordinis. 1949. Pp. 321.

In DE SPIRITUALITATE FRANCISCANA, father Vitus has selected for discussion the basic and more exclusively characteristic qualities of Franciscan spirituality. The first and largest section of the book is devoted

to a treatment of Christocentrism—particular as it is exemplified in the life of Saint Francis and in the writings of Bonaventure and Scotus, and in general as it has appeared in the traditional practice of the Order. The typically Franciscan virtues—reverence toward all creatures, simplicity, the evangelical life, seraphic love—are discussed extensively but by no means exhaustively. The second part of the book is devoted to the apostolic life and related subjects—regular discipline, spirit of prayer, study. Father Vitus has reserved the third part of his book for a discussion of the Capuchin vocation as distinguished from the Franciscan in general. While this section is well done, its interest for any but Capuchins will perhaps be limited to the historical aspects of the subjects presented.

On the whole, Father Vitus has produced a work of considerable value for those who wish to study the nature of traditional Franciscan spirituality. He has clearly synthesized the practice and doctrine of the great saints and scholars of the Franciscan Order, and has indicated the lines to be followed for further study. If at times his treatment becomes somewhat labored, it is never confused; and his style is always simple and direct.

It is difficult, however, to decide whether or not the book should have been written in Latin. As a rule, those who profit most from studies of this type are either not equipped to handle Latin or are not enthusiastic about making the effort. On the other hand, those who have no objection to Latin are usually already familiar with the sources upon which such studies are based. Since Father Vitus' approach is factual rather than interpretive, and since he presents no hitherto unknown material nor solves any disputed problems, his work holds little interest for specialists. It would seem that by writing in Latin he has definitely cut himself off from the very readers who would benefit most from his work and most appreciate it. Of course, it is only fair to add that the author intended his book primarily for the use of clerical students, and for this use it is admirably adapted.

There is a good bibliography, an index, and a table of contents. The typography is excellent.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Faith

Scarcely a day goes by without some announcement of another startling advance in the field of medicine. It may be a novel technique that has been developed, or the discovery of a new wonder drug; or maybe it's the latest miracle of surgery. Among the last mentioned—miracles of surgery—there is one, performed for the first time a little over a decade ago, which has always fascinated me. It is the so-called transplanting of an eye, or portion of an eye, from one human being to another, with the result that the latter, who had been blind before, is now able to see. I think this operation is a most apt illustration of what took place in us at the time of our baptism.

At that solemn moment, God's eye, so to say, was given to us by means of the virtue of faith. And through that eye of God we are able to see in a supernatural manner, able to take the divine view of things. We can see things we never dreamed of before; we can see more clearly; we can see more accurately. This marvelous gift of faith plays such an all-important role in our life, that we shall do well to examine it a little more closely.

The first thing to be noted about faith is its absolute necessity for a truly spiritual life. Holy Scripture emphasizes this fact very pointedly by stating: *He who is just lives by faith* (Rom. 1, 17). In other words, if we wish to be holy, virtuous, God-pleasing, we must live a life of faith. Merely making acts of faith now and then will not suffice. Our entire life must be permeated by faith. Everything, just everything, in our life must be viewed, evaluated, accepted or rejected according to the standard of faith, if that life is to have its full worth.

This necessity of faith has a universal application. It holds for anyone's life. But it applies with double force to us religious. Our life must be pre-eminently a life of faith, or it doesn't make sense. Without intending to lessen in the slightest degree the greatness of the religious life, we must admit that it does restrict some very basic and some very strong urges of our human nature, namely, the urge to possess, to establish a home, and to be independent. And, unless we are able, with the help of faith, to sublimate these restrictions into positive and attractive values, our religious life is bound to become painfully boring. Then, too, there are so many things in the religious life which are hard to explain. We cannot see the reasons for them with the eye of our unaided mind. We need a more penetrating eye, the eye of faith. For instance: we are assigned to some work which is apparently useless, or for which we are plainly unprepared; or, at

times, we have superiors who may indeed be capable administrators, but are from being human-relations experts; or, we are the object of suspicion, distrust or envy, despite our good intentions and best efforts; or, we suffer from some personal defect, such as poor health, a drab personality, an unconquered character fault; or, we see many a contradiction between the professed reverence for constitutions and the actual observance of them or, what is worst of all, we are made to witness cutting heartlessness and downright injustice. These and similar situations are not unknown in the religious life. And, if they are not to disturb our peace of soul and sour our disposition, we must be men and women of strong faith. These situations call for an application of the Scholastic formula *Credo ut intelligam* ("I believe in order that I may be able to understand"). Yes, if we only believe most firmly in God's changeless and enduring love for us, then let come what may. We shall be able to understand it correctly. We shall recognize it as part of our heavenly Father's loving plan to shape and form us into the image of His divine Son. If it means a veritable crucifixion—well, then the resemblance will be complete! Let us never doubt these words of Holy Scripture: *For those who love God all things work together unto good* (Rom. 8, 28).

Faith, therefore, is of the utmost importance to us religious. And precisely because of its importance, we must be careful never to forget that it is also a real trial for us. Failure to realize this may easily lessen its effectiveness in our life; and that would be a calamity, since we are so helpless without it. The trial of faith is owing principally to the darkness which surrounds it.

Without doubt, there is nothing so certain, so infallibly true, as the message of our holy faith. It is based on the unerring word of God Himself. Nevertheless, we are told in Holy Scripture that *faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen* (Heb. 11, 1). In other words, faith gives us absolute assurance about the truth of supernatural realities while leaving those realities beyond the reach of our senses and, to a great extent, even of our intellect. Take, for instance, the teaching on the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. We are convinced that Jesus is there, we would willingly die for that conviction. Still, we are sensibly blind and deaf to Him at our altars. And our intellect remains poised in obscure wonderment at His mysterious presence. Or, to take a much simpler example, let us consider our work. Faith teaches us that, if it is done for the love of God, it has tremendous value—more worth, in fact, than a grandiose reconstruction of the whole world based purely on natural reasons. We firmly believe that, as we go about our humble duties,

... And yet, the value of these tasks retains a haunting sense of intangibility simply because our senses are so unimpressed by the external appearance of our work. In this way, we could go through all the teachings of faith and find in every one of them a central core of dazzling light—the infallible word of God; and a surrounding area of shadow—the region inaccessible to our senses and intellect.

But, since we are creatures of curiosity as regards both our senses and our intellect, we chafe under our inability to see and know all. We keep probing for evidence and searching for reasons. And at times this human, but not too perfect, longing is expressed in words like these: "Oh, of course I believe. But if I could only have some external assurance, some visible sign . . . It would help so much to encourage me." That, however, is reminiscent of the language of Saint Thomas, the Apostle. And we know what our dear Savior said to Him: *Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed* (Jo. 20, 29). No, a visible sign would not be a help to our faith, but an obstacle. Faith grows in perfection, not as the light increases, but as the shadows deepen. Recall the touching scene of our holy Father Francis towards the end of his life. He lay in a tiny, miserable hut near the convent of San Damiano. He suffered from a painful stomach illness, the heat was oppressive, the insects annoying, his body wasted to sheer skin and bones, his eyesight all but gone. And in that moment of awful darkness, there rose from his heart and lips those glorious words of praise known as "The Canticle of the Sun." There was a man of faith, a "blind man with perfect vision."

Faith would cease to be were it ever to show us everything and give us all the reasons. At that moment there would be no further chance of *fighting the good fight of the faith* (1 Tim. 6, 12) by holding fast to our belief in a world of unbelief, by never hesitating even in the face of seeming contradictions. At that moment faith would cease to be a trial. And that would be a moment of incalculable loss to us, for, while faith is indeed a trial, it is a most beneficial trial.

And that brings us to our final observation regarding faith—its grand reward. When mentioning a reward in this connection, let us not think of familiarity with its breath-taking vision of God in place of the veiled view of faith. No, let us by-pass that glorious exchange and consider just two of the rich returns which faith brings in this present life. First, it guarantees a sense of security and great strength of soul. We are living in a world torn by strife and dissension, threatened with a gruesome atomic war, oppressed by fear. What a consoling

thing it is to be able to face that world with our back braced against the so wall of faith. It gives us the assurance that, no matter how desperate situation becomes, it will never get out of control, but will be made to serve all-wise designs of the Lord of the universe. It reminds us of God's watch care over us, to such an extent that not even a hair of our head shall pe without His permission (Lk. 21, 18). With such faith as our support, far fr looking upon our cause as hopeless, far from cringing with fear, we shall d to assert with the late Pope Pius XI: "It is our combative glory to live these challenging times." Yes, we shall be eager to engage in the struggle aga God's enemies, confident of our ultimate success. That is the meaning of Scriptural words: *This is the victory that overcomes the world, our fa* (1 Jo. 5, 4).

Secondly, faith gives us an astounding power over the Heart of Ch To be convinced of this we need only thumb through the pages of the Gos There we shall find our Lord making exceptions to the rigid laws of na because of the faith of those who came to Him for assistance. Repeatedly, find such expressions as *thy faith has saved thee; if thou canst believe, all th are possible; let it be done to you according to your faith*. Of course, the cl example in this regard is that of the Canaanite woman who sought help for afflicted daughter. The Savior successively ignored her, refused her, rebu her. Yet, she humbly continued her pleadings until—it almost seems in spite Himself—He granted her request. His words on that occasion are signific for our present purpose: *O woman, great is thy faith! Let it be done to t as thou wilt* (Mt. 15, 28). From those words we understand that the key to G treasure-house of graces and blessings is faith. It can move something gre than mountains; it can move the very Heart of the God-man!

In this conference we noted three important facts about faith: first, it is absolutely necessary for us religious; second, that it is a real trial; and th that it brings a grand reward even in this life.

At present, we are in what might be called the season of faith. Holy W with its story of the Passion culminating in the apparent failure of our Sa on Good Friday, is the supreme test of our faith. Easter week, with Ch glorious resurrection and His apparitions to the Apostles, is the supr confirmation of our faith. This then is the time to impress upon ourselves importance of faith.

Let us be convinced that faith is the deciding factor in our success or fa as religious. All the necessary helps to perfection are at our disposal. T

Effectiveness has been abundantly proved by the numerous Franciscan Saints and Blessed. What they will mean to us, however, depends on the manner in which we use them, and that, in turn, depends on our faith. If our faith is lively, it will produce strong convictions within us. These convictions will beget a spirit of determination; and it is unswerving determination that insures steady progress in perfection. No wonder Holy Scripture tells us that *without faith it is impossible to please God* (Heb. 11, 6). No wonder the Church calls faith "the beginning, the foundation, and the root of all justification." Let us, therefore, use this holy season to meditate on faith, to pray for faith, to grow in faith. (Lord), *I do believe; help my unbelief* (Mk. 9, 23).

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Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M. ✓



The name of Francis has ever been a solemn protest against sensuality; and his life will enable us to learn that lesson, too frequently ignored in our days and country: moderation in living. This life will teach the people of today that the precious ornaments of a Christian are those which ennoble the soul—not those which pander to the irregular appetites of the body. It will teach man that *dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return* was never spoken of the soul, which is akin to the angels—intellectual, immaterial, undying, and eternal. Consequently, its adornment by the practise of virtue, and not the gratification of the body, should form the lofty object of man's ambition. The prevailing sentiment of our age is that we enjoy the good things that are present, that we clothe ourselves in soft raiment, fill ourselves with costly meat and drink. Such, however, is not the teaching of Him born in a stable, and pre-eminently styled the *Man of Sorrows*. Such is not the lesson taught by the life of His fervent disciple, Saint Francis, but rather that the poor in spirit possess the kingdom of heaven, that meat and drink are not the kingdom of heaven, neither is the gratification of the bodily appetites.

Charles da Nazzano, O. F. M. ✓

THE SAFEGUARD AGAINST ILLUSIONS

It is a sublime truism that the chief goal of our interior life is an ever closer union with God through the virtue of charity. More rarely do we inquire into the nature of the secondary end of the soul's strivings: *detachment*, that attitude of heart that is ordained to root out the snares on our route toward God and so lend wings to our pursuit of life's goal. It is the writer's purpose to invite docile hearts to attend to the mind of the Seraphic Bonaventure as he explains the value Franciscan poverty offers to detachment. We are disciples of the *Poverello*, the disciple *par excellence* of the Poor Christ.

Whatever impedes the soul's swift flight to God constitutes an ominous threat to the freedom that Incarnate Truth has brought to carnal man. Even the noblest eagle can, Prometheus-like, be earth-bound by the slightest threads. A triumphant surrender of oneself to the exigencies of counselled poverty is a keen sword, able to sever the tiny hawsers that would moor our fallen nature to the alien shore. And so, poverty is not the sniveling negation that worldlings think it is. It is incredibly dynamic: a mighty updraft of man's soaring aspirations. It is a wisely directed rocket, stripped of all superfluity, climbing unencumbered into the limitless vault of God's heavens: "That poverty is most elevated that is most remote from the world, and accordingly closest to the kingdom of heaven. Those who embrace it are similar to those possessing eternal life, who own no earthly thing. Poverty makes men poor in things but rich in virtues. For to him who is poverty vowed: that having removed the obstacles to virtue, sanctity is increased." (Cf. St. Bonaventure, *Expos. in Reg.*)

The implacable enemy of charity's growth is the longing to gain and retain temporal goods. A perfect soul must be replenished with One alone, Who is Triune. Love for Him—charity—thrives in the degree that love for creature and cupidity—diminishes. Thus the soul in charity dwells in the City of God. It is by poverty that this dwelling is in large measure assured, for only poverty can wean the affections from created goods and turn them to the uncreated Good.

The mere possession or non-possession of goods is of course in itself something indifferent, and hence it is not precisely the creature as such that threatens charity. Rather, the hazards lurk in ambush, buried unobtrusively in the inclination of our fallen nature to give itself over completely to the ephemeral pleasures flowing from the (inordinate) use of terrestrial things. "In the first place one must consider the concupiscence of pleasure which exists in one to whom there is the yearning for delicacies, for softness, for what concerns

flesh—if he seeks after savory food, lovely clothing, luxurious delights. It is not only reprehensible to consent to these desires; one ought to turn from them at the first suggestion." (*De Triplici Via*).

Thanks to the Adamic weakness stemming from Original Sin, there hides a seductive quality in those material things that are the objects of our sense appetites, and, like the fly-catching tropical plants one reads about, we run the risk of finding our wills snared in the fatally inviting skeins of matter all about us. The intellect, clouded because in our father Adam we chose Satan's lie to our Father's truth, is prone to error in judgment as to where true worth lies. The will, enfeebled by Adam's election of apparent rather than true good, vacillates between the objects of its longing. Of ourselves we are miserably poor, and desperately need the riches and the bright light and the firm support that poverty offers us.

The spirit of poverty is the fundamental basis of all perfection, according to Saint Bonaventure. "The counsel of poverty," he writes, "is firmly proved as the most high and stable foundation of all evangelical perfection." (*De perf. evang.*). Poverty is not the *form* of perfection; charity alone is that: "Our Lord commands the act of charity, the virtue of incomparable eminence, utility and excellence. A God-like virtue it is, and in it all precepts are radically founded; through it all other virtues are informed unto merit; according to it all works are acceptable." (*Sermo. de temp.*, Dom. 17 Post Pent., Sermo I).

But poverty is, in the words of Blessed Angela of Foligno, "a safeguard against illusions." Pride touches only those who possess or hope to possess, the saintly Tertiary tells us. It is poverty that attracts to us a light so sure and so bright that, perfectly enlightened on the meaning of this earthly life, we are "sheltered from all illusion in the measure that we love poverty."

It is by this light, and this humility, and this freedom from false judgments regarding the true value of creatures that the Christian soul is enabled to understand that charity is the essence of all perfection; that cupidity, in its legion of guises, is charity's sworn enemy: "The Christian religion is built on Christ, Who is in our intellect through faith and in our will through charity. These two are fused into one, for the foundation of Christianity is in faith and faith operates through charity. To this foundation is directly opposed cupidity." (*Apologia Pauperum.*).

Franciscan poverty is thus a form of *ascesis* aimed at the impediments to

sanctity's growth, and it is for this reason that the philosopher Gilson calls poverty extolled by Bonaventure "a reparatory discipline of the Christian under its most perfect form." The separation from the allurements of material things, brought about by the spirit and practice of poverty, has the effect of progressively stabilizing the soul in its struggle for perfection, helping to maintain between the soul and the material order the balance achieved by the concurrence of divine grace and human liberty.

The Seraphic Doctor, at once the most articulate and learned defender of poverty our Order has ever known, reminds us that in the wood of the Cross we find the summit of voluntary poverty, for by the Cross do we turn from the world that smacks of earth. When Saint Paul exclaims, *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (Gal. 6, 14), Saint Bonaventure replies, "Who accomplishes this, that man should neither love the world, nor the world love him? Certainly true poverty, which condemns the whole world!" (*Sermo de tempore Dom. II Post Pascha, Sermo V*).

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Fr. Aidan Carr, O. F. M. C.



When I left my country which was so dear to me, I made up my mind to leave it merely in body alone. I could have kept up friendly relationships with many people by letter. I had many acquaintances and friends both within and without the Order. But if I was continually to keep before my mind what I had left behind, what use would it have been to leave it at all?

Junipero Serra, O. F. M.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (IV)

TEXT: Chapter II: *Novitiate and Profession*

The Third Article

The Brothers and Sisters to be received in the Third Order must be faithful Catholics, not suspect of heresy, firm in obedience to the Roman Church, unmarried, free of debt, sound of body, ready of mind, of clean reputation, and at peace with their neighbors. On all these matters they shall be carefully examined before reception by him who has the faculty to receive them (Rule of the Third Order of Leo X, chapter 1), with due observance of the Sacred Canons and the Constitutions of their Institute.

The second chapter, concerned with the novitiate and profession, comprises articles three, four, and five. The first of these states the conditions for a vocation to the Third Order Regular, the second has to do with the novitiate proper, and the last with profession.

The Brothers and Sisters to be received . . .

The term, "to be received" into a religious order or congregation, has the technical meaning of entering the novitiate. The third article, consequently, treats of the qualifications for a valid and licit admission to the novitiate. The wording of the article, with the exception of the last phrase, "with due observance . . .", is taken over verbatim from the Rule of Leo X. The fact that the conditions laid down in it are essentially identical with the general canonical requirements for all religious orders and congregations is itself admirable testimony of the Franciscan spirit of the rule—its perfect accord with the aims and mind of the Church. This confirms the opinion that these requirements are to be understood or interpreted according to the sacred Canons. Let us consider them from this standpoint.

With due observance of the Sacred Canons . . .

Canon 538 reads: "Any Catholic who is free from legal impediments, has the right intention, and is capable of bearing the burdens of the religious life, can be admitted into a religious organization."

In concise fashion the Code lays down the essential and sufficient conditions for recognizing a vocation to the religious life. Interpreted from the standpoint

of the Rule and constitutions, this canon also gives the signs of a vocation to a particular Third Order congregation.

The first and obvious requirement is that the candidates be *Catholic*. As the Rule puts it, they must "be faithful Catholics, non suspect of heresy, firm obedience to the Roman Church." Thus, catechumens, apostates, heretics, schismatics or excommunicated persons are excluded. Before taking on the obligations of the evangelical counsels, the candidate must be willing to observe the minimum requirements for being a Catholic. "Faithful" is taken here in the narrow sense of one whose faith is sound. One whose past life has been marred by serious lapses into sin is not excluded from entering a religious order or congregation to do penance, to make amends for the past, and to avoid the occasions of sin in the future. The phrase, "non suspect of heresy", has a special meaning in an age where ignorance of doctrinal matters coupled with imprudent enthusiasm too often led well-meaning men and women astray. It still applies to many cases in our own day.

The second requirement, namely, that they be *free from legal impediment* refers to Canon 542, which indicates the obstacles to a valid or licit entrance into religion. We shall take them up in detail later.

The third condition is that the candidate have the *right intention*, namely, to serve God more perfectly by the practice of the evangelical counsels. This will, in itself, is a sign of a vocation to the religious state since God's grace alone can inspire one with the efficacious desire to live in this fashion. If there are obstacles or impediments that cannot be done away with, or a lack of strength or natural ability to carry on the burdens of religious life as practiced by a particular institute, this is a sign either that the call is an invitation to a more perfect life in the world or to some other religious institute.

If one entered religion only to escape the burdens of a life in the world, or on the assumption that it was an easier life, or for sake of social security, and the like, such an individual would have mistaken the object of religious life. On the other hand, a true vocation is perfectly compatible with such secondary aims as a desire to teach, to work for the missions, to serve the sick, etc.

The final condition is that the candidate is *capable of bearing the burden and fulfilling the obligations of religious life*. The practicality of this restriction is readily seen. Both the community and the individual ordinarily suffer if the manner of life or work, customary for members of the institute, is beyond the strength or talents of the person who has embraced it. The rule has this

in mind when it adds the clause that aspirants must be "sound of body, ready of mind". Ordinarily, it would be unfair to burden an institute with someone whose health would be a source of constant care and expense. A convent is not a hospital or home for cripples. Likewise, a person whose health from the very outset makes it impossible to observe the essentials of the common life can hardly receive proper training in the spiritual life. Yet, each member has a right to expect this of the institute. However, this restriction is primarily for the protection of the community. If the latter has reason to expect that an aspirant, in spite of chronic ill health, will contribute such an unusual service to the institute as to outweigh any inconveniences it will suffer, there would be no objection to admitting such an individual, provided the candidate as a general rule can observe those essential or major points of the Rule or constitutions that admit of no general dispensation.

The canon states that any one with the above requirements "can be admitted". The question arises whether a superior is under any obligation to accept a worthy candidate who meets all the requirements demanded by the Code, the Rule, and the respective constitutions. Since everyone with the proper qualifications has not only the freedom, but also the right, to follow this invitation to a more perfect form of life, there seems to be a corresponding obligation in justice not to turn away a worthy applicant without a reasonable cause. Such a cause might be insufficient income, inadequate housing facilities, or a serious doubt whether the aspirant will ever be of any value to the institute. However, if a superior, prompted by jealousy, resentment, or dislike of the aspirant's parents or relatives, or by any other unworthy motive, were to turn away an otherwise desirable candidate, he would do a serious injustice to the individual and would be bound to make restitution as far as this is possible.

Returning to the question of those who are legally free to enter a religious organization, we note the following restrictions laid down by Canon 542: "Admission to the novitiate is *invalid* in the case of: (a) *those who have joined a non-Catholic sect . . .*"

According to an official declaration of the Commission of Interpretation, this impediment is incurred only by those who have apostatized from the Catholic Church and joined a non-Catholic or atheistic sect, even if they have later repented and returned to the Church. Those brought up in heresy or atheism, even if they continued in it after reaching the age of reason, do not contract the impediment. The term, "non-Catholic sect", applies strictly only to Christians who

are not Catholics, and hence does not extend to such false religions as Judaism, Buddhism, and the like. Likewise, secret societies, like the Masons, would not be included unless they make a profession of atheism.

"(b) Those who have not attained the requisite age for entering the novitiate."

The canonical age for entering the novitiate is fifteen years. The aspirant cannot validly begin the novitiate until the day after the fifteenth birthday anniversary. Thus, for example, one born on June 1, 1937 may not be received until June 2, 1952. This age limitation does not apply to the postulancy nor to the additional year of novitiate required by some constitutions, which at times may be permitted to precede the canonical novitiate. The Church declares that children who have completed their fourteenth year are no longer subject to the parents in the matter of choosing a state of life. Many states, however, do not emancipate children from parental authority until they are eighteen or older. In such cases, prudence would require that superiors do not admit minors either to the postulancy or novitiate without the consent of their parents.

"(c) Those who enter religion under the influence of violence, grave fear, or fraud, or those whom the superior receives under pressure of the same influences . . ."

The Church makes every effort to safeguard the liberty of the aspirant in the matter of entering a religious institute. Any one forced or induced by grave fear cannot make a valid novitiate or profession. In addition, excommunication is automatically incurred by all who force another either to enter the novitiate or to take vows, whether solemn or simple, perpetual or temporary. (Can. 2352) To protect women still further, the local bishop or his delegate must question each candidate individually before her entrance into the novitiate, and also before she makes either her temporary or her perpetual vows. (Can. 552)

In order to be an impediment, this moral constraint must be a determining factor in causing the person to enter the convent to begin with, and not merely a factor inducing one, who already intends to become a religious, to enter sooner than was planned. Since entrance into religion has the technical meaning of beginning the novitiate, one who was forced to enter the postulancy and later voluntarily decided to remain is free to do so.

So-called reverential fear which children show towards their parents, guardians, or the like is ordinarily not considered as grave. We say "ordinarily"

advisedly, because an exceptionally timid person may be unduly influenced by such fear. Where the parents, by their repeated reproaches, threats and the like, cause a child to enter the convent for the sole or principal purpose of escaping such treatment, the novitiate and subsequent profession are simply invalid.

Similarly, the use of violence or grave fear to induce a superior to accept a candidate, who would otherwise be rejected as unworthy or who manifestly lacks the proper qualifications, would render the admission invalid.

What is true of violence and fear applies also to fraudulent or deceitful measures. If a candidate, for instance, were to conceal a serious disease, that would certainly have caused superiors to reject him, his admission would be invalid. The same holds in case the aspirant has been seriously deceived; for instance, if he were falsely led to believe that only as a religious would he be able to save his soul.

"(d) Married persons, as long as the marriage bond lasts."

According to the old regulations, married persons could enter religion with the consent of their partner. By the new Code, however, a special dispensation is required in addition to the consent. Even if the married parties are legally separated (e. g., by a civil divorce, or by an ecclesiastical decree of separation from bed and board), they are still required to obtain a dispensation from the impediment, according to the majority of commentators. If one of the partners has abandoned the other and is living in adultery, the other does not need the consent of the first before applying for a dispensation to enter the novitiate. Widows or widowers, however, are free to enter unless disbarred by the particular constitutions of an institute.

"(e) Those who are or have been bound by the bonds of religious profession."

Whoever has left a religious institute after taking vows, whether temporary or perpetual, cannot validly re-enter the same or another religious institute without a dispensation of the Holy See. This impediment is contracted whether the person was dismissed or left the institute voluntarily, so long as the departure took place after making profession. It does not hold for those societies whose members do not take the three essential vows. Neither does it apply to fugitives, to apostates, or to others not dispensed from their vows. The latter are obliged to return to their respective institute and, if they have given proof of amendment, or have been legitimately excommunicated, the institute is bound to readmit them.

"(f) *Those who are in imminent danger of punishment for grave crime which they have been or can be accused.*"

To have a member of a religious community (even if only a novice) brought before a civil or ecclesiastical court for a grave crime would cause the institute a certain amount of embarrassment and dishonor. Since every crime, in a technical sense, is a serious or grave fault, the expression, "grave crime", would imply a very serious misdemeanor. Furthermore, the law forbidding and punishing such a crime must be just. Unjust laws or decrees passed by an anti-clerical government, for instance, would not prevent one who has violated them seriously from entering the novitiate. The term, "imminent danger", implies that the threat of punishment is not merely a remote possibility. The requirement of the rule that the candidates for the Third Order Regular must be of "good reputation" is not meant to exclude those who may have led a criminal life in the past but have atoned for their crimes and sincerely wish to lead a better life as religious. Nevertheless, where such individuals are not barred by particular regulations of an institute, the superior should still use great discretion in admitting them.

"(g) *Bishops, whether residential or titular, even though only nominated by the Roman Pontiff.*"

"(h) *Clerics, who by a disposition of the Holy See are bound by oath to consecrate themselves to the service of the diocese or missions, for the period during which their oath binds.*"

This does not refer to secular clergy ordained under the title of "servant of the diocese". They take an oath to serve the diocese in order to acquire the necessary title for ordination. In entering a religious institute, they merely exchange this title for another. Only those clerics are disbarred who in certain missionary colleges and seminaries by a special ordinance of the Holy See take an oath to serve the diocese or missions for a certain period of time. Also, those ordained under the title of the missions in places subject to the Sacred Congregation for the Propaganda of the Faith may not enter religion without the permission of the Holy See.

Canon 542 continues: "The following are validly, but illicitly, admitted:

(a) *Clerics in major orders without the knowledge of the local Ordinary and against his will, if his objection is based on the serious loss to souls the withdrawal would cause, when that loss cannot be otherwise avoided.*"

The bishop in such a case is obliged to give his permission as soon as he can and let other priests to replace those who wish to follow the calling to a higher life. Prior to the subdiaconate, however, clerics are perfectly free to join a religious order or congregation.

"(b) *Those burdened with debts they cannot pay.*"

Before taking upon themselves the counsels of perfection, the aspirants should satisfy their natural obligations. Hence the Rule wisely prescribes that those to be admitted be "free of debt". Superiors who knowingly take in such individuals would be obliged to satisfy their creditors. If the creditors, however, have relinquished their claims, or agreed not to bring suit, or arrived at some kind of legal settlement, there would be no objection to admitting the candidate.

"(c) *Those charged with the administration of temporal affairs which might cause the institute to be involved in lawsuits and other annoyances.*"

In the same spirit the Rule requires that prospective Third Order members should be "at peace with their neighbors".

"(d) *Children who are necessary for the support of their parents or grandparents who are in grave need, and parents whose help is needed for the support and education of their children.*"

By "grave want", ordinary poverty is not meant, but a state where the parents are reduced to begging, or engaging in work that would be disgraceful or unsuited to their age, strength, and the like. Since this obligation to help one's parents arises from the natural law, a novice would be obliged to leave the novitiate to care for them if such a need arose. Once vows are taken, however, it would require an extreme, and not merely a grave, need before a religious would be obliged to return to the world. If it is certain, however, that an individual would be of no assistance to the parents by remaining in the world, or if others, for instance, his brothers or sisters, are both ready and willing to help, or if the religious community itself comes to their aid, there would be no objection to one entering the convent, nor would there be any need for a novice to leave the novitiate. With regard to other relatives in need the code is silent. However, many commentators maintain that an aspirant should not enter if his brothers or sisters are in extreme want.

"(e) *Candidates for the priesthood in the religious community who suffer from an irregularity or canonical impediment.*"

"(f) Those who belong to an Oriental rite may not enter an institute of the Latin rite without the written permission of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Church."

Only the Holy See can dispense from these impediments to valid or licit admission. On all these matters, they shall be carefully examined before reception

The obligation to examine the aspirants regarding their qualifications devolves upon the superior qualified to admit them. According to Canon 560, "The right of admitting candidates to the novitiate and to subsequent profession, whether temporary or perpetual, is vested in the major superiors after they have taken the vote of the council or chapter, according to the particular constitutions of the institute." By this canon the right of admitting to the novitiate is given to the religious superiors and not to the local bishop. The constitutions determine whether the provincial superiors can admit candidates without recourse to the superior general, and whether the vote of the council or chapter is to be decisive or merely consultive with regard to entrance to the novitiate.

The constitutions of a particular institute may impose additional impediments to reception and determine under what conditions a superior may dispense from them.

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O. F. M.



I have no attachment for this or that place; my only desire is to follow the Rule of obedience. If I am told to move on or stay here; to take up residence in another place for the missions or to return to our holy College; I will do so with equal happiness and contentment. Command me whatever you like or find most appropriate.

Junipero Serra, O. F. M.

THE CHRISTOCENTRIC LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS

In his brief but comprehensive treatise on Franciscan spirituality, *In the Spirit of Saint Francis*, Father Theodosius Foley, O. F. M. Cap., felicitously refers to Saint Francis of Assisi as "The Christ of Umbria." Herein is contained the very essence of the life of the Seraphic Saint, for, from his legendary birth in a stable to his death devoid of all things material, his life was an attempt perfectly to mirror the life of his Divine Savior. For him, Christ was—had to be—all. Other founders of religious orders might base their lives on some particular phase of the life of Christ—his prayer, his preaching, his work with the poor and the sick; but nothing less than living the *entire* life of Christ as He Himself led it would suffice for Francis. For this reason it was that Francis laid such stress on the Gospel; for this reason he made it the *modus vivendi* for himself and his friars. "This is the Rule and life of the Friars Minor: namely, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity".

Puer natus est nobis (Isa. 9, 6).

Previous to his conversion between the years 1205 and 1206, actual instances of the influence of Christ upon Francis are not easily found, although there are some legends of doubtful authenticity which attempt to elucidate the parallel circumstances surrounding the birth of each. Albert Paul Schimberg, in his novelized life of Saint Francis, points out some of these. He tells us that "learned men have pointed out that these stories were unknown before the fourteenth and fifteenth century, two or three hundred years after Francesco's birth. But shall we therefore deny ourselves the pleasure of the legends redolent of a younger, less sophisticated, and more joyous spirit than that of the doubting and disparaging savants?" Though historically unfounded, these legends may serve to add color and background to bring the main picture into higher relief.

In Assisi, one can behold a small chapel covering the stable where Madonna Pica bore her first son. Over the door is an old Latin inscription:

*Hoc oratorium fuit bovis et asini stabulum
In quo natus est Franciscus, mundi speculum . . .*

We are told that when Madonna Pica's hour drew near, a mysterious beggar appeared at the Bernadone household and in return for an alms told the servant that Madonna Pica must go to an abandoned stable nearby and there bring forth her child. This was an extraordinary bit of advice, but the wife of Peter Bernadone followed it. The legend goes on to say that Francis's birth was in

imitation of his Divine Master, "to be in this as like unto Him as it is given a creature to be like its Creator, any image like unto its original." At the birth of Francis angelic voices were heard singing hymns of peace and praise.

Historians will try to explain the incident by stating that the stables were once adjoined to the houses, the better to utilize the animals' heat. The impression given by the legends, however, seems to give more the idea that the stable was removed some distance from the Bernadone house; even that the stable was on the same property. Be this as it may, the same legend provides us with another and further account of the early life of Francis.

"A . . . stranger appeared when the child, freshly baptized, was brought back to the parental house. He . . . begged to see the baby boy, took him in his arms, as, once of old, Simeon cradled the Christ Child, and solemnly declared that Messer Pietro's son was a vessel of election, a child of predilection . . . the stranger gave the child back to his nurse saying: 'Guard him well, for will one day be great in the sight of the Lord. The prince of darkness suspects his high calling and will stop at nothing to destroy his life. Take care lest he fall into a trap set for him by the evil one!'"

*The Lord granted me, Brother Francis,
thus to begin to do penance. (Testament).*

We are all familiar with the story of the conversion of Saint Francis between the years 1205 and 1206, but a closer glance at these events will show that the more important of them involved Christ. In the text of John of Ceprano *Quasi Stella Matutina*, as appearing in Otto Karrer's work, we read that "in withdrawing from its (the world's) noise and turmoil, he hoped to behold Jesus Christ secretly in his soul".

Who does not remember the incident, early in his conversion, when Francis suddenly came face to face with a leper, one of a class of people who previously had been to him the epitome of all that was sordid, ugly and revolting in the world? Tempted as usual to avoid him as soon as possible, "he conquered his revulsion, got down from his horse, gave the leper a coin and kissed his hand. And the leper gave him the kiss of peace. Then Francis mounted his horse and continued on his way." We may be fairly sure of this much, but popular legend would have us believe more; "that as soon as the lips of the young Assisian touched the leper, the leper indeed vanished but in his stead stood a man of exceeding beauty; and ruby-glowing wounds were on His hands and feet

Although this was, for Francis, a great conquest over self, perhaps the greatest incident related to his conversion happened a few days later. While praying in the church of Saint Damian before an old Byzantine crucifix the young man suddenly heard it speak to him in these words: "Francis, do you not see that my house is falling to ruins? Go, and repair it". We know the story from this point: how Francis, thinking the actual building of Saint Damian's was meant, begged stones from various friends in Assisi and its environs and restored the edifice. Then he went on to restore other declining churches in the vicinity. The fact remains that here was the first noteworthy occasion on which Christ actually manifested Himself and His will to His servant in a physical, tangible manner. This indeed was the beginning of Francis's religious life and the inception of the break with his home ties. Soon he would renounce his home altogether to cling to Christ, the Spouse of his soul for all eternity, after a series of humiliating dissensions with his earthly father, Peter Bernadone. At last, on that bright day before Bishop Guido of Assisi, did he finally renounce that earthly father so as to be able to "say in truth, 'Our Father Who art in heaven'."

Now, his chief attachments to earth were severed. Now, he was ready to do God's will; ready and waiting. For a year or so he remained in the vicinity of Assisi, a sort of oddity to the citizens but personally growing closer to God through the continuous exercise of prayer and good works. Still he waited for some command from God; a command which was soon to be forthcoming. Once again Christ was to enter the picture in a way not so tangible as in the previous incident but in a much more definite and lasting manner.

On the morning of February 24, 1208, as he was hearing Mass in his beloved chapel of Our Lady of the Angels—the Portiuncula—he heard read the Gospel text beginning, *Going therefore preach, saying: the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. "This is what I have sought," exclaimed Francis, and throwing aside purse, staff and shoes, he exchanged his hermit's tunic for the poor garb of the Umbrian peasant, and his belt for a cord. Francis had now begun to live the life of his Divine Lord and Master, using as his model the portrayal of Him as found in the most perfect life of Christ ever written: the Holy Gospel. When he was joined soon after, about April 15th, by Bernard of Quintavalle and Peter of Catania, he returned to the same source for the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit to show them a rule of life. The three entered the church of Saint Nicholas and, the grace of God being implored, Francis took the Evangelium, or book of Gospels, and three different times opened it at random. The three texts thus obtained (Matt. 19:21; Luke 9:2-3; Matt. 16:24.)

indicated that Francis and his companions were to live a life as similar as possible to that lived by Our Lord while He was on earth. This completely satisfied Francis, who instructed his companions: "This shall be our life and our rule and the life and rule of all those who wish to join our community. Do as you have heard." Thus did God make known to Francis of Assisi through His Son Jesus Christ, that he was to bring back the apostolic life that our Lord lived in all its pristine purity.

For to me to live is Christ (Philip. 1:21).

The devotion to the Sacred Humanity of Christ has ever been a popular one with Franciscans. This distinctive trait of the Order can be traced directly back to the Seraphic Patriarch whose every thought, word, and deed was centered about this tremendous mystery. We can easily form the thought that must have been forever before Francis's mind: "Lo! Here is God become man. The very thought of it! Oh wonderful mystery! But see *how* He has become man: naught does He claim for Himself save poverty, humility, suffering. My God delighted in these, can I do better than to make my Lord's poverty, humility and suffering my own?"

Although there were many incidents illustrating the conformity of the life of Saint Francis to the life of Christ, we shall do well to consider that conformity existed first and foremost as an interior spirit completely filling the heart of our Seraphic Father and thence manifesting itself in exterior action.

In his testament, Saint Francis tells us: "The Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live after the manner of the Holy Gospel." His Rule of life was the Gospel only. It was his desire and intention to relive the life of Christ according to the evangelical counsels. Thus, the Franciscan life of life as exemplified stems directly from the Holy Gospel.

Cardinal Colonna, Francis's ecclesiastical protector, best stated the mind of the Seraphic Father when he declared to the Holy Father, Pope Innocent III: "I have found a saintly man who desires to live after the manner of the Holy Gospel and to observe evangelical perfection in all things, and I am convinced that God intends to restore the true faith in the whole world through him." The sentiments of this Cardinal express the destiny of the Seraphic Order for all time—personal evangelical perfection and the reform of the world according to the Holy Gospel.

Perhaps the most distinctive note of Franciscan life, however, and the one which makes it most similar, externally, to the evangelical life is the Seraphic

interpretation of poverty. In this we are reminded of the answer which our Lord made to one who would be his follower: *Foxes have holes and the birds have the air their resting-places; the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.* This was the ideal of Francis. The previous interpretation of the vow of poverty—poverty of the individual, while the Order continued to own possessions—was not for him. Once again he had to live as his Divine Master. Therefore, casting all aside but the clothes on their backs, he and his first followers completely threw themselves on the protection of Divine Providence. Brother Cuthbert tells us that "the ideal which governed the lives of Saint Francis and his followers was, in Franciscan language, 'the Poor Christ'." This was the basis for their refusal to accept any property at all, either for themselves or for the Order, and when at last they did consent, because of pressing conditions, to accept the Portiuncula for the annual rent of a yearly basket of fish, it still was no more than a place wherein they might stop over on their continual missionary trips and to which they might occasionally go for a Chapter or a retreat.

The mention of the missionary trips recalls another incident in the life of Francis bearing resemblance to a similar instance in the life of Christ. Let us first hear the Gospel text: *After this, the Lord appointed seventy-two others, and sent them before Him, two and two, into all the cities and villages he himself was to visit . . . He told them . . . You are not to carry purse, or wallet, or shoes; you are to give no one greeting on your way. When you enter a house, say first of all, "Peace be to this house", and if those who dwell there are men of good will, your good wishes shall come down upon it . . . Remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they have to give you; the laborer has a right to his maintenance.* Now, some time after Francis had chosen his apostolic band of twelve followers, when the brothers had increased somewhat in number, Francis sent these in a very similar manner, two by two, into all the countries which he wished to evangelize. We know that the Master's prescriptions concerning possessions were diligently carried out by these early friars and that the others concerning food are likewise stated in the Holy Rule.

The Fioretti tell us of another occasion of resemblance between the lives of Francis and Christ, in the chapter dealing with the fast of forty days and forty nights which Francis made during a Lent on an isle in the Lake of Perugia. We are told that in imitation of his Divine Lord Francis had a friend bring him by boat to this island secretly on Ash Wednesday with instructions to return for him on Holy Thursday. He took with him naught but two small loaves. Our

saint then spent the time in prayer and the contemplation of divine things. According to the Fioretti, during this entire time he took no food nor drink save for half of one of the loaves, and this only to quell the temptation to think that he had excelled the Savior. The introduction to this chapter is also enlightening insofar as it brings to light much of the theme of this treatise. "The servant of Christ, Saint Francis, was in certain things like unto a second Christ given to the world for the salvation of souls. Wherefore God the Father willed that in many points he should be conformed to His Son, Jesus Christ, as we have already explained in the calling of his twelve companions, as also in the mystery of the holy stigmata, and in a fast of forty days which he made . . .

*Vivo autem, jam non ego;
vivit in me Christus. (Gal. 2:20)*

If the life of Saint Francis previous to his Stigmata was Christ-like and Christocentric, it was as nothing compared to his life after this miraculous event when he was transformed literally, completely and with no reserve into another Christ.

Shortly before this occurrence, however, there took place an incident which is usually considered among those near the conclusion of Francis's life. In one of the most Christocentric of his actions. As the Christmas of 1223 approached, Francis caused to be built at Greccio a representation of the stable at Bethlehem, correct, as far as possible, to the last detail, around which Midnight Mass was to be sung. When this hour finally came, all the townspeople gathered with torches and joyous hearts. Francis acted as Deacon at the Mass and delivered the sermon, whose simplicity and soul-ravishing beauty we can easily imagine. We have it on the authority of pious legend that when, at Midnight Mass, Francis placed the babe in the manger there was suddenly no longer an imitation in his arms but the living Infant Savior Himself.

We may say that, from this time on, the Seraph of Assisi was no longer a citizen of earth but rather one of the celestial realm who knew that he was far from home and was impatient to meet the embrace of his Lord and Savior.

The following year, Francis retired to an isolated spot atop his beloved Mount Alvernia to pass the Lent of Saint Michael, a fast of forty days in preparation for the feast of Saint Michael, September 29th. This feast began with the feast of the Assumption, August 15th, and lasted until the feast of the Archangel. It was one of the six Lents which we are told the Saint kept, the others being: from the Commemoration of All Souls to Christmas; from

Epiphany for the continuous forty days in honor of our Lord's fast; the regular Lent; the forty days in preparation for the feast of Saints Peter and Paul; and from this latter feast to Our Lady's Assumption. During the Lent of Saint Michael, however, occurred the event which was to add more than anything else to his fame and renown; but, more than that, to him it meant complete union with Christ and God's stamp of approval on his entire life. While at prayer on this peak on the morning of the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, September 14th, there appeared to him a Seraph in the form of a crucified one—a Seraph of exceeding beauty, who impressed upon his hands, feet, and side the marks of the Sacred Passion, that in all things, even at the end of his life, he might be entirely conformed to his Master.

From this point, events hurried to a rapid, exquisitely painful but beautiful conclusion for Francis. This, his latest gift was not to be given without a price—the price which Christ paid for it: pain and suffering. These were to be his to a tremendous degree from now on. The pain from his eyes, from his ailing stomach and from the new wounds of love, complicated with dropsy, combined to keep him in almost perpetual agony. But if we know that in His Agony Christ gave supreme adoration to God, we have tangible evidence that Francis did likewise, for his interior feelings on this point are wonderfully summed up in his Canticle of the Creatures in which he calls upon all the elements to join in the praise of the All-Kind and All-loving God.

The Rule, which was for Saint Francis and his followers a mere adaptation of the supremely perfect evangelical life, was their whole guide of life. This it was which made the first Friars Minor conform to the life of Christ set down in the Gospel and inspires us Friars today to do likewise. In a final attempt to insure its perpetuity, just before his end Francis wrote his Testament, in which he insisted upon the faithful observance of the Rule *sine glossa*.

All was now completed. Francis had finished the work which God had given him to do. Naught remained for him but to commend his spirit to God. His body stripped naked of all its possessions save the five wounds of Love, Francis consummated this final act not so much by death as by a passing over (*Transitus*) into the arms of his Divine Spouse, to whom he was led by his beloved Sister Death; for it had been the entire principle of his life that *per ipsum, et cum ipso, in ipso est tibi Deo, Patri Omnipotenti, in unitate Spiritus Sancti, omnis honor, et gloria*.

Middleburg, New York

Fr. Tobias Klein, O. F. M. Conv. ✓

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

LES SIX AILES DU SERAPHIM . . . PAR SAINT BONAVENTURE. Translated by Adrien-M. Malo, O. F. M. Montreal; Les Editions Franciscaines, 1951. Pp. 156.

This translation of Saint Bonaventure's DE SEX ALIS SERAPHIM is the latest publication of Canada's Franciscan-sponsored La Vie des Communautés Religieuses. Their choice of this treatise for publication is singularly happy for it is one of the most realistic and practical and profound guides for religious superiors ever written. Although it is thoroughly Franciscan in spirit, it is nevertheless broad and general enough to be used by religious following any rule. The Jesuits, in fact, have used it since the fifteenth century.

Father Malo's edition is practical rather than scholarly since it is intended for the practical purpose of bringing the wisdom of Saint Bonaventure to French speaking religious who have difficulty with Latin. He has, however, included the Latin text (Quaracchi) in smaller type for those who may wish to consult the original, and provided an introduction, notes, and a table of contents that is practically an index.

For those who read French, Father Malo's work will be most welcome.



THE LIFE OF MARY AS SEEN BY THE MYSTICS. Compiled by Raphael Brown. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1951. Pp. 292. \$3.50.

Something quite different in "biographies" of Our Lady is this compilation: THE LIFE OF MARY AS SEEN BY THE MYSTICS. The author has combined in a continuous narrative relevant selections from the mystical writings of Saint Elizabeth of Schoenau, Saint Brigid of Sweden, Venerable Mother Mary of Agreda, and Sister Anna Catherine Emmerich. The result is a detailed account of the life of Our Lady, beginning with the lives of Saint Ann and Saint Joachim and ending with the Assumption.

Because the Church has always private revelations with caution and the author has seen fit to write an objective introduction stating (among things) not only the attitude of theologians toward the four mystics whose writings he has borrowed, but the attitude the reader should take of them. He urges that his book be read as a religious novel, not as a fifth Gospel.

According to the author, every statement in THE LIFE OF MARY AS SEEN BY THE MYSTICS has been borrowed directly from one of the four sources, and combined, condensed, and adapted to form a whole. Mary of Agreda and Catherine Emmerich have provided approximately two-thirds of the total text. Of these two, the former contributed most of the material concerning the interior life of Mary; the latter contributed most of the details of events. Brigid of Sweden supplied the available light on major occurrences. Elizabeth of Schoenau described the life in the Temple and something of the Immaculate Conception. To those who relish the colorful, and unauthenticated details concerning Our Lady, THE LIFE OF MARY AS SEEN BY THE MYSTICS can be highly recommended. But by all means read Edward Ryan's foreword and the complete introduction should be read before the book is delved into.

To some readers the book will prove a source of interest and edification and spiritual uplift; to others it may be repulsive. This much can be said in any case: the historicity of the events related is questionable, there is nothing questionable about their adherence to Catholic doctrine (in spite of the early Dominican opposition to Mary of Agreda's Scotistic leanings). There is no fundamental discrepancy between Mary as she appears in the Gospel and as she appears in the revelations of these mystics. The book is entirely "fictitious" but it will appeal largely to those who have a taste for this very specialized kind of spiritual reading.

Besides the excellent foreword and introduction, the book also offers a selected bibliography.

HUMILITY

Through dark, through tears,
My heart has waited, yearning like a candle;
But she has passed like a low, unbearable singing
Through my wisdom.

I have given my lips to the earth,
But I have never found her kisses.
And in my comely prostrations,
Her laughter was small bells ringing.

She has informed all my words with hallowness
And she has invested my resolutions with bright rags
She has attended the obsequies of her unhallowed hours
And she has been a dissonance in the encomiums of recall.

(I grew weary of her seraphic mockery
Until, at last, I won her shadow
With loud and restless wooing.)

But now dust has become my dignity
And shame my nobility
Because I have bartered my proud shoulders
For the whips of forgiveness
And I have bent my head
To the blows of mercy.
I have suffered my loud wounds to be healed
And I have given my heart to be bruised
In the ignominy of pardon.

Then let no loneliness intrude
On this companionable grief,
For her footprints are freshly-dug in my sorrow
And I have caught her veil, lightly, for a moment
In my hands.

My pride has lost its innocence
To her charms.

*Poor Clare Monastery of
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Roswell, New Mexico*

Sr. Mary Francis, P. C.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Our Blessed Mother

Shortly before his joyful meeting with Sister Death, Saint Francis exhorted his followers never to leave the little chapel of Saint Mary of the Angels. He expressed the desire to have his heart buried there as a token of his love for Mary. From that time down to our own day, when the Church has granted a special feast in honor of Mary, Queen of the Franciscan Order, every Franciscan has considered it a high privilege and a sacred duty to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary. The beautiful prayer of the liturgy, "Vouchsafe to let me see thee, O holy Virgin," voices this traditional Franciscan attitude toward the glorious Mother of God. Hence, it is only proper that our conference of this month of May treat of her for whom the month is named—Mary. We consider her under the appealing aspect of our Blessed Mother.

It is not hard to prove that Mary is our mother. This vital fact is based on her two Annunciations, the one at Nazareth, the other on Calvary. When the Archangel Gabriel announced to Mary in her little home at Nazareth that she was chosen to become the Mother of God, he indicated unmistakably the special character of her Son by calling Him Jesus, a name which signified one who would save his people from their sins (Mt. 1, 21). Her son, therefore, as the Savior of the world, was to possess the unique distinction of having two bodies, His personal, physical body composed of flesh and blood and bones, and a Mystical Body composed of all those to be saved through His merits. Now one of the prime functions of a mother is to form, fashion, and nourish the body of her child. Consequently, when Mary gave her consent to become the mother of Christ, she agreed to mother Him whole and entire, that is, His physical body and His Mystical Body, because the two cannot be separated in the plan of God. She would mother His physical body in the tender way natural to all mothers. She would mother His Mystical Body by co-operating with Jesus in His redemptive work for souls. And since this co-operation means participation in the actual birth, nourishment, and protection of our supernatural life, Mary is as truly our mother in the supernatural sense as she is the mother of Jesus in the natural. She is our mother, therefore, not in some vague, metaphorical way, much as we would call a woman devoted to an adopted child a veritable mother to this child, but in all truth and reality because, in union with Jesus, she really brings us into supernatural being. That is why Mary is called the Second Eve, the mother of all who live the supernatural life. That is why it is said that

Christmas morn she brought forth her *firstborn* son (Lk. 2, 7). Christ is only her *first* child; all the redeemed are her other children.

This breath-taking truth was publicly affirmed on Calvary. It was the moment of Mary's second Annunciation. In a way, this Annunciation was more solemn than the one which took place at Nazareth, both because of the dramatic setting in which it occurred and because the one who spoke to Mary was not merely an angel of God but the very Son of God Himself. An eerie darkness had spread over the hill of Calvary and many of the people who had thronged around the cross of Christ were struck with terror and fled back to Jerusalem. This gave Mary and her faithful companions a chance to draw near to the dying Savior. When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold thy son. Then he said to the disciple, Behold thy mother (Jo. 19, 26-27).

These words of Christ implied more, much more, than a mere provision for His mother's safekeeping after His death. They were a formal declaration of Mary's essential role in the divine plan of redemption. They proclaimed her the true spiritual mother of all mankind represented by the person of Saint John. This is evident from the fact that the last words of Christ on the cross were not simply chance utterances occasioned by the passing mood or suffering that He happened to be experiencing at the moment. Christ was in perfect control of His faculties and sentiments as is clear from the whole manner of His death. These words, therefore, were fraught with deep Messianic significance, and had been determined upon from all eternity. They were reserved for this solemn occasion to console Mary and to impress us. Coming as they did at the height of Mary's grief, they reassured her regarding the value of her sufferings which were, in very truth, the pangs of spiritual childbirth. Her hour of sorrow was brightened by the reminder that she was bringing forth children unto God. And as for us, Christ's statement of Mary's motherhood was made at this tragic moment so that we should never forget the very dear price which Mary paid in becoming our mother. Thereby we would be moved to love her all the more tenderly and go to her with all the greater confidence.

From what has been said thus far it is clear that Mary is actually our mother in the supernatural order. This is the basic reason for our devotion to her and we must never lose sight of it. In the spiritual life we are all just children striving to attain to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ (Eph. 4, 13). And as long as we are on this earth we shall remain

children in this sense. Hence, our great need of a mother to help us in spiritual development. Here I should like to quote a passage from Father Boudot's excellent book, *Our Lady in Our Life*: "All life tends to grow and express the child's law is to become a man. So of the supernatural life; it must develop. God might have decided that like the angels, we were to settle our eternal destiny in one single act of the will; instead He willed that we were to have the power of growing, and He gave us the time and the means . . . Our Lady helps us to grow in Christ. She is a mother. A mother is not satisfied with giving birth to a child: she watches over its growth, desires to bring it to perfection. Supernatural growth requires at every moment some fresh exercise of grace, but this demands actual graces, without which we should at once come to a standstill. Through Our Lady come these graces, all the graces that we need, for all the details of our life, for all our difficulties, for every step in our progress. No doubt the distribution of grace belongs by His own right to the sole Mediator, Christ. God alone can give divine life, says Saint Thomas. But God has willed that because of their intimate union in the Redemption Christ and His Mother should also be united in this distribution of grace. God might have given grace alone: He pleases to distribute it through Mary" (pp. 19-21).

Because of its importance, allow me to repeat one sentence of the quotation. "All the graces that we need, for all the details of our life, for all our difficulties, for every step in our progress" come to us through Mary. Note the universality of those words—all the grace, for all the details, for all our difficulties, for every step. Yes, just everything in our supernatural life comes under the influence of Mary. As our mother, she is charged with our entire spiritual growth. Our present Holy Father confirms this view in his encyclical on the sacred liturgy called *Mediator Dei*. In this document he quotes with approval the statement of Saint Bernard that God "wished us to have everything through Mary". In the light of this teaching, therefore, we can truthfully say that we were granted the grace of baptism because of Mary; that we were confirmed to receive all the blessings of each confession, Holy Communion, and Holy Eucharist through her intercession; that every grace we need to practice virtue, to overcome temptation, to fulfill our daily tasks—in a word, to live and die in the love of God, comes to us through the hands of Mary. What an all-important part the Blessed Mother plays in our life! Once more, however, let us stress the truth that this role of Mary is not a role of necessity but a role of choice. God chose to give Mary this essential part in the plan of Redemption. But we can safely say that to this choice the words of Holy Scripture: *The gifts of God are without*

number (Rom. 11, 29). In other words, God will never go back on His choice, and He will always bring about our salvation through our Blessed Mother.

It is indeed a great consolation to realize that our eternal welfare is in the hands of such a mother. For she is at one and the same time God's mother and our mother. As God's mother she can obtain for us all that we need. In fact, Mary is called the "praying omnipotence." What God can do by His power, Mary can obtain by her intercession. While on earth her constant refrain was, *Be it done to me according to Thy word*. And now that she is in heaven God deigns to make those words His own regarding all the petitions of His mother. The "Memorare," used so universally by the faithful, attests to the efficacy of Mary's intercession. Hence, we need never hesitate to go to our Blessed Mother with all our problems, even those which seem quite hopeless. The Church applies these words of Holy Scripture to her: *I was with Him forming all things . . . playing in the world* (Prov. 8, 30-31). Taking care of the world is easy for Mary; it is just play for her. Yes, nothing is too difficult for the great Mother of God. If anyone, therefore, can obtain our requests it is she.

Moreover, since Mary is our mother she will help us. We were born to her on Calvary, and the very excess of anguish which we caused her then awakened in her heart a maternal affection for us without compare. She is determined that the children of such sorrow should never perish. If the Little Flower promised to spend her heaven in doing good on earth, what can we expect of Mary, the most loving of mothers? Like her Divine Son, she is *always living to make intercession for us* (Heb. 7, 25). It is said that a mother's day is never ended. How true that is of our heavenly mother! She will allow no rest as long as there is one soul to be saved, one sinner to be converted, one sorrowing heart to be consoled, one tear to be dried. She is not so occupied with being the Queen of Heaven as to have no time for her needy children on earth. To be convinced of that, all we have to do is to run through the invocations in her litany and see the endearing titles conferred upon her by grateful hearts:—"Mother of good counsel," "Virgin, most merciful," "Virgin, most faithful," "Cause of our joy," "Health of the sick," "Refuge of sinners," "Comforter of the afflicted," "Help of Christians." What a world of devoted love is implied in each of those titles! What assurance they give us that the first to help us and the last to abandon us will always be our Blessed Mother!

Having reflected on the important place of Mary in our spiritual life, and her ability and willingness to help us, there is but one conclusion which we can draw, namely, that we should have a strong and consistent devotion to her.

The Saints are our models in this as in so many other things. No matter much they may differ among themselves in other respects—temperament, emphasis on a particular virtue or practice—they are all in perfect agreement when it comes to devotion to the Blessed Virgin. We shall look in vain for a Saint who did not have a great devotion to Mary. This is particularly true of our own Franciscan Saints. When reading their lives in the breviary, references to their love for the Blessed Mother occur with monotonous regularity. And their writings, setting forth her glory and defending her prerogatives, would constitute a veritable library in itself. In addition to the testimony of the Saints, theologians tell us that if we neglect to have a devotion to Mary it is a sign of culpable indifference to our eternal salvation. And the Church herself, in her Canon Law, exhorts all the faithful to foster a childlike piety toward the Blessed Virgin (Can. 1276).

But what form should devotion to our Blessed Mother take? Apart from the prescriptions of the liturgy, there is freedom on this score. So much depends on one's training, on one's personal preferences, and on the attractions of the environment. However, considering the matter objectively, we must admit that the most perfect form of devotion to Mary is that of total consecration. Briefly, it consists in placing at her disposal everything which we are permitted to give her, dedicating ourselves entirely to her service, becoming, as it were, her slaves. Since this form of Marian devotion is receiving at present a great deal of publicity, it would be worthwhile to make a few observations regarding it.

If we consider the general run of the faithful, this type of devotion is, to say the least, a bit out of the ordinary. And it has widespread implications which, as a rule, are not fully grasped at first glance, and which, when they become apparent later on, may cause disturbance and anxiety to souls. Hence it would certainly seem advisable not to make this act of consecration without thorough instruction from, and the advice of, one's spiritual director. Furthermore, it is unfair and incorrect to say that, because a person doesn't make the act of consecration, he does not love the Blessed Virgin tenderly. First, there is only one kind, not the only kind, of devotion to Mary. Then, too, the act of consecration does not prove one's devotion automatically, by the very act of being made. Rather, a person has to work at it, live up to it fervently and consistently in his daily round of duties, to have it mean something. Consequently, it may well be that one who has not made this consecration has a much greater devotion to Mary than another who has so consecrated himself. Granted, however, that one thoroughly understands the total consecration, that he is

make it, and that he strives, earnestly yet sanely, to carry it out in practice—then, there can be no doubt that such a consecration does offer to the Blessed Virgin an extraordinary honor. Moreover, given the conditions mentioned, it is bound to produce great spiritual profit for the person concerned. For it is simply a case of taking the direction and the disposal of one's spiritual life out of one's own hands, a mere tyro, and placing them in the hands of Mary, a consummate specialist. If perfection consists in becoming counterparts of Christ, then who could be more expert in forming Christ in souls than the Blessed Mother whose heavenly-appointed task is precisely that of giving birth to Christ, both physically and mystically, as we have seen? Mary is called by Saint Augustine the "Mold of God" and by Father Faber the "Short Cut to Christ." By complete surrender to her a person casts himself into this divine mold and quickly and securely takes on the features of Christ. And should the spirituality of a particular Order or Congregation call for special tints and shades in the image of Christ sought for in its members, we can hardly conceive that Mary, a master artist, would fail to bring about the desired effect.

However, when all is said and done, we must return to our original proposition—the total consecration is not required, it is something entirely voluntary. The main thing to remember is that, no matter what form our devotion to Mary takes, it should be wholeheartedly generous. Father Fulgence Meyer, O. F. M., in his charming book on Mary, *Who is She?* tells about an old Brother who was deeply in love with the Blessed Mother. One day a compulsive desire sprang up in his heart to see the object of his love. It was revealed to him that this privilege would be granted him on condition that forever after he should be blind. For the eyes that had beheld the fairest of God's creatures were never to be used again to gaze on the common things of this world. The old Brother agreed. But when Mary appeared to him, he became quite panicky and quickly covered one eye with his hand so as not to be totally blind for the rest of his life. Later, however, he regretted very much his lack of generosity, and begged for a second chance so that he might sacrifice his total eyesight in honor of Mary. Again his request was granted. And he gazed at the glorious Virgin with his one good eye, eager to forego his sight in return for the rapturous vision vouchsafed to him. But when Mary had disappeared, he was amazed to discover that he could now see perfectly with *both* eyes . . . We may say this story is a mere legend, and we may even brand it fantastic, but we can never deny the lesson it contains, namely, that it is impossible to be generous with our Blessed Mother and not to lose thereby.

St. Louis, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.

THE BOOK OF THE CROSS

Wisdom, which is the worker of all things, taught me (Wis. 7, 21)

The Franciscan habit is cruciform. The seal of the Franciscan Order is the pierced hands of Christ and of Francis enshrined within the cord. The Cross was given the world by the disciples of our stigmatized Father. All these and countless other reminders serve always to emblazon the heart with the thought of the Crucified upon the true Franciscan's heart.

Without violence to truth, does it not seem that poverty's claim to a central role in our spirituality rests ultimately upon this: Lady Poverty—together with the other women—was near when the soldiers cast lots for His garment. Now one can not seek to pierce the gloom of Calvary's hill but one does find there the stark beauty of holy poverty.

We Franciscans must be poor, not that we may be poor but that we may become Christ-like; that we may become rich in Christ beyond the dreams of any avaricious heart. Is it surprising then that for Saint Bonaventure the Christ Whom we must imitate is Jesus upon the Cross, stripped of all possessions? "Christ the High Priest taught the perfection of poverty by His word, but especially by His example, when entering the holy of holies He was poor and naked upon the Cross." (*Apologia Pauperum*). Hence it is that poverty inevitably carries with it some share in the Crucifixion.

Frequently, the suffering that poverty brings us rests in the humility that asks permission of our superior for personal needs. Sometimes again it is the awareness that it is not the material possessions we have in fact forsworn that best proves our renouncement, but rather it is the irrevocable repudiation of the possibility of ever owning anything in our own name. But more piercing still than the pains these barbs inflict, is the anguish we experience in coming face to face with our failure to extirpate the spirit of compromise from our hearts. Caught between the ambivalence of a stern ideal and our practical lives as we in reality lead them, we are ever being abruptly and painfully reminded how un-Christlike, how un-Franciscanlike we are indeed.

We soon come to know how little we can do without God's strong sustaining grace; we receive consoling intimations within the core of our soul that a certain must needs be, in some degree, the common destiny of each idealist. And as we push on, often half-stumbling and dismayed, towards horizons that seem to escape us, yet without despair hoping against hope that tomorrow we shall be better, is it not perhaps then that we are most akin to the Christ who

dreadful struggle in the Garden? The spirit and the flesh are frequent combatants and we are more than seconds to their parries. What religious, vowed to poverty that would aspire to imitate the Crucified and the Poverello, does not sometimes hear the echo in his heart: *Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not my will, but thine be done?*

By whatever means God deigns to allow us to be in some measure configured to His Son, through the agony of the flesh and spirit, the inescapable truth is that we must accept the Cross. "This is the consummation of one's discipleship of Christ: to carry the Cross because on it Christ chose to end His life. In that the Cross is supreme humility—the highest poverty—and from it Christ could truly say: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither . . .*" (*Comm. in Luc.*). Herein hides the secret of all secrets; the truth that Francis caught and taught; the truth that radiates throughout the vast synthesis of Bonaventure's thought; a truth we know so well that we know it not: "If we wish to learn spiritual things, we must take up the Cross as a book, for in it is written the entire wisdom of Christ." (*Sermo. de temp., Fer. sexta in Paras.*).

We catch here more than a whisper of the sources of the living waters from which Francis drank so deeply. *Idiota* though he was, his wisdom indeed surpassed that of the most erudite men. Francis understood that from the pages of the book of the Cross he might look through the lattices, through the windows, into the room of his beloved Bridegroom. And might also learn, not only to sit beside the plentiful streams of divine knowledge, but to prefer that knowledge before kingdoms and thrones, esteeming riches as nothing in comparison with it.

Our sublime vocation as Franciscans summons us above all to a conformity with the suffering humanity of Christ. We must become assimilated to Him if we would prove faithful to that calling. And this earnest attempt to conform to His humanity is, ultimately, merely an expression of our effort to reach unto the divine nature of the Word through our similarity to His assumed human nature. "God enlivens us according to Christ, and by His example God directs us through life's way, as in the Psalm (15, 11): *Thou hast made known to me Thy way of life.* God makes known to us the ways of life when He distributes to us faith and hope and charity . . . in which consists the way of life through which Christ taught us to walk. God therefore enlivens us according to Christ, because He directs to life His imitators." (*III Sent., Prooemium*). For us as

Christians, to be perfect is synonymous with the unending growth in grace as religious, to be perfect consists in our never deliberately halting the upward and upward movement of the soul Godwards.

"How", you ask, "can the human life of Christ be the immediate for our life of grace?" Of course His *human* life can not be the exemplar of our life of grace, if one considers only His *natural* human life. In reality there are two lives in Christ because there are two natures. Life is nothing other than the ensemble of activities by which a nature realizes its ultimate perfection. The divine life of grace is simply pre-eminent. The natural activity of His human life has natural objects, and while that life is perfect in its order, yet that life necessarily remains ever inferior to the order of grace.

Herein then lies the profoundest reason why Our Lord's life is the exemplar on which Francis and all saints must build their human lives of grace. The human nature of Christ is anointed by the grace of the hypostatic union. His human nature belongs substantially to the divine Person of the Word, and the grace of union His human nature has received the same sanctifying grace which the just themselves receive. The Christ-life is a divine life lived in perfection in human nature. "He is the exemplar and mirror of all virtues and merits. For the imitation of this exemplar has been erected the model of the Church militant." (*Apologia Pauperum*).

Christ crucified is the source, ideal, support and the reason for all Franciscan lives. It is in terms of the suffering humanity of Christ that we must really understand the Franciscan spirit if we are to understand it. By our incorporation to Christ we are elevated to God, and this is the explanation of grace: the life of God communicating itself to us. By union with the Word each man becomes in the Word a son of God and then can truly say, *Abba, Father!* Our way must be through the perfected knowledge of God through Faith, and the imitation of Him through the Cross. The crucifix must be the center of our devotion, as Christ is the center of all things.

Rensselaer-on-Hudson, N. Y.

Fr. Aidan Carr, O. F. M.



Sin is cast out with the help of God and not just by free will, without free will.

Saint Bonaventure

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (V)

The Fourth Article

TEXT: *The year of novitiate must, under the discipline of a Master, have as its purpose to train the mind of the novice in the study of the Rule and the Constitutions, in pious meditation and the love of prayer, in mastering all that pertains to the vows and the virtues, in suitable exercises calculated to root out the germs of vice, to curb the passions and to acquire virtues. Lay novices should moreover be carefully instructed in Christian doctrine, a special conference being given to them at least once a week.*

As this article is taken bodily from the Code of Canon Law (C. 565, par. 1-2), it is to the canonists that we should turn for an explanation.

The year of the novitiate

The year of novitiate is distinct from the postulancy which is now required by Canon Law for all sisterhoods and, in institutes of men, for the brothers who are not clerics. This postulancy, however, is not required for the validity of either the novitiate or subsequent profession, but only for its licitness. A kind of pre-novitiate, the postulancy was first introduced for practical reasons and its regulations varied from institute to institute. Especially in former times when it might be prolonged for several years, it served as a safeguard for vocations by permitting the aspirant to leave the world and live within the shelter of the convent before reaching the canonical age for entrance to the novitiate. The fact that perpetual vows were customarily taken immediately after the novitiate made such an additional period of trial of the religious life and the character of the aspirant an eminently practical measure. According to the new Code, however, which prescribes that at least a period of three years temporal vows precede perpetual profession, the necessity for a prolonged postulancy has ceased. Its main purpose now is to give the aspirant a taste of the religious life on the one hand and the religious superiors an opportunity to evaluate the candidate's character fitness on the other. Thus it permits the aspirant to leave or to be dismissed with less inconvenience to all parties concerned than if they had been formally clothed with the habit and entered the novitiate.

For that reason Canon 540 wisely suggests that the postulant wear some modest attire but different from that of the novices. Since the postulancy is now intended as a substitute for the novitiate, the time required has been shortened.

The Code prescribes at least six months period for institutes with perpetual vows. While this can be prolonged at the discretion of the major superior, it should not be beyond another six months (Can. 539). Though the postulant need not be made at the house of the novitiate, it is obvious that if it is to serve its purpose, it must be made in some house where the religious discipline according to the constitutions is faithfully observed (Can. 540).

The novitiate year begins officially with the reception of the habit, on which this is primarily intended for institutes that have no special habit—in a manner as prescribed by the constitutions (Can. 553).

In addition to the requirements for valid and licit admission mentioned in connection with the third article of the rule, Canon 555 requires for the validity of the novitiate: (1) that the candidate must have completed at least his fifteenth year at the time of reception; (2) that the novice must make the novitiate one continuous and complete year; (3) that he spend that year in the house of the novitiate.

If the constitutions prescribe a longer period for the novitiate, this is required for the validity of the profession, unless the constitutions expressly demand it under pain of invalidity.

In connection with the licitness of the novitiate, we might call attention to the fact that Canon 544 requires not only certificates of the baptism and confirmation of the candidate, but also certain testimonials of good character and the like. Since the documents demanded for entrance into institutes of men and women differ substantially and are customarily listed in the constitutions of the respective institute, we can omit discussing them here.

Under the discipline of a master

Even though the novices have not taken vows, Canon 561 obliges them to obey the novice master (or mistress) as well as the local superior. In agreeing to become a member of the religious institute, they come under the domestic discipline of those charged with its governance. The master of novices exclusively has the charge of the internal affairs of the novitiate. Hence, Canon 561 forbids the superiors from interfering with the formation of the novices or the direction of the novitiate with the exception, of course, of the Visitors and the cases provided for in the constitutions.

Since the novice master or mistress is not a superior in the canonical sense of the term, nor is it in accord with the mind of the Church that they hold

position, this same canon declares that so far as the general discipline of the novitiate is concerned, the master of novices, his assistant and the novices are subject to the local superior. This general discipline would include, for instance, the general order of the day for the community as a whole, such as the time of meals, recreation, and the like. The special order of the day for the novices, however, such as the time for class, religious instruction, additional spiritual exercises, etc. remains within the province of the master. For visiting the parlor, leaving the house for walks, or vacation, and so on, the permission of the local superior would be required. On the other hand, the local superior may not interfere with the local government of the novitiate, nor assign duties to the novices without the consent of the master.

As Saint Francis wisely realized, any instruction will have a deep and lasting effect only if it springs from inner conviction and has borne visible fruit in the life of the teacher himself. That is why Canon Law requires that only such religious be assigned to the novitiate or study houses as will give a good example of religious discipline (Can. 554) and demands moreover that the novice master be conspicuous for prudence, charity, piety and religious observance. In addition, he shall be at least thirty-five years old and at least ten years professed (Can. 559). Commentators point out that since the ten years of profession is to be reckoned from "their first profession", it is not required that an individual who for weighty reasons has legitimately transferred from one religious institute to another be a member of the second institute ten years before he becomes eligible for mastership. The same canon also provides for the appointment of an assistant master, who should be at least thirty years old, five years professed, and endowed with the other qualifications necessary and proper for this office. To stress the importance of the task of educating future members of the institute, this canon adds the final rejoinder that both master and assistant be relieved from any other tasks that would interfere with the guidance and training of the novices.

Must have as its purpose to train the mind of the novice

It is unfair to any child that it be called too soon to live the life of an adult, and the religious novice also must gradually grow to intellectual and emotional maturity before facing the stimulating challenge of religious life. Hence, the canon wisely forbids that novices be employed in external charges of the institute in any type of work or study that would make their spiritual education or formation a secondary matter (Can. 565, par. 3). In the same spirit, it prohibits indiscriminate association of the novices with the other members of the

community until their period of probation and initial training is over (Can.

In the study of the Rule and the Constitutions

It is the mind of the Church that each novice be given a copy of entire constitution, or at least that the complete text of the same be available for their studious perusal, during their novitiate year. Since the issuance of new Code, this provision is now inserted in all constitutions approved by the Holy See.

In pious meditation, etc.

Since the natural God-given means of developing and perfecting the human personality is through the married state, it is supremely important that the soul who has "espoused Christ", should find the supernatural complement to her personality that God intended in establishing the religious state. Hence the importance of teaching novices at the outset the obligation and the necessity of "putting on Christ". Since the lay novices, unlike the clerics, are not expected to take up *ex professo* the study of theology, they should be instructed in Christian doctrine to an extent that befits their state, that they may know better the character and the ideals of their divine Model. They must be taught how to eradicate vices, subdue their passions, and acquire something of His virtues, so that someday they may be able to say with Saint Paul: *It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. 2, 20).

Since the personal and intimate union of the soul with Christ will only be achieved by one who has learned to love prayer, the novices are to be instructed in the practice of meditation that they may appreciate its almost infinite possibilities as a source of spiritual enlightenment, consolation and strength through it to taste something of the sweetness of the Lord.

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.



Nothing in life should cause us sadness. Our clear duty is to conform ourselves in all things to the Will of God and to prepare to die well. That is what counts; nothing else matters. If this is secured, it matters little if we lose all the rest; without this all else is useless.

Junipero Serra, O.F.M.

THE LAUDES DE CREATURIS

Contradicting the generally accepted interpretation of Saint Francis's *Laudes de Creaturis*, as presented in various anthologies and World Literature texts, the late Fr. Michael Bihl, O.F.M., criticized the English version of Matthew Arnold as misinterpreting and mistranslating this Franciscan praise of God by and through His creatures.¹ Nor is Arnold the only translator who is deserving of such censure, since the dozen or more other translations that have appeared in English bear the same defect, an unconscious distortion of the pure Franciscan view of God's creation.

The true meaning of the "Song" is simply a praise of God by and through His creatures, and not, as Jorgensen would lead us to believe, a song about creation, nor, as various other versions have pictured it, a praise for creatures. This misdirection of Saint Francis's praises in the Canticle of the Creatures arises solely from the faulty rendition of the Italian words *per* and *cum*. Arnold and later translators have read into the word *per* the meaning of "for", whereas in reality *per* is equal to the Latin *a* or *ab*, the English "by" or "through". The Italian *cum* (also *con* or *cun*) has the meaning of "through the medium of". The whole point of the Song is that Saint Francis is praising God through His creatures, for the peculiarly Franciscan approach to creatures is that we are led to God by contemplating His works.

The following literal translation is an attempt to show more clearly the attitude of Francis towards creation, that is, his love for creatures because by them and in them he saw God, and was thereby better able to love Him. This translation has been made from the recent critical edition of the *Laudes de Creaturis* of Vittore Branca.²

Most High, Omnipotent, good Lord,
To You praise, glory, honor and all benediction.

To You alone, O God Most High, do they belong,
And there is no one worthy to mention Thee.

Praised be, my Lord, by means of all Your creatures,
And most especially through Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day, and illumines us by his light.

¹P. Michael Bihl, O.F.M., Book Review of "Greyfriars. The Story of Saint Francis and His Followers", by Harold Goad. *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XLI, 1948. p. 299.

²"Il Cantico di Frate Sole", *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XLI, 1948. pp. 1-87.

For he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor:
And is a symbol of Thee, O God Most High.

Praised be, my Lord, through sister Moon and all the Stars:
For in heaven You have formed them, clear, precious and fair.

Praised be, my Lord, by brother Wind,
And by the air, the clouds and the clear sky and every kind
of weather,
Through whom You give to Your creatures nourishment.

Praised be, my Lord, by sister Water,
For she is most useful, humble, precious and chaste.

Praised be, my Lord, by brother Fire,
Through whom You illumine the night:
For he is gay and mighty and strong.

Praised be, my Lord, by our sister Mother Earth,
Who keeps and sustains us,
And brings forth various fruits with colored flowers and leaves.

Praised be, my Lord, by those who give pardon through
Your love
And suffer infirmity and tribulation.

Blessed are they who endure all in peace,
For they, O God Most High, will be crowned by You.

Praised be, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death,
From whom no living person can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
But blessed are those found in Your most holy Will,
For the second death will do them no harm.

Praise and bless my Lord,
And thank Him and serve Him with great humility.

Duns Scotus College,
Detroit, Mich.

Fr. Marian Douglas, O.F.M.

THE FRANCISCAN BOOK SHELF

In response to numerous requests for a list of books on Franciscan Spirituality, the following bibliography has been prepared for readers of the CORD. Rev. Irenaeus Herscher, O.F.M., librarian of the Friedsam Library, Saintaventure University. In addition to recent books, a few out-of-print items are mentioned, since it may still be possible to obtain some of them from second-hand book dealers. This bibliography is divided into three parts: the first part is a list of biographies of the Poverello, the second includes classics on the Franciscan Spiritual Life, and the third is devoted to books of Conferences, Prayers, Meditations, and like material presented in the spirit of our Holy Father Saint Francis.

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Thoughts from Saint Francis of Assisi. New York, Benzinger, 1925. 157 p.
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As the Morning Star, the passing of St. Francis. New York, McMullen, 1947. 218 p.
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EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

The twin roots of all sin are pride and sensuality. From these stem the imperfections and evil tendencies that throw our soul into disorder, hinder our going to God. But, just as sensuality in its grosser forms enters the life of a religious, so pride in the form of satanic rebellion against God could hardly exist in a soul consecrated to God. Pride is extreme self-assertion, total self-worship. The proud man is his own god, and in his perverted heart echoes the defiant *non serviam* of the fallen angels. Obviously, pride and the vows of religion are mutually exclusive. For religious, true virtues arise not from pride but from one of its lesser offshoots, vanity. Pride is a vice diametrically opposed to Christian humility, the virtue upon which sanctification depends. Humility is truth; it is the acceptance of reality; it enables a man to acknowledge not only his absolute dependence upon God but also his utter sinfulness and unworthiness in the sight of his all-holy Creator. Vanity, however, is a kind of childish egotism and self-delusion. The vain man does no violence to the Divine Majesty, as the proud man does; but he is guilty of injustice to God in that he retains for his own enjoyment, for the satisfaction of his own ego, that which should be given to God. Opposed to vanity is Christian modesty, the virtue which enables a man to see himself as he really is, to place himself in the proper relationships, to think and act according to right order and right measure. Modesty is the virtue of the children of God. It was the virtue especially beloved by our Seraphic Father Francis, who called his brothers Friars Minor—men who would be devoid of vanity because modesty would make them realize the modicum of value they possessed in the sight of God and of men. It is the virtue of Franciscan realism. Since Christian modesty is so important in the work of our sanctification, and since vanity is opposed to it, Saint Bonaventure advises us to ask ourselves:

DO I GIVE IN TO VANITY BY SEEKING THE FAVOR OF MEN; BY WORKING FOR HUMAN PRAISE AND RECOGNITION; BY ASPIRING TO WORLDLY HONOR?

In regard to the first point, we must understand that seeking the favor of men is by no means synonymous with being liked, respected, and esteemed by others. As Franciscans we should make every reasonable effort to live in peace with others, to make ourselves agreeable, and to be respected as good religious. Vanity enters in only when we are inordinately concerned about the attitude of others toward us. We can best discover to what extent vanity influences us by examining our reactions when confronted with positive disfavor. For example: W

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

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And I have lost the love or respect of another, am I unduly troubled? Do I grieve simply because my vain little ego cannot endure having anyone turn against me, or rather do I grieve because the law of Christian charity is being violated? How do I react in the face of a broken friendship or a growing aversion? Do I try to put the blame on the other person, perhaps even to the point of injuring his reputation? Do I grow bitter and venomous? Give way to childish sulking and sulking? Or do I, on the contrary, make every effort compatible with both self-respect and humility to heal the breach? When others treat me coldly or show genuine dislike or hostility, am I sufficiently humble to look into my own conduct and try in all sincerity to find out if I myself may not be at fault? How do I act when superiors seem, or actually are, ill-disposed toward me? Do I become unhappy, sink into despondency and self-pity, or even give way to desperation? Am I known as one who cannot be corrected, who must be treated like a little child—petted, coddled, caressed? In my desire for affection do I make myself a nuisance to others, perhaps even disgust them with cloying caresses and mawkish attentiveness, then feel injured when they withdraw from me? Am I so much in love with myself, so convinced of my own excellence, that when others fail to love and admire me I accuse them of stupidity or blindness or malicious injustice? Do I realize the tragic incongruity of such conduct with the state of perfection to which I am vowed?

Sensitiveness is another manifestation of vanity. It is one of the most common causes of disharmony and unhappiness in religious communities, and one of the chief obstacles to growth in holiness. It is a spiritual disease which results from our allowing our ego to assume an importance out of all proportion with reality. Some of the following questions may help us detect its presence in our own soul: Am I quick to take offense? Do I resent teasing, ridicule, criticism, even when there is no malice intended? Am I suspicious? Do I interpret as overt or insidious enmity whatever is not wholehearted approval? Do I spend time weighing and pondering and analysing the conduct of others in an effort to discover their real attitude toward me? Do I give way to melancholy at the least slight, feel martyred at a cold glance, persecuted at a sharp word? When reprimanded, how do I react? Am I willing to believe that the reprimand was given in justice and charity, or do I insist that dislike, vindictiveness, jealousy, or some other unworthy motive was the cause of it? Do I allow myself to become so childish that I even question others about their feelings for me, asking them if they like me, or why they do not like me, or what they have against me, or why they did this, or what they meant by saying that? Do I ever pause in my probing analyses of human relations to find out to what extent—if any—God

occupies my consciousness and to what extent my precious little ego occupies it? Sensitiveness poisons the soul, and if left unchecked it leads to psychic aberrations and neuroses of the worst kind. At best, the religious is always a cross to his community.

Vanity is responsible also for the "street-angel, house-devil" of the religious. It is a disheartening fact that the very religious who are most dear to their community are sometimes the ones who are best loved and best liked by seculars. Let us examine ourselves on some of the following points: friendly and gracious to people outside the community but rude and unfriendly to my fellow-religious? Do I seek popularity at any cost, even at the expense of violating justice or charity or my vows? For example, do I violate my poverty in order to appear generous, or to literally buy the affection of some person? Do I support projects which make me popular with outsiders but which are detrimental to the interests of my community? Do I try to build up an attractive front for myself by bragging of my accomplishments and talking up my importance and value to my community, of my popularity? When in the presence of persons I want to impress, do I assume poses and attitudes for my benefit? Is my conduct toward others governed by genuine respect, or do I try to ingratiate myself by fawning submissiveness or exaggerated solicitude and flattery? Is my desire for the esteem of the world so perverse that it drives me even to tear down or undermine the good opinion seculars may have of a community? Am I jealous, possessive, domineering? It is only natural that our human nature should desire to be loved, and in itself this desire for love is good; but when it breaks the bonds of right measure and rational control it becomes destructive of our natural and supernatural happiness.

Those who hold positions of authority should be especially watchful that they strive to win the applause and affection of their subjects at the expense of violating their duties. For persons in authority some of the following questions may be pertinent: Do I fulfill my obligations in justice and charity toward God and love of God, or do I perhaps show partiality, side-step unpopular regulations, or grant unlawful petitions simply to win the favor of those subject to me? Do I tend to ignore the demands of Franciscan poverty, for example, or to grant permissions that are contrary to the common life, or tamper with the precepts of the order of the day, in order to be called a "good" superior? Let us keep in mind that a superior who yields to every whimsical request, who closes his eyes to irregularities, who fails to enforce the less pleasant prescriptions, can

be as a good superior in the eyes of God. The same holds for teachers and supervisors and all who hold positions of authority over others.

The third point of our examen, the vain aspiring after worldly honors, has also been touched upon in previous discussions. It will suffice to mention here that the mere possession of worldly honors is not incompatible with sanctity. Popes and kings, scholars and statesmen, have been canonized by the Church. But vanity, the desire of an inflated ego for adulation, is utterly evil and utterly inimical to holiness. A soul infected with this disease loses its sense of perspective; its vision becomes so distorted that its wretchedness appears to be excellence; its poverty, super-abundance; and the satisfaction of self-love triumphs over the rights of God. Such a soul will not scruple to use any and every means to achieve its ends, and failure generally results in hysteria.

By way of conclusion, it may be well to add here a few comments on hysteria, since it is by no means uncommon among religious of both sexes. Hysteria is a disease of the affective life, and should be treated as such by a competent psychiatrist in cooperation with an understanding and experienced priest. The hysterical character is victim of a grossly overgrown ego. He is desperately in want of attention and sympathy, and since he is too vain or too weak—or both—to bear the burdens of community life, he seeks satisfaction where personal sacrifices are not required, where more satisfying rewards can be obtained. The craving for recognition and praise, even for passing mention, may become so violent that his entire personality is thrown off balance. The hysterical religious can be extraordinarily charitable—in fact, usually is so—but if his charity is not recognized and rewarded by love it quickly turns into bitter hatred. To get attention he may resort to adulation and flattery or to lies and false accusations. He may make himself appear wholly depraved, even to the extremity of confessing sins he never committed; or he may make himself appear physically ill and pretend to be suffering great agony. It would take us too far afield to go deeper into a description of the hysterical character; it will suffice to emphasize that the religious who is abnormally self-centered is well on the road to hysteria.

It is important, especially for superiors and those in authority, to understand the psychology of the hysterical personality. Such persons are not liars in the strict sense, nor are they wholly responsible for the harm they do. They are maladjusted and confused, and, as a rule, the vow of chastity is the cause of their sickness. Deprived of the love and sympathy that would normally be

theirs in the married state, they seek to satisfy their love-hunger with substitutes and compensations in the religious state. Such persons must be treated with the right kind of understanding, just as a person who is ill must be treated with the right kind of medicine. In the last analysis, it seems that persons with a tendency toward the psychoses of hysteria are not qualified for the religious life, and those who have charge of novices should watch for the symptoms. Total surrender to the cross, together with the steadfast will to be nailed with Him to the cross, is the way to prevent hysteria, and, from the spiritual point of view, the cure of it. Some of the following points may help us discover traces of hysteria in our own spiritual life: Do I try to center all my love on God alone, and am concerned only with winning and retaining His favor? Do I expect nothing at all from any human being? Do I watch my motives? Do I resist my natural urge to attract attention? Do I resist any tendencies toward the ordinary, spectacular, or outstanding? On the other hand, do I ever talk about my real or imaginary "inner experiences"? Do I talk about my interior sufferings, my problems and difficulties? Do I become the center of every recreation or every conversation, do I pout or retreat into silence? Do I really feel in my heart a craving for human love and affection and do I really feel I cannot be happy without it? If so, I must have recourse to fervent and humble prayer?

We shall close this examen by calling attention to a little prayer which may prove helpful. How often during the day do we express the wish in some form or another, that the Lord be with us. The *Dominus tecum* of the Virgin Mary; the *Dominus vobiscum* of the priest during Mass; the prayer in the Breviary—all should remind us that if the Lord is with us, it is because of Christ, and through Christ, and because of Christ, let us give our hearts to Him; but let us keep our heart free from any desire to be loved by men.

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner



A sinner may fast, pray, weep, macerate his body, but what he gains so long as he is a sinner, is to be faithful to his God.

Candide Chalippe,

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Love of God

A man of no religious belief, passing a Catholic church one day, noticed an inscription over the main entrance. Out of curiosity, he walked up to the door to read what was written there. He stood for a long time, staring in deep amazement at the words carved in the stone. Then slowly he turned and walked away. So great was the impression which those words made upon him that he immediately took instructions and became a Catholic. The inscription he saw was: "God is love."

Throughout this month of June we are often reminded of that astounding truth—God is love—by the frequent references which are made to the Sacred Heart devotion. For the whole purpose of this devotion is to bring us to a realization of the boundless love of God for us and of our obligation of loving Him in return. What better subject for our conference could we choose than the mutual exchange of love between God and ourselves?

During one of His apparitions to Saint Margaret Mary, our Blessed Savior appeared to His Sacred Heart and said: "Behold this heart which has loved men and women." There is a poignancy about those words which is touching. They seem to indicate, at one and the same time, our Lord's ardent longing to have us know His great love for us and our utter inability to grasp its full import. These words are strongly reminiscent of another revelation made to Saint Catherine of Genoa in which God said to her: "Oh, if you only knew how I love a soul! That will be the last thing you will learn in this world; for to understand it I must kill you." Therefore, to try to plumb the depths of God's love for us is to be attempting the impossible. Still, we can get an adequate, and an inspiring, picture of that love by meditating on its qualities which God Himself has made known to us.

In the first place, it is an *eternal* love. Whenever we hear that word "eternal", we begin to reel. We try to imagine a span of time stretching back and back through never-beginning ages of long ago, when this world did not exist, when angels had not as yet been created, when nothing or nobody was, but only God. And yet, no matter how expansive we made our idea of eternity, no matter how far back we push the horizons with which our limited minds inevitably come in contact, we shall not be able to find a single moment when God was not loving us, when He was not caressing us with His love. Each one of us, in every true sense, make his own these words of Holy Scripture: *The*

Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways, before he made anything the beginning. I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was. The depths were not as yet, and I was conceived: neither had the fountains of waters as yet sprung out. The mountains with their huge bulk had not been established: before the hills I was brought forth. He had not yet made the earth, nor the rivers, nor the poles of the world. When he prepared the heaven, I was present (Prov. 8, 22-27). Yes, throughout all of eternity's timeless eons I was present in the mind and heart of God. He had decided upon my creation. He had planned every detail of my life with a view to its final consummation in the endless embrace of love in heaven. The very thought of it all overwhelms me. And yet we know that it is absolutely true, for God has said: *I have loved you with an everlasting love* (Jer. 31, 3). What a revelation that is! What value does it not impart to us puny creatures!

But that is not all. By the very fact that God's love for us is eternal, it is likewise *unchangeable*. Our poor, weak, human love is so fickle. Today we are enthused about a thing and tomorrow we are indifferent to it. Now we are in God's service and before long we are quite listless. How different, on the other hand, is divine love. It is ever the same, more steadfast than an image in changeless bronze or chiseled in unyielding granite. Whether our hearts are warm with love for Him, or whether they are cold with the frost of unconcern, His response is always and only an abiding love. For He is our devoted Father in heaven who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust (Mt. 5, 45). Perhaps we have played the unhappy part of the Prodigal Son. If so, we have known not only the patience and forbearance of our heavenly Father, but also His eagerness to have us return, His welcome when we came back, and His generous restoration of our squandered heritage. Perhaps we have wandered far from His protecting arms, or perhaps we have experienced the anxious pursuit of the Good Shepherd after His lost sheep, to see His genuine joy upon finding it. Maybe we have even seared the lips of a traitor's kiss, and in return were called God's friends. Only a love could be strong enough to weather such treatment, to remain constant in the face of denial, desertion, and betrayal. The enduring love of a mother for her child has often been honored in verse and song. And rightly so, for it knows no limits and counts no costs. And yet God says of this love: *Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isa. 49, 15). In moments of sorrowful reflection when our past infidelities loom large and foreboding before us, it is the

of this changeless love of God that means so much to us, that gives us renewed courage and hope.

Another quality that makes God's love for us so attractive is that it is infinite. And because it is infinite, it is big enough to embrace each one of us individually. There is no such thing as a parceling out of divine love in order that every one of the millions of human beings may have a share in it. Just as the sun can be mirrored, whole and entire, in every tiny pool of water found by the side of a road, so God's love can be cradled, in its undivided completeness, in every created heart. God, therefore, can be and is totally preoccupied with each individual without in the least minimizing His loving attention to any one in particular. Each one of us can lay claim on God's entire love, can look upon God as his own personal Beloved, without prejudice to a like claim and right on the part of his neighbor. And since God's infinite love is able to embrace each one of us individually, it can specialize in the attention required by our individual needs. There are no two of us alike. From our finger tips to the innermost recesses of our souls we differ in a host of ways; so much so, that we are often a mystery to one another, and at times even to ourselves. But we are no mystery to God. He knows us perfectly, and modifies His loving designs to fit our peculiar make-up exactly. *As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear him: for he knoweth our frame* (Ps. 102, 13-14). Yes, He knows the amount of strength and endurance each one of us has, and He measures our trials and crosses accordingly. He knows our individual talents and limitations, and He expects no more from us than we are capable of giving. He is the only Master Who will unfailingly reward honest effort and genuine good will in lieu of results. He knows the fears that at times grip our souls, and His loving Heart is ever ready with the precise grace to meet the situation. In these and countless other ways God's love takes into consideration our particular needs, and it is mighty consoling to know that there is always One Who understands us so thoroughly and can help us so surely.

When we reflect on these qualities of God's love—eternal, changeless, infinite—it is hard to make ourselves realize that such a tremendous love really exists, and especially that it is manifested to us insignificant creatures. With holy awe we ask God in astonishment: *What is a man that thou shouldst magnify him? Or why doest thou set thy heart upon him?* (Job 7, 17). The answer to that question, of course, is that God loves us only to have us love Him in return. So eager is He to have our love that He commands us to love Him: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with*

thy whole mind (Mt. 22, 37). Speaking of this command, Saint Augustine says: "Thou dost command us to love Thee, O God? Should we not rather consider our highest privilege to do so?" Indeed, it is a rare privilege to live for no other purpose than to love, and to be loved by, God. We should strive to make ourselves like unto the love with which He loves us. His love for us is eternal; ours should be enduring. His love is changeless; ours should be constant. His love is infinite; ours should be whole and undivided, and for Him alone. And perhaps our love for God is far removed from this ideal. How often we hear in spirit the plaintive cry of our Father Francis, "Love is not loved," and it seems his words are spoken directly to us? How often we think of the command of the Sacred Heart that what pains Him most is the ingratitude and coldness of hearts consecrated to Him; and with a sort of guilty uneasiness we ask the question, "Do You mean me, Lord?" How often we recall, with some awe akin to fear, the statement of Saint Paul, *If any man does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (1 Cor. 16, 22)? There is no doubt about it: our love for God could be stronger and more unselfish, and our ambition could be to make it so. But how can we increase the love of God in our hearts?

A very effective help to this end is to learn to know God better. Saint John tells us: *He who does not love does not know God* (1 Jo. 4, 8). Once we come to know God, our hearts will go out to Him spontaneously, since it is natural to the heart to become enthusiastic and devoted whenever it encounters beauty and amiability. Hence, it would be worth our effort to meditate frequently on the perfections of God as portrayed in good spiritual treatises and especially in Holy Scripture. Likewise, after the example of Saint Francis, we would do well to keep ourselves alert to the beauty of God in creatures, the works of His hands. In this regard, Saint Bonaventure says of our holy Father: "In all things Saint Francis beheld Him Who is most fair, and by His footsteps in created things he found his way to his Beloved, making a ladder of all things to ascend to Him Who is to be desired in them all." And of another holy soul it is recorded that, as he walked through the fields and meadows, he would playfully say: "Be silent, be silent, lovely flowers. I know what you wish to say to me. You wish to say that I should love God Who created you for me." Would that all hearts too had ears to catch the voice of every creature exhorting us to love God. Through them God is ever pleading: *My son, give me thy heart* (Prov. 23,

Another means whereby we can increase our love for God is the frequent making of acts of love. God tells us in Holy Scripture: *I love them that love me* (Prov. 8, 17). And it logically follows from those words that the more we

love God, the more He will love us. Now, at the time of our baptism we were given the ability to love God in a supernatural way. But that ability will not develop of itself. We must cultivate it and help it to grow by exercising it in acts of love. It is a good policy, therefore, to have one or the other loving ejaculation which appeals to us, and to use it often and thoughtfully during the day. We know that this was the practice of Saint Francis himself. He would spend long hours simply repeating from the depths of his heart "My God and my All." It was his way of telling God what he thought of Him and how much he loved Him. Certainly those hours of spiritual love-making helped to win for him the title of "Seraph of Assisi." And we can be sure that a like practice on our part will do much to fill our hearts with God's love.

Finally, the best and surest method of growing in the love of God is to beg Him to increase it. After all, the love of God is a gift, the most precious gift God can give to us. And He willingly bestows it on those who show themselves anxious to have it. The words which our Lord addressed to the Samaritan woman refer especially to this love, and, hence, they are meant for us too: *If thou didst know the gift of God . . . thou wouldst have asked it of Him* (Jo. 4, 10). Joyce Kilmer, the celebrated poet who was killed in the First World War, once sent a letter from the battlefield to his wife, and in it he said: "My dear wife, help me to love God. If I love Him, that is all that counts. I received faith by praying for it. I hope to receive love the same way." We also can confidently hope to receive God's love if we but ask for it perseveringly, for, as Saint Augustine says so beautifully: "God thirsts to be thirsted for (*Deus sitit sitiri*)."

The theme of this conference has been the mutual exchange of love between God and ourselves. Let us try to realize the importance of that relationship. Really, it is the heart of the spiritual life, the essence of perfection. Father Liagre, C. S. Sp., in his book *A Retreat with St. Therese*, develops this point very well. The following is a modified version of his explanation. God longs to give himself to us. But since He is love, He can give Himself only by causing us to love Him. Therefore, He instills into our souls a desire to love Him. If we correspond with that desire, He satisfies it with the gift of His love. And because God is an infinitely loveable Being, we do not rest satisfied then but experience new desires, stronger desires, to love Him still more, which in turn are satisfied if we co-operate with the graces thus vouchsafed to us. Thus there is an alternate succession of desire and fulfillment, referred to in Holy Scripture in the words: *I to my beloved, and his turning is towards me* (Cant. 7, 10). In God it is the desire to be loved, in us it is the desire to love. And in these two desires,

each craving the other, is found the whole story of the relationship between God and ourselves, from the first stirrings of grace to the heights of sanctity and the everlasting union of heaven.

From this explanation it follows that our highest ambition should be to understand the great love God has for us and to requite that love. Each day, each duty, each occasion to practice fraternal charity, each chance to make a sacrifice may be viewed as an offering of love to us on God's part. And when we generously embrace these opportunities, it means we are offering God our love in return. In this way God constantly solicits our love and we can continually give Him that love, and thus, from day to day, draw ever closer to Him and make ever greater progress in perfection. If God is Love, then we must love like Him—all love, in the sense that we view everything as a chance to love Him. In this light we can understand the significance of the statement: "Love, and love alone, that counts in the spiritual life."

Westmont, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O.S.A.



Do the best you can to become, with the grace of God, a true and perfect Friar Minor, and when you appear to have attained that ideal state, if you are ever privileged to come so far, then say in the sincerity of your heart: *servi sumus*.

Junipero Serra, O.S.A.

FRANCISCAN MEEKNESS

An important ingredient in the happiness and joy of Saint Francis and the first Friars was the virtue of meekness. They surely were happy because they had given up all their possessions and had put their trust in the goodness and freedom of God. But what kind of joy could they have had if they had not been meek—and humble of heart?

Ever since the day Christ asked His listeners to learn of Him because He was meek and humble of heart, meekness and humility have been linked together in a wonderful fashion. Humility rests on knowledge—a knowledge of what God is, in contrast to what we are. Every day offers us many occasions to exercise the virtue of humility. Sometimes others point out our faults and it is humility that prompts us to realize our unexaggerated and true worth. If our pet ideas and projects are opposed by others, humility will again help us to realize that merely because a project or an idea is our own does not give it more importance in the eyes of God. But how we react to these conflicts caused by our pride and pettiness necessarily calls to mind the virtue of meekness. If we were ideal religious, every time someone exposed our pride we would continue to love our "offender" as much as we did before. Our God-centered love of neighbor would have left no room for any self-centered anger to rise up within us. From this we can see that the virtue of meekness can rightly be defined as an outward showing of an interior attitude of kindness and charity in the time of opposition and conflict.

The answer to the question, "Am I practising the virtue of meekness?", is found in the words of Christ. With wonderful exactness He said, *By their faults you shall know them*. The fellow citizens of Saint Francis unwittingly used these words of Christ to judge whether Saint Francis and his early followers were meek and humble of heart. If a rainy season allowed, the Assisians blotched the Friars with mud. Others had their fun by tearing the habit right off the Friars' backs. But the reaction of the Friars is much more worthy of note. The *Three Companions* (39) says, "They did not ask for what had been taken. But if any, moved by pity, wished to restore what had been taken, they received it back willingly . . . but, as they had been admonished by Francis, they bore these things meekly and patiently, nor were they sad, nor did they speak evil of those who ill-treated them."

What sanctity, what humility, and what meekness these first Friars have shown us. What else but sanctity or God-centeredness could have prompted them

to act the way they did. If they had been constantly on the watch with a doubt to see that their rights, opinions, or ideas were not rejected or tampered with, the podesta of Assisi might have had a brawl on his hands. Wouldn't we have been quick to fight back? But these first Franciscans had learned from Peter and from Saint Francis himself that the rights, opinions, and ideas of a Franciscan have no more importance than they do in the eyes of God. Saint Francis had taught them that peevishness is so easily directed toward the "sin" who has attacked our pride, rather than to a possible sin of violating one of the rights or gifts God has given them. We too have our own rights, opinions, ideas and they have a right to be protected and fostered—but according to the instructions God has given. *Blessed are the meek and humble of heart, He*. Therefore God expects us to realize that it is He Who has given us these rights. We are to be humble enough to readily admit that the opinion of someone might be better than our own. Whenever anyone is in opposition to what we say, or think, God asks us to react with meekness of heart—with an interior attitude of love and kindness.

Those that live and associate with us give us so many occasions to follow Christ's admonition to be meek of heart. How often it is each day that our associates "step on our toes" and squeeze out just a little of our pride. But our reaction to this is sometimes a far cry from the meekness of the first Franciscans. Perhaps we are busy hugging a new book and nursing our love for peace and quiet. Then someone slips in and asks help with a problem. In no time our peace is running off a questionnaire. "A problem?—so early in the day?—so late in the dinner time?—at this time of night? I am not going to budge until I finish this book. What? you still bothered with that?" How close it would have been to the Franciscan meekness if an interior attitude of love and kindness had urged us to say, "Why sure. Glad to. Here, have a chair". But no, we give the person a quick sharp answer and feel that we have a right to feel the way we do. We do not lose our self-control by showing all our feelings externally. But we still are not meek. We lack that interior attitude of love and kindness. Meekness surely includes self-control, but it includes much more. To control angry feelings is *striving* after meekness and this is very good, but it is not the actual possession of a meek and humble heart. Meekness always excludes the deliberate self-centered anger bubbling up within us.

In our endeavor to follow the meekness of Christ and Saint Francis, the conduct of those around us plays an important part. Whether the conduct of a fellow religious is good or bad, it can be a great help towards acquiring meekness.

The good conduct of a fellow religious inspires us to imitate his goodness and charity. Bad conduct tries our virtues and exercises our meekness and gives it deeper roots. But if we are a religious who is "sensitive", only the good conduct of others will leave our virtues intact. Our sensitiveness will urge us to battle with any opposition to our sensitivities. During such a battle, we not only have self-centered anger bubbling up within us, but our anger flows out into words and actions.

A sensitive religious is agreeable only to those who are in sympathy with his likes, whims, and fancies. People who annoy him, and thereby could help his striving after meekness, are avoided. A sensitive religious easily becomes disgruntled and unhappy because he thinks the main obstacles to his happiness are his associates and environment, whereas the fault lies in himself. More particularly, it often lies in the "pet virtues" that a religious is trying to cultivate.

Some religious are all out for manners; others for cleanliness, punctuality, or silence. As for silence, no one will deny the value of prescribed silence for discipline, recollection of the soul, and for the work of the mind. But to blind one's scale of values with an over emphasis on silence always attacks the meekness that Christ and Saint Francis have asked of us.

To have my happiness completely hinged on silence means that I will frequently be unhappy. And when I am unhappy and peevish because of any noise, it doesn't take long to show these noisemakers that I lack an interior attitude of kindness and charity. By my pouncing on them I will show that my zeal for silence is not as holy as I would like to think. My peevishness will likewise show that I have a mere craving for a natural peace of mind—a passionate desire to have everything running smoothly. The healthy temperament and vitality of others will have little consideration in my standards. I want silence, I say, and I am going to get it. I may get the silence I want, but the motive for wanting silence and the way I go about getting it postpones my full possession of meekness.

Maybe it is bad manners that often riles our peace of mind. Of course everyone appreciates good manners—our giving to another the love and respect due to the God-given gifts he has. But when we demand respect for ourselves with no thought that it is primarily our God-given gifts and virtues that demand respect, we indulge in self-assertion, the opposite of meekness. We lose the essential element of meekness—the interior attitude of kindness and charity. How anxious we are to exalt ourselves and not God's gifts, to overestimate our

value and our powers, to believe that all we have is ours and is *for* and ourselves.

When we react to bad manners with a scowl or cutting remark, we sometimes so sure that we are then just being enthusiastic for due respect the gifts we see in ourselves. We forget that a bad-mannered person has come from God too and that they are to be respected as such. Just because our aim is directed toward something good, something supernatural, does not mean our motives are supernatural. Nor, above all, does a supernatural aim insure our interior attitude of kindness and charity. Our goals and attitudes are quite separate and distinct.

Pet peeves and other forms of self-assertion can so easily strangle meekness in our heart. Furthermore, they set up blocks so that meekness scarcely returns. Of course we cannot expect to eliminate pet peeves and self-assertion over night. It takes time and plenty of it. But all these difficulties have to be solved and wiped away before we reach heaven. If they are eliminated here on earth, they will have to be burned out in purgatory. There is no place for pet peeves, selfishness, and the fifty-seven other varieties of self-assertion.

Heaven is the true home for the meek because Christ has told us so. He said, *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land*, the land of heaven. As Christ made heaven possible for us by meekly suffering and dying on the cross, so we will actually gain heaven by our meekness in times of suffering and opposition. This is one of the ways that Saint Francis and some of his Friars followed to gain the heavenly reward and glory they received. Suffering and opposition from others brought them closer and closer to God until they finally saw God face to face! Are we willing to follow the same God-way of meekness?

Oldenburg, Indiana

Fr. Duane Stenzel, O.S.A.



A very common failing amongst men is to adopt one extreme in an endeavor to avoid another, and sometimes not to perceive that the danger into which they fall is greater than that which they had sought to flee from.

Candide Chalippe, O.S.A.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (VI)

The Fifth Article

TEXT: *At the end of the time of probation, let those who are found fit be admitted to profession.*

Short though the wording of this article is, it contains a number of points for consideration if we view it in the light of the prescriptions of Canon Law.

At the end of the time of probation

Canon 555 (par. 2) requires that the novice "make the novitiate for one continuous year." Canonists point out that the novitiate year is not complete until after midnight of the anniversary day of the reception into the novitiate. Consequently, if a novice received the habit on June 1, he or she could not make profession until June 2 of the following year. Since the year is to be taken according to the calendar, leap year simply prolongs the novitiate an additional day.

Canon 556 indicates when the continuity of the novitiate year is interrupted, when it is merely suspended, and when it is left canonically unaffected. The novitiate is interrupted and "must be made over, if (1) the novice after being dismissed by the superior has actually left the house; (2) if without the permission of the superior he leaves the house with the intention of not returning, or (3) if for any reason—even with the permission of the superior—he has remained outside the house of the novitiate for over thirty days, consecutive or otherwise, even though with the intention of returning." (par. 1)

A novice who has been dismissed, justly or unjustly by a competent superior, breaks the novitiate as soon as he actually leaves the house. Even if the superior were to readmit him the same day, the continuity of the year of probation is destroyed, and another full year would be required. In the case where the novice departs without the permission of the superiors with no intention of returning, the novitiate is broken the moment he leaves the cloister provided his intention not to return can be proved in the external forum, for instance, by his words to fellow novices or others, by his actions such as packing all his belongings, or under other circumstances. Let us suppose, however, that a novice left the house informally with the secret intention of not returning, planning, let us say, to write back for his belongings. If such a novice should regret his fault and return promptly, commentators on the Code point out that he could continue his novitiate.

Regarding the reckoning of the days required to break the novitiate, that if a novice spends at least part of the day in the novitiate he is not considered to be absent for a canonical day. Thus, a person who leaves the novitiate Monday morning and returns late Sunday evening is considered to have been absent only five days. Note also that the novitiate is interrupted only when the thirty days absence is complete. Consequently, if the novice wishes to begin a new canonical year, he must begin computing the time from the day he returns after the novitiate has been canonically interrupted. Let us suppose, for example, that a novice was absent at one time for 17 days. Several months later he returns away for an additional 14 days, making a total of 31 days. He could not count this new novitiate year as beginning after the first absence, but must count the new time of probation from the day of his return after the second interruption.

"If the novice has remained outside the precincts of the novitiate for more than fifteen days but not over thirty days, consecutive or otherwise, either with the permission of the superior or through force of circumstances, but under the authority of the superior, it is necessary and sufficient for the validity of the novitiate to supply the days spent outside the novitiate. If the entire period of absence is more than fifteen days, the superior may prescribe that those days be supplied, but this is not necessary for the validity of the novitiate." (Can. 556, par. 3)

This canon goes on to state that "Superiors must not grant permission for novices to remain outside the precincts of the novitiate except for just and grave reasons" (par. 3). Some congregations have the custom of sending the novices away to a villa or country house with the novice master for a period of vacation. Congregations consider the change in air and needed rest as sufficient motive for such practice. Since the villa cannot be considered a canonically erected house of novitiate, such a vacation could not be prolonged beyond fifteen days without delaying the profession of the novices. *A fortiori*, sickness or a surgical operation requiring hospitalization, calamities such as flood, fire, and so on, would be sufficient reason for remaining outside the novitiate. Similarly, as the last paragraph of this canon states, "the transfer by the superiors of a novice to another novitiate of the same institute, does not interrupt the novitiate." All these provisions, however, presuppose that the absence from the novitiate, or the journey between novitiates, does not exceed fifteen or thirty days. Otherwise it will be subject to the prescriptions mentioned above.

The requirement of the Code that "the habit prescribed for the novices by the constitutions be worn throughout the whole period of the novitiate,"

in special circumstances determine otherwise" (Can. 557) is regarded as directive, and not as affecting the validity of the novitiate.

Religious institutes that distinguish officially between two classes of members, such as clerics and lay brothers, or choir sisters and lay sisters, should note that the novitiate made for one class is not valid for the other" (Can. 558). Since the tasks expected of each class in such institutes differ considerably, we can understand why a person may have a vocation for one state and not for the other. Both the aspirant and the religious superior have a right to test the vocation of the state of the candidate's choice during the year of probation. To determine whether such class distinctions exist, however, the constitutions should be consulted. If the latter are not sufficiently explicit on the matter, the novices are all considered as belonging to the same class.

As a more proximate preparation for profession, novices are required to make a will disposing of whatever they actually possess or may subsequently possess, as they see fit (Can. 569). Once the religious is professed, this will cannot be altered except with the permission of the Holy See unless the need is urgent, in which case the major superior, or, if he cannot be reached in time, the local superior, may give permission for the change (Can. 583). As Canon Law recognizes the validity of such a will even of minors, the parents and guardians would have to respect the will of a professed religious who died while still a minor.

Since the simple vow of poverty deprives the religious of the independent use of his property, its revenue, and its administration, but does not deprive him of the actual ownership itself or of the right to acquire personal property in the future, Canon Law requires that the novices who have property must cede the administration thereof to whomsoever they wish (either to the religious institute or to someone outside) for the period they are in simple vows (Can. 569). If the novices have no property at the time there is no need to bother with making this cession, for they can make it later notwithstanding their profession, should they acquire property at some future date.

Those found fit should be admitted to profession

Religious profession, though inseparably connected with the public vows of poverty, chastity and obedience according to the present legislation of the Church, is not simply identical with pronouncing one's vows. The vows are promises made directly to God, whereas the profession is a bilateral contract between the individual and the religious community, whereby the former agrees

to live according to the rule and constitution of the institute under the direction of legitimate superiors and the community agrees to accept the aspirant as a professed member with all the rights that this entails.

Since profession is a bilateral contract entered into freely and knowingly by both parties, we can understand the wisdom of the Church's legislation which declares that "the novice is free to leave the religious institute and the superior, chapter, according to the constitutions, may dismiss the novice for any cause without obligation on their part to inform the novice of the reasons for the dismissal" (Can. 571, par. 1). It is wise to record the reasons for dismissal, however, in case the novice should complain of an unjust treatment, or decide to enter another community.

"When the year of the novitiate is completed," the canon continues, "the novice, if judged qualified, shall be admitted to profession; if judged otherwise, he must be dismissed. If there is any doubt as to his fitness for profession, the major superiors may prolong the time of the novitiate, but not for more than twelve months" (par. 2). Since the higher superiors ordinarily have no direct contact with the novices, we can understand why Can. 563 requires that the superior submit a report to the chapter or higher superior concerning the fitness of each of the novices so that the latter may be in a position to decide on the fitness for admission.

According to present legislation, "in every order of men or women, in every congregation which has perpetual vows, the novice must take temporary vows for three years, or for a longer period if he will not yet be twenty-one years of age after the three years of temporary vows. These vows must be taken in the house of the novitiate. If the constitutions demand yearly profession instead of vows every three years, these constitutions are to be followed. The superior may prolong the period of temporary vows by making the novice again take temporary vows, but the prolongation may not extend beyond three years" (Can. 574). According to the canonists, the condition that the profession should be made in the novitiate house is regarded as directory and would not affect the validity of the profession.

For a valid profession, Canon Law requires: (1) that the one to be professed has reached the legitimate age (at least 16 years for temporary profession and 21 years for perpetual or solemn profession); (2) that he be admitted to profession by the legitimate superior determined by the constitutions; (3) that a valid novitiate has preceded according to the requirements of Canon 555; (4)

that the profession must not be based on violence, grave fear or deceit; (5) that the profession be explicit or expressed in formal terms; (6) and that it be made into the hands of the superior authorized by the constitutions, or his delegate. (Can. 572, par. 1).

For the validity of the profession of perpetual vows, whether simple or solemn, it is also required that the simple, temporary profession has preceded, as explained above. (Can. 572, par. 2).

If a religious with perpetual vows transfers to another institute with the authorization of the Holy See, he is required to make a novitiate in the new institute after which he is to make, not temporary, but perpetual profession. The time of probation may be prolonged before admitting such a religious to profession but not beyond an additional year.

It should be noted that the vote of the council or chapter, according to the constitutions of the respective institute, is deliberative or decisive for the first temporary profession, but only consultive for the perpetual profession (Can. 575, par. 2). Consequently, if a superior were to admit a novice to first profession against the majority vote of the council or chapter, the profession would be invalid.

In the case of a perpetually professed religious who has transferred to the novitiate of another institute and consequently must either make perpetual profession or return to his original organization, the vote of the chapter or council is also decisive, according to the Commission for the Interpretation of the Code.

In making the religious profession the rite prescribed by the constitutions is to be observed. The act of profession is to be drawn up in writing and signed by the professed and at least by the superior or delegate who has received the profession. This document should be kept in the archives (Can. 576).

When temporary vows have expired, the new profession should be made on the anniversary day. While perpetual profession may not be anticipated without a special indult from the Sacred Congregation for Religious, Canon Law gives to the superiors the faculty of anticipating the renewal of temporary vows for just reason as early as a month before the anniversary day.

Pope Pius XI renewed the privilege permitting a novice in danger of death to make profession even before the termination of the novitiate. The Sacred Congregation explains the conditions for such a profession: (1) the novice must

have begun the novitiate according to Canon Law; (2) the novice master, major or local superiors, or their delegates may receive the profession; (3) the formula of profession must be the same as that ordinarily used at the time of the novitiate, omitting any expression that indicates the duration of the profession; (4) the effect of these vows is to insure for the novice all the indulgences, graces, and spiritual favors gained by the professed who die in the institute of the society. In addition a plenary indulgence in the form of a Jubilee indulgence is granted; (5) the profession has no other canonical effect. Consequently, if the novice recovers, he or she can leave the community or be dismissed like any other novice. If such a one finishes the novitiate and is accepted he or she can make profession like the others. On the other hand, if the novice dies, the institute does not acquire any right to his property or dowry.

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.S.B.



Thanks be to God, I want for nothing but the prayers of many, that the Divine Majesty may deign to grant me pardon for my many and great sins, and enable me to become a worthy minister of the Holy Gospel.

Junipero Serra, O.S.B.

THE CHAPEL OF BESTOWAL

(Chapter III of Saint Bonaventure's *Vitis Mystica*, "De Circumfossione Vitis")

Now the vine is trenched round. By this trenching is understood a scheming guile, as though he who was plotting to deceive some one by treachery were digging a pitfall; whence the lament cries, *They dug a pit before my face*. For no artifice could be hidden from Him Who is equipped with eyes both before and behind, Who regards both the past and the future as the present. Let us show by an example something of these pitfalls. *They brought*, says the Gospel, *to the Lord Jesus a woman caught in adultery*, and said that *in the Law Moses commanded to stone such persons*. What, therefore, dost thou say? You perceive the pitfalls for the true Vine, with which the malicious husbandmen trenched round our blessed Vine, the most sweet Lord Jesus, not in order to make Him blossom, but rather to make Him wither. But in very truth their intention yielded to the contrary result; the trenching was done too well, so that the Vine dropped the dew of mercy amongst us.

However, it would be too long a story to enumerate all the pitfalls dug for Him by the malicious husbandmen who strove to interpret falsely all of His Works and deeds. But where they observed that the trenching in no way harmed the Vine but that the diggers themselves fell into their own traps, they no longer schemed to trench the Vine but to uproot it, that at least like other plants it might die. With this end in view they tore holes not only in the hands but also in the feet; in addition, with the lance of their savagery they bored the side and ripped into the recesses of that most Sacred Heart, which long since had been pierced by the lance of love. *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart!* O Jesus, beloved above all, Thy bride, Thy sister, Thy loved one has wounded Thy Heart! What need was there for Thy enemies to wound Thee more? What are you after, you enemies of Christ? If a wound is already stabbed into the Heart of my dearest Jesus—nay, because He is wounded—why do you inflict a second wound? Are you unknowing that a heart touched by one wound is dying and in some measure unfeeling? The Heart of my dearest Lord Jesus is dead because it was wounded. The wound of love o'erpowers the Heart of Jesus the Bridegroom, love's death mastered it. How shall another death enter? *Strong as death is love*, truly stronger than death. The first death, love for the many dead, cannot be cast forth from the heart's home that it conquered for itself through an unconquerable wound. If two equally powerful men battle together, one inside the home, the other outside, does anyone doubt that the one on the inside holds the victory? See how great

is the strength of the love that conquers the home of the heart and kills the love's wound; and not only in the Lord Jesus but also in His servants. So ago the Heart of the Lord Jesus died, of Him Who *faced death at every moment for our sake, reckoned no better than a sheep marked down for the slaughter*. But bodily death drew near and conquered for a time—to be conquered.

But because we have once come to the Heart of the sweetest Lord Jesus, *it is good for us to be here*, let us not easily be torn away from Him of whom it is written that *the men who swerve from Thee will be names written in the earth*. What then will be the fate of those who approach Thee? The Scriptures tell us we shall draw near to Thee and *be glad and rejoice in Thee, remembering Thy Heart. Behold, how good and pleasant it is to dwell in this Heart!* A rich treasure, a priceless pearl, is Thy Heart, good Jesus, which we find in the ploughing of Thy Body. Who is there who could cast this pearl aside? Nay, rather, give all pearls, barter all my thoughts and loves, and acquire for myself this pearl, *casting the burden of my thoughts into the Heart of the good Jesus, and it will without deceit sustain me.*

Before this Temple, before this Holy of Holies, before this Ark of the Covenant, I shall bow down and sing in praise of God's name in David's psalm: I have found my Heart to pray my God. For my part I have found the Heart of my King and Lord, my Brother and Friend, the Heart of the most good Jesus. Shall I not pray then? Assuredly, I shall pray without failing. For my Heart is even my heart. I say it boldly. If—indeed because—my head is my head, how can what belongs to my head not be mine? As my eyes are truly my eyes, how can what belongs to my eyes not be mine? As my heart is truly my heart, how can what belongs to my heart not be mine? All is well with me, then, for, behold, I have one Heart with Jesus. And no wonder; because *there was one heart in all the company of believers*. Therefore, most sweet Jesus, having found this Heart of Thine and mine, *I shall pray Thee, my God, to accept my prayers in this Chapel of Bestowal; yes, draw my whole being into Thy Heart.* Although the deformity of my sins shackles me, none the less—since my Heart is enlarged and dilated by an ineffable love and *Thou, Who alone can cleanse what was born of tainted stock—none the less, O Beauteous One of all, wash me clean, cleaner yet, from my guilt, purify me from my sin, that, purified through Thee, I may draw near to Thee, the Pure One, and deserve to dwell in Thy Heart all the days of my life, to see and do Thy will.*

His side was pierced to open for us an entrance into it; His Heart was wounded to afford us a dwelling in that Vine, delivered from outer temptation, as was wounded, none the less, that we might see in the visible wound love's

ground, for he who loves ardently is wounded by love. How can this ardor be better revealed than that He should permit not only the Body but also the Heart itself to be wounded by the lance? Then the carnal wound displays the wound of the spirit, and this the text previously mentioned would imply when it speaks of a double wounding: *Thou hast wounded my heart . . . thou hast wounded my heart.* The cause of each wound is the sister herself and the spouse, although the Bridegroom had clearly said that "that hast wounded me by the seal of love for thee, and I am wounded also by the soldier's lance." Who would permit his heart to be wounded on a friend's behalf unless he had first received love's wound for that friend? This is why He says, *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart!* But why "sister" and "spouse"? Could not the tenderness of the loving Bridegroom be sufficiently shown by the use of the term, "sister", only, or of the term, "spouse"? And again, why "spouse" and not "wife", since neither the Church nor any faithful soul ceases from begetting daily to Christ her Bridegroom the offspring of good works? I shall answer in a few words. Brides are usually loved more ardently, since the marriage has taken place but recently, than afterwards, when in the course of time love itself becomes tranquil. Therefore, in order to intimate the abundance of His love that does not lessen as time goes on, our Bridegroom calls His loved one a bride, for that His love is ever new.

But because brides are also loved carnally, and in order that you may not savor anything carnal in the love of our Bridegroom, He calls His bride "sister", because sisters are not now cherished with a carnal love. It is for this reason that He says, *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my bride*, as though to say: "I love thee deeply as a bride, chastely as a sister; on account of thee My Heart has been wounded." Who would not love this Heart so wounded? Who would not return the love of a Heart so loving? Who would not embrace a Heart so chaste? A soul, wounded by a return love, that cries, *I have been wounded with love*, will love this wounded Heart. A soul that says, *Tell my beloved that I languish with love*, will return the love of this loving Bridegroom. Then, while we remain in the flesh, let us return the love of the Lover as much as we can; let us embrace our wounded Bridegroom Whose *hands and feet, side and Heart, the wicked husbandmen have dug*; let us pray that He will vouchsafe to fetter our heart, till now so hard and impenitent, with the bond of His charity and wound it with the lance of His love. Amen.

Christ the King Seminary

Fr. Columban Duffy, O. F. M. (trans.)

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

Man is by nature a social being; consequently, it would be unnatural to be really indifferent about our reputation. Our good name is a spiritual value—protected by the natural law, and we are morally obliged to cooperate with the natural law in protecting it. For a religious to say and mean: "I don't care what others think of me," he would have to lack understanding of the value of his reputation, or he would have to be devoid of self-respect. It is one thing to endure misunderstanding, to be judged and condemned for God's sake, but it is an entirely different thing to be callous about our reputation simply because self-respect has become a non-functioning element in our spiritual makeup. No man is free deliberately to sacrifice his good name; nor can any man ever be dispensed from the obligation to live so as to be respected by others. After all, the command of our Blessed Lord is still binding: *Let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to the Father in heaven* (Matth. 5, 16). But this is where the concupiscence of vanity may enter in—we are not righteously *only* to be respected by men. Here again the example of Christ is clear: we must seek not our own honor but the honor of our Father in heaven. Lest the honor and praise of men become the motivating force behind our activity, Saint Bonaventure advises us to ask:

AM I DESIROUS OF HUMAN PRAISE AND HONOR?

How strong in our poor human heart is the desire to be known and respected, and what ridiculous forms this desire sometimes assumes in striving for realization. Even our "humility" aims to make the headlines. We are all inclined to smile at the publicity seeker as the victim of a rather pathetic human impulse, yet how few of us are able to recognize this same impulse when it becomes the driving power behind our own activity. We have had occasion to examine the purity of our motives and intentions in general; now we shall fix our attention on the particular motive of false ambition. First, ask ourselves: Do I try to be a good religious—at least exteriorly—because I want to be respected by others? Am I more concerned about what people think of me than about what God thinks of me? Do I perhaps regulate my conduct so as to win the approval of my superiors, or to gain their confidence, secure positions and offices? Do I feel that the higher I rate in the estimation of my superiors the better I can manipulate monastic policies to my own advantage and glory? Do I pray and work as well when no one notices me as when I

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Am I under observation? Do I forget that the eye of God is always upon me, and that even if no one else sees me, I must do all things as perfectly as possible as to please Him? There are some religious who soon lose interest in, or deliberately avoid, work that is hidden and unrecognized and unappreciated by others. Am I of their number?

An excellent test of the purity of our intention is our attitude when faced with a difficult task or probable failure. In such situations, do I place myself, my talents and abilities, simply at the service of God, putting forth my best efforts yet leaving the outcome entirely in His hands? Or does fear of failure cramp and cripple my efforts? Am I the kind of religious who never makes a mistake because he never does anything? Do I refuse to undertake projects or to accept certain assignments or offices for which I have talent and to which obedience calls me, because I dread the shame of possible ill-success? Am I willing to work and even to make great sacrifices as long as I have approval and praise and cooperation, but do I refuse to go on in the face of opposition? Does the least breath of criticism, the slightest threat of failure, cause me to default? If I do not receive the praise and recognition I feel is justly due me, do I consider myself abused, unappreciated, perhaps shelved? And do I, as a consequence, refuse to accept any further assignments, or do I go on working, but badly and grudgingly? Am I wise and humble enough to welcome criticism? Can I bear to hear the truth about my work, my actions, my personality? Can I appreciate a pointed joke at my own expense, and take profit from it? Finally, do I accept failure with humble equanimity, with nothing deeper than a natural and normal regret, and with the conviction that God has permitted this outcome for His own good reasons? Do I fight against the bitterness of defeat not only in matters of exterior activity but in matters of the moral and spiritual orders as well? Can I take failure with the humble resignation of the Psalmist: *It is good, O Lord, that thou hast humiliated me?*

If failure is painful, success unnoticed and unpraised can sometimes be even more painful. Obviously, the religious who expects a citation for every miserable little performance hardly deserves sympathy when that citation is not forthcoming. But, let us ask ourselves: When I know I have done something really worthwhile, am I unduly insistent upon recognition? How do I feel when my very best efforts are completely ignored or taken for granted? Does it hurt so much to have my work pass unnoticed that I cannot go on with it? Suppose I have spent hours preparing an unusually good meal for the community and no one seems even aware of it; or suppose after months or years of strenuous mental

effort I have completed a difficult course of study with high honors, and one word of congratulation is offered me. Does my reaction indicate that I labored for human praise or for the love of God? It is not a bad sign if indifference of our fellow-religious should hurt us, for we are human and a desire for recognition is natural. But if we allow the hurt to go so deep as to assume such proportions that we are thrown off-balance emotionally and become incapable of going on with our work, that, indeed, is a very bad sign. In effect, we say to ourselves: "Why should I go on with it? Nobody cares." And when we say, "Nobody cares", we betray the sad fact that whether God cares is of no importance to us. A true Franciscan is unperturbed by the indifference of men; in fact, he rather rejoices in it, for he is mindful that when he had done all that he ought to do, he is still an unprofitable servant.

It is human to feel hurt when our best achievements pass unnoticed. When our charity is accepted without thanks the hurt goes even deeper. Christ Himself complained about the ingratitude of men because it pained His Heart. Gratitude arises from humility and reverence; it is the recompense we naturally expect for a favor done to another. But, supernaturally, we expect neither gratitude nor acknowledgement nor any kind of human reward for even the greatest work of charity. A careful reading of the Sermon on the Mount will convince us that the true follower of Christ looks for no recognition in this world and seeks no human recognition. There is perhaps no better test of the purity of our intention than our reaction to ingratitude. How do we feel, for example, when, after having helped a confrere at the cost of great personal sacrifice, I receive no word of thanks, I can perceive no indication of gratitude? Do I give way to disillusionment, cynicism, or bitterness? How do I act toward those whom I have befriended not only fail to show gratitude but even rebuff me or forget they ever knew me? Persons who bite the hand that feeds them are unfortunately no uncommon phenomena. But persons who continue to hold out their hand in spite of the bites are rare indeed. In the last analysis, however, this is precisely what is demanded of a true Franciscan. For the Lord, of Francis will want above all to be a true child of God *Who makes his sun rise on the good and evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust* (Matthew 23:45). Can I honestly say, then, that my reaction to ingratitude is Christian and Franciscan?

At this point we should do well to examine our works of charity in the light of Saint Augustine warns us, and Bonaventure agrees, that works of charity are potentially dangerous in that we may be led to seek recognition for performance.

Our Blessed Lord tells us not to let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, and His scathing condemnation of the charity of the Pharisees is applicable to our own charity if it is motivated by self-love. Let us then ask ourselves: Do I sound a trumpet before and after every good deed? Do I publicize my works of charity, keep calling attention to them, try to keep them the main topic of conversation? When my name or the name of my institute is omitted from official reports, or when statistics fail to show the actual extent of my charitable activity, do I feel unfairly treated? Do I suffer from an exaggerated ambition to compete with others, to outdo them in charity, merely for the sake of winning a reputation for myself or my institute? What, for instance, is my aim in studying or in preparing myself for charitable activities in professional fields? Am I less interested in the knowledge to be acquired, in the techniques and skills to be used in helping others, than in the marks I earn, or in the degrees and titles I secure? Do I cherish a fondness for degrees and titles because they add luster to my institute or satisfy requirements, rather than because they indicate—or should indicate—an efficient personnel capable of doing great service to the poor of Christ? In the midst of my works of charity, no matter how professional the level, do I always keep close to the spirit of our Seraphic Father?

Our talents and skills have been given us by God to be used in His service; they have definitely not been given us as a means to cover ourselves with glory. Some of the following questions may help us to check on this point. Do I habitually make a display of my talents and efficiency in an effort to wring praises from others? Do I perhaps resort to tall tales about how I accomplished remarkable feats under the most trying and adverse circumstances? Or do I, like a child telling its mother what happened in school, inform my hearers how much my work has been admired, how much my talents have been praised? Do I jealously nurse every little compliment that may come my way, gloat over it, brag about it, enlarge upon it? Do I suppose deprecatory remarks about myself to force others to praise me or to admire my "humility"? Obviously, conduct of this kind would make our religious life a mere caricature of the Franciscan ideal.

Hypocrisy is another point that calls for attention here. Our Lord was always mild and tolerant toward human weakness, but He was merciless in His condemnation of hypocrisy. The same is true of our Seraphic Father, whose mind was the mind of Christ. He himself strove ever to be the same within and without, and urged his brothers to do likewise. Yet here we must be careful not to fall into error. We should be guilty of hypocrisy if, like the Pharisees, we are to exhibit piety and humble submission and delicacy of conscience and all

the religious virtues, while interiorly we were quite the opposite. We then be whited sepulchres indeed, fair to behold but full of rottenness. On the other hand, a fanatical insistence upon unvarnished honesty and no matter how devastating, always and everywhere, would also be a virtue. We are religious, and as such we are bound to avoid scandalizing serious people. There are times when common sense dictates that truth be concealed, especially in a question of scandal or injury to reputations. Honesty, too, may be the gentle cloak of charity. We are not guilty of hypocrisy, for even when we observe the exterior forms of religious behavior expected of us, interiorly we are in a turmoil, or suffering from dryness and disgust, or struggling to control an exuberance of spirit that longs to kick over the traces. The one thing necessary is purity of intention. If we observe the outward form of devotion to God and not to impress others, contrary interior dispositions do not make us hypocrites. It may help us to avoid scrupulosity on this point if we remember that in religious education we first learn or acquire the exterior form, and then advance toward spiritual maturity we are to fill that exterior form with the life of God. But never are we free to adopt false attitudes to be seen and praised.

Ultimately, what do we need of human praise? Of what positions of authority, titles and degrees and honors? If they fall to us, let us use them for good; but let us keep in mind that if we have gained all the honors of the world, we have gained nothing in the eyes of God excepting a greater responsibility and a severer judgment. "For so much is a man, as he is in the eyes of God and no more."

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner



Those who are to come here as ministers should not imagine that they are here for any other purpose than to put up with hardships for the love of God and the salvation of souls. But to a willing heart all is sweet, *amanti suave est*.

Junipero Serra,

THE CONTEMPLATIVE

There is no space for thunder here,
No poppies from the old, luxuriant lips
Spring up in crimson words and toss the stars
Lightly around the dark, familiar skies.

We will not speak of mountains or of darkness,
Nor even mention silver mists. The Name
That bends the whole broad arc of worlds is only
And all I know. We will not talk of prayer.

Go, put away the tales of almost-seeing
(Sternier than legend!), whisper them away.
Too shattered now for breaking, I come singing
Hoarse little scraps of melodies You know,

Stumbling down a cinder path and clutching
Pathetic, wind-burnt flowers of my love,
My eyelids shuttering shame and peace past dreaming,
Your mercy pouring down my cheeks like fire.

Clare Monastery of
Lady of Guadalupe,
Bell, New Mexico

Sr. Mary Francis, P. C.

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OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Work

A few years ago, quite accidentally, I came across a little book by J. Drabek, entitled *A Hymn to Work*. It contains some strikingly inspiring variations about work which I should like to adapt to the religious life conference. After all, work forms a great part of our daily life. And to a very large extent, depends our perfection, and therefore our happiness on earth, and our reward later on in heaven. Hence, it will be of great profit to spend a few moments of reflection on this subject.

The first thing to remember about our daily work is that it is part and of human existence. *Man is born to labor, and the bird to fly* (Job 5, 7). This is true of human beings in general, how much more is it true of us religious. Without fear of contradiction, we can say that the Rule of every Religious Community imposes on its members a strict obligation to work diligently and faithfully. The religious life is not a sinecure to be enjoyed, but a cross to be borne. We become religious, not to take things easy, but to work hard, to burn ourselves out in the service of God. If we fail to measure up to this requirement of the religious life, we do not even earn the right to partake of the alms and charity of the faithful. *If any man will not work, neither shall he eat* (2 Thess. 3, 10). Apart from the prescribed recreations, therefore, we must keep ourselves busy with work assigned to us by obedience. It is true, not all work is equally hard, but all can and must keep themselves usefully occupied according to his capabilities, his strength, and his age.

But work is much more than a necessity for us. It is above all a blessing, the value of which we do not meditate upon enough. Its worth becomes immediately evident when we consider it in relation to God, to our fellow-workers, and to ourselves.

In relation to God, our work constitutes a distinct privilege for us, a source of praise to Him. Just to be able to work at all is something to be grateful for. Is not God Himself the Great Worker of all times? If we open the Bible, we shall find on its very first pages how God brought into being heaven and earth, and adorned them with the vast array of creatures whose beauty, diversity, and order amaze us. And did not Christ proclaim to the Jews: *My Father works until now, and I work?* (Jo. 5, 17). Therefore, when we apply ourselves to our work, we are imitating the Divine Worker, and that imitation is our glory.

And besides giving us a chance to imitate God, work likewise makes it possible for us to become God's collaborators. God has purposely left His work unfinished so that we might have the joy of working with Him and helping Him to perfect His creation. Think of all the necessary and useful things which man has produced down through the centuries. God did not need men to make these things, but that is the way He wanted it. In a very true sense we can say that these things would never have come into being without us. It's like the old violin maker who, fondly caressing one of his finished masterpieces, addressed thus: "God could never have made you had it not been for me." At first blush, that statement seems blasphemous. But, of course, its meaning is not that God was powerless to make that violin, but that he was unwilling to do so except by means of the skill of the craftsman. God's plan is to place in creation unlimited potentialities and to give us astounding abilities. Then He invites us to think about those potentialities and to work on them until, one by one, they begin to come into existence and to take the shape and form that will be of service to us. In this way, He accords us the sublime privilege of being His fellow workers in the completion of creation. He wants us to be more than mere spectators in the world; we are to be contributors to its splendor and usefulness by our work. Our contributions may be varied—anything from cooking a meal and making a habit to enlightening a mind and training a character. It makes no difference. Each represents the exercise of our God-given power to add a finishing touch in one way or another to the world around us; each makes us, in some slight degree, co-creators with God. What a gracious gift from God is this power to work. How like unto God it makes us.

When we view work in this light, it is easy to see how wrong we are when we fret about the type of work we may be asked to do. Every task, even the seemingly most insignificant one, brings with it the grand privilege, just described, of being God's collaborators. The Saints were quick to understand this, and that is why their ranks include slaves, shepherds, and common laborers as well as statesmen, brilliant educators, and kings. Hence, to feel elated because our work brings us into the limelight and wins for us the admiration of men, or to feel dejected because our work is hidden and unknown is to miss the point completely. The essential thing is to possess "the grace of working", as our Father Francis so discerningly styles it. The purely accidental part is to be scrubbing floors, or tilling the soil, or educating youth, or ruling a convent. The distinction between lowly and exalted forms of work, in so far as it implies lesser or greater worth, certainly never originated in heaven. For the Son of God Himself was engaged in both types, and who would dare to say that His work in the

carpenter shop was less acceptable to His Heavenly Father than was preaching of the kingdom of God? No, such a distinction is a survival of times when certain kinds of work were considered beneath the dignity of man. It is a distinction that bespeaks attachment to one's personal gratification and satisfaction. In a drama of the Passion some years ago, a character was who could imitate the crowing of a rooster when Peter denied his Master. The actor of the cast side-stepped this role. It was too insignificant for them; they wanted to be out on the stage where everyone could see them. One humble soul, however, volunteered to take the part and made such a good job of it that, when they were taking their curtain calls, he received the most enthusiastic acclaim from a part of the audience. And who knows—perhaps heaven's heartiest applause goes to the soul doing a so-called lowly task in some obscure corner rather than to one doing brilliant things in the eyes of the world.

Work, however, not only constitutes one of our highest privileges, but it also offers us a wonderful opportunity of fulfilling the great purpose of our creation, namely, glorifying God. Think of the rubrics and ceremonies connected with some sacred church functions—the folded hands, the bows, the genuflection and the like. They are not something extraneous to the function itself but add their help to make it sacred. They are prayers in action. It can be the very same in our daily work. If we take the viewpoint of faith and are convinced that our daily tasks form an integral part of our religious life, of our service to God, then our every action takes on the character of a sacred rite and ceremony. It assumes the nature of an inner elevation of our mind and heart to God, which is nothing else but prayer. And thus is fulfilled the behest of Holy Scripture: *Whatever you do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him* (Col. 3, 17). Hence, the statement of Saint Augustine: "Thou dost give praise when thou workest."

Let us recall to our minds the builders of the great medieval cathedrals. How conscious they were at all times that their labors were a sacred service. They were working for God first and foremost. Every detail of that service, therefore, had to be perfect, whether it would be in full display on the elaborate facade, or whether it would be hidden from view in some remote corner. The best was not good enough for their Lord. Perhaps those men did not utter a great number of prayers in so many words while they toiled away, but the sound of their hammers and chisels echoed the sentiments of their hearts, and was wafted up to the throne of God in a sweet harmony of praise. And such a result may be the result of our work. No matter how ordinary may be the task

form, provided we do them in the spirit of devotion, provided we offer them cheerfully and freely to God, and accomplish them for Him to the best of our ability, they are, without doubt, a beautiful hymn of praise in His honor.

Next, with regard to our fellow men, work becomes an expression of our love for them. Saint John, the Apostle of love, tells us: *My dear children, let us love one another in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth* (I Jo. 3, 18). There is perhaps no surer nor more practical way of observing this exhortation than by working for others. What is it that endears a mother to her children? Is it not the many steps she takes for them, the countless ways in which she serves them? The toilworn hands of a devoted mother tell better than words could ever do how much she loves her children. For love, genuine love, entails the gift of oneself. But when we work for others we are offering to them our strength, our time, our attention, our convenience, our talents; in a word, our very selves.

Another way to view this truth is to look upon our work as the actual performance of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. From this angle, we can see that preparing the meals is nothing else than feeding the hungry and giving drink to the thirsty; that teaching is instructing the ignorant and counseling the doubtful; that caring for the house is in reality giving a home to the homeless; that being infirmarians gives us a chance to visit the sick and comfort the sorrowful. And thus our work affords us a golden opportunity of showing that love which Christ Himself stated would be the factor deciding our eternal fate on the day of judgment.

Moreover, when we work conscientiously for others it is an indication of our high regard for them. Why go to all that trouble, why take such pains, why sacrifice ourselves to such an extent unless we consider the ones for whom we are working worth all the effort? Indeed, to be willing to work for others is to pay them a gracious compliment. For it means that we realize their worth, that we recognize them, according to the teaching on the Mystical Body, to be other Christs, for whom no sacrifice is too great, no task is too exacting. What a powerful motivation is contained in that thought for doing our work cheerfully and faithfully.

Finally, when we consider work in its bearing on our own lives, we discover that it is both a mold and a mirror of our character. How does work serve to mold our characters? Every job that we are given to do brings with it a definite challenge insofar as it demands energy, patience, careful attention, resourceful-

ness, and perseverance. If we measure up to that challenge by manifesting the qualities just mentioned, we not only do something splendid in the task performed but the task also does something splendid to us. It deepens our maturity, increases our sense of responsibility, thereby making us more complete men and women. Therefore, each piece of work well done means a further growth of character. As one writer puts it: "If the work you do at your little job is the best you can, whenever it grows to be a bigger job, it will find you ready for it." And that is precisely the meaning of our Lord's words: *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater* (Lk. 16, 10).

But if work, because of its self-disciplinary quality, can help us to develop our character, it can also, by the same token, be a very revealing mirror of our character. To find out what kind of men and women we are, all we need to do is examine the kind of work we consistently turn out. Is it neat or slovenly? Is it performed enthusiastically or half-heartedly? Is it precise or haphazard? The answers to these questions will, relentlessly, tell the story of our character. Towards the end of the last century, a secular priest, who had been prominent in church circles, applied for admission into the Franciscan Order. When he entered the novitiate, no exceptions were made in his regard, and the good he was expected none. One day a former associate of his was surprised to see him in the novitiate corridor, and made the remark: "Why, Father, do you come here to do such work? Don't you consider that beneath your dignity?" The Reverend Novice replied: "No, not at all. But if I did not do this work well, I would consider that beneath my dignity." There was a man who had the right kind of work, who saw in it an accurate index of character. His answer points to the ideal attitude which we should always take towards our daily tasks.

This conference had as its theme our daily work. We saw, first of all, that such work is a necessity for us. And then we considered how we can manifest our beautiful virtue out of this necessity by bearing in mind the advantages that our work offers to us with regard to God, our neighbor, and ourselves. If our constant endeavor is to make the most of these advantages, then our work will be an endless source of blessing to us. Even in this life it will fill our souls with an abiding peace and contentment that will make the cross of work seem light and sweet. And as to the next life, heaven—well, let us just remember the incident related in the life of our holy Father Francis. When he had turned his back on the world and had begun to serve God exclusively, he worked very hard in repairing neglected and dilapidated churches. Many of his former friends, seeing the change that had taken place in him, thought him foolish and ridiculous.

Among the revilers was Saint Francis's own brother, Angelo. One morning, when he saw Francis kneeling in prayer, he said to his companion, in a mocking tone loud enough for Francis to hear: "Go and ask Francis to sell you a penny's worth of sweat." Francis mildly answered: "You're too late, my dear brother; I have already sold it at a good price to my Lord and Savior." What a consolation there is for us in these words! We, too have—so to say—made a bargain with God. We promise to do our work faithfully during the short span of this life, and God promises to give us in return everlasting bliss in heaven. *Behold, I come quickly, He says, and my reward is with me, to render to each one according to his works* (Apoc. 22, 12). In very truth, we have sold our efforts, our fatigue, our sweat for a very good price!

Westmont, Illinois

Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.



To no one has the duty been given of judging the secrets of the human heart; the Apostle says to *pass no judgment before the time until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the things hidden in darkness and make manifest the counsels of hearts*. Therefore, never devote yourself to judging or condemning others, but whenever you see something happening that causes you displeasure, first of all, before you judge the doer, look to yourself whether you may find in yourself anything reprehensible; if you do, then condemn yourself for that concerning which you judge another, and say with the Prophet: *I am he that have sinned, I have done wickedly*.

Saint Bonaventure

SAINT COLETTE OF CORBIE (I)

Though Saint Colette was a personage of renown in the fourteenth century in which she lived, to-day she is little known beyond her native France, Belgium where her holy relics were for a time enshrined after her death in the city of Ghent. She was a contemporary of the great Saint Vincent Ferrer, the lowly Maid of Orleans, Saint Jeanne d'Arc. One wonders whether these saints ever met in those dark and troublous days of the Church and of France. If they did, nothing beyond legend is known of it. But certainly they had much in common in the interest of the Church for which they labored, suffered and died. Saint Colette was especially known to the ecclesiastical rulers, and to the kings and nobles of France, who often sought her advice. Yet, her life's work, the reform of the greatest Orders in the Church, like the Order itself, remained hidden and unknown.

The life of Saint Colette, who was born in January 1381, spanned the most unfortunate days of the Great Western Schism, when the seamless robe of Christ was being rent asunder by unworthy, ambitious, power-mad ecclesiastics. Perhaps never did the gates of hell threaten more fiercely to prevail upon the Church, and perhaps never did that Church prove itself so manifestly un-divine as in those days when destruction threatened, not from without by a persecuting tyrant, but from within by her own faithless children.

Saint Colette's birth of an hitherto childless mother, then over sixty years of age, was considered the miraculous fruit of her parents' prayers to Saint Nicholas, patron of children. Accordingly she was baptised Nicolette, which name was later shortened to "Colette." She was reared in that staunch love of God and the Church, which has been characteristic of so many of the children of France, the Eldest Daughter of the Church. After the death of her aged mother and while she was still in her early youth, Colette wished to consecrate herself to God in one of the cloisters of the Poor Clares in France. But there, the ravages of the Schism had left their mark. The houses of the Poor Clares were relaxed, the Rule a mere ornament. In order to find in solitude and self-abandonment that spirit of prayer for which her soul longed, and which the religious life of her day could not offer her, she became a recluse in her native town of Corbie. A very large and wealthy Benedictine abbey flourished there and the Benedictine monks undertook her guidance and ministered to her spiritual needs. Now, at the seclusion she had chosen, she found the union with God for which she had longed. She would seek nothing else than its perfection, and by prayer

she would offer herself day and night as a victim for the crying needs of the Church.

However, in her seclusion the spirit of God inspired her, urging her to do other work for which she felt neither the ability nor the desire. That she should go forth and reform the Order of Saint Clare in which she had once vowed to find her life's work, was a task she felt she could not accomplish. Again and again she resisted the signs God gave her of His will; but when she was finally struck blind and deaf, she cried out her Lord, *what wilt Thou have me do?* God then sent her a guide in the person of the saintly Franciscan Pere Henri de Laune; and in August, 1406, at the age of twenty-five, Colette left her hermitage with the permission of the papal legate in Paris, Cardinal de Chalant, and the Bishop of Amiens. She left against the advice of her Benedictine guides and in the face of their displeasure and that of many of the people of Corbie who were loath to lose their saintly townswoman. She was made to feel this displeasure for many years after, even when she endeavored to establish a monastery of the reform in Corbie. In company with Pere Henri and a friend of the Countess Blanche of Geneva, she journeyed to Nice. Here she was presented to Pedro de Luna whom France recognized as the sovereign pontiff, Benedict XIII, though he was in fact the anti-pope. To Colette, he was the representative of Christ, and to him she determined to confide the work to which God was calling her. When she was ushered into his presence, he arose to meet Colette. After a lengthy interview, he received her vows and despatched her, as abbess, on the way of her arduous undertaking. He gave her as guide and assistant Pere Henri who was to share indeed in her labors and her trials.

The word "reform" is generally frowned upon in our day, and often given an incorrect interpretation by a distortion of its original meaning. To "reform" is to "bring again" and rebuild that which has fallen to ruin over the passage of time or the misuse of man is surely a most commendable work. A person engaged in restoring an old historic land-mark to its original form would feel he was doing a great work; by others he would be praised rather than condemned. The reformers of religious Orders have been just such rebuilders, on a far nobler plane. Saint Colette, by God's inspiration and under His guidance, began the reform, the bringing-again to its original beauty, of the Order of Saint Clare in France. Though still young in years, she was already a mature woman of deep spiritual insight, sensible and practical, with a loving and understanding heart. She has been falsely depicted as severe, forbidding, possessed of a harsh austerity which would give to the Order of Saint Clare a visage never intended by the foundress.

Those who know Saint Colette better, who have lived by the statutes she formed for the Rule of Saint Clare, see the holy reformatrix as she really was, a mother of the Order. Though Saint Colette was a reformatrix, she reformed the Order by new beginnings rather than by reforming the old members of the Order. Her task did indeed lead her to a few monasteries where a very small number of religious lived a relaxed life, but for the most part she did not try to restore the dying embers, but built up new communities, allowing the old embers to slowly disappear. Thus her reform was made almost exclusively of new monasteries of Poor Clares, where she began with the enforcement of the First Rule of Saint Clare.

The Constitutions which Saint Colette left to the houses she established are still being observed. Anyone who could write a series of directions on an old Rule of the thirteenth century, more than two centuries after that Rule had been written, and with an insight and wisdom that would make those directions as practicable in the twentieth century as they were in the fifteenth, must certainly have been guided by the Holy Spirit. When in 1933 the Constitutions of Saint Colette were revised to conform to the new code, the changes necessarily made in them were so negligible that for all practical purposes they remained unchanged. This was the great work of Saint Colette. Her journeys, her sufferings, her miracles, all were accomplished with unflinching courage and firm conviction, but always with the tender heart of a mother. She did not, in any way, as is sometimes claimed, change the spirit of the Order, adding a greater austerity than Saint Clare had given it. She did not graft a new branch on an old trunk, but made the original trunk grow, blossom and bear new fruit. The devastation had left it almost barren. Her aim was not to make a good thing better, but to form anew a work of the Holy Spirit in the Church of the West, bringing it back to its intrinsic beauty and usefulness. It is no great art to make over an old garment into something more beautiful than its original, but a delicate touch to restore what was worn out and lost, fashioning it into its original glory, unchanged and undiminished, so that it is entirely as it was—original—that is greatness and art. Such was the work of Saint Colette in the Order of Saint Clare.

Those who have passed long years in the Order and have observed and lived by the Rule of Saint Clare and the Constitutions of Saint Colette can assure themselves with conviction that the latter was a true follower of Clare, humble, loving, obedient, a true mother of the Order. The sweet and humble virgin of Corbie would be the last to consider that her own stature should or could be measured

by that of the great Foundress of the Second Order. What the patient hands of Saint Clare formed under the direction of the Seraphic Father was humbly measured and balanced, formed anew with delicate exactitude by Saint Colette, and then placed again in the care of the great Foundress. She who formed her own life after the pattern of the seraphic virgin of Assisi patiently strove that the houses she founded should be such that Clare could easily and joyously find place in them. To call the Poor Clares who observe the Constitutions of Saint Colette "Colettines" is likely to create confusion in the minds of those not familiar with the Order, giving the impression that they form a separate Order—certainly the last thing Saint Colette would wish. The title conferred by Holy Church is "Poor Clare Nuns of the Reform of Saint Colette," a title much more to the mind of the saintly reformer, who wished no distinction for her name save to be a humble follower of Saint Clare, just as her life and her reform followed the life and the primitive Rule of the glorious foundress.

Though Saint Colette was called by God to restore the spirit and observance of the First Rule of Saint Clare, this was by no means the sole interest and work of her life. She who loved the Church of God so ardently, mourned incessantly over the Schism which rent asunder the seamless Robe of the Bride of Christ.

Even as a child she had realized the sad condition of the Church, when schism gave allegiance to two popes. In her hermitage she ceased not day or night to plead for those blinded prelates whose pride held all Christendom bound in fetters, unable to expand to the grace and joy of the Divine Shepherd of Souls. Unutterable anguish filled her soul as she beheld in ecstatic vision the ravages the schism was causing as it went on year after year without cessation. We cannot doubt but that she offered her life again and again for its healing; however, she was not to die for the cause, but to live and suffer for it. Her labors brought her in close contact with prelates and nobles, and she strove not only by her prayer and penance, but also by her advice to bring that dark chapter of the Church's history to a speedy close. She had been a close friend of Amadeus of Savoy and when the Schism was renewed she strove by earnest pleading to convince him that he should refuse the unholy distinction of accepting the offer of an anti-pope. For a time her earnest words seemed to hold him in fear of committing the sacrilege, but in the end he succumbed to the temptation and accepted under the name of Felix V. Colette in deep grief journeyed to the various houses of her reform exhorting her communities not to give allegiance to him, but to redouble their prayers and sacrifices for the Church.

Having spent herself for over 40 years without ceasing, she was near the 66th year of her age. She had worn out and exhausted her physical and knew she was nearing the threshold of eternity. The close union of her soul with her Beloved kept her at times in an almost unbroken state of prayer and her Daughters knew she was pleading for the suffering Bride of Christ. Standing now on the pinnacle of her own deep humility and contemplative holiness, she, better than anyone, could see more clearly the depredation left in the wake of the long Schism. She viewed with a breaking heart the wreckage of that great bulwark of the Church, the religious Orders; but in this life was she to see the Church rise from the deep mourning into which the faithless children had cast her. But when she looked into the Divine Council of her Bridegroom in eternity she knew her sufferings and labors had not been in vain. On the same day that her soul left this earth and winged its flight to heaven the election of Nicholas V as successor to Eugene IV put an end to the Schism with the resignation of Amadeus of Savoy. God had touchingly accepted her sacrifice.

(to be continued)

Poor Clare Monastery of
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Roswell, New Mexico

Sr. M. Immaculata, P. C. (A)



During the whole course of your life strive to be subject to all the commands of the Lord and to show humble obedience always not only to prelates but to subjects. Do not be quick to ask, "Who is it who gives this order?" but rejoice that he does give an order.

Saint Bonaventure

AND THE LORD LED ME AMONG LEPERS

Heaven gained a new Saint, the Church a new Spiritual Leader and the sick and infirm found a new friend and protector in the youthful Francis of Assisi on the day he stepped from his horse, handed a coin to the repulsive looking leper standing at the roadside with outstretched arms, and went the limit to which any human being could go when he pressed upon the leper's rotting flesh the highest token of human affection—a kiss. It was a test administered by God Himself to His beloved servant, and Francis made the grade. Having mounted his horse again Francis looked back to take a last glance at the leper, but behold, the leper was gone! And as Francis rode along, a multitude of thoughts must have invaded his mind so that with the spiritual eyes of his soul he surely saw written in letters bold and gold, on the tablet of the sky, the Master's own words: *Believe me, when you did it to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me* (Matt. 25, 40). From this day until his death Francis of Assisi continued to lavish his affection upon the poor and the sick, the outcast and the leper.

Like Father, Like Son. A son often inherits many of his father's characteristics; a spiritual offspring, if at all genuine, must inherit some of its founder's characteristics. The Seraphic family, among the many other Seraphic virtues which it inherited from its Founder, found itself at every phase of its existence the Champion of the Sick. Saint Francis never tired of pleading the cause of the sick in order to impress his followers with the need of this form of the Apostolate.

In his Admonitions Francis writes: "Blessed is the brother that would love his brother in illness, when the brother cannot be of use to him, as much as he loves him in health, when he can be of use to him." And in his definitive Rule of 1223 he penned those words which have been imprinted upon every Franciscan Heart at the very dawn of his Franciscan Life: "And if any of them (i. e., the brethren) should fall into illness, the other friars should serve him as they would wish to be served themselves." With this last admonition, which he deemed prudent to impose upon his brethren as a precept—binding under pain of mortal sin—Francis of Assisi was convinced he had presented his followers with a worthy challenge. It remained only for history to show whether or not that challenge would be heeded.

We, the twentieth-century followers of Saint Francis of Assisi, may say without fear of contradiction that the challenge of the Seraphic Saint has been heeded. For we can proudly say to those who dare question us: "Look at the record." Our modern world is interested in statistics, not that they are

sufficient proof for any premise we may assume but because they serve as measuring stick for the amount of good capable of accomplishment. If it is statistics in which we are interested, we Franciscans can proudly point to 130 hospitals conducted by our Franciscan Sisters throughout the country. Of these hospitals have priests of the First or Third Order Regular as chaplains in order to assure themselves of the perpetuation of the Franciscan Spiritual Heritage. All this is proof sufficient that the Sons and Daughters of Saint Francis of Poverello of Assisi are conscious of the good which they may accomplish in this form of the Apostolate, they are conscious of the place Saint Francis occupies in the field of Nursing, and they are doing all in their power to imitate him.

That Francis of Assisi is capable of helping those in the Nursing Profession is brought out more forcefully by the following example. The visitor to the Montefiore Hospital in Pittsburgh may be amazed to find there, in the prominent place of honor in the lobby, a beautiful painting of Saint Francis of Assisi, the inspiration of which each member needs in his profession. What is most interesting in this case, though, is the fact that Montefiore Hospital is a Jewish Institution. Is this not a fitting tribute to our Holy Father?

Perpetuating our Franciscan Heritage. In no other place in the world are we able to exercise a more fruitful apostolate than in the Hospital. It is here that a man is smitten and thrown upon his back in a hospital bed that he begins to examine his conscience. Indeed, "man's extremity is God's opportunity." It remains for us Franciscans only the task of perceiving the opportunity of doing what we are humanly able to do as Christ's representatives. But when we are able to do anything for the patient we must first become conscious of our own position in the divine economy of salvation. We have pledged ourselves to follow Christ after the pattern set for us by Saint Francis of Assisi. This is only a *means* of arriving at Christian perfection, but mark well, it is a *necessary means*. Unless, therefore, we are permeated with the Seraphic Spirit, we shall be nothing more than walking ghosts in our hospitals, accomplishing absolutely nothing for the patients. But how shall we acquire this spirit?

Our first task should be to read Franciscan Literature. It must become an integral part of our personality. We must pray much to obtain this grace, we must reflect frequently upon the Franciscan Spirit and every line of our reading must be done in a prayerful spirit. Then, and then only, shall our intellects be able to absorb this vast object known as "Franciscan Spirituality". Surely, we all agree that the place to begin our reading is with the writings of Saint Francis.

Now though they are, they are replete with sound, spiritual Franciscan teaching, and they were penned by the Franciscan. From these we should proceed to the study of Franciscan hagiography, reading the lives of those who lived our own form of life and lived it successfully enough to be raised to the honors of the Altar. Our attention should be centered upon those who were engaged in our own type of work, works of charity, in order to see how they practised the Franciscan Spirit.

And as our reading progresses, and our minds absorb and assimilate more and more of the Seraphic teachings, there shall remain in our souls only one thought: *Non sibi soli vivere*, and perhaps when our bodies are in the sleep of death, our fellow Religious may lavish upon us the beautiful encomium which the Mother Church lavished upon Saint Francis: *Non sibi soli vivere, Sed aliis vult proficere* (He did not wish to live for himself alone, but desired to be of assistance to others.)

Catholicity—the Hospital Atmosphere. Whether you are conscious of it or not, the hospital in which you are sacrificing your time and energies (notice I did not say "in which you are working", for it is much more than that for us Franciscans) bears the name Catholic. And you yourself are a Catholic Hospital Chaplain, or Sister, or Physician, or Nurse. What a sublime dignity is yours! There was once another man who bore that very title; it was given to him by the Church in recognition of his spirit, his labors, and he was called "Francis, the Catholic and wholly Apostolic man." Take him for your Model, let him be your Ideal. Set yourself to the task of molding your spirit, your attitude of mind, according to the mind of "Francis the Catholic . . . man."

Have you ever stopped to think what the term "Catholic" means? It means universal, and more concretely, it means that the patient in the hospital bed and you are related, for you are both children of a common Father, and brothers and sisters of Christ, the God-Man. This is why the Church gave Saint Francis that admirable title, for he always insisted that God is our Father and we are His Children in Christ. Being children of God, we are then brothers and sisters of Christ, and, if we are deeply convinced of this fact, our conduct will show it as we go about our daily duties.

This attitude will prevent us Franciscans from being mere cogs in the modern hospital machinery. We will not treat the patients as so many products of the assembly-line, but each as an individual worthy of individual and loving consideration. It has been said of Saint Francis that he never saw the forest for the trees, in other words, he was so preoccupied with the individual trees which

composed the forest that he never got around to considering the composite attitude, too, should be like this; we should be concerned with each individual patient and not with the entire hospital. That will be cared for by the Superintendent, the Board of Directors—and don't forget Divine Providence—but the matter for you here and now is the patient who has been committed to you.

If, perchance, we are hospital officials, we might well consider our attitude towards patients of different races. Has there been any discrimination in admitting paupers to our hospitals? One of our great Archbishops recently brought together the communities engaged in hospital work in his diocese. He received several complaints regarding admission of patients to these institutions and the eminent Churchman, in no uncertain terms, informed those present that he would no longer need the services of a Community which would refuse admission to a person because of race or financial conditions. And while there are unfavorable incidents which we must face, we are, nevertheless, comforted when we hear of incidents which prove that the Spirit of Saint Francis is still in the world today. A pauper attending Mass at one of our Franciscan Churches collapsed, and the Superior of the Monastery hastily summoned an ambulance from a local Catholic hospital. When the doctors arrived they looked at the patient and said: "Oh, another one. And to think that we just put clean linens on the stretcher." The Superior, in his simple manner, informed them that he was willing to pick up the linens later in the day and wash them himself. Saint Francis must have smiled benignly upon this son in whom he could rightly be proud.

Franciscan Principles in our Hospitals. There are many important points of Franciscanism which might be treated here. I must limit myself to three focal points of Franciscan Spirituality: Union with the Incarnate Christ, Union with the Suffering Christ and Union with the Eucharistic Christ. The problem facing us is this: How are we able to make our Catholic patients conscious of these Franciscan sentiments? To be sure, we need not prefix the word Franciscan to every sentence or phrase. The finest example of Franciscan Spirituality which I ever read was a book where the only mention of "Franciscan" was in the title which appeared after the author's name. The method must, and should, become convinced of this, be adapted to each personality, taking into account the person's present attitude towards Christ, his progress along the path of perfection (as far as we are humanly able to discern), and his receptivity. We shall then consider the first of these:

Union with the Incarnate Christ. The Franciscan's love for the Incarnate

Christ goes back to the moment in Heaven when it was decreed that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity should assume human flesh. For Him were all things created, He was the Center of all creation. And the moment He appeared in human flesh at Bethlehem was considered so sacred and memorable a moment to Francis of Assisi that he wished it to be imprinted forever upon the minds of his followers. For this reason he popularized the devotion of the Christmas Crib as a means of recalling the Incarnation and all of God's blessings to mankind.

The Franciscan must show the patient how he can love Christ the Man, the Christ Who could feel deeply on certain things, the Christ Who could weep at being scorned and forsaken, the Christ who could gather children about Himself and say: *Unless you become as one of these, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* In talking to the patient, therefore, we should personalize Christ, make Christ live again, and then the patient will be willing to accept Him.

Union with the Suffering Christ. Once the person grasps firmly the personal attitude towards Christ, once he begins to look upon Christ as a Person Who could suffer, he will begin to think less of his own sufferings. Here we Franciscans have the priceless treasure of the Devotion of the Way of the Cross which we can offer our patients. It is an infallible remedy, for once the patient begins to contemplate Christ's sufferings, he will become so immersed in them that his own sufferings will seem quite small in comparison to those of the God-Man.

It was with this end in view that Father Matthew Miller, O. F. M., founded the Franciscan Apostolate of the Way of the Cross. Realizing that many bed-ridden patients are being deprived of a wealth of spiritual treasures he resolved to spread the use of the centuries-old Station Crucifix among these shut-ins. In this way they are able to "walk the Holy Highway" with the Suffering Christ and gain countless blessings and indulgences for each mental journey they take with Christ.

Union with Christ Through the Eucharist. Only God could have thought of such a means of union as the Blessed Eucharist, because only God could create the effect such a possibility. The mother gives a memento to her child as he leaves home, the friend gives a photo to a friend, but Christ gave us Himself. Unfortunately, in the early centuries people did not receive Christ into their hearts daily. It was Saint Francis of Assisi who insisted upon more frequent reception of the Eucharistic Christ into our hearts. This Seraphic love which

Francis had for Christ in the tabernacle has been transmitted to every Francis heart. But it cannot, and must not, stay there.

Knowing what His presence means to us we will be anxious, serene, restless, until we see our Catholic patients receiving Christ into their hearts or at least several times a week, according to their physical condition. We will be told that He will help them battle the difficulties which assail them, the discouragements which are continually cropping up as they lie in the hospital, helpless and forgotten. This will surely prove to be the patient's greatest consolation.

We have touched upon the most important phases of Franciscan Spirituality as they affect the vitality of our Franciscan hospitals. It has been shown that the over-all spirit which should dominate the Franciscan hospital is the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of men. Finally, the three principles which molded Francis's character are also proposed for the molding of the patient's character: from the Crib we lead the patient to the Cross and to the Eucharist, Which will serve as his Companion into eternity. What formula can we desire?

Buffalo, N. Y.

Fr. John Forest Faddish, O.F.M.



Preserve silence so that you may never engage in detracting, complimentary, dissolute or dishonest speech, and realize that it will be necessary, according to the Savior's teaching, to give an account in the day of judgment not only of idle, harmful, and scandalous words but also of the slightest thought.

Saint Bonaventura

THE GOSPEL MERCHANT

Thomas of Celano, the first officially-recognized biographer of Saint Francis, was a writer whose literary gifts and discerning taste have preserved for us much of the pristine glory of Saint Francis's life. Thomas assures us that the whole object of Francis's striving, his first wish and his final aim, was to observe the teachings of the holy Gospel in utmost faithfulness—"to obey the commands of our Lord Jesus Christ with all the ardor of his soul."

Francis yearned to reproduce in his own life the life of Christ, as fully as that is given to mere man. And so Saint Francis was a balanced idealist: his heart was in heaven but his feet were firmly on the ground, and he knew that only by prayer and by a close study of Our Lord's character as narrated in the Gospel could that holy balance be achieved and maintained.

Those who first surrounded our Seraphic Founder clearly grasped that Francis intended only that his brothers live the Gospel integrally if they were to become Christ-like. And thus when it seemed doubtful that Pope Innocent III would actually approve the Franciscan Rule, it was Cardinal John of Saint Paul who appealed to the Pope and to the cardinals of the papal court. This defender of Francis and his ideal pleaded that a rejection of the petition of Francis on the grounds that his Rule was too novel and too hard to live would in effect impugn the practicability of the Gospel. All the little beggar from Assisi wanted, the cardinal argued, was that the law of the life of Christ in the Gospel be confirmed unto him and his followers.

In reality, that was an astute argument to advance against any possible objection Innocent III may have had to confirming the Rule officially. Cardinal John of Saint Paul was perfectly aware that the guiding purpose of the Pontiff's reign was the creation of a theocracy of the Christian nations, under whose aegis the Gospel itself would be better realized in all spheres of contemporary life.

The superb intuition given to Francis, enabling him to perceive the fundamental importance of the historic life of Christ as delineated in the New Testament, has stamped an everlasting evangelical character upon Franciscanism. It has fixed the gaze of his spiritual progeny unflinchingly on the Christ of the Gospel. For the Franciscan, then, other biographies of Christ, books of piety and meditation, all are acceptable in the degree that they aid one to interpret and to apply to one's own soul the lessons of the Christ-life.

We understand that even the most "inspired" books can never hope to do

more than deepen our love and attraction for the inspired Gospel account. The imagination of any word-artist, however so beautiful and moving the poet's traces of Christ, becomes meaningless and empty if it prove untrue to His as found in John, Luke, Mark and Matthew.

Indeed we have sufficient material in the Synoptics and John to occupy exclusive attention. For like a magnificent panorama of mountain valleys and the awesome vistas across the face of some storied land, we find always new angles, fresh inspiration, hitherto undiscovered loveliness hidden within the Gospel narrative. The Little Flower, once advanced well in the spiritual life, put aside all else in favor of "just" the New Testament. Is it likely that he kept by his side much else? It is not without cause that Saint Bonaventure calls him "a Gospel merchant."

Were we never to study anything but the life of Christ in the New Testament, yet we should never begin to exhaust the limitless possibilities of knowing still more about *this most beautiful among the sons of men*. We would commence in time what we hope to continue throughout all eternity.

The deepest secret of genuine holiness, as shown us in the lives of the saints, is this vision of Faith that reveals Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, and once having attained it, the implementation of it in one's personal life. As Bonaventure reminds us in his commentary on Saint Luke: "To attain to heaven consists most especially in two things: in the perfect knowledge of Christ through faith, and the perfect imitation of Him through the Cross. He who does not the vivid quality of our faith (albeit an infused virtue) requires quickening support from a close examination of the historical details of His divine life lived so perfectly in human form?"

Of course it is by His grace—first of all—that we can become like Jesus: *Without Me you can do nothing*. But grace perfects nature, and it is why we strive to have the guilelessness, the limpid simplicity, the all-pure humility that adorned the natural character of Christ and Francis. We want Christ clear and firm and decisive in His judgments; we hear Him speaking with one having authority, so that His very enemies are compelled to exclaim: *Has any man spoken as this man speaks*. No matter how He may be heckled and harassed by others; no matter how fatigued by the burdens of the day and the heats, He remains patient, approachable, with time to help those who come to Him in need.

In His relationships with others, we learn from the Gospel that He values them in terms of their love for the heavenly Father: He does not play favorites and rewards with a kind word those who have tried their best. He pierces through the weakness and the malice and the blindness of men, and sees in them the image of God Whose Son He is. He is a true friend Whose sympathy goes out to the little ones, to the outcasts, to the lepers, to the sinners. And Saint Francis turned at times to fix his gaze on this facet of Christ's character almost to the exclusion of the rest.

But yet we never find that He is soft, or over-indulgent, or influenced by human respect. Even those who come to entrap Him in His words must admit that He cares not for the opinion of men. Never languid nor motivated by mere sentiment, He is in all things selfless, incapable of deception, single-minded for the interests of the heavenly Father.

Our Lord's constancy meets us at every turn in the Gospel. A shadow of that same constancy manifested itself in the firmness of Saint Francis's conviction that God had called him neither to the eremitical nor the monastic life as already established, but to a new and simple observance of the Gospel. Jesus has a definite work to do, and His meat and drink is to do His Father's will. His journeys, His teachings, His sufferings, all demonstrate this unswerving trait.

Failure may come His way, but He does not despair; opposition may beset Him on all sides, but this serves only to enkindle his best efforts; the malice of others never embitters Him. He does not look for recompense on this earth; He toils and prays and goes about doing good. Above all and in all He understands that there is no salvation for men unless there be the Cross for Himself: *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His Glory?*

Briefly, then, this is the picture of the eternal Galilean that must have been formed in the mind of Francis and filled his soul with love and longing. This is the Christ Whose wounds were impressed forever in the crucified flesh of our stigmatized Saint-Founder. This is the Christ to Whom we too must conform our lives in the measure of our grace, because we too are Franciscans. An impossible task, you say? Yes, but are we not called to the impossible? *Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father*. We do not cease to be true followers of Christ and Francis simply because we are not perfect. We cease rather when we cease trying to be like them!

Anthony-on-Hudson
Roseland, N. Y.

Fr. Aidan Carr, O.F.M. Conv.

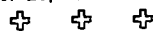
FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

The following list of Franciscan Ordinaries gives a fair indication of what is to the Church in China. The list is accurate up to December 31, 1951 (Acta O 35-6).

<i>Diocese of Mission</i>	<i>Ordinary</i>	<i>Position</i>
Chefoo	Alphonse Tsung, Bishop	Impeded (probably in)
Chowtsun	Ambrose Pinger, Bishop	Imprisoned (Tsingtao)
Idushien	Sac. saec. PA	?
Weihaiwei	Gabriel Quint, Prefect	Imprisoned (Shanghai)
	Apostolic	
Tsinan	Cyril Jarre, Archbishop	Imprisoned ¹
Kiangchow	Quinctinus Pessers, Prefect	Thought to be at liberty
	Apostolic	
Luan	Constantius Kamer, Bishop	Impeded (Peiping)
Shohchow	Edgar Haering, Bishop	Impeded (Peiping)
Taiyuan	Luke Capozzi, Archbishop	Imprisoned
Fengsiang	Anthony Chow, Bishop	Perhaps now imprisoned
Yutze	Hermenegild Focaccia, Bishop	At liberty
Sian	Pacificus Vanni, Archbishop	Impeded (staying in)
Tungchow	Peter Moretti, Prefect	Expelled
	Apostolic	
Yenan	Pacificus Ly, Bishop	Newly appointed ²
Sanyuan	Fulgence Pasini, Bishop	Imprisoned
Hankow	Maurice Rosa, Archbishop	At liberty
Ichang	Venantius Gijssels, Vic.	Imprisoned
	Capit.	
Kichow	Ferruccio Ceol, Bishop	Imprisoned
Laohokow	Alphonse Ferroni, Bishop	At liberty
Shasi	Julius Dillon, Prefect	Expelled
	Apostolic	
Suhsien	Dominic Mien, Prefect	At Liberty
	Apostolic	
Wuchang	Rembert Kowaski, Bishop	Imprisoned
Changsha	Petronius Lacchio, Archbishop	Imprisoned
Hengchow	?	?
Peking	Ladislaus Lombos, Prefect	Impeded (staying in)
	Apostolic	
Siangtan	Pacificus Calzolari, Prefect	At Liberty
	Apostolic	
Yungchow	Sigisbald Kurz, Bishop	Impeded (staying in United States)

¹ Since this report was compiled, notice has been received of Archbishop Jarre as a result of imprisonment. The faithful of Tsinan are already venerating him as it was Archbishop Jarre who published in 1943 his Chinese translation of the Canon Law (CORD, Vol. I, No. 12, October 1951, p. 240).

² Rev. Fr. Pacificus Ly Hsuan Te, of the Fengsiang Commissariat, was named of the Diocese of Yenan on December 28, 1951.



The summer of 1952 will mark the thirtieth year of the Department of Sacred Science at Saint Bonaventure University. Courses in Theology are offered to Sisters, Brothers, and lay-teachers of Religion in Catholic Schools.

This department was organized by the Very Reverend Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O. F. M., former President of Saint Bonaventure College and Rector of the Seminary of Christ the King, and the present Minister Provincial of the Holy Name Province. The curriculum comprises five summers of study in Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Sacred Scripture, Church History, Canon Law, Catechetics, and related subjects, leading to the

Master of Arts degree upon the completion of a written dissertation. The first completed their studies in 1943.

For the record, let it be mentioned that Saint Bonaventure University was the first institution in the Americas to offer in Sacred Theology for teaching in colleges and universities have since this program, varied in non-essential their individual purposes but based upon the plan first put into effect by Thomas. The first of these schools offered the courses in the Sacred Theology teachers in the year when Saint Bonaventure University granted degrees to its graduates in the same field.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Religious Profession

I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body (Gal. 6, 17). When a religious makes his profession, he promises to observe the particular Rule of his Order or Congregation by living in poverty, chastity, and obedience. This ordering of the formula of profession clearly indicates that the essence of the religious life is the observance of the evangelical counsels or the three holy vows. A person is a religious, not so much because of the Rule he follows, but rather because of the vows he makes. Hence, it is of the utmost importance to every religious to have a high regard and a deep love for those sacred promises. Let us, therefore, take the religious vows as the subject of our conference this month. While the conference deals with the vows directly, still all that is said can be understood with equal right of the three virtues which underlie the vows, namely, the virtues of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Consequently, those who have not made religious profession as yet, can look upon the following thoughts as applying to themselves as well as to the professed members of the Community.

At times, spiritual writers compare religious profession to a mystic crucifixion. The comparison, I think, is apt and suggestive.

According to this view of religious profession, poverty is the nailing of our hands fast to the cross. It is with our hands that we conduct our affairs and dispose of things. We speak of giving with a free hand. When we offer something to another, we do so by stretching forth our hand and saying: "Here is something for you; take it." We even have a commonly-used slang expression, "hand-out", to denote a gift. Hence, when the right to dispose of things, to give things away, is taken from us by the vow of poverty, it is really like nailing down our hands on the cross so that they can no longer have, or do with, things as they please.

Obedience is the nailing of our feet to the cross. Our feet represent the power of movement, the ordering of our lives, the going where we will. This going where we please is of the very essence of liberty and independence. That is why, when the State wishes to take away a person's freedom, it locks him in jail so that he cannot move around as he would like to. When, therefore, we renounce the freedom to come and go as we please by the vow of obedience, we, for all practical purposes, nailing our feet tightly to the cross.

Chastity is the piercing of our heart with a lance. The heart is a universally accepted symbol of love. We speak of loving with our whole heart. A beloved friend is frequently referred to as a "friend of one's heart". A lover is called a "sweetheart". Now, when, by the vow of chastity, we bind and regulate our heart so that it cannot love merely as it feels like doing, giving to fleeting whims; when we temper both the aversions and the attractions of our heart, it is equivalent to transfixing that heart with a lance, the lance of self-discipline and self-control.

In this way, then, we can look upon our three vows as a mystical crucifixion. Poverty and obedience are the nails that bind fast our hands and feet; chastity is the lance that transfixes our heart. Of course, those who do not understand, those who have no faith, will shake their heads in incredulity and disdain at such a crucifixion. Like the mocking, taunting enemies of Christ on Calvary, they will tell us to come down from the cross, to give up this foolish and useless way of life. And—maybe we ourselves are tempted to take this view of our mystic crucifixion!

Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. We have in the sacrifice of Christ and His crucifixion. Those wounds, which were inflicted by hatred, frightfully disfigured Him, hampered His actions, and stamped failure in the eyes of the world. And yet, by accepting those wounds in love, He changed them into the greatest and most precious sacrifice that the world has ever known.

Think of His hands. Christ was no longer free to bless others, to minister to them, to do acts of kindness for them. And still, by offering up those seemingly useless hands that He redeemed the world, He bestowed on all mankind the priceless blessings of grace, and proved to us the power of His love. And so it is with us. We may seem to be hampered in doing good because of our vow of poverty. We may not give the way we would like to give, we cannot do as much as we would. But the limitation on our helpfulness is only apparent. Never have we been in a better position to do good than now, with our hands held back by the vow of poverty. If we will only accept this restriction as a loving sacrifice to God, it will be the source of untold blessings far more precious than the tiny trifles we might have bestowed if our hands were free to give.

Consider Christ's feet as He hung on the cross. No longer were they

free to follow the lost sheep, or visit the sick, or seek out the sorrowing heart. They were nailed and tied. And yet He said: *And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself* (Jo. 12, 32). Yes, at those transfixed feet, to all appearances useless on the cross, countless sinners, starting with Mary Magdalene, have found peace, hope, and forgiveness. And what about us, with our feet held fast by the nail of obedience? Will that nail burn and tear and cut—and no longer be there? Or will it be like a key that unlocks endless stores of treasures? It depends entirely upon us. If we accept obedience in a spirit of redeeming sacrifice, it will lead us to more good and reach more places than our unshackled feet could ever have done. Our acts of obedience, exactly fulfilled and lovingly given, can be sent as messengers of blessing to all parts of the world—to the battlefields of Korea, to win protection or a happy death for our soldiers there; to the pagan stretches of Africa, to obtain the grace of conversion for some benighted infidel; to the fields of China, to merit the grace of baptism for some poor abandoned baby, or the grace of perseverance for a persecuted missionary.

Look at the Heart of our crucified Savior. It was quiet in death. No longer did it tap out its message of love. And yet, this lifeless heart lay open as a welcoming, safe refuge to all. It gave up its last drop of Precious Blood as a priceless ruby for the redemption of the world. The very wound that made sure that this Sacred Heart would stop beating was in all reality a mouth which told us of the greatest love known, the love of dying for one's friends. *Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends* (Jo. 15, 13). A similar effect is had when our heart is pierced with the lance of self-restraint. Its power to love is not killed but quickened, not taken away but redirected. It is dead only to earthly, natural love, to shallow emotionalism and blighting sentimentality. In place of these, it is filled with a supernatural, spiritual, refined love, a love that is stronger than death and most consistently capable of sacrifice.

Therefore, our mystic crucifixion, by means of the vows, emphasizes anew the superiority of sacrificial love over mere bustling activity in the supernatural order. Far from rendering us useless, it enlarges our range of service in every respect. It takes away all that we possess, yet never are we more able to give so much. It restricts our freedom of movement, and still on the wings of self-sacrificing obedience we can, like ministering angels, visit the uttermost parts of the world. It drains our hearts completely of watery, human love, and yet fills it to overflowing with the blood-red wine of a love that is divine. Thus, our crucifixion, like the cross of Christ, is the symbol and the source of untold blessings.

However, if this crucifixion is to have such wonderful effects, conditions are necessary. We must submit to it:—

In the spirit of sacrifice. By this is meant that we must expect to experience suffering because of our mystic crucifixion. We know very well that Christ did. In fact, His sufferings, even in anticipation, were so great that He died out in anguish: *Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me* (Mt. 26:39). Yes, it is only if we feel the sting of the nails and the thrust of the spear that we can say in all truth that we are offering to God a genuine sacrifice. Otherwise, we are like the man who said to Saint Francis de Sales that he never bothered him. To which the Saint dryly responded: "Then you've fasted!"

Freely. There can be no value, no merit, in a forced crucifixion. Jesus, we must mount this cross because we want to. He expressly said: *No one takes (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself* (Jo. 10, 18). We look upon our possessions, our body, our will, not as evils that we must renounce but as great goods that we wish to renounce for the sake of greater goods, for the sake of the greatest of all goods—God's love!

Cheerfully. This condition is a necessary consequence of the foregoing. Because we embrace the cross freely, we rejoice in the opportunity it offers us to prove our love for God. In Holy Scripture, there is but one recorded reference to our Lord's singing, and that was the night before His death, just before going to the Garden of Gethsemani to begin His passion. That's the spirit we must have; we make the sacrifice of our mystic crucifixion rejoicing, with a song in our heart. And we wouldn't come down from that cross if we had a chance in the world!

A practical way of continually nourishing these sentiments in our hearts is the devout renewal of our vows every day. Since these vows constitute a concrete and inclusive expression of our love for Christ, we shall want to make a protestation of that love over and over again. This protestation may indeed be made at any time during the day, but perhaps the most appropriate moment is after Holy Communion. That is the moment of enlightenment, motivation, and strength as far as the vows are concerned. It is the moment of enlightenment because the Eucharist is a living exemplification of the observance of the vows. It recalls to our minds the great sacrifice of Calvary, a sacrifice which Christ made in perfect submission to the will of His heavenly Father. *Christ humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross* (Phil. 2:8).

Again, the sparkling-white Host speaks to us of the radiant purity of Christ, Whose Precious Blood is the *wine springing forth virgins* (Zach. 9, 17). And the humble and unassuming appearances of the Eucharist give us an object lesson in absolute detachment from the riches and fineries of life. The moment after Holy Communion is also a time of motivation, because we have just experienced the magnanimous generosity of our Savior Who gave Himself to us so unreservedly. Certainly the thought of His liberality will impel us to manifest a like generosity on our part by renewing the offering of ourselves entirely to His service through the perfect observance of our vows. Finally, Holy Communion affords us all the strength we need to be faithful to our vows. This is the Bread of the Strong which can make us, as Saint Chrysostom says, like lions breathing forth fire and terrifying even the devil himself.

In this conference, we looked upon our religious profession as a mystic crucifixion, which blesses our life with a new value and increased power for good. We considered the sentiments which should animate us in submitting to this crucifixion, and mentioned one helpful means to foster these sentiments in our hearts.

By these and similar reflections, let us try to impress upon ourselves ever more vividly the sacredness of our holy vows. They constitute a knightly code of honor to which we pledged ourselves when entering upon the sacrifice of Christ, our Liege Lord. In the spirit of the knights of old, the driving ambition of our hearts should be—loyalty; and our one gripping fear—infidelity. With Christ we have mounted a cross, and with Christ we must remain on that cross until we die. And when, in death, we are taken down from the cross, if our religious life presents a record of courageous and faithful bearing of the marks of the Lord Jesus in our bodies, then we may rest assured that those precious marks, even like the wounds of the Crucified One, will remain forever—a pledge of mercy on the Day of Judgment, a claim to special glory throughout all eternity.

Westmont, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.



The foulest kind of boasting is that done through ignorance and carelessness.

Saint John Capistrano, O. F. M.

SAINT COLETTE OF CORBIE (II)

As a recluse, Saint Colette was a humble member of the Third Order of Saint Francis. She knew of the laxity prevalent in the ranks of the Seraphic Order; and in her humility she pleaded with Saint Francis and Saint Clare for penance and prayer that the fervor which once glowed among their sons and daughters might by God's grace be restored. But that she herself should be instrumental in bringing this about never occurred to her. In an ecstatic vision, however, she beheld the two saints pleading before the Throne of God that they might grant them the young recluse for the reform of their Order. As has been mentioned before, she stoutly resisted, believing herself incapable of so difficult and arduous a task; but once convinced that this was what God required of her, she accepted the desired solitude of her beloved hermitage. After that, she spent her life in countless weary journeys through her wayward France, in endless, often fruitless negotiations for the establishment of the houses of the reform.

Pedro de Luna had received Colette's vows, and had recognized her as chosen by God for a great work in the Church. It has been said that never did Pedro de Luna act a more worthy prelate than in his dealing with the young recluse of Corbie, giving her his sanction for the task he knew well cried out to be done. When she returned to Corbie as a professed Poor Clare, intending to inaugurate there the work of the reform of the Order of Saint Clare, she found that evil tongues had been busy. In her absence her reputation had been so besmirched and her character so maligned, that no one now dared to offer her shelter. This was the first great trial in her new work, and many more awaited her. Having distributed her parents' possessions to the poor, she was now without a place to live, and was told there would never be one for her in Corbie. Then she experienced for the first time what has been the lot of countless saints whose hearts are entirely dedicated to God and His holy Will, and of whom our Divine Savior uttered that highest of His beatitudes: *Blessed are you when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven.*

Disillusioned, and with the heavy heart which has tasted the ingratitude and fickleness of human love and esteem, Colette turned her steps away from her native Corbie. Two young women of her former acquaintance followed her out of the city, begging her to accept them as her first followers. They had not dared to manifest their true sentiments in the presence of their fellow townsmen, for theirs is the honor of being the first members of Saint Colette's reform. Then, with nowhere to lay her head or to shelter her two companions, Colette

have felt that this was a truly spiritually auspicious beginning for the work she had undertaken for Saint Francis and Saint Clare. How they must have rejoiced to see the foundation of the reform laid on such absolute poverty! Colette now made her way to the little town of Baume where the brother of Pere Henri, Alard de Baume, gave her a small apartment in his castle. There she and her two companions began the strict observance of the primitive Rule of Saint Clare.

The wife of Alard was at that time about to give birth to a child and was in imminent danger of death. At Colette's earnest prayer, she was happily delivered of an infant girl. This child grew up and joined the reform as Sister Perine, and was Saint Colette's first biographer. An older daughter of Alard also joined Colette as the fourth member of the little group. Thus the town of Baume had the distinction of being the cradle of the reform. However, the castle of Baume was neither suitable for a monastery, nor was the apartment spacious enough for one. The countess of Savoy then gave to Colette an old monastery at Besancon, a place ever to be especially loved by her as the first monastery of the reform. Others were established through various gifts and grants, but often only after long negotiations, endless journeys and interviews, all very distasteful to the young religious who ever longed for monastic solitude.

By 1435 she had established thirteen foundations of Poor Clares in France where the primitive Rule of Saint Clare and her own Constitutions were observed. Pere Henri had remained her faithful friend and assistant, accompanying her in many of her exhausting journeys. After he had watched the progress of Saint Colette's reform over a period of thirty-three years, and having seen her houses established in many important towns in France, Pere Henri died, rich in merit, at the age of seventy-three years, on February 23, 1439. He was buried in the Poor Clare monastery at Besancon. His death left a great void in the life of Saint Colette, for he had been her spiritual adviser, had encouraged and counselled her in her many trials, and been always a loyal and sympathetic brother in Christ, much as Saint Francis had been to Saint Clare.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were disturbed not only by the Great Western Schism, but by almost incessant wars within France and between France and England. While Saint Vincent Ferrer was thundering his threats of divine vengeance, and Saint Jeanne d'Arc, having fought for the Church and France, was languishing in prison, undefended by the bishops of France, and finally dying at the stake accused as a heretic, Saint Colette prayed, wept and labored, begging God's mercy for her nation. But the treachery and intrigue

between the houses of Bourbon and Burgundy continued, either in turn over to the enemy to gain their ends. Both houses loved and esteemed the effacing Colette, and gave her their support and assistance, while she in turn never ceased her efforts and prayers to bring peace to the two noble houses. At last peace was restored through the inter-marriage of the two families, it came as a heaven-sent relief. With this marriage came the expansion of territory of Duke Philip of Burgundy into the Low Countries. Colette had been hoping for an opportunity to expand the work of her reform into Flanders, now saw a way to do so. Finally in 1440, after many delays and difficulties, building of a monastery was begun in Ghent; but it was not until October 1442 that Colette and a small band of Sisters from Besancon took possession of the new house, thus introducing the reform into Belgium. The monastery was extremely poor and aptly named "Bethlehem." On her return to France some months later, she found Saint John Capistran awaiting her at Besancon, wishing to seek her advice regarding the reform, and also to assist her in founding a monastery at Amiens. This was to be one of the last of Saint Colette's foundations in France, made only after a great many difficulties and many obstacles had been overcome. In a letter to her Saint John Capistran called her "Sister Colette of the Order of Saint Clare, entirely devoted to Christ our Lord, our beloved daughter in the Heart of the Spouse of Virgins."

In 1443 Colette and some of her daughters set out for Amiens from Besancon. After the foundation there, a house was also founded at Hesdon in Flanders and one at Heidelberg.

In the autumn of 1446, Colette who had been for the time at Hesdon left there for Ghent. She was now 65 years of age, and her daughters, seeing her constant state of exhaustion, feared that her tired body could not last much longer. Colette, however, never slackened her pace, seeming to say that the night would soon be upon her. She still cherished the hope of establishing a house of her reform in Corbie, and having one now at Amiens, the capital of Picardy, she felt the time had come to direct her efforts toward Corbie. Negotiations were begun, to the joy of the people of Corbie whose sentiments were now so altered that they were filled with enthusiasm at the prospect of receiving the illustrious Colette back to her native town. A letter from Pope Eugene IV authorized her to establish a house of the reform there, and everything seemed to indicate the happy fulfilment of her long prayed-for dream. But, alas, the opposition of the large Benedictine abbey was so vehement that these religious declared they would not cease to oppose her in every possible

way. Colette humbly withdrew, not wishing to provoke quarreling and scandal, though she wrote to the Benedictines telling them of her deep sorrow and refuting the charge laid against her of wishing to deprive the Benedictines as well as the poor of Corbie of the support of the citizens. The building of the new Poor Clare monastery was by that time already under construction, but the monks appealed to King Charles VII against Colette, and the work was abandoned. The Duchess of Burgundy exerted her powerful influence on behalf of Colette, but the case continued to drag from one civil court to another. Saint Colette's cherished dream was thus never realized in her life-time, but she offered her heartbreaking disappointment to God as one more of those shattered dreams He has so often received from the hands of His saints.

After forty years of labor, having founded eighteen houses of the reform, her task seemed complete. Saint Colette had made the first draft of her statutes while at Besancon in 1410, revised them at Poligny, and continued working at their perfecting as her rich experience prompted her, until the final draft was made at Besancon in 1434. The fact that these statutes, written in Latin, were revised over a period of twenty-four years during which experience ever deepened her insight explains why her daughters in the twentieth century can still benefit from them so practically, able to observe the Constitutions of their Mother even in this modern age just as she bequeathed them to her daughters in the fifteenth century.

Saint Colette had also a small following of friars whom she encouraged to return to the faithful observance of their rule. In her long journeys she met many Franciscans whom she exhorted and encouraged; interested in her reform of the Second Order, these Franciscans gained from their contacts with the sincere and humble nun a great confidence in her, and a group of them on her advice returned to the strict observance of the Rule. They were the nucleus which expanded and wielded great influence in the restoration of discipline within the Order. Colette, ever a lover of unity, would have wished nothing more than that this group should later merge into the great observance of the Order and leave no trace of itself. This is but another proof that Saint Colette was truly a reformer in the noblest sense of the word, never changing the old into something new, but restoring to its original greatness what time and circumstance had all but destroyed.

The presentiment felt by her daughters at Hesdon, when she bade them farewell and gave them her mother's blessing that they would never see her again, proved only too genuine. On leaving any one of her monasteries to

embark on her long journeys, her last words inevitably were: "Let us all regret, my dear Sisters, that we have but one heart with which to love God; that this heart is so poor and weak." It was at the monastery of Ghent that Saint Colette was to depart this life. As the end drew manifestly near, her daughters grieved at their impending loss, Colette begged them not to mourn. She herself remained absorbed in prayer, at times in ecstasy. February 26, 1447, Extreme Unction was administered, while Colette continued in serene union with her Beloved. On March 6th, in the 66th year of her life, her soul fled to its Creator to receive the reward for so long and arduous labor in His Name. It is significant that on that same day Nicholas V was elected pope to succeed Eugene IV, which marked the end at last of the great Schism.

Colette was buried according to her expressed wish in the common cemetery, but some years later her precious remains were disinterred, placed in a small casket, and buried in the monastery of Ghent. When wars and intermittent disturbances obliged the community of Ghent to flee elsewhere for safety, each time took with them the precious relics. When after three hundred years they were again removed from Ghent and taken into France, the prioress of Carmel of Saint-Denis, Madame Louise, daughter of King Louis XVI, received them and kept them in safety. After the death of Emperor Joseph II of Belgium, Madame Louise legally deeded the relics of Saint Colette to the Poor Clares of the monastery of Poligny, where they remain to this day.

After her death, Saint Colette's monasteries of the reform continued to grow in numbers, until in the course of time they were to be found in nearly every country of Europe, sharing with many religious Orders the vicissitudes of war and persecution. Several houses flourished in Belgium leading to the foundation of a number of monasteries in Germany, among which was one at Duesseldorf. The Kulturkampf under Bismark scattered these communities, many of the nuns choosing banishment in exile to dissolution of the community. Thus the community of Duesseldorf fled across the border into Holland. Seeking about for a safer haven, the nuns thought of making a foundation in the United States. The Franciscan Fathers of the Holy Cross Province in Germany had sent a group of friars to the United States who had established a house at Cleveland, Ohio. Realizing the sufferings of the Poor Clares in exile in Holland, these friars asked the Bishop of Cleveland to accept a foundation of Poor Clares for his diocese. He consented, but on condition that the Sisters come to some house already established in the United States. This was a disappointment, which the friars sought to circumvent. Accordingly they requested the

Clares who had come from Italy only a short time previously and had established a small monastery in New Orleans, to come to Cleveland. In obedience to the Provincial, the little group left New Orleans and came to Cleveland. Once settled there the friars invited the Poor Clares of Duesseldorf to come to the United States. This was in December 1877. It was no small surprise to both the Italian and the German nuns to learn they were to combine their separate foundations. However, they set themselves to live together in harmony and love, each willing to be subject to the other. There were no difficulties of observance as each group faithfully observed the primitive Rule of Saint Clare. But there was the well-nigh insurmountable difficulty of the divergence of language; and the trial of not being able to understand one another was a telling one, as both little communities were only just beginning monastic life in a foreign land of strange customs which provided difficulties enough. In the end the Italian group left and made a new foundation in Omaha, Nebraska. This affair caused a great deal of scandalous gossip which grew to such proportions that it could not be repressed for years, to the detriment of both communities and to their mutual sorrow. There undoubtedly was considerable imprudence manifested by those who arranged the impossible combination and its attending circumstances, but there never was a trace of enmity or even disharmony between the two groups of nuns. They remained close friends through the years, so much so that some twenty years later when the two German foundresses, Mothers M. Veronica and M. Josepha had established a house in Chicago and the Italian Sisters were rebuilding their monastery in Omaha, the latter were invited to live in the Chicago cloister and did so for several months until the new Omaha monastery was completed.

Those of the original community in Holland who had remained there were able later to return to Duesseldorf and their old monastery. The little community in Cleveland meanwhile passed through the inevitable hardships of a new beginning to emerge as the first monastery of the reform in the United States. Having received worthy subjects they were able to purchase a more suitable property and build a permanent monastery and chapel. In 1892 the saintly Archbishop Patrick Feehan of Chicago invited the two foundresses, Mothers M. Veronica and M. Josepha, to make a foundation in his rapidly expanding archdiocese. A plot of land was bought, and one wing of what would later be a permanent monastery was built. In April 1893, five cloistered and three extern Sisters left Cleveland for Chicago. It was the year of the great World's Fair when Chicago was beginning its mushroom growth. Few took any notice of the

arrival of the little group of contemplative nuns who had come to give Chicago the benefit of their lives of prayer and sacrifice. So great were the trials and hardships of the early years of the Chicago foundation, that the saintly foundresses were several times tempted to abandon it and return to Cleveland. However, the Franciscan Fathers helped and encouraged them, and gradually the difficulties became less insurmountable. Both foundresses died in Chicago after they had seen the permanent monastery built, and are buried in the cemetery of the enclosure.

After some years the Cleveland house made another foundation at Rockford, Illinois, and after the first World War one in Oakland, California. The community later moved to a more propitious site in Santa Cruz, California. A foundation was made by this Community at Santa Barbara and as late as 1950, one at Los Altos. In 1948 a colony of Sisters was sent from the monastery in Chicago to establish a house in Roswell, New Mexico, Saint Francis's own land.

In 1950 the original Cleveland Monastery also sent a group of Sisters to Brazil, South America, to make a foundation there with the help of the Portuguese Franciscans. Thus in seventy-five years since their coming to the United States, seven houses have been founded in this country and one in South America. The old Duesseldorf house also established a monastery after the first World War at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, which house in turn established one at Belo Horizonte, also in Brazil. Thus the Duesseldorf house is the parent house of the seven houses in the United States and three in South America.

December 1952 marks the Diamond Jubilee of the first foundation of the Poor Clares of the Reform of Saint Colette in this country, and the nuns of the various communities which have grown from this foundation are planning to unite in making an offering of thanks and praise to God for His great goodness in the past three-quarters of a century. That vocations have happily flourished in the United States is a sign that the graces of the Holy Spirit have not been bestowed in vain, and that even in the modern stream-lined life of the present day souls know and choose the "better part".

Poor Clare Monastery of
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Roswell, New Mexico

Sr. M. Immaculata, P. C. (Abbess)

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (VII)

The Sixth Article

TEXT: Chapter III: *Love of God and Neighbor*

The obstacles to sanctity being removed by the three holy vows, the Brothers and Sisters should strive to fulfill the Divine Law, which depends wholly on the love of God and neighbor. Charity is the soul of all virtues and the bond of perfection. Nothing is better, nothing more effective than charity to mortify the vices, to advance in grace and to attain the height of all virtues.

This chapter, as its title indicates, embodies the heart of the Rule for the simple reason that it contains the substance of the Gospel message, man's obligation to love God and his fellowman. In fact it would not be far wrong to say that, in practice, one is a Christian, a religious, a Franciscan precisely to the extent that he realizes in his life the ideal inculcated in this sixth article of the Rule.

The Brothers and Sisters should strive to fulfill the divine Law . . .

First of all, one is a Christian to the extent that he approximates this ideal, for "the Divine Law . . . depends wholly on the love of God and neighbor." We recall how Jesus himself summed up the substance of Christian morality for a puzzled lawyer when he said: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like it. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself* (Mk. 12, 30-31). Perhaps this scribe, whose good will Christ commends, had become so confused by his study of the Mosaic law and the traditional red-tape in which the Pharisees had bundled it for safekeeping that he could no longer distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. Many a novice in religious life has faced a similar quandary in regard to religious perfection. Some do not seem to realize that the latter is simply a higher degree of Christian perfection. In consequence, it too is a love of God and neighbor. Tertiary Regulars, however, have no excuse for such bewilderment if they but grasp the significance of this sixth article of their Rule. Their goal is nothing more or less than the perfect observance of "the Divine Law" and hence a perfect love of God and fellowman. That is why this article might almost be called a statement of aims and objectives while the remaining articles

have the character of directives specifying the way in which this more perfect love can be acquired or practiced.

The obstacles to sanctity being removed . . .

Secondly, we declared that one is a religious to the extent that he or she puts this article into practice. For while the goal of the love of God and neighbor is the same for the Christian in the world as for the religious in the convent, the means for attaining this goal differ. In the case of the latter, the principal obstacles to this higher love are "removed by the three holy vows." Spiritual writers have long recognized that the evangelical counsels are an effective antidote to man's threefold concupiscence. This fact has been treated so frequently and in such detail that we need but allude to it here. What is sometimes overlooked, however, is the positive side of the three vows. The latter are not merely a negative aid towards the love of God in the sense that they remove whatever might create a divided heart. They do far more than this, for they produce a positive bond between the soul and Christ.

If we analyze the nineteenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we see that insofar as the three vows are evangelical they constituted the entrance requirements to the apostolic band. They created a social bond between the individual and the Savior that went beyond the ties of mere friendship or the relation that binds the disciple to the teacher. They incorporated the individual in that group Christ called His Own. They were a means of sharing his way of life, of working with him at his Father's business, of enjoying the intimate presence of his Person. This daily "living with Christ" was incompatible with plying a fixed trade, caring for one's property, supporting a family. Hence, the apostles had to choose—to put it bluntly—between a personal career and a home of their own or the company of Christ. In taking their vows religious make the same choice as did the apostles.

Now contemporary Catholic writers, while recognizing that the primary purpose of the married state is the procreation and education of children, have become more forcibly aware of the fact that it is not only the children who develop and mature in the bosom of the family. Marriage is also a school for parents, and the married state is the normal and natural way that God intends the majority of men and women to develop a healthy and mature personality.

For this reason, religious through their vow of chastity surrender something infinitely more precious than the so-called pleasures of the flesh. They offer God as it were the sacrifice of their personality. Nevertheless, to the extent that

religious are faithful to their chosen state the more readily and easily do they acquire that perfect personality that comes of "putting on Christ". The positive meaning of becoming one with Christ differs accordingly as one is a man or a woman, for there is no more fundamental or basic personality difference than that associated with the distinction of sex.

As spiritual writers have long pointed out, through her vow of chastity a woman becomes in a special way the bride of Christ. Obedience as a vow loses something of the importance and primacy it has for a group of men. It becomes instead a consequence of this spiritual marriage in which the bride pledges herself to obey as well as honor and love her divine Spouse. Poverty too becomes not so much an abnegation of material goods as a dependence upon the providence of the bridegroom to supply the necessities of life. Thus the religious is liberated from the need of providing for herself and is free to devote her entire time to comforting and consoling her Beloved and caring for His needs and those of His little ones. She will accept or use only what Christ's love sends her or provides her with.

As her love for Christ ripens, new insights are opened for the spouse of Christ. In His love she discovers a sense of her own worth, in His providence she finds that security that is so important to the mental well-being of a woman. In caring for His Own, she finds an outlet for her unique power to love and to give. All of this leads to her spiritual maturity and the flowering of a complete personality.

For a man, however, the vows have a somewhat different character. They unite one to Christ, but not as a helpmate or spouse but as an apostle, as one who is sent in Christ's name to take His place, to carry on in His stead. Hence a man's "working with Christ" is of a parallel rather than a complementary nature. He becomes "another Christ" busying himself with some aspect of the very work Christ Himself carried on while upon earth. He becomes a spiritual guide, a father, a friend. Like Christ he may labor at a man's trade to support those dependent upon him. Because an apostle means "one who is sent or commissioned," obedience to the Will of God in the person of superiors becomes of primary importance. Poverty becomes a means of being more Christ-like (Saint Francis) and has the practical effect of freeing one for the work of the apostolate (Saint Dominic). For a man, the analogy of the vow of chastity as a spiritual marriage no longer holds. Marriage itself does not have as profound physiological, psychological or spiritual effects for a man as it does

for a woman. It is not surprising then that spiritual writers who approach subject for the most part from a man's viewpoint have tended to understate full significance of the vow of chastity, regarding it as less important than vow of obedience or even of poverty.

Nevertheless, through this vow a man too sacrifices the normal natural of maturing his own personality. However, the more perfectly he "puts Christ," the more he acquires that sense of responsibility, that respect womanhood and motherhood, that fatherly solicitude for his spiritual charges that Christ instilled step by step into His Own apostles. For we know how Savior turned the "sons of thunder" into the gentlest of the apostles, how He rebuked them for being brusque and inconsiderate of the women who brought their little ones to Christ, how His Own example awoke in them a sense of compassion and understanding for the sufferings of humanity. And when one who has given up all to follow Christ's footsteps feels the heaviness of His Master's cross, when, in the language of Paul, he is crushed beyond measure so that he is weary even of life, he too will discover that Christ has not left him an orphan. Through the other self that is being formed within him, he will find that encouragement and inspiration that a man in the natural order was meant to find in the woman with whom he shares his life.

Thus the sacrifice religious make of their personality through the vow of chastity need not be a burnt offering. In God's supernatural providence it should rather be a more direct means of achieving that perfect personality that comes with transformation into Christ. Since Christ was the incarnation of the love of God and neighbor, we can understand why a religious becomes a better person, a better Christian for his vows. But more than this, in putting the ideal of this article into practice one becomes a better *Franciscan*, which brings us to the third point.

Charity is the soul of all virtues . . .

Not only does this sixth article of the Rule underscore the essence of Christian and religious perfection, it also indicates the Franciscan approach to this perfection.

Some spiritual writers will insist that *Christ is not divided* and that there is no such thing as being *of Paul* or *of Apollo* but all are Christ's (1 Cor. 12) and therefore such expressions as Franciscan spirituality, or Benedictine spirituality, and the like are meaningless. Yet to use Saint Paul's own simile, the Church is a body. Each member has its own function, its unique contribution

to make to the health of the whole. In this sense, too, each religious order or movement provides for some specific need in the plan of God. Its members tend to achieve their goal as Christians, as religious, in a distinctive fashion. For even though as Catholics they have a common faith and make use of the common means of perfection, such as prayer and the sacraments, nevertheless through the impression the personality of their founder leaves upon the movement, through the nature of their work, their specific function in the Mystical Body, certain distinguishing characteristics appear. In this sense, then, we can speak of a Franciscan spirituality, a Franciscan approach to perfection.

Spiritual writers sometimes distinguish two basic methods of acquiring the various virtues that make one Christlike. One is analytic or elementaristic, the other is synthetic or organic. The first is guided by the motto: "Divide and conquer." It singles out the different virtues or vices for individual study. It takes up each fault methodically and seeks to eliminate one vice after the other. Similarly, it concentrates first on the practice of one virtue, then upon another, and so on. This method has the distinct advantage of calling attention to one's particular faults and is highly effective in eradicating them. It is also not without its points in the acquisition of virtue. Nevertheless, it does have certain drawbacks. Not infrequently it creates the impression that the spiritual life is like a jig-saw puzzle that must be built up piece by piece. If not prudently employed, this method sometimes leads the soul to exaggerate the importance of certain virtues at the expense of others, even producing at times a distorted spiritual personality.

The organic approach, on the other hand, stresses the basic unity of the spiritual life. Charity or love is the soul of all the virtues. Hence to grow in love is to grow or increase in all the virtues (1 Cor. 13). Instead of concentrating, then, on one virtue after the other, the soul in love with God seeks only to strengthen that love and to manifest it at every opportunity. At one moment of the day, this may be through an act of obedience; at another, through an act of humility, patience, forbearance, and so on. The soul has but one prayer, to love God more and more. It has but one sorrow, that it does not love enough. This concentration on the single goal of a more perfect love not only simplifies the spiritual life, it turns the soul's gaze outward to God and neighbor rather than inward to self. It tends toward action and doing rather than upon critical analysis or evaluation. In this sense, it is a kind of spiritual extroversion. As this love increases, it crowds out all affection for whatever is inconsistent with the will of God. Thus, the vices and faults of the religious are gradually diminished.

Various virtues appear, not as extraneous appendages or as something from charity that pop into existence one after the other; but as the members and organs develop from the living germ cell, so these virtues simultaneously by imperceptible stages as one's love of God matures.

While the Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis need not despise or the analytic method in their spiritual life, the organic or synthetic should always have their preference. The present article of the Rule, a reminder that if a Franciscan would fulfill the function in Christ's Body that God's providence has planned, if they would put on the person of Christ, if they would grow in His love either as His bride or as His nothing is better, nothing more effective than charity for attaining the. Growing in love through loving, each will become a better Franciscan therefore a better religious, a better Christian.

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.



If after Communion you do not experience some spiritual refreshment that is a sign of spiritual sickness or death. You have placed a fire in your breast, and you do not feel heat; honey is in your mouth, and you do not taste sweetness. But, if you experience any consolation, attribute it not to yourself but to His unfathomable goodness, and say in your heart: "By His mercy He has obliged me to detest my misery. If He has done such things to me, what would He do if I should correct my life? Then, with all my might, I will change and cling ever to Him." But do not think this to be possible by your own power, but by the help of His grace; this may He deign to do for you and to me.

Saint Bonaventure

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(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Irenaeus Herscher, O. F. M.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According To Saint Bonaventure

As we have already seen, Saint Bonaventure's plan for examination of conscience gives first place to the sins and imperfections arising from negligence. The Seraphic Doctor advises us to consider these faults in some detail, for no religious, regardless of how seriously he strives for perfection, can hope to avoid them entirely. Nor, for that matter, should we regard these faults as wholly unmixt evils, for besides keeping us watchful and spiritually active, they tend to deepen our humility and to make us rely more completely on the grace of God. Second in importance, according to Saint Bonaventure, are the sins and imperfections arising from concupiscence. These faults also stem from the weakness of our human nature and consequently they too are difficult to avoid. We must nevertheless wage a relentless war against them, for they are intrinsically more serious than sins of negligence and are not merely a matter of humiliation for us but a matter of genuine shame. The third and most dangerous kind of sin is that arising from malice. Saint Bonaventure does not devote much space of sins of malice, for to him, the ardent follower of the Seraphic Francis, malice is simply incompatible with the Franciscan vocation. He is sufficiently realistic, however, to admit that there are hidden seeds or roots of malice in the soul of every man—the plantings of original sin. If allowed to grow, they can and invariably do result in the total destruction of the spiritual life. Unlike the sins that arise from the weakness of our poor human heart, sins of malice arise from a deliberately perverted intellect and will; they are diabolically evil.

Since the most common manifestation of malice is anger, Saint Bonaventure here advises us to ask:

DO I KEEP ANGER ALIVE IN MY HEART? DO I
ALLOW IT TO APPEAR IN WORD OR MANNER?

There is, of course, such a thing as righteous anger or indignation. Christ Himself gave us an example of that when He drove the vendors and money-changers out of the temple. This kind of anger arises from love, and all its manifestations are controlled by the rules of Christian charity and prudence. It may at times be deadly serious; it may wound deeply and hurt deeply, but it is always tempered and sweetened by the charity from which it springs.

With this in mind let us now turn to the various forms of sinful anger. First in importance are the sins of cold and conscious revolt against others. Here we may ask: Do I knowingly and wilfully hate any person, for any reason

whatsoever? Do I hate those who are ill-disposed toward me and who obviously seeking to injure me? Am I forgetful that Christ has commanded to love my enemies, to do good to those who calumniate and persecute me? Do I allow my natural dislikes and aversions to assume the proportions of hostility? Do I deliberately keep the cold fire of hatred alive in my heart? Am I so blind and perverted that I even speak proudly to others of the intensity of my hatred? If I must admit that this evil passion sways my heart, do I acknowledge the reason for it? There can never be a legitimate reason for a religious to hate any person; when hatred enters the heart, the spirit of God departs. It is tragic indeed that a religious, consecrated to God and bound by vow to strive for perfection, should be so forgetful of the example of Christ, so blind to the misery of his own soul, so indifferent to the precepts of his Franciscan vocation, as to sin through hatred. Still, we may do well to examine ourselves honestly: If I have been the victim of injustice, real or imaginary, have I allowed my outraged ego to seek satisfaction in revenge? If a superior has been unjust to me, have I retaliated by defiance, insubordination, or insult, adding to the sin of injustice the sin of irreverence? If jealousy is the cause of my hatred, do I seek to harm the person of whom I am jealous? Do I, for instance, try to ruin his reputation, undermine his position, or destroy the qualities of which I am envious? If jealousy stems from a disappointed affection, what is my reaction in the face of a rival? Do I perhaps hate a person who is really or apparently robbing me of the love of a friend, a superior, students, or of my patients? Am I foolish enough to allow unrequited love to turn to hatred? Jealousy is one of the most destructive vices that can enter the human soul, and hatred that is born of jealousy is deadly.

If I avoid the cruder and more obvious forms of malicious anger, do I perhaps indulge in the equally effective and often more cruel form—insult, ridicule, barbed remarks, needle-prick annoyances? Do I sink to the level of spying on my enemy to discover his weaknesses? Do I have recourse to slanderous insinuation, refined and subtle calumny? If I must admit my guilt in this regard, then I must admit that I am keeping anger alive in my heart. I am slowly but surely poisoning my soul.

Sad to say, enmities in varying degrees of bitterness do exist among religious. We must, however, recognize them for what they are—the works of the devil. Every religious is therefore bound to avoid both the causing of enmities and the widening of breaches that already exist; and there is a positive obligation to avoid cold and sullen silence? Do I let others know I have a grievance by completely ignoring

especially on the part of superiors, to restore enemies to mutual charity. No matter who or what caused a difference between members of a religious community, everyone concerned must make a sincere effort especially through prayer and sacrifice, to heal the difference. Nothing is more distressing than the sight of an open, conscious, and deliberately protracted enmity among religious; it is a grievous offense against God, a scandal to seculars, and an attack on the very foundations of the religious life. If our community should ever be torn by open and malicious discord and if nothing is done about it, we should feel obliged to bring up the matter at the official visitation.

Besides the sins of anger that arise from an evil and perverted will, there are also sins that arise from our psychological and physiological makeup. These latter are less malicious, but they are none the less evil and may lead to tragic consequences. Here let us ask ourselves: Am I irritable and short-tempered, or—as we usually prefer to express it—have I a nervous temperament? Do I fly into tantrums at the slightest provocation? Do I tend to do physical violence to others in my fits of anger? Am I perhaps notorious for my bad temper? This is especially important for superiors and for those who have authority over others, in schools, for example, or in hospitals. There is a definite incongruity in the religious who maintains authority through fear rather than through love. We should all do well to ponder the words of Saint Francis to superiors: "And let them be careful not to become angry and excited about the faults of others, because anger and excitement in oneself and in others hinders charity." Besides, a cantankerous religious is little better than an caricature. There is something ludicrous and pathetic and perhaps a little contemptible about a religious who can be thrown into a fit of anger by a banging door or a dead battery or an inadvertent error on the part of another. We should keep in mind, too, that it is almost impossible for a quick-tempered religious to maintain the respect of those over whom he may have authority. If he cannot control himself he cannot hope to control others. There is also the sobering fact that an angry man almost always commits more than the sin of anger. In the heat of passion he may pass harsh and unjust judgments, distort the truth, impute to others deeds and motives of which they never dreamt. A violent tongue is no ornament to a religious personality, and rarely, if ever, accomplishes any good.

Religious women, as a rule, avoid the more explosive kind of anger as being undignified and unladylike, but they are less scrupulous about avoiding the quiet and sullen kind that is more dangerous because it eats more deeply into the soul. In this regard we may ask ourselves: Do I show my anger by lapsing into cold

the person who has aroused my anger, by refusing to return a greeting or refusing to respond to a remark from that person? A face distorted by violent anger is sometimes laugh-provoking; but there is nothing amusing in the cold stare and curled lip that betrays quiet anger.

In regard to the minor clashes that are bound to occur in community life, we should carefully examine our disposition toward forgiving offenses and toward asking forgiveness of those we offend. For example: Do I know how to offer and accept an apology in the spirit of Franciscan courtesy? Or are my apologies as insulting as the original offenses, and my acceptance of apologies so magnanimous that they dwarf the apologies? Do I forgive graciously and sincerely, and do I try to forget offenses as quickly as possible? Do I always wait for the other person to take the initiative toward reconciliation? Do I habitually take it for granted that I am the offended one, the other person the offender? Am I willing to admit that I may be as responsible for the discord as the other person, perhaps even more so? These and similar questions will throw considerable light on the degree of humility and self-knowledge we possess.

A milder form of anger concerns our human tendency to complain about minor irritations. Such trivialities as bad weather, unpalatable food, annoying people, will sometimes exhaust our meager supply of patience. If we cannot avoid such faults entirely, let us at least avoid the habit of complaining. A Franciscan who must be qualified as critical, nagging, or murmuring is one who has forgotten he belongs to the Order of Penance. The same may be said of aversions. We cannot hope to love all people in the sense that we feel attracted toward them; such love is beyond our power to control or to force. Many people, even among our fellow religious, will be repulsive to us. But we must never allow such feelings to blind our judgment or to turn into hatred.

A final word may be said in regard to our attitude toward quick-tempered persons. Such persons are victims of a serious spiritual malady; humble and patient charity on our part will help them overcome their illness. We should never deliberately irritate them, as is sometimes done, to make them a source of entertainment. We have no right to make sport of the weaknesses of any man; the dignity of the human personality as the image of God forbids such irreverence. Let us bear in mind the admonition of our Seraphic Father, that we should bear with the frailties of our neighbor as we would have him bear with us if we had his frailties. "Where charity is and wisdom," says Saint Francis, "there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where patience is and humility, there is neither anger nor disturbance of mind."

the person who has aroused my anger, by refusing to return a greeting, refusing to respond to a remark from that person? A face distorted by anger is sometimes laugh-provoking; but there is nothing amusing in the stare and curled lip that betrays quiet anger.

In regard to the minor clashes that are bound to occur in community life, we should carefully examine our disposition toward forgiving offenses and asking forgiveness of those we offend. For example: Do I know how to offer an apology in the spirit of Franciscan courtesy? Or are my apologies as insulting as the original offenses, and my acceptance of apologies so magnanimous that they dwarf the apologies? Do I forgive graciously and sincerely, and try to forget offenses as quickly as possible? Do I always wait for the other person to take the initiative toward reconciliation? Do I habitually take the initiative? Do I grant that I am the offended one, the other person the offender? Am I ready to admit that I may be as responsible for the discord as the other person, or even more so? These and similar questions will throw considerable light on the degree of humility and self-knowledge we possess.

A milder form of anger concerns our human tendency to complain about minor irritations. Such trivialities as bad weather, unpalatable food, and impatient people, will sometimes exhaust our meager supply of patience. If we avoid such faults entirely, let us at least avoid the habit of complaining. A Franciscan who must be qualified as critical, nagging, or murmuring is a person who has forgotten he belongs to the Order of Penance. The same may be said of aversions. We cannot hope to love all people in the sense that we feel drawn toward them; such love is beyond our power to control or to force. Many people, even among our fellow religious, will be repulsive to us. But we must not allow such feelings to blind our judgment or to turn into hatred.

A final word may be said in regard to our attitude toward quick-tempered persons. Such persons are victims of a serious spiritual malady; humble and patient charity on our part will help them overcome their illness. We must never deliberately irritate them, as is sometimes done, to make them a source of entertainment. We have no right to make sport of the weaknesses of others, or to treat the dignity of the human personality as the image of God with irreverence. Let us bear in mind the admonition of our Seraphic Father: "We should bear with the frailties of our neighbor as we would have him bear with us if we had his frailties. 'Where charity is and wisdom,' said St. Francis, 'there is neither fear nor ignorance. Where patience is and gentleness, there is neither anger nor disturbance of mind.'"

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner,

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Sacrament of Love

Back in 1917, during World War I, a group of eighteen Irish soldiers came across a church in a little French village which had been recaptured from the Germans. To their utter horror they found the tabernacle door forced open and the Hosts strewn over the floor. Reverently, adoringly, they gathered up the Sacred Particles and received them in Holy Communion. And in protest of such an abomination they posted this simple statement on the door of the church: "We, the undersigned, offer our lives, should God be pleased to accept them, in reparation for the horrible sacrilege committed against our Eucharistic Lord in this church." According to Army records, all eighteen of these soldiers were killed in the next battle in which they engaged. God had accepted their sacrifice.

Naturally, this story of heroism thrills us. We look upon those soldiers as men—men of deep and penetrating faith, with a practical love equal to their faith. In this conference, I should like to point out how we also can give a practical demonstration of our faith in, and our love for, the Blessed Eucharist—not by dying for it but by living according to its message. At times, living for a truth, day in and day out, often in the face of formidable challenges and heart-breaking disappointments, can be harder than dying for it by one swift, sure stroke. The message of the Eucharist according to which we are asked to live is fraternal charity, the love of our neighbor—a message that is fairly shouted forth from the tabernacle.

The very institution of this Sacrament took place against a background of love. Recall what the Gospel says when our Lord, with His Apostles, entered the Upper Room where He was to institute the Holy Eucharist: *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end* (Jo. 13, 1). Indeed, He had given the Apostles many proofs of His great love. He had chosen them as His ambassadors, He had bestowed upon them the privilege of intimate friendship with Him for three years, He had taught them to pray, He had shown them the utmost patience, sympathy, and understanding. But now He was to go the very limit of love and give them the gift of gifts—Himself. Thus, we can see that the very motive of instituting the Blessed Sacrament was love of neighbor. It was a gift of love entirely of love and wholly dedicated to the diffusion of love.

Many centuries have passed since that memorable night, but throughout all the Eucharist has been a faithful echo of that opening note of love on

which it began. In fact, Christ's life in the Eucharist is but a continuation of His life in Galilee, a life summed up by Saint Peter in the words: *about doing good* (Acts 10, 38). Yes, in the Blessed Sacrament Christ comes through again for all generations those acts of kindness and help performed for the people of His day. Thus, He wishes to be our inspirer and model in doing good, giving us an example, that as He has done to us, we also should do to our fellow men. (Jo. 13, 15). Let us now consider some specific lessons in fraternal charity which our Eucharistic Master gives to us.

First of all, He is the very embodiment of self-forgetfulness, teaching us not to be eager for our own advancement, not to be envious of our neighbor's good fortune. Of old He went about His labors of love without the blare of trumpets, without the sensation of headlines, without a show. He had told the Jews: *I do not seek my own glory* (Jo. 8, 50). Literally He lived up to those words. Often, after He had worked a miracle, He would slip away to some quiet spot to avoid the praise of men. He sent His disciples with the power of performing wonders among the people, but He did not worry at all about how they might eclipse His fame in so doing. Today, in the Eucharist He is the same. How little in reality is done for Him compared to that which the world does for her so-called great men. He visits daily, a procession now and then, some songs in His honor. And His glory is greater than all the great ones of the world combined. How often He is content with a little frame house, or maybe not even that, while men of power dwell in luxurious homes. How often He has only the barest necessities, a simple line of sacred vestments and vessels, while His creatures go about in silk and jewels. Yet, we hear no complaints from the tabernacle, no spiteful attitude there. Self-forgetfulness is the watchword in that place. What a lesson for us when we feel we are slighted, when it seems our efforts are not appreciated, when we see others succeed and ourselves fail! At such times are we not easily tempted to begrudge our neighbor his success, and to glory in his accomplishments? But before we give in to these temptations, let us ask ourselves if Jesus would act that way. And when we have studied the lesson of utter selflessness that He gives us from the tabernacle, let us try to help us translate that lesson into practice.

Next, there is the question of judging our neighbor. We see how easily we are wrong—there can be no doubt about that—and we naturally feel inclined to condemn him. But, then, can we see the duration and the strength of the temptation that was his? Can we be sure that his fault was due to malice

rather to a moment's weakness? Can we know all the circumstances? And if we cannot, should we judge him? Let us look at Jesus' teachings on this point. While on earth, He proclaimed that He had come to save, not to judge. He refused to judge the poor woman taken in adultery. He corrected the Apostles who believed that the man born blind was so afflicted because of some sin on his part or on the part of his parents. In the Eucharist, He continues that same lesson. Can we for a moment think that He is ignorant of the untold uncounted sins of the world? He sees them better than we. He knows the malice of men's hearts. Often He recognizes a denying Peter and a betraying Judas at the communion rail. Yet He keeps His peace and reserves the judgment of such things to the great day of reckoning. Once more the sentiment of His Sacred Heart is: "I am to help and to save, not to judge." Why can't we adopt that principle as the rule of our lives? How much more pleasant we could make this world if we did! And how much more advantageous it would be for us than judging our fellowmen, since our Lord says: *Do not judge, that you may not be judged* (Mt. 7, 1).

Our Eucharistic Master, however, is not content with instructing us in what to avoid lest we do wrong to our neighbor, but He also teaches us how to be of service to others. While on earth, He wearied Himself in going from town to town to spread the consoling message of salvation. In the tabernacle He has put on immortality in order not to grow tired in helping us. He has multiplied His presence that He might be in all places just for our convenience. Of old, His time was everybody's time. He was sought in the early hours of the morning; His noonday repast was interrupted; and when evening shadows had fallen, though exhausted from the day's exertions, He was called upon to bless and heal the sick. Today, in the tabernacle, His time is ours. Never is He too busy for us; no hour is too early or too late for Him. In Palestine He blessed the children and fed the hungry people. In our churches and chapels He repeats these favors. How often has not His hand been raised in benediction over us? How often has He not fed our souls with a food more miraculous than the multiplied loaves of old? The sorrowing widow of Naim and the weeping sisters of Lazarus were consoled. Never has He refused the same service to us, as perhaps with aching heart we knelt before the tabernacle and poured out our troubles to Him. Formerly He worked countless miracles—restoring sight to the blind, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead to life. Nowadays, from His sacramental home, He gives ever new and more penetrating light to our soul that it might appreciate more deeply the wonders of the spiritual world. And He offers us

His own flesh to eat as the antidote against the leprosy of sin, and as of immortal life. Yesterday He climaxed His life of charity by a heroism. Today, at every stroke of the clock, that death is mystically renewed down God's love and blessing upon us. Where can we ever find a better in fraternal charity? Let us not say that it is too hard to learn. We are expected to do the same works that Jesus does—those wonderful miracles. We are expected to have the same love that He had: *This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you* (Jo. 15, 12). Many occasions during the day for little acts of kindness and service. They are a chance to show whether or not we have been apt pupils in the Eucharist of the Master. And there is our chance to amass for ourselves abundant riches, since every such little act of charity means a reward in heaven according to the words of Jesus Himself: *Whoever gives to one of these little ones a cup of cold water to drink, he shall not lose his reward* (Mt. 10, 42).

But the Holy Eucharist goes further than merely teaching us to love our neighbor. It also helps us to do so. Immediately after Jesus had instituted the Blessed Sacrament, He promulgated His great commandment of love: *A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another* (Jo. 13, 34). He chose this precise moment to proclaim the commandment of love in order to show that it is especially in the Holy Eucharist that will help us to observe that precept. And it could be otherwise. We cannot stand near a fire without feeling its heat. In like manner, we cannot come near to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, Whose Heart is a burning furnace of charity, without feeling our heart grow warm with true Christian love. The lives of the Saints are a clear confirmation of this truth. When did Saint Francis get his tender, all-embracing love for men? All through his life, night he would bask in the love of his Eucharistic God at the foot of the altar, and on the following day would radiate that love to his fellow men. What of Saint Vincent de Paul the Apostle of Charity in modern times? Very early in the morning he could be seen making his way to the chapel, there to spend a few hours with the Lover of mankind on the altar before setting out on his errand of mercy. How explain the heroic charity of Father Damian, which caused him to exile himself on a little island far out in the Pacific Ocean, there to care for the rotting bodies of lepers till he himself shared their terrible fate? There is only one explanation—the Holy Eucharist. "If it had not been for the Blessed Sacrament," he tells us, "I could not have carried on these many years." What the Eucharist did for these men, it can do for us also—make us *like-minded, compassionate, lovers of the brethren, merciful; not rendering evil for evil,*

not for abuse, but contrariwise, blessing (1 Pet. 3, 8-9). In this Sacrament is the fire which our Lord is so anxious to kindle in our hearts is, above all, the fire of love. And it is especially for that end that He comes to us in Holy Communion. Moreover, concerning this Sacrament, Christ has proclaimed: *The bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world* (Jo. 6, 52). But what is the nature of this life, if not charity? And it is precisely to nourish that life that Christ offers to us the Eucharist. Indeed, the Blessed Sacrament is the most effectual means that could be found for energizing our souls with strong, active charity.

In this conference, an attempt was made to show that the Blessed Sacrament was born of Christ's love for mankind, that it teaches us how to love our fellow men, and that it helps us very much to do so. From these observations it is evident that the Eucharist richly deserves the special title so frequently accorded it, namely, *The Sacrament of Love*.

But let us not make the mistake of expecting this sacrament to work automatically for us. Like all the other elements in Christ's economy of salvation, it works to the extent that we work. While it offers us the greatest possible incentive to practice charity, it is at the same time a call to action on our part. To spend fifteen minutes before the Blessed Sacrament, or to go to Holy Communion, or to assist at Mass, is something very good, but it is not enough. When we leave the chapel we must show the fruits of our close association with Christ, we must act in such a way that others can see that we have learned well the lesson of our Eucharistic Master. Behold how our Lord gives Himself, whole and entire, to us in the Blessed Sacrament; we also must be willing to give our all for the preservation and growth of charity. Behold how our Lord sacrifices Himself for us on the altar; we too must be ready to sacrifice ourselves on the altar of charity for others. The law of charity goes hand in hand with the law of self-renunciation, and unless we are determined to practice the latter, the former will never produce the fruits which it should. In a word, the Eucharist points out to us the way of charity, it strengthens and supports us in its practice, but it does not dispense with effort on our part.

A soul-stirring scene was enacted at the National Eucharistic Congress in Cleveland a couple of decades ago. A living monstrosity of gigantic proportions, composed of thousands of school children, was formed on the field of the Municipal Stadium. It was a scene that left sweet memories in the minds of all who saw it. What took place on that occasion should be repeated every day in

our convents. The God of charity is always in our midst, in our chapel, and religious—to the very last one of us—should in spirit rally to His side with gold of love in our hearts to form for Him a splendid monstrosity, a monster which will draw down upon us, upon our Communities, and upon all with whom we come in contact the last blessings and sweet joys of genuine charity.

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Fr. Herman Doerr, O. S. B.



See how beautifully Christ is contained under these two species, first of all because bread and wine are the best food for man. Bread nourishes the flesh of the body, and wine passes into the blood which is the seat of the soul. In the second place, because they are more chiefly and commonly used since they are purer and less disagreeable, the spiritual purity of the repast is shown by them in the best way possible. Thirdly, they best signify the Body and Blood of Christ, for the bread symbolizes that Body, threshed, ground and pounded, the Passion, cooked and baked by the fire of divine love in the oven and on the altar of the Cross. The wine signifies the Blood pressed out of the grape, that is, out of Christ's Body, in the wine-press of the Cross by the treading of the Jews. And, fourthly, they beautifully symbolize the Mystical Body of Christ, that is, the Church, gathered together of many faithful predestined to life, though collected from a multitude of grains and grape-clusters.

Saint Bonaventure

THE SIX WINGS OF THE SERAPH

The Prophet Isaias describes his call to the sublime office of a prophet in Israel in the following words: *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and elevated; and his train filled the temple. Upon it stood the Seraphims: the one had six wings, and the other had six wings: with two they covered his face, and with two they covered his feet, and with two they flew. And they cried one to another, and said: Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord of hosts, all the earth is full of his glory* (Is. 6, 1-3).

When Saint Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, was about to compose a treatise for the direction of superiors, he borrowed the title from the above passage, and named his book *The Six Wings of the Seraph*. The choice was a happy one, for, the Saint argued, even as the highest choir of angels rules over the other angelic choirs and because of their closeness to the Triune God, they are burning (Seraphim from the Hebrew word *saraph* i. e. to burn) with the fire of divine love; so must those also, who are called to govern and direct souls to sanctity, be aflame with the love of God, which is the essence of all sanctity.

This little work of Saint Bonaventure, which is divided into seven chapters, may boast of a history which is at once eventful and colorful. It has been used by countless spiritual leaders and directors and, because of its practical approach and human touch, its usefulness continues to this very day.

The celebrated Father Claudius Aquaviva, General of the Society of Jesus, had copies sent to each superior of the Society with the injunction that its wise directions should be carefully studied and sedulously followed.

While the book is primarily meant for religious superiors and directors, its scope is so broad and its directives so flexible, that anyone in charge of others, whether in schools, hospitals or any other position, will not fail to draw valuable lessons from its content. In modern terminology we might call it a textbook on Educational Psychology.

By the Six Wings, Saint Bonaventure understands the six virtues or spiritual qualities which should adorn those who are placed over others. These are: Zeal for Justice, Sympathy, Patience, Good Example, Discretion, Devotion or Piety.

Here we shall have to content ourselves with a few passages, which, though chosen more or less at random, will nevertheless be found useful by all readers.

The Seraphic Doctor claims that there are four classes of Religious who, in spite of certain faults and defects, may go by the name of "Good Religious".

This classification shows the broadmindedness of the Saint. And while it tends to give courage to all of us perhaps, yet, those who may discover their place on the lowest rung will soon learn that they must rise higher if they wish to attain spiritual perfection. They will soon learn that a good religious life does not mean a perfect religious.

To begin with the lowest class. They are people, the Saint tells us, who do no wrong, avoid sin, never give offence or scandal. They are friendly, sociable, and live in peace with everybody. So much for the negative side. On the positive side, they evince only a small measure of energy and activity. They perform their routine duties with fair regularity, but display no real effort or advance in virtue. In fact they seem to shun hardship, toil and sacrifice. What humorously Saint Bonaventure calls them "baptised babies".

We all know this type. They are harmless, innocuous creatures: smiling, afraid to harm even a little cat; seemingly helpful everywhere when the floor needs scrubbing, or some menial task needs attention, though not apt to hide away or find some trivial excuse. And yet, everybody seems to love them, so much so that even Almighty God would find it hard not to love these dear little angels.

The second class has much in common with the above. Apart from their hatred and horror of sin and every evil deed, they do take an active part in the practice of virtue. They appreciate its value and desire to progress to a certain point. They go so far as to make earnest and continuous efforts, bring sacrifices in order to register progress in humility, in mortification, in fraternal charity, and the like. However, when they reach a certain point they seem to lapse into mathematical calculation. They want to do all that is right and proper, but they call a halt when the requirements exceed a certain measure. They fulfill every item of the law, but are not interested in anything beyond it.

We often hear the language of this class of good people. "I want to go to heaven, sure. If I get by Saint Peter I shall be satisfied. But I don't want to be canonized. I don't have the ambition, the courage and the grace. Even in heaven I want to have my ease and not be bothered with the prayers and appeals of my brethren or sisters below, etc."

To sum up, they have no effective desire to strive after higher perfection. They are satisfied with what may be termed the "New Deal", leaving the steep slopes of the Everlasting Hills to those who wish to climb them.

The third class rises high above the second in their search for the higher and better things. Their horror for sin and all evil is deep-rooted; their love for virtue and good works profound and all-embracing. They are led by a spirit of genuine humility, mindful of the Savior's word: *When you have done everything that was commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants* (Luke 17, 10).

People of this class are positively yearning after the things of the spirit, after those inner graces which make us taste *how sweet the Lord is*, and which lead us to an intimate union with God. Yet, there is a certain inhibition, a hesitancy to go forward, which, perhaps may be traced to a degree of hidden self-love or selfishness. Hence, the spiritual misery of the sinful world and the horrible darkness in which paganism is steeped do not find much sympathy in their hearts. There is a curtain, as it were, between their own souls and the rest of God's unhappy children scattered over the vast and dreary lands of Christ's Empire. They fail to grasp the boundless love of the Sacred Heart of our Saviour. To explain their condition, Saint Bonaventure uses the answer of the fig tree to the other trees in the Book of Judges: *Can I leave my sweetness, and my delicious fruits and go to be promoted among the other trees?* (Judg. 9, 11).

This class, argues the Saint, is hardly fitted for superiorship, because they reveal a lack of vision and understanding in regard to the needs of others and fail to rise to the lofty plans of the Almighty. Hence, he introduces a fourth class which not only has the qualifications of true superiorship but also the requirements for true sanctity.

Such souls, Saint Bonaventure explains, not only possess all the virtues previously enumerated, but also a burning zeal that divine justice be exemplified in all men; that God be served, honored and loved by all. Our Divine Lord is the shining example; for being in the glory of God He left His heavenly home to live among men and become our servant. This is *the scarlet twice-dyed* (Ex. 26, 1), namely, the love of God and neighbor. The love of God not only seeks sweetness in God but strives to fulfill God's will in all His creatures, especially in those who are marked with His own divine image. Thus the love of God and the love of neighbor must converge upon their ultimate goal: the glory of God. In this state the soul is *not self-seeking* (I Cor. 13, 5), but God-seeking in all its hopes, longings and aspirations.

The description of this fourth class of Good Religious carries the implication that superiors should be chosen exclusively from this class. Saint Bonaventure knows well—and throughout the booklet he frequently avers to the fact—

that this is a high standard, and that the number of those who fully attain may not be large. On the other hand, the Saint makes it plain that the earnest desire and the strenuous effort to reach this standard are essential requisites for those who are called to lead others to sanctity, even as the same standard also serves as the aim of all who sincerely desire to be saints. When the Seraphic Doctor speaks of sanctity or perfection in religious communities, he speaks without mentioning the name, the Mystical Body of Christ, that unique spiritual organism, of which Christ is the spiritual Head and under Whom all members are united by the bond of love. This bond of *charity unfeigned*, as the Apostle calls it, flows from Christ the Head and, like the blood streams in the physical body, reaches all the members. To understand and fully share the knowledge and working of this mystery is the standard set by Saint Bonaventure for those who strive after sanctity, especially for those who are called to lead others to sanctity.

What then does Saint Bonaventure mean by Zeal for Justice? In what manner of justice has he in mind? "By justice," he says, "is here meant the observance of all those things that are necessary for the salvation or perfection of souls".

In other words, for a Religious, justice means observance—the observance, namely, of the Holy Rule. The observance of the Rule to which the Religious has pledged himself is his safe, sound and solid way to sanctity. It reminds us of the clear-cut axiom of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux: *Serva Regulam, et Regula servabit te*—"Observe the Rule and the Rule will save thee." Nothing is clearer, more practical and more consoling.

Our Rule, Saint Bonaventure goes on to say, is derived from different sources which either directly or indirectly bear upon the Rule that we profess. These sources are 1) the Eternal Law of God; 2) the laws of human institutions promulgated under the authority of the Church or, which is the same, the Order; 3) our Holy Vows and all that they imply; 4) certain practices peculiar to each Order or community, which have the sanction either of a venerable tradition or of present legislation or counsel.

Like all spiritual writers and directors, Saint Bonaventure is careful to distinguish between what is grave and what is light; between strict laws and precepts and counsels. "We should not," he warns, "regard grave things as grave and trifles as grave things." We should not *strain out a gnat and swallow a camel* (Matt. 23, 24); nor *tithe the mint and rue and every herb and pass*

judgment and the charity of God (Luke 11, 42). Coming down to practical life, the Saint admonishes that there is a vast difference between omitting an inclination in choir than repeated detractions of a fellow religious; between neglecting a little rubric at the Office than starting a serious and scandalous quarrel in the monastery. The former neglects demand kindly correction; the latter faults, severe punishment. In this, as in all other things, prudence must guide the superior, and humble submission the subjects. Thus, discipline is maintained and, as a result, charity will reign like a queen among the virtues.

Christ the King Seminary

Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O. F. M.



Take this Sacrament of the Eucharist away from the Church, and what will remain in the world but error and infidelity and a Christian people dispersed like a herd of swine and dedicated to idolatry, as is quite apparent among other unfaithful souls. But through This the Church stands, the Faith is strengthened, the Christian religion and divine worship flourish; for Christ said: *Behold I am with you unto the consummation of the world.*

Saint Bonaventure

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (VIII)

The Seventh Article

TEXT: *A great sign and aid of the love of Christ is the frequent and daily approach to the Holy Eucharist, which is at once a sacred banquet memorial of His passion. It should also be the endeavor of religious frequently to visit and devoutly to venerate our Lord Jesus abiding with this admirable mystery; for this is the greatest Sacrament of the Church an inexhaustible fountain of all blessings.*

The personal devotion of a great saint may sometimes leave a deep impression upon all subsequent Catholic practice. We need but recall Dominic's crusade for the rosary, Saint Leonard of Port Maurice's love for the stations of the cross, Saint Margaret Mary's apostolate for devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As Franciscans we may recall with pride that the Church has given its Christmas crib to our Holy Founder. We may even know in some particular and general way that Francis is in part responsible for the strong emphasis on Christocentrism, on devotion to the humanity of Christ and on the mystery associated with the Incarnation that characterizes Catholic piety as we know it today. Yet we may tend to overlook a very concrete and striking instance of Francis's influence upon the devotional life of the Church, our attitude toward the Blessed Sacrament.

Independently of the Sacrifice of the Mass, the Eucharist, as the Resurrection Sacrament, plays a very central role in the private devotional life of the religious or devout Catholic and in the public worship of the Church today. We take this so much for granted that we find it difficult to imagine that it was not always thus. Yet, in Francis's day benediction or exposition of the Blessed Sacrament for instance, was unknown. Catholic Eucharistic devotion centered almost exclusively about the Mass as a sacrifice. Christ was primarily the Priest, not our Eucharistic Friend, our divine Lover, Whose *delights were to be with the children of men* (Prov. 8, 31). The altar, not the tabernacle, was the center of the church. Indeed, wherever possible the Sacred Species were usually reserved in some hidden place and not upon the main altar, a vestige of which practice persists in the custom of keeping the Blessed Sacrament in a side chapel of the great cathedrals. If people visited the church apart from Mass, it was to pray rather to their Father in heaven, than to the Son Who had come into their midst to meet them.

Only rarely and after long preparation did the faithful dare to approach the Holy Table. Even an exceptional saint like King Louis received six times a year. This unwholesome attitude of exaggerated fear had been growing more or less steadily for several centuries. So acute had the problem of Communion become that the Lateran Council in 1215 had to impose upon the laity the obligation of going at least once a year. With the love for the Eucharist growing cold, it is not surprising that churches, for the most part deserted, began to collect cobwebs, to fall to ruin.

Into this milieu came a Francis who could "see nothing bodily of Our Lord Jesus Christ except His most Holy Body and His most Sacred Blood." Here in the Eucharist was his Christ, the Christ of the Gospel, the Christ on Whose life he modeled his own, Whose "mirror" he would become. This was the Christ who *came unto His own and His own received Him not*, leaving Him practically deserted, for all purposes a "forgotten God". No wonder Francis's heart was touched. With his own hands he gathered stones and mortar to rebuild crumbling chapels, he seized a broom to sweep out dirty churches, he washed soiled linens that were to touch the Body of his Savior, he burnished the sacred vessels that would hold His Blood. Wherever he went, he preached devotion to the Eucharist, begging his listeners not to forget the God in their midst, their "Emmanuel".

But because his voice was weak and would not carry to the corners of the earth, Francis began to write those simple touching letters, letters to the clergy, to the rulers of the people from the mighty prince down to the mayor of the humblest hamlet, to the custodes charged with the care of his friars, to all the faithful. "Eucharistic letters" they have been called, for it seemed that the Poverello could not pick up a pen, or write what was closest to his heart, without pleading His Love Who was not loved. He begged priests to show a greater reverence "for the Lord's Body and the cleanliness of the altar" (*Letter to the Clergy*). He would have the mayor send a town crier through the streets at eventide to remind the people to praise and thank God, to put off their foolish anxiety and receive the Body and Blood of Christ (*Letter to the Rulers*). He enjoined the superiors of his Order that "in the preaching they do, they admonish the people concerning penance and that no one can be saved except that he receives the most Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord" (*Letter to the Custodes*).

He sent his friars to distant provinces with chalices, ciboria, linens for the altar made by Sister Clare and her companions; he provided them with beauti-

fully wrought irons for baking hosts; all this, that they might supply needy churches and that his Lord might be treated with due reverence.

He encouraged the practice of visiting churches (*Letter to All the Faithful*). What even great theologians like Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventura hesitated to do, he invited—daily reception of Communion. His *Laudes* or "Praises on the Our Father", interpret "our daily bread" as the Eucharist. And when some of his friars wondered at the time he spent before the Blessed Sacrament and asked him what he did there, Francis replied: "I pray, I love, I adore."

Here was the heart, the living source of his spiritual life. Here was the reason why churches could never be just beautiful buildings of stone. This "faith in churches", as he quaintly calls it, he regarded as one of the greatest of the graces God had bestowed upon him. Recounting the special blessings God granted him upon his conversion, he writes "The Lord gave me so much faith in churches that I would simply pray and say thus: We adore Thee Lord Jesus Christ here and in all Thy churches which are in the whole world, and we bless Thee because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world!" (*Testament*).

When he learned that in certain parts of France there was a devotion to the Eucharist, France became for him "the Friend of the Eucharist". At the Pentecost chapter of 1217, Francis, resolving to go himself to a distant province, declared: "I choose the province of France, where there is a Catholic people who more than other Catholics greatly reverence the Body of Christ, which is to be a great joy, and therefore do I desire to converse with them" (*Speculum perfectionis*, c. 65). Indeed, he desired to die in France that his death, like his life, might be an act of adoration of the most holy sacrament.

His personal crusade for the Eucharist ceased to be a one-man affair. It became an essential part of the early Franciscan apostolate, a charge the Saints would not let his friars forget. Significantly, the very first of his *Admonitions* is entitled "On the Lord's Body".

What was the result? Lest we seem prejudiced let us quote the impartial testimony of the Benedictine Dom Cuthbert Butler. "When we find that a change appears in Western Christendom towards the middle of the thirteenth century, a great wave of Eucharist devotion and piety then beginning to flow, and when we recollect Saint Francis's Eucharistic propaganda, we can hardly be mistaken in looking on him and his friars as the first heralds of the movement that more than aught else has given increasingly its most special character to

all subsequent Catholic piety and spiritual life." (*Ways of Christ*, Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 53).

If even non-Catholic admirers of Francis recognized that the Eucharist was not only "the favorite theme of the Saint" (H. Boehmer), but also "to a certain extent the soul of his piety" (Sabatier), we can understand the importance of the present article of the Rule. Its wording needs no explanation. In it we hear Francis speaking again, we listen to his earnest words, we feel the warmth of his burning letters, we recall the solicitude that prompted his last will and testament. How well Francis realized the Eucharist as "the greatest Sacrament of the Church"; that it was not merely a sacrament, but a sacred banquet to be partaken of "readily and without delay"; that an example he sets his followers, his impatience to visit his brother friend, his longing to adore Him "in all the churches which are in the whole world," his eagerness to "pour out his heart before Him." If we would be like Francis in spirit and in truth, the Eucharist must be the soul of our piety also.

The idea of daily Mass and Communion is no longer the thing we wonder at it was in the day of Francis. Our danger is that we come to take for granted the miracle of love for granted, and so, in our own fashion, repeat the mistake of the medieval Catholic by failing to tap this splendid source of spiritual life, this "great aid to the love of Christ." We would do well then to take Saint Francis for another favor, the grace of perpetual wonder at this invisible fountain of all blessings." Whenever we welcome Christ, be it on an altar or in our hearts, let it be with a blessed mixture of his Seraphic voice and Seraphic love.

"It is a great misery and a deplorable weakness," wrote Francis, "when you have Him thus present to care for anything else in the world. Let the entire man be seized with fear; let heaven exult when Christ is in the living God, is on the altar in the hands of the priest. O admirable light and stupendous condescension! O humble sublimity! O sublime love! that the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humble Himself for our salvation He hides Himself under a morsel of bread. Consider, brothers, the humility of God and pour out your hearts before Him, and be persuaded that ye may be exalted by Him. Do not therefore keep back anything from yourselves that He may receive you entirely Who gives Himself up entirely to you." (*Letter to All the Friars*).

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(to be continued)

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EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

God is simply good, and for that reason there can be no envy in Him. Goodness loves goodness and abhors evil. God would contradict Himself were He to will evil or rejoice over it. God is charity, overflowing goodness, and in His love He gives every good and perfect gift.

As children of Saint Francis, we pride ourselves on a more conscious living of the Christian truth that we are children of God. Now, a child must resemble its father; for, as our Rule exhorts, "it becomes the child most of all to reproduce in itself the image and virtues of its parents". Imitating our Seraphic Father, then, we too must show forth in our life the goodness and charity of God. It simply follows that there can be no envy in us, no dislike of goodness, no joy over evil. *Charity does not envy . . . thinks no evil, does not rejoice over wickedness, but rejoices with truth* (I Cor. 13, 4-7).

Nevertheless, as long as they are pilgrims here upon earth, even the children of God may be tempted to envy and jealousy. Hence the Seraphic Doctor urges us to ask ourselves.

DO I YIELD TO ENVY BY REJOICING OVER THE FAILURES OF OTHERS OR BY GRIEVING OVER THEIR SUCCESSES AND GOOD FORTUNE; BY BEING PLEASED AT DISCOVERING FAULTS IN THEM AND UNHAPPY AT DISCOVERING GOOD QUALITIES?

Before going on to consider these points, it may be well to distinguish between merely human envy, or jealousy, and diabolical envy, or envy in a more restricted sense.

Human envy is almost synonymous with jealousy. Jealousy does not sin so much against God and goodness as against our neighbor and fraternal charity. Jealousy is egoism. A certain object which is the property of someone else appeals to us and we covet it; or a certain object which we possess appeals to others and we guard it passionately so as to keep it for ourselves alone.

In regard to jealousy, then, we may ask ourselves questions such as the following: Do I covet the good qualities of others—gifts, talents, virtues, appearance, personality? Do I suffer when I see that others are better than I, have more success in their work, receive more praise from superiors, are held in higher esteem than I? How do I react when one of my fellow religious meets with outstanding success or wins a bit of glamorous publicity? Is it easy

for me to offer congratulations with unmistakable evidence of sincere joy, or does my forced smile, my dead-fish handclasp, my faint damnation betray the petty rancour in my heart? Do I feel hurt when others advanced to positions of authority or given opportunities to standing work for the Order? Do I try to salve my wounded ego with argument that circumstances favored them, that superiors are partial to them, that they are mere sycophants and that if I stooped to their level I could rise to prominence? Do I have the childish habit of comparing myself with others and concluding that I am just as good, if not better, than they?

There are some religious who possess many talents, but keep even them for themselves. On this point we may ask: Do I keep my knowledge and the fruits of my experience for myself alone and refuse to share them with others?—for example, a certain method of teaching, or an unusual recipe, or an effective way of handling a difficult situation? If so, what is the reason? Because I want to be known as the only one who can do this particular kind of work, or because I fear someone else may surpass me, or because of the smallness of my heart I feel that others should learn the hard way? Did I withhold from others information and skills that would be of use to the community and to those under our care, preferring the praise of my own little glory to the common good? Jealous guarding of one's talents and knowledge is a kind of spiritual miserliness; it is one of the meanest faults a religious can be guilty of.

Of a much more serious nature, however, is the diabolical envy mentioned by Saint Bonaventure. If jealousy stems from human weakness, diabolical envy stems from complete malice and no excuse can be offered for it; it is a total perversion of nature. For greater clarity, let us examine ourselves on each of the four points Saint Bonaventure mentions:

1. *To rejoice over the misfortunes of others.* Malicious joy is mean. It is true that *simile simili gaudet*, then to rejoice over the failure of another gives evidence of a soul that has failed itself, that has wrecked itself on the rocks of malicious envy. If we experience joy over the misfortunes of others, even of our enemies—it can mean only that our soul is devoid of charity, that words and deeds which may appear charitable to other persons are the effluvia of egoism in the sight of God. Our self-scrutiny in regard to this must be merciless; to deceive ourselves would be tantamount to eternal sui-

There are many kinds of failures and misfortunes, but here we are concerned only with those that are not of a moral or religious character but are more or less extrinsic to the person afflicted. We may test out attitudes in general by asking one of the following questions: How do I react when one of my confreres is in trouble? Do I feel genuine sympathy? That is elementary charity. Do I feel that it serves him right, that he deserves to suffer because of this or that injustice done to him? That is revenge. Do I actually enjoy watching him suffer? That is diabolical envy. By way of closer examination, we may ask ourselves: Do I enjoy watching others writhe under the crossfire of public rebuke or scandal or severe criticism? Do I feel satisfaction, gloat over them, make them the butt of my cheap jokes and witticisms? Do I even increase their misery by deliberately meddling with them? If I know a confrere has suffered a severe loss—a beloved friend, perhaps, or a close relative—do I add to his pain by my attitude? Do I make the misfortunes and failures of others the subject of my liveliest and most interesting conversation? Do I impatiently publicize them even outside the convent, like the bird that fouls its own nest? Is it a joy for me to dig up the old bones of forgotten scandals and scatter them abroad, perhaps even to the ruin of a person who has since lived a good and respectable life? Do I realize that this kind of subversive activity is murder in the worst sense—spiritual murder? Our Seraphic Father had harsh words for such envious religious: "Disruption threatens the Order," he warned, "unless the detractors are counteracted. The sweetest odor spread by the many good Friars will soon turn to stench unless the stinkers' mouths are gagged . . . and if you find any accused brother innocent, make his accuser a marked man before everyone."

As Franciscans we must try to keep our heart always charitable, always pure, and the eye of our mind simple and open to all good, blind to all evil. In the misfortunes and failures of others let us see only Christ Who suffers in them, and let us leave judgment to the Lord.

2. *To grieve over the success and good fortune of others.* It seems that religious frequently overlook one basic form of charity—to rejoice at the good fortune of others. Yet it is this very rejoicing with others that, according to Saint Bonaventure, will increase our happiness in heaven, since the *amor caritatis exultat in multitudine bonae societatis*. Our fallen nature, however, and our disordered self-love make it much easier for us to feel sympathy with one who suffers than with one who rejoices. But even here we must be careful to distinguish between the real *compassio*—the real *suffering with* another—and the pseudo-compassion that affords us a kind of sentimental pleasure in feeling sorry for

another. In any case, the charity that must be in us as true children of God forbids that we should ever grieve over the happiness and success of our brethren in Christ. And this is the point we should now consider. Am I unhappy because others are happy? Do I keep aloof or maintain a disapproving silence, when I find a confrere basking in the light of glory? Do I try to belittle the accomplishments and good works of others, try to explain away a confrere's virtues because they appear to be faults, or insinuate that what passes for a good work is the consequence of overweening ambition or some other vice? Do I impute unworthy motives to every work of charity, to every outstanding enterprise that is not my own? If someone who was my equal and my friend is suddenly raised to a prominent position or is made superior, do I promptly discover his failings and refuse to see any good qualities in him?

Saint Francis seems to have known this kind of envious religious malice well, for he analyzes their motives with merciless clarity: "This is how the detractor talks: 'I possess no moral perfection, I have no learning or talent to fall back on, and so I have no standing with God or with men. I will do what I will do: I will smear the elect and curry favor with those higher than I. I know that my superior is human and that he, too, now and then makes the same shift as I to fell the great cedars and leave myself the only shrub in the forest.' Ah, you wretch, go, live on human flesh, and with nothing else to live on, gnaw at the vitals of your brothers!"

If I am the kind of a person who has no eye for anything good, either in my own Order or in any other, I must realize that I do not love God. For I am truly catholic—universal and all-embracing—I will rejoice over all the good that is done for God and the Church. Anything less would be unworthy of a child of Francis, the *vir catholicus*.

3. *To be pleased at discovering faults in others.* Here the Seraphic Doctor advises us to examine our attitude toward moral and religious defects in others. We must have true and genuine pity and sympathy and mercy toward all sinners, but we must never be happy at discovering sin in anyone. Sin must always be abhorrent to us, and we must hate it because it offends God and defiles the world redeemed by Christ. It is not hard to discover faults in others. The Pharisees had no difficulty in discovering faults even in Christ Himself. And how pleased they were! How pleased they were to discover sin in others, how happy to condemn! Am I perhaps of the race of the Pharisees? Am I meticulous and correct in exterior observance, scrupulously careful to avoid staining myself

serious sin, yet totally devoid of understanding love and pity for the weak who cannot measure up to the law that I so flawlessly represent? Do I indulge in the satanic practise of spying on others, setting traps for them, deliberately maneuvering them into situations that I know—or hope—will break them? If I do these things, what is my motive? Am I trying to ruin others, or am I trying to enhance the whiteness of my own perfections against the blackness of another's sins? Whatever the reason for our joy in discovering evil in others, that joy is diabolical.

4. *To be displeased at discovering good qualities in others.* This is the ultimate in malice. If we are jealous of the good qualities we see in others, it is only because we want them for ourselves. But if we are displeased at seeing good qualities in others because we hate goodness, then we are steeped in that kind of envy that characterizes the devil. Certainly no child of Saint Francis could live such a terrible contradiction—no Christian could live it. We mention it here only because of the sad fact that even religious may fall so far from grace that goodness becomes hateful to them. Let us be watchful then; let us keep a close scrutiny over our attitudes toward the virtues we see in others, lest spiteful envy poison our soul.

The words of Saint Peter offer a fitting close to this examination of conscience: *Lay aside, therefore, all malice, and all deceit, and pretense, and envy, and all slander. Crave, as newborn babes, pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow to salvation; if, indeed, you have tasted that the Lord is sweet* (I Pet. 2, 1-2).

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He who contemns knowledge is an enemy of nature, because it is natural for man to desire knowledge; therefore, he who despises knowledge sins against nature, and he who neglects the gift and talent of the Holy Spirit stands convicted of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Saint John Capistran, O. F. M.

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

THE PERFECT JOY OF SAINT FRANCIS, Felix Timmermans, translated by Raphael Brown. New York: Farrar and Straus, 1952. Pp. 344. \$3.50.

Felix Timmerman's DE HARP VAN SAINT FRANCISCUS has been enjoying unusual popularity in continental Europe; thousands of copies have been published in almost every language, and now the English version appears under the title: THE PERFECT JOY OF SAINT FRANCIS. The translator is the well-known Tertiary, Raphael Brown.

Timmermans tells the story of Saint Francis in the manner of fictionalized hagiography. The historical facts are presented clearly enough and without notable distortion, but they are subjected to a considerable amount of imaginative coloration. If the book is read simply as a religious novel—which no doubt the author intended—the imaginative elements should not be too disturbing, nor should there be too much disappointment over the naively poetical characterization of Saint Francis and his first followers. More irritating, however, is the uneven style of translation. But almost every work suffers in its foreign language versions, and perhaps the childish tone of THE PERFECT JOY OF SAINT FRANCIS is the result of the translator's attempt to recapture the Fioretti-like flavor of the original.

Despite these minor shortcomings, however, the book is pleasant reading and can be recommended for general consumption. THE REVELATIONS OF MARGARET OF CORTONA, Most Reverend Ange-Marie Hiral, O.F.M. Saint Bonaventure University, 1952. Pp. 87. \$1.75.

This is another of Raphael Brown's translations, and here again we find evidence of his difficulty in rendering a foreign book in virile and idiomatic English. Apart from certain crudities of style, however, this little book has much to offer by way of spiritual refreshment. The sixty-eight chapters are composed almost exclusively of the conversations that took place between Christ and the penitent Margaret. There is no analysis, no interpretation of these conversations, nor is there any attempt at exploring the fascinating and challenging character of Margaret herself. It is unfortunate that Bishop Hiral did not attempt something of the sort; his love for the Saint would surely have aided him to analyze her

strange character and her still strange spirituality.

Since the book is purely devotional intended only to promote the cult of Saint Margaret and to make known the ineffable mercy of God toward sinners, there is nothing like documentation or reference source materials. But the revelations of Christ to Margaret make excellent matter for meditation, and for this purpose, taking revelations simply as they are offered, little volume is a welcome contribution to popular Franciscan material.

THE WORDS OF SAINT FRANCIS, compiled and arranged by James Meyer, O.F.M., Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press, 1952. Pp. 345. \$3.00.

Something new in Franciscan books, Father James Meyer's anthology, WORDS OF SAINT FRANCIS. The author's purpose, as stated in the Introduction, is to provide the average reader with a clear understanding of the Franciscan ideal expressed by Francis himself and to show how this is to become functional in everyday life.

To attain his purpose, the author has arranged the authentic writings of Saint Francis in new translations, and the words of Saint Francis as recorded by his early biographer, into twelve chapters dealing with some specific topic. Each of the chapters is preceded and followed by the author's remarks in the form of a running commentary.

Father James has been careful to provide a good text, based on critical editions, authentic sources, and he supplies adequate references for those who are interested. The notes are full and generally useful, although some, as for example the note to section in which the author defends his use of "Brother Death" instead of the commonly accepted "Sister Death", are merely annoying. The volume is compact, breviary in size and format, with flexible fabric cover. There are twelve illustrations in black and white.

On the whole, Father James is to be congratulated on supplying a dependable collection of the writings and words of Saint Francis. For Franciscans, the present volume should prove as valuable for reading and meditation as the Rule itself; it is indeed filled with "spirit and life".

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Saint Francis

To us Franciscans October means one thing above all others—the feast of our holy Father Francis. Therefore, it is easy enough to decide on the subject of our conference for this month. It is quite different, however, when we try to select some aspect from the life of Saint Francis for more particular study. So many attractive features present themselves for consideration that we are hard pressed to give any single one of them our preference. Still, since a choice must be made, perhaps we can discover the characteristic of Francis which stands out above all others and fosters all the rest, a characteristic which is the very soul and foundation of his spiritual life. To my mind that characteristic is his attachment to Christ. If ever a man made Christ the center of his life, the focus of his devotion, the goal of his strivings—that man was Francis. How much he would have loved the beautiful prayer of Cardinal Newman, since the sentiments are so typical of Francis's own converse with Christ: "Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may be only a radiance of Thine. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus."

The admirable thing about Francis's devotion to Christ is its completeness, its thoroughness. It was a total dedication to the entire man. His manner of life, his message to the world, his religious exercises—all had to do, in one way or another, with his heart's great love, Christ. This conference, of course, cannot begin to treat of all these angles. Hence, let us restrict ourselves to the message of Francis. It will be more than sufficient to emphasize the strong attachment of the Saint to Christ.

What is the message of Saint Francis? Actually, nothing else but the message of Christ. Francis was not an innovator, but a loyal follower. He knew full well that Christ, the God-Man, had come into this world for the precise purpose of showing us how to live. Had He not said of Himself: *I am the way, the truth, and the life?* (Jo. 14, 6). And Francis was too humble to presume to improve on God's plan. He was too wise to offer the poor substitute of a man-made program of life for the one designed by Eternal Wisdom Itself. He was too well versed in Sacred Scripture to forget the warning of the Holy Ghost: *If anyone preach a gospel to you other than that which you have received, let him be anathema!* (Gal. 1, 9). In very truth, he could cry out with Saint

Paul: *I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified* (1 Cor. 2, 2).

So the message of Saint Francis was, in itself, nothing new. It was the Gospel message; it was Christ. And the only reason it can, in any age, be called Saint Francis's message is that he proved to the world that it could be lived in its entirety, that he left to us a practical method of living it, and that he aroused in the hearts of countless men and women an ardent desire to live it.

The world of the thirteenth century had not forgotten the message of the Gospel. It was read and re-read. But people had come to view it as a set of rules to be observed—and quite exacting rules at that—which called for no compromises. To Francis that was all wrong. To him the Gospel was more than a set of rules; it was a person—Jesus—Who had shared our life and respect, except sin, in order to show us how to live and to sanctify each of our lives, and Who wished to continue His life in us.

Francis not only believed this sublime truth, but he also translated it into practice with all the fiery ardor of his generous nature. The aim of his life was none other than that enunciated in the words of Holy Scripture: *To men is Christ* (Phil. 1, 21). Towards that end he strained every fibre of his being. And so marked was his success that our late Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, said of him: "There has never been anyone in whom the image of Jesus Christ and the evangelical manner of life shone forth more lifelike and strikingly than in Saint Francis. He was rightly spoken of as 'another Christ', appearing to his contemporaries and to future generations almost as if he were the Risen Christ" (*Rite Expiatis*, p. 4).

Yes, the people of Assisi woke up one day to find in their midst a poor man who lived and spoke and acted for all the world like Christ. At first they mocked him and abused him. Then they shook their heads in dazed astonishment, wondering just how long this strange experiment would go on. But, week by week, the weeks began to pile up into months, and there was no retreating on the part of this little man; when people recognized the disarming sincerity that underlay the whole tenor of his life; when they saw his childlike, unquestioning faith in the possibility of such a life—then their mocking ceased, their doubts were swallowed up in sympathetic understanding which soon grew into enthusiastic admiration and acclaim.

From all sides and from every walk of life people flocked to Francis, urged

pleading with him to let them share his manner of life. And to all who came to him he had nothing else to offer but only Christ. His sermons were simple, his exhortations to love the God-Man Who had loved them so much. His devotions he taught them had to do with Christ, especially Christ in the Eucharist, Christ on the cross. The Rules of Life which they asked him to draw up for them were but the Gospel life of Christ adapted to their own varying conditions of life.

Thus it was that the multitudes who hastened to Francis ran right into the arms of Christ. And that is exactly what Francis wished. For he was not the savior of these people, but only their guide on the way. He was not the Christ, but only the mirror of Christ. He was not their King, but merely His herald.

But we still haven't heard the complete story of the message of Saint Francis. It contains a further feature which is truly a heaven-inspired stroke of genius. While Francis demanded of his fellow men that they be like Christ and act like Christ, it was not only the historical Christ of Galilee that he presented to them, but also the ever-living Christ of their own day and age—the Mystical Christ. The clear-visioned faith of Francis saw that if Christ were to be the exemplar, teacher, and confidant of all men, then He must meet the needs and answer the problems of each particular age; He must be—the expression of the age—used with all due reverence—a Man of the times, medieval for the thirteenth century man, modern for the modern man. Christ Himself had made provision for this by the establishment of the Church. Through the Church, Christ continues His life, His teaching, His ministrations among men, with never the slightest essential change, and still with constant adaptation to the varying conditions and problems of each succeeding century. Historically, Christ belongs to the first century only; mystically, by means of the Church, He belongs to every century till the end of time. Francis understood this perfectly, and that is why he bound himself and his followers closely, irrevocably to the Church. If they wished to hear Christ teaching today, they must hearken to the Church. If they wished to have their hearts burn with love of Christ, they must go to the Church, whose sacramental source of grace can alone make such love possible. No wonder the Church, in her liturgy for Saint Francis's feast, calls him "a man Catholic and wholly apostolic". No wonder, too, that the message of Francis is always strikingly new and appealing, since it is identified with the ancient yet ever youthful and vigorous Gospel message as guarded and propagated by the Church.

This cursory review of the message of Saint Francis provides us Franciscans with abundant food for thought. No doubt we were at one time much like the

thirteenth century Catholics. We looked upon our religion merely as a list of and don't's; we saw in the Gospel only an impersonal narration of the words and actions of the God-Man. And we struggled and wrestled with these things, striving to construct them into a program of life, a rule of conduct, for ourselves. Then one day, by the mercy of God, we met the little poor man of Assisi. What led to that acquaintance is not always easy to say. And it does not matter too much. Maybe it was a book about Saint Francis that we read, or an acquaintance with some follower of his. Anyway, we met Francis, and in him we had a vision of Christ. Gradually our view of things began to change. We came to see Christianity not as something but as Somebody, not only as a biography but very largely also an autobiography. In other words, Francis pointed out that being Christians means being Christ—living His life, thinking His thoughts, doing His deeds; it means saying what Saint Paul said: *It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me* (Gal. 2, 20); it means, finally, accepting responsibility for the origin and increase of the Christ-life in others, for offering that life to men Christ depends upon us, He needs us. Strong as our claim may seem, it is just what Pope Pius XII teaches in his Encyclical on the Mystical Body: "One must not think that He (Christ) does not require the help of His Body's help. What Paul said of the human organism is to be applied like to this Mystical Body: *The head cannot say to the feet: I have no need of you*. Christ requires His members . . . And in carrying out the work of Redemption He wishes to be helped by the members of His Body" (No. 54-55).

Here, someone may object: "What's new about all this?" To which we can readily answer—"Nothing!" Didn't we observe before that Francis was a innovator? Franciscanism isn't a new system of things, but the method of integration of the Gospel into everyday life. Let us note that word "method." It implies that we Franciscans are to be professional integrators of the Gospel into everyday life, that we are to be experts at the job. And right there is the unique element which Francis introduced. Every Order in the Church of Christ, while professing and living the complete Christian program, has what may be called its specialty, something which it cultivates with particular attention. Maybe it's the liturgy, or the scapular, or preaching, or education. With the Franciscans it is the Christ-life of the Gospel, that is, the entire and face-to-face acceptance of the Gospel message as preached and practiced by Christ, so that when He speaks about loving one's enemies, becoming like little children, being genuinely simple, not worrying about our bodily needs, etc., we take His words and exclaim: "This is it! This is the life for us!" Francis expects his followers, to make it our business to go through the world, as he did,

prove to men that this Christ-life of the Gospel is possible, and that it is a life of peace and joy. Our mission, as Franciscans, is to be specialists in putting across that message to all with whom we come in contact, not only by our words but above all by our lives. Others are to see us and marvel, and marveling, be attracted by the lovable Christ Who lives within us, and Whose transparent temple we must be.

Only God knows how desperately our twentieth century needs this message. Perhaps the two greatest evils that plague society at present are bewilderment and lack of love. Look for a moment at the sea of bewilderment on which men are floundering today. Never in the history of the world have there been so many schools and so little education. Never have our printing presses run off such countless pages of newsprint on every conceivable topic, and such utter inability to formulate satisfying answers to life's fundamental questions. Never has man delved so deeply into the secrets of nature, never has he walked the path of science with so much cocksureness, only to find himself pathetically inadequate to turn his knowledge into a genuine blessing instead of an instrument of extinction for the human race. What is the remedy for this disheartening bewilderment? There is only one, and we Franciscans must do our part in applying it. We must help to bring mankind back to Christ Who said of Himself: *I am the light of the world. He who follows me does not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life* (Jo. 8, 12).

Concerning the second great evil, namely, lack of love—well, it ought to be evident to anyone who cares to see that, despite the numerous fraternities and clubs existing today, despite the gigantic undertakings of such organizations as the Red Cross and the Red Feather Agencies, despite the elaborate economic plans to help the world, I say, despite all these things, there is something lacking. Somehow these projects don't ring true. Maybe it's because they offer help in a manner that is mechanical, cold, and impersonal; or because they are tainted with the blight of self-seeking; or because, side by side with such activities, there is a sickening superabundance of bickering, jealousy, mistrust, and downright dislike. Whatever the immediate explanation may be, there can be no doubt about the root cause. Christ is left out of the picture. We must convince men that until they find and embrace Christ, actually or potentially present in every human being that walks the earth, just as Francis found and embraced Him in the outcast leper; until they hear and heed, as did Francis, these words of Christ: *As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me* (Mt. 25, 40)—there will not be, there cannot be, any genuine charity

among men. The only motive for the consistent practice of charity under the trying circumstances of life and towards all the demanding and puzzling characters that are met in life is Christ.

The recurring feast of our holy Father Francis, therefore, presents a challenge to us Franciscans. It demands that we become imbued with more of the vision and more of the generosity of Francis, so that we may be able to share the treasures with others. The significant thing about Francis is that, although he suffered for years from a painful malady of his eyes, a malady that finally spelled total blindness, his vision of God's ways was perfect. And although his heart was emptied completely of the things men value so highly, his love for the things God had made was that of a seraph. How different it is with so many people today! Their eyesight may be perfect, yet their vision is faulty; they see so many things that Christ is blotted out from view. Moreover, their hearts are full of love indeed, but so frequently they are stuffed with petty loves which leave no room at all for Christ. They are afraid to prefer Christ to all else, and so to embrace Christianity in its entirety. Someone recently made the point in an observation: "Men have been inoculated with small doses of Christianity which keep them from catching the real thing." May this feast of our blessed Father Francis do this one thing for us—make us eager to have men catch the real thing by helping them catch the spirit of Saint Francis!

Westmont, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O.F.M.



All that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Now these transitory things are contrary to eternal life. Therefore, always be poor on earth, if you do not want to be cast out of heaven.

Saint Bonaventure

A THIRTEENTH CENTURY ADVOCATE OF PEACE

Artists have been known to employ contrast in order to highlight a favorite theme in one of their compositions. To the twentieth century observer, looking back at the thirteenth century, it seems that this must have been the idea in the mind of the Divine Artist when He set Elizabeth of Portugal, that great Franciscan Peacemaker of the century, into the time and place that He did. What a setting for holiness it was—on the one side, a grandfather, James the Conqueror, King of Aragon, who almost rivalled Henry VIII in his matrimonial experiences, who banished his family from the Court to escape their murmurings against his loose living; and on the other side, a grandfather who was the illegitimate son of the Emperor Ferdinand II. It was with such a background that Elizabeth was born in Saragossa, Spain, the place of banishment for her family, in the year 1271. Her parents, Prince Peter, son of James I, and Constance, daughter of Manfred, gave her in baptism the name Elizabeth in memory of her mother's saintly aunt, the great Elizabeth of Hungary, who had been canonized by Gregory IX in 1235.

Her very birth itself began the role she was to fill for life, the role of peacemaker. The King was so anxious to see this youngest grandchild that, for her sake, he made peace with his son, Peter, and recalled both him and his family to Court. From then until his death six years later, King James kept her at his side and was much concerned with her training. In spite of the conditions existing at his Court, her biographers tell us, James did a very thorough job of instilling piety into the heart of this favorite grandchild. And the six year old Elizabeth was remarkably good and pious. Strange as it is to find such virtue in so young a child, still more strange does it become in view of the fact that as late as ten months before he died, the King who taught her was warned by Gregory X that unless something was done about his own scandalous life and that of his Court, he would be excommunicated and the whole of Aragon placed under an interdict. Nevertheless, it must be said for him, that before he died he did send away his latest matrimonial partner, as the Pope had ordered, divided his kingdom between his sons and donned the Cistercian habit.

At James's death, Peter became King and himself assumed the care and training of his daughter. He was most careful to expose her to the influence of only the most virtuous people, his idea being that their example would serve as a spur to Elizabeth. From this time until her marriage, we have only very provoking generalities concerning her. We read that as early as eight years of age

she had an exceptional self-control; her solicitude for the poor was surprising and her love of prayer was most unusual.

Scarcely had she reached the age of twelve when the question of her marriage became the all-important topic, not to herself, of course, for she was the last to be consulted, but to those most interested in the game of European politics. The King of Naples, Charles of Anjou, sought her for his son-in-law; while the King of England, Edward I, attempted to win her hand for his eldest son. Her father, however, was rather reluctant to part with this daughter, being certain that much of the happiness then existing in his kingdom was due to her prayers. But when it was Denis, the young King of Portugal, who begged her in marriage, he finally acquiesced; which acquiescence completely setting of contrast for this thirteenth century Queen, for Denis was himself an illegitimate son of a usurper and of an illegitimate princess. Somehow, we begin to associate holiness with such a setup; and, to make the scene of things a bit dramatic, just two months after Elizabeth left the house of her father, he was suspected of being involved in the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers. When his answer to the accusation was an army sent to rout Charles of Anjou, the Pope, who was a kinsman of Charles, put Peter under a ban of excommunication and deposed him from the throne of Aragon.

In seeking Elizabeth for his bride, Denis had considered her birth, her beauty. However, after a very brief association with her, he came to admire her extraordinary piety, and, for the first few years of their married life, they were happy. He allowed her complete liberty in her devotions and charities—and there were not a few in this teen-age wife of his. In a Court where early rising was certainly not the order of the day, Elizabeth rose very early, recited Matins, Lauds, and Prime of the Divine Office. Upon completing them, she assisted at the Holy Mass, then finished the Little Hours of the Breviary; to these she added every day the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Office of the Dead; in the afternoons, she said Vespers and retired often to her Oratory with her books of piety. She received the Sacraments frequently. Her mortifications were unusual in a Court in which indulgence was the accepted law: she adhered strictly to all the fasts prescribed by the Church and even added to them voluntarily, for she, of all people, realized that only in such self-denials could a balance be struck with the existing excesses; for three days of every week she fasted, in addition to all of Advent; every Friday found her partaking of nothing but bread and water. All this might be expected of a Nun. But Elizabeth was a Queen, with all the duties of a queen to fulfill, and she neglected not a

It makes her appear a very austere, unappealing person. But this Elizabeth was not. By her very charming modesty and sweetness she won hearts—her piety was not of the hard variety. Though she was severe with herself she was the essence of kindness to others, both equals and subjects. Her charity to the poor was especially remarkable. She gave not only alms, but she gave of herself. Frequently did she visit the hospitals and institutions to perform the humblest duties, which God sometimes rewarded with miracles.

At his death in 1285, when Elizabeth was thirteen years old, her father was absolved from his excommunication; and in 1289 her husband, King Denis, was released from his. At the same time, the interdict which for years had overshadowed Portugal was removed, and for this blessing all the people of the land firmly believed that they were indebted to the Queen. It set her deeper in their hearts, if such a thing were possible.

In 1290, when Elizabeth was twenty, her first child was born and was named Constance after the mother of the Queen. After the birth of her son Alphonsus in 1291, she began her real role of peacemaker. It is worthy of note that the enemies here, as in almost all her other endeavors, were those of her own household. In her first attempt at establishing peace, when all her entreaties were in vain—when she was unable by persuasion to settle the quarrel between King Denis and his brother Alphonsus—she had her way when she resorted to diplomacy. She made over to her brother-in-law one of the estates from her own possessions, and the dispute was ended.

Though the daily life of Elizabeth was in itself a sermon, Denis, with all his qualities for greatness, finally succumbed to the temptations and the worldly pleasures that surrounded him. He became corrupted and led a life that was definitely unworthy of a Christian prince, a life that was a subject of scandal to his people. His unbounded jealousy and infidelity were to Elizabeth a veritable martyrdom. But we are told that she overcame her natural repulsion to such conduct in her husband, that she not only did not feel anger, either toward the King or toward the women that he acquired, but she even went so far as to command that his many children by them should be cared for as the children of a King should be. She met this trial, as she met all others, with a great calmness. She felt that the offense to God far outweighed any offense to herself, and so she prayed the more. She did not berate Denis, being wise enough to recognize the futility of such a method. Instead, she sought to win him with constant sweetness and gentleness and a never-ending courtesy. Denis, however, with this example of fidelity constantly before his eye, was not moved to give her credit,

but, because of his own sensual heart, he was inclined to judge ill. On one occasion when a nobleman in his Court, in an attempt to ingratiate himself, insinuated to the King that there was more than met the eye going on between Elizabeth and her young secretary, he believed the suggestions wholeheartedly. Secretly, he gave orders to a lime-burner to throw into the flames the first person who brought a message from him; and the next day he sent off this pious page of the Queen with the royal message. It so happened that the devout youth was in the habit of hearing Mass daily, so that when he passed the Church dedicated to Saint Francis and the bells were ringing for the Elevation, he entered and remained until the end of the Mass. But not having heard a whole Mass, when another priest approached the Altar almost immediately, he stayed and assisted at the second Mass also. Meanwhile, the King, impatient to hear of the success of his messenger, sent the calumniator to inquire. He arrived before the Queen's page and asked if the command of the King has been fulfilled. In spite of his protestations that he was not the one intended, he was thrown into the kiln and consumed by the flames. Shortly after, the secretary of the Queen arrived and then took the word to Denis from the kiln-owner that his word had been punctually obeyed. To say the least, the King was surprised, and after a bit of reflection saw the hand of God in this strange turn of events. He determined never again to harbor doubts of his faithful Queen.

Elizabeth once more interfered in behalf of peace in 1297. She had at first urged armed intervention in an affair of the young Ferdinand IV of Castile, but her great love of peace prevailed upon her to invite to a peace conference Queen Maria, the mother and Regent of the young King. In just three days these two women settled by a treaty what men had not been able to settle by years of war and bloodshed. It was this same young King of Castile who married Elizabeth's daughter, Constance, in 1298 at Coimbra.

By 1302 some of the members of her family were again threatening to start war upon each other. This time it was her brother, James II, and her son-in-law, Ferdinand IV. She besought the two Kings to submit the matter to the judgment of King Denis at a place between the two kingdoms. They acceded to her request after a great deal of persuasion, even to the point of opening the conference at the feast of the Nativity of Our Lady. The arbitration was so successful that not only did it settle that quarrel, but it brought about the Treaty of Alcañices which was an offensive and defensive alliance between the two countries.

Her son-in-law, Ferdinand IV, died while very young in November 1304. The King and Queen made the journey to be with Constance in her grief,

just two months after the death of her husband Constance died also. It was a real trial for Elizabeth, for her love for her children was a very vital part of her. On the way back to Lisbon, after she had buried her daughter, she was told by a hermit that she must have a Mass said for Constance every day for a year, in order to have her freed from Purgatory where she then was detained. He told the Queen that Constance had appeared to him in his sleep and asked him to explain her need to her mother. Elizabeth at once made the necessary arrangements, and at the end of the year Constance appeared to Elizabeth herself, told her that eternal happiness had begun for her, and that she was exceedingly grateful to her mother for her goodness.

From this time the Queen redoubled her mortifications and fastings. She increased her almsgiving to such a point that King Denis grumbled at her open-handedness. It would have taken a miracle to silence the royal objections. So the favored one of God got her miracle. On a winter day, the King met her as she was on the way to her beloved poor. At the time she had a sum of money with her and was attempting to conceal it in order to avoid another clash with her husband. Noticing this, he asked her what she carried so carefully. She answered him that they were roses for the poor, and to satisfy him she opened her mantle for him to see. Denis beheld the freshest of roses on that winter day, and once again he recognized the hand of God in the affairs of his Queen.

Elizabeth's son Alphonsus married Beatrice of Castile, and it was arranged by the King that they should live in a palace of their own, though he kept his illegitimate sons at his own Court, and favored one of them especially, Alphonsus Sanchez. Quite naturally this made for bad feeling on the part of Alphonsus, who planned to do away with Alphonsus Sanchez and to overthrow his father. It was Elizabeth who prevented the catastrophe.

At this point, when the King was still upset by this rebellion of his son, a certain few of his courtiers voiced to Denis their calumnies concerning his consort. They accused her of being indifferent to his interests, and of being ready to second their son in any attempt he might make to seize the crown. King Denis, believing because of his jealousy, ordered Elizabeth to withdraw to her residence at Alanquer. With her customary patience and calm the Queen received this added disgrace. Her time of exile was to her truly a time of glory. Her poor sick, and the lepers especially benefited by her enforced retirement. On one occasion while assisting in the care of the sick in the hospital, she was washing one of the women, when she noticed how the patient attempted to conceal one of her feet. The woman feared that the very sight of such a cancerous foot would

be too much—much less did she expect that the Queen could tend it. But she reckoned without Elizabeth, whose powers of persuasion in such a case of reluctance were practically limitless. It ended by Elizabeth having her way. Not only did she clean the wound but in the process she pressed her lips to it, and at the very moment that her lips touched the wound the cancer disappeared. This is just one of the numerous instances of cures which she effected during the period of her banishment from Court.

The fame of these cures, as well as their own love for her, made the people restless for her return. Both the officers of the Court and the leading citizens of Coimbra begged the Queen to allow them to interfere in her behalf, with arms, if necessary, but she would have none of it. As is to be expected, Denis heard of both these offers, and of the vehement rejection of Elizabeth to them. Of her refusal to allow bloodshed as a means to reinstate herself. He realized that he had better recall her to Court in order to keep the good will, not only of the common people, but even more so, of his own officers. And her return, and the enthusiastic rejoicing of her people, partook more of the nature of a triumphal procession than of a return from exile.

Almost the first act upon her return was to persuade Alphonsus to make submission as son and subject to Denis; and to secure from the King a full pardon for all the rebels who had joined forces with her son. This was in 1317; but in 1320 her son was once more trying to bring about the death of his half brother, and, as a result, war broke out again between father and son. Even Pope John XXII could effect nothing with his exhortations nor by recognizing Alphonsus as heir and contributing to the fleet of Denis. It required the skill of Elizabeth. She rushed into the midst of the ranks, careless of her own life, intent only on preventing more misery. Alphonsus was really devoted to his mother, and his utter disregard of herself in her concern for them touched his heart. She appealed to the fatherly love of Denis and, in the presence of both armies, brought about a reconciliation.

The truce between them lasted, however, for only a year and a half, when in 1323 the ambition of Alphonsus renewed the quarrel; and at the head of an enormous army he met the King on a battlefield not far from Lisbon. They were deep in battle, the dead and wounded lying on all sides, the arrows and spears were flying free and fast, when right into the very thickest rode the royal peace-maker. To what daring her love of peace led her! The very daring of the deed so stunned everyone that the fighting stopped and they watched. Her heroism, the love that prompted it finally so affected the father and son that it aroused

the son to repentance and forced him to beg mercy of Denis and to promise obedience; while the King, in turn, gave his blessing to his son. Thus ended the struggle between the two nearest her heart, brought about through the endeavors of a tender courage.

Following this reconciliation, Elizabeth was granted one of her much prayed for desires. In May, 1323, the Pope absolved Denis from his excommunication, and, for the first time since the very earliest days of their marriage, they knelt side by side to receive the Body of Christ. Denis was completely won from his evil ways; he had begun to understand the grace with which God had favored him in giving him such a wife as Elizabeth. But it was only toward the end of 1324, when he became seriously ill, that full realization came to him. The Queen never left his side. Her tender affections and solicitude were to him indeed soul-stirring. It was probably through her efforts and prayers that he was given the blessing of a holy death on January 6, 1325, after a reign of 45 years.

A few days after the death of her husband, Elizabeth clothed herself in the habit of the Third Order and withdrew to a small house next to the Convent of Poor Clares in Coimbra, which she herself had been instrumental in establishing. She spent much of her time in going among the nuns in humble service and joining them in the recitation of the Divine Office. The following year, as dowager Queen of Portugal, she made a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Apostle of Spain, Saint James of Compostella, and one among many of her gifts was the golden jeweled-encrusted crown of her coronation. It was on this pilgrimage that the Archbishop gave her the pilgrim's staff and shell which were so precious to her that she had them placed in her coffin. Upon her return home, she seemed unable to dispose of her valuables fast enough. Her jewels were made into chalices, reliquaries, crosses; her royal robes were made into vestments for Church use; her alms were multiplied past believing. It appeared that at last the way was clear for her to join her dear daughters, the Poor Clare Nuns, and she began to make her preparations. The priests and the people of her kingdom, however, tried to persuade her that she could promote the glory of God much more effectually in the world by her works of zeal and charity. Finally, her love of neighbor triumphed over her own inclination to the extent that she was satisfied to follow the rule of the Third Order, and to live in her little house in the shadow of the Convent where her own will would have taken her. And this very Franciscan Queen insisted on wearing the habit of the Third Order publicly; with her there were no half-measures.

Not even these last few years of her life which she so wanted to spend in

solitude and prayer were free from demands on her ability at mediation. As in the past, the trouble was with her own family. In the summer of 1336 war broke out between her son, Alphonsus IV of Portugal, and her grandson, Alphonsus of Castile. Every attempt possible was made to dissuade her from making journey to the combatants, but to no avail. It was a troublesome and dangerous journey, but she was determined to save her people from the bitterness and bloodiness of war. She was suffering from a tumor and some sort of blood poisoning, but neither the excessive heat of her body, nor the intensive summer heat of the plains could stay her. She had a mission to perform and perform she would. When she arrived her very presence seemed to dispose both parties to peace, yet she was in such a condition that they feared she might die when she spoke to them. To her son her last message was one of peace—he was to live a life according to the teaching of the gospels, and to do all in his power to preserve peace, a message to be expected of a mother who had spent practically her whole later life in getting him, not out of one bit of trouble after the other, as do mothers of other sons, but in getting him out of one war after the other.

The following day, Monday, she grew much worse, and by Thursday it seemed a matter of breaths, so consumed by fever was she. After having made her last Confession when her Chaplain brought the Blessed Sacrament to her, she insisted not only on rising from her bed but also on falling to her knees and bowing to the ground in adoration of her God in the Eucharist. Then shortly afterward, she received Extreme Unction. From then on she continued in a state of prayer and often invoked the Blessed Virgin. She was heard to say while smiling: "Mary, mother of grace, mother of mercy, defend us from our wicked enemy and receive us at the hour of our death." Then in the presence of her son, the King, and his wife, she went to the Prince of Peace, bearing an unusual record of peace making. It was the fourth of July, 1336, and she was then sixty-five years old.

Elizabeth was buried, with all the solemnity and pomp of a royal funeral in the Convent Church at Coimbra and almost immediately many miracles were attributed to her whose intercession the people invoked with heartfelt confidence. When her body was exhumed three centuries later in 1612, it was found to be entire, at which time it was enshrined in the Chapel built especially for her. Not until 1625 did Pope Urban VIII solemnly canonize Elizabeth of Portugal and set aside the eighth of July as her especial feast.

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AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (IX)

The Eighth Article

TEXT: *But the test of the love of God is the practice of charity towards our neighbor. Wherefore, charity towards others should appear above all in the true follower of Christ. All his conversation should be guarded, useful and proper. That charity may abound in deed, it must first abound in the heart.*

This is the third and the last article of the present chapter on the aims and objectives of the Tertiary Regular way of life. The first article, as we recall, indicated that love or charity is not only the mark of the Christian, or the ideal of the religious as an apostle or bride of Christ, but it is the special heritage of the children of the "Seraphic Saint" whose love transformed him into a "mirror of Christ".

The second article stressed the Eucharistic Christ, as the "soul of Franciscan piety". It is Christ come into our midst to remind us of His love for us and to help us grow in love for Him.

This final article tells us what is all important, how we may know if our love of God be true. As Saint John puts it beautifully: *No one has ever seen God. If we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. In this we know that we abide in him and he in us . . . If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar. For how can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God, whom he does not see? And this commandment we have from him, that he who loves God should love his brother also. (I John. 4, 12 . . . 21).* Our personal attitude towards God's other children, towards Christ's other brethren, will always be in the last analysis the real test of true love.

We cannot help recalling how God tested the love of Francis. For He willed that it should be active and practical like His own—active in meeting the challenge of sin and the ravages it left upon the corporate body of mankind, practical in seeking out those most desperately in need of help.

Of the corporal works of mercy practiced by Christ, the one that seems to stand out strikingly in the Gospel account is His compassion for the sick and needy. And this example of the Master was to change men's attitude towards the unfortunate. Now in Francis's own day, the disease that was fast becoming a major social problem was leprosy. Brought in from the east, the Arabian leprosy

had spread so rapidly during the time of the Crusades that most of Europe was plagued with it. In France and Italy, especially, thousands of leper hospitals sprang up to care for them. Almost every big city and even the larger villages had their lazarettos. For Christian faith saw in these social outcasts something of Christ of whom Isaias had written: *He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows; and we have thought Him as it were a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted* (Is. 53, 4).

If Francis by reason of his affectionate and generous nature seems to have had a natural love and sympathy for the needy, he did not find it easy to work with the lepers. In fact, he seems to have had more than a normal horror and revulsion for these unfortunate souls. Their running sores, the filth and stench associated with their hospitals filled him with a terrible nausea and revulsion. He himself tells us how he could not bring himself to give them alms personally but would rather have another hand them to the leprous beggar while he himself would hurry past holding his nose. (*Tres Socii*, n. 11).

With this in mind, we can understand something of the test God devised for Francis. One day without warning Francis was suddenly confronted by a leper on the highway. His first feeling was one of fear and revulsion. He wanted to ignore the outstretched hand, or to throw the money on the ground and flee. But he remembered the words God spoke to him in spirit: "Francis, if thou wishest to know Me, conquer thyself, choosing the bitter instead of the sweet; and in reward what is bitter will become sweet" (*Celano, Legenda Secunda*, n. 9).

Conquering his antipathy, Francis dismounted from his horse and ran to meet the leper. Kissing and embracing the man, he filled his hand with coins. And when he remounted his steed and turned for a parting look at the leper, the latter had mysteriously vanished. But Francis's own soul was filled with supernatural sweetness. From that day on, Francis became the special friend of lepers. He would go to the lazarettos to wash their sores, mend their tattered clothes, and bring some measure of cheer into their bleak existence. And when friars began to band about him, he would settle them in the vicinity of leper hospitals and even have them use these hospitals as their temporary homes.

Our love for God may never be tested in the dramatic fashion that Francis was, but tried it will be. And for all the difference in the concomitant circumstances, the test will be basically the same. What we do to the least of His brethren, He will account as having been done to Himself. Each Third Order Congregation or Institute has its own special apostolate of charity to perform

Whichever spiritual or corporal works of mercy it should emphasize, its members will find ample opportunity to imitate Francis's heroic love of neighbor.

Every true Franciscan, then, should be sensitive and alert to the needs of humanity and eager to alleviate them. There will be nothing of that manifest condescension in his manner that makes it so difficult to accept charity from another. Francis's attitude to the poor should be our model here. Time and again he would give away to some beggar in dire need his tunic or mantle or the bread he had collected for his meal. And always because he wanted no one to be poorer than himself, or to be dearer to his own Lady Poverty. And because he saw in every poor person "a mirror in which to behold the Lord and his poor mother", as he put it, his attitude towards them was one of sincere friendliness and profound esteem. In like manner, we should see the "needy Christ" in all whom we help. Only then will we consider charity a privilege, for there can be no attitude of condescension in one who serves Christ.

Un-Franciscan too is the attitude of those who would excuse their lack of charity because others are undeserving, unappreciative, or may exploit their love. We cannot forget what Francis did when he found that his friars were turning away robbers who came to them for food. He reproved his brothers sharply and sent them out into the woods with baskets of food in search of "Brother Robbers".

Our charity should not be limited to those outside the convent. Above all, it should characterize all our relations with our companions in religion. The apostolic band, by reason of the evangelical counsels they were to practice, were in truth Christ's first religious. Three years they spent in the school of the Master, and, when their last class was over, what thought did Christ leave with them on their graduation night? *A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another* (Jo. 13, 34-35). No wonder then that the rule adds: "Wherefore, charity towards others should appear above all in the true follower of Christ." And who more than the Franciscan apostle or bride of Christ should be called His follower?

If charity is the great social virtue, the faculty of speech is in a special way our social faculty, for it makes human society possible. It is the means of learning the needs of others, of communicating our encouragement, our sympathy, our experience. Yet too often the human tongue becomes an instrument of unkindness, of discord, of seduction. More evil and harm is caused by thoughtless or careless speech than we dream of. No wonder that Saint James could say: *If anyone does not offend in word, he is a perfect man* (James 3, 2). Wisely,

then, the rule points out the practical warning: "All his conversation should be guarded, useful and proper."

But because it is *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks* (Mat. 12, 34) it is in the closing words of this article that we come literally to the heart of the matter of charity. For both in word and in deed charity must always be an utterance of the heart. And unless we treasure this key we will never be truly worthy of the Seraphic Saint we call our Father.

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.



Saint Francis used to say that the ideal Friar Minor should have the *lowliness* of Brother Bernard—he had it in a most perfect degree along with his love of holy poverty; the *simplicity and purity* of Brother Leo—truly a man of the most holy purity; the *courtesy* of Brother Angelo, the first knight to enter the Order—a man graced with all courtesy and gentleness; the *gracious mien and inner delicacy* of Brother Masseo, together with his fair, devout language; the *modesty* of Brother Giles, elevated in contemplation to the utmost perfection; Brother Rufino's *gift of virtuous, continuous prayer*—he prayed always, even sleeping and working; his mind was always with God; the *patience* of Brother Juniper—arrived at a state of perfect patience by accepting the exact truth as to his own uselessness (which he kept before his eyes continually) and by desiring absolutely all else to imitate Christ on the way of the Cross; the *bodily and spiritual prowess* of Brother John Lodi—in those days stronger of body than any other man; the *charity* of Brother Roger—all his life and manner was aglow with charity; the *solicitous concern* of Brother Lucido—his conscientiousness was the greatest, and scarcely would he stay in any place a month at a time, for at the moment he found pleasure staying at a place he promptly left it, saying: "We have no lasting home here, but in Heaven."

Speculum Perfectionis

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

According to Saint Bonaventure

The Franciscan way of life is the way of joy in the Lord. To a soul that is wholly devoted to God as a child to its father, all things are touched with the brightness and sweetness of divine love. Once we have come to the realization that God is truly our Father, that He adores us with an infinite love and holds us securely in His all-powerful arms, then we will experience a foretaste on earth of the peace and delight that will be ours in heaven. As the Christian soul advances toward perfection, spiritual joy increases and sadness with all its concomitant evils decreases. Because the degree of our spiritual joy is so intimately and essentially associated with the degree of perfection we have attained, Saint Bonaventure mentions as the last point in our examination of conscience the vice which opposes spiritual joy—the vice the medievals called *acedia*, and which we translate rather lamely as sloth.

Actually, *acedia* has a much broader connotation than sloth. *Acedia* is spiritual torpor, coldness, solidification; it is laziness, indifference, listlessness; it is tedium, sadness, depression, aversion for the things of the spirit. Bonaventure calls it the cesspool of all evils—the source of evil suspicions, of blasphemous thoughts, of malicious detraction. And the religious who falls victim to this terrible sickness of soul is in danger of eternal death. The Holy Spirit Himself warns us (Prov. 24, 30-34):

*I passed by the field of the slothful man,
and by the vineyard of the foolish man:
and behold it was filled with nettles,
and thorns had covered the face thereof,
and the stone wall was broken down . . .
Thou wilt sleep a little, said I,
Thou wilt slumber a little;
Thou wilt fold thy hands a little to rest;
And poverty shall come to thee as a runner:
And beggary as an armed man.*

Sloth is the most dangerous of the capital sins. It does not cause the scandal or incur the censure that falls to the more spectacular vices such as anger or gluttony or lust; but precisely because it attracts so little attention it is so much the more dangerous. The slothful religious feels himself secure in his torpor. After all, his sin is more negative than positive; he does not do anything so

very wrong, he simply fails to do anything very right. Yet of all the vices that plague our fallen nature, sloth is the only one that actually nauseates God. *Because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth* (Apoc. 3, 15-17). For this reason Saint Bonaventure urges us to search our soul and ask ourselves honestly:

HAVE I YIELDED TO SLOTH?

In general, we may ask ourselves whether or not true spiritual joy reigns in our soul. We must not, however, confuse lack of joy with aridity and similar states of soul which are sent by God for our purification and are not the result of any fault on our part. The gladness of heart that characterizes a healthy spiritual life will never be lost, even in the midst of the severest interior or exterior trials. The soul that truly loves God can never be truly unhappy, no matter how great the sufferings and desolation that may descend upon it. It should also understand that a sour, gloomy, or pessimistic disposition need not be taken as an indication of sloth. The cold and killing joylessness that marks the slothful soul is of a distinct and unmistakable nature. It is rooted in a perverted will, and manifests itself, according to Saint Bonaventure, in three principal ways. Each of these will be a point for our consideration.

1. The slothful religious is *tepidus*—lukewarm. Here we may ask ourselves: Am I making serious efforts to strive after perfection, or am I content to drift with the current? Do I easily seek to be excused from my obligations—fasting, prayer or work? Do I fulfill my obligations only when strictly necessary, and then without enthusiasm or interest? Do I try to avoid serious sins, but habitually wink at minor transgressions? Do I side-step sacrifices and whatever may disturb the inertia of my soul? Have I permitted my conscience to become lax, so that I can no longer discern the gravity of my sins and imprudences? Do I try to palliate my lapses by comparing myself with others, by hiding behind the refuge of self-deception, or even by refusing to admit the true nature of my faults? *There is a way which seemeth just to man, says the Holy Spirit, but the end thereof lead to death* (Prov. 14, 12). The tepid religious is like the stagnant pond and the stench of his soul rises to high heaven.

2. The slothful religious is *somnolentus*—dreamy. Do I indulge in daydreaming, in filling my mind with pleasant fantasies, in living in a little world of my own creation? Is reality so unpleasant to me that I try to escape from it by retiring into my dream-world? Do I realize that my vocation to religious perfection requires my fullest attention at all times, that I must face

situations and use every moment for God and for my own sanctification? Unfortunately, it is possible for a religious to sleep his way through life, even to dream of himself as a mystic and therefore above the petty concerns of the world about him. Do I tend in this direction? Am I aware that some day I must awaken from my sleep, and that the awakening may be not only rude but utterly tragic?

3. The slothful religious is *otiosus*—lazy. To be sure, laziness is a vice to which all men are more or less prone, but let us ask ourselves: Do I make the necessary efforts to overcome laziness, or have I allowed it to become one of my major faults? Do I shy away from work, even from that which is obligatory, merely because effort of any kind is distasteful to me? When I am forced to work, do I move sluggishly and painfully, hoping that some kind confrère will pity my weakness and relieve me of my burden, or that my superior will become exasperated into giving my work to someone else? Do I go through the motions of being busy in order to avoid a real assignment? Do I waste time doing nothing, or worse still, do I waste the time of others by idle conversations, or silly diversions, or simply by getting in the way? Do I cherish an over-tender fondness for my bed, seeking it out at the slightest provocation and leaving it with the greatest reluctance? Is physical comfort the primary object of my endeavors? Am I mentally lazy? Do I hate the mental effort of studying or concentrating on my work? Do I shrink from thinking out the problems that face me daily, shrugging them away in a kind of *laissez-faire* attitude? Am I too lazy even to make the effort of examining my conscience? In general, am I tractable and submissive as long as no one disturbs me, but surly and peevish whenever anyone tries to force me to activity? Let us remember that Saint Francis had no use for lazy religious. He called them flies.

4. The slothful religious is *tardus*—slow. Some people are naturally slow-moving, which is no fault of theirs; but *tarditas* as an offshoot of sloth is not so much slowness of action as lack of that joyous eagerness, of that alacrity of mind and spirit, that characterizes the fervent religious. Here we should ask ourselves: Do I go about my work listlessly, dragging myself from one task to the next as if the simple effort of keeping alive were too much for me? Do I lack the zest and vigor of movement that would be mine if I truly loved God and took delight in His service? Does my slowness indicate that my spiritual life is congealing—that the fire of love is burning so low that it can no longer keep my soul warm and alive and active? Am I becoming frozen over spiritually?

5. The slothful religious is *remissus*—negligent and careless. Do I neglect my duties out of sheer boredom or indifference? Am I the type of religious who can never be given a responsible assignment because it is known that I will neglect it carelessly? Do I accept work, but postpone doing it? Do I make promises and promptly forget about them? How do I discharge my religious duties? Do I neglect corners on such matters as prescribed prayers, rubrics, ordinances? How do I discharge my professional duties? If I am employed in caring for the sick, do I do some other work where the consequences of my negligence may affect the sick? do I realize that I may be in danger of committing serious sin, and of being involved in public scandal? Although the remiss religious may not always feel serious guilt as a direct result of his negligence, the point to be stressed is the attitude itself. The religious who is habitually remiss is one who no longer has the purpose of his vocation at heart.

6. The slothful religious is *dissolutus*—dissolute. The test here, based on the question: Where do I seek my pleasure? For the dissolute religious is worldly and carnal. "When the spirit is lukewarm and grace is cooling down to grace," says Saint Francis, "flesh and blood needs seek its own. What is left, when the soul finds no delights, but that the flesh turns to the kind? And then animal appetite uses the argument of necessity as a pall. The carnal sense shapes a man's conscience" (II Celano, 69). Do I have to do that I find enjoyment only in worldly sports and amusements and not in the service of God? Do I prefer the companionship of worldly-minded seculars to that of my confreres, and do I, in consequence, spend most of my time outside the monastery? If I have to answer these questions in the affirmative, dare I go to ask myself why it is so? Am I trying to drown the voice of conscience? Or has tepidity made religious life such a torture to me that I can find surcease only in carnal pleasure? How far have I gone in this? To the point of mortal sin? Sacrilege? Am I leading a double life—a religious exteriorly, but secretly addicted to the most shameful practices? Do I realize that this cannot go on that sooner or later I must come to an impasse?

7. The slothful religious is *indevotus*—without devotion or fidelity to God. Is this perhaps my state? Do I find the spiritual exercises so irksome that I perform them as quickly as possible, mechanically, or not at all? Do I spend my time of prayer in deliberately entertaining distracting—even sinful—thoughts? Do I sneer at monastic customs of piety, ignore monastic rules and regulations that are meant to increase devotion? Do I take little or no interest in the things that concern God, the Church, my Order? Have I but slight appreciation

for spiritual values? Am I living the religious life simply out of routine? How is it with Mass, Holy Communion? Do I go to confession regularly but confess only the usual trivialities and make no mention of the disease that is killing my soul? What about the annual retreat, the monthly recollection? Am I, in my perversity, piling sin upon sin by abusing the very means God has given me for my sanctification? To be without devotion—without a healthy prayer-life—is to be in danger of spiritual disaster. For this reason Saint Francis urged his brothers to pray well, for from prayer comes spiritual joy. "If the servant of God studies to have and to keep, within and without, that spiritual cheerfulness which proceeds from a clean heart and is acquired by devotion to prayer, the evil spirits cannot harm him . . . But the demons are elated when they can extinguish or in a measure interfere with the devotion and joy proceeding from prayer that is pure." (*Speculum Perfectionis*, 95.)

8. The slothful religious is *tristis*—sad and melancholy—and for very good reasons. To try to live the religious life after all supernatural motives have died out is a real torture. The difficulties of community life, the demands of superiors, the innumerable trials and conflicts that are inseparable from the religious state, become unbearable once the soul has lost contact with God in love. If we are sad, then, we should do well to ask ourselves the cause of our sadness. Am I unhappy because the religious life has become burdensome to me, and yet I have no desire to return to the world, or see no way of returning? Or am I fretful because I have opened my soul to the demands of pride and sensuality and avarice, and my vows prevent me from fully satisfying these demands? Do I regret that certain pleasures are forbidden under pain of grievous sin? When I see others faithful to their duty and progressing in virtue, do I give way to envy and jealousy and melancholy brooding? Has my character become so twisted and soured that my confreres avoid me, and do I, in consequence, become sullen and depressed and critical of what I consider their lack of charity? The sadness that stems from sloth is a disease for which there is but one remedy—sincere manifestation of conscience to a spiritual director and a wholehearted effort to return to God.

9. The slothful religious is *taediosus*—a victim of utter boredom. To such a religious, life in the service of God becomes "flat, stale, and unprofitable"—and it is questionable if anything less than a miracle of grace can help him. The soul is completely solidified by the coldness of spiritual torpor; it has passed into the coma that precedes death.

In order to keep from falling into sloth and becoming a prey to the diseases that it engenders, we should make every effort to keep joy alive in our heart. In fact, spiritual gladness is the best safeguard against every sin. Therefore, close our examination of conscience with the words of our Father Francis: "The devil exults most when he can steal a man's joy from him. He carries a powder with him to throw into any smallest possible crack of our conscience, to soil the spotlessness of our mind and the purity of our heart. But when spiritual joy fills our heart, the serpent pours out his deadly venom in vain."

"The demons cannot hurt a servant of Christ when they see him with holy mirth. But when his spirit is tearful, forlorn, downcast, it is swallowed up completely by sadness, or it is carried to the extreme of vain joys . . . When a servant of God, as commonly happens, is troubled by anything, he ought to rise and pray, and insist on staying in his sovereign Father's presence until He restores the joy of his salvation to him. For if he lingers in his gloom, that Babylonian mess will ripen to the point where, if it is not flushed out with tears, it will generate permanent corrosion in the heart" (II Celano, 100).

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O. S. B.



There are many people who devote themselves to prayer and devotion and practice bodily mortifications and lacerations of many kinds, but at a single word that seems offensive to their person, or at anything taken away from them, they are quickly troubled and perturbed.

Such people are not poor in spirit, because anyone that is truly poor in spirit hates himself and loves those who slap him in the face.

Saint Francis

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Fr. Philotheus Boehmer, O. F. M.



There are many people who devote themselves to prayer and devotion and practice bodily mortifications and lacerations of many kinds, but at a sign of anything that seems offensive to their person, or at anything taken away from them, they are quickly troubled and perturbed.

Such people are not poor in spirit, because anyone that is truly poor in spirit hates himself and loves those who slap him in the face.

Saint Francis

But the desire to become a saint, besides being a necessity for us, is likewise of great value to us. Every real desire is both a pledge of good will and a powerful prayer. When we desire holiness, it means we are trying our best. Either that, or the desire is not genuine. But if we are trying our best we shall be pleasing to God. That is a mighty consoling thought when we discover ourselves embarrassingly weak in climbing the stairway to perfection. Nobody, however, blames a little child for not being able to make it up a steep flight of stairs. And so also our loving Savior will not condemn us if now and then we find a step too high to manage, so long as we keep on trying. Maybe that step is the overcoming of an aversion for a particular person, or the conquering of impatience, or the acquiring of perfect detachment. God indeed does not approve of our failures in these matters, but He certainly is pleased with our efforts. And, sooner or later, when He decides that we have shown enough good will, He Himself will stoop down and lift us up to the step we have been trying in vain to mount.

Furthermore, our sincere desire to improve constitutes one of the most efficacious prayers we could make. Not only will it assure us of God's all-necessary grace, but it will also hasten its bestowal. God does not need words to recognize a prayer. The very longing of our hearts pleads our cause better than words could ever do. Holy Scripture confirms this view in more than one text, such as: *Seek, and you shall find* (Mt. 7, 7); *I wished, and understanding was given to me* (Wis. 7, 7). And Saint Lawrence Justinian claims that the prophet Daniel received so many signal graces because he was a "man of desires". By the way, he is referred to under this title three distinct times, as if God thereby wished to emphasize how pleasing to Him were the desires of this holy man. Yes, God is always touched by the good desires of pious souls, and if He has promised to hear each prayer that we say, how ready will He be to grant the request for our sanctification contained in the desire to become a saint!

Now there remains one more question to answer about this desire—What are the *qualities* which should characterize it? Since its object is the most important business of our life, in fact, the very *raison d'être* of our existence, it is evident that this desire should be predominant, that it should take precedence over every other desire of our heart. Anything at all that may rob us of this desire or even lessen its influence must be given up without hesitation. For in actual practice this desire is nothing else but the longing to grow in God's

love, and of that Christ said: *This is the greatest and the first commandment* (Mt. 22, 38). When Lindbergh was preparing for his epochal solo flight in 1927, he was fired with a driving ambition for just one thing—to reach Europe. Everything else was secondary. Willingly he made all sorts of sacrifices to insure the success of his daring venture. The same spirit should animate us in our quest for holiness. It is the “one thing necessary”, the absolute “must” of our lives, to gain which no sacrifice is too costly, no effort too great. Our Lord taught this unmistakably in the words: *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness* (Mt. 6, 33). Therefore, in all our actions, in all our plans, in all our striving, the prime consideration must ever be: “How does this tie in with my obligation to become a saint?” To anyone who reflects on the eternal consequences of fulfilling or the neglecting of that obligation, this line of conduct is the only one that makes sense. It is simply a matter of putting first things first! *For what does it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul?* (Mt. 16, 26).

But in order that our desire to become saints may thus have the power to influence every aspect of our lives, it must be strong and forceful. *Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice, for they shall be satisfied* (Mt. 5, 6). A starving man craves food, so we must crave perfection. *My food is to do the will of him who sent me* (Jo. 4, 34). As a parched desert traveler longs for the refreshing taste of cool water, so we must long to acquire holiness. *As the hart panteth after the fountains of water; so my soul panteth after thee, O God* (Ps. 41, 2). There is no place in this matter for a spineless “I would like to”, but only for a vigorous “I will”. One homespun philosopher, speaking of obstacles on the road to success, made this sage observation: “When I meet such obstacles, I either climb over them, or run around them, or tunnel under them. But if all these methods fail, then I simply lower my head and beat my way through them.” That expresses perfectly the determination we should have in striving for perfection, and it is in harmony with the statement of our divine Master that *the kingdom of heaven has been enduring violent assault, and the violent have been seizing it by force* (Mt. 11, 12). Sanctity is like gold buried deep in the hills; only hard, painful work will win its possession. There are no “ten easy lessons” to become a saint. True, the God-given directions are simple to understand, but it is quite another thing to carry them out. That calls for all the strength of will, all the spirit of sacrifice that a person can muster. The easy-going Saint has not yet been canonized—and never will be. Heaven

is exclusively a home of heroes and heroines. Only those will merit a place in this eternal hall of fame who *labor as good soldiers of Christ Jesus* (2 Tim. 2, 3).

They must labor, not for a day or a year, but for a lifetime; not sporadically as moods entice, but consistently as principles dictate. And that points out that our desire for sanctity should be, in the third place, persevering. We know what Holy Scripture has to say about perseverance: *Which of you, wishing to build a tower, does not sit down first and calculate the outlays that are necessary, whether he has the means to complete it? Lest, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish, all who behold begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish!’* (Lk. 14, 28-30). We religious have set ourselves to the task of erecting the tower of holiness. God has drawn up specific blueprints for each one of us, corresponding to our individual strength and talents, and to the graces allotted to us. We have only so much time to complete this project, for *the night is coming, when no one can work* (Jo. 9, 4). How terrible it would be were we never to build this tower at all! The devils would laugh us to scorn on Judgment Day. Less tragic, of course, but still sad enough would be our failure to complete this tower according to the Divine Architect’s specifications. What a loss would be ours for all eternity in terms of the full measure of reward that had been prepared for us! Lest such a calamity befall us, we must persevere relentlessly in our determination to attain sainthood. There are three dangers to perseverance against which we must always be on our guard. The first is discouragement which is never warranted under any circumstances whatsoever. It is to be met head on with an humble trust in God’s merciful forgiveness for past mistakes, and in His powerful assistance for each fresh attempt to scale the heights of sanctity. *To him that is little, mercy is granted . . . Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me* (Wis. 6, 7 and Prov. 9, 4). The second danger is smugness over past accomplishments. This can be avoided by the alarming realization that pride goes before the fall, and that in the remaining stages of our battle for heaven our surest safeguard is to take the attitude of Saint Paul who said: *Forgetting what is behind, I strain forward to what is before, I press on towards the goal, to the prize of God’s heavenly call in Christ Jesus* (Phil. 3, 14). The third big danger is mediocrity—being satisfied with efforts scarcely greater than those put forth by good lay people. Refuge from this danger may be found in the grim warning that *to whom much has been given, of him much will be required* (Lk. 12, 48), and that our models in striving for perfection are not the lay people but the Saints of God.

Despite the most careful watching and the best of intentions, how desire for holiness will never be persevering unless it is at the same time. In aiming at sainthood, we shall miss the mark just as surely by setting sights too high as by setting them too low. Virtue's path is always the mean. Hence, our determination to become saints must find its realization in the faithful performance of our ordinary religious duties. For us the channels of God's grace, without which progress is impossible, wait for opportunities of performing headline deeds and all the while to back up simple duties is to pursue a chimeric type of holiness. Unless we will to the contrary is manifestly evident and attested to by the endorsement of a prudent director, we must be convinced that our perfection is bound up with the unsensational and often humdrum tasks of the religious life's routine. And we should be grateful that such is the case, for it places holiness within the reach of all of us and proves that we are not presumptuously desiring to become saints.

Some years ago, I heard a story about a young man who had a desire to scale a very forbidding peak in the Alps. Seasoned mountain climbers tried to dissuade him from the hazardous undertaking. But he set out the same. When no word was heard from him or about him after a number of days, a searching party followed the trail he had taken. They found his body on a grassy ledge where it had fallen from the cliffs above. Knowing how much the lad had loved mountain climbing, they decided to bury him on a spot where he had been killed. And on the rustic marker over his grave they wrote this simple inscription: "He died climbing." Of course, we can admire the foolhardiness of this young man, but maybe we can draw a little inspiration from the terse statement on his grave. We religious have also set out to climb a very steep mountain, the mountain of perfection. Our one ambition should be never to stop till we reach its summit. If we will only keep this desire burning brightly in our hearts, it will carry us over many a rough and harrowing spot, and it will nerve us to keep driving onward and upward even though figuratively speaking, our knees may be bruised and torn and our fingers bleeding. And when death finally overtakes us, what sweet consolation there will be in the thought that—we died climbing.

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Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.

GLORIOSUS CHRISTI ATHLETA

A Portrait of the Martyred Archbishop of Tsinan, Cyril Rudolph Jarre, O. F. M.

Was he a saint? No. Is he a martyr? Yes. But no one becomes a saintly martyr in a day or two. Each martyr has to go his purgative way. He does not simply depart this world "strengthened by the last rites of the Church." He must atone for his sins, failings, and negligences by offering to God his physical and mental sufferings. The total surrender of his life, his passing away, must be a conscious meeting with the Eternal, a seeking of union in pure love with Him Who is his Savior.

This journey to the altar of heroic sacrifice can be reduced to a few steps; but these steps will be so terrible that they suffice to change a sinner into a saint. On the other hand, it may take months and years before the sacrificial journey comes to an end.

So it was with Archbishop Jarre. For almost four years the Lord tried him in the school of suffering. Hard, very hard, was the training he had to undergo before reaching full spiritual maturity. He himself wrote: "How often have we prayed: *Lord, not my will, but Thine be done!* But when the time really comes when God hears our prayer, how hard it is for us to accept everything with total resignation to the will of God." To bring to completion the image God had in mind for His servant, the chisel had to cut deeply time and again. But the bishop himself realized more clearly than anyone else how much he needed that chisel, and he stood firm and courageous under the hand of the Divine Artist.

The Man

Archbishop Jarre was from the Ahr, in Germany. Men of the Ahr reflect the character of the region. Like the little river that flows to the north and then suddenly turns to the south, the people of this district are subject to rapidly changing moods. Sympathy may quickly turn to antipathy; those who are praised to high heaven today may be in bad odor tomorrow; those out of favor today may become intimate friends and confidants tomorrow; the smooth-flowing tale of the narrator surrounded by friends turns to dead silence at the appearance of one who is not welcome; hours of bickering over some question or other will be peacefully concluded by a walk through field or forest, or amidst the ruins of the past. The bishop himself belonged more or less to the past in virtue of a brief military career under the old regime. He served, however, not on the banks of the Rhine but in far-off Tsingtao, which was then a German possession. The *gloire de la patrie* burned brightly in him, a heritage from his French forebears;

but at the end of the last war, with Stalingrad, Nagasaki, and the fall of T, his patriotism lay buried forever.

Archbishop Jarre was a twin. In his youth he had been physically weak, but he had tried to overcome his handicap by vigorous daily gymnastics. He did these exercises with an iron will; even in his seventies he went through the same every morning after rising. Although actually rather short of stature—he was the smallest of all the missionaries in his diocese—he seemed rather tall. Everything about him gave evidence of rigorous physical training and discipline. Mountain climbing and swimming in the Yellow River were his fondest recreations. It was his pride that he was the first missionary in China to use a bicycle instead of the slow and expensive mule. Even as bishop, when on tour for Confirmation, it was the beloved bicycle that carried him to remote Chinese districts. According to tradition, a whole village once went out to meet the bishop in true Chinese fashion—band, banners and fireworks. As the good people waited patiently far outside the village gates for the arrival of the episcopal carriage, His Excellency came rolling down the road on his bicycle from the opposite direction, trousers clamped up and tropical helmet yellow with sweat. He was delighted at the joke of slipping into the empty village unnoticed, but when the people discovered what had happened they were far from amused. Indignantly they protested against such an improper entry. It once happened that another missionary, who wore a long beard like the bishop's, came to a certain village in a carriage. Bowing to all sides and lifting his hand in greeting and paternal benediction, he looked for all the world like His Grace. With fire banners he was escorted into the church. Once in the sacristy he changed places with the real bishop, who had arrived unnoticed some time before on his infamous bicycle. It was only gradually, and with no little reluctance, that the good people came to accept their "bicycle-bishop". During the later years of his episcopate, however, when China was torn with suffering, the people learned to love and appreciate this modest, unassuming man who was yet a prince of the Church and their spiritual father. In his old age the people no longer saw him riding his bicycle; he journeyed on foot.

He was a Franciscan. Having gone forth from the strict old school of Harreveld, he kept the Franciscan ideal faithfully throughout his life. His love for poverty was extreme. His clothing was so poor that when I first arrived in Tsinan I mistook him for a lay brother. He always wore Chinese clothing. His long black gown was mostly a collection of patches; his cloth shoes were worn down on the sides. Once, for his feastday, some of the Sisters presented him with

a new outfit, but the next day he appeared again in his old clothing. Smilingly he excused himself before the questioning eyes of the Sister: "*Ach, ja*—a Chinese priest came in from the interior. He was desperately in need of something to wear. These old clothes will do me a while longer." He was most economical in the use of things. He salvaged every little scrap of paper that could still be used. A Chinese priest once showed me his letter of transfer. It was written on a sheet of paper, on the back of which could be clearly seen the kind regards of Sister Superior X. He loved books and took the tenderest care of them. His beautiful missal was his treasure. He would not even permit the new Mass texts to be pasted in for fear of spoiling the binding. His breviary was as clean as on the day it came off the press. Considering his natural meticulousness, one can understand why on one occasion, when his breviary got a shower, he lost his temper. It happened that a priest from an outside mission was to have a High Mass in the cathedral. Just before the *Asperges*, the sacristan whispered to him: "The Bishop is here; use plenty of holy water." After the *Asperges* the celebrant went up and swung the aspergil three times over the bishop and his breviary, leaving them both dripping. It must not be supposed, however, that this exterior cleanliness was merely an idiosyncrasy; it was rather the expression of the bishop's interior purity and cleanliness, just as his love of order was an expression of his interior discipline. Yet in spite of his fussy nature, love of poverty made him the shabbiest—and the gayest—of men.

He was a professor—a born teacher. As a young priest he taught in the minor seminary; later he lectured in Rome. As bishop he always helped out with teaching and filled vacancies whenever someone was needed. With deep and infectious enthusiasm he began the translation of the *Codex juris canonici*¹ into the highly technical language of Chinese law. It was the first time that Rome ever gave permission for a private translation of the *Codex*. After three years of diligent work, he presented to the Church a 622-page volume, a masterpiece in every respect. The bishop loved to lecture. Not only in pulpit and classroom, but at table, when walking, even when playing chess, he lectured. Adding to these details the fact that the bishop was a canonist whose legalistic mind found more pleasure in propositions and analyses, in divisions and classifications and distinctions, than in the beauties of art or symphonies—though he loved *potpourri*—the portrait of this jurist-professor-bishop becomes more complete. The program of his entire day was carried out with the exactness of a clock. Before he said Mass he finished the whole office, even Compline. Meditation, rosary, stations of the Cross, study, recreation—all followed a fixed schedule.

¹ Cf. THE CORD, Oct. 1951, p. 240.

His day began at 4 o'clock in the morning and ended at 9 o'clock in the evening.

He was a bishop. Of the approximately fifty years he spent in China he was a bishop for twenty-five. He saw the rise and fall of more than a dozen dynasties, but his episcopal chair stood firm amidst the turns of political upheavals, and the people's esteem for him increased with the turns. The dignity of Archbishop crowned his old age. The consciousness of being the voice of the teaching Church, and the final authority in regard to ecclesiastical rights and the observance of the liturgy, was very strong in him. He was a missionary, full of enthusiasm for the newer trends in the liturgical movement. He often enough had a long fight on their hands before they could convince him of the value of these new conceptions. On the other hand, many of his over-eager zealots had to capitulate before the decisions of this quiet, unassuming, promising Romanist.

Truly, for all his greatness, Archbishop Jarre was a complicated character, and there were times when those under his authority had to suffer much from him. But he himself was aware of this, and the older he grew the more he felt his inadequacy. He petitioned Rome for a successor, a younger man whose strength would better enable him to bear the burden of the pallium. Rome refused the petition. Meanwhile the Communists were gaining strength. One day rumors reached Tsinan—rumors of the massing of Red troops in the North. Rumors of persecution in Red China. Archbishop Jarre packed his trunks. What did he do this? Was he trying to force Rome to appoint the successor he asked for? Did he think that his departure would leave his people free to take care of themselves when the storm broke? Did he think that he could do no good working from unoccupied territory? Or was he simply fleeing from the Communists? Whatever his motives, we do not know; we can only conjecture. We know only that when the Red armies began to move south he packed his trunks and prepared to leave for free China. No one thought of blaming him for he was an old man in his seventies.

The Prisoner

Then the amazing thing happened. Exactly twenty-four hours later the bishop unpacked his trunks. He was going to remain. On July 14, 1948, he wrote his great letter of farewell. "In regard to myself," he wrote, "I feel urged and fortified by the grace of God to persevere on the battlefield of my life, the more so the nearer the hour of crisis approaches. Indeed, in my perhaps presumptuous state of mind I dare say with Saint Paul: And now behold I feel irresistibly urged to remain in my beloved episcopal city of Tsinanfu, not know-

ing what will happen to me; but the Holy Spirit warns me, saying that imprisonment and persecution are awaiting me. But I fear none of these (with the grace of God), nor do I hold my life in any account as being dear to me, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus, to bear witness to the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that you all will see my face no longer (Acts 20; 22-25)."

The call of God had reached him. God Himself urged him to remain with his flock. He answered the call, and by so doing took the first steps toward the altar of sacrifice. Soon the devastation began. One mission station after another, one city after another, fell into the hands of the Communists. From the South news reached him that priests had been imprisoned; and from the North, that churches had been desecrated. He could no longer visit the many flourishing Christian communities in his large diocese; only the episcopal city was still free. "You can perhaps imagine what this means to me," he wrote, "if you consider that since 1904 I have given myself—first the enthusiasm of my youth, then the full vigor of my manhood, and now the waning strength of my old age—to the service of the Tsinan mission. With bleeding heart I see the almost certain destruction of this work to which I have contributed the best of my talents and abilities for more than forty years."

Then came the leave-taking from friends and confreres. He himself would remain, but he insisted that all the aged and sickly missionaries, foreign and Chinese, were to leave the country. Every day new groups of departing missionaries went to the airport—priests and brothers, sisters and seminarians. Among them were his oldest confreres, the men with whom he had shared the joys and sufferings of mission life for so many decades. Not only his confessor and personal advisers left him, but also many a dear confrere, like the ninety-four year old Brother Corbinian Paugger who pleaded with tears to be allowed to end his days in the beloved home of his choice. He had not seen the home of his birth since 1894. In all these trying situations the bishop remained energetic, yet friendly, pressing each hand warmly and gratefully in a last farewell—forever.

The younger men who had volunteered to remain gathered around their courageous bishop. His heroic example inspired them. Those who still hesitated in hours of fear found a strong support in him. At the end there was a total of forty priests and a few brothers at his side. Some of the Sisters² also remained to

² The Sisters who remained were Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, Hospital Sisters of Saint Francis, (Springfield, Illinois), and Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (Paterson, New Jersey). It is not known for certain what became of the members of the several Chinese congregations that had houses in the city.

carry on the most important duties in the big orphanages of the city and hospital. When his eyes rested fondly on this little group of faithful souls encouraged and yet saddened, for he knew that quite possibly none of them would ever see home again. Often he sighed under the terrible pressure of responsibility: "For the time of persecution this impressive number of missions is much too large for our mission . . . but it is edifying to see so many priests offering themselves to God to work for souls amidst the greatest dangers, and for the sake of Christ to be willing to suffer imprisonment and even death. Such a sacrifice toward the end of life makes up for hundreds of faults and frailties of the past . . . It is and will always remain an honor for the two provinces of Saxonia and Colonia that half the number of this band of heroes belong to them."

He who has the courage to give himself unreservedly to God, once he has done so, no longer worries about the future. A mature tranquility, a spiritual balance, takes possession of him. With the bishop, this interior tranquility and harmony increased day by day. Only once, when we heard that the Reds were planning to flay him alive, did he lose courage; and then he quickly regained it. I still remember him like a little general standing on the truck which brought him out of the bombed suburbs of Tsinan. He had come out to get us and bring us into the comparative safety of the city.

The following day saw the complete encirclement of Tsinan. A terrible battle followed. The episcopal residence, from which the police forces fought gallantly until their general turned traitor, was the target of more than a hundred grenades and mines. The bombardment was terrific. Roofs—even the great cathedral roof—were hurled into the air; walls burst apart; the wounded screamed and groaned in agony; the stench of decaying corpses filled the air. Eight days of combat, then Tsinan, the key city between north and south China, between Red and Nationalist China, was betrayed into surrender. During the days the non-combatants in our section of the city had found protection only in one small shelter. Again and again the beads of the rosary glided through the fingers of the bishop. He prayed the *Our Father* aloud with a none too pious Protestant in order to dispose him to some kind of contrition. After the last shot was fired, the bishop sang the *Te Deum* in gratitude that no one connected with the mission had been killed, although more than 50,000 people had lost their lives. The sight of his residence reduced to a heap of rubble made him realize the perishableness of all earthly possessions.

He found a loving reception, however, in the little convent. But God con-

tinued to wrestle with him; the final renunciation was still a long way off. The bishop now found himself deprived of personal liberty; he was not allowed to leave the city. His mountain climbing and his long trips through the valley came to an abrupt end. He once applied for permission to go to Tsingtao, and he was refused. He had to have permission even to spend the night outside his living quarters. Deeply humiliating for him were the many appearances at police headquarters, the repeated questioning that went on for hours, the sudden inspections at night. Once he was forced to answer a list of stupid questions put to him by an eighteen year old mental defective. But he could still pray: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*. When, however, some of the Catholic teachers, an ex-seminarian, and even his vicar-general made friends with the Red-organized National Church, that was a knife plunged into the depths of his soul. In humble, pleading love, he knelt at the altar of his apostate vicar and served his Mass; but all his efforts were in vain. The vicar remained obdurate, and some weeks later, after he had been deposed and excommunicated, he declared open war against the bishop.

Meanwhile, most of the Chinese priests had been imprisoned. Four European priests, who had been teaching in the upper school, followed them. Clergy and laity were being subjected to severe penalties for belonging to the Legion of Mary. Finally, in the July of 1951, the bishop himself was sentenced to room imprisonment. He who loved sunshine and water and mountains and fresh air had to sit day and night in a little room. He who loved silence had to listen to the constant chatter and singing and carousing of the soldiers on guard. He, the great lover of activity, had to sit idle. From the window he could see the police coming and going, but he never knew who was involved. How were his imprisoned priests? What was the situation of the Church? What about the "New Movement"? Why was it that his right hand, the Father Procurator, was suddenly put into the "red auto"? Had he been sentenced to banishment from the country? If it were only this, it would still be for the best. But perhaps it was something worse—he could not know. The only way to keep informed was to have little notes slipped into his room. But soon the trick was discovered, and the writer of the notes had to appear before the police every day until he finally submitted and wrote a letter of repentance. In grinding monotony the hours, the days, the weeks, the months passed without Mass, without Holy Communion. But the rosary never left the bishop's fingers.

The Martyr

Then came the long-dreaded day. On October 17, 1951, the bishop was led

to jail. We know nothing factual about what he went through, but we can reasonably suppose that he was dealt with just about as we were—only with even greater severity. The first day brought us a trial lasting six hours in the course of which we had to stand uninterruptedly in one spot. The things were discussed over and over again. When one judge became tired, another came and started all over.

Every statement of ours was written down, and woe if our statements did not agree in the smallest detail. Then began a cross-examination that consisted of one to gibbering idiocy. Tired to death and mentally paralyzed, we had to make out our confessions. We tried, but in our exhaustion all we could manage to do was scribble out a few meaningless sentences. The judge became furious and ordered us to rewrite the confessions, stating why, with whom, on what, at what place, for what purpose, etc., etc. A few hours of sleep on three hard benches and the trial began anew: during the day, in the middle of the night, before the judge, before several. The trial dragged on for six weeks; then, in the middle of the night, transportation to another jail. Again six weeks, but this time a trial. Six agonizing weeks of waiting and fearing, of thinking and brain-racking. No book, no breviary, not even a rosary. Then followed the third, and fourth, and fifth prison, each one worse than the other. Imprisonment itself is a torment, for the Communists have introduced a system of torturing prisoners which is inhumanly cruel. From 5 o'clock in the morning until 9 o'clock at night the prisoners have to sit on the bare ground. They are not allowed to move, nor to speak, nor even to turn their heads. For any change of posture they must have permission from the guards.

This is what we went through, and no doubt it is also what the bishop went through. We have no details of what he suffered in prison, but an eyewitness has related how he fell victim to the illness that resulted in his death. It happened that one morning the bishop moved a little toward the window without permission. For this he was reprimanded immediately. The guard delivered a long sermon on his disobedience and violation of the rules. Then he was forced to sit in such a position that his face was exactly opposite the guard's peep-hole. From then on he was treated with greater harshness. One very cold morning the bishop wished to put a cloth over his head, because he was sitting directly beneath the window. He had already caught cold and coughed much. Although he humbly asked for permission, it was not granted. He had to expose his bare head to the cold draft of air. Day and night he wore the terrible handcuffs, which made eating with chopsticks very difficult and the necessary private performances a real torture.

Between the handcuffs and the vermin, he had no real rest. He must have suffered intensely during the winter months. He grew feverish; night perspiration and coughing spells became worse; severe pleurisy brought him close to the grave. His condition became so serious that it was feared he would die in jail. Naturally, no foreigner can be permitted to die in a Chinese jail; that would mean irreparable loss of face. He was transferred to our hospital—too late. The best physician was consulted, but he pronounced the case hopeless. One would think that even the most rabid Communist would have had heart enough to let the aged prelate die in peace. But no; two soldiers guarded him day and night, one at his right and one at his left. Not only that; there was a final six-hour trial, a last attempt to force a confession from this poor skeleton. But to all their questions, the dying bishop merely replied: "I shall give you an answer to that in the grave." When at the approach of death he asked for the Last Sacraments, he was told, after prolonged deliberations, that Extreme Unction is only for good citizens and should not be wasted on such as he.

Thus, in the spirit of sacrifice and holy resignation, he committed his last hours into the hands of his Lord Whom he had striven to follow all his life. He died on the afternoon of March 8, Fatima Saturday, at three o'clock, the hour in which his Lord and Master died on the Cross.

Fr. Dagobert Voss, O. F. M.

(Translated and adapted from Sanctificatio Nostra, July 1952, 209-216, by Sister M. Veneranda, S. M. I. C.)

EPILOGUE

The apostasy of Tsinan's vicar general, Chung Wen-lung, has been a source of deep grief to Chinese Catholics, especially to the faithful clergy. Among those who felt most keenly his shameful defection and betrayal of Archbishop Jarre was his friend Father Pacificus Li Hsuan-te, a Franciscan of the Fengsiang Commissariat. On December 28, 1951, Father Pacificus was named bishop of the Diocese of Yen-an. Although, in raising him to the episcopal dignity, Rome was in effect offering him the martyr's crown, he not only accepted the appointment with joy, but went further and made a solemn offering of his life to God for the apostate vicar general. He had not long to wait. By the first of the year (1952) the Reds placed him under arrest. Nothing has been heard of him since.

THE BURIAL OF ARCHBISHOP JARRE

The burial of the Franciscan martyr-bishop of Tsinan, Cyril Rudolph Jarre, has been described in recent months in several newspaper articles. The following letter, from one of the few Franciscan Fathers left there, is an eye-witness account of what took place. The pertinent passages are taken from the first draft of the letter as printed in Mission Crumbs published by the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Paterson, New Jersey. Explanations of the allusions in the letter are taken from the Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, May-June-July, 1952, pp. 166-167. Although the archbishop is not mentioned by name in the letter, it is clear to whom the "He" refers.

Was it a dream or a reality? For the first time in my life I was gazing upon the body of a saint. Unforgettable! To see Him lying there so peacefully freed at last from all burdens and care, reposing in the brightness of glory. You will be happy, I'm sure, to hear something from me about Him. In case you have already heard, it won't do any harm to hear such things a second time.

It was on February 3 that they brought Him half dead from the prison to the hospital. In His room were three beds close together—one on the right hand and one on the left, both occupied by guards, and His in the middle. No one was permitted to enter the room. On February 5 we heard that He was very lonely and asked permission to bring Him the Last Sacraments. The answer: "We have to consider that first." Finally, came the result of the considering: "The holy anointing is to be administered to good citizens only; it is not fitting that it be administered to people like Him . . ."

And then . . . came March 8. It was Saturday—Fatima Saturday—around 3 o'clock that He died. His body was released. There was rejoicing among the people that His sufferings had come to an end. A few days before, they had still subjected Him to six hours of questioning. But He had given only one answer: "You can ask me about that in the grave." And now He lay on the bier in the little chapel, clothed in red vestments. It must have been truly sublime. The people poured into the chapel to see Him. On Sunday morning, after High Mass, it seemed as if all the Catholics in the entire district were migrating to the city. Naturally, the others eyed the scene with considerable distaste. Within a short time the situation became really hot—but the people paid no attention to it and made no attempt to hide their feelings. The chief of the police department for religious affairs in Tsinan went around with his men and tried to terrorize the people into dispersing; they took names, confiscated hymn books, threatened and argued, but it all ended by their having to have the chapel closed. In a last

desperate attempt to save face, he commanded Brother D—— to take the body away immediately. That was one order that was promptly and gladly executed, for it was exactly what Brother had come to do—to bring the body back to Hungkialou and have it laid out in the seminary chapel.

(On Sunday, the ninth, in the same chapel the first Requiem Mass was celebrated in the morning. So great was the crowd of people that the police were astounded. A member of the "autonomous church" broke out into loud expressions of grief before the coffin and in the presence of the police and the faithful. The Christians who filled the chapel and the adjacent garden chanted the *Te Deum* continuously. At noon, the police forced the people from the chapel and ordered the burial to take place immediately outside the city in the town of Kukiafen, twelve kilometers away. A. O. F. M.)

The police chief for religious affairs was glad when He left the city, and we were glad to know we could welcome Him. He came about 5 o'clock,¹ amid the pealing of the bells. When the coffin was opened (Fr. Th—— and I stood in the choir—the church was packed) the people with one accord broke out into the *Te Deum*. Then the endless line filing past the coffin. The people were not satisfied with merely looking at Him, they had to kiss Him. The local police in Hungkialou had given us permission to postpone the burial until Tuesday, but apparently they did not know at the time for whom we were asking that permission. About 9 o'clock that night, after we had all gone to bed, there was a terrific racket at the monastery door. I anticipated nothing good. I was out of bed and dressed in a wink. I hadn't much to put on, because in these times we don't take much off. When I got to the gate I saw four men planted there. And the order? "He has to be buried tonight! Orders are orders. And furthermore He has to be buried by ten o'clock." In the meantime, the police chief for religious affairs had arrived with his staff. Until midnight there was a hearing on the question of why He had been laid out in red vestments. While all this was going on His Body was removed to Kukiafen, a nearby village where there have been Catholics for over three hundred years.

(Chung Wen-lung, the deposed ex-vicar general who had lodged the accusation against the Archbishop and is now the leader of the autonomous church, advised the police that the red vestments in which the body of the Archbishop had been clothed signified that he was a martyr. At once, at ten o'clock at night, this matter was investigated, and orders were issued that the

¹ I. e., to Hungkialou.

body should be brought immediately during that same night to Kukiafen and buried there. A. O. F. M.)

When the police were informed, about 2 o'clock in the morning, that He had been buried, the order was given to bring Him back, and to see that He was back by 8 o'clock A. M. At five o'clock we started out, took Him out of the grave, and brought Him back to Hungkialou. We put Him in Stanislaus's room. The police chief and the "Man from the East"² led the way. The "Man from the East" had brought black vestments for the body. And he did it. The people were furious. They put on a wonderful show! The people demanded white vestments, and the gentlemen had to give in. The people demanded that He lay in state until Tuesday, and the gentlemen had to give in. The people demanded a funeral band, and the gentlemen had to give in. The atmosphere became so oppressive that the gentlemen found it expedient to disappear.

(At ten o'clock, Chung Wen-lung, the ex-vicar general, in the presence of the police, stripped the body of the dead man of the red pontifical vestments, wishing to clothe it in the garb of captive criminals. The people protested and cursed him. Permission to use white pontifical vestments was granted. New testations and petitions from the faithful. The police telephoned central headquarters which gave permission to postpone the burial until noon of the following day. A. O. F. M.)

On Tuesday about 9 o'clock we held the solemn burial from the seminary chapel. There were eleven Friars there—the holy remains of our community. The rest of us were locked up, or—. But the people! They had come from everywhere—I don't know how many. I know only that they were one people in mind and heart. They all had to see Him once more before the coffin was closed, they all had to kiss their bishop-father once more. Twenty men carried the coffin and to the accompaniment of jubilant singing they bore it high above the heads of the people all the way to Kukiafen. Everyone wanted to help carry it. The police were there, of course, but they kept discreetly in the background. In the cemetery the singing died down, and just before the interment the whole crowd began to weep. The police looked on in surprise. "You Catholics, why are you crying?" one of them asked. "We've always heard that Catholics don't cry at funerals."³ But no one bothered about the police, and, as far as I know,

² "The Man from the East" translates the surname of Chung Wen-lung.

³ The pagan Chinese custom of loud and usually theatrical weeping at funerals frowned upon by Catholics.

no one bothered to answer their questions. I could tell you of many beautiful incidents that occurred at the cemetery, but this much will have to be enough for now. Suffice to say that His burial could not have been more beautiful. The people remarked that the red vestments in which He was first laid out symbolized His martyrdom, and the white in which He was buried symbolized His eternal glory.

(The account in the A. O. F. M. concludes: During this last morning more people kissed the hands and feet of the Archbishop than in the twenty-three years of his episcopate. With the holocaust of the Archbishop the movement in favor of the independent church seems to be dead. Chung Wen-lung, the ex-vicar and apostate, was so cursed, derided and mocked in Hungkialou, in the presence of the police, and especially by the women, the young folk, and the children, that he no longer dares to come into that locality. We hope that the dead Archbishop will become the martyr-patron of Tsinan).



Blessed is the servant that takes direction, blame, and reproof as patiently from another as from himself.

Blessed is the servant who, on being reproved, cheerfully agrees, modestly complies, humbly confesses, and readily makes amends.

Blessed is that servant who is not quick to excuse himself, and humbly accepts the embarrassment and the reproof for a sin when he was not guilty of any fault.

Saint Francis

SAINT JOHN CAPISTRAN ON STUDIES IN THE ORDER

In this letter Saint John Capistran reveals himself as one of God's angels. During his first term as Vicar General of the Observants he wrote against the zealots who were convinced that studies opposed the purity of the Rule and were carrying on a campaign of calumny against him ever since he had succeeded Saint Bernardine of Siena in founding a school of theology at Perugia in 1424. In throwing up a protective wall around the enclosure of proposed studies, he barbed his charity with sharp and critical comments.

To the reader of this letter he bares an impetuous nature, driven to study by zeal and—from a worldly standpoint—by a lack of prudence. But the saints were ever prone to defy conventions; and the same impetuosity that led him to chaplain the Christian army against the Turks spurred him on to insist on his subjects a zest for combating the ignorance and consequent heresies of the age through more intensive study.

If we read this letter as it was written—with clenched teeth—the voice of the angry saint may still reach us across the centuries and stir us also to a zeal for the better gifts.

Venerable Fathers, respected and dearly beloved sons: for you I intercede prayerfully for saving grace and eternal peace in the Lord.

I am forced to wonder not a little that where I was expecting the most prompt obedience and concerted efforts in a matter touching the glory of God and the common welfare, and the honor and furthering of our holy Religion, precisely there I encounter rebellious obstinacy in some of you. Before I was burdened with the office of Superior, these were the very men who were wont to treat me as most loyal friends, hastening to consult me for advice and following it without delay. Yet now they have become obstacles to me and opponents, contumacious and rebellious, even setting themselves up as judges on our holy Rule against the commands of their lawful Superior regarding studies.

Are we unaware that a priest cannot treat of holy matters if he does not know them? Do we not realize how necessary are the keys of the Church? Are we ignorant of the fact that for their right use adequate knowledge is necessary? Is not knowledge enumerated among the gifts of the Holy Spirit? O ignorance, foolish and blind mother of all errors, who has courted you, what has increased your darkness, except sin? Here I refer not to positive fault, but rather to the fault of omission caused by neglect of study. Can anyone benefit others if he

does not know how? How will he know unless he learns? How can he learn unless he is taught? Alas! How stupid, barren, and sluggish is the counsel of the ignorant!

Untold is the harm caused by shameful ignorance and neglect. He who despises knowledge is an enemy of nature; for man naturally desires to know. Therefore, he who hates knowledge sins against nature; and he who neglects the gifts and talents of God blasphemes the Holy Spirit. "For this resistance is as wrong as the sin of fortune-telling, and not to submit herein is as sinful as idolatry." Is it not written: *For God loveth none but him that dwelleth with wisdom* (Wisdom 7, 28)? *For by wisdom they were healed, whosoever hath pleased thee, O Lord, from the beginning* (Wisdom 9, 19). *For regarding not wisdom, they did not only slip in this that they were ignorant of good things, but they left also unto men a memorial of their folly, so that in the things in which they sinned they could not so much as lie hid* (Wisdom 10, 8).

Dearly beloved, be careful lest there be hurled against you that malediction: *For wisdom shall not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins* (Wisdom 1, 4). Do you perchance consider it of more value to spend your time in murmuring, condemning, slandering, lying, and foolish talking, and in objecting to superiors as well as to subjects, than in the useful study of those doctrines necessary for one's own salvation and that of others, for the worship of God, and for the control and government of souls? Can anyone doubt that the Commandments must be kept to gain eternal life? And what of the Church Militant? Can the ignorant man give her proper service? In the words of the Apostle: *If anyone ignores this, he shall be ignored* (I Cor. 14, 38). Which means that he shall be ignored for salvation, but not for damnation. Are you not bound to know *our* law, and by that I mean our Rule? Are there not more precepts in it for you than in the common law? Oh, the abominable stupidity of a darkened mind! What is it but an inert clod, a dead cinder, a confused blackness and a hateful rivalry deceived in the gloom of evil! Will you believe me, or do you prefer to become obstacles to your own selves?

You say that Brother John is seeking honor from this project of his, just as he sought honor from the reformation of the Order in the time of Martin V. If I desired the reform of the Order, if, with all my strength and with all my heart, I sought and strove for this, how can you picture me as so vile, so base and despicable? Would that I had passed out of this miserable life before I saw this day! I long for your advancement, for your salvation; I want you to be useful; and I desire your honor and glory. Pardon me, please, for having

sought to stir you to zeal for the better gifts. Without the gift of wisdom, can you grasp the meaning of faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance, or of the other virtues and holy gifts, including the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, or the distinctions between original, venial, and mortal sin, together with the various types of mortal sin differing in gravity and species? Are you not bound to be versed in these things? Being ignorant of these virtues and virtues, how will you be saved? If you are enclosed in the darkened theater of your mind, how will you *let your light shine before men*? Rather will you fall one by one into the pit.

"For whoever lives in rebellion and refuses to speak well and to do well is no member of Christ, but rather a member of the devil; no Christian, but rather an infidel." Do you not need Guardians? And do not Guardians have the care of souls? And having that spiritual responsibility, can they discharge their office properly without knowledge? Indeed, a priest, inasmuch as he is designated for holy things, should know about holy things. And both priests and clerics should have at least enough knowledge of grammar that they can recite the divine office correctly and clearly, and not slovenly; that they can pronounce the words properly according to syllable and sense; and that as they read they can understand something of the text. Those administering the Sacraments should understand the efficient, material, formal, and final causes of the Sacraments. Of course, they must know the proper manner of administering them. And if a preacher merely memorizes fables and stories, and recites them mechanically like a lyre or an organ, not knowing whether he is speaking well or badly, does he not leave himself open to the ridicule of his audience? Oh, how base is the doctrine (and it must be retracted!) tainted with heresy which some preachers, like dogs, chew over and belch forth! And sometimes this happens merely from blind ignorance.

And you, my confessors, so prompt to absolve. Do you know that if you pass a false judgment you are held to retribution? Do you know that the Lord will ever require an account of that ignorance from your hands? In the Valley of Josaphat this Divine Arbiter will judge you because of the keys of knowledge you despised. *For the lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth: because he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts* (Mal. 2, 7). Yet he is not an angel unless he announces truth; but he cannot proclaim truth which he does not know; nor can he know unless he learns; and to learn without a teacher is impossible. Can you both flee and serve your devilish teacher? Satan, clever and experienced, will seduce your ignorance just as he seduced Eve; and

ADVENT SUMMONS

Come forth from the holy place,
Sweet Child,
Come from the quiet dark
Where virginal heartbeats
Tick your moments.

Come away from the red music
Of Mary's veins.
Come out from the Tower of David,
Sweet Child,
From your House of Gold.

Leave your lily-cloister,
Leave your holy mansion,
Quit your covenant ark.
O Child, be born!

Be born, sweet Child,
In our unholy hearts.

Come to our trembling,
Helpless Child.
Come to our littleness,
Little Child,
Be born unto us
Who have kept the faltering vigil.
Be given, be born,
Be ours again.

Come forth from your holy haven,
Come away from your perfect shrine,
Come to our wind-racked souls
From your flawless tent,
Sweet Child.

Be born, little Child,
In our unholy hearts.

Poor Clare Monastery of
Our Lady of Guadalupe,
Roswell, New Mexico

Sr. Mary Francis, P. C.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Spiritual Joy

During this month of Advent, we find a striking example of the paradox which abound in the Catholic religion. Paradoxes, I say, not contradictions for each one of them, like a dissonant chord in music, will always resolve in beautiful harmony, the harmony of a balanced and soul-satisfying program of living. Thus, on the third Sunday of Advent, in the midst of a season of penance, a note of joy rings out, which immediately interprets for us the entire doctrine of mortification, showing us that, far from being an end in itself, far from being a joy-killer, it is the sure means of guaranteeing to us true and lasting happiness of soul. Moreover, that note of cheer, on such an occasion, forcibly reminds us of the fact that our holy religion is a joyful way of life. That is why it is called *Evangelium*—the message of glad tidings. That is why Saint Paul can say that true Christians, though sorrowful, are always rejoicing (2 Cor. 6, 10). What he means is that, while we are expected to go about the work of our salvation seriously, still this very seriousness leads to imperturbable peace and genuine joy. And it must be so, otherwise our religion would not be adapted to our nature which was created for, and craves, happiness. Hence, we find the Church insistently stressing this element of joy, not only during the happy seasons of the year, but also during the penitential seasons, yes, even on Good Friday, when her liturgy, so to say, parts the clouds of sorrow momentarily and allows a ray of the gladsome Easter dawn to shine on her grieving children. Let us, therefore, close this series of conferences with a meditation on spiritual joy. We shall consider the source of this joy, its advantages, and some of the means to preserve it in our hearts.

Our joy must find its source in God. *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice* (Phil. 4, 4). The reason for this is twofold—our creation by God, and the gifts bestowed upon us by God. God gave us life by creating our souls directly, and our bodies indirectly, through our parents. But He gave us life for a definite purpose, namely, to know Him, to love Him, and to serve Him. And it is only by fulfilling this purpose of our creation, only by seeking God, that we can expect to attain happiness. "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O God, and our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee" (St. Augustine). Then, too, God has granted us the sublime privilege of being His very children; He has given us the saving teachings of His divine Son that we might always have the correct viewpoint of things; He has mercifully pardoned our many sins that we may be at peace with Him; He watches over us and cares for us with the solicitude of

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loving mother; He has promised us eternal life. Any one of these or of the other priceless gifts of God is a treasure beyond compare, and is sufficient to make our hearts fairly dance with joy. *Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject to you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven* (Lk. 10, 20)

God and His gifts—there we have the only sure, the only permanent, foundation for a life of happiness! The only sure foundation . . . Does this mean that creatures play no part in our happiness, or that we are not allowed to enjoy them? Certainly not. Our life is so bound up with other persons and with the things of this world that we could not get along without them. God wants us to use these creatures—and to enjoy them, *for every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be rejected that is accepted with thanksgiving* (1 Tim. 4, 4). Creatures, in themselves, will do us no harm, will not spoil our happiness, provided we use them as God intended them to be used. There's the important point. We must relate our enjoyment of creatures to God's service, to His holy will. And that comes down again to "rejoicing in the Lord". It is strange but true that the things of this world have a mysterious way of insisting that God's will be carried out. They will bring joy and satisfaction if used according to God's will, but sorrow, disappointment, and even disgust if they are not. Monsignor Ronald Knox, in his book *A Retreat for Priests* (p. 20), gives us a practical and accurate norm by which we may judge if we are using creatures as we should. Are they getting in the way of our prayers? Do they leave us too little time, or attention, or strength, or relish for our prayers of obligation and devotion? If so, they are displacing God in our hearts. And to the extent that they do this our joy will be diminished, for its increase and decrease are ever in direct proportion to our union with God.

Again, by saying that God and His gifts are the only permanent foundation for a life of happiness, there is no intention of implying that if we keep close to God we shall be spared suffering and affliction. Not at all! Look at Christ and His Blessed Mother. Trials, persecutions, and crosses were their constant companions during life. Blessed Pius X said that the words of the Prophet can be applied to both of them: *My life is wasted with grief: and my years in sighs* (Ps. 30, 11). The one is known as the "Man of Sorrows," and the other is called the "Queen of Martyrs." And yet, this world has never seen two happier souls than Jesus and Mary. Happiness in this life does not mean the absence of suffering, but the presence of God. But God had united to Himself the human nature of Jesus hypostatically, and the soul of Mary by the fullness of grace. And nothing was able to destroy or mar that union. Hence, nothing

was able to rob them of their joy. Moreover, in the light of that union saw suffering in this world as part and parcel of the Heavenly Father's as His way of redeeming, sanctifying, and rewarding souls. Consequently, Jesus and Mary spoke their *Fiat*, even though it meant untold suffering for it filled their hearts with the inexpressible joy that comes with the loving fulfillment of the Heavenly Father's will. This very same reason, though to a extent in their regard, explains the unalterable joy of the Saints despite many trials. Think of the Apostles, rejoicing after being scourged by the think of Saint Paul, claiming that he exceedingly abounds with joy in tribulations; think of our holy Father Francis, expounding his doctrine of Perfect Joy. Our hearts, likewise, will find unchanging and lasting happiness only if, at all times and under all circumstances, they are united to God His holy will. There is no other way.

Now, what are the *advantages* to be derived from keeping ourselves joy united to God at all times? In the first place, it is one of the most important means of preventing and of overcoming temptations. Holy Scripture soundly warns us: *Drive away sadness far from thee. For sadness hath killed wisdom and there is no profit in it* (Ecclus. 30, 24-25). Yes, it has led many a soul to the loss of sanctifying grace, to spiritual death. An old proverb has it that the devil loves to fish in troubled waters. When we give in to sadness and become morose, preoccupied with our troubles, we are usually an easy prey to the wiles of the devil. It is at such times that he tempts us especially to neglect of duty, to self-pity, to irritability, to envy, to sins of lust and intemperance, and to discouragement which Saint Francis de Sales calls the "meanest of all temptations." In former times, sadness was judged so dangerous to the soul that if anyone deliberately yielded to it, it was considered matter for confession and a penance was imposed for it just as for any other sin. No wonder the Saints urgently exhort us to be always cheerful. They look upon true joy as the sunshine of the heart which quickly dispels the mists of temptation, as the fresh air of the soul which effectively destroys the germs of sin. On this score, our holy Father Francis says that "spiritual joy is the surest defence against the thousand temptations of the devil."

Another advantage of spiritual joy is the help it gives us in the performance of our daily duties. Let us just ask ourselves when we find it easier to do our work—when we are gloomy or when we are cheerful? The answer, of course, is self-evident. Sadness has a benumbing effect on our soul just as excessive cold has on our body. It makes us sluggish, listless, indifferent, and thus prevents us

from putting our whole heart into the task before us. *As a moth doth by a garment, and a worm by the wood: so the sadness of a man consumeth the heart* (Prov. 25, 20). On the other hand, when we are cheerful, everything seems so easy and we are scarcely sensible of fatigue. Our mind is alert, our will is energetic, and we push right on till the work is accomplished. On one occasion, Saint Bernard was planning to build a new monastery on a very forbidding, marshy piece of land. "This foundation," he announced, "will mean real work. Give me men for it with joy in their hearts, a joy that bubbles to the surface no matter how black things get." How correct Saint Thomas is when he declares: "We only do that well which we do with joy." That is why Holy Scripture tells us to *serve the Lord with gladness* (Ps. 99, 2). And, by the way, when we go about our work with a song in our heart and a smile on our face, it is perhaps the nicest compliment that we could pay to the service of God. It proves how literally we accept His statement: *My yoke is easy, and my burden light* (Mt. 11, 30).

The third advantage of cheerfulness is that it fosters our growth in virtue. *I have known that there was no better thing than to rejoice and to do well in this life* (Eccl. 3, 12). Look at that text. Joyfulness and doing well, that is, practicing virtue, are linked together as the ideal combination. Indeed, the two always go hand in hand. We might almost say that the recipe for holiness is happiness. One writer phrased it very succinctly in this way: "To be holy, be happy." But whether we wish to claim that much for happiness or not, it still remains true that the great mystics do not hesitate to assert that joy is inseparable from heroic sanctity. To tread virtue's path perseveringly is no easy matter. It calls for great enthusiasm and energy, and, above all, for unflagging tenacity of purpose. Only a consistently cheerful disposition will be capable of displaying those qualities and, hence, will have what it takes to reach the heights of holiness. In fact, a person can not be constantly cheerful without thereby practicing many virtues. Blessed Contardo Ferrini used to say: "A smile can be itself an act of heroism, the height of abnegation, and a wonderful demonstration of faith." How divinely true, therefore, are these words of Holy Scripture: *The joyfulness of the heart is a never failing treasure of holiness* (Ecclus. 30, 23). Hence, Pope Benedict XIV, in listing the four requisites for canonization, included the spirit of supernatural joyfulness, even though the candidate may have been of a naturally melancholic temperament. This truly revealing teaching recalls to mind the famous saying of Saint Francis de Sales: "A saint who is sorrowful is a sorry saint," as also the prayer of Saint Theresa of Avila: "From sour-faced saints, O Lord, deliver me!"

Other advantages of spiritual joy might profitably be considered here such as its beneficial effects on our bodily health and its magnetic power of attracting vocational prospects to our Community, but space will not permit our taking up these interesting aspects of the subject. And anyway, the advantages already mentioned are sufficient to make us eager to use all the *means* at our disposal to preserve a spirit of cheerfulness in our hearts. The first and most important is to avoid sin. Sin is a deliberate eviction of Love from our soul, turning away from God. But, as we repeatedly noted before, there can be no true and lasting joy apart from God. Sin, then, is the only real joy-killer. *Who hath resisted God, and hath had peace?* (Job 9, 4). Here we are reminded of the advice which our holy Father Francis once gave to a friar who was sad and morose: "Brother, it behooves not the servant of God to be sad and ill-humored before men. He should, on the contrary, be always of good cheer. If you have sinned, go and examine yourself in your room and, weeping over your sins before God, confess your faults to a priest. But when you return to your brothers, put aside your sadness and be cheerful like the others." As is evident from these words, the only excuse for sadness which Saint Francis admitted was sinfulness. And that is correct. It was through sin that unhappiness first made its appearance on earth, and as long as men persist in committing sin, it will yield them nothing but misery. Cheerfulness has been defined as "radiant sinlessness," and I believe that definition is a most precise one.

The second means to preserve our hearts from sadness is prayer. Once again let us turn to our holy Father Francis and see what he teaches on this point. Whenever he felt sadness stealing over him ever so little, he flew immediately to prayer, for he said: "If God's servant is troubled about anything, he ought forthwith arise and pray, and remain persistently in his heavenly Father's presence until He restores to him the joy of His salvation." How perfectly this advice agrees with the Scriptural admonition: *Is any one of you sad? Let him pray* (Jas. 5, 13). No doubt, all of us know from personal experience the life which prayer affords in moments of trial and distress. At such times, as we knelt before the Blessed Sacrament, or fingered our rosary, or took recourse to prayerful reading, we realized the tender implications of Christ's words: *Come to me, all you that labor and are burdened: and I will refresh you* (Mt. 11, 28).

Another guarantee of cheerful living is the spirit of meekness. *The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord* (Isa. 29, 19). How miserable we make ourselves by getting all worked up about a little personal affront, or an infringement on our convenience, or a violation of our rights. The advice usually given on such

occasions is, "Hold your peace." It means that if we pass over these trifles in silence, we shall preserve our hearts in peaceful tranquility. Why don't we act in that way? Is it because we're not big enough? I prefer to say that we're not little enough, not humble enough. Meekness is based on humility. That's why our Lord mentioned them together when He said: *Learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart* (Mt. 11, 29). That is a hard lesson for us to learn, simply because we're so very proud. But learn it we must if we would enjoy uninterrupted happiness. Let us note well what Christ promised us if we imitate His meekness and humility: *You will find rest for your souls* (Mt. 11, 29).

Finally, let us not overlook childlike confidence in God. We may not, and most often don't, understand the reason for crosses and trials that come our way. But that is unimportant. The essential thing is to fall back on the basic truth that God is our loving Father. That will take care of any situation. If He marks the fall from the sky of each tiny sparrow, He'll be solicitous about all the happenings in the lives of His dear children. This consoling truth is a most effective spiritual shock-absorber which enables us to negotiate even the roughest spots on life's highway without being unduly shaken up. *Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded. For who hath continued in his commandment, and hath been forsaken? Or who hath called upon him, and he despised him? For God is compassionate and merciful, and will forgive sins in the day of tribulation: and he is a protector to all that seek him in truth* (Ecclus. 2, 11-13).

In this conference, we meditated on spiritual joy under a threefold aspect—its source, its advantages, and the means capable of preserving it in our hearts. May the principal benefit which we derive from these considerations be a deeper appreciation of the importance of spiritual joy in our lives. It may be that we are too easily inclined to pooh-pooh all the talk about constant cheerfulness and genial smiles, branding it as just another cheap technique advocated by a popular treatise on psychology with some such title as: *Seven Ways to Make People Like You*. However, the book which, more than any other, stresses joyfulness happens to be the most sacred book in the world, the book inspired by God, the Bible. It contains eight hundred texts related to this subject in one way or another! And that is surprisingly significant for a book which specializes in a style that is concise, terse, and even summary. If we don't consider spiritual joy important, God certainly does!

But we also have a special obligation to consider it important, for we are Franciscans. And, down through the centuries, Franciscan spirituality has

become synonymous with joyful spirituality. Joy is one of the most precious fruits of the Franciscan view of life, with its emphasis on love, on poverty, on God as our Father, and on Christ as our Brother. The oldest chroniclers of the Order testify that the Franciscan family lived constantly in an atmosphere of joy. The first Rule which Saint Francis drew up contained these words: "Let the Friars take care not to appear exteriorly sad and gloomy like hypocrites, but let them show themselves to be joyful and contented in the Lord, merry and becomingly courteous." And not only were they to be joyful themselves, but they were also to spread joy wherever they went. Shortly before his death, which by the way, he met with a song on his lips, Saint Francis made this observation: "What else are the Friars but joyous minstrels of the Lord, who move and excite the hearts of men to spiritual joy." We Franciscans, therefore, have a tradition to uphold, the tradition of unfailing cheerfulness. May our Father Francis obtain for us the grace ever to be as loyal to it as was that faithful follower of his of an earlier day, Saint Francis Solanus, who was known to his contemporaries as "the man with a mouthful of smiles".

Westmont, Illinois.

Fr. Herman Doerr, O. F. M.



Acceding to numerous requests, we have had *An Examination of Conscience according to Saint Bonaventure* published in book form. The price per copy is \$1; a 10% discount is allowed on orders for two to five copies; a 30% discount on orders for five and over.

AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (X)

TEXT: Chapter IV: *The Divine Office, Prayer and Fasting*

The Ninth Article

The Brothers and Sisters should perform the Divine Office worthily, attentively, and devoutly, according to their Constitutions. Lay members, however, shall say twelve Our Fathers for Matins and Lauds, and five for each of the remaining canonical hours.

The previous chapter, we recall, contains the heart of the rule, the substance of the Gospel message—our obligation to love God and our fellowman. The remaining chapters of the Rule, excepting the last which defines the obligation of the Rule itself, concern the Franciscan practice of this dual law of love. Perfect love is unselfish in the sense that it is a giving, a sharing, a surrender of our self to another. To God alone we can reasonably give our entire self with no strings attached. Yet, this perfect dedication, this complete gift of ourselves, is impossible so long as those selfish instincts rooted in the imperfection of our nature are not subjected to the yoke of reason and brought into the service of God. But where love of God and self-discipline are strong, the Franciscan turns naturally towards that concrete manifestation of love of God and forgetfulness of self, the practice of charity towards one's neighbor. The supernatural love life of the Franciscan religious, then, concerns God, self and others. Its triple objective is to love God, to control self, to help others. Now, it is this threefold aim that dictates the subsequent chapter divisions of the Rule. The fourth chapter deals with our relations to God, the fifth with our control of self and the sixth and seventh with what concerns our fellowmen.

Perfect love of God which seeks Him for His own sake, and not for what He can give us, is threefold: an adoring love, a repentant love, an atoning love. The first two articles of the present chapter remind the Tertiary Religious how he or she may render to the Creator the love of adoration or worship, whereas the remaining articles concern the subject of repentance and atonement. Let us consider the first of these articles on the practical manifestation of the love of God, that which concerns the recitation of the Divine Office.

The Brothers and Sisters should perform the Divine Office according to their Constitutions . . .

Because God is God, He merits from His creatures the supreme love of adoration. Because man is man, a social being, he owes his Creator not only a

private but also a public worship of sacrifice and prayer. If the Mass is the Church's public sacrifice, the Divine Office is its official prayer. As his Holiness Pope Pius XII puts it: "The Divine Office is the prayer of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ offered to God in the name of and on behalf of all Christians when recited by priests or other ministers of the Church, and by religious who are deputed by the Church for this purpose" (*Mediator Dei*).

Strictly speaking, only the Divine Office or "canonical office" is to be considered a part of the official public prayer of the Church, and this regardless of whether it is recited in choir or in private. As such, the Divine Office differs from all other "Offices" which are approved but not imposed by Holy Mother Church. Sometimes it is called the "great office" to distinguish it from the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin.

While the Code of Canon Law concerns itself with the obligations for religious orders with solemn vows, it leaves it to the constitutions of congregations with simple vows to make their own prescriptions regarding the Divine Office. Where the constitutions of such congregations require choir service, the religious are bound to render it, but it should be noted that this obligation is not imposed under pain of sin.

In most congregations of the Third Order Regular, however, the constitutions substitute the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin for the great office, and prescribe that it be recited in common by the community and even privately by those religious legitimately excused from choir. Similarly, these constitutions indicate the number of religious necessary for choir obligation to arise. While none of these obligations of themselves bind under pain of sin, their very imposition is itself significant. Inasmuch as they are patterned on the general regulations for the rendition of the Divine Office laid down by Canon Law, they indicate the desire of the respective religious institute to share in the formal worship of the Church. While the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin is not to be confused with the great office, which is the official public prayer of the Mystical Body of Christ, nevertheless, as the very word "office" indicates, the Marian office, like that of the lay members of the community, is a task, an assignment, entrusted to the religious community in the approbation of the constitution. All this would seem to indicate that the Church, in approving of the substitution of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin for the Divine Office prescribed by the Rule, intends to give the religious institute an opportunity to add its contribution to the public prayer of the Church without imposing upon

the community or the individual religious a strict obligation to render this public service in its name.

In this sense, then, religious in reciting their Office, whether it be the greater or canonical office contained in the Roman-Seraphic Breviary or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, can be said to be praying in the name of the Church. For that reason, the Office has a special efficacy about it that brings God's blessings not only on all Christians at large or upon the respective congregation or religious institute, but also upon the individual religious and those for whom he or she prays. That is why the Office enjoys a place of prominence among the pious exercises of the community and in the eyes of a discerning religious has a value unlike that of any purely private prayer.

Consequently, the general directives regarding the recitation of the Office should be observed not only by those Regular Tertiaries obliged to recite the Divine Office as such, but also by those called to perform the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin. This brings us to the next consideration, the manner of saying the Office.

Worthily, attentively and devoutly . . .

It goes without saying that the official or semi-official prayer offered in the name of the Church should be performed in a *worthy* manner. A worthy choral recitation demands a fitting place, namely the chapel or choir adjoining the chapel, and the observance of the prescribed rubrics. The very posture of the religious should be at all times an external indication of the official character of the work they are performing. In private recitation, the rubrics need not be observed; neither is any special place prescribed, though religious should not recite it in a place where they cannot make a sanctuary of their heart and pray in a recollected manner. Furthermore, a worthy recitation must be vocal, entire and continuous. It must be vocal because it is an act of external worship. It is not necessary that the private recitation be audible, but it suffices if the lips move. The recitation of the Office must be entire or complete, without any clipping of syllables or mutilation of words. If one recites the Office in choir or with a companion, he fully complies with his duty if he recites this part and listens attentively to the other side. But a notable mutilation of the Office can take place if one side continually begins before the other has finished. The Divine Office should be said without unnecessary interruptions. This continuity refers primarily to choral recitation. As for private recitation, it is permissible to interrupt a canonical hour, or even a single psalm, for a reasonable cause.

A practical instance might be the case of a Sister in charge of the sacristy who recites her Office during the celebration of a High Mass and occasionally may interrupt her prayer to direct the servers, censor bearer, and so on.

Secondly, the Office must be performed *attentively*. Moral theologians distinguish between internal and external attention. The latter consists in mere avoidance of any action that is incompatible with the recitation of the Office, such as sleeping, writing, talking and the like. It may be present even when the mind is prey to a host of distractions. Internal or true attention is advertence of the mind to the task being performed. Internal attention may be directed primarily to the correct pronunciation of the words, in which case it is called material or superficial attention; or it may regard the meaning of the words, in which case it is known as literal attention; or finally, it may concentrate itself with the end of prayer, which is God in His divine perfections or mysteries. This last we call intellectual or spiritual attention.

To satisfy one's obligations, it is sufficient, says Saint Alphonse, to have at least external attention coupled with the virtual intention of worshipping God in the Divine Office. This latter intention, theologians point out, is signified though not actually expressed, in the act of taking up one's breviary and reciting the Office. While this may be a source of consolation to a religious who despite his best efforts is beset with distractions while saying his office, no fervent Franciscan will be content with this minimum but will strive for true spiritual attention. Which brings us to the third point, namely, that the Office be said *devoutly*.

If spiritual or intellectual attention characterizes our recitation of the Divine Office, this daily tribute to the All High God will indeed become an act of devotion. Perhaps one of the simplest ways of keeping spiritually attentive is to recall the presence of God, or to unite oneself in spirit with Christ, while adapting to one's personal needs the sentiments contained in the Psalms or other parts of the Office. This union with Christ in spirit is more readily achieved if we but recall His promise to be present where two or three are gathered together in His name. If the recitation of the Divine Office is truly an act of public worship, then Christ will certainly be with us "spiritually and sacramentally", as Saint Bonaventure puts it (*De Sex Alis Seraphim*, ch. 7). It should be easy to keep in mind some scene of Christ's life for each of the canonical hours. As the Seraphic Doctor reminds us: Christ was born of the Virgin Mary during the night (Matins), was judged by the Sanhedrin in the early hours of the morning (Lauds), rose from the tomb at the break of day (Prime), was scourged at

the third hour, and sent forth His Spirit upon the Apostles (Terce), was crucified at the sixth hour (Sext), died for us upon the cross at the ninth hour (None), gave us His Body and Blood in the Eucharist at Vespers, and at the hour of Compline was buried in a stranger's tomb.

As for making the sentiments of the various prayers of the Office our own, we can well take Saint Francis himself as our model. "He recited the psalms with such attention of mind and spirit," says Saint Bonaventure, "as if he had God present within him; and whenever the name of the Lord occurred in them, it seemed to leave a sensible sweetness on his lips." (*Legenda Major*, ch. 10). Certain verses of the psalms may have a special appeal or sweetness about them that makes devotion easy. We might well mark these in our Office book and reflect on them mentally while continuing our recitation, even as Francis lingered over the name of the Lord to taste its sweetness.

Lay members shall say twelve Our Fathers . . .

In some religious Institutes, a distinction is made between choir and lay members. In such cases, the latter are obliged to recite the "lay office" of forty-two Our Fathers: twelve for Matins and Lauds and five for each of the remaining hours.

However, those obliged to recite the Divine Office or the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin might do well to recall the permission first granted by Innocent IV (Aug. 9, 1253) to the Poor Clares, and extended through the communication of privileges to the other branches of the Franciscan family, namely, the right to substitute the lay office for the regular Office under certain conditions. It may happen at times that circumstances are not such as to excuse a religious entirely from the recitation of Office. They merely make it difficult to say or necessitate its postponement to an inconvenient time. Such, for instance, would be the case if one had sore eyes, or could find no breviary handy, or is travelling, or was unable to read because of darkness, and so on. Under these conditions a religious would be justified in making use of this privilege. Even less reason would be required where the obligation to say the Office is not imposed under pain of sin. In fact, in such cases it would be better to substitute the lay office for the Little Office than to omit part of the latter entirely when they cannot be readily said either in choir or privately as the constitution prescribes.

(to be continued)

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Allan Wolter, O. F. M.

THE HOUSE OF GOD (I)

(Saint Bonaventure's Sermo II in Epiphania Domini)

Entering the house, they found the Child with Mary his Mother (Matthew 2, 11).

In this verse, the object of this present great solemnity is expressed, namely, the Epiphany, which indeed was the apparition of the Lord, or His finding by the Magi. The Feast is described in reference to a three-fold circumstance: first, in regard to the suitableness of the place encompassing Him, when it says, *entering the house*; secondly, in regard to the benignity of the Child that is seen, *they found the Child*; thirdly, in regard to the dignity of the companion caring for Him, *with Mary His Mother*.

The suitableness of the place is implied when it is called a house, because it was a place of tranquility. And it should be noticed that according to the four-fold meaning of house this word has a four-fold signification; for there is a house in which Christ is found corporally, and this is the house of the Virgin Mary; and there is a house in which He is found spiritually, and this is the house of the faithful soul; and there is a house in which He is found sacramentally, and this is the house of the Church militant; and there is a house in which He is found eternally, and this is the house of the celestial court. The first refers to the literal meaning, the second to the moral meaning, the third to the allegorical, the fourth to the anagogical. And in this way through this word the affections are redirected, morals are re-ordered, faith is instructed, and devotion is enkindled.

Jesus' Corporeal House

The house, then, in which Jesus is found corporally is the house of the Virgin Mary. In this house, first of all, He was formed, and found by Joseph and the holy angels; secondly, here He was born, and found by the shepherds and the neighbors; thirdly, here He was given the breast, and found by the Apostles. Therefore, the first house in which the Child Jesus was formed, and found by Joseph and the holy angels was the house of the virginal womb, of which the eighteenth chapter of Jeremias speaks: *Go down into the potter's house, and there thou shalt hear my words*. This can be best understood of the womb of the Virgin, where with His Own hands the Lord fashioned for Himself a body, and into it the Son of God descended in order to hear the Father's words; it was in reference to this mystery that He Himself said in the sixth chapter of John: *I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will,*

but the will of him who sent me. And in this house He was found by Joseph and the angels, as the first chapter of Matthew states: *She was found, before they came together, to be with child by the Holy Spirit*. This is what was signified in the seventeenth chapter of Numbers, where it is written that Moses entered into the tabernacle of the testimony and found that the rod of Aaron in the house of Levi had budded; because the Virgin Mary, although coming from the root of Jesse, was none the less joined to the priestly caste.

The house in which He was born, and found by the shepherds and the neighbors was the house of the manger belonging to the shepherds, a poor and narrow little crib concerning which the twenty-ninth chapter of Ecclesiasticus says that *the chief thing for man's life is water and bread and clothing*. The necessary thing for our life is *water and bread and a house to cover shame*. Here is the poor, little, narrow house in which palace and stable are combined, and in this house He was found by the shepherds; regarding this mystery the second chapter of Luke says that *they went with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in the manger*. For it was suitable that He who *became all things to all men* should be seen by the shepherds in a place belonging to shepherds.

The house in which He was given the breast, and found by the Magi was the house of His Mother's bosom; in reference to this mystery the third chapter of the Canticle of Canticles says that *I held him and I will not let him go, till I bring him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that bore me*. And it was on the outside of this house that, in the eighth chapter of the Canticle of Canticles, the bride desired to find Him: *Would that thou wert my brother, she says, nursed at my own mother's breast! Then I would meet thee in the open street and kiss thee, and earn no contemptuous looks*. In this house the Magi found Him, as the second chapter of Matthew relates: *Entering the house, they found the child with Mary his mother*. It is significant that it says, *with Mary his mother*, because when He appeared a Wonder to the Magi He was even yet nursing at His Mother's breast.

The house in which He lived and was found by the disciples, or the apostles, was the house of the paternal inn, which is mentioned in the sixth chapter of Mark: *A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, and among his own kindred, and in his own house*; for those among whom He abode disdained Him, saying that He was the son of Joseph the carpenter. None the less, in this house was He found by the disciples, as in the first chapter of John where

Philip said to Nathaniel: "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and the Prophets wrote, Jesus the son of Joseph of Nazareth."

Full of glory are these discoveries, and answering to man's yearning through which the Child Jesus appeared in the substance of our flesh; for Holy Mother Church contemplates these and all the others, but especially that discovery in which He appeared to the Magi, because that was the beginning of the calling of the Gentiles.

Jesus' Spiritual House

The house in which He is found spiritually is the house of the faithful soul, of which can be understood the verse from the eighth chapter of Wisdom: *When I go into my house, I shall repose myself with her*, that is, with the uncreated Wisdom, Who is the Son of God, Christ Jesus, Whom we say and believe is the power of God and the wisdom of God. This house must first of all be built, so that the Child Jesus may be invited into it; then it must be guarded and maintained lest He be banished from it; finally, it must be searched and inspected and ransacked, in order to discover Him as He lies hidden there.

For the building of the spiritual house—and this is a holy conscience—four factors present themselves. The first is the frame-work of justice, mentioned in the seventh chapter of Matthew: *Everyone who hears these my words and acts upon them, shall be likened to a wise man who built his house on rock*; and, a little farther on: *And everyone who hears these my words and does not act upon them, shall be likened to a foolish man who built his house on sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and was utterly ruined*. This is why the threat is heard in the twenty-second chapter of Jeremias: *Woe to him that buildeth up his house by injustice, and his chambers not in judgment*. This frame-work the house of the avaricious does not have, those who strive to enrich themselves through fair means or foul; of these Habacuc speaks in the second chapter of his prophecy: *Who to him that gathered together an evil covetousness to his house*. Men like these build worldly houses and not heavenly ones; therefore, the Lord threatens them in the fifth chapter of Isaias: *Woe upon you, that must ever be acquiring house after house, field after neighboring field, till all the world goes wanting! Would you have the whole land to yourselves to live in?*

The second factor is the ornamentation of modesty, and of this can be understood that verse in the first chapter of the Canticle of Canticles: *The beams of our houses are of cedar, our rafters of cypress trees*. This is said because of

the beauty and grace and odor of the modesty that diffuses its perfume throughout the house. *Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, unto length of days*; and again: *I have loved the beauty of thy house*. Without this modesty's beauty the house is deemed leprous; and of it the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus says that *if the priest going in perceive that the leprosy is returned, and the walls full of spots, it is a lasting leprosy, and the house is unclean*.

The third factor is the foundation of confidence spoken of in the third chapter of Hebrews: *Christ is faithful as the Son over his own house*. *We are that house, if we hold fast our confidence and the hope in which we glory unto the end*. Now, our confidence is in the Lord Who makes our house so secure that it deserved to be called not a house only but also a strong tower, as in that verse from the eighteenth chapter of Proverbs: *The name of the Lord is a strong tower*; on the contrary, of the hypocrite whose hope and confidence is not in God the eighth chapter of Job says that *the hope of the hypocrite shall perish, and his trust shall be like the spider's web. He shall lean upon his house and it shall not stand: he shall prop it up, and it shall not rise*.

The fourth factor is the encompassing wall of discipline, of which the fifty-first chapter of Ecclesiasticus speaks: *Draw near to me, ye unlearned, and gather yourselves together into the house of discipline*. Those who gather themselves together into the house of discipline are the ones who do not wander about outside, but return again and again into the inner recesses of conscience, according to the advice of Ecclesiasticus for everyone: *Be first to run home to thy house, and there withdraw thyself, and there take my pastime*. On the other hand, the seventh chapter of Proverbs speaks of the undisciplined in the person of the foolish woman who is *talkative and wandering, not bearing to be quiet, not able to abide still at home*; in this connection the fifth chapter of the first epistle to Timothy speaks of silly widows who *go about from house to house, idle, gossipers, mentioning things they ought not*. Those who go about from one neighbor's house to another are the ones who seek to judge the consciences of others through external acts; against these the twenty-first chapter of Ecclesiasticus says that *the foot of a fool is soon in his neighbor's house*, and, again, that *a fool will peep through the window into the house*. In houses of this kind, open and restless, the Lord refuses to live, and, knowing this, Mary remained at home, as the eleventh chapter of John has it.

In the second place, the house that has been built in this manner must be guarded and maintained lest Christ be banished from it, as we have already said. Now, this is accomplished through four guardians. The first is humble fear, as

in the twenty-seventh chapter of Ecclesiasticus: *Unless thou hold thyself diligently in the fear of the Lord, thy house shall quickly be overthrown.* And no wonder because, as fear builds upon the lowest and soundest base, so pride crests its house upon a prominent and perilous elevation, as in the seventeenth chapter of Proverbs: *He that maketh his house high, seeketh a downfall.* And no wonder for the Lord will destroy the house of the proud, as the same book states. Therefore, Seneca observes: "Bring yourself down to lowliness, from which you cannot fall."

The second guardian is the modesty of reticence that prompts a man to keep his own possessions hidden. Of this the fourth chapter of the fourth book of Kings reads that *Eliseus* said to the woman: "*Begone, and go into thy house, and shut thy door when thou art within and pour out the oil into all those vessels.*" Now, the oil signifies devotion of soul which should be hidden, according to the Lord's words in the sixth chapter of Matthew: *But when thou prayest, go into thy room, and closing thy door, pray to thy Father in secret.* In this connection, Gregory writes that "the treasure, once found, is hidden in order to save it"; and this is why Ecclesiasticus advises: *Bring not every man into thy house.* However, Ezechias did not follow this advice, and accordingly was reproved by the Lord and by Isaias, as in the twentieth chapter of the fourth book of Kings, where Ezechias showed the messengers of the King of Babylon the house of his aromatic spices, and the gold and silver, etc.; and afterwards the Lord threatened him that all these riches would be carried into Babylon; this He would not have said unless Ezechias had been vainly delighted.

The third guardian is stirring grief, and this is what keeps all others on the outside. Of this can be understood that verse in the twelfth chapter of Exodus: *There arose a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house wherein there lay not one dead.* This cry of grief makes the house safe from dangers, and because of this the seventh chapter of Ecclesiasticus states that *it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to the house of feasting;* and, in the same citation, that *the heart of fools is where there is mirth, and the heart of the wise is where there is mourning.* Through sorrow strangers are banished, according to that verse in the fourteenth chapter of Proverbs: *The heart that knoweth the bitterness of his own soul, in his joy the stranger shall not intermeddle;* and, in this same relation, Jeremias says: *I sat alone, because thou hast filled me with bitterness.* This guardianship truly penitent men have, and of these the thirtieth chapter of Job asks: *Who hath sent out the wild ass free, to whom I have given a house in the wilderness, and his dwellings in the barren land?*

The fourth guardian is an avid love; for, when you love something, because of that very love you become watchful so that the object you love will not be lost. The twelfth chapter of Luke reads: *Amen I say to you, that if a householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would certainly have watched, and not have let his house be broken into.* The danger is to be careless in the guarding of the house, because the twelfth chapter of Matthew states that when the unclean spirit finds the house unoccupied, swept and adorned, then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that man become worse than the first. A quite evident example of this is in the fourth chapter of the second book of Kings, where it is told that *Isboseth* was sleeping in his house upon his bed at noon, and the doorkeeper of the house, who was cleansing wheat, was fallen asleep; and the robbers, entering, cut off the head of Isboseth. Every spiritual man, therefore, should be on his guard against sloth, and keep a continual vigilance, as the bride in the Canticle of Canticles: *I sleep, and my heart watcheth;* for this reason the last chapter of the first epistle of Peter warns: *Brethren, be sober, be watchful!*

(to be continued)

Christ the King Seminary

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LAUDA LXV

Ah, little Boy, full well I know
Thy wisdom is a perfect thing,
Thy power hath as strong a wing
As ever rounded years possessed.
Ah, little One, and is it so
That thou canst hold unfaltering
The will and nature of a King
In such a little lowly nest?

Jacopone da Todi

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE

Poverty in Spirit

Of all the virtues associated with our Seraphic Father Francis, poverty that distinguishes him most characteristically and most clearly reaches to us his mind and heart. Yet it is this very virtue that is least understood and appreciated.

To be sure, we can all of us speak glibly enough of Franciscan poverty. We brag about it sometimes to religious of other Orders, and we extol its social value. But Franciscan *poverty in spirit*—that is something we rarely discuss and more rarely still see practiced. No doubt the reason for this is in our petty mediocrity. We do not clearly understand the Beatitudes described by our blessed Lord, because they are perfections—that is, they are found only in souls who have reached, or who are very close to reaching, a high degree of sanctity. And where do we stand? Admittedly, afar off. Yet—and this is the point to be stressed—as children of the Poverello we are definitely obliged to find out exactly what poverty meant to him, so that as faithful children we may “reproduce in ourselves the image and virtues of our father.”

Now what, actually, does Franciscan poverty mean? Or better, what did poverty mean to Saint Francis? Was it an affair of the emotions merely, a public and dramatic stripping away of all earthly bonds and possessions, or an allegorical romance with Lady Poverty? Books enough have been written to almost convince us that for Francis poverty was a glorious adventure of knightly chivalry, a typically medieval outburst of religious exuberance, utterly charming and utterly impracticable for us today. At the opposite extreme is the legalistic interpretation of the poverty of Francis. Did he really insist always and everywhere that poverty be observed to the letter? Was it a kind of obsession with him? Here again, there are books enough to prove that where poverty was concerned, Francis was inexorable. For the sake of his beloved poverty, they say he went about excoriating lax brethren, cursing transgressors, precipitating breach that nearly destroyed the Order, even defying the authority of the Church. *Fiat justitia, pereat mundus!*

Obviously, Saint Francis had nothing to do with either attitude, for both are contrary to sanctity. For Francis it was *poverty in spirit* that mattered. From poverty in spirit should flow naturally the exterior poverty that distinguishes the Franciscan way of life. Franciscan poverty is not simply a form or an attitude; it is a conviction based on the cold reality of what we are before God. We

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Saint Francis spoke of poverty in spirit, however, he meant not so much poverty in the interior disposition of soul (although this is by no means excluded), but rather poverty in the Holy Spirit, in Him Who is the “Father of the Poor” (Sequence of Pentecost). This is total poverty—poverty that has given all, even the idol of self, to be burned in the fire of the Holy Spirit. If we have any doubt as to what poverty in spirit meant to our Seraphic Father, we have his own words to resolve our doubts:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matth. 5, 3). There are many who devote themselves assiduously to prayer and good works, abstain from many things, and afflict their body in many ways, but at a single word that seems offensive to their person, or at anything taken away from them, they are immediately aroused and scandalized. They are not poor in spirit, for he who is truly poor in spirit hates himself and loves those who slap him in the face” (“Admonitiones”, *Opuscula*, I-19).

So there we are. The poverty that our Seraphic Father expects of us is total renunciation, total annihilation of all we naturally and legitimately cling to. If we wish to know how close we are to fulfilling his expectations, let us ponder a little on his words and examine our conduct accordingly.

First of all, Saint Francis sketches a portrait of the good religious, a portrait that bears a close resemblance to the majority of us. The good religious observes the outward forms—attends the community exercises, engages in the good works of the institute to the best of his ability, fulfills the prescriptions of his Rule and the obligations of his vows. He is, or honestly tries to be, kind and agreeable to all, helping wherever he can, giving generously of his time and talents. His spiritual life is well ordered. He is devoted to prayer and meditation, and spends whatever time he can spare in the presence of the Holy Eucharist. He loves penance and mortification. He fasts according to the law and perhaps even beyond it. He endures physical pain and fatigue without complaint. He is quite detached from family and friends and from all earthly possessions. He prefers rough and patched clothing, and always chooses the poorest and meanest things for personal use. He offers himself for the most difficult work and conscientiously fulfills every task assigned to him, no matter how trying it may be. He is careful, too, in little things. He never wastes paper, or burns lights needlessly, or speaks unnecessarily. On all counts he rates as a good religious, and superiors wish they had more like him. But—is he a *perfect* religious? The test lies in his poverty. If this is so, then we can justly say that we are

good religious and that we are doing all we should do, then let us look more deeply into our soul and try to discover if we are *perfect* religious, if we are as truly poor in spirit as Saint Francis would have us be.

First of all, let us ask ourselves if we are touchy about whatever concerns our person. For example: How do I react when my honor and reputation are under fire? Do I rush to my own defense? What happens when my judgment or ability is questioned? Does my anger flare up, or do I retire into cold and sullen silence? When my opinion on matters in which I feel competent is either disregarded or not asked for at all, do I feel slighted? When my work is spoken of disparagingly, or my talents given a low rating, do I feel that this is a gross injustice? If someone should speak insultingly to me, do I become indignant, or do I reply in like terms? If others sneer at my efforts, or express doubts about my being a worthy religious, or flatly state their dislike or disapproval of me, do these things disturb me unduly? How do I react when I learn that I am the victim of a totally false and evil report to the superiors? What if others expose my real weaknesses and deficiencies? Can I take it squarely, or do I make frantic efforts to cover up or explain away? Can I take corrections, criticism, and blame, with equanimity?

The second test lies in our reaction when something is taken away from us. It is one thing to make a voluntary act of renunciation, but it is quite another thing to submit to an involuntary deprivation. A religious may be the personification of generosity and self-forgetfulness, but when his superior simply takes something away from him or requires him to sacrifice something for another, he swells with indignation. Suppose I hold a certain position. I like my work, and I feel that I am doing it supremely well. Then, for no apparent reason, it is taken away from me and given to another, while I am reduced to an inferior position. How do I take it? Perhaps I have a room that satisfies me in every way, and it is mine by right of seniority. Suddenly I am told to move out and give my room to a younger confrere who needs more air and light, and I find myself relegated to the miserable little hole he occupied. What then? Do I gladly yield my right, knowing that one who is wholly poor in spirit has given up all things, even his "natural" rights? What if my good name is taken away from me, either justly or unjustly, and I am forced to live under a cloud of shame and suspicion? Does my conduct prove that I am truly poor in spirit, that I lay no claim to anything at all, not even to my reputation? All these trials are most difficult for our weak human nature to bear, but if I must confess that when I am faced with these things I am "immediately aroused and scandalized" (scandalized

in the root meaning of being caused to sin), I am not yet poor in spirit and I am not yet what I ought to be.

There is a third point for us to ponder in this admonition of our Seraphic Father. It is implied rather than expressed, but it is none the less evident to those who know the mind of Francis. The point is this: the exteriorly correct religious may very well be of the same type as the pharisee who thanked God he was not like other men, and in the same breath condemned other men for not being like him—literal observers of the law. We know very well what Christ thought of the pharisee. Let us be careful, then, never to let our prayer become a declaration of our virtues and a boast of our superior observance of the law. And never, for the love of God, let us fall victim to the illusion that because we observe the letter of the law more perfectly than others, we really amount to something. Let us rather be convinced that of ourselves we are nothing, and we have nothing. What we are, whatever we have, belongs to our Creator Who holds us in the palm of His hand. If we wish to be of true value in the eyes of God, let us confess with our Holy Father Francis that but for the help of divine grace, we would be the vilest of sinners. If we wish to possess the kingdom of heaven, the reward of those who are poor in spirit, we must forget the romance, forget the law, and concentrate on the one basic reality of our sinful nothingness. Then our prayer will be that of the humble publican: *Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner.*

We now come to the final test of our poverty, and this is the most gruelling of all, for it is clean contrary to our nature. We are expected not only to be detached from our possessions and from ourselves, but even to go to the ultimate of hating ourselves and loving those who hate us and injure us. We have said that this is contrary to nature, and so it is; but it is not contrary to right reason. If, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, we look deeply into our soul, we shall find that our fallen nature is nothing but sin and imperfection and evil tendency. And the more we strive for holiness, the closer we come to the Divine Light in Whose radiance our vileness becomes ever more clearly visible. This is the reason why the saints, despite their exalted virtue, are the most humble of men. They see with merciless clarity their own misery against the infinite perfection of God; they see their ingratitude rise up against the merciful love of the Father; they see their utter unworthiness redeemed by the Passion of Christ and raised to the glory of adoption—made co-heirs with Christ of the eternal kingdom of God. Overwhelmed with love at the realization of their Father's goodness and mercy, these holy souls cannot help but hate the mean little idol of self that

keeps clamoring for their worship. Now, to hate something means to wish it away, to want to annihilate it. Consequently, whosoever works against this little god of self-love and tends to destroy it, that is the person enlightened soul, love and embrace as their greatest benefactor. "For he who is truly poor in spirit hates himself and loves those who slap him in the face."

As children of the poor and lowly Francis, we have much to do if we would "reproduce in ourselves the image and likeness of our father". It is indeed a large order that he sets before us, and excruciating to our blindly egotistical nature. Yet it is no more than Christ Himself demands of us. Christ has told us in unmistakable terms that unless we lose our life we shall not find it; that unless we die to self we cannot bring forth fruits of holiness; that we must sell all we possess to purchase the one pearl of great price. It is high perfection that Christ demands of His chosen ones. But, if we would kneel in spirit at the manger in Bethlehem and meditate with our Seraphic Father on the infinite condescension of the Word made flesh, the Infant God Who emptied Himself for love of us, surely we should find His poverty in spirit sweet and desirable rather than bitter and austere. The Franciscan way, let us remember, is simply the way of Christ. It is hard, but never harsh; it passes through suffering and death and total annihilation of self, but it leads finally to the glory of eternal life. We have the example of our Seraphic Father to encourage us, and his parting admonition to spur us on: "Die before you die, that you may not die when you die."

St. Bonaventure University

Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M.



LAUDA LXV

O Little Boy most sweet,
In my heart I have conceived Thee,
In mine arms I have received Thee,
Because my cry is Love!

Jacopone da Todi