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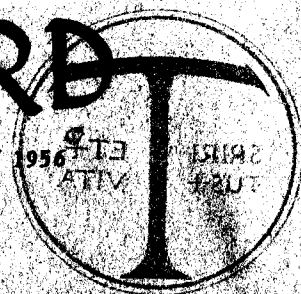
A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

HUMAN DESTINY

"God is love," wrote John, "and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him" (I Jn. 4:16). A whole philosophy of life lies embodied in that line. To understand it fully is to know why we are what we are—human beings, children of God, religious. It tells us too what sin is, and why this refusal to abide in love has the terrible consequences we know it to have. But what is more consoling, it reveals how we may meet the challenge of sin. For the love of which John speaks is not only creative, it is redemptive; and with our cooperation can transform us into the likeness of God's Son. Could we choose a better text than this to develop in these monthly conferences?

Consider, for the present, our human destiny. In Genesis (1:26) we read that God said: *Let us make mankind in our image and likeness.* But if God is love, this is but another way of saying that we are created in the image and likeness of love itself.

Love, we know, is a beautiful word, but much abused. It may mean anything from soft-hearted sentiment to hard-headed devotion. It can stand for selfish passion as well as for passionate selflessness. In more than one sense love or charity covers a multitude of sins.

Actually there are two basic types of love, one altruistic, the other egoistic. The first asks: What can I do for you? The second: What can I do you for? The former is based on what we have and are; the latter on what we are not, but hope to be. It seeks only to have, to own, to possess, whereas perfect love seeks rather to be had, to be owned, to be possessed, for it is the gift of oneself to another. It was such love to which Paul referred when he said: *Charity... is not self-seeking* (I Cor. 13:5) and John had in mind when he wrote: *God is love.*

1. Egoistic

Though one of the greatest... apparently... knew only of egoistic love... he believed to be a quest for... an en-

deavor in the universe is nothing else but the imperfect reaching out to perfect itself. The eye loves to see because seeing is the perfection of the eye. The ear loves to hear because hearing is a perfection of the ear. The nose loves to run, not because a running nose is a perfection, but it does get rid of the germs. And so his theory goes. Biologically speaking, all activity is trying to keep what we have or to get what we do not have. Even the perpetuation of the race through reproduction is a kind of self-extension in which the individual seeks immortality in posterity. All love then in some way is a search for one's perfection. The heliotrope that follows the sun with transfixed gaze to drink in its life-giving warmth, the bullfrog calling to his mate, the chicken grubbing for a worm, the cat that brushes against your habit for the tingling pleasure it brings, even the dog that hungers for the companionship of man—all are seeking to fill a need, a want, an emptiness in themselves.

And because Aristotle did not know fully what love is, he did not know fully what God is. God could not be Creator for him, for creation is an act of love and all love is imperfect. His deity, instead, was a God of thought or knowledge. Yet He knew nothing of this changing world, for that would have disturbed His divine peace of mind. And so He dwelt in splendid isolation, having only Himself to think about. He was a mind enwrapped in itself "whose thinking is a thinking on thinking" (Metaphysics XII, 9).

And because he could never understand God, Aristotle could never really grasp the nature of man created in His image. Man became most God-like, he believed, through knowledge—an error doubly false because it comes so close to being true. It was the mistake of Eve who thought being like to God was merely a matter of knowledge, an error perpetuated by certain educators who claim there is no sin, there is merely ignorance.

2. Altruistic Love

But John set Aristotle aright by telling us that God is not only truth or knowledge; He is also, and above all, love. And Paul went on to explain to his converts with their Greek culture, that this love is not self-seeking (I Cor. 13:5). It is rather the thrill of making another glad, forgetting oneself to think of others. Since it does not seek

to perfect itself, it is not ambitious. Such love delights in what is good simply because it is something good and perfect, irrespective of whether it is a good for self or not. Hence as Paul goes on to say, such love is not pretentious or puffed up. And since charity does not envy, such love is the basis of friendship, for it prompts one to share what he has with others. Where it finds imperfection, it does not rejoice over wickedness, but strives to heal the wound, to fill the needs of others; for charity is patient, is kind.

True love, perfect love, then, is unselfish. Even when it delights in some good we possess, it rejoices in that good for its own sake and not because it is our good. And the mark of its unselfishness is that it seeks to give, to share, to reproduce itself: *Bonum est diffusivum sui*.

Aristotle erred. Our God is not a lonely God, for He is love. And here perhaps is the deep psychological reason why the pagans drifted into polytheism. Every great error is a guess at a great truth. Marginal or primitive peoples recognize that God is good and loving. But as we go up the ladder of civilization, we are told, the notion of the all-high God becomes more and more obscured with secondary, inferior gods. It almost seems that the more heathens grasped that God is love, the more they were convinced He must share His love with other divine persons. Their great error was to create their gods in the image and likeness of human love which is imperfect and mixed with selfishness. But as false love or selfishness divides, true love or selflessness unites. And so it is only natural that a God who is love should be both three and one.

If we love a good for its own sake, Duns Scotus tells us, we wish it to be loved by others. The love the eternal Father bears His infinitely lovable divine nature is not a jealous, selfish love. And through the eternal generation of His only begotten Son, He gives it a perfect co-lover. Since the Son's love is like that of His Father, Son and Father share their divine nature with the Holy Spirit, the personification of love. God, then, is a Trinity of Persons, the first family, the first social unit, the primordial society. And if love is a giving, a sharing of one's life, of one's being, with another person, we begin to comprehend in some dim way why John could say simply: *God is*

love. For so closely are the lives of the three Divine Persons intertwined that it is not even theologically correct to speak of them as three lives. For there is but one life, even as there is but one mind, one will, one nature, one God.

We cannot comprehend this, for it is a mystery—the most profound of our faith. Yet a mystery is a great deal like the sun. If you try to look into it directly, to study it and analyze it, you grow dizzy and blind. But look away from it and everything becomes bright and clear because of it. As so it is that while we cannot understand the Trinity, paradoxically, the Trinity helps us understand ourselves, our nature, our destiny as human beings. For Scripture does not say merely we are fashioned in the likeness of God, but that we were created in the image of the Trinity. God did not say: "Let me make man in my image and likeness" but "Let us:" for it is the Trinity of Persons who speaks.

And because a God of love is not a lonely God, man too can never be happy alone. Like the Trinity whose image is stamped on his soul, he can never be content with personal loneliness, but must give and share what he is and has with his fellowmen. Only then does he begin to live. Only through such love can he fulfill his natural destiny. Here, incidentally, is the root reason why all isolationism is fundamentally false.

3. Man as the Image of God

How did the three Divine Persons make us like themselves? Genesis hints that God breathed into man something of His own life, as it were, and man became a living being (Gen. 2:7). But if our God is a living God precisely because His inner life is a life of love which all this implies, we might say more exactly that God made us like to Himself when He gave us the power of unselfish love. According to Duns Scotus this capacity for altruistic love is nothing other than our free will. Following the lead of Saint Anselm, he reminds us that among the myriad powers creatures possess, the free of man is a thing apart, unique. Aristotle after all was almost right, for nature is constantly seeking its own perfection. It loves what is good only because it satisfies some need. Yet there is one

faculty that frees us from this necessity of nature, our human will. Its fundamental freedom, Scotus tells us, is to liberate us from the need of always seeking ourselves, of loving what is good only because it is a good for us. The will makes it possible to love the good and perfect for its own sake as a thing of beauty, as something lovely and lovable in itself. It is man's power of altruistic love and it enables him to give and to share instead of seeking only to possess and to hoard.

Where such love is, knowledge too is present. Where there is will, there is also reason, for love is not blind, though at times we may be tempted to think so. Actually love's "blindness" is really a keener, more penetrating vision. It sees the potential as actual, which is a philosophical way of saying that love depicts what could be as though it actually were. The lover, in a word, constantly discovers new capabilities, hidden resources, unsuspected traits present in the beloved in germ or bud, only waiting for the warmth of love to bring them to full flower.

Unselfish love above all is not blind. It is ingenious in using the mind or intellect to discover the needs of others, to find new outlets for selfless giving. And since intellect and will imply a spiritual soul, in this sense Francis could say: "Observe, O man, to what distinction the Lord has raised you, creating and moulding you in His likeness by giving you a soul" (*Admonitions*, n. 5).

4. Man, a Creature of Two Loves

Our likeness to God, however, is by no means a mirror image. Though our will is our highest, our most divine faculty, it is not our only one. We are not gods, but creatures knowing good and evil. Our being is divided between two loves. Are we not imperfect, burdened with real needs and wants that clamor for fulfillment? Is God Himself not the author of our human appetites and the desires rooted in our nature? We cannot simply love all things solely because they are good in themselves; we are constrained by our very humanity to seek also what is good for us. And this is the fundamental dichotomy of our being; we are constantly torn between the love that is self-seeking and the love that is self-giving. If we seek

ourselves, it is the creature in us; if at times we forget ourselves, go out of ourselves, give what we have, it is the divine in us—the spark of love that is not desire but friendship—the perfect love.

God planned that these two loves be integrated, and so they were in Eden. We can only give and share with someone who has a capacity to receive. Only if we have real and genuine needs is it possible for another to fill them. And it is this ability to give and to take that makes mankind one family so that it reflects in its own way the inner give and take that is the life of the Blessed Trinity. And so these two loves, one perfect like that of the Creator, the other characteristic of the creature, form the warp and woof of which human society is woven.

Sin, which put the will in the service of selfishness, destroyed something of this perfect integration of the lower and higher loves that our parents knew in paradise. And that is why Paul speaks of the law in his members fighting against the law of the mind and leading him into sin. "For I do not do the good that I wish," he complains, "but the evil that I do not wish, that I perform" (Rom. 7:19). For while we are not expected to neglect our own good, for our very nature would protest against it, original and personal sin creates a bias in favor of egoistic love so that it is no longer perfectly subservient to the will. Neither is the exercise of altruistic love as easy as it once was. To deny ourselves is always difficult. And Christ Himself testified there is no greater love than laying down one's life for another. Yet self-denial is a condition for following Christ. And *he who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world keeps it unto life everlasting.* (Jn. 12:25).

5. Love as the Perfection of Man

This self-denial, necessary for the attainment of our end or destiny, also has a positive aspect. It is the love or *charity* which is *not self-seeking*, or as Paul puts it elsewhere, which is the *bond of perfection* (Col. 3:14), integrating our personality and making us mature. *Who abides in love, abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:6).

But even if man were not destined to inherit heaven, but were to remain on a purely natural level, he would still be bound

to live for others. He would still be required to exercise this unselfish, altruistic love, sharing his time, his talents, his possessions with his fellows, under pain of being forever unhappy.

Cynics who claim man to be incapable of any true altruism seek to explain his seemingly unselfish actions as being secretly prompted by the joy he finds in so acting. It is true that there is no greater thrill than that of making another glad, nor greater happiness than that which comes from the complete gift or surrender of self in perfect love. All this is readily understandable since God normally associates with this most perfect action, as He does with every other action that is good and proper, a delight or satisfaction proportionate to its perfection. And if unselfish love is a spark of the divine in man, should he not find in it a sweetness that could be called in truth the nectar of the gods?

A little reflection, however, disproves the cynical contention that the desire for happiness motivates such love. For there is something spontaneous, or as others say, "irrational" about true love. It outruns human reckoning; it does not count the cost or appraise the consequences. And even upon reflection it can not always give the reasons for its actions. We can only say we love the beloved for being what he or she is.

Further proof that such love is not disguised selfishness, were such needed, is found in what sometimes is called the "Stoic paradox." *Seek happiness and you will never find it; forget your happiness and you will discover it.* For when we deliberately search for happiness, when we make pleasure or delight our primary aim or goal, our love is no longer selfless. And since the highest joy or delight accompanies only the most perfect love, by seeking such happiness we prevent ourselves from ever attaining it. And that is why the most miserable people in the world are those who think only of themselves, their own comfort, their own interests and ambitions.

Too many of us, including even religious, have fallen victim to the epidemic of egotism. We have become too absorbed in ourselves. We circle around our own personal problems and concerns day in and day out. If the problems of others claim our attention at all, it is only because in some way or other we ourselves are affected

by them. Morbid self-interest and self-pity, which is another form of egotism, saps the strength of all too many today. No wonder the world is sick, and the offices and consultation rooms of doctors and psychiatrists are crowded with unhappy people. The best tonic such individuals could take would be to forget themselves in the interest of others. "I found happiness," declared the Little Flower, "the day the love of God entered my heart and told me to forget myself always."

Part of this self-forgetfulness, we might note incidentally, is the lost art of accepting favors graciously. The proud and self-sufficient desire to be beholden to no one. They are surly in receiving favors and make it difficult for others to help them. This too is egotism—selfishness in rags, if you will, but selfishness all the same. True charity is both humble and generous. It not only prompts us to give graciously to others, but makes it easy and rewarding for others to give to us. This is genuine *caritas* that makes men brothers and welds the human race into one family under God.

And finally, our giving must be guided by prudence. Paradoxically we can kill others with care. We ought not to be like one "Lady Bountiful" of whom it was said: "She devoted her life to others, and you can tell the others by their hunted look." True charity is tactful, not obtrusive. At times the greatest charity we can show to others is to let them alone, to permit them to stand on their own feet.

If we love unselfishly in this enlightened and understanding way, we shall achieve our destiny. Our lives will reflect something of the inner give and take that is the life of the Blessed Trinity in whose image we are created. Our lives shall be full, for the more we empty ourselves, the richer we become. And because we are not concerned with our own happiness so much as with making others happy, we shall taste that sweetness of Franciscan joy that is the natural consequence of Seraphic charity.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

THOMAS MERTON AND THE FRANCISCANS

Thomas Merton has become so completely identified with the Cistercian tradition that it seems a little surprising at first to recall that some of the early though very important influences on his spiritual awakening were not Trappist in origin, but Franciscan. Now this in itself, of course, is no revelation. You only have to open up a copy of *The Seven Storey Mountain* and index your way back to what we shall call "the Bonaventure period" in the life of this American monk. But what we shall try to show here is that the Bonaventure period was not just a prelude, an interim, a pleasant academic idyl in the pre-Trappist life of Thomas Merton, but that it formed lasting influences which are still evident even in his latest writings. In fact, it is possible to draw from his books a miniature anthology of Franciscan reference.

In 1939 the young convert, Thomas Merton, went to Columbia University in order to visit his friend Daniel Walsh and to seek his "advice about where and how to become a priest. . ." The door had been opened and the feast on the banquet table of Holy Mother Church lay before his eyes. He talked with Daniel Walsh about the great religious Orders: the Jesuits; the Dominicans; the Benedictines. It must be said here that this point in the life of a pre-religious is one of most delicate torture, swaying as it does in the balance between the affectionate, though self-seeking will of the ego, and the natural Will of God. When Daniel Walsh asked, "What do you think of the Franciscans?" Thomas Merton thought to himself:

"Yes, I liked the Franciscans. Their life was very simple and informal and the atmosphere of St. Bonaventure's was pleasant and happy and peaceful. One thing that attracted me to them was a sort of freedom from spiritual restraint, from systems and routine. No matter how much the original Rule of St. Francis has changed, I think his spirit and his inspiration are still the fundamental thing in Franciscan life. And it is an inspiration rooted in joy, because it is guided by the prudence and wisdom which are revealed only to the little ones—the glad wisdom of those who have had the grace and the madness to throw away everything in one uncompromising rush, and to walk around barefooted in the simple confidence that if they get into trouble, God will come and get them out of it again."

Now if this (true as it may be) is all that being a Franciscan meant to Thomas Merton, then it would be easy to say, as indeed he did himself say, that what actually appealed to him was a sense of religious ro-

manticism, a kind "of simple thirteenth century lyricism." But with his usual good judgment Thomas Merton is quick to correct this concept of Franciscanism so prevalent among us today. One point, though, should be made clear. When he follows with the paragraph, 'However, the lyricism,' etc., it should be obvious to the reader that he is not now speaking at a time contemporary with his talk with Daniel Walsh—but at a time chronologically far removed—namely, at the time he was writing *The Seven Storey Mountain*.

"However, the lyricism must be carefully distinguished from the real substance of the Franciscan vocation, which is that tremendous and heroic poverty, poverty of body and spirit, which makes the Friar literally a tramp. For after all, "mendicant" is only a fancy word for tramp, and if a Franciscan cannot be a tramp in this full and complete and total mystical sense, he is bound to be a little unhappy and dissatisfied. As soon as he acquires a lot of special articles for his use and comfort and becomes sedate and respectable and spiritually sedentary he will, no doubt, have an easy and pleasant time, but there will be always gnawing in his heart the nostalgia for that uncompromising destitution which alone can give him joy because it flings him headlong into the arms of God. . . Without poverty, Franciscan lyricism sounds tinny and sentimental and raw and false. Its tone is sour, and all its harmonies are somewhat strained."

It is evident here, of course, that Thomas Merton's grasp on the essence of Franciscanism is clearer and stronger than it had been earlier. 'I am afraid,' he says, "that at that time it was the lyricism that attracted me more than the poverty, but I really don't think that I was in a position to know any better." (Incidentally, it is this kind of complete and open sincerity that has given Thomas Merton so much meaning to us in this age of sham and duplicity). But it is equally important to realize that Thomas Merton at this time, and even much later than this, did not yet fully understand the Franciscan way of life in any but the most abstract sense. It was always *Franciscanism*, but hardly ever Saint Francis—and never, of course, *Father Francis*. It never seems to have occurred to him in the most profound and fundamental fact of all that every Franciscan is, or aspires to be, a *follower* of Saint Francis, who is himself the *follower* par excellence of Christ Our Lord.

It was not long after his talk with Daniel Walsh that Thomas Merton decided to enter the Franciscan novitiate. But by the summer of 1940, several months before the novitiate would open in August, Thomas Merton began to doubt his vocation.

"It is true," he said, "I was called to the cloister. That has been made

abundantly clear. But the dispositions with which I was now preparing to enter the Franciscan novitiate were much more imperfect than I was able to realize. In choosing the Franciscans, I had followed what was apparently a perfectly legitimate attraction—an attraction which might very well have been a sign of God's will, even though it was not quite as supernatural as I thought. I had chosen this Order because I thought I would be able to keep its Rule without difficulty, and because I was attracted by the life of teaching and writing which it would offer me, and much more by the surroundings in which I saw I would probably live. God very often accepts dispositions that are no better than these, and even some that are far worse, and turns them into a true vocation in His own time."

True, and yet one cannot help but hear in all this a very slight and tenderly pathetic whistling in the dark. Now this perhaps would be an unkind thing to say if it were intended in any way to be critical of Thomas Merton. On the contrary, it is simply to understand a young man who at the time did not understand himself, or at least what he wanted to do with himself. "Of course I understand the whole business now. My own mind was full of strange, exaggerated ideas. . ." And then the narration follows with great poignancy and need not be repeated here.

But surely it is in no way condescending to say that at St. Bonaventure's, Thomas Merton had friends and spiritual advisers who without question had much to do with the forming of his spiritual vocation. This, however, does not mean that Thomas Merton received his principles of spirituality from the Franciscan Friars. It simply means that in a time of indecision and vacillation, the Bonaventure period proved to be a stabilizing force to him in his search for the light of guidance. St. Bonaventure's became a kind of retreat to him in more ways than one. It was the place he always came back to. Even after the profound Harlem episode, where the Franciscanism of the remarkable Baroness Catherine de Hueck impressed him so deeply, he came home again to St. Bonaventure's. In fact, as events turned out, it proved to be his last home "in the world." Gethsemane was next.

However, it is the whole burden of this essay to claim and to demonstrate that the Franciscanism which Thomas Merton did acquire during the Bonaventure period never entirely left him. Nearly ten years later Fr. Louis Merton made the following entry in his published journals, *The Sign of Jonas*:

"The Portiuncula always brings me great blessings—and that is

the Franciscan side in me which continues to grow also. It was last year I first realized how much there is in Portiuncula Day for those who will take it. If we are granted indulgences, it is because there is so much in the feast which they represent. They are counters. The feast brings graces of contemplation and spiritual joy, because every church becomes that tiny little church that Saint Francis loved above all others. Thus everyone in the world can share the bliss of his sanctity."

Nothing could be more explicit than the phrase "...and that is the Franciscan side in me which continues to grow also." But the fullest expression of Fr. Louis on what Saint Francis means to the world was yet to be written. It appeared recently in his book *No Man Is an Island*. This particular part of the book devotes nearly five pages to Saint Francis, so that obviously it cannot all be quoted here. And yet it would be worse still not to quote any of it. Thus Fr. Louis:

"The remarkable thing about St. Francis is that in his sacrifice of everything he had also sacrificed all 'vocations' in a limited sense of the word. After having been edified for centuries by all the various branches of the Franciscan religious family, we are surprised to think that St. Francis started out on the roads of Umbria without the slightest idea that he had a 'Franciscan vocation.' And in fact he did not. He had thrown all vocations to the winds together with his clothes and other possessions. He did not think of himself as an apostle, but as a tramp. He certainly did not look upon himself as a monk: if he had wanted to be a monk, he would have found plenty of monasteries to enter. He evidently did not go around conscious of the fact that he was a 'contemplative.' Nor was he worried by comparisons between the active and contemplative lives. Yet he led both at the same time, and with the highest perfection. No good work was alien to him—no work of mercy, whether corporal or spiritual, that did not have a place in his beautiful life! His freedom embraced everything."

It is, of course, that very last sentence which is the key to everything Fr. Louis has been so eloquently speaking all along: "His freedom embraced everything," as in fact it truly does. There is not a mode of life that Saint Francis cannot enter into. All of our great religious Orders and societies retain, as they should, their own particular ways of spirituality and even their own more or less "specialized" saints. But there is not a religious Order in the Christian world, nor any state of life, in

which Saint Francis does not hold deep and fruitful meaning. It is certain that he now holds such depth of meaning for the young Trappist monk, whose journey from the Seven Storey Mountain to the truth that No Man Is an Island, has given us all that spiritual joy of recognition, which is the freedom and joy of Saint Francis himself in Christ Our only Lord.

Thomas P. McDonnell, T.O.F.

MOTHER MARY THERESIA BONZEL AND HER COMMUNITY

Near the southwestern boundary of the German province of Westphalia, amid the gently rolling hills of the Sauerland Mountains, where the brooklet Bigge sends its babbling waters through the fertile meadows, lies the quaint, medieval city of Olpe, with a population of about six thousand. The history of Olpe might have remained obscure forever had not one of its daughters, by the splendor of her seraphic life, immortalized its name.

Here on the feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis, September 17, 1830, was born a maiden destined by divine Providence to rally a numerous family under the banner of the Poverello of Assisi. The child was christened Regina Christine Wilhelmine, but commonly called Aline. She was the eldest of two daughters born to the wealthy industrialist Frederick Edmund Bonzel and his wife Maria Anna Liese. The *Sauerland Genealogy* and the *Chronicle of the City of Olpe* list the families of Liese and Bonzel as wealthy patricians whose names can be traced to the middle of the sixteenth century.

From her tender infancy Aline showed a great love for the Holy Eucharist, which foreshadowed the character of her future vocation. This could have hardly been otherwise. The sweet sounds of pulsating prayers and holy songs of the faithful and the majestic tones of the deep organ mingled with the tender lullabies of the pious Mrs. Bonzel who, living in the stately mansion next to the parish church, directed the child's young heart toward Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Often the little one was found in the shadow of the sanctuary, kneeling close to the tabernacle, whispering words of love to the good God hidden behind the little golden door.

At the age of five the first great sorrow entered Aline's young life; her illustrious father died unexpectedly at the age of twenty-nine. His untimely passing was a terrible blow not only to his immediate family but also to the community of Olpe and the province of Westphalia, for he had been a prominent industrialist, a leader in politics, a generous, charitable man, and above all a staunch Catholic who tolerated no government interference with the rights of the Church.

After the death of her husband Mrs. Bonzel devoted herself even more than before to the proper training of her two young daughters. Unknowingly Aline caused her mother many anxious moments, for she was fleet of foot and daring in all kinds of sports and games. She knew no danger; her buoyant spirit, her inventiveness at play, her tricks and pranks, made her a general favorite. Endowed generously in mind and heart, Aline could easily have fallen victim to pride and conceit. But her Mother was always close, guiding her precocious child on the path of humility and self-control.

Aline's intense yearning for the reception of the Holy Eucharist was not fulfilled until the age of twelve. Later in life, as Mother Mary Theresia, she confided to a sister the happiness that filled her heart on the day of her first holy Communion. She revealed:

On the day of my first Holy Communion I was unspeakably happy. Before that day I was a very vivacious child, always ready to take part in every escapade. As I returned to my place after having received Jesus for the first time into my heart, an indescribable sensation came over me. I had a foretaste of heaven and but one thought filled my whole being. As Jesus had given Himself entirely to me, so should I, in turn, give myself entirely to Jesus. Without quite realizing it, I was saying over and over again, 'O Lord, I am Your victim; take me as Your holocaust; do not reject me.' This prayer of oblation silenced every other thought and raised me to a state of inexpressible bliss.

We shall see how the Lord accepted her offering, and how He assisted her with His divine grace to remain true to her promise.

Her attraction to the interior life and works of piety found a splendid realization and development in the family circle. Her pious mother was her first teacher in prayer; she set a glowing example of genuine Christ-like living to the growing child. Mrs. Bonzel was justly proud of her richly endowed daughter, and she cherished fond hopes of a bright future for Aline.

There is another personage not to be overlooked when speaking of

Aline's early childhood. It is her uncle Arnold, the brother of her father, who after the latter's death assisted Mrs. Bonzel in the education of her children. Arnold lived a celibate life and was known in Olpe as "the saint." He was a man of prayer and gave liberally of his wealth to the poor. The keynote of his life was love for the Holy Eucharist. To this saintly man Aline Bonzel confided her innermost thoughts and aspirations, and from him she received all possible encouragement and assistance. Under his influence and with the assistance of divine grace, her beautiful soul blossomed forth, a vessel of God's benediction. The young maiden learned to give alms with a lavish hand and to console the sick and sorrowful with sweet tenderness.

After graduation from the schools of Olpe, Aline was sent to the famous finishing school for girls conducted by the Ursulines in Cologne. Pursuit of knowledge and perfection in the social graces were the objectives of this institution. Aline loved her studies but even more the cloistered solitude of the school halls and chapel and the religious atmosphere of the place. Her visits to the Prisoner of Love multiplied steadily, and the almost unconscious self-oblation of her First Communion day now found a realization far beyond her years. The offering: "Lord, let me be Your holocaust; reject me not," was ever in her mind and heart and frequently on her lips.

Pressed by her mother and friends, Aline made her debut after her return from Cologne. Surrounded by admirers and suitors, she found herself the center of attraction; but her choice between God and the world was made, and no allurements of pleasure, comfort, and social standing, not even the pleading of her mother, could sway her from her noble resolve.

God Himself came to her assistance by permitting her to fall victim of a heart disease that gave her much suffering to the end of her days. Thus He fashioned a great soul, one that in all the enterprises of future years did not trust in its own strength but relied completely on His loving Providence. In spite of her poor health, Aline soon became known as the "angel of mercy" in the city of Olpe. With two kindred friends she cleaned and decorated the sanctuary in the parish church. With Aline as their leader, this pious circle visited the homes of the poor, the sick, and the dying; they helped over-burdened mothers of large families and took a special interest in orphans and neglected children. Together they joined the Third Order of Saint Francis, and Aline exchanged her name for that of Mary Theresia. The young Tertiary gave freely and graciously from her patrimony, and to go begging for her dear poor be-

came a passion with her. With a basket on her arm she could be seen touring the bakeshops, the public marketplace, the clothing stores, the cobblers, near-by farms, and the homes of her wealthy relatives and friends. After sundown, with tact and discretion, she deposited the "treasures of the day" in the humble homes of her beloved poor. The alleviation of wants and misery served Mary Theresia as a means to lead souls back to God and Holy Church.

Lest the strictness of the Franciscan penitential order be beyond her daughter's strength, Mrs. Bonzel permitted Mary Theresia to join the gentle Order of the Visitation at Muehlheim on the Moehne river in Westphalia. At long last the day of departure from home and kindred was at hand, and a jubilant Magnificat rose from the heart of the generous maiden. But who can imagine her disappointment, when on the morning of this eventful day, Mary Theresia awoke with a severe case of erysipelas, making it impossible for her to travel. Resigning herself wholeheartedly to Divine Providence, she breathed a fervent "Fiat voluntas tua." While sympathizing with her sick daughter, Mrs. Bonzel was happy at the turn of events. Perhaps Mary Theresia would change her mind and remain in the bosom of her family; but in this she was mistaken.

Slowly recovering from erysipelas, the young Tertiary yearned more than ever before to give herself to God in religious life. She seemed haunted by the seraphic Saint of Assisi, whom she beheld in a dream beckoning her to follow him. Saint Clare too appeared to her, pointing out the road of Franciscan poverty and penance. Mary Theresia had been born on the feast of the Stigmatization of the Poverello, and thus, as she loved to say, "had proceeded from his wounds." She already wore the livery of a Franciscan tertiary. What other need was there to assure her in her choice of the seraphic mode of life?

To insure her daughter's complete recovery and to turn her mind from embracing religious life, Mrs. Bonzel arranged for her a lengthy trip through the fatherland. While traveling with her dear friend Regina Loeser, Mary Theresia met Clara Pfaender, a Sister of Christian Charity, who was about to sever her connections with the community of Pauline von Mallinkrodt because of her intense longing for a religious congregation with perpetual adoration. Mother Pauline regretted losing the saintly Sister Clara Pfaender; yet, she saw the finger of God in the event. Six days later, contrary to their inclination but obedient to their spiritual director, Mary Theresia Bonzel and her friend Regina Loeser joined Clara Pfaender for the purpose of establishing in Olpe a congre-

gation for the care and education of orphans and other neglected children. The rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis was to be the foundation of the new community.

After a holy retreat with the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus in Aix-la-Chapelle and a lengthy visit with the saintly daughter of Saint Francis, Mother Frances Schervier, the three zealous souls, with Clara Pfaender as superior, began to live a life in common according to the rule of Saint Francis. And now we find the little seed of the new community developing rapidly. Because of the increasing number of orphans, the house became too small, and Mrs. Bonzel purchased a large building for the young community. Poorly furnished in accordance with the wishes of its occupants, the sisters' new home was a veritable paradise, another Nazareth, where communion with God and the practice of Christ-like charity rendered sweet the hours of community life. This heavenly peace and happiness was not to endure without God's stamp of approval, the seal of the cross.

Sooner than expected the young sisterhood found itself confronted by one of the severest trials in its history—a trial that led to dissension and finally to separation. Prior to the investiture of the Sisters, Mother Clara Pfaender compiled the statutes of the new congregation, basing them, to the bitter disappointment of Mary Theresia Bonzel and Regina Loeser, upon the Augustinian rather than the Franciscan life. Severe as this trial was, another was added which served to increase the anxiety of the two girlhood friends.

From the time that the number of orphans and sisters began to increase, Mother Clara Pfaender thought of transferring the motherhouse of her congregation from Olpe to near-by Elspe. When Bishop Conrad Martin denied her Community the practice of home nursing in the city of Olpe because of the objections of the Sisters of Charity at the local hospital, Mother Clara, with ecclesiastical approval, selected Salzkotten as the center of her community. Olpe was reduced to a mission place with Sister Mary Theresia as superior.

The cessation of perpetual adoration in her little convent home must have been exceedingly painful to Sister Mary Theresia, whose all-surpassing love was for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. However, far from yielding to discouragement, she remained loyal and obedient to Mother Clara until Bishop Conrad Martin, July 20, 1863, declared the convent in Olpe independent of the convent in Salzkotten and appointed Sister Mary Theresia superior of the community in Olpe.

This decree marked the parting of the ways of two valiant souls—

Mother Clara Pfaender and Sister Mary Theresia Bonzel. The painful separation was recognized and accepted as ordained by Divine Providence; it resulted in two religious congregations, both destined to do much good for God and the Church.

With courage, humility, and faith, Mother Mary Theresia shouldered the burden of the office of superior, placed upon her by Bishop Conrad Martin of Paderborn. Immediately she discarded the distinction between lay sisters and choir sisters. All became one in rank and one in heart. Then she set to work to base the statutes of her congregation upon the Rule of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis. They were approved by the Church in 1865 and the title, "Poor Sisters of St. Francis Seraph of the Perpetual Adoration," was conferred upon the Congregation.

The rapid increase of sisters and orphans called for a well-planned system of expansion. The foundress was equal to the task. Her ardent love for orphans and neglected children led her on to ever new toils, ever new sacrifices. At the same time she left nothing undone to train her daughters in the science of the religious life. Nothing escaped her watchful eye. She was ever at the helm, as it were, to steer those confided to her care toward the harbor of perfection. While giving her wholehearted attention to all in general, her loving care was at the same time bestowed upon each in particular. She was for each individual sister an unspeakably kind and loving mother who gave wise counsel in difficulties and consolation in sorrow.

During the formative period the congregation was greatly aided by Mother Frances Schervier, the saintly foundress of the Sisters of the Poor of Saint Francis of Aix-la-Chapelle. The zeal of the young Olpe sisterhood in the practice of self-denial was so great that Mother Frances advised the sisters to mitigate their extraordinary life of penance; she also recommended a change in their coarse woolen garments, for the work among the children and the sick justified and required the wearing of linens. Later she opened the hospitals of her community to the sisters of Olpe for their education in the science of nursing. Mother Frances' wise counsel and genuine kindness won the lasting gratitude of Mother Mary Theresia and her community.

(To be Continued)

Sr. M. Fridian, O.S.F.

ST. BONAVENTURE EXPLAINS THE "OUR FATHER"

Our holy Father Saint Francis ordains in his Rule that "Clerics shall recite the Divine Office according to the order of the Holy Roman Church. But laics shall say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins, five for Lauds; for Prime, Tierce, Sext and None, for each of these seven; for Vespers, however, twelve; for Compline seven; and let them pray for the dead" (Rule, III).

By this simple ordinance our Seraphic Father manifested his profound reverence for the most beautiful of all prayers, the Our Father. He was eager that the lay brothers of his Order who, because of their work and lack of clerical training could not be asked to say the Divine Office with the priests, should nevertheless approach God with "this pearl among all prayers" and in this simple and forthright fashion participate in the praises which Mother Church, the Bride of Christ, offers daily to her heavenly Spouse.

Saint Francis offered no reason or explanation for making this choice. He took it for granted that his brethren would, in the simplicity of their hearts, understand and appreciate the inestimable value of the divinely-inspired Lord's Prayer. However, his faithful son and scholar, Saint Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor, went out of his way, in his "Exposition of the Rule of the Friars Minor" (ch. III, nn. 3 ss), to give a beautiful and colorful explanation of the Brothers' Office. As was his way, the Seraphic Doctor pointed out a symbolic and spiritual meaning in almost every word, figure and number. Surely the members of other religious communities will profit by Saint Bonaventure's commentary, which reads as follows:

For the instruction of the lay brothers Saint Francis continues (in his Rule): "But the lay brothers shall say twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins." The lay brothers should be taught that these words "Our Father, who art in heaven" are meant to prepare the soul for prayer. For by assuming the name "Father," God wishes to give us confidence at prayer, since a father is always willing to give of his riches to his children (See II Cor. 12:14). By the word "our" we are taught that our love must reach out, so that no one may restrict his prayer to himself alone. By the words "Who art in heaven" the Lord seeks to purify our intention, in order that the petitioner may ask only for the things of heaven.

With the words "Hallowed be Thy Name" there follows a prayer of seven petitions. The first three pertain directly to the honor due to God; the remaining four comprise the needs of the petitioner. Hence the words "hallowed be Thy Name" carry the petition that the most holy Truths of our faith become known to all the infidel world. The words "Thy Kingdom come" plead, however, that the laws of God be obeyed by the faithful. The third petition "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven" has for its purpose that God's goodness be loved, and that for His own sake He be worshipped by the weak even as He is worshipped by the strong.

Among the four petitions that follow, the first begs for all the necessities of soul and body. This is contained in the words "give us this day our daily bread." And since we ask bread only for "today" we guard ourselves on the one hand against the temptation to greed, and on the other remind ourselves of the uncertainty of life. The second petition "forgive us our trespasses" begs deliverance from the debts we have incurred in the past. But the addition "as we forgive those who trespass against us," implies what Saint Augustine calls "the debt of innocence." This means to be innocent of wishing harm to anybody. For the petitioner must realize that in this prayer he brings evil upon himself if in his heart he harbors rancor against anyone. The second petition looks into the future: "and lead us not into temptation"—which means, do not permit temptation to assail us. In other words the petitioner begs for the grace to shun all dangers of sin and temptation. The third petition, "but deliver us from evil," looks to the present and embraces all the evils of our earthly exile. It means that as we spend our life in patience we look forward to death by which God will end this life whenever it pleases Him. And all these prayers are confined by the word: "Amen." Meanwhile we should bear in mind that the present Prayer should be venerated above all other prayers because it was given us, without any intermediary, by the Lord Himself.

Now Saint Francis had a special reason for ordaining that the Brothers should say "twenty-four Our Fathers for Matins." Matins, which is the nocturnal office, represents the night-watches of heaven's citizens, and at those hours this sacrifice of praise is most pleasing to God and His Angels. The number twenty-four recalls the number of the Fathers of both Testaments. Twelve were the Patriarchs through whom the chosen race was multiplied in the flesh. Again, Twelve were the Apostles through whom in the New Testament the faithful were multiplied spiritually. In this way our Brothers, in virtue of this mystical

number, enjoy the companionship of the Fathers of both Testaments and thus may safely hope that their prayers will be heard through their merits, since undoubtedly they have joined the angelic choirs. Again, since the natural day consists of twenty-four hours, it is easily inferred that a prayer which features the number twenty-four should implore spiritual benefits for all times. Furthermore, since these nocturnal praises that are sung by the clergy consist of psalms, lessons and canticles, of which there are nine of each, we are led to recognize in them the nine choirs of angelic spirits.

Now the number twenty-four is obtained by multiplying eight by three. Number three indicates what we must believe; number eight (which is the Eighth Day or the Day of Judgment) symbolizes Justice, that is: Render to everyone his due. Lay Brothers, therefore, who do not aspire to chant the angelic praises in choir or to engage in intellectual meditation, nevertheless render a simple profession of their faith and justice under the token of this sacred number. For while number eight symbolizes the virtue of Justice, number three stands for the belief in the Blessed Trinity.

Then follows the words "For Lauds Five." Even as the office of Matins signifies the praises of the citizens of heaven, so the office of Lauds denotes the divine worship of the Church, from the morning of her primitive days to the time when the Light will shine brilliantly, which we expect to witness at the end of the world. For Lauds begins with the Reign of Christ who among the Jewish people was vested with majesty (the first Psalm of Lauds, 92:1, *the Lord is reigning, he is arrayed in majesty*). Then the praises continue amid the jubilation of the whole earth, proclaiming among the Gentiles the peace which is given to holy Church (the second Psalm: 99:1). After which, these two psalms are joined to the third, to indicate that peace has been achieved among the two peoples (the third Psalm: 69:1, *O God, thou art my God*).

Next, at the chanting of the Cantic of the Three Youths in the fiery furnace (*All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord*,—Dan. 3:57) the office of Lauds sings the praises of the Church under the reign of Antichrist. And as the last Psalm is added to these (fifth Psalm: 148:1: *Praise the Lord from the heavens*), we are reminded of the time after Antichrist. This is the moment when the nations who previously were Jews and pagans are now joined with the Christian community in the unity of faith, to render joint praises to the Lord.

We surmise that Saint Francis assigned to the Lay Brothers five Our Fathers for Lauds because of the five petitions contained in the

ecclesiastical office. But besides that, it may also have been his intention to indicate that the divine praises are twofold, celestial and terrestrial. This brings to mind the two hierarchical orders: the one in heaven rendering praise in spiritual aspirations; the one under heaven, by means of sensible symbols. These symbols are offered by the five senses. Thus the sense of hearing praises God in canticles; the sense of sight in ecclesiastical adornments; the sense of touch in external ceremonies; the sense of taste in the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar; the sense of smell in the odor of incense and similar objects that spread an atmosphere of sweet fragrance.

Saint Francis continues: "For Prime, Tierce, Sext and None, for each of these seven Our Fathers." At Prime our Lord was arraigned before Pilate and other tyrannical leaders. At Tierce He was accused and judged. This is also the hour in which the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles. At Sext He was crucified. At None He died on the Cross. In each instance the Seven Our Fathers suggest to us a sevenfold prayer, either to obtain the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit or to give thanks for the Seven Sacraments, through which the Saviour made available to us the merits of His Passion.

The Rule continues: "For Vespers twelve Our Fathers." This order has two meanings. On the one hand, since Vespers are to be said at the twelfth hour, we implore Christ's mercy twelve times for the sins of the day past. On the other hand, the prayers at Vespers denote the vespers or evening of the world. At this period of the world's history Christ in His Incarnation brought us a new day on which He turned the twelve hours into reality by choosing His Twelve Apostles. This may be the mysterious meaning of our Lord's question: *Are there not twelve hours in the day* (Jn. 11:9)?

Finally Saint Francis says: "And for Compline seven." By this is intimated the consummation of all. For as the Holy Spirit begins and guides with His sevenfold gifts, so He consummates the day's work and merit. All told then, the Brothers' office consists of seventy-six Our Fathers, and to this is added a "Prayer for the Dead." This increases the number to seventy-seven. Dividing this by seven we obtain the number eleven. An ancient gloss on the text of Matthew 18:22 tells us that eleven indicates transgression because it oversteps the Ten Commandments of the Decalogue. Hence it would seem to follow that the number seventy-seven, which is obtained by multiplying seven by eleven, symbolizes the remission of all transgressions. Perhaps our Lord had this in mind when He answered Saint Peter in these words: *I do not say*

to thee seven times, but seventy times seven thou shalt forgive thy brother (Matt. 18:22).

Thus far the explanation of the Brothers' Office by the great Doctor of the Church, Saint Bonaventure, the pride of our holy Order. Bonaventure loved the Lay Brothers of the Order, because not being burdened with the many responsibilities that priests have to carry, they are free to follow our Seraphic Father in simplicity, humility, and holy poverty according to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. May they read and study these lines of the Seraphic Doctor and profit by his simple, sometimes naive, but deeply significant elucidations.

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.

SCRIPTURE READING WITH SAINT BONAVENTURE

And his parents were wont to go every year to Jerusalem at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. And after they had fulfilled the days, when they were returning, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and his parents did not know it. But thinking that he was in the caravan, they had come a day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem in search of him. . . And it came to pass after three days, that they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who were listening to him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have been seeking thee sorrowing." . .

And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" And they did not understand the word that he spoke to them. . . And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was subject to them;

and his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men. (Lk. 2: 41-52).

In going to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover (v. 41), the Holy Family concurred with the ceremonial custom of the Old Law. As the Gospel states: *when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast* (v. 42). Yet, this was not merely a standing on the law of ceremony; it was an ethical action. For Christ later declared: *Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have come not to destroy, but to fulfill* (Matt. 5: 17). Hence, in both custom and conduct, the Holy Gospel records that *they had fulfilled the days* (v. 43). However, after the festivities, it was customary for all to return home: *And after those days every man returned to his house* (Judith 16:25). But this was the time when Christ did not follow the usual custom: *And after they had fulfilled the days, then they were returning, the boy Jesus remained in Jerusalem* (v. 43). It was not necessary for Him to seek His parents' counsel in order to honor His heavenly Father. Regarding his remaining, even though *his parents did not know it* (v. 43), Joseph and Mary were hardly negligent. For it was reasonable for each to think that Jesus was in the company of the other. Humanly, the Seraphic Doctor asks, what was more natural among the adults than that the men should travel with the men and the women with the women? And still, even though inculpable, this fact was small comfort to them in their loss. Because they soon realized that *they had come a day's journey before it occurred to them to look for him among their relatives and acquaintances* (v. 44).

Imagine the sudden shock at *not finding him* (v. 45)! Picture further the anxiety, retracing their steps, as *they returned to Jerusalem in search of him* (v. 45). Mary alone could well use the anguished appeal of Solomon's love song: *I sought him and, found him not: I called, and he did not answer me. . . I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if you find my beloved, that you tell him that I languish with love* (Cant. 5: 6 & 8). And the silent sorrow of Joseph, supporting Mary in their desolation, must have driven him onward in their anguished search. At this point, should we not join them by examining our own actions in like losses? If Jesus seems to have left

us for a time, do we seek Him sorrowing? Should our quest continue to be unavailing, do we look for a cause in ourselves? Is it our own fault that He is a *hidden God to us*? Has the little ego of our own pride, perhaps, set up its throne in us, thus crowding Him out of our souls? Has some unobtrusive or almost-unnoticed affection gained a foothold in our heart, which should be His kingdom alone? If this is the case with us, is it any wonder that our search for Him is fruitless? Supposing we feel we have lost Him, do we have the courage to leave the caravan of human consolation and go forth in solitary search of Him Who alone can give rest to our troubled hearts? Sensibly, we should not let the length of a day's journey pass without seeking Him. To do this, with the help of grace, we need but the *will to go*. But where shall we go? Saint Augustine advises us: "Do not go outside, but turn within yourself." The lover in the Canticles could not find Him *whom her soul loved* in the city, that is, outside herself. Neither can we—nor inside self, for that matter—until we rid our soul of yearnings for external things and crush the ego that rules our thoughts and desires. Only when emptied of self, can we hope to come upon Him. For when we effect this complete change of heart, like to the returning to Jerusalem of Joseph and Mary, Jesus will undoubtedly make His appearance in the temple of our souls.

Even then, our divine Master may want to subject us to further lessons. This happened to Joseph and Mary: *for they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions* (v. 46). Notice the human posture: *sitting in the midst of the teachers* (Ibid.). This 'sitting' signified His quiet humility. He was exemplifying the studious submission for which—as the *best part*—He later commended Mary of Bethany: *who also seated herself at the Lord's feet, and listened to his word* (Luke 10: 39). But Jesus also spoke out, first *asking them questions* (v. 47) and then showing *his understanding* and giving *his answers* (v. 48). Truly an example for us is this lesson proposed by God: *Learn before thou speak* (Ecclus. 18: 19). For the open ear, the questioning mind, and the serene soul are prerequisites for illumination of the humble man by the Holy Spirit: *All wisdom is from the Lord God* (Ecclus. 7: 1). Indeed, Jesus' learned listeners were

amazed (v. 47). And, knowing Him to be the *wisdom of the Lord God*, the attitude of Joseph and Mary is understandable: *when they saw him, they were astonished* (v. 48).

However, realizing that God had given to herself and Joseph the parental authority over Him, Mary was prompted to ask: "*Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold, thy father and I have been seeking thee sorrowing*" (v. 48). And here, from the fact that He did not excuse His action on human grounds, Christ seemed to accept quietly and humbly His Mother's corrective question. He apparently acquiesced to her maternal right to obedience. For God spoke through them: *My son, keep the commandments of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother* (Prov. 6: 20). And again: *Honor thy father and thy mother* (Exodus 20: 12). But then, since they were entitled to an answer, He promptly pointed out that His action was justified by a higher obligation: *How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business* (v. 49). Never for a moment denying the validity of parental authority, Jesus reminded them—and us—that the first fealty and responsibility is to God. How well Saint Francis grasped His message. Casting off his clothing, which symbolized that human bonds no longer held primary authority, the little poor man of Assisi could confidently pray: *Our Father, Who art in heaven* (Matt. 6: 9). In this regard, human beings—even those bound to us by family ties—may not fully grasp our voluntarily-vowed obligations in religion. If unable to explain satisfactorily, we can best imitate the silent submission of Christ when He evidently realized that *they did not understand the word that he spoke to them* (v. 50).

But then, having done His divine duty, He submitted humbly to His parents' guidance: *He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them* (v. 51). We can apply this to our own way of life. Living in a religious family, we should strive to adapt ourselves to the requirements of humble submission. Its reward, for us, is the joy spoken of by the Psalmist: *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity* (Ps. 132: 1). Let us focus the attention of our souls on Christ Who *was subject to them* (v. 51). Who was subject to whom? Saint Bernard answers: "God to men." Then he asks us: "If God submits himself

men, do you, desiring to rule, want to place yourself in preference over your Author?" Each one must answer this for himself.

However, the example of Jesus was not lost upon Mary. Rather than discuss His actions, she made them the object of her own reflection: *His mother kept all these things carefully in her heart* (v. 49). And, as she pondered His words and works in her soul, who can doubt but that she often spoke prayerfully to her heavenly Father? Even before Saint Paul wrote about it, Mary was well aware that *her conversation is in heaven* (Philip. 3: 20). The behaviour of Mary is a tacit reprimand for our talkativeness. Answerable as we are for every useless word, should not her example give us abundant matter for meditation? And, lest we pass him by unnoticed, Saint Joseph also points out the lesson for us. For throughout the whole episode he remained watchful but silent, the epitome of saintly reserve. . . Our Gospel text concludes: *Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace before God and men* (v. 52). Saint Bonaventure is not unaware of the theological problems here involved. But, leaving most of their dogmatic import aside, he refers simply to the moral meaning. His advice is simply to copy the examples of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as proposed to us. He recommends putting on the mind of Christ, imitating His virtues, as suggested to us in the Holy Gospels. Our progress, he says will be evident before *God and men* (v. 52); we must endeavor to grow like Christ: *until we all attain to the unity of faith and of the deep knowledge of the Son of God, to perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fulness of Christ* (Eph. 4: 13).

Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.

Apologies to the Atonement Fathers!

In the December 1955 issue of THE CORD we published a review of Father Titus Cranny's FATHER PAUL, APOSTLE OF UNITY, in which it was stated that this is the first book-length life of Father Paul. Happily one of our readers was kind enough to call attention to our error. The fact is that in 1951 the Graymoor Press published a full-length biography of Father Paul written by David Gannon, S.A. So sorry we slipped.

CAUSE OF OUR JOY

When thou mad'st God a flesh to wear
And gave Him two small eyes to see
Earth-craft He did some aeons back,
Thou madest laughter, too, Marie.

Our mirth grew strong within thy womb
Along with that small Saviour sweet,
And all our songs were born that night
A little God lay at thy feet.

Sorrow we had full-plenteous
Without thee, and we found the way
Of lonely pain with never need
For thy dear hand to beck or stay;

But singing and laughter only came
When thou agreedst to queen the earth
And heavens, too, with mothering
Alike our Saviour and our mirth.

Cause of our music and our glee,
Lady, our joy flows all from thee!
Mother of all hilarity
That ever wast or shall e'er be.

SISTER MARY FRANCIS

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

NATIONAL MEETING OF THE FRANCISCAN TEACHING SISTERHOOD

"Nature—The Mirror of God," was the theme of the fourth National meeting of the Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods, held at Marian College, Indianapolis November 25-26.

Upwards of 400 delegates from some 27 different Congregations who came from the New England and other Eastern states to as far west as Colorado, and from the Dakotas to Oklahoma. In addition about fifteen Franciscan friars took an active part in the conference either in presenting some of the papers, acting as discussion leaders, or consultants at the various general and sectional meetings.

The conference was opened with a High Mass offered by the Very Rev. Vincent Kroger, O.F.M., Provincial of St. John the Baptist Province, Cincinnati, Ohio. In his sermon addressed to the delegates Father Kroger stressed the fact that "It is a spiritual equipment and a supernatural disposition which is needed" to enable Franciscan Teachers to turn over the world to Christ, or "renewing all things in Christ."

"The modern world says we do not have academic freedom," Father Kroger stated and, "that we are hampered and restricted by the truths which faith teaches us. But the modern world does not ask us to take the loyalty oath. When we say we want to turn the world over to Christ, we are not suspected to mean the overthrow of the government, a world revolution to deprive individuals of their God-given rights. Even the votaries of the world know that Christ Our Lord stands for peace and justice and respect for every human individual," he said.

"We have academic freedom in the best sense of the words," Father Kroger assured the assembled Sisters. "Faith, after

all, is not a restriction but a guide, it does not coerce us but leads us," he continued.

As followers of St. Francis, he urged the Sisters to "be like the Holy Sacrifice, a channel of divine grace to our fellow men. . . by living and acting in a spirit of faith. . . and in a spirit of love."

The Rev. Mother Mary Cephas, O.S.F., Mother-General of the Sisters of St. Francis, Oldenburg, Indiana, host of the convention welcomed the delegates and expressed the hope that all present would "learn more about Our Holy Father Francis, learn more about the God of Francis." As a result of the conference, she said, "we should all be better Franciscans, better servants of God, better servants of man, for having been privileged to be one of this group of eager-to-learn, eager-to-give Franciscans."

The key-note address of the two-day event was given by the Rev. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., of St. Francis College Fort Wayne, Indiana, president of the Franciscan Educational Conference, of which the Sisters Conference is an affiliate. He asked the assembled delegates to capture the Franciscan approach to nature, and through nature to find God. He urged them to teach science as a science; not to neglect the natural while stressing the supernatural; and while philosophy and science are separate, he said, they are not to be separated.

In a delightfully Franciscan Paper, the Rev. Leander Blumlein, O.F.M. of Duns Scotus College, Detroit, Michigan, spoke on "St. Francis' Attitude towards Creatures." The basic trait or quality or attitude which formed the ground work for all other virtues of St. Francis was his reverence for things."

"This," Father Blumlein asserted, "pre-

supposes the proper recognition of a value in itself—a thing which we moderns have often lost in the quest for the practical, the useful. Francis grasped the value of things in themselves, and thereupon their value toward a further goal; he saw how worthy of veneration things are in themselves, and was willing to let things speak for themselves, without rushing to put them immediately to use." He urged the Franciscan Sisters to use the Franciscan approach which is radically Christian, in teaching the sciences. This would be accomplished by having "a deep reverence and respect for the very nature of things." This, he said, calls for deeper and sounder and true scholarship, deeper findings. In having such reverence for things one woos them, wins them, has them work along, as it were, instead of being worked upon. "A true Franciscan scientist," Father Blumlein declared, "will work with things, rather than upon them." He urged the delegates to make the universe a "ladder" to God.

The Very Rev. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., rector of Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure, N.Y., presented a paper and led a discussion on the subject of "The Creation of the World, according to Franciscan Teachings."

The Director of the Academy of American Franciscan History, Bethesda, Md., spoke briefly about the research work being done by the research center. He also outlined the various projects now being readied for publication. Among these are the Life and Letters of Father Junipero Serra, the Apostle of California.

Several sectional meetings were held during the afternoon, all of them developing the theme of the conference for teachers in the Elementary, Secondary, and College and Nursing Education Fields. Demonstrations were held under the direction of teachers of elementary schools of Indianapolis: Sister M. Adriana, O.S.F.

of St. Theresa School, Sister M. Janita, O.S.F. of St. Rita School, and Sister Frances de Chantal, O.S.F., Our Lady of Lourdes School.

The section in the field of Secondary Education was under the chairmanship of Sister M. Bibiana, O.S.F., Cotter High School, Winona, Minn., and heard Sister M. Michele, O.S.F., of Mount St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois, speak on "Science Clubs in a Catholic High School."

The College division under the chairmanship of Sr. M. Joan, O.S.F. College of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois, presented by the Rev. Allan Wolter, O.F.M., of Cleveland, Ohio, and the Franciscan Institute, N.Y. The subject was "The Complexity of the Atomic Nucleus."

The Nursing Education division was treated to an inspiring paper by Sister Mary Aquinata, S.S.M., St. Francis Hospital, Wichita, Kansas, on the subject of "Student Personality Development."

Approximately 15 Franciscan librarians under the chairmanship of Sister M. Josepha, O.S.F., Holy Family Library, Manitowoc, Wisc. discussed some of their own problems. They also listened to a paper presented by the Rev. Ambrose Burke, T.O.R., of Francis Preparatory School, Spring Grove, Pa., on the subject of "Backstage a Bibliography." This outlined the work of compiling a Bibliography on recent Papal Pronouncements on Science.

A paper on "The Teaching of the Sciences," prepared by the late Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. director of the Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure, N.Y., was presented in his name by the Rev. Allan Wolter, O.F.M. member of the same Institute.

The second day sessions were opened with High Mass offered by the Very Rev. Gerald Walker, O.F.M. Cap. provincial of St. Joseph's Province, Detroit, Michigan. In his sermon he gave a spiritual consideration of Franciscan Education as

it is related to the topic of the conference: "Nature—the Mirror of God."

"To understand what Franciscan Education is, what its aims and goals are, one must understand the philosophy of life which underlies it." Bishop Felder, he said, declared: "The peculiar and individual character of Franciscan learning is derived from a two-fold source, namely from the Augustinian orientation of doctrine and from the Franciscan contemplation of the world." "All profane science" Father Walker stated, "contains within it the science of God, and in the mind of St. Bonaventure, the Franciscan should convert all of his studies into sacred studies by allowing everything that he learns to tell him something more about God."

"The Proofs for the Existence of God and the Natural Sciences," was the subject of the Paper presented by the Rev. Kieran Quinn, O.F.M. Cap. St. Fidelis College and Seminary, Herman, Pa. In his discussion Father Quinn pointed to a recent address of Pope Pius XII to the Pontifical Academy of Science for a modern vindication of the age-old proofs of St. Thomas for the existence of God. In the second part of his paper, he showed that scientists in every field do find that nature is a mirror of God; that from the wonders of the universe about us they conclude to the existence of God.

The Rev. Victor Hermann, O.F.M., Dean of Quincy College, Quincy, Illinois, spoke to the general assembly on "The Place of the Natural Sciences in Catholic General Education and stated: "Besides the usual goals claimed for science: the aim for precision; the acquisition of the so-called objective method; the appreciation of the work of the scientist, and the understanding of the physical and biological world; there is one which no Catholic and no Franciscan educator can ignore. It is expressed in the theme of this conference: Nature, the Mirror of God," de-

clared Father Hermann. "The deeper man's knowledge of the world about him becomes, the more perfect a reflection of the mirror he sees," he stated. "The more perfectly he understands God's perfection reflected in nature," he continued, "the more adequately he will be equipped to achieve the primary purpose as a rational being: the glory of God."

At the Business Session it was revealed that the topic for next year's conference will be: "The Franciscan Life Today." The place for the next meeting has not been set. It was decided that in future, the proceedings of the Franciscan Sisterhood Conference would be published as a part of the F.E.C. Report, rather than being issued as a separate volume, as heretofore.

Available in time for the meeting were the Proceedings of the Third National meeting of Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods, *Mary in the Franciscan Order*. The price of this volume is \$2.50 and is available from the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. Previous Reports may be obtained while the supply lasts.

Franciscan Education, the report for 1952 held at St. Francis College Joliet, Illinois at \$1.00 from the Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 9, Illinois; and *Theology in Daily Life*, the 1953 Conference held at Alverno College, is available from the Seraphic Press, 1501 South Layton Blvd., Milwaukee Wisc.

One of the requests made at the business meeting was for a translation into English of the Abridged Divine Office for Franciscan communities. A survey will be made to see how many Franciscan Motherhouses are interested and would be willing to cooperate in such a project.

Among the Resolutions unanimously passed at the final session was one of encouraging all Franciscans to make a definite contribution to the solution of the problems faced by modern science and by philosophy. The Conference also ex-

pressed a prayerful sympathy to the confreres of the late Father Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., former director of the Franciscan Institute, whose untimely death last May removed a noted philosopher and scientist who, in his life, so ably and devotedly expressed the theme of this convention, and continually found in "Nature, a Mirror of God."

Another Resolution extended Seraphic Felicitations to His Excellency the Most Rev. Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, D.D., Apostolic Delegate to the United States, and member of the Franciscan Family, on the occasion of his Golden Sacerdotal Jubilee.

The final resolution read: "Whereas the Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, in his counsel to teaching Sisters urges their training in personal, moral, and spiritual perfection, and likewise stresses the need for training religious teachers in a manner that corresponds in quality and academic degrees to that demanded by secular accrediting agencies; be it resolved: That

the Fourth National Meeting of Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods recommend to Superiors, General and Provincial, that no teacher be sent into a classroom until she is prepared religiously, educationally, and professionally, for her important responsibility of instructing and guiding youth."

In his concluding remarks to the delegates the Most Rev. Paul C. Schulte, D.D., archbishop of Indianapolis, considered it imperative that the teacher inculcate in the child the prayerful habit of referring all things to God as their first cause and final end. He also stressed the importance for all to see God's perfections and handiwork in the world around us.

Among the features of the convention were several Franciscan book exhibits and art displays.

The Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods organization is an affiliate of the Franciscan Educational Conference founded 36 years ago. The former convenes during the Thanksgiving holidays, the latter meets during the summer months.

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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE OUR DESTINY AS CHILDREN OF GOD

Taking as our theme that text of Saint John: *God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:16), we discovered our destiny as human beings. Created in the image and likeness of the Trinity, the primordial family, we are destined to give and share our lives with our fellowmen. In our own finite way we mirror that infinite inner give-and-take that is the very essence, the very life, of the Trinity. But God not only asks us to share our lives with our fellow creatures—we should have had to do this even if we had been destined for a merely natural order—He has lifted us to a supernatural order, inviting us to share in the inner life of the Three Divine Persons.

1. The Inner Life of God

What can we know of the essence of God, of the divine nature? How can we perceive even a shadow of this divine delight? It is true, of course, that the created world does tell us something of the splendor of our infinitely lovable God. Just as we cannot handle an object without leaving dozens of invisible finger prints upon it, so nothing tumbles from God's creative hands without carrying upon it some impression of the divine touch. But because our vision has been dimmed by original sin, as Saint Bonaventure tells us, the invisible finger prints of the Trinity on the world remain hidden from us unless dusted with the powder of faith. Scientist and saint can study the same bit of nature without seeing the same things. Take the Grand Canyon, for instance. The color artist may study those shifting hues for hours, for days. From the time the sun rises over the Painted Desert, catching the white sandstone rim and turning it to gold and driving down the purple shadows until they change to reds and hazy greens and blues, through the mid-day light that turns mysterious capes and temples and plateaus into things of indescribable beauty, until sunset when reds deepen to dim purples and the grays and yellows and greens change to magic blues, it is always different. But the man of faith sees much more than a magnificent play of color over the rugged, breathtaking beauty of the Canyon; he sees a

reflection of the infinite splendor of God, ever ancient ever new. To the geologist, those layered walls of the Canyon that drop over a mile into the earth are a history book. They take him back through five geological eras. He sees the sea deposits of marine shells in the upper sand and limestone wall. Lower he sees what were once sand dunes with tracks of primitive reptiles and amphibians. In the sandy shale he discovers primitive evergreens, fern-like plants, insects. Then come the red flood-plain deposits with land-animals and plants; more sea deposits as he drops deeper into the gorge; ancient trilobites; species of plants and animals long extinct. So he goes back further and further into the dim geological past before man walked the earth. But the saint sees all this and more—he begins to comprehend the timelessness of God for Whom a thousand years are but a day. The story of evolution itself tells him not only of the ineffable variations hidden in the living cell which like the kaleidoscope brings out continually changing forms; it tells him something of the ineffable mystery of God that all eternity will not suffice for us to explore.

It is the same with other beauties of nature. The universe is full of stray melodies that fall upon the ears of the saint with the ordered beauty of a divine symphony. The music of a child's laughter, the song of a brook, the caroling of birds, the whispering of pines—all are continually breaking out to delight our senses. No wonder pantheists could mistake the universe for God.

Yet we know that nature, for all its beauty and power, is not God. Behind the child's laughter is the whimper of pain; behind the marvelous order of the universe is the chaos in the heart of the atom; behind the wonder of life is the mystery of death. Every natural beauty has its natural shadow. This in itself is not to be wished away, for the shadow somehow serves to enhance the beauty. Nevertheless it makes clear to every discerning mind that nature is but a material veil concealing God's splendor from mortal eyes, yet permitting something of the radiance of His glory to shine through.

To recall our original figure, creatures are but fingerprints of God. And how much do finger prints tell us? Could we judge the beauty of God's lovely Mother from the finger prints she left on the

bowls and tables at Nazareth? What would they tell us of her attractiveness, her gentleness, her beauty, her marvellous graces and virtues? And so it is with God's finger prints on the natural world. They tell us as little about Him as Mary's finger prints on an earthen jar. Yet there is a difference. Our ignorance of God is what theologians call a "learned ignorance." We know that the difference between what is ugly and what is beautiful is not so great as the difference between the beauty of God and the beauty of a creature. In fact some theologians tell us that God is not beauty, goodness, and truth. Not that they wish to say He is ugly, evil, and false, but only that He infinitely transcends what we know as beauty, goodness, and truth, so that it seems more correct to say what He is not rather than what He is.

The infinitely lovable divine essence is what makes the Blessed Trinity reach out creative fingers that others may share the thrill of loving what they love, their own incomprehensible nature that we call divine. It is a mystery, of course, this love of God for us, and simply beyond the grasp of human understanding. But this much we know: that God is love, that love is the answer to the "why" of creation, and that love is the only way for the creature to return to the Creator, Who is the ultimate end and destiny of all things.

2. *The Incarnation as a Bond*

In order to draw us gently into the divine life of the Trinity, dispelling our fear and awe, the Second Person became incarnate—put on our nature, shared our joys and sorrows and weaknesses, and assured us through the Scriptures that His delight is to be with the children of men. But because man is to every other man a brother Christ could not become incarnate without by that very fact becoming our brother, and His Father becoming our Father as well. We became adopted sons, coheirs with Christ, and the Love of the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit, took up His abode in our souls.

There are other bonds besides that of human nature that link us to Christ—our faith, which is somehow a re-thinking the thoughts of God; sanctifying grace or charity, which is the Christ-life in us. But the long and short of it is that we form one great family, we are all children of God. And so in addition to the purely natural ties

that make mankind one race, the divine Family, through the bond of the Incarnation, is linked with the human family which in turn is firmly cemented together by supernatural love and by incorporation into the Mystical Body. This is why in the supernatural order it is simply impossible to separate the love of God from the love of neighbor. We cannot love God without loving His Son; but the Son is also man. In this sense Saint John could write: *If anyone says: I love God, and hates his neighbor, he is a liar* (I Jn. 4:19). Conversely, it is impossible to love man without loving God, because one man is Christ. But this last statement needs qualification. It is possible to love man without loving God, if we take "man" in the sense of "humanity;"—if we love human nature and ignore the human person. In this way we can exclude the divine Person from our love. And this, incidentally, is the meaning of the great Communist experiment and other movements like it. In its beginnings, Communism had the interests of man at heart. Like Rousseau, its leaders realized that man is created free but everywhere is in chains. They tried to reform social conditions, to make life livable; but without God there was no security, no insurance or guarantee of the brotherhood of man. And what happened? Persons were lost sight of. It was only the collective man, not individuals, that they considered. That is why Stalin could deliberately let over two million Ukrainians starve, while he shipped grain to foreign markets. That is why the Reds did not hesitate to pour army after army of cannon fodder into Korea. It was the inhuman treatment of a cartoonist who was abandoned by the Communists when his incurable sickness ended his usefulness to *The Daily Worker* that first caused Heywood Broun to doubt Communism.

3. No Man Reaches Heaven Alone

The inner give-and-take that is the life of the Blessed Trinity is a model of our own. No one ever enjoys eternal life exclusively through his own efforts. Some have received it gratuitously—innocent children who die in the state of grace, symbolical of the Holy Spirit. Others find life in giving it to others, symbolical of the Father. Others both give and receive it, symbolical of the Son. There is no such thing as isolationism in the spiritual, the supernatural, order.

In fact, according to God's plan, love of fellowmen leads logically to God. It begins when a young man and a young girl join hands and realize for the first time that they cannot be happy alone. It is the oldest story in the world—they need each other. With marriage come children, the fruit of their love. Once more they must broaden their interests, widen their horizon, take others into their heart. If a father becomes jealous of his wife's devotion to the children, or if the mother centers all her affection on her offspring and leaves none for their father, that marriage will fail. Each partner has to expand his heart, each has to become progressively broader, more understanding, more generously self-sacrificing. Quite rightly marriage has been described as a school in unselfishness.

But children grow up, parents retire, life with its needs becomes less complicated, less difficult to satisfy. Husband and wife no longer need each other so much; yet their capacity to love, to give, to sacrifice, has grown greater with the years and needs other outlets. They may first turn their attention to their grandchildren, or engage in social activities or works of charity; but gradually God disengages them from all these things to remind them gently but firmly that it is He alone Whom they have really been seeking. At length they come to know that the infinite God alone can exhaust their power to give and to love. This is the reason why older men and women take more interest in religion, slipping into church for daily Mass, kneeling before the Tabernacle for hours of silent prayer.

It is natural that the older we grow, the more eagerly we should look forward to heaven. God gradually takes away our little earthly pleasures, the things that absorbed our youthful interest. It is His way of making us homesick. Assuredly the burden of lonely old age is no light one, especially for those who have spent their whole life in the service of others; but if we bear it with patience, it will add to our joy for all eternity.

It is difficult to picture the delights of heaven; yet it was the thought of eternal blessedness in possession of God that drove our Seraphic Father to hasten through life, as Celano tells us, like a pilgrim hurrying to reach home. So it should be for us. If we look upon our earthly life as a kind of pilgrimage, the crosses that accompany

old age will be as so many happy signs that we are nearing our journey's end, that we will soon be in sight of our true and eternal home.

What is it like? No one knows; no one ever saw it and returned to tell us about it. Saint Paul got one foot into heaven, so to speak, in a vision. And what did he say? He stuttered like a tongue-tied child. *Eye has not seen nor ear heard.* But if he could not tell us what heaven is like, he showed us by his life how utterly consuming was his desire for it. He was honored, esteemed, respected as a Pharisee. He threw it all away to become a fool for Christ. He was driven from the synagogue, regarded with suspicion by the other Apostles, betrayed by false friends, thrice beaten with iron rods. He was scourged until his back was one mass of bloody ribbons and he hung from the pillar as one dead—and not just once, but five times that we know of (II Cor. 11:23 ff). But nothing restrained him from preaching Christ. He pushed on, not aimlessly as one *beating the air*, but ever reaching out for that incorruptible crown he had glimpsed. *We are Christ's, co-heirs with him of heaven. Yet so if we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him. For I reckon the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in us.* And if anyone knew, it was Paul of Tarsus. No wonder he longed for death, *to be dissolved and to be with Christ.*

We too should learn to regard death for what it is, the beginning of life. At the moment when the veil of this time is rent asunder and we no longer see God as in a dark glass, but face to face; in that moment we shall suddenly realize the meaning of that phrase we have uttered so often in life and perhaps so unthinkingly: "Our Father who art in heaven. . ." Like awe-struck children we shall stand before Him, speechless with wonder, until the Holy Spirit Himself prompts us, putting into our mouths that beautiful word: "Abba, Father." And when the answering arms of God reach out, their touch will awaken our power to love. It will course through our being like a surging flood, sweeping us into God's eternal arms. And He will clasp us and hold us and for all eternity will not let us go.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

MOTHER MARY THERESIA BONZEL (II)

From 1863 to 1870 the young community grew rapidly in every phase: sisters, orphans, buildings, and new foundations. Although constantly suffering from ill health, Mother Mary Theresia personally opened every new foundation and instructed the sisters in the specific aims of the new mission.

The Franco-Prussian War of 1879 found her on the battlefields where she directed the angelic service of her sisters. Countless soldiers passed to eternity reconciled to God through the aid of the sister nurses. Hundreds of wounded soldiers, friend and foe alike, received tender loving care in field and home hospitals. Thousands of religious brochures and papers were distributed to the soldiers who, thus uplifted and instructed, made their peace with God. Five of the sisters paid the supreme sacrifice as a result of their strenuous war duties on the battlefields. Recognizing the community's distinguished service, the government decorated each sister nurse with a merit badge and the valiant foundress with the Iron Cross.

Then in quick succession came crosses far more precious to God—loving souls, the crosses of hate and persecution by the very government whom the community had served so valiantly in time of war. Bismarck unleashed the infamous Kulturkampf which threatened to nip the life of the young community in its very bud.

At this period in the history of the congregation we meet with that great mystery in God's dealing with man, which has often caused wonder to those who are inexperienced in the ways of Divine Providence. The activities of the sisters had reached a flourishing state; their work among the poor, sick, and orphaned and neglected children was praised by all; everything bid fair for further progress when the enemy of God and man designed to destroy it.

By numerous national decrees religious institutions were secularized; Catholic schools, orphanages, seminaries, and postulates were closed, and religious investiture and profession forbidden. This unjust ruling was a blow to all Catholic educators, especially to Mother Mary Theresia, the born teacher and lover of children. Her devotedness to the cause of education was manifest from the very beginning of her congregation; it stood as a beacon light in the external objectives of her sisterhood. When the Bismarck regime put an end to the educational endeavors of Catholic institutions of learning, Mother Mary Theresia, far from yielding to discouragement, chose nursing of the sick as one of the major ob-

jectives of her congregation; but even the noble work of Catholic sister nurses was greatly curtailed by government interference.

The foundress and her sisters had yet another heavy blow to endure. Bishop Conrad Martin of Paderborn was secretly arrested, deposed, and held captive at the fortress of Wesel. Mother Mary Theresia and her daughters doubled their prayers and penances for the safety of their beloved prelate and the suffering church. In these days of tribulation, the foundress counseled her children:

For this cause should your prayers be offered, your mortifications and penances endured. The day you cease to offer your intentions for that purpose, you can no longer call yourselves daughters of Holy Mother Church.

As the blood of martyrs became the seed of new Christians, so the cruel Kulturkampf injected new vigor and life into Catholic hearts and institutions, and opened undreamed-of fields of labor for its victims. Bismarck indeed became a powerful instrument in the hands of Divine Providence for strengthening the faith in Germany and for spreading the Gospel far beyond the boundaries of the fatherland. Exiled religious communities took deep roots in many countries of the globe. Like bright rays emitted from the sun, they streamed from their homeland in all directions; they feared neither the sands of the deserts nor the terrors of the sea. Among the exiles were the sisters from Olpe.

Bishop Dwenger of Fort Wayne, Indiana, visited the motherhouse during the days of the Kulturkampf and offered the distressed community a wide field of missionary work in his diocese. December 14, 1875, he welcomed the first group of six sisters who settled at Lafayette on the Wabash river.

Unknown and without funds, they began their work in a few poorly furnished rooms, but God blessed their labors with abundant success. The third day after their arrival found these heroic pioneers in the hovels of the poor and sick, and within a week a temporary hospital was ready for the reception of patients. The first years of the community in America were replete with untold privations and hardships, but the sisters' trust in God was equal to their great faith; in prosperity and in adversity they depended upon God's Providence.

In 1877 the daughters of Mother Mary Theresia were offered the first school mission in the United States, Saint Boniface, Lafayette. In quick succession thereafter, new foundations were established: schools, hospitals, and orphanages.

Three times the foundress crossed the ocean to visit her American daughters and foundations. Wherever she went, she met the poor, the

sick, and her favorites—orphans and neglected little ones. Her heart went out to all of them with the devotion of a mother. There was something undefinable in her outward appearance that drew all hearts to her, something so kind and charitable, so winning and really good, that no one could doubt it was a reflection of her beautiful soul.

On her visits to the United States, Mother received request upon request for the opening of new foundations. It pained her greatly to refuse so many petitions for excellent missions because of lack of sisters. However, to deny a request for the opening of a school in a district of the poor was impossible for her.

Within the first decade of the sisters' labors in the United States, the community established six hospitals and assumed charge of seven schools located in the states of Indiana, Ohio, Nebraska, and Kansas. At the time of the papal approbation of the community, January 31, 1931, the American foundations numbered 52 schools, 21 hospitals, and 4 orphanages.

In Germany the storm of the Kulturkampf had abated, and by the decree of April 29, 1887, most of the religious congregations had been allowed to return to their native country and to resume their former work. The amazingly rapid revival of her congregation brought much joy and consolation to Mother Mary Theresia. Offers of new foundations poured into the motherhouse from all provinces of the fatherland and other European countries. Large numbers of candidates knocked at the door of the motherhouse in Olpe, and within a very short time the resurrected community had flourishing missionhouses in Westphalia, Rhineland, Hanover, Saxony, Thuringia, Brandenburg, Silesia, Hessen, Brunswick and in Austria. At the time of papal approbation, 1931, the community in Germany had 120 houses and 1,600 sisters in 43 hospitals, 10 convalescent homes, 43 centers of home nursing and social work, 12 orphanages, 6 schools of higher learning, 6 domestic science schools, and 95 kindergartens. This amazing development was wrought at the price of great sacrifices.

As Mother Mary Theresia's Community had proved itself during the Kulturkampf, so too in World War I. While large numbers of sisters ministered to wounded and dying soldiers in France, Poland, Russia, and Galicia, the Sisters at home opened soup kitchens, sewing circles, nurseries, and convalescent homes for starving and tuberculous children. Thousands of poor and needy were kept alive by the charity of the Olpe sisters. Thousands, too, remained true to God because of the glowing example of these valiant women.

Alas for the gratitude of governments! The sisters who had labored

and toiled to utter exhaustion for the good of their country, became again the object of hate and persecution of a man insane with desire for power and revenge, Adolf Hitler. With a stroke of the pen he closed all the community's schools. The valiant Mother Verena, schooled by the foundress herself in the ascetic and religious life, never allowed an unfavorable word to pass her and the sisters' lips against the persecutors of the Church. The prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," was engraved deeply on their hearts.

The storm of persecution by the Nazis was followed by the terrors of World War II. Again the sisters' service was requested by the godless government.

At the front and at home the sisters suffered indescribable hardships. With orphans, patients, and other charges, day after day and night after night, they rushed to air-raid shelters. Many of the community's foundations were leveled to the ground, and a large number of sisters, patients, and children lost their lives in circumstances too horrible to relate.

The terrible war had hardly ended, when the sorely-stricken Community stood ready to heal the wounds of soul and body of thousands of homeless, hungry, sick, and morally and mentally crushed unfortunates. It opened its houses to refugees from the East who had been expelled or threatened with death or exile to Siberia by ruthless Communists. The charity of the American provinces in these distressing times is written in heaven. Clothing, food, medicines, household utensils, and money were rushed by the American provincial and missionhouses to European scenes of suffering. Undoubtedly, Communism would have triumphed in West Germany as it did in the East had it not been for the material help received from the United States.

Here we revert briefly to an important milestone in the history of the Community of the Poor Sisters of St. Francis Seraph of the Perpetual Adoration. By 1930 the Community had spread over such vast areas in Europe and in the United States that with ecclesiastical approval it was divided into four provinces. The large German province was divided into the northern, Holy Family Province, with the provincial house in Muehlheim on the Moselle, and the southern, Sacred Heart Province, with the provincialate in Bonn on the river Rhine. In America, the Mississippi became the dividing line between the eastern, Immaculate Heart of Mary Province, with headquarters moved from Lafayette to Mishawaka, Indiana, and the western Saint Joseph Province, with the provincialate first in Dever, then in Colorado Springs. The generalate remained in Olpe, Westphalia.

One of the greatest advances in the internal history of Mother Mary Theresia's Community was the adoption in 1949 of a revised rule and new constitutions, granting to each province the right to elect its own provincial chapter, i.e., the provincial superior and her four councilors. The wisdom of the changes effected is already apparent in the rapid internal and external development and efficient administration of the four provinces of the congregation.

In 1950, Mother Mary Theresia's Community was offered the domestic management of the American College in Rome. Since this mission called for a staff of thirty sisters, the offer had to be declined. Very many other petitions for the service of Mother Mary Theresia's daughters in schools and hospitals had to be rejected for lack of sisters.

However, in conformity with the foundress' predilection for orphans and poor neglected children, the eastern American province, in 1954, established a mission at Rockaway Park, Long Island, New York, serving some three hundred neglected boys from the metropolis New York, and, in 1955, a school for colored and poor white children in Buras, Louisiana.

The sisters of the American western province, too, walk in the spirit of their holy Mother by caring with tender devotion for poor orphans and Indian children. In spite of incredible hardships they continue their heroic apostolate of teaching and nursing the American Indians at Jemez, Zuni, Cochiti, Albuquerque, and Gallup. New Mexico.

The educational activities of the Community in America were crowned with the development of two colleges: Saint Joseph College on the Rio Grande in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Saint Francis College in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

In the General Chapter of 1953 the momentous decision was made to expand the Community into several far-away countries in answer to numerous requests from prelates and missionaries in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, and Canada. In the very near future, the first South-American foundation of the Community will be opened in Brazil.

At present, Mother Mary Theresia's Community comprises 122 houses in Germany staffed by 1,600 sisters and 91 foundations in the American provinces with 1,200 sisters.

Now our thoughts must revert to the venerable foundress, whose holy career ended in a most edifying death, February 6, 1905. Her funeral in Olpe resembled a triumphal march. Twenty-five years later, September 17, 1930, her remains were exhumed and solemnly placed in a new chapel built in the convent garden of the motherhouse in Olpe. Many favors, spiritual and physical, have been reported by such as sought the

holy Mother's intercession with God. Testimonies of such favors are being collected by her spiritual daughters.

It may be truly asserted that the life of Mother Mary Theresia was always deeply moored in God. The love of God enkindled her soul and left her with a profound feeling of God's presence which permeated her entire being. The Franciscan motto, "My God and My All," was her favorite ejaculation. She would pray before the Blessed Sacrament for hours at a time, totally oblivious of her surroundings. When the clock struck the hour, she united herself with her Divine Spouse by praying aloud:

O God, grant us a virtuous life and a happy death. Amen. O Jesus all for love of Thee this hour. Mary, Mother, ever help. Angel of God protect me. Teach me, O my Jesus, to think and judge mildly and charitably, to speak little and wisely, to act justly and prudently, in order that my life be always pleasing to Thee and that I may reach perfection in holiness. Amen.

In a circular letter to her spiritual family she wrote: "Instant prayer and converse with God make us true religious, not work among the children and the sick." For many years, summer and winter, in the early morning hours, she made the stations of the cross barefooted outside, weeping as she pondered the sufferings of her Lord and the sins of mankind causing these bitter sufferings.

She resembled the Little Poor Man of Assisi in her intense love of the Holy Eucharist, the Manger, the Cross, Our Blessed Mother, and Saint Joseph. Love for Christ in the Blessed Sacrament prompted her to introduce perpetual adoration in the motherhouse and to inculcate great respect for the priesthood. She cultivated a touching reverence for the Holy Father, the Pope, and for the Bishops of the Church, and she sorrowed deeply when the "Bride of Christ" was persecuted in her prelates. She had an extraordinary love and devotion to Saint Joseph and he, in return, did wonderful things for her, things which often seemed miraculous. While traveling in America, her train was held up and robbed. Warned, she quickly alighted with her companion and walked briskly across the fields in the direction of a church steeple. In the humble chapel, the sacrifice of the Mass was being celebrated. After receiving Holy Communion, the Sisters were driven back to the train by some kind farmers. In the Colorado Rockies, her driver with horse and car plunged into an abyss shortly after the foundress had left the carriage in response to a warning by a venerable-looking stranger who disappeared as mysteriously as he had come. Numerous are the occasions when bills were

paid miraculously and food and clothing provided in times of dire poverty. After exhausting all earthly resources, the humble Mother addressed her troubles to her dear Saint, and never did she do so in vain. She composed a prayer in his honor and added the name of her loving protector to the name of each sister.

Like Saint Francis, the foundress was a great lover of poverty, humility, penance, and charity. Although her life was an indescribable chain of sorrows and sufferings, she was ever joyous, bearing all heroically for the love of God and the good of souls. Even though she was born and reared in wealth, she despised the world and its goods and became the "Mother of the Poor" whom she loved with special affection. The keynote of her holy life was a continuous self-oblation, expressed in her own words: "Lord, let me be Your victim; take me as Your holocaust; reject me not."

Assuredly, the secret of her success was the ever-flowing fountain of grace of the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The unbroken chain of ninety years of adoration, reparation, thanksgiving, and petition in Germany, and eighty years of the same angelic service in America, has been the source of strength for Mother Mary Theresia's Community, and the mainspring of untold blessings for Holy Church. The Holy Eucharist was heaven on earth for the saintly foundress. Her spiritual daughters yearn for the day when, with ecclesiastical sanction, they may address their beloved Mother with the invocation, "Saint Mary Theresia of the Blessed Sacrament, pray for us!"

Sr. Fridian, O.S.F.

THIS ARTICLE IS BASED UPON THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

1. Sister Fridian and Sister Honora. *From the Wounds of St. Francis*. Paterson, New Jersey: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1955, 288 pp.
2. Elsner, Dr. Salesius, O.F.M. *Mutter Maria Theresia Bonzel und Ihre Stiftung*. Werl, Westphalia: St. Franziskus Druckerei, 1925, 300 pp.
3. Sister Rosana. *The History of the Community*. Lafayette, Indiana: Community Press, 1946, 210 pp.
4. Hammer, Rev. Bonaventure, O.F.M. *The Congregation of the Poor Sisters of St. Francis Seraph of the Perpetual Adoration*. Lafayette, Indiana: 1910, 116 pp.

SAINT FRANCIS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CREATURES*

Francis of Assisi as a lover of creatures has become a commonplace in the world's art, whether painting, sculpture, music or literature. Yet precisely in that role Francis is frequently and seriously misunderstood. Well-meaning devotees sometimes draw a picture of a romantic humanitarian, a soft, though attractive, sentimentalist. Why? Because such recreators tend to isolate Francis' love of nature, separate it from the total outlook of Francis the man. In their efforts to appreciate his attitude toward creatures they force Francis into a pattern of a nature lover, rather than fit his love of nature into the whole pattern that was Francis himself.

What, then, is the way toward a proper understanding of Francis? Surely one must proceed from the solid basis of supernatural faith and Christian dogma and truth. Francis was always the *vir catholicus*, rich in grace and filially attached to the Church and its teachings. Any structure he would raise would necessarily rest upon that foundation.

However, assuming such a supernatural basis of faith and dogma for Francis' outlook, we might pose a further question: is there some way of our getting inside Francis himself, as it were, and seeing all things, Creator and creatures, through his eyes? Can we somehow share Francis' *Weltanschauung* with him? More pointedly, is there one quality or attitude which, if we grasp it, will give us at least the foundation of the overall pattern of Francis' outlook? Yes, there is; it is reverence.

If we accept reverence as the psychological basis of unity in Francis the man, we will find in it the master key to a fuller understanding of why and how he loved creatures, of why and how movements and acts of love sprang forth so spontaneously from him toward all things good. We can find in the concept also the beginnings of a Franciscan approach to science. And more, if we catch that spirit of reverence ourselves, it can point the way toward a fuller and warmer appreciation of Francis and his whole movement.

Reverence

If reverence is to be our key to an understanding of Francis, we must first answer the question: what is reverence? Dietrich Von Hildebrand offers a definition in his book *Liturgy and Personality*:

...reverence is a response to the general value of being as such, to the dignity which all being possesses as opposed to nothing or to mere

*This paper was prepared for The Franciscan Educational Conference, August 1955, at Rensselaer, N.Y. and for the Sisters' Division held at Indianapolis, Ind. in November, 1955.

fictitiousness, to the value of its own consistency, of standing on its own, of the ultimate "positivity" of being.¹

Reverence, therefore, presupposes a recognition of the value of being in itself, apart from any ulterior end a being might serve. And there lies the heart of the problem and the difficulty for us moderns. Because we have grown so accustomed to being "practical," utilitarian and (unwittingly) selfish, we have lost sight of the value of being as such. What is a thing good for? How can it be used? How can it serve me or mankind? We readily ask such questions and ignore the prime question: what is it? Aware of this situation, a whole gallery of present day Christian thinkers stress the all-important idea that things are of value first of all in themselves. To a few of these thinkers we turn briefly for a clearer understanding of this necessary premise.

"Meaning" and "Purpose"

Romano Guardini blazes the path by drawing the distinction between meaning and purpose. All things have meaning, he tells us, though not all things have purpose.² Of the two, meaning is by far the more important.

In so far as a being has purpose it is subordinated to something else. It serves another being in some way, exists for that other being and derives value from it. Thus a pencil serves one to write, a saw to cut wood, a slave to do his master's bidding.

That which we call purpose is, in the true sense of the word, the distributive, organizing principle which subordinates actions or objects, so that the one is directed towards the other, and one exists for the sake of the other. That which is subordinate, the means, is only the significant in so far as it is capable of serving that which is superior, the end.³

Regardless of its purpose, and even in the absence of a purpose, everything has meaning. Its meaning is simply to be itself, that it should be and by its very being glorify God who brought it into existence. Its meaning stands apart from any relation the thing may also have to some other created object.

Now what is the meaning of that which exists? That it should exist and should be the image of God the Everlasting. And what is the meaning of that which is alive? That it should bring forth its essence, and bloom as a natural manifestation of the living God.⁴

Therefore each thing, whether or not it has purpose, is vested with a dignity not dependent upon its use nor upon its benefits or service to

other but simply upon its being. "Purpose is the goal of all effort, labor and organization; meaning is the essence of existence, of flourishing, ripening life."⁵

Gerald Manley Hopkins grasped this vision well in the "inscapes" he observed. He realized that "There lives the dearest freshness deep down things,"⁶ and made it a frequent theme of his poetry. Nowhere does he state it more expressly than in the sestet of a sonnet:

As fishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells,
Each hung bell's tongue to fling out broad its name;
But swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name;
Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
Dwells out that being indoors each one dwells;
Selves—goes itself; myself it speaks and spells;
Crying *What I do is me: for that I came.*

In relation to meaning, then, reverence might further be defined as the proper or adequate response to the meaning of a thing. Since the inherent value of anything is in direct proportion to its being, a thing will elicit a greater or lesser response according to the nature of its being. In giving reverence, therefore, one must first grasp the nature of the object, and then pay a meaningful response.

Man of Vision; Man of Power

Fr. Gerald Vann, O.P., in *The Heart of Man*, carries the implications of reverence a step forward by distinguishing between the man of vision and the man of power. The man of power desires to have, to use, to rule independently of everyone and everything not himself. He desires mastery and determines to acquire it at the cost of any violence, by grabbing, smothering, even killing if necessary. He is wholly wrapped up in a world of purposes. The man of vision, on the other hand, is concerned primarily with meanings, with knowledge of and appreciation for things as they are, and in using them he respects their nature. Paradoxically, Fr. Vann indicates, the man of vision is the real man of power, the true master, while the would-be man of power is powerless. The man of vision is a lover, for he values things for what they are; the man of power is a lover, for he seeks only himself and his good in things. An example of Fr. Vann will illustrate the point:

...all know the difference between the carpenter who is really a craftsman and the man who can knock a bookcase together if he needs one. There is no doubt which of the two is master and maker; you watch with admiration the almost miraculous obedience of tool and

material to the craftsman's will. But you notice that it is not he who asserts with every gesture his will to dominate; it is the hedge-carpenter who wrenches and forces and blusters and drives the wood to obey him against the grain. There is no great art without reverence. The real carpenter has great technical knowledge of material and tools; but the bungler might conceivably have that and still be a bungler. The real carpenter has something much more: he has the feel of the wood, the knowledge of its demands is in his fingers; and so the work is smooth and satisfying and lovely because he works with reverence that comes of love.

Apply this to any form of making, apply it to the way men treat animals they have care of, apply it to the relationship of men with men; always it is the lover and servant who is most the master and who seems to have magic spells at his command. . . remember that reality is not a nettle to be grasped, or a fruit to be plucked and eaten, but a bride to be wooed.⁸

The man of vision, because he is alive to meanings, is always the true man of power. He respects or reverences the nature of a thing, works with it rather than upon it, cooperates with it rather than forces it, and the thing in turn responds to the touch of his hand. What Fr. Vann is stressing is simply this: reverence, a loving response to the value of being, begets in turn a response from the being.

Attitude of Reverence

Up to this point we have been dealing with the concept of reverence. An intellectual concept, however, must remain ineffective as a pattern of life unless it become an intellectual habit (if we may use the term in this way), a *principium agendi*, a mindset, an outlook—in this case, an habitual attitude of reverence. What are some of the implications of such an habitual attitude?

"Leisure"

Something of such an attitude of reverence is included in what the German philosopher Josef Pieper calls "leisure." Contrary to what we so often mean by the term, leisure is not to be understood as idleness, or simply non-activity, nor does idleness itself imply non-activity. Rather, according to Pieper's understanding, idleness is what the medievals meant by *acedia*, a vice which Saint Thomas regarded as a sin against the third commandment since it prevents one from having "the peace of mind in God."⁹ *Acedia* signifies

that a man does not, in the last resort, give the consent of his will to his own being; that behind or beneath the dynamic activity of his existence, he is still not at one with himself, or, as the medieval

writers would have said, face to face with the divine good within him; he is a prey to sadness (and that sadness is the *tristitia saeculi* of Holy Scripture).¹⁰

Idleness may (and generally does) beget a furious activity, a hurly-burly existence, an eagerness to grab hold of and meddle with everything, to actively intervene with things and never let them unfold. It is characteristic of the man totally engulfed in the world of purposes; the man of power, the would-be master.

Leisure, on the other hand, is the opposite of idleness thus defined. It is man's happy and cheerful affirmation of his own being, his acquiescence in the world and in God—which is to say love. . . an attitude of non-activity, of inward calm, of silence; it means not being "busy," but letting things happen. . . there is also a certain happiness in leisure, something of the happiness that comes from the recognition of our incapacity to understand it, that comes with a deep confidence, so that we are content to let things take their course. . .¹¹ But leisure, Pieper adds, is not simply non-activity; it is foremost an attitude of contemplative celebration.

God, we are told in the first chapter of Genesis, "ended his work which he had made" and "behold, it was very good." In the same way man celebrates and gratefully accepts the reality of creation in leisure, and the inner vision that accompanies it. And just as the Holy Scripture tells us that God rested on the seventh day and beheld that "the work which he had made" was "very good"—so too it is leisure which leads man to accept the reality of the creation and thus to celebrate it, resting on the inner vision that accompanies it.¹²

Thomas Merton frequently writes of the same spirit, though not under the same term. In *Seeds of Contemplation* he says:

Untie my hands and deliver my heart from sloth. Set me free from the laziness that goes about disguised as activity when activity is not required of me, and from the cowardice that does what is not demanded, in order to escape sacrifice.

But give me the strength that waits upon You in silence and in peace.¹³

In accord with the nature of his book, Merton sees such an attitude of leisure fructify in contemplation. Moreover, he stresses a further notion necessary to our approach to things, namely, the gift-character of every created being and the ensuing response due it.

The situation of the soul in contemplation is something like the situation of Adam and Eve in Paradise. Everything is yours, but on one infinitely important condition: that it is all given.¹⁴

For all God's gifts there must be in us a response of thanksgiving and happiness and joy: but here we thank Him less by words than by the serene happiness of silent acceptance.¹⁵

Leisure, therefore, implies a recognition of the mystery of things and their acceptance as gifts. Faced with mystery and gift one must not attempt to grab hold, to lay open, to use merely; one must rather respond with reverence, stand aside, as it were, and let things unfold themselves. Then in leisure, with its contemplative approach to everyday reality, the habitually reverent man will necessarily acquire a spirit of childlike wonder.

b. The "Spirit of Discretio"

Closely related to the attitude of leisure, perhaps even a part of it, is what Dietrich Von Hildebrand calls the "spirit of *discretio*." It is "a sense of the dramatic rhythm of being," a sense of "the law of inner development of all things, which varies according to the sphere of being," an appreciation of the fact that "everything requires its own time of inner ripening in order to be genuine and true."¹⁶ The spirit of *discretio* might be considered a willingness to let things mature, a holy patience while being unfolds.

A person lacking such a spirit can only bungle in his approach to things. In his irreverent craze for efficiently accomplishing his purposes, in his haste to "get things done," he will do violence to the nature of things and must ultimately end in failure. He will, for example, sand a varnished surface before it is dry, pick the fruit before it is ripe, jump to a conclusion before understanding the implications of a premise, set out to convert the world before he himself is grounded in the faith. In other words, not grasping the meaning of things and being totally concerned

¹Dietrich Von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (N.Y.: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 58.

²"Objects which have no purpose in the strict sense of the term have a meaning. . . Measured by the strict sense of the word, they are purposeless, but still full of meaning." Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Trans. Ada Lane. (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, reissued, 1935), p. 174.

³*Ibid.*, p. 172.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner (N.Y.: Oxford University Press, 3rd ed., 1948), p. 70.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 95. Italics are the author's.

⁸Gerald Vann, O.P., *The Heart of Man* (N.Y.: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945), pp. 9-10.

⁹Josef Pieper, *Leisure: the Basis of Culture*. Trans. Alexander Dru. (N.Y.: Pantheon Books Inc., 1952), p. 50.

with purposes, he will never give serious response to the value of being as such; the spirit of leisure will be impossible; and in his superficial, selfish, domineering approach to things he will never win their response. The most he can erect is a seemingly solid structure, but one built on sand, an unstable, shifting *Weltanschauung* at best, because he lacks the spirit of reverence.

* * * * *

Such, then, are the nature and implications of reverence, the quality which we assume as the psychological basis of unity in Francis the man. It remains for us now to see that attitude at work in Francis himself.¹⁷

Fr. Leander Blumlein, O.F.M.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 49.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 50 and 52

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³Thomas Merton, *Seeds of Contemplation* (Norfolk, Conn.: James Laughlin, 1949), p. 36.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 150.

¹⁶Dietrich Von Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-41.

¹⁷Citing a number of twentieth century authors, none of whom would be listed among "Franciscan writers," as the groundwork for understanding Francis of Assisi, and even seeing in him an exemplification of their ideas, may seem strange. One might, of course, recall the fact that these authors are simply expounding Christian principles of which Francis, as the "radical Christian," would be the embodiment. Our surest justification, however, in this procedure is the fact that some of these authors themselves refer to Francis implicitly or explicitly as an example of their concepts in action. For example, cf. Dietrich Von Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 33, 123.

THE HOLY FRIARS OF SAXONY

The early companions of Saint Francis are well known to us in the heart-warming pages of the *Little Flowers*, wherein we breathe the atmosphere of primitive Franciscanism. The Fioretti, dated about 1325, rely in turn on earlier sources, such as the *Actus beati Francisci et sociorum eius* (ed. P. Sabatier, 1902). This latter work provided likewise much of the material which an unknown member of the Franciscan Province of Saxony used about 1340 to make his own set of portraits of his older brothers in religion. Fortunately for us, he was not content with the *Actus*, nor with an even older *Catalogus Sanctorum Fratrum Minorum* (ed. L. Lemmens, O.F.M., 1903), but inserted into his work a still older document on the Holy Friars of the Province of Saxony.

This Saxonian Fioretti, which is full of delight in its own right, seems otherwise unknown. Yet from its contents and from outside sources

we may conclude that the Friars herein portrayed belonged to the first generations of the Franciscans of Germany and that the document itself belongs to the thirteenth century (the very mistakes our scribe makes shows he is but a poor copyist). Their story bears witness to the influence of the Poverello in the "persons, places and cold climates" of the North. We have translated and edited it from the Latin edition provided by Father Edwin Auweiler, O.F.M.,¹ with the help of a tentative English version which he made some years ago. Some of the footnotes rely on his edition; others are proper to this translation. Frs. Marian Douglas and Fintan Warren are responsible for most of the translation; Fr. Ignatius Brady, for revising and editing.

FRIAR JOHN OF PIANO DI CARPINE

1. The patience and labor of Friar John of Piano di Carpine

I. The virtue of steadfastness with which the Holy Spirit fortified the sons of St. Francis is most brilliantly exemplified in the lifework of Friar John of Piano di Carpine. For in the burning zeal of his spirit he traversed many regions of the world, never ceasing to preach the divine word, but striving incessantly to do good and edify men by word and example. In this way he spread the Order far and wide.

When Saint Francis sent the holy man Friar Caesar to Germany, he dispatched with him Friar John of Piano di Carpine, a preacher in both Latin and Lombardic, and Friar Barnabas the German, an able preacher in Lombardic and German. Friar Caesar then sent Friar John of Piano di Carpine and Friar Barnabas ahead to preach in Wuerzburg and then in Mainz, Worms, Speyer, Strassburg and Cologne. There they made themselves known to the people, preaching always the message of penance, and preparing a hospitable reception for the friars who were to follow.

Afterwards, through their wholesome preaching, God increased the number of friars and they obtained dwelling-places in several cities. Then all the other pioneer friars under Friar Albert of Pisa, minister of Germany and successor to Friar Caesar, gave serious thought to the condition and spread of the Order. In a chapter at Speyer, September 8, 1223, they appointed Friar John of Piano di Carpine to be the first custos of Saxony and to establish the Order there.

With Friar John the following also entered Saxony: Friars

John and William; Friar Giles the Lombard, a cleric; Friar Palmerius, a priest; Friar Raynald of Spoleto, a priest; Friar Rudiger the German, a laybrother; Friar Rokkerus, a laybrother, and Friar Benedict the German, a laybrother; Friar Titmar the Thuringian, a laybrother; and Friar Emmanuel of Verona, a tailor.

2. When they arrived at Hildesheim they were hospitably welcomed and entertained by the Lord Henry of Tosseym, provost of the Cathedral chapter. When they presented themselves thereafter to the Lord Bishop Conrad, who was a great preacher and theologian, they were accorded a splendid reception. The Bishop called together all the clergy of the city and had Friar John of Piano di Carpine (now first custos of Saxony) deliver a sermon to the gathering of clerics. When the sermon was finished the Lord Bishop warmly recommended Friar John and the friars of his Order to the clergy and the people. Moreover he gave them faculties to preach and hear confessions in his diocese. And through their preaching and their good example many people were moved to do penance and to enter the Order. One of these was Bernard of Papenburg, the son of a nobleman and canon in the Cathedral. Another was Albert, the master of the boys' school, a very learned man; also a man named Rudolph and a certain knight.

But sad to say, there was a reaction when some of the friars left the Order. The people grew cold toward the friars; they gave them alms only reluctantly and looked askance at them when they came a-begging. But just as suddenly, by the mercy of Divine Providence, the lost favor bloomed anew and the people again showed love to the friars as before.

Friar John then sought to spread his Order by sending several excellent friars to Hildesheim, Brunschweig, Goslar, Halberstadt and Magdeburg. And two years later, while Saint Francis was still living, the friars came to the coastal regions and founded a new convent at Luebeck.

II. *His laudable tenure of office and his worthy administration*

3. In the general chapter held three years after the death of our Holy Father, John of Piano di Carpine was made minister of Ger-

many.¹ Now Friar John, since he was a man of generous girth, was unable to visit all the houses on foot, and therefore rode on a donkey. The people of that time, to whom the Order was still a novelty and who saw the deep humility of the rider, were greatly moved that Friar John, following the example of Christ, would rather ride on an ass than on horseback. They showed greater devotion to his donkey than they show to the Provincials themselves now that they are used to the friars.

Friar John was also a very avid propagator of our Order. For after he had become Provincial he sent friars into Bohemia, Hungary, Poland, Denmark and Norway. He also accepted the house in Metz and established the Order in Lorraine.

Furthermore he was the dauntless champion of our Order. For without fear he stood up personally for his Order before bishops and princes. As a mother loves and cherishes her sons and a hen her chickens, Friar John fostered and guided all his brothers with the peace and charity of loving kindness.

III. *His journey to Spain and to the Tartars*

4. Friar John remained here but two years as Minister and establisher of the Order.² Realizing that the more one undergoes labor and poverty in this life, the greater will be his reward after this life in the Kingdom of Heaven, when he was sent as minister to Spain he strove to gather together a new family for the Lord in that country. For he would not "have an abiding city." Traveling from place to place he spread the Gospel after the fashion of the Apostles and gathered an abundant harvest of souls for heaven.

For fourteen years Friar John did almost superhuman work in Spain for the development of the Order and the salvation of souls. But the Lord, who makes the way of this world rough for His elect while they are journeying towards Him, through His Vicar, the Supreme Pontiff, assigned Friar John to the land of the infidels. Here he was to gain new and greater recompense in labors for the welfare of Holy Mother Church.

For, as he tells us himself in the book which he wrote, *De Moribus Tartarorum*,³ at the bidding of Innocent IV, he, together with friars of the Order of Preachers, abode and conversed with the Tar-

tars for a year and four months and even longer. With his companion and fellow-sufferer in his hardships, Friar Benedict the Pole, he was given orders by the Supreme Pontiff to investigate carefully the conditions among the Tartars. Friar John, therefore, wrote a history of everything that he saw with his own eyes among the Tartars or that he heard from trustworthy Christian captives living among them.

IV. *His preaching and his steadfastness before the Tartar rulers*

5. Now when Friar John and his companions had arrived in the fortified camp of the Tartars and were asked by them about their business, the friars bravely answered: "We are envoys of the Lord Pope who is the Father and Lord of all Christians. He sends us to the King and the princes of the Tartars and to all the Tartar people, because he wishes all Christians to be friends of the Tartars and to live with them in peace. Moreover he also desires them to be in the good graces of God in heaven and therefore through us and by his letters he urges them to become Christians and to accept the Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for otherwise they cannot be saved."

But while they were traveling through the realm of the Tartars they met their army and were conducted to Byathonoy, one of their generals. When they refused to adore him he grew angry and by an outright sentence commanded them to be executed. He was neither afraid to shed their innocent blood nor to violate the accepted international custom which everywhere allows ambassadors to come and go safe and free. But some of his counsellors spoke up to him: "Perhaps we should not kill all of them but only two, and then we will send the other two back to the Pope." Others again advised: "Let one of them, the leader, be flayed and we will stuff his skin with straw, and send it to his master via his companions." But others had this to say: "Let's kill two of them after having them beaten through the whole army; the other two we'll hold prisoners until the Westerners, who are sure to follow them, have arrived here." And others advised: "Let us take two of them and show them our whole army so that they may behold our might and multitude. Then we shall place them in front of the war-engines of our enemies

while such are at rest so that they may seem to have been killed by these engines and not by ours."

But the sentence of Byathonoy⁵ prevailed; viz., that they all should be executed because they had stubbornly refused him the required prostration and adoration. Then God, Who brings to naught the plans of the wicked, intervened on behalf of the friars. The oldest of the six wives of Byathonoy and certain men who took care of visiting ambassadors, opposed the death-sentence of the friars by every possible means. Byathonoy's wife pleaded with him: "If you kill these envoys you will incur the hatred and dislike of all who hear of your deed, and you will lose all the presents and gifts which are customarily sent to you by prominent people from various and distant regions. And in just retribution your own envoys whom you send to leading men in all directions will be killed mercilessly and destroyed." By these entreaties Byathonoy was at last brought around; his heart full of gall and turbulence was softened and calmed and, as his anger slowly subsided, he became pacified.

6. Friar John of Piano di Carpine in the sweat of his brow traveled far and wide through that region and preached the Faith even before the Emperor of the Tartars. After he had done a great deal of

F. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.

¹"De Vitis sanctorum fratrum minorum Provinciae Saxoniae," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, XVIII (1925), 211-25; XIX (1926), 46-62; 181-93.

²This is not quite correct. No chapter was held in 1229. Instead, at the Chapter of 1227, Simon of Sandwich, an Englishman, was named Minister of Germany, but was assigned the following year to be the lector or teacher of the Province; in his stead the Minister General, John Parenti, appointed John of Piano di Carpine. Comparison with the Chronicle of Friar Jordan of Giano will show that our author has taken several numbers from him.

³That is, 1228-1230. He was then sent by the General Chapter of Assisi to the Province of Spain, where again he remained but two years (and not fourteen, as our text reads above), being brought back to Germany in 1232 as the first Minister Provincial of the new Province of Saxony. He held this new office until 1239; nothing is known of his further career until 1245, when he was sent to the Tartars.

⁴Edited as *Ystoria Mongulorum* by A. van den Wyngaert, O.F.M., in *Sinica Franciscana*, tom. I (Quaracchi, 1929), pp. 27-130. There were no Dominicans assigned to this mission; our chronicler is again in error.

⁵Surprisingly enough, what follows is not so much as hinted at either in the *History of the Mongols*, which John wrote enroute, or in the report of Benedict the Pole (in *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 135-43). Nothing seems to indicate that they suffered from the Tartars. Our chronicler has, apparently, as Father Auweiler points out,

work he returned happily to the land of the faithful with his companions. But the Lord gives plentiful reward to the athletes who bravely compete in the arena of His Church Militant. And He with Whom there is abundant redemption, and Who is the exceeding great reward of His Saints, deigned to summon our Friar John from the hardships of this wicked world to the blessed repose of Eternity.⁶

borrowed from the *Speculum historiale* of the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais and ascribed to the Franciscan missionaries the troubles experienced by the Friars Preachers who went to the Tartars in 1247. This he could do in good faith, since the *Speculum* does not clearly distinguish the two missions.

⁶This chief was usually called Baicu, Batchu, etc. (see van den Wyngaert, *op. cit.*, p. 582); he was the leader of the Tartar army in Persia. Since he is not mentioned at all by John of Piano di Carpine, it is likely that the latter never met him.

⁷Our chronicler again displays his wide ignorance of Friar John's later life. On the latter's return to Innocent IV, he was sent on a mission to St. Louis IX and then, in 1247, or 1248, was made Archbishop of Antivari in Dalmatia. After some hectic years in this see, he died on August 1, 1252.

SCRIPTURE READING WITH SAINT BONAVENTURE

(Comment in Lucam, Ch. III, vv. 21-23, Opera Omnia, Tom. VII, pp. 81-84).

Now it came to pass when all the people had been baptized, Jesus also having been baptized and being in prayer, that heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased" (Lk. 3:21-23).

The ultimate purpose of the penitential preaching of John the Baptist was that Christ might be manifested to the people: *That he may be known to Israel* (Jn. I: 31). However, men would fully know the Saviour only when they had been reborn in Him through Baptism. John somehow anticipated this rebirth by his baptism, as he said: *For this reason have I come baptizing with water* (Jn. I: 31). Yet this Baptism was quite imperfect, when compared with the Baptism of Christ and the Holy Spirit. For the former was done by mere man, whereas the latter is authorized by God; the former had but temporal duration, whereas the imprinted character of the latter

endures eternally; the former was only a recommended counsel, whereas the latter is a necessary pre-requisite for entering Heaven; the baptism of John had only penitential power, whereas the Baptism of Christ with the Holy Spirit has the efficacy to make its recipient, in very truth, a child of God. John knew the imperfection of his baptism. So, even while baptizing for penance, he informed those to whom he ministered: *I indeed baptize you with water, for repentance. But he who is coming after me is mightier than I. . . He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire* (Matt. 3: 11). Hence, while fulfilling his mission of preaching and baptizing, the precursor of Christ constantly called attention to the One coming after him, the Messiah. His preaching and baptizing purposed and proposed penance for the advent of Christ and His teachings in public life. This repentance called for a complete change of heart in his hearers, so that their souls would be open, ready and waiting for the preaching and baptism of Christ. Thus, the Baptist's main work was done on that day when the unknown Christ came among them and John declared: *In the midst of you there has stood one whom you do not know* (Jn. I:26).

Here it is fitting that Saint Matthew, whose Gospel opens with the natural genealogy of Christ, should narrate for us the human course of events on that historic occasion. Thus he tells us the Good News: *Jesus came from Galilee to John, at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. And John was for hindering him, and said, "It is I who ought to be baptized by thee, and dost thou come to me?" But Jesus answered and said to him, "Let it be so now, for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice." Then he permitted him. And when Jesus had been baptized, he immediately came up from the water* (Mt. 3:13-16). Saint Bonaventure speaks of this ceremony as the spiritual regeneration of Christ. Not that Jesus was sanctified by the Baptism, but rather the Saviour conferred regenerative powers upon the very waters. Saint John Chrysostom points out: "He did not receive remission of sins, but He sanctified the waters for all others to be baptized." Moreover, when He is thus presented to us in His baptism by John as a Man, Christ is informing us as to the manner and form of serving God. For this service begins with our baptism.

Fittingly, then, this manifestation of Jesus at the Jordan shows Him in the form of a servant. Indeed, He had taken this form upon Himself when He was clothed with our human nature: *taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself* (Phillip. 2: 7). His baptism by John further reveals to us His three-fold humiliation as a Man. First, He is humiliated in His assumed human nature as a servant *before all the people*. This is evident from our first text, which tells us: *Now it came to pass when all the people had been baptized, Jesus also having been baptized* (v. 21). Lest we should underestimate the multitude witnessing His service of humiliation, the Gospel tells us of the great crowd coming to John: *Then there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan; and they were baptized by him in the Jordan* (Matt. 3: 6). Truly, many people were present to see the public humiliation of Christ in the form of a servant.

Secondly, his humiliation was increased with respect to the minister baptizing. For it was an awesome humility whereby the Lord submitted to the ministration of John: *Jesus also having been baptized* (v. 21). The Baptist realized this, saying: *"It is I who ought to be baptized by thee, and dost thou come to me?"* (Mtt. 3: 14). The answer of Christ gave His purpose: *"Let it be so now, for so it becomes us to fulfill all justice"* (Mtt. 3: 15). The Seraphic Doctor remarks that His example was for our instruction, because this fulfillment of all justice exemplified perfect humility which subjects itself not only to superiors and equals but even to inferiors. Rich rewards await the soul who deeply meditates upon that submissive service of Christ, humbly receiving the baptism of John. And we should also notice that Jesus first acted, before He began preaching. *Jesus began to do and to teach* (Acts I: 1).

Thirdly, the humiliation of Christ was undertaken with respect to God hearing Him. So it is fitting that the Gospel recounts His prayerful attitude: *being in prayer* (v. 21). Hereby He fulfilled the words inspired by the Holy Spirit: *Be subject to the Lord and pray to him* (Ps. 36, 7). Once more, too, His prayer is an example for us. The Old Testament had admonished: *Let nothing hinder thee from*

praying always (Eccl. 18:22). Christ first did this, so that He could later advise us: *Pray always and do not lose heart* (Lk. 18: 1). And He carried out His counsel, because He prayed not only at baptism but throughout this life—in solitude, before preaching, when working miracles, while dispensing Sacraments and even in His passion, consummated by the prayerful offering of His Spirit to His Father. And His Father listened to His prayers: *For Jesus, in the days of his earthly life, offered up prayers and supplications to God and was heard because of his reverent submission* (Heb. 5: 7). If we follow humbly His submissive service to God and prayerfully commit our cause to the Divine Will, we should have every hope and confidence of being heard by our Father.

After His humiliation, there came His glorification by the Triune God. The Holy Trinity clearly identified Him as the Saviour of mankind. For the testimony of the three Divine Persons bore witness to Jesus as the Son of God Incarnate. This revelation manifests Christ as more than the Man Who was humiliated by baptism. He is, in one and the same Person, the Eternal Word. To this fact, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity Himself testified when the *heaven was opened* (v. 22). The Seraphic Doctor remarks that this text means first that a great heavenly light appeared. This is in accord with the words of the Son of God about Himself: *"I am the light of the world"* (Jn. 8:12). Likewise, Saint Paul reminds us: *God. . . has spoken to us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory and the image of his substance* (Heb. 1: 1-3). For us, this apparition of the Word of God signifies the power of the baptism of Christ. This Sacrament opens the gates of heaven to welcome home those spiritually reborn. Therefore, the Scripture saying that *heaven was opened* (v. 22) has the deep signification that our loss in Adam has been repaired through the second Adam, Jesus Christ. For, by His Redemption, Christ resurrects us through baptism from death in the tomb of sin to the glorified life of grace.

Secondly, besides the Light of the Son, there appeared the Dove, symbolizing the Third Person of the most Holy Trinity: *And the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form as a dove* (v. 22). When this happened, John was assured that here was the Christ.

For God had told John: "*He upon whom thou wilt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, he is who baptizes with the Holy Spirit* (Jn. I: 33). After the flood, the sign of peace returning to the submerged world was brought by the dove: *and she came to him in the evening, carrying a bough of an olive tree* (Gen. 8: 11). Most fitting, then, is the symbol of the dove, denoting the Holy Spirit's baptism with the saving waters of grace. Indeed, it is like an outward reassurance of lost innocence being inwardly restored with peace to the soul.

Finally, after the *Light* of the Son and the *Dove* of the Holy Spirit, there was heard the *Voice* of the Father: *And a voice came from heaven* (v. 22). This fatherly Voice had been heard in the Old Testament: *The voice of the Lord is upon the waters* (Ps. 28: 3). Our faith tells us that, through the words from the mouth of the priest at baptism, the *voice of the Lord is upon the waters*. As a consequence, we are bound to believe that by our baptism in Christ we are spiritually re-conceived. This rebirth means that we have been raised from death in sin to share a new and divine life in Jesus Christ. Moreover, the baptismal sign of the cross over us connotes that we now belong to the Triune God: "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." We are thus signed over as the exclusive property of God. "In the Name" signifies the Unity of the God possessing us: *One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all* (Eph. 4: 5). Therefore, our new and spiritual conception makes us heirs and true sons of the one and only Lord, our God. From this conviction, we can realize how our baptismal rebirth in Christ enhances the nobility of our soul. We are baptized in the "Name of the Father," for by baptism we become children of the King of kings, God the Father. What a marvelous dignity! This thought has an inspiring, as well as a frightening, aspect, because if we are faithful to that noble, eternal imprint upon our soul, our baptism in Christ will lead us to our Father's house; but if we besmirch it by final impenitence, we will lock ourselves forever out of our heavenly home. Further, our Baptism regenerated us as brothers of Christ, so much so that, even as God spoke to His Son in the proper sense, now too He has spoken to each of us in an applied sense: "*Thou art my beloved son*" (v. 22). Thus

we are also baptized in "the Name of the Son." Baptism thus gives us a genuine birthright, as true children of God, with His Divine Son, Jesus Christ, as our Brother. But this wonderful inheritance brings with it a tremendous responsibility. The very word "responsible" means to be capable of giving an answer. In effect, we are actually answerable for every thought, word, and action. This would be indeed terrifying, were we not convinced that divine help is given to us.

Hence now for our comfort and consolation, we notice that we are also baptized in "the Name of the Holy Ghost," assuring us of all the help that we need. Having regained our innocence, if we are to keep a stainless soul unto eternal life, we must constantly implore the aid of the Holy Spirit. Baptism in Christ brought the fulness of the Holy Spirit's grace into our souls. So that, even as our rebirth made us children of the Father and brothers of the Son, likewise our spiritual re-conception espouses us to God through the Holy Spirit. We are united to our Divine Spouse by the Charity of God, lovingly poured forth into our souls. While, with the help of the other Sacraments, we remain in the state of sanctifying grace, we can also be convinced that the most Holy Trinity dwells within us. Speaking to Saint Jude, Jesus also reminded us: "*If anyone love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him* (Jn. 14: 23). Thus we can see that by keeping the word and law of God, we insure the presence of the Holy Trinity within us. Our baptism in Christ enables us to enjoy this most priceless and most lovable Divine Presence.

Yet Christ would counsel us to do more than fulfill the mere requirements of the Divine Law. He was constrained to please His Father in all things. His Father testified to this: "*Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased* (v. 22). Beyond our own obligation to strive for perfection, should not our zeal prompt us to please God in all things? A Saint of our own times, Therese of the Child Jesus, was inspired to try this. Late in her short life she could claim that from her earliest years she had endeavoured never to refuse God anything. Though we can hardly claim as much, can we excuse ourselves from making that effort? Like her, we may have no chance for great deeds, but the perfecting of the little tasks lies

within our reach. A devout morning offering will prepare us daily to sanctify every action. A thoughtful sign of the cross will remind us of our baptismal vows to the most Holy Trinity. A conscious effort will enable us to keep a spirit similar to that of Christ at His Baptism and throughout His life who said: *I do always the things pleasing to Him* (Jn. 8: 29). In this way, even on earth, we will prepare for that eternal praise: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost."

Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.

Rev. William Joseph Manning, T.O.F. R. I. P.

The readers of THE CORD who were so appreciative of Father William Manning's series of meditations on the Franciscan Crown will be saddened to learn of his untimely death December 30, 1955. Father Manning died of a heart attack at Newburgh, N.Y., while en route to Boston for a brief visit.

Father Manning, an alumnus of Boston College, served in the U.S. Army during World War II, and upon separation from the service entered Saint John's Seminary. He completed his theological studies for the priesthood at Christ the King Seminary, and was awarded an M.A. degree from Saint Bonaventure University. Ordained last February with the class of 1955, Father Manning was assigned to Saint Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Bismarck, North Dakota, where, besides teaching at the cathedral high school, he was named editor of THE DAKOTA CATHOLIC ACTION. The sudden death of so gifted and zealous a priest is felt as a heavy loss to the diocese.

Father Manning was buried from Saint Mary's Church, Cambridge, the family parish on Tuesday, January 3, 1956. He was but 29 years of age, and had been a priest less than a year.

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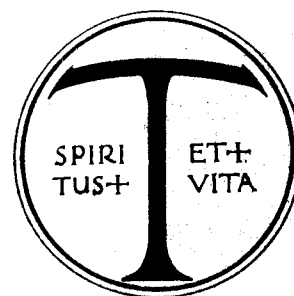
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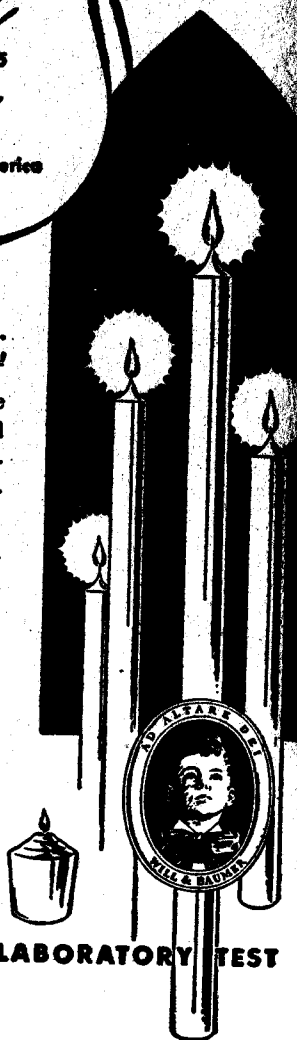
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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

OUR DESTINY AS RELIGIOUS I

Developing the theme that *God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:16), we discovered our destiny first as human beings, then as children of God. It remains to recall our role as religious, for the religious state represents a special way of striving for perfection, which is perfect Christian love. As defined by Canon Law (Can. 487) it includes two distinct, though related elements, the first and most important of which is the consecration of our person to God through the triple vows of religion; the other is the acceptance of a stable form of community life through profession of obedience to the rule of some approved religious institute. Together they represent a state where one may fulfill in a unique manner the two great commandments: *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). For the present we shall consider the religious as a person consecrated to God, leaving for a subsequent conference the religious as a community member.

By giving us a spiritual soul with its power of unselfish love, God framed us in His image. If we exercise this divine side of our nature, we begin to live and mature spiritually, mirroring in our persons something of the inner give and take that is the very life of the Trinity, thus preparing ourselves for that day of final adoption when as children of the Father (Eph. 1:5), and *coheirs* of His divine Son (Rom. 8:17), we enter our heavenly home, transformed into *new creatures* (2 Cor. 5:17) without blemish of selfishness through the permanent indwelling of the Spirit of Love.

1

From what has been said, we might think man's likeness to this God of love is limited exclusively to man's mind and will. In reality it extends deeper, penetrating even to the difference of the sexes. For if Scripture says *God created man in his image*, it adds immediately, *male and female he created them* (Gen. 1:27). "In producing Adam and Eve," Cornelius a. Lapidus goes on to explain, "God willed to imitate His own eternal generation and emanation. From all eternity He generated the Son and..."

breathed forth the Holy Spirit, so now in time He produced Adam in His own image, generating him even as a son, and out of him producing Eve, who was to be the love of Adam, even as the Holy Spirit is the Love of God" (*Commentaria in Pentateuchum Moysis*, c. 3).

It is not surprising that the sex differences go deeper than the body and express also a quality of soul. For not only do men and women walk or talk differently; they also feel and think differently. Psychologically as well as physiologically these diversities, generally speaking, are of a complementary nature. Man's capacity for theory for instance is counterbalanced by woman's practical sense. Corresponding to the masculine comprehensive viewpoint is the feminine gift for detail. Man's devotion to abstract ideal is countered by woman's concrete concern with individuals. In the male, ambition and self-assertion predominate; in the female, it is the spirit of sacrifice and self-surrender.

These distinctions are symbolized somehow in the Scriptural story of Eve's creation. As Hugh of St. Victor expressed it, Eve was formed from Adam to indicate human nature is basically one; but not from his head, for she was never meant to rule, nor from flesh of his foot for she was not to be his slave. She was taken from his side, for she was to be his cherished companion and helper (*De sacramentis*, 1. 6, 34-35). Call it the poetic touch, if you will, but God fashioned woman from a bit of living tissue close to the heart of man. He stole something seemingly from man's heart, leaving him less sensitive, more aggressive, better able to bear the brunt of hard knocks and stiff competition he would meet in the world. But what man lost, woman gained. Hers was the greater power to love, to sympathize, to understand. Hers was a strange strength, unlike that of man's, the stuff of which great sacrifices are born.

In truth we might almost say that in creating sex, God cut human nature in two, which after all is the etymological meaning of the word, for sex is derived from *secare*, to divide or cut in two. And that each might have something to give and receive from the other, that through their mutual love and service in this life, God put human nature back together again, thus preparing some day for heaven where *there is neither male nor female, for we are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3: 28).

Each of the sexes has its characteristic virtues and defects, its strong and weak points. Through mutual association each acquires something of the strength of the other, for the perfect masculine personality, psychologists tell us, is not purely masculine, nor is the ideal feminine personality purely feminine. And while this tempering of each personality with something of the best of the opposite sex begins already in one's childhood home, it is usually brought to completion only in the married state. For it is not only children that develop and mature in the bosom of the family. Marriage is also a school for parents, and the marital state becomes the ordinary God-given means for developing a healthy and mature personality through progressive growth in unselfish love.

Because of the profound effect marriage can have on human personality, some make the mistake of believing it superior to the virginal or celibate state enjoined on religious. And to correct this fallacy our Holy Father Pius XII issued the encyclical on *Holy Virginity*.

Every great error, however, is a guess at a great truth. And the truth in the present case seems to be this. If one has never loved with an ardent, soul-consuming fervor, he has missed one of life's most rewarding experiences. One who has never been subjected to the wonderful maturing effect of a deep and all-absorbing love, is less a man or woman for it. In this sense it may be truly said, it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.

Normally such a complete and soul-fusing ardor must needs be concentrated or centered on a single individual or person. For unlike God's altruistic love, man's capacity for affection is finite. As the sociologist expresses it, the intensity and extensity of human love are inversely related (P. A. Sorokin, *Explorations in Altruistic Love and Behavior*, Boston, 1950, p. 33). The more individuals man loves, the less intense his love for any one of them, so that practically speaking, while he may grow to love more and more people, or his love for any one person can continue to increase, only one being can be loved above all others. It was in this sense that Montaigne could write: "That perfect friendship of which I speak is indivisible: each one gives himself so wholly to his friend that there remains to him nothing to divide with another; on the contrary, he grieves that he is not double, triple, or fourfold, and that he has not several souls and

several wills, to confer them all on the object of his love" (*Essays*, I, ch. 28).

Ordinarily it is through conjugal love that the human heart finds it easiest to give itself so completely to another individual. Only one who has tasted something of such love can comprehend Adam's wonder as he looked on Eve: *She now is bone of my bone; and flesh of my flesh. . . for this reason a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife and the two become one flesh* (Gen. 2: 23-24). Only one who has felt such affection can fully appreciate what Scripture says of Jacob: *He served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her* (Gen. 29:20). Which is why a contemporary theologian could write of earthly paradise before the fall: "In a certain profounder sense, it is woman herself who is the intended paradise of man; she is herself the 'substance' of paradise" (J. Trinck, "The Structure of Christian Paradise" in *Bijdragen* 16 (1955), 386). And the same might be said of woman, for as God told Eve: *Your husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over you* (Gen. 3: 16).

Yet where writers go astray in lauding marriage at the expense of virginity is in forgetting that both conjugal and parental love in the supernatural order are but a means of preparing us to share our lives with the divine Persons themselves. And despite all marriage does for man it leaves his heart divided. Paul put the matter in a nutshell when he wrote: *He who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please God. Whereas he who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife and he is divided. And the unmarried woman, and the virgin, thinks about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and in spirit. Whereas she who is married thinks about the things of the world, how she may please her husband* (I Cor. 7: 32-4). And in the real, everyday world about us, how many a woman has bartered her soul for the security of an earthly home and the love of a man. Neither is it only in Puccini's opera that we hear above the wailing and lament of the *Te Deum* the anguished voice of Scarpia, "Tosca, mi dimenticare Iddio" (Tosca, you make me forget God!).

But where God is not forgotten, but is instead the end and beginning of a man's existence, even the most sacred human ties must recede to the background. Anyone who can utter Francis' prayer with

Francis' fervor, *Deus meus et omnia*, will not find celibacy or virginity unnatural or strange, but rather the most obvious thing in the world for one who has fallen very deeply in love with God.

That is why, historically speaking, the practice of perpetual continence became the first expression of the ascetical life, and indeed the most widely observed form of Christian asceticism in the early days of the Church. At first such "religious" lived in the world with their relatives, sharing the common life of the Christian community. Only towards the close of the third and beginning of the fourth century did these ascetics and virgins withdraw to the solitude of the desert or band together into communities lest their spiritual life suffer from excessive contact with the world. And thus gradually the religious community life as we know it today was born.

The vow of chastity, then, is far more fundamental to the religious life than is commonly believed. And even from an ascetical point of view, its implications are not always appreciated. For in eschewing the personality development that normally comes through marriage and human parenthood, the religious denies himself one of the most precious and ennobling of all purely human experiences. And that is why, as we have indicated elsewhere, "religious through their vow of chastity surrender something infinitely more precious than the so-called pleasures of the flesh. They offer to 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*" (*Book of Life*, p. 40). This sacrifice, then, was never meant to have the character of a burnt-offering, as we shall see upon a little reflection.

Sacrifice is not fundamentally something negative, but positive. It implies not merely an alienation from self but a giving to God. And as Lydwine van Kersbergen points out, from a positive aspect, virginity in essence is the consecration of a person to God. It is not enough to set apart or "make sacred" places, times, or material things. It is also fitting to consecrate the person as well, for God's "claim on our very selves is likewise absolute. To manifest this truth, God desires that a few, the first fruits, should be set apart from the rest of mankind as belonging totally, manifestly to Himself" (*Woman's Role in the Vocation of Virginity, Worship* 29 (1955), 242). In

One might go further and ask whether such is not perhaps the perfect of personal sacrifices. For in every other instance a sacrificial gift or victim is a substitute for self. In this consecration, we give God the reality, not a substitute. And if the gift of oneself is of the essence of perfect love, then we can understand why such a sacrifice, if it be genuine, can never be a destructive holocaust. Perfect love of God in the end can never lead to self-destruction but rather to the perfect fulfillment of personality. Only someone who is a person can give himself freely to God in the perfection of love. To give oneself freely is to assert what it means to be a person. And the most perfect assertion of personality a creature can make is to return to the Creator what even God Himself cannot take from us by force, the free gift of oneself.

II

To vow virginity, then, in a very real sense is an assertion of the supreme value of the individual person. For woman, especially, this has profound consequence, and becomes the fundamental expression of her "emancipation" in a true and Christian sense. For this reason, Gertrude von le Fort might well say, it is through her consecrated virgins that womanhood proclaims the absolute value of a person. Indeed, in the orient and pagan countries where virginity as a state of life is unknown, woman's sole value is to be a medium of pleasure to man and to be the bearer of his children. The virgin on the contrary is a living object lesson, a perpetual protestation against the idea of evaluating woman in particular and any human person in general solely in terms of their contribution to a family, a state, or a country. Each person has an absolute value in the eyes of God. "Like the solitary flower of the mountains, far up at the fringe of the eternal snows, that has never been looked upon by the eye of man; like the unapproachable beauty of the poles and the deserts of the earth, that remain forever useless for the service and purposes of man, the virgin proclaims that the creature has significance, merely as a glow from the eternal radiance of the Creator. The virgin stands at the margin of the mysteries of all that is apparently wasted and unfulfilled. Like those who have died in early youth and have not lived to unfold their glorious gifts, she stands at the brink of all that has seemingly failed. Her inviolateness, which, if it be purity, always includes a depth of pain, denotes the sacrifice that is the price

for insight into the immortal value of a person. This explains why the liturgy always places the virgin beside the martyr, who bears witness to the absolute value of the soul" (G. von le Fort, *The Eternal Woman*, Bruce, 1954, p. 22-3).

This kinship of the virgin with the martyr can, of course be overemphasized. There is an element of truth in what Van Kerbergen says when she writes: "Dedication in virginity implies a dying, a mystical slaying of self, a holocaust consumed by the fires of love" (*art. cit.* p. 248). And even the pagans grasped something of this profound truth, for their legends abound with accounts of how the anger of the gods can be appeased only by the sacrifice of a pure virgin.

Yet it would be a serious mistake to think that God intended this holocaust to leave the victim's soul a twisted, warped, or frustrated personality. Such might indeed result if the virgin viewed only what she has given up by her vow rather than what she has gained.

Of the triple renunciation she makes, that of carnal pleasure, affective development through conjugal love, and motherhood, the first is of relatively minor moment. Far more important for her emotional maturity and personality development are the latter two. In this sense Gertrude von le Fort could write: "The unmarried state and childlessness are really a profound tragedy. Both to marriage and to children, woman is spiritually and physically more intimately disposed than man, and to be deprived of them can lead her to regard her own existence as utterly futile" (*op. cit.* p. 25). To reach the fulness of womanhood, one must love and become a mother. But the religious life, insofar as it entails the union of the consecrated virgin to Christ achieves this goal in a special and supernatural manner.

For by her vow of chastity the virgin becomes in truth the bride of Christ. "The deepest reason and in the last analysis the only reason why a woman prefers consecrated virginity to human union, pure and holy though it may be, is because in virginity Christ will be her husband" (*Sponsa Christi*). It is not surprising then that the elaborate ritual of the Roman Church for the Consecration of Virgins as found in *Pontificale Romanum* represents a deliberate attempt of the liturgists to imitate the Christian wedding ceremony (Cf. Rene Metz, *La consecration des Vierges dans l'Eglise Romaine*, Paris, 1954). Neither does the Church hesitate to "exhort virgins to

love their Divine Spouse more ardently than they would love a husband had they married" (*Sacra virginitas*). As God once said to Eve so can He say to the religious bride of the New Adam: *Your husband shall be your longing, though he have dominion over you* (Gen 3:16). Far from blighting her affective development, then, her consecration provides her a divine partner as the perfect object for her love. If Christ asks for pure and detached hearts, He does not want dried up ones. As we know from His revelations to such saints as St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the Sacred Heart wishes to be loved with all the ardor and affection of which a woman's heart is capable.

Men have sometimes looked askance at what they consider to be the daring imagery of the nuptial theme. And in the historical development of liturgical rite of the Consecration of Virgins of the *Pontificale Romanum* we see evidence of deliberate but unsuccessful attempts to suppress or at least minimize this bridal relationship to Christ. Behind this criticism is a failure to comprehend the difference between the masculine and feminine temperament. As the French psychologist Gustave Thibon points out: "The polar opposition between sense and spirit is much less marked with woman than man; the 'sublimation-point' of the sensibility consequently is lower for the feminine character. To become integrated in spiritual love, the vibrations of woman's sensibility need not be decanted with the rigor as those of masculine passion. In studying the feminine character a certain danger of illusion exists for men. One should not forget that if the mind of woman is less detached than man's from the bonds of flesh and blood, her instincts on the other hand are closer than his to the things of the soul. Men are often prone to judge severely certain feminine states in which sensibility and spiritual love seem to be altogether too close, for the simple reason that the same proximity in a masculine soul could be no other than an inverse transposition. Naturally, this does not mean that women are themselves exempt from illusion; quite the contrary—the suprasensory tonality of their instincts predisposes them to illusion. We have merely wished to show that certain 'osmoses', very pure in themselves, between the instincts and ideals in a woman, run the risk of being interpreted negatively when submitted to criteria borrowed solely from masculine experience. Let us add to this that woman possesses an instinct unknown to man: the maternal instinct—and that manifestations of this, more or less transposed, are often

attributed by man to sexuality" (*Ce que Dieu a uni*, Lyons, 1947, pp. 72-73).

Conjugal love for a woman is not primarily a thing of the flesh but an affair of the heart, and for that reason it has always been easier, and in a sense, natural for a woman to sublimate and transform the affections she would have for a husband in marriage to the person of Christ. That is why the Little Flower, in whom the affective side of the feminine temperament found such a perfect spiritual expression, had but one aspiration: "To be your bride, my Jesus; to be through union with you a mother of souls!" That affectionate attachment to Christ is not the purely emotional thing it may seem to a man is clear from the heroic sacrifices it has evoked in the saints. "What seems good in His eyes," exclaims St. Theresa of Avila, "seems good in mine. What he wills, I will. I know not where this wondrous delight will end."

This sacrifice of her personality, far from leaving the consecrated virgin an emotionally starved or frustrated individual whose finest feminine instincts have become withered and dried, should rather lead to her perfect union and transformation in Christ. As Leon Bloy observed with profound spiritual insight: "The more saintly a woman becomes, the more she grows to be a woman."

III

As we have pointed out elsewhere, "For a man, the analogy of the vow of chastity as a spiritual marriage is not so fitting." For one thing, "marriage itself does not have the profound physiological, psychological, or spiritual effects for a man as it does for a woman" (*Book of Life*, p. 41). For another, as psychologists have long been aware, the very way in which men and women love each other is as different as the difference of sex itself. "If man is more elevated than woman as to his mind," declares Thibon, "he is lower as to his flesh. To love a woman he has to descend from his mind but fails to come to a halt in that intermediary zone of the heart in which a woman dwells" (*op. cit.*, p. 153).

It is ordinarily true that the greatest attachment to another individual his own age a man experiences is towards the woman he has asked to share his life. There are rare cases, however, where he feels towards a man his own age a love which is deeper and surpasses in tenderness even the affectionate attachment he may have for

his own wife, yet possesses none of the sexual overtones of the latter. Such a love Scripture records of David and Jonathan. When he learned of the latter's death, the young king, racked with grief, exclaimed: *My brother, Jonathan, exceedingly beautiful and amiable to me above the love of women. As the mother loveth her only son, so did I love thee* (2 Kings, 1, 27). Such a friendship between two mature and even elderly men is exceedingly rare. As Montaigne, who has given the classical description of it in his essay *On Friendship*, declared, it is fortunate to happen once every three hundred years. This truly asexual love transcends any other form of attachment of which the heart of man is capable. "In the friendship of which I speak our souls blended and melted so entirely that there was no sign any longer of the seam which join them," he declares. "They regarded each other with so ardent an affection and with a similar love saw into the very depths of each other's hearts, that not only did I know his heart as well as my own, but I should certainly have trusted him in any matter concerning myself sooner than myself." And because two such souls "have everything in common between them, they are but one soul in two bodies" (*Essays*, I, ch. 28).

It was to this same rare union with Himself that Christ invited His apostles when He reminded them *I have called you friends* (Jn. 15, 15). That this was no ordinary or common friendship, is clear from the conditions it entailed. It implied selling every worldly possession they might have and distributing the money to the poor, it meant leaving not only father and mother but also renouncing any conjugal or parental ties: *If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple* (Lk. 14: 26). It included perfect obedience to His will: *You are my friends if you do the things I command you* (Jn. 15:14). In short, the requirements for this daily living with Christ, working with Him at His Father's business, enjoying the intimate presence of His Person, are the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Every man who for love of Christ has embraced the religious life, is invited to share this rare friendship with the Son of God. Well might the apostles, and in particular the chaste John, have said with Montaigne "These are delights which are not to be imagined by one who has not tasted them." And they too would have understood why

he said: "When I compare all the rest of my life, although by the grace of God it has been spent in ease and comfort, with the four years which were granted me to enjoy the sweet companionship and society of that man, it is all smoke, a dark and wearisome night" (*op. cit.*)

The religious state, in short, in so far as it represents a personal consecration or dedication to God, is primarily a union with Christ. As the complete gift of oneself, such a sacrifice represents the epitome of perfect love. And while psychologically speaking, it is difficult, if not impossible, to love a *God whom he does not see* (1 Jn. 4:20), *in this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him* (ibid. 9). It is here the profound wisdom of Francis' Christo-centrism becomes apparent. Some indeed have criticized it, declaring that our spiritual life should be God-centered primarily rather than Christ-centered. Yet humanly speaking, it becomes impossible, particularly for the feminine temperament, to love with the full affection of which the human heart is capable an abstract, spiritual deity we can neither picture nor imagine. Neither did God in His providence intend such to be the case, for as Christ tells us bluntly: *No one comes to the Father but through me*. And when Philip in his enthusiasm went on to exclaim: *Lord, show us the Father and it is enough for us*, Christ with a kind of divine impatience at his lack of comprehension, replied: *How canst thou say, 'Show us the Father? Doest thou not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me . . . He who sees me sees also the Father* (Jn. 14: 6-9).

If the end-all and be-all of our existence in the present dispensation is to share someday with the Trinity of Persons their inner life of love, then we can understand the supreme wisdom of the religious who, already in this life, unites himself to Christ in love. For a woman, of whom it has been said with some measure of truth, love and marriage is the whole of her existence, this loving association and dedication to Christ can be most fittingly expressed through the bridal theme. Perhaps for that reason one may suspect that the vow of chastity in its positive aspects at least may be from a woman's viewpoint the most basic element in the triple vow of religion. "Obedience," as we have noted elsewhere, "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 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" (*Book of Life*, p. 40).

Despite the sacrifices such a relation entails, she does not become less a woman, for "as her love for Christ ripens, new insights are opened for the bride of Christ. In His love she discovers a sense of her own worth, in His providence she finds that security which 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" (*ibid.*).

For man, to whom marriage is never the whole of his life and his interest, and for whom conjugal love is often more a matter of the sense than of the heart, this attachment to Christ takes on rather the character of that rare friendship that existed between David and Jonathan, a love that is *above the love of women*. And while, as Maitaigne acutely observes, this has nothing of a sexual character as we ordinarily understand the term, yet it leads to a fusion of soul that is deeper and more lasting, if less ardent and ephemeral, than that usually attained by a man in conjugal love. Such an affection comes closest to that experienced by the bride of Christ. And perhaps it is not without its significance that the Sacred Heart gave to St. Margaret Mary as a model of the ardent love He expected of His religious bride, none other than our Seraphic Father Francis. In his pure yet passionate love for Christ, we have something of the finest and noblest emotions of which the masculine heart is capable.

And because this intimate friendship of a man with Christ is conditioned by perfect submission of will: *You are my friends if you do the things I command you* (Jn. 15: 14), the vow of obedience becomes of primary importance. As Francis put it "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 loses all he possesses and loses his body and his soul who abandons

himself wholly to obedience in the hands of his superior" (*Admon.* n. 3). And because poverty is the patrimony of Christ, this vow makes it possible to share Christ's company. When the Scribe full of love for Jesus exclaimed: *Master, I will follow thee wherever thou goest*, Jesus said to him: *The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head* (Mt. 8:19-20). And even though renunciation of the married state and parenthood may not have the same significance for man as for a woman, in a sense too man by his vow of chastity sacrifices the normal natural way of maturing his own personality.

"Nevertheless," as we have said, "the more perfectly he *puts on Christ*, the more he acquires that sense of responsibility that respect for womanhood and motherhood, that fatherly solicitude for his spiritual charges that Christ instilled step by step into His own apostles. For we know how the Saviour turned the *Sons of thunder* into the greatest of the apostles, how He rebuked them for being brusque and inconsiderate of the women who brought their little ones to Him, 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* (2 Cor. 1:8), he too will discover that Christ has not left him an orphan. Through that other self that is being formed within him, he will find that encouragement and inspiration which 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" (*ibid.* p. 41). "For who, more than the virgin," His Holiness says pointedly, "can apply to himself that marvelous phrase of the Apostle Paul: *I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me.*" (*Sacra Virginitas*).

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.

SCRIPTURE READING WITH SAINT BONAVENTURE

Now there were standing by the cross of Jesus his mother and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. 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." And from that hour the disciple took her into his home. After this Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst." Now there was standing there a vessel full of common wine; and having put a sponge soaked with the wine on a stalk of hyssop, they put it to his mouth. Therefore, when Jesus had taken the wine, he said, "It is consummated!" And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit (Jn. 19: 25-30).

With the Seraphic Doctor, we cannot help but notice the fewness of those actually compassionating the suffering Saviour (v. 25). For, of all those who had been dear to Him, only His Mother Mary, the holy women, and Saint John remained to suffer with Him. Through them was fulfilled that saying of the Psalmist: *My friends and my neighbors have drawn near* (Ps. 37: 12). Therefore, by their bodily presence, they offered Him the outward evidence of inward compassion; whereas, His other friends, by staying away, failed to commiserate Him in sorrow: *And they that were near me stood afar* (ibid.). Looking over our own past lives, must we not admit that we have usually resembled those who *stood afar off*? In retrospect, have we not too often asked for human help, instead of turning to Him with Whom we should share our sufferings? Can we not recall those many moments—seven times daily, and more—when we not only spurned our part of His cross but even joined His tormentors by our misdeeds? Even when apparently faithful, does not our recollection remind us that our almost unholy and indifferent attitude has kept us also aloof and distant from a positive partaking in His Passion? For example, routine reception of the Sacraments, half-hearted proffering of prayers, and a grumbling (if not unwilling!) bearing of our daily crosses? All of these and many other things may have withheld us from our place on Calvary with Christ. Admitting our past departure from His cross, how can we amend and resume our stand of compassionate suffering with Him? To enable us to

participate in His Passion, Christ Himself has made the first overture. For, like a ray of hope through the dark desolation apart from Him, the voice of Jesus pleaded for us: *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing* (Lk. 23:34). When we realize that the voice of Christ was—and is—truly interceding for us, our change of mind, heart, and action should be immediate, transporting us promptly to the foot of the cross. Our prime purpose should be to know what He would have us do; and, like Saint Paul, we ought to strive to do it, saying: *I rejoice now in the sufferings I bear. . . ; and what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body, which is the Church* (Col. I: 24).

Upon taking our stand near the Crucified Christ, we may discover that our past has also likened us to Dismas at His side. Indeed, have we not often stolen the use of time, talents, and tasks, sinfully appropriating them for ourselves, whereas in reality they belonged to God directly or through His representatives exacting our obedient use of them? Worse still, acting like the thief who thinks himself unseen, have we not also buried that talent—belonging to God—in the dirt of sloth, idleness, and downright laziness? If so, coming to our senses, may we join Dismas in rebuking those who would have us continue in our thievery and cowardice. While suffering like the repentant thief, let us admit our guilt and its just deserts, as we proclaim the innocence of Jesus: *For we are receiving what our deeds deserved: but this man has done nothing wrong* (Lk. 23:41). Avoiding the action of the unrepentant robber, may our conversion prompt us to beg Christ: *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom* (ibid. v. 42). In answer, although our possession of heavenly happiness may be delayed, we can be assured that we have become actually suffering members of Christ's Mystical Body, so that even now, in the City of God on earth, we can build up a suburb of His Heavenly Kingdom. Our present garden of Paradise is the Catholic Church's sacramental life of grace. It is like a foretaste of Heaven promised by Christ to every sincere suppliant: *Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise* (ibid. v. 43).

Now we can see that with Mary, John, the holy women, and Dismas, we do indeed have a place in compassionating the suffering Saviour. But, apparently, Jesus wanted to draw us into still more intimate union with His Passion. Therefore, through John, He

asked Mary to watch over us and to bring us closer to Him: *Woman, behold thy son* (v. 26). Here also, He reminded us implicitly that He was still reverently honoring His Mother. For Saint John Chrysostom said that His looking upon (v. 25) and speaking to (v. 26) His Mother meant that He was giving Mary filial respect even to His last breath. His Father had said: *Honor thy father and thy mother* (Exodus 20: 12). Jesus showed Mary this honor till the end of His life. As Saint Bonaventure remarks: "What He had commanded, that He fulfilled." Moreover, what He has done, He also expects us to do. For that reason, in the person of John, He spoke to everyone of us: *Behold thy mother* (v. 27).

Taking our place beside the Crucified Christ with our daily cross, then, let us try to fulfill all things as God and His Mother want us to perform them. Our crucifixion will liken us to *Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished* (v. 28). Our fidelity to the will of God will help us not only to make satisfaction with Christ for personal sins, but it will enable us to possess the satisfaction of compassionating Him in His world-wide Crucifixion. Moreover, this sharing in His suffering will increase our desire to bear something with Him for poor sinners. This was the deep meaning behind Saint Francis' incessant yearning "to live not for himself alone, but also to benefit others." In its sublime significance, this dictum finds fulfillment in our own lives, when our longing to participate in the Passion of Jesus prompts us to give voice to our desire to suffer with Him for the salvation of souls: *I thirst* (v. 29). This cry of Christ was first a reminder that the Eternal Word had truly assumed human nature. From His words, those heretics who have held that He did not suffer as man are confuted. But, more than His physical want and suffering, the fulfillment of the Scripture through His Redemption relieved His spiritual thirst for the salvation of souls. For, only when He had made satisfaction to His Father's Will, would Jesus be satisfied. Saint Bonaventure says that putting the wine-soaked sponge to His mouth (v. 29) meant that Christ was actually asserting that all things had been finished satisfactorily, as He had foretold: *Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that have been written through the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished* (Lk. 18: 31). Thus, the obedient perfection of His Passion is the reason why His Redemption can

apply to all men: *When perfected, he became to all who obey him the cause of eternal salvation* (Heb. 5: 9).

Finally, although condemned, scourged, and crucified by others, He freely consummated the redemptive act of His Passion. In the Garden of Gethsemani He had submitted His will to the will of His Father. After so doing, He then went willingly to passion and death, as His Father had commanded. Christ had previously foretold that He would suffer willingly and die freely: *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down myself. I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. Such is the command I have received from my Father* (Jn. 10: 17f). So it was that having fulfilled all things according to the Divine Will, Jesus said: *It is consummated! And bowing his head, he gave up his spirit* (v. 30). With a sublime and submissive self-control, He thus perfected the work of our Redemption. Again, in this, He remained our Exemplar. Like Him, our share in His Redemption, through Mary, can only be finished by our free will in graceful accord with the Will of God. We will recognize our striving to achieve this purpose of life when daily we can ready ourselves more and more to declare: *Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me: In holocausts and sin-offerings thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, "Behold, I come—(in the head of the book it is written of me)—to do thy will O God"* (Heb. 8: 5-7).

As we behold the agonizing Christ upon the Cross, our fixed determination should be to do and to accept the will of God. Striving steadily to consummate our crucifixion, we will learn to die daily with Christ. This was the reason why the first death of the body held no sting for Saint Paul, that he had no fear for the second death of damnation. Hence, he declared: *I die daily* (I Cor. 15: 31). About these two deaths (of which only the second should cause us concern), Saint Augustine beautifully advises us: "Strive to die before you die, so that you may not die when you die." When God has helped us to perfect this practice of true daily mortification, at the time of our natural death we can rightly hope for eternal life. May we then, through Mary our Mother, pray reverently with Jesus: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit* (Lk. 23: 46).

Fr. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M.

DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART

The claim that Saint Bonaventure, the Seraphic Doctor and Prince of Mystics, should properly be called the Doctor of the Sacred Heart, has its foundation and justification in his works on mystical theology, especially *Lignum Vitae* (*The Tree of Life*) and the *Vitis Mystica* (*The Mystic Vine*). Holy Mother Church has given an implicit endorsement to that claim by selecting from these two writings the lessons for the III Nocturne of the Feast of the Sacred Heart. The liturgical and devotional life of the Church is under the constant guidance and inspiration of the *one and the same spirit, who allots to everyone according as he will* (I Cor. 12:11) as the Church and the world may need His special operation. While the spread of the devotion to the Sacred Heart by Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque and other saints effectively stemmed the tide of religious indifferentism and secularism in the seventeenth century, its essence and object reach back through the gallant lines of the Fathers, Doctors, and Saints of the ancient Church—back, as Saint Paul says, to *the unfathomable riches of Christ, to the mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things* (Eph. 2:8-9). In his inimitable manner, which is as simple as it is convincing, Saint Bonaventure unfolds the mystery of the infinite love of God for man. Taking his station beneath the Cross in holy contemplation, he points out that the Sacred Wound in the Saviour's Side is the entrance to His Sacred Heart which is not only the symbol but the seat and source of divine love.

In the *Lignum Vitae* Saint Bonaventure places before the devout soul the Tree of Life which has three branches. These branches are shown in pairs. The first pair symbolizes the Mystery of Christ's Origin; the second, the Mystery of His Passion; the third, the Mystery of His Glory. Each branch bears four Fruits and it is in the description of these Fruits, namely the events in Christ's Origin, Passion, and Glory, that the Saint rises to the highest peaks of spiritual reflection and contemplation. Indeed, the whole work may be called a Cantic of the Saviour's Love.

The seventh Lesson of the Feast of the Sacred Heart contains part (number XXX) of the Eight Fruit of the Second Branch, where the soul contemplates "Jesus pierced with a lance" (*Jesus Translatus*). We give the passage in its entirety:

DEVOTIONS TO THE SACRED HEART

In order that from the Side of Christ, sleeping on the Cross, the Church might be formed, and that the Scripture which says; *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced* (Jn. 1:37; Cf. Zach. 12:10), might be fulfilled, it was ordained by divine indulgence that one of the soldiers should pierce and open His Sacred Side. Thus, while blood and water issued forth, there was poured out our salvation's price which, streaming in profusion from its source, from the very depths of the Saviour's Heart, was destined to impart to the Sacraments of the Church the power to confer the life of grace, and to serve those who already live in Christ the cup of *the fountain of living water, springing up unto life everlasting* (Jn 4:14). Behold the lance which through the perfidy of Saul, that is, of the reprobate Jewish nation, had by divine mercy been *fastened in the wall* (Kings 19:10), now made a *cleft in the rock and a hollow in the wall* (Cant. 2:14)—a dwelling place for doves.

Arise, then, O friend of Christ, be *like the dove that makes her nest in the mouth of the hole in the highest place* (Jer. 48:28). There, like *the sparrow that has found a house* (Ps. 83:4), do not cease watching; there, like the turtle dove, hide the offspring of chaste love; there, put thy mouth to draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountain (Is. 12:3). For here is the *river that went out of the midst of paradise* and which, *being divided into four heads* (Gen. 2:10) was diffused into loving hearts, to spread fruitfulness and moisture over the whole earth.

The VIII and IX Lessons of the Feast of the Sacred Heart are taken from the Third Chapter of the *Vitis Mystica* (*The Mystic Vine*). The title is taken from the Saviour's words: *I am the true vine* (Jn. 15:1). In this precious little book Saint Bonaventure describes in twenty-four chapters the various scenes and phases of our Lord's bitter Passion. The whole description is borne aloft on the wings of sublime, devout, and seraphic contemplation. While the Schoolman reveals himself in his style and the masterly way he imparts instruction and analyzes scriptural texts, it is above all the mystic that speaks to us with all The fervor of loving heart.

Chapter III: *The Vine dug round about* (*De Circumfossione vitis*).

1. The Vine dug round about. By this we understand the deceitfulness of insidious men. For he who by his cunning plans to deceive a man is said to dig a pit. Hence, "the true Vine" complains: *They have dug a pit before Me* (Ps. 56:7). For no deceit could be hidden from Him Who sees both the past and the future as if present. Let us give an instance of one of these "diggings." "They brought to the Lord Jesus," the Gospel tells us, "a woman taken in adultery," saying, "Moses in the law commanded us to stone such a one. But what sayest Thou" (Jn 8:3-5)? Here you see the pit around the true Vine. It was dug by wicked husbandmen

round about the blessed Vine, our most amiable Lord Jesus, not that It might bear fruit, but rather that It might wither away. But their intention was turned against them. The ground was dug far around and yielded to us the moisture of divine mercy.

2. It would indeed lead us too far to recount all the pits that the wicked husbandmen dug, in their design to taint with calumny all His words and deed. But when they saw that their digging failed to harm the Vine, but rather caused the diggers themselves to fall into the pits, they ceased no longer to dig round about the Vine, but rather to dig into It, and in this wise It would be doomed like other trees to incurable aridity. They, therefore, dug through, not only the hands, but the feet also, and in their fury thrust a lance into the Side and to the very depths of the Most Sacred Heart which had already long ago been pierced by the lance of love. Hence His cry: *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart* (Cant. 4:9). O most beloved Jesus, since Thy heart had been wounded by thy spouse, thy friend, why was there need that it should be wounded again by thy enemies? What are ye about, O ye enemies? If the wound was inflicted—yea, if the Heart of the most sweet Jesus was wounded why inflict a second wound? Or, do you not know that once a wound has been inflicted on the heart it must die, and in consequence lose all sensation? The Heart of my most sweet Lord Jesus is dead; the wound of love has laid hold of the Heart of the most sweet Jesus was wounded, why inflict a second? Is the meaning of the second death? *Love is stronger as death* (Cant. 8:6), yea, even stronger than death. From the heart's recess the first death cannot be expelled, for that was suffered for the multitude who have died, whom he had purchased with an inviolable wound. If two equally strong men in contest, and one of them is in the house and the other without, who can doubt but that the one inside will gain the victory? Now see how great is the power of the love of him who is in possession of the house of the heart and who dies of the wound of love. And this is true not only of the Lord Jesus but also of his servants. Thus then had the Heart of the Lord Jesus been wounded and had died long ago, as we read: *for they make we are slaughtered all times, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter* (Ps. 43:22). Then came the death of the body and for a while held sway, but only to be defeated for all eternity.

At this point we should briefly interrupt the meditations of the Seraphic Doctor, to explain what he means by the two wounds and the two deaths. Mark the words of the Eternal, spoken by Jeremiah the Prophet: *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. There-*

fore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee (Jer. 31:3). God's love for man, which became manifest in Christ Jesus, is eternal. Speaking mystically, this love inflicted a wound on the Saviour's Heart and preordained him to a death of love for all mankind, but in particular for His Bride, Holy Church, and for every individual soul that seeks Him. His physical death on the Cross and the wound inflicted by His executioners were the external manifestation of His eternal love. Therefore, the Seraphic Doctor argues correctly, the physical Wound and Death on the Cross, bitter and shameful though they were, could not efface or diminish the mystic Wound and Death of His infinite and eternal love. Rather, while the former were enacted only once on Calvary's heights, the latter reached back to all eternity and were destined to remain forever. All this brings home to us the lesson that the love of the Sacred Heart for mankind is in reality the infinite and eternal love of the Triune God. Saint Bonaventure's text continues:

Once we stand before the Heart of our most sweet Lord Jesus, and realize that *it is good for us to be here* (Matt. 17:4), we shall not easily be torn away from Him of whom it is written: *They that depart from Thee shall be written in the earth* (Jer. 17:13). What then will be the reward of those who approach Thee? We shall come to Thee, it is said, and *we will be glad and rejoice in thee, remembering* (Cant. 1:3) thy heart. A good treasure, a precious pearl is Thy Heart, O most benign Jesus, which we found after the field of Thy Body was ploughed through (Matt. 13:44). Who would cast away this pearl? No, rather will I give up all pearls, and exchange all my thoughts and affections to acquire this one, casting *all my care* in the heart of my gentle Jesus, and without guile *He will sustain me* (Ps. 54:23).

4. Before this temple, this holy of holies, and before this ark of the testament *I will prostrate myself* (Ps. 5:8) and *praise the name of the Lord* (Ps. 68:31), saying with David: *I have found my heart to pray this prayer to thee* (II Kings 7:27). Yes, I have found the heart of my Lord the King, my brother and friend, the most loving Jesus. Why then, should I not pray? Yes, I will pray indeed. For His Heart is also my heart—boldly do I say it. For if indeed Christ is my Head (cf. Eph. 4:15), how then is that which belongs to my Head not also mine? For in the same manner as the eyes of my physical head are truly mine, so also is the heart which belongs to my spiritual Head mine. How fortunate I am. Behold, Jesus and I have one heart. And why should we wonder, since also, *the*

multitude of the believers were of one heart (Acts 4:32). Having found then both my heart and Thine, most sweet Jesus, *I pray to Thee, my God*. Let my prayers enter into the sanctuary of Thy hearing; yes, draw me wholly into Thy Heart. And although the ugliness of my sins restrains me, nevertheless, since Thy Heart is extended and enlarged by incomprehensible love, and since it is Thou alone *Who canst make him clean that is conceived of unclean seed* (Job 14:4), therefore, do Thou Who art most beautiful of all, *wash me thoroughly of my guilt and cleanse me of my sin* (Ps. 50:40). Thus purified by Thee, I may come to Thee, the most pure, and merit to dwell in Thy Heart *all the days of my life* (Ps. 26:4) to *look upon Thee* and *do Thy will* (Ps. 142:10).

5. For also to this end was Thy Side pierced, that an entrance might be opened to us; to this end was Thy Heart wounded, that we, freed from all external disturbances, might dwell in that Vine. To this end indeed was the wound inflicted that through the visible wound we might behold the invisible wound of love. For he who loves ardently, is wounded by love. And how could this ardor better show itself than by permitting not only the body but the very heart to be pierced by a lance. The physical wound, therefore, shows the spiritual wound. This truth is beautifully suggested by the aforesaid text, in which the words *thou hast wounded me* are mentioned twice. For each of the two wounds was caused by the sister and the spouse. It is as if the Bridegroom wanted to say in plain words: "Because of the ardor of My love for thee thou hast wounded Me; therefore was I wounded again by the soldier's lance." For who would allow that for the love of a friend his heart be wounded, unless he had first received the wound of love for him? Therefore He says: *Thou has wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast wounded my heart* (Cant. 4:9). But, why sister and spouse? Could not the affection of the loving Bridegroom be proven sufficiently if either sister or spouse were mentioned? Again, why spouse and not wife, since neither the Church nor the faithful soul ceases daily to bring forth to Christ, the Bridegroom, the fruit of good works? To be brief: spouses are loved more ardently, while the wedding is still young, than later, because as time wears on love itself is subdued. Therefore, our Bridegroom, in order to show the greatness of His love, which time does not diminish, calls His friend "spouse," because His love is ever new.

6. But since the love between spouses necessarily implies a carnal element, our Bridegroom, in His solicitude that nothing carnal taint our love for Him, calls His bride by the name sister, because the love for sisters is far above the flesh. Therefore, He says: *Thou hast wounded my heart, my sister, my spouse*, as if He meant to say: "because I love thee ardently as a spouse and chastely as a sister, My Heart is wounded be-

cause of thee." Who then would not love the Heart so wounded? Who would not return the love of such a Lover? Who would not embrace one so chaste? Verily with all her heart the soul loves Him Who is wounded and, being wounded by a mutual love, she cries out: *I am wounded by love*. And returning her love to her loving Spouse she says: *Tell my Beloved because I languish with love* (Cant. 2:5). We, therefore, who still live in the flesh, shall try with all that is in us, to return our love to the Lover; let us embrace Him Who was wounded for us when wicked husbandmen *pierced his hands and feet* (Ps. 21:17), His Side and His Heart. Let us beseech Him that with the bond of His love He bind our heart, which is still so hard and impenitent, with the bond of His love and wound it with a spear. Amen.

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.

SAINT FRANCIS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS CREATURES

Francis, a Man of Reverence

In looking at reality with Francis, the man of reverence, we turn first to God.

a. Toward God

Francis, the *vir catholicus*, saw God at the center of all things. Wherefore, life (and all reality) in spite of its complexity was basically simple. And what was God to Francis? Surely He was the Supreme Being, with all the attributes listed in the theology books—simplicity, immutability, eternity, immensity, ubiquity, infinity and unity. Francis' grasp of these truths inspired his own warm version and response in his *Laudes Dei*.

Thou art holy, Lord God, who alone workest wonders.
Thou art strong. Thou art great. Thou art most high.
Thou art the almighty King, Thou, holy Father, King of
heaven and earth.
Thou art the Lord God, triune and One, all good.
Thou art good, all good, highest good, Lord God, living and true
Thou art charity, love. Thou art wisdom.
Thou art humility. Thou art patience.
Thou art security. Thou art quietude.
Thou art joy and gladness.
Thou art justice and temperance.
Thou art all riches to sufficiency.
Thou art beauty.
Thou art meekness.
Thou art protector. Thou art guardian and defender.
Thou art strength. Thou art refreshment.

Thou art our hope. Thou art our faith.
 Thou art our great sweetness.
 Thou art our eternal life, great and admirable
 Lord God almighty, merciful Saviour.¹⁹

For Francis, then, God as the highest of all beings, held the highest of all values, and was therefore worthy of the highest response. Francis gave that response in the simple spirit of the *Gloria's* "We praise Thee . . . We adore Thee. . . We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory.

b. *Toward All Creation*

God, Francis knew, is not only the Supreme Being; He is also the Creator and Lord of creation. In His goodness God willed that there be other beings to glorify Him by their existence, and in that act of willing there came forth out of nothing angels, the firmament, the earth, plants, animals and men. God looked at all things and saw them good. He continues to quietly contemplate them in this seventh day of rest.

And so also Francis. He took time to *consider* the lilies of the field, to contemplate them for what they are, things gifted by God with existence and glorifying Him by that existence. Francis did not search them out merely to pluck and use them. He was willing to expend leisure, to "waste time for the sake of God" as Fr. Guardini puts it,²⁰ to forget purposes for a moment and regard the meaning of things in themselves. Therefore, to borrow the phrase again, he could perceive "the dearest freshness deep down things." The value of created beings lay in their existence, and to that he responded with proportionate reverence.

c. *Toward Nature*

To look at creation only "in general" is an impossibility. We see concrete, individual things. In doing so we notice the great variety in nature, a variety of genera subdivided into a greater variety of species which in turn embrace a multiplicity of varied details. Why such variety? "Things could be so much more simple," observes Fr. Guardini.²¹ Why not just "trees" instead of oaks, maples, elms? Why not every leaf and branch identical with every other? With even a much narrower variety the same practical purposes could be served. But there still remains the question of meanings.

Each individual thing is a good in its own way, glorifying God by the splendor of its individuality, by its own existing essence. Each thing has its own particular meaning and value in being *this* star, *this* bud, *this* leaf, *this* bird. Or, as Thomas Merton has it:

Therefore each particular being, in its individuality, its concrete nature and entity, with all its own characteristics and its private qualities and its own inviolable identity, gives glory to God by being precisely what He wants it to be here and now,

in the circumstances ordained for it by His Love and His infinite Art.

The forms and individual characters of living and growing things and of inanimate things and of animals and flowers and all nature, constitute their holiness in the sight of God.

Their inscape is their sanctity.²²

Francis seems to have had a singular appreciation for things of nature which would express itself at the most unpredictable moments and in the most unexpected ways. We recall the time when he would not permit Brother Fire to be extinguished, even though it was burning his habit. He would carefully lift a worm off the path lest it be crushed by passers-by. When cutting trees the brothers were bidden not to destroy them entirely so that they might have a chance to grow again.²³ A sentimental fool, one might be tempted to call Francis here, and so would he have been had purposes alone been guiding his judgment of values. However, posit an appreciation of meanings, a vision of things as good because they are being and doing what they were meant to be and do, and we begin to see reason behind such "madness." Because Francis was so alive to meanings, his enthusiasm for things was always fresh and his response to them genuinely spontaneous.

Nowhere is Francis' enthusiasm more strikingly shown than in his *Canticle of the Sun*.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, through all Thy creatures,
 especially through our honored Brother Sun
 who makes the day and through whom Thou givest us light;
 and a sign, O Most High, of Thee.

Praised be Thou, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars
 formed in the sky, clear, precious and fair.

* * * * *

Praised be Thou, my Lord, through Sister Water,
 who is useful and humble, precious and chaste.

Praised be Thou my Lord, through Brother Fire,
 by whom Thou dost illumine the night;
 beauteous is he and gay, mighty and strong. . .

We note how Francis is first of all concerned with the sun as shining, with the water as being water, with fire as burning, and not with the value of the sun as giving him, Francis, light to go about his work, nor with water as quenching his thirst, nor with fire as cooking his food or giving him warmth. The sun does "give us light," the water is "useful," and fire does "illumine the night," but Francis' primary stress falls upon this, that God be praised (glorified) *through* or by means of these things' being and doing what God meant them to be and do, and in that

being and doing serving us. The canticle is before all else a song of praise and, except in the sense of "We give Thee thanks for Thy glory," only secondarily and incidentally a song of thanksgiving for utilities given to us. Such a distinction is necessary if we are to understand anything of the essence of the Sun Song, the song of Francis standing before the mysterious gift of the universe, responding with reverence to the inherent value of being.

It must be evident how all nature became for Francis a *scala Dei*, for in the being of all things he saw God's creative touch. (poet that he was), Francis was also aware of symbols. He constantly saw the "wood" of the Cross, the "Lamb" of God, the "Living Water," the "Flower of the Field," all of them simply added motives for reverential response. Nature could never become a distraction to him. He would not shut himself up anachorite-wise in a small cell, but he went out and sang his own part in the *carmen creaturarum*, the part of Francis the man, created, fallen, but redeemed.

Nature in its turn responded to Francis. Birds listened to his piping, a cricket sang at his bidding, even Brother Fire did not burn him. Without intending to rule out the supernatural in Francis' dealings with nature, we can still see in them something of the pattern of reverence, getting a further response—perhaps even of God's fastening His stamp of approval on Francis' approach.

d. Toward Men

Because Francis' vision of reality was an ordered one, his response to men by far exceeded his response to nature, for in them he discerned a far greater value. Francis paid reverence not only to men with more than the usual marks of holiness, nor only to those with special abilities, nor only to those with superior social standing. His reverence was based rather on a principle, one which Frank Sheed sums up well:

It is not enough to value strong men for being strong, brilliant men for being brilliant, good men for being good. We must value all men for being men, *all* men, weak, stupid, vicious, not only the mediocre average even, but the dismal worst. And we cannot do that unless our view of what man is makes him a thing of value.²⁴

Francis' view, of course, saw man as endowed with a rational and immortal soul; by nature, therefore, set above the rest of material creatures. Adding to that natural dignity, and enhancing it immeasurably, he knew the fact of the Incarnation and Redemption. But more, there was Francis' own concept of the human body patterned after that of Christ.

Mark, O man, the degree of excellence in which the Lord has placed you, for He has created and formed your body according

to the image of His beloved Son, and your spirit after His likeness.²⁵

Acting upon such a principle Francis could embrace the leper, deal amicably with brethren so different as Leo, Juniper, Sylvester, Martin and Elias, and kiss the hand of a fallen priest. Francis was aware of this, as Fr. Vann puts it:

The human being may seem uninteresting or repulsive. . . but in addition there is here a greater mystery, for beneath the externals there may lie hidden a grandeur that is more than human—and if there is not, there is a void the very tragedy of which should compel our love.²⁶

That same spirit of reverence impregnated the legislation and admonitions which Francis left as norms for his Order. Superiors are reminded that they are but ministers and servants of the other brothers, that they must admonish their brothers humbly and correct them charitably. The ministers are to receive their subjects charitably and kindly and show such great familiarity with them that the subjects may speak and act with them as masters with their servants.²⁷ A certain minister was bidden to show kindness to a fallen brother and "if he does not ask for kindness, you ask him if he does not wish for kindness."²⁸

The effectiveness of Francis' spirit of reverence is proved by his influence upon his contemporaries and upon the world ever since. Francis was indeed a man of vision and, because of that vision, a real man of power.

e. Toward Goods of Fortune

To see Francis' ideal of poverty as rooted in the spirit of reverence is not as far-fetched as it might first appear. Francis indeed chose to be poor because he wished to follow the poor Christ. But can we not say that both Christ and Francis were poor for the same reason, namely, out of respect for the nature of things in themselves as well as to counteract a prevalent abuse of things by would-be masters or men of power?

Goods of fortune, possessions of any type, are good in so far as they are beings. More, by their very nature, but always according to their nature, they are meant to serve men. Viewed and used properly, they can help lead man to God; viewed and used improperly—and such an abuse always implies violence and irreverence on the part of the user—they will drive him away from God. It is another example, similar to that of the carpenter driving the wood to obey him against the grain, of violating the law of the order of things: reverence begets response.

Francis chose poverty precisely because he appreciated things as good, and his early life had given him occasion enough to know the dangers of materialism. Fr. Guardini observes significantly:

...would Francis have been able to "marry" Lady Poverty with so much radiant enthusiasm and graciousness if he had come from a very poor house? I doubt it. His sacrifice possessed such a high degree of emancipating power because he knew the value of things he renounced. He knew how beautiful the world is, how delightful abundance, with all its possibilities of enjoyment and munificence.

Fr. Guardini goes on to remark that the general consciousness of the true order of Christian property "is the fertile field from which, when it pleases God, the flower of renunciation climbs into bloom."²⁹ Poverty and moderation, therefore, vital landmarks in the whole pattern of Franciscan ideals, rest upon the foundation of Francis' spirit of reverence for things.

f. Other Applications

Many more examples of reverence at work in Francis' ideals easily suggest themselves. Surely his love of chastity was grounded in his respect for the human body fashioned in the image of Christ. His outstanding obedience to the Church, with its essential hierarchical structure and consequent superior-subject relationship, might well be seen as an expression of reverence. Even his acceptance of the flow of events, often unforeseen, such as the stream of new brethren to his way of life, the demand for a set Rule of life and its ultimate revision, showed his reverence toward the mysterious workings of Divine Providence. Particularly was this evident in his last days as he saw his Order slipping from his ideals and himself powerless to remedy the situation. Handing the reins of leadership to Brother Peter of Catani, he prayed:

Lord, I commend to Thee Thy family which hitherto Thou hast committed to me; and now on account of the infirmities which Thou knowest, O most sweet Lord, being unable to have the care of it, I commend it to its Ministers, who shall be held in the day of judgment to show cause before Thee, O Lord, if any brother should perish through their negligence, or evil example or bitter correction.³⁰

In fact, one might possibly construct an interpretation of the whole life of Francis as well as outline a synthesis of Franciscan spirituality (with quite evident applications to the spirit of the vows, zeal in the apostolate, and so on) by using reverence as the central and unifying concept. Because of the theme of this conference, I wish merely to suggest one further application, namely, the implications reverence can have in even a modern approach to the study of the science.

Reverence and the Science

Any Christian approach to the sciences will necessarily include re-

spect for God's role in creation. Further, it will always take into account God's providence in conserving and governing His creation. Therefore, it must exclude positing any contradictions with what we know to be certain revelation.

A truly Franciscan approach, since Franciscanism is radical Christianity, will go the full way and be radical in its insistence upon reverence for the nature of God, of men, and of things. Because of such insistence, a Franciscan approach can produce better scientists and a sounder science. For scientists in their theories and experiments will not force their findings into preconceived molds and rest complacent with apparent answers. Rather they will be aware of the meaning of things as well as of purposes; they will be willing to work with the spirit of *discretio* and watch in wonder as things mature and unfold. Because they are true men of vision with pure aims, they will win a response from nature itself.

To quote Fr. Vann again:

Descartes thought that the supreme purpose of knowledge was to make us masters of nature; there have been more modern advertisements proclaiming knowledge as a paying investment. That way true wisdom will escape us. We might learn from the great scientists themselves—for it is not they, it is their ignorant camp-followers who are utilitarians. We might learn from the great philosophers, who know that wisdom is a mistress who must be wooed in silence and humility. We might learn from the saints, who worship the Truth. Knowledge is power, yes; but before we can use the power with safety we must worship. So with things, and still more with persons. First you must look for them as things in themselves, first you must see and love; then you can use them with impunity and without violence because you will be using them with love.³¹

A scientist imbued with reverence will proceed in the attitude of leisure; he will leaven his rush of study and experiment with the spirit of silence.

As a result,

...we shall be able to return to the lilies and find our eyes fully opened. We shall have something much more than an aesthetic sense. We shall see their beauty indeed, and shall rejoice; but we shall see what lies beyond and yet within them, and then we shall know our kinship with the halt and the lame, the dull and the stupid, the leper. Then, finally, we shall be whole.³²

We might add that if (and it is a big "if") modern Franciscans in the field of science copy their father in his spirit of reverence, and insist upon it in their students, their approach can become a healthy leaven

in scientific study instead of degenerating into a "leveler" as all mediocre approaches must always be.

Fr. Leander Blumlein, O.F.M.

¹⁹Hilarin Felder, O.M.Cap., *The Ideals of St. Francis*. Trans. Berchmans Bittler, O.M.Cap. (N.Y.: Benziger Bros., 1925), pp. 411-12.

²⁰Romano Guardini, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 173.

²²Thomas Merton, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

²³Hilarin Felder, O.M.Cap., lists these and other like incidents, *op. cit.*, pp. 419-20.

²⁴Frank J. Sheed, *Society and Sanity* (N.Y.: Sheed and Ward, 1953), p. 38.

²⁵*Admonitiones*, no. 5. *Opuscula S. P. Francisci Assisiensis* (Quaracchi: Ex Typ. Colleg. S. Bon., 1941), p. 8.

²⁶Gerald Vann, O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 17.

²⁷*Regula II*, cap. X. *Opuscula S.P.F.*, pp. 71-72.

²⁸*Epistola ad quendam Ministrum*. *Opuscula S.P.F.*, p. 109.

²⁹Romano Guardini, *The Lord* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1954), pp. 285-86.

³⁰*The Mirror of Perfection*, Sect. IV, ch. 39. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, *The Mirror of Perfection, The Life of St. Francis* (N.Y.: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1951), pp. 283-84.

³¹Gerald Vann, O.P., *op. cit.*, p. 22.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 23. Regarding the importance of a correct attitude in producing sound scholarship we might call attention here to an article by Dietrich Von Hildebrand, "The Idea of a Catholic University," *Journal of Arts and Letters IV* (Spring 1952), pp. 15-35, and also to the essays "Catholicism and Unprejudiced Knowledge" and "The Role of Reverence in Education" by the same author in his book *The New Tower of Babel* (N.Y.: P.J. Kenedy and Sons, 1953), pp. 129-79.

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The *Directory* was under the management and editorship of Brother Finbarr, O.S.F., Associate Professor of History and Chairman of the Division of Social Science at St. Francis College in Brooklyn. Brother Finbarr is also the Commissioner for all Franciscan Teaching Brothers in the United States, representing them in the Franciscan Educational Conference.

Some interesting statistics compiled in the *Directory* show that the various branches of the Franciscan Order in the United States conduct two thousand and eighty educational institutions. This number includes 25 colleges, 50 seminaries, 64 schools of nursing education, 270 secondary schools and 1,668 elementary schools. They also conduct three special educational projects of considerable significance: the Franciscan Educational Conference, the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure, N.Y., and the Academy of American Franciscan History at Washington, D.C.

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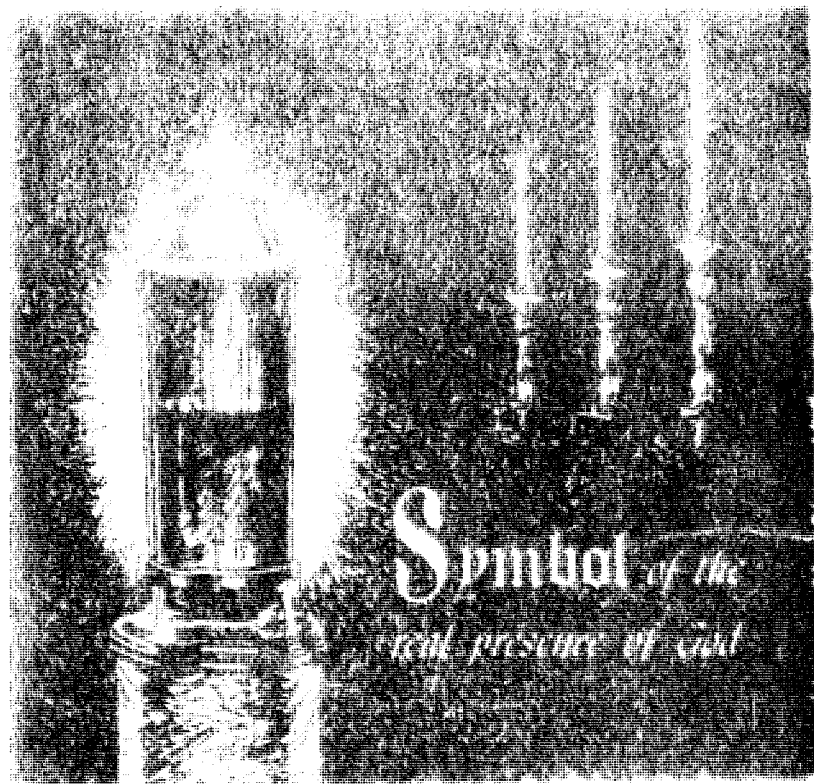
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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

OUR DESTINY AS RELIGIOUS II

In developing the theme that *God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:16) we showed why man is destined to share his life with others even in a purely natural order, for he bears in his soul the image of a divine family whose very life entails a sharing of an infinitely lovable divine nature by a Trinity of Persons. In the supernatural order, God uses man's altruistic love for his fellowmen to prepare him for heaven, which is a kind of participation in the life of the Trinity. *No one has seen God*, Saint John explains in the same epistle, *but if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us*. Man's likeness to the Trinity extends even to the sexes, for as Cornelius a Lapide put it, "God willed, in the production of Adam and Eve, to imitate His own eternal generation and spiration." Uncreated love divided human nature in two so that man and woman might have something to give each other. Through their natural love they were to complement their personalities, putting human nature back together, as it were, thus readying themselves for heaven where *there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3:28).

The better to achieve their eternal destiny hereafter, and already in this life to find that perfection of personality which belongs to those who have *put on Christ* (Gal. 3:27), religious through their vows, and especially that of chastity, dedicate their persons to their divine Master as *first fruits unto God and unto the Lamb* that they may *follow the Lamb wherever he goes* (Apoc. 14:4).

For a woman, this consecration has the character of a spiritual marriage, so that the destiny of the dedicated virgin is, in the words of the Little Flower, "to be your bride, my Jesus; to be, in union with you, the mother of souls."

To the religious brother or priest, however, Christ says as once He said to His apostles: *No longer do I call you servants, but I have called you friends* (Jn. 15:15). This is no ordinary friendship to

we are invited, but a rare and wonderful love which like

and I have loved the love of woman (2 Kings

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for Christ is unique, for after all it is only to a divine Person that we can give ourselves with complete and absolute abandon. And only one who has vowed to Christ all that the normal individual holds dear on earth—possessions, a home and family of his own, his very will—has given himself body and soul to Christ. Such persons indeed experience that spiritual joy Christ promised (Jn. 15:11) and can exclaim with the Psalmist: *O taste and see that the Lord is sweet* (Ps. 33:9).

As the bride of Christ through union with her divine Spouse "marries-in" to the divine family as it were, so the apostle and intimate friend of Jesus is united through Christ to the entire Trinity. *If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him* (Jn. 13:23). *And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you shall know him, because he will dwell with you, and be in you* (Jn. 14:16-17). Here we see the deep significance of Christ's prayer for his first "religious": *That they may be one even as we are one*, He pleads, *I have made known to them thy name and will make it known in order that the love with which thou hast loved me may be one in them and I in them* (Jn. 17:22,26).

Thus religious by their intimate bond with Christ anticipate as it were the union with the Blessed Trinity that is of the essence of heaven. And by abandoning themselves body and soul through their triple vow, they profess their desire to fulfil to the limit the first and greatest commandment: *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* (Mk. 12:30).

But the religious state, though it grew out of the virginal or celibate state, according to present-day Canon Law is also a matter of the common life. It remains to discuss the role of the religious member of the community.

Apart from their primary purpose of uniting one more closely with God, the triple vows with their allied virtues of poverty, chastity and obedience, have also a secondary social aspect. Poverty in practice, as sociologists assure us, can be reduced in great measure to living on a common life. As Father Creusen comments: "The best means of preserving the essentials of poverty, and of acquiring the spirit of poverty, that is to say, a real detachment from temporal possessions

and the comforts of life, is to practice life in common. In the canonical sense, community life consists in this that everyone uses the goods belonging to the community and does not possess anything as his own in the manner of food, clothing, and furniture" (*Religious Men and Women in the Code*, Bruce, 1940, p. 208).

The vow of obedience obviously strengthens and enhances the authority the Church invests in superiors that they may keep the community united. For Francis obedience goes still further. His *caritativa obedientia* where obedience becomes synonymous with love (*Admonitions*, n. 3) entails more than subservience to a superior; it implies service to one's inferiors or equals. Writing to his first followers, he said: "Let them in charity of the Spirit willingly serve and obey each other. This is the true and holy obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Reg. prima*, c. 5). If obedience is making our neighbor's need our command, then even the faithful in the world can practice Francis' virtue, which is why he could write to them: "We should never desire to be above others but ought rather to be servants and subject 'to every human creature for God's sake.'" And because this fraternal charity not only unites us to one another but also to God, Francis goes on to add: "And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon all those who do these things and who shall persevere to the end, and He shall make His abode and dwelling in them, and they shall be children of the heavenly Father whose works they do, and they are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ" (*Letter to All the Faithful*).

Chastity too makes its contribution to fraternal charity, for in freeing the soul for the exclusive service of God, it enables the religious to ask with Christ: *And who is my mother and who are my brethren*. (Matt. 12:49). *And looking round on those about him*, he too can reply, *Behold my mother and my brethren* (Mk. 3, 34). For if religious truly love God with their whole heart and soul, mind and strength, how can they help but love those who like themselves have left their parents because they knew they must be about their *Father's business* (Lk. 2:49). At the same time chastity keeps this fraternal love from degenerating into particular friendship and insures the purity of the maternal or paternal solicitude religious may have for their spiritual children. Thus the vows and their kindred virtues not only enable a religious to fulfil *the greatest and first commandment*, but the *second*, which is like it, *'Thou shalt*

love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matt 22: 3-39). And until the individual dedicated to God has fulfilled this second commandment to the letter, he has not achieved his destiny as a religious.

I

In virtually the same breath as Christ invited the apostles to the intimate friendship and union with Himself, a union like that which bound Him to His heavenly Father, He charged them to love one another. *As the Father has loved me, I also have loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments you will abide in my love, as I also have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be made full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you* (Jn. 15:9-12).

Christ tells his first "religious community" bound together by the "evangelical counsels" that their unselfish love for one another reflects the love life of the family that is Trinity, and through this practice of charity they will taste something of that divine joy which we said might be called the "nectar of the gods." Well might we ask: Is this not the essence of the hundred-fold we have been promised in this life?

Something of the tremendous impression Christ's new commandment made upon the Apostles can be gleaned from the behavior of those who first followed them to become the infant Church. For we read in the Acts of the Apostles that *all who believed were together and held all things in common, and would sell their possessions and goods and distribute them among all according as anyone had need* (Acts 2:44-45). Conscious of their brotherhood under God, the first Christians seemingly adopted a kind of community life. They realized with that intuition given to the saints that one can love one's neighbor *as oneself* only where there is no longer a distinction between *thine and mine*. Their Christlike charity, consequently, prompted them to what has sometimes been called "Christian communism" wherein each regarded it a privilege to care for the needs of another at his own expense.

This perfect love, so in contrast with pagan attitudes of the day that it became the trademark of the true follower of Christ, has always held a special fascination for founders of religious orders. Saint Augustine, for instance, who not only introduced monasticism into Africa but influenced profoundly the whole ideal of religious

life for ages to come, saw the religious community as the perpetuation of the *fraternal* love of the infant Church when all *believers were of one heart and one soul*.

In one of the sermons of the *Doctor caritatis*, which reveals the Christian rhetorician at his best, we read how Saint Augustine described the *substance* of the religious life to his people. After becoming Bishop of Hippo he had organized the clergy into a religious community living in the episcopal residence. This aroused comment among the people unfamiliar with his novel combination of the contemplative and active life. And so it was that Augustine came to deliver the two charming sermons on the common life we find among his extant works. "I began to gather brethren of like disposition as myself, my equals, having nothing as I had nothing," he declares. "And I sold whatever little I had and gave the proceeds to the poor, ~~so~~ did these also, so that *we could live in common*" (Serm. 355). And then in somewhat dramatic fashion, he called the Deacon Lazarus to read to the congregation crowded in the cathedral this passage from the Acts of the Apostles: *Now the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one soul, and not one of them said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord, and grace was in them all. Nor was there anyone among them in want. For those who owned lands or houses would sell them and bring the price of what they sold and lay it at the feet of the apostles, and distribution was made to each, according as anyone had need* (Acts 4:32-35). And when the deacon had finished he carried the book of the Scriptures to the bishop sitting on the pontifical throne. "I also wish to read ~~some~~ words," explained the saint, "for it gives me greater delight to ~~read~~ them than to speak my own ideas." And having read the passage once more in solemn fashion, he turned to the people saying simply: "You have heard what we wish to do; pray that we may be able to do so" (Serm. 356).

Perhaps no saint or doctor of the Church was more conscious of the social consequences and implications of the religious life than Saint Augustine. Not only was he by nature a sociable individual, but his whole life was a record of the potentialities for good or evil inherent in social impact. Before his conversion, Monica's son knew the power of false teachers and evil associates. But the

example of heroic religious also made him realize how shameful was his weakness and gave him courage to attempt a conversion. His growth in spirituality was itself the fruit of community life. The little philosophical circle that had lived with Augustine and Monica near Milan at the time of his conversion was transformed into a sort of lay monastery. Soon the group moved to Tagaste where they lived together "for three years fasting and praying and doing good works, and meditating day and night on the law of God" (Possidius, *Vita S. Augustini*, c. 3). Ordained priest at Hippo, where he had gone to recruit vocations for his monastery, Augustine was given a piece of property near the cathedral for his convent. "There he began to live with the servants of God according to the manner and rules established under the holy Apostles" (*ibid.*, c. 5). Five years later when he became Bishop of Hippo, he promptly converted his residence into a monastery, living the common life with his clergy after the "model of the early Church in Jerusalem" (*ibid.*). He was the first religious founder to combine the contemplative ideal with an active apostolate among the people, and thus did in a manner appropriate for his age what Francis would repeat in somewhat different fashion some eight centuries later.

Far from being contrary to the social instincts of the human part, the religious state for Augustine was human society at its best, an attempt to recapture the charity of the primitive Church. Where true to itself, the monastic community would always be the epitome of fraternal love, a living object lesson of what Christ meant when he said: *By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (Jn. 13:35).

Francis too was fully conscious of the community aspects of religious life. He would not hear of calling his followers hermits, monks, or canons, but *fratres* — brothers. Like the *Doctor Gratianus*, whom Christian iconography so fittingly pictures with a human heart in his hand, the Seraph of Assisi was well aware of Christ's new commandment. He too wished his little band to be *one heart and one soul* so that *not one of them said that anything he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common* (Acts 4:32). But in another sense, he went further than Augustine. Instead of taking as his model that extension of the primitive apostolic band, the early Christian community, Francis went back to the apostles themselves to whom Christ had once said: *And all*

you are brothers (Mtt. 23:8). As the sequence for Francis' feast puts it: *restauravit lex sanctita, statum evangelicum . . . tenet ritus datae normae, culmen apostolicum*.

Indeed the poverty so dear to the Poverello's heart becomes possible only where perfect fraternal charity exists. As one of his modern sons reminds us (P. Ramstetter, O.F.M., "Introduction to a Franciscan Spirituality," *Franciscan Studies* 11, 363ff.), if Francis insists on the "sublimity of the highest poverty" whereby his friars "as pilgrims and strangers in this world" should "appropriate nothing to themselves, neither a house nor place nor anything", he immediately adds: "and wheresoever the brothers may be or meet one another let them act towards one another like members of a family. And each should with assurance make known his need to another, for if a mother nourishes and loves her child in the flesh, how much more eagerly ought one to love and nourish his brother in the spirit" (*Reg. bullata*, c. 6). In his first rule, the saint suggests this perfect brotherly love in a somewhat tentative fashion. "In so far as God gives them grace," he declares, "let each one love and nourish his brother as a mother loves and nourishes her son" (*Reg. prima*, c. 9). His final rule, however, has no hint of hesitation. No longer is there any question of God giving them the grace. Indeed, this is the very grace of their vocation — to love their confreres with a charity not only as constant as that wherewith a mother cherishes her child, but with a love that surpasses even this paragon of natural solicitude and care. For has not God Himself said as much equivalently: *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaiah 49:15). *And this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you* (Jn. 15:12).

"It is easy to see," writes Ramstetter, "how poverty ceases to be a hardship when brothers treat each other as brothers, when brothers know they can rely upon the sympathy and helpfulness of their brothers, brothers who love each other more than mothers can love their own children" (*art. cit.* 364). And the same might be said of obedience and chastity. For if out of love for Christ, the religious deprives himself of a family of his own, then his community, his order, becomes "his family" where he may experience and practice that Christian love or charity that is needed for the maturing of his personality. Obedience, likewise, is not difficult where superiors

consider themselves servants and "footwashers" of the community (*Admonitions*, n. 4), and receive their subjects "charitably and kindly so that (the subjects) may speak and act with them as masters with their servants" (*Reg. bullata*, c. 10).

But be he superior or subject, monk or friar, with a fixed monastery or wandering through the world as a pilgrim and stranger, the goal of every religious should be to love his fellow religious with something of Christ's own love for him. This is his *raison d'être*, his destiny as a member of a community. And woe to those religious whose conduct be such that anyone should have reason to regret leaving all to follow Christ. *He who does not love abides in death* (I Jn. 3:14).

Is it not from our brothers in religion that we receive the hundred-fold Christ promised in this life? Are they not our defense against our own weakness, or the attraction of the world? *A brother is a better defense than a strong city* (Prov. 18:19).

Are we conscious of our own obligations on this score? Is our help and concern for fellow religious limited to material aid? How often do we really pray for them? And then there is that difficult matter of good example. Only on the other side of eternity shall we know how much our actions have been an influence for good or evil in the lives of our confreres. While we ought not to have what is called an "evil eye", ever on the watch for the fault of a fellow religious, for *charity thinks no evil, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things* (I Cor. 13, 6-7), on the other hand we may also have an obligation at times to administer fraternal correction. "If among the brothers," Francis declared, "there should be a brother desiring to live carnally and not spiritually, let the brothers with whom he is humbly and zealously admonish, instruct, and correct him" (*Reg. prima*, c. 5). As we know from the other writings of Saint Francis, "carnally" means "according to the perverse desires of self-love" and "spiritually" means "guided by the Spirit of the Lord," who is also the Spirit of Love (Cf Esser-Hardick, *Die Schriften des hl. Franziskus*, Werl, 1951, p. 164ff). One of the characteristics of a good family is that one can be at times very outspoken in such matters, particularly if one has proved in countless ways that the reproof proceeds from true fraternal concern for our brother's welfare.

Where the true family spirit prevails, too, there is none of that despicable jealousy or envy of another's graces, talents, or accom-

plishments. But because religious charity is the fruit of the spirit and not something purely natural, we sometimes discover even in the convent "small souls" who by their ridicule would reduce everyone to the level of their own mediocrity. In fact, as Augustine remarks, "He who has not felt this has not made a single step in the way of perfection. As soon as one starts to improve, to wish to advance, to despise earthly things . . . to fix thoughts solely on the contemplation of God, . . . behold we see such a one suddenly made the target of the detractor's tongue, opposed in a thousand ways, and what is worse, any and every means is used to drag him from the ways of salvation" (*Enar. in ps. 119*, n. 3). If the community is to protect a religious, it is not to baby him or deprive him of initiative and a sense of responsibility. As in a family, each member has his own talents and his own tasks. Each receives his own grace from God. And while he should beware of the fault of beginners, of which Francis speaks in his Rule, flaunting his ideas and norms of conduct in the face of others who may not have received his grace, rather than "judging and despising himself" (*Reg. bullata*, c. 2), at the same time he ought not let a lack of encouragement or appreciation deter him from doing what he knows to be right and good. No religious is mature if he cannot stand on his own feet. On the other hand, he ought to examine himself on his attitude towards his confreres. Has he by his kindly interest and even personal sacrifice furthered their good work? Or, God forbid, is he tainted with *invidia clericalis*, tearing down and bringing to ruin what God Himself is seeking to build up through the zealous brethren of his order? "Whosoever envies his brother on account of the good which the Lord says or does in him," Francis declares, "commits a sin akin to blasphemy, because he envies the Most High Himself who says and does all that is good" (*Admon.*, n. 8).

But where religious, far from inviting the curse of Saint Francis by such conduct, seek rather through their charity to "edify" in the beautiful Pauline meaning of that term, the community for all the human weakness of its members can become a kind of paradise on earth, the hundred-fold Christ promised us below. To make it such should be the goal of every religious. For not only will they be fulfilling to the letter the second of God's two great commandments, but they will experience that deep joy and contentment that prompted Augustine's rhapsody: "The practice of charity is strength, fruit

and flower, beauty and sweetness, food and drink, nourishment and caresses, of which one never tires. If it enchants us so in this land of exile, what will it be like when we reach our fatherland" (*In epist. Joan.*, 10, 8).

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

THE HOLY FRIARS OF SAXONY

HOLY BROTHER LIEBHARD

I. *The graces he received.*

43. The Most High sometimes reveals to little ones those things which He hides from the wise and the prudent. Recently, that His grace might shine forth radiantly in one of these little ones, He filled a poor layservant in the convent of Braunschweig with great gifts and graces. In this way He showed to all the friars that He does not pay attention to the mere habit and profession, but solely to solid virtue in truly devout men.

At the time I entered the Order there was in the convent of Braunschweig a certain servant named Liebhard (Lefardus) who did menial service for the friars. His virtue and piety were such that because of his holy life the friars received him into the Order and joyfully invested him.

II. *His piety while still a layman.*

44. While still living as a layman in the service of the friars, he had dedicated himself totally to devotion and unceasing prayer.

Now the convent Church in Braunschweig is laid out in such a way that the convent servants who sleep in the cloister can enter the choir at any time of the day or night. Our Liebhard, then, as soon as he had finished his kitchen chores in the evening, would hurry to the choir and there he would offer to God his evening sacrifice of most devout and persevering supplication. But when the time of Matins was approaching he would go to bed a little while; but only rarely did he take off his clothes, for thus he could more quickly return to choir for midnight. Then as soon as the bell sounded he would arise and would spend the rest of the night in prayer until dawn, and would sleep a little. God rewarded his almost uninterrupted praying him to such perfection that he attained to the sweetest ecstasies while still wearing secular garb.

During the winter when he had to light the hearth, he was very often discovered in a trance, sitting on bended knees, his hands folded, his head bowed, his eyes open, neither seeing nor hearing nor feeling anything. The friars, wishing to find out whether his soul was rapt in the contemplation of heavenly things, sometimes pricked him with a sharp tool or even held burning candles to his hands, all of which left him perfectly insensible and quite unaware that he was being hurt. Only when he returned to consciousness would he complain about feeling pain where he had been injured. Sometimes, too, he was found standing in his cell, his face turned towards the wall, his hands folded, and himself unconscious of all earthly things; his body would be as rigid as a corpse through the whole of the ecstasy. And if his hands were sometimes forcibly gripped and pulled apart, they would immediately and violently rebound with a clap as if two boards were struck one against the other.

III. *His continuous prayer.*

45. Once it happened that Friar Liebhard was sent out with Friar Berthold, a laybrother, who at the time was his fellow scullion in the kitchen, to collect the eggs that had been begged in the alms-district of the convent. Now this servant, Berthold, knowing from experience the great devotion of his companion Liebhard, did not risk handing the basket of eggs to him, for he feared that Liebhard would forget all about them should the sweetness of devotion overwhelm him. Since it was thus up to him to carry the eggs, he handed Liebhard a basket full of cheeses. He hoped that if by chance Liebhard should enter into the joys of celestial visions, he would not have to worry about the safety of the eggs. But while they were returning to the city, the one with his eggs and the other with his cheeses, our Berthold, who was also a man of devotion, began to talk of God to Liebhard. So entrancingly did he speak that Liebhard was enkindled with a holy fire and was carried off into a transport of heavenly contemplation. No longer aware of the heavy load on his back he let it drop to the ground. And exulting in the fervor of his spirit, he ran like a man drunk with spiritual joy through the fields and along the road with such speed that Berthold was hardly able to follow him. Finally after this jubilation of heart he was caught up in an ecstasy of contemplation over those things he had been considering with wonderment of mind, and became as stiff as a corpse. His companion, finding him thus lifted out of himself, had to sit down by the roadside until he returned to consciousness.

*IV. His absentmindedness regarding
temporal things, as a result of
his frequent trances.*

46. In the springtime when the servants had to take care of the garden and plant the seed, Liebhard worked with the others in the garden. But he paid no attention to the useless words of his fellow workers, but instead he thought of how he might please God and offer himself to the Lord as an oblation full of sweetness. Hence, from his deep thought on the future joys, such a flood of devotion would come over him that he would become elated and begin to dance through the courtyard as though drunk; and he would indeed be merry from the sweetness of the interior drink.

In the same way he sometimes became so enrapt in thinking of heavenly things that he forgot the things he was assigned to do in the kitchen. For in this state he could no longer attend to the sauce and fish placed upon the fire, and they became a total loss. Also sometimes while he was sitting at the table the spirit would overcome him and he would heave deep sighs and groans in the fervor of devotion. But if this prevented him from eating and it seemed that he was about to have an ecstasy, he would arise from the table and go away by himself where he could hide in his ecstasy. But more than once he failed to reach such a hiding place and was overtaken on the way by the growing ecstasy. Later he would be found by the others, stiff as a dead person.

In the courtyard near the choir, where he was accustomed to pray at night, his many genuflections kept the grass from growing, and the ground was entirely bare. From this, everyone passing there could see how Liebhard spent his time in prayer and the praise of God.

V. His patience in bearing scoldings.

47. Friar Liebhard loved patience also as his own dear friend. For when he was harshly scolded for his negligences his only answer was, "God mend us all." And he always said this with real modesty and humility. And so that all would know of his utter willingness to submit to every insult, he told his fellow-menial, Friar Berthold: "If someone would strike off my head, or trample me into the mire under his feet, I would still love him as much as if he had heaped the grandest favors upon me!"

VI. His charity and obliging ways.

48. Friar Liebhard was also very charitable. For in the evening when he and his companion had to wash the turnips for the next day's dinner, he would readily do all the work alone and would urge his partner to go to bed. He was so filled with charity that he would will-

ingly have done all the work of the convent if his absentmindedness and forgetfulness had not stood in the way.

VII. His love of poverty.

49. So great was his zeal for poverty that (as a layman) he would never accept any return for his work except the bare necessities of food and clothing. So one day the guardian of that convent, who had to attend the chapter and who expected a change, called the servant to him and said: "Liebhard, you have served the friars long and faithfully without any compensation. Therefore, I would like to give you something now in case I should be changed or you should leave the service of the friars, so that in case of sickness or need you will have some little reserve laid aside." Liebhard answered: "My lord, I have no doubt of God's goodness. For He Who has looked out for me so carefully until this moment, will in His constant clemency also provide for me all that I shall need in the future. For never have I served the friars in hope of temporal gain; He for Whose love I have done it will reward me well in due time." But when the guardian kept pleading with him to accept at least half a farthing, he at last yielded on condition that the money should be given to the Brother Almoner and be used for the necessities of the friars. By no means did he want to take money for his own use in repayment for his services to the friars, lest it should seem that he had served them for wages.

*VIII. How Friar Berthold
tested Liebhard's
patience.*

50. Friar Berthold who served with him in the kitchen, and who was also a very devout man, once tried the patience of Friar Liebhard, when the latter was being rebuked by his superiors for some carelessness. As if in a burst of anger he addressed Liebhard: "I am afraid that, when our strength fails us because of hard work or old age, the friars will not keep us or feed us anymore, but will put us out without mercy and have us taken in at the hospital dedicated to the honor of the Blessed Virgin." When Liebhard heard this he replied: "If that should happen, we shall be much better off, for while we are now with the Blessed Francis, we shall then be with the Blessed Virgin. In this way we shall suffer no loss of grace but rather, because the Mother of God is so high in dignity, we shall find greater gain through her intercession." To such an extent had Liebhard thrown all his cares upon the Lord that he firmly placed all his hope and anxiety in God alone.

*IX. How he held himself unworthy to
be received into the Order and
the company of the friars.*

52. Friar Corwyth, the Custos, knew of Liebhard's holy life and praiseworthy conduct; and therefore he gladly received him into the Order because of his virtuous life, and with the consent of the friars he sent him after his reception to Wittenberg.¹² After entering the Order, Liebhard began to consider and to think how God had called him to this state through the merits of Saint Francis, to the end that he might serve Him more worthily and laudably. Because of this he soon began to make such progress that all came to realize that his former virtues bloomed forth anew and that by his marvelous devotion, his charity, patience, and humility, Friar Liebhard was reaching the very apex of perfection. And as the custodies of Magdeburg and Halberstadt were at that time but one custody under the Custos of Braunschweig, the latter came to Wittenberg, and observing the actions of Friar Liebhard, he was greatly pleased at his outstanding piety. And when he had observed his transcendent rapture in contemplation and had seen how Friar Liebhard was preparing with utmost diligence and unspeakable devotion for the coming Feast of Easter, the Custos ordered certain friars to keep him under careful observation during the time of prayer until he should pass into ecstasy and become sweetly united to the Lord in blessed union. By doing this, these friars found this very dear friar rapt in fervent prayer, lifted up altogether in heavenly glory and so absorbed in wonderful contemplation that his spirit could not be detected in its earthly dwelling.

XI. His death and burial.

53. But who can count the times when he passed into the heavenly Jordan "ascending through the desert leaning upon his Beloved; and finding his delights in the Spouse of his soul!" When he had led his life praiseworthy to its end, he died in Wittenberg and there shared his last resting place with his fellow friars.

HOLY BROTHER ADOLPH

I. His conversion.

54. In the year of the Lord 1223 the noble Lord Adolph, count of Holstein, Stormarn and Schaumburg, gained, with the help of God and by the aid of the citizens of Luebeck, a great victory on the battle field near Bornhovede.¹³ This ended the war he had been waging against the King of Denmark, the Duke of Schleswig, and other nobles. Soon, afterwards he celebrated the wedding of his daughter, whom he bestowed upon the Lord Abel, Duke of Schleswig. A few years later this Duke was

crowned King of Denmark in the Metropolitan see of that kingdom. But after the marriage the Lord Archbishop Gerard, with many tears, carried out a formal separation between the Lord Count and his wife Heylewyg. Then led by the Holy Spirit the Lord Count took the habit of the Friars Minor in the city of Hamburg and in that Order he served the Lord very devoutly for twenty-four years in voluntary poverty.

*II. How the Blessed Virgin appeared
to Friar Adolph and foretold his
death.*

55. After he had entered the Order, Friar Adolph built a chapel in Kiel and embellished its windows with the pictures of those Saints whom he loved best. On one occasion before his death he went into the sanctuary to pray and, behold! the Mother of Jesus appeared in great glory accompanied by the Saints whose likenesses were on the windows. Standing before him, she said to him: "My son, why are you so reluctant to die? Why do you fear? Die in peace, for my Son, Whom you have served so faithfully in the habit of the Friars Minor, will reward you well for all you have done for Him." Lifting up his eyes, he could not gaze upon the Blessed Virgin because of her exceeding splendor. Then the circle of Saints departed with the glorious Mother and Friar Adolph remained in the consolation of the Lord. But he would never say a word about this vision until his last days, and then he made known to his confessor the whole account of what he had seen and heard.

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (Transl.)

¹²Corwyth, we gather from a remark a few lines below, was Custos of Braunschweig, which then included what later became the custodies of Magdeburg and Halberstadt. Liebhard therefore joined the Order before their separation, which certainly took place before 1260.

¹³This date (1223) is manifestly wrong. Adolph John IV (Scouvenberg) did not win the victory at Luebeck until 1238 or 1239; the following year (1239 or 1240, according to different chroniclers) "he left his young wife and two small sons, John and Gerard, and all his worldly riches, to enter the Order of the Friars Minor. In this Order he became a priest, lived for many years in a praiseworthy manner and rested in the Lord in a blessed end" *Chronicum Principum Saxoniae*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Scriptores, XXV, p. 474). Another and later account says he intended to become a lay-brother, but because of his learning was persuaded to become a priest; his First Mass was offered in the Friars' church at Hamburg, which he had built, (*Anal. Fran.* III, p. 235, n. 7; and L. Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, an. 1239, n. 14). This latter account adds that as a friar he humbly labored with his own hands in building the convent (and chapel, as our text shows,) at Kiel. Once, when on the quest of milk, he unexpectedly met the knights of his son; after a moment of sudden embarrassment he recollected himself and in humility poured the milk over his head and body. Adolph died in 1261. (See also the *Chronicle of the twenty-four Generals*, A.F., III, p. 240; L. Lemmens, *Catalogus sanctorum fratrum minorum*, p. 34ff.)

AMECAMECA

Turning off to the right from the road to Puebla and heading toward Cuautla, we reach Amecameca, about forty miles from Mexico City. Here there is a small hill rising to the height of some five hundred feet, known as **Sacro Monte** from the shrine it harbors.

The history of this shrine goes back to the very beginnings of Mexico's colonization by the Spaniards. There were already five Franciscan Friars in the land when the famous thirteen Franciscans arrived in 1524. Their spiritual background derived from the reform movement of the great Cardinal Cisneros—responsible, among other things, for the Polyglot Bible—and more immediately from the severe reform of Juan of Guadalupe, in several respects similar to the later Capuchin reform. His followers made a practice of preaching an austere and simple Christianity to the neglected peasants and townfolk of the western provinces of Spain, according to the terms of the Bull issued by Alexander VI in 1496 that they might "throughout the world among the faithful and the infidel, preach the word of God and the holy Gospel." Such was the preparation of these Franciscans of so remarkably strict an observance for the enormous missionary work in New Spain.

There, in general, they were to set the forms in matters of administration as well as in apostolic zeal for the other mendicant groups who shortly joined them in their work among the Mexican Indians. When the only roads were hardly more than footpaths, they penetrated to the most remote settlements over a vastly extended territory and succeeded, after some years, in erecting churches wherever they went, many of magnificent architecture and nearly all of them of excellent taste and charm. By their humble way of life and their sincere preaching, the friars won the Indians' respect and admiration; acceptance of the Christian faith soon followed. Their labors in behalf of education and their defense of the native population against enslavement and exploitation by the conquerors is an essential part of the story of the emergent pattern of colonial culture in Mexico. Not even the modern secularist who professes no interest in such things, attempts very much to discredit their tremendous achievement.

The leader of this first apostolic band of the sons of Saint Francis was Fray Martin de Valencia, who had taken the habit in the convent of Mayorga in the province of Santiago and was the second provincial of the custody of San Gabriel in Extremadura, founded in 1516, when the call came to him in 1522 to proceed to the New World. Later he was guardian of the convent of Tlalmanalco (today, together with its open chapel, **completely in ruins**) and when in 1533 he retired there to end his

AMECAMECA

earthly life the following year, he was but a few miles distant from Amecameca. It was at Amecameca that he made an oratory in a hillside cave where he was accustomed to withdraw occasionally for periods of prayer and penance. From this cave he could look out upon the snow-covered peaks of Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, and who knows what profound considerations may have filled his soul or what divine discourse took place as he contemplated the majestic scene and thought of the legends of the gods and giants of those mountains and of the Christian truths he had brought for the first time to so many multitudes. This cave remains, after four centuries, sacred to the memory of one of the truly luminous figures of Mexican history, whose enduring greatness lies in the fact that he cared nothing for himself or his future fame but only for the glory of the God who had made him.

However, the narrative of Amecameca does not stop at this point, for in the sacred cave is to be found a holy image well worthy of veneration. The story of how it got there is interesting. It seems that one day a mule team was passing by burdened with boxes containing various statues destined for churches in more distant places. After a short rest, the muleteers, when ready to resume their journey, discovered that one of the mules had disappeared. Searching with some difficulty the wooded region about, they finally found the animal in Fray Martin's cave. Though the drivers used all their resources to urge it forth, the mule refused to move. Thinking that perhaps this was due to the weight of the box that burdened it, they unfastened the box and set it on the ground. The mule was free to move, but now they found they could not lift the box from the ground. To see what might be the reason for this phenomenon, the men opened the crate and viewed within, as they expected, a carved figure of Christ representing him as he lay in the tomb. Reverently they removed the image and placed it upon their cloaks and mantles alongside its erstwhile coffin. But when they attempted to replace it in the crate in order to go on their way, they found to their astonishment that in no manner could they budge it. By this time the reason for the prodigy began to dawn upon them—the image of the dead Christ had selected this site as its final resting place.

From that day to this the statue has reposed in the cave already made holy by Fray Martin de Valencia, the object of veneration of the inhabitants of the neighborhood as well as of pilgrims from distant parts who go there to pay homage and present their requests. At the beginning of Lent the statue in its glass case is taken to the parish church of Amecameca—began by the Dominicans in 1547—and is returned to the Sacred Mount on Good Friday.

Those who are not accustomed to the representations of the dead

Christ which are found in many of the churches of Mexico may come upon them with something of surprise, if not outright revulsion. The faith in some other countries, especially to the north, is certainly less graphic, but many Mexicans would find it rather stultified and colorless. Such comparisons aside, however, there is no doubt that these images of our Lord in the tomb are quite vivid. And why not? After Christ died on the cross, his body was taken down, prepared for burial, and placed in the tomb. Saint John, whose Gospel is most descriptive of what happened, tells how Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate to *let him take away the body of Jesus* and how there was brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes and how *they took Jesus' body, then, and wrapped it in winding cloths with the spices* and laid it in a new tomb in a nearby garden. These carved figures closely follow the Gospel description. They usually have a white sheet or a scarlet or purple velvet coverlet drawn up over the entire body, leaving only the head exposed. Under the chin there passes a broad linen band and around the wounded head is another—for the crown of thorns has been removed—and the hair, washed and brushed, falls gracefully to the shoulders on either side. The stillness of the lacerated body, the pallor of the bruised countenance, the closed eyes, testify that the work of redemption is finished, the sacrifice complete, that the Son of Man has become like unto other men in all thing save sin, even to death. The swathed body is, moreover, confirmation of the words: *In the world you will find only tribulation; but take courage, I have overcome the world*—for it is this same body that will rise transfigured in glory. Those who pass by with squeamish shudders and averted head may be turning away from much more, spiritually, than they realize.

The problem here at Amecameca—but certainly not exclusively here—is to see beyond the immediate appearance and to overlook a great deal that naturally goes against the grain. For it must be said, and no doubt ought to be said, that the approach to this shrine, up the cobbled way that leads past the Stations of the Cross, is dirty and dilapidated, that the buildings are in bad repair, and that the chapel itself is extremely shabby. These conditions, unfortunately, are in keeping with the general tone of Amecameca which is typical of those Mexican towns, drab and distressful, which modern progress has not yet reached.

This is particularly regrettable in view of one more important aspect of Sacro Monte. The image of the dead Christ is really remarkable and possessed of extraordinary qualities. The saying is that whoever approaches it with humility—willing to overlook certain distasteful exterior elements—and with the proper dispositions present their petitions, will find that they have not gone there in vain. Not that they will experience a miracle on the spot—there is no need for that. But when such

suppliants have returned home they may well be aware that something has happened to them, or to the persons for whom they have prayed, or to the difficult circumstances which demanded solution. If this taxes credence, go to Amecameca and put it to the test.

Gordon Bodenwein

CONVERSION: MARGARET OF CORTONA

How quickly carefree worlds can crumble, crash,
And be extinct !
How swiftly dust returns to dust:
One brigand's brutal blow was all!
A hound howled. Then silence . . .
Your lover lies alone, Margaret.
A dog's insistence drew you to this place.
The Hound of Grace tugged at your skirts
Until you came upon his handsome face
Half-hid in mud and framed in blood.
Scream, woman !
Sound the siren of your terror !
But do not be too prodigal with cries and tears.
Rather, save them:
Store them in the fragments of your shattered heart.
Spill them later from the housetops of your penitence
Like nard upon Cortona's feet.

— Fr. Pierre Van Groll, O.F.M.Cap.

Like every founder of a religious order, congregation or society, Saint Francis became obsessed with the desire to imitate the example of Christ's life and so to graft the gospel to his daily conduct as to lose his identity in his Divine Master. That, as a consequence of loving God and faithfully keeping His word, Christ would make His abode with him and reveal Himself to him, his soul quivered with a consuming, yet humble, ambition to fulfill the requirements for the great visitation. Appreciative of his abysmal unworthiness of divine recognition: "Who are you, O God, most dear, and who am I, your worthless little worm of a servant;" nevertheless, he was enraptured by the embryonic possibility. "Please, O Lord, let the fiery, honeyed force of your love lap up my spirit from everything there is under heaven so that I may die for love of love for you." (Op. 125) During the course of his conversion, the qualities of Christ gradually narrowed into focus and His virtues took the form of a particular model to be imitated and embodied in him. That Christ had done all things well was a gospel fact, but particularly how and why He did so was to be resolved by a personal diagnosis of the Master and by a resultant emphasis upon special virtues which, to Francis at least, best mapped the way that followed his Lord. Thus Francis could say, when he was striving to formulate a rule of life that would render his followers Christ-like, "I wish you not to speak to me of any other rule, not of Benedict, nor of Augustine, nor of Bernard." Not that one contradicted the other, nor that one's focus of Christ rendered all others' blurred; but rather that inasmuch as each one embraced Christ entirely with the motive of loving Him completely, each also was drawn to one or more particular virtue, which, for him, demanded special attention and necessitated acquisition thereof if he were to become Christ-like.

It is in this light that certain virtues may be called "Franciscan," for they are the ones which Francis believed to have been predominant throughout the diverse circumstances of Christ's life. Indeed, Christ had done all things well, but for Francis there had always been evidence of meekness, peacefulness, humility, and gentleness. Of such virtues was the beginning of Christ's life: the stable, a manger, the unprivileged shepherds, poverty, humble and self-effacing Mary and Joseph. Of such virtues was the end of that life: a cross, nakedness, a borrowed tomb. And throughout the three public years there was the repeated evidence of Christ's own words: *I am meek and humble of heart* (Matt. 11:29). As Francis paged the gospels, ploughed and harrowed their lines to cultivate a rich crop of truth and virtue, the meekness and humility of Christ held his eye, like the silver ribbon of the moon's reflected light

across the dark, mysterious ocean. So it was that he wrote in his rule: "I counsel, admonish and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ, that when they go about in the world, they should not quarrel, argue, nor judge others; but they should be meek, peaceful, modest, gentle, and humble" (Rule III). It was elementary logic that he should so exhort his followers, for Christ had said of Himself that He was meek and humble of heart. So, then, must Francis be; so, then, must be his followers. Nor was this to be regarded as a lesser virtue—optional, so to speak; for Francis exhorted, urged, that this virtue of meekness be especially evidenced in the lives of his disciples, who were at all times to be harbingers of peace. "Peace be to this house." Unless the kindly warmth of meekness permeated their entire being, they would not truly be called *Fratres Minores* nor would they be said to be "following the teaching and footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ," (Op. 25), as Francis counselled, admonished, and exhorted. They would be lacking in one of the essential ingredients of Christ-likeness, according to the Franciscan ideal.

The particular beauty and magnetic attraction of the Franciscan way of life spring from what may be termed, "the silent virtues;" and it is in this perspective that the axiom, "silence is golden," has its truest and most profound meaning. It is evidenced particularly in meekness, which holds anger in check and locks the tongue so that no quarrel or vituperation may escape to disrupt the peace or sear the heart of one's fellow man. This quiet virtue steers attention to humanity, specializing in the recognition, appreciation and understanding of its qualities, characteristics, ideals, foibles, day-to-day difficulties, likes and dislikes expressed or patently implied in one's daily word or conduct. Seemingly unoccupied, the disciple is engrossed in mental observations to increase ways and means to foster concord, to avoid even the conception of a trial or pang within his neighbor. Meekness is an examining physician of human frailty, seeking how to lessen it; it is a probing spectator of the human race, seeking how to help it. In the realm of world affairs it is the discerning diplomat at the conference table; it is the pleasing personality that disperses discomfort and uneasiness, and makes one feel in place and wanted; it is the palliatory business director who magically causes accounts to multiply. "*And they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one.*" (1 Cor. 1X, 25).

By means of his habitual, unnoticed observation of his co-existants, the disciple increasingly realizes that the thoughtless word or deed can be a thrust of a dull, jagged knife; that frequently what is summarized as an unintended hurt or sorrow is in reality a lack of consideration, concern, and consciousness of another's over-all make-up; that the over-

worked rejoinder, "I'm sorry," or, "I didn't mean it," has as its foundation an uncultivated sensibility for our fellow man's peacefulness. Meekness has no hand in fashioning man-made crosses, for it is concerned not with self, but with others; it prefers to listen than to talk, to be the audience rather than the performer who gains the plaudits; it is happy to applaud, to console, to help even, if necessary, without recognition, to waive what is due, and to estimate values in relation to eternity. It allows for considered opposition to a viewpoint expressed or of an action performed, but never to the exclusion of reined emotions, so that a clear evaluation of benefit or futility prevails at all times. Futility of conversation is quickly recognized, and then the priceless wisdom of mortification stems the possibility of erupting passions. Meekness possesses as one of its many facets the pervading awareness of the existence in man of human defects and of countless personal idiosyncracies, which, in their over-all insignificance, nevertheless have the potency to ignite in another the spark of impatience, temper, uncharitableness, spreading discord, hurt, and inner turmoil. The disciple is perpetually on guard against the sudden display of another's imperfections and weakness, and, therefore, is seldom if ever surprised and propelled into exhibitions of equal frailty. Patience, understanding, and a prevailing spirit of forgiveness are his ever accessible tools, in whose use he labors unceasingly for mastery. "Blessed is the person," said Francis, "that puts up with the frailty of his neighbor to the extent he would like his neighbor to put up with him if he were in a similar plight."

In order to render this virtue more keen and sensitive in practice, the disciple is reined by moderation. He resists talking too much or without cause, for too often the wagging tongue renders inaudible the sage whisperings of common sense, balance, altruism and tact. He thinks well before speaking, and, like the diplomat, he thinks twice and then says nothing, for the unweighed word, once expressed, betimes falls heavily upon another's heart. He laughs genuinely but not without sobriety. Like words, unbridled laughter can rankle, disturb, annoy, bore, and even wound. He is conscious of the fact that man does not convey or transmit his inner thoughts, emotions, and reactions by word alone, but also by his tone, his gestures, his facial expressions. These, too, must be studied by the disciple and controlled, for, while the tongue is silent, the eye may trumpet anger, impatience, and dislike as loudly as a verbal explosion. He realizes, too, that silence is not always wise nor most fruitful, but that at times it may prompt discomfort, embarrassment, and even resentment within his neighbor; and so there will be situations which will elicit from him a few well tempered words in order to ease a

tense or uncomfortable situation, and set everything in proper balance and value.

Wisely, then, did Francis urge his followers to be meek; it is Christ-likeness as described by Christ Himself; it is the product of temperance, patience, fortitude, and charity; and it is proof positive that virtue and sanctity can be attained only by a vivid and studied awareness of the countless opportunities provided by daily living wherein the practice of virtue is repeatedly paged. Affability, which is the manifestation of meekness, is an essential quality to the maintenance of, or introduction to, peace, and of all the positive and substantial qualities in man, affability is the one most difficult to acquire, because the bloodstream of meekness flows from all other virtues. "Meekness," wrote Saint Jerome in his *Commentary on Galatians*, 5:20, "is a mild virtue; it is kindly, serene, gentle in speech, gracious in manner; it is a delicate blending of all the virtues." And the saint goes on to pinpoint the virtues even more precisely; "Kindness is akin to it, for, like meekness, it seeks to please; still it differs from the latter in that it is not as winsome and seems more rigid, for though equally prompt to accomplish good and render service, it lacks that charm, that gentleness that wins all hearts."

As the adult is humored and enchanted by the innocence of a child, so the countless failings of mankind are overcome by the winning virtue of meekness. For good reason, then, all have been directed by Christ to become as little children, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. In his insistence on meekness there was a keen realization in Francis of the tragic possibility and flagrant contradiction of a man of prayer and dedication, self-centered, of volatile temper, bombastic, inconsiderate, harsh, uncouth: a man of chapel spirituality, blind to its fulfillment in a world riddled with trial and weaknesses, wherein the kind hand of virtue is meant to paint beauty where frailty detracts from the nobility of man, "For my part," said Francis, "I want just this privilege from the lord, never to have any other privilege from anybody than to do reverence to everybody and by obedience to the holy Rule to convert everybody by example more than by word" (MP 50).

To Francis, spirituality was not so much something to own as something to give; something by which others were to be helped, lifted up, assuaged, and restored to peace. It was a tender bloom to be watered and nurtured privately, but to be displayed publicly so that its sweet scent might fill the air. Meekness, in its delicate blending of all the virtues, looked out on a vista of limitless spiritual horizons: "I became all things to all men that I might save all." (I Cor. 9:22). In his daily study of his Master, Francis must have noted what Isaiah prophesied of the Messiah: "The bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he

shall not quench" (Is. 13:3). This was how the Savior was to be recognized. Francis observed his Lord with His apostles: how He bore with their faults, their ignorance, even their rudeness; how He was patient when impatience seemed justified to hurry the slow process of their education. He heard his Lord preach meekness unceasingly. His apostles must be simple as doves, meek as lambs, and they must forgive seventy times seven times. To walk in the footsteps of Christ meant, for Francis, to be meek, for then would the soul be emptied of self and filled with Almighty God.

Fr. Celestine Regnier, O.F.M. Conv.

THE CHRISTOLOGICAL CONTENT OF THE *SERMONES* OF SAINT ANTHONY. Juniper M. Cummings, O.F.M. Conv. Padua: 1953. Distributed in the U.S.A. by Bede's Book-Nook, Chaska, Minnesota. Pp. X-8-143. Paper. \$2.00

This study is an excellent presentation of the Christology of Saint Anthony, based on the *Sermones*, the only writings believed to be authentically his. The Evangelical Doctor built his sermons upon the liturgy, arranging them around the Gospel, Epistle, second nocturn lessons of the breviary, and the Introit. In this, of course, Saint Anthony was following the practice of his own day; but his use of the liturgy as a means of imparting doctrine is wholly in harmony with our modern liturgical movements, and also gives evidence of the traditional Franciscan reverence for, and influence upon, the liturgy of the Roman Church.

Father Cummings' study shows that Saint Anthony's Christological doctrine was unusually rich and quite traditional. Here we can find a source for such devotions as to the Holy Face, the Holy Name, the Holy Eucharist, the Sacred Heart, and the Precious Blood. Most important, perhaps, for the average reader, is the Anthonian doctrine on the spiritual life. Truly and thoroughly Christocentric, Saint Anthony offers a spiritual-

ity that is based neither on the training of the will nor on the training of the mind in the grasp of abstract thought, but rather on a total following of Christ Who is the Way, a seeking of Christ Who is the Truth, and a living in Christ Who is the Life. It is interesting to note, in passing, that Saint Anthony stresses several aspects of Christology that other Doctors treat rather sketchily: for example, the importance of the devil in soteriology, and Christ's role in the beatitude of angels and men.

On the whole, Fr. Cummings has produced a highly useful study of the Christology of Saint Anthony, and has presented his material in a manner suitable to the untrained reader as well as to the theologian. Those who are concerned about footnotes, however, will no doubt be annoyed at the extremely abbreviated method of reference—the only flaw in an otherwise thoroughly competent treatment of deeply interesting subject.

SMF

ANSELM WEBER, O.F.M., MISSIONARY TO THE NAVAHO. Robert Wilken, O.F.M. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1955. Pp. x-255. \$4.50.

Here is a factual and realistic picture of the Franciscan endeavor among the Indians and the Anglos of the Southwest

from 1898 to 1921. The author has made no attempt to dramatize or glamorize the labors of the first three friars who laid the foundations of the Navaho mission, nor does he attempt to conceal or palliate the stupidity and narrowness and prejudice of those who created heart-breaking difficulties for the struggling missionaries. The weaknesses of the missionaries themselves are frankly stated, and their mistakes as well as their triumphs are all recorded. The complete picture is hardly a testimonial to human wisdom and charity, but rather a striking testimonial to the power of God working through defective human instruments.

The story is well told in vigorous narrative style, and comfortably supplied with sources and documents. It is a story

of struggle and heartbreak, of beauty and tragedy; but above all, it is a story of authentic American mission life, and because of this, it is genuinely and deeply inspiring.

SMF

LIVING THE LITTLE OFFICE. Sister Marianna Gildea, R.S.M. Dallas, Pennsylvania: College Misericordia, 1955. Pp. xv-167.

Sister Marianna has attempted here to provide a running commentary or meditation on the Psalms of the Little Office. The purpose is not to give the reader anything like a learned discussion of the Psalms nor of the construction of the Office, but rather to offer helpful thoughts for those who may find the Psalms difficult to understand.

SMF

LYRE

Thy hand upon the lyre of spring
Has plucked so lightly at the air
That we are wakened, unaware
Of light and music quickening.

Robert Lax

OUR FRANCISCAN VOCATION

I

The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this, namely, to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, by living in obedience, without property, and in chastity. (II Rule)

REFLECTION

In these few words our holy Father Saint Francis summarizes the way of life he chose for himself and for those who would follow him. It is to live a life according to the holy Gospel of Christ. Originally, Francis did not even want to write out a set rule of life for his followers. He

simply wanted them to put into practice what our Lord teaches in the Gospel. As for the three great counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, these were to be whole-heartedly accepted by means of the usual dedication of oneself to God in public vows.

Mother Church tells us Franciscans today that under pain of sin we are obliged to observe these vows and also the items of our Rule which she has declared to be of strict obligation. But is it the mind of the Church that we should forget the ideal of Saint Francis? No, as Franciscans we should be ardent lovers of Christ. We should strive to the best of our ability *to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

The Gospel is not just a book to be placed reverently on the shelf. The Gospel is not just a part of the Mass. The Gospel is not just some stories about Jesus. No, the Gospel is rather the very life of the Friars Minor.

II

I, little brother, (Francis) wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of his most holy Mother and to persevere in it until the end. And I beg you, and advise you, always to live in that most holy life and poverty. And guard yourselves carefully, lest in any way you ever depart from it through the teaching or advice of anyone. (Letter to Saint Clare)

REFLECTION

It is not enough for us Franciscans to fall in love with the Gospel ideal of Saint Francis and *wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ*. We must also be able and willing to *persevere in it until the end*. And that is easier said than done. For human nature tends to grow discouraged, lazy, and lax. That is why Saint Francis says, "*Guard yourselves carefully.*" Check yourself to see whether you have given in to this natural tendency to slacken off in effort to follow the Gospel life of Francis. Another reason why perseverance in our ideals is so difficult is because the *teaching or advice* of the world and false brethren tend to persuade us to depart from the Franciscan ideal. We must not listen to them but to the pleading voice of our Father: "*I beg you, and advise you . . .*"

Saint Clare, to whom Saint Francis first addressed these words, stubbornly refused to give up her ideal as she had learned it from him. Are we equally determined *always to live in that most holy life*?

III

Let all the brothers strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ. And let them remember that we ought to have nothing else in the whole world, except, as the Apostle says: "Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content" (I Tim. 6:8). (I Rule)

REFLECTION

To join Saint Francis in the following of Christ means to leave behind the world and all its trappings and allurements. If we wish like Francis to attach ourselves to the Savior, then we must detach ourselves from the creature comforts in which human nature delights. When we chose Christ as our love by entering a religious order, we shook off the world. But this same world continues to woo us with its charms. Therefore we must really *strive*, that is, put real effort in our work of following the *humility and poverty . . . of Christ*.

Meditations on death and judgment will help us to realize that there is no eternal value in the riches and pleasures of this life. Then nothing will remain except the amount of grace and merit we have treasured up for ourselves in heaven. When Christ judges us we will see how truly nothing else in the whole world matters except our love and service of him.

Do we *remember* these things? Do we really *strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ* by giving up all unnecessary things? Do we use materials sparingly in the spirit of poverty? Or do we acquire and hoard up things superfluous? Do we always want the newest and finest in clothing and materials? Do we desire what we cannot have? Is it really true that "*having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content*?"

IV

All of us brothers should keep a very careful watch over ourselves, lest under the guise of some reward, or work, or assistance, we dissipate or separate our mind and heart from the Lord. (I Rule, 22)

REFLECTION

All religious must *keep a very careful watch* against the wiles of the devil, who seeks to *separate our mind and our heart from the Lord*. When Satan can no longer lure us away from God with worldly temptations, with human vainglory, bodily pleasures, and such like, he then tries other methods.

Under the guise of some reward, or work or assistance, that is, under the appearance of something good, he proposes some scheme to us. The *reward* may be some advantage for ourselves or our community. The

work may be some worthwhile project. The aid may be some help to our neighbor. Yet the thing proposed, or the manner in which it is carried out, is contrary to obedience or the true religious spirit. This seemingly good object or activity soon occupies all our attention; it becomes uppermost in our desires. It interferes with fraternal charity, regular observance, and the spirit of recollection. Thus it causes us to *dissipate or separate our mind and heart from the Lord*. On the contrary, if we stay with what obedience prescribes and our Rule of life permits, then we shall be of one mind and heart with Christ.

V

I warn and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ that the brothers beware of all pride, vainglory, envy, avarice, the care and worry of this world, of detraction and complaining. (I Rule, 10)

REFLECTION

Saint Francis wishes to warn us in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, to remind us that someday Christ will come to judge us, as the Gospel for the First Sunday of Advent tells us. Then we will have to account for the pride . . . envy . . . detraction, and other vices in which we may have indulged.

Our seraphic Father also exhorts . . . in the Lord Jesus Christ, that is, he appeals to our love for Jesus. He asks that we avoid all the above-mentioned sins and faults because they are displeasing to our Savior.

The sins enumerated here by our holy Father Francis are not the gross, external crimes such as murder, robbery, and adultery. Rather they are the more hidden, insidious sins of the soul, of the heart, of the lips. Only too well do we know that these are often found among us religious — at least to some degree. Because they are not so external and visible to the eye, they all the more easily creep through the cracks of the cloister and into our lives. Saint Francis therefore admonishes us to keep our conscience on the watch and beware of these sins.

VI

Let them note that this is what they must desire above all things to possess the spirit of the Lord and his holy activity, always to pray to him with a pure heart, in persecution and sickness to retain humility and patience, and to love those who afflict, reproach, and contradict us. (II Rule, 10)

REFLECTION

We have already heard Saint Francis counseling us to accept the Gospel with its poverty, chastity, and obedience. He further urged us to detach

our hearts from the things of the world. Then he warned us of sins of the heart.

Now in the above passage the Poverello becomes very positive. He wants us to EMPTY our heart of the world and of sin, in order that we may FILL it with God, with the indwelling presence by grace of the most holy Trinity. He desires us to *possess the spirit of the Lord*, to be temples of the Holy Spirit. "You however are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the spirit of God dwells in you" (Rom. 8:9). "He abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us" (I Jn. 3:24).

Let us keep ourselves in the state of grace, that we may not lose this precious treasure of God dwelling in our heart. Let us be more conscious of this "sweet Guest of the soul", not forgetting or ignoring him. Attentively let us listen to his voice, Generously let us cooperate with his inspirations. Thus the *Spirit of the Lord* will live in us by his *holy activity*, helping us to practice Christian *humility and patience*.

VII

Let us guard ourselves against the wisdom of this world and the prudence of the flesh for the spirit of the flesh greatly desires and strives for the possession of words, but very little for the work; it does not seek religion and interior sanctity of spirit, but wishes and desires a religion and sanctity appearing outwardly to men. And these are the ones of whom the Lord says "Amen, I say to you, they have had their reward" (Matt. 6:2). (I Rule, 17)

REFLECTION

Formalism consists in performing external ceremonies without the proper interior spirit. Hypocrisy is an attempt to appear better than we really are. Both are here condemned by Saint Francis. He wants in his followers sincerity and true inner spirit.

But *the wisdom of this world* goes all out for hypocrisy, sham, artificiality, and formalities. The wrapper is more important than the contents; the label counts more than the product. Our fruit is often artificially colored to make it look riper and sweeter than it really is. A man's name is more important than his character. The world also *desires . . . words*. Millions are spent freely on press and advertising; work, however, is shortened and avoided wherever possible.

Is our life mainly a *religion and sanctity appearing outwardly to men*? Fingering a rosary, paging through pious books, quoting lives of the Saints or Scripture: these things do not always spell holiness. *Interior sanctity of spirit* is our goal.

Martin Wolter, O.F.M.

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Chronological List of the publications of the Franciscan Institute

FIP means Franciscan Institute Publications;

SLS stands for Spirit and Life Series.

- 1944 1. *The Tractatus de successivis* Attributed to William Ockham, edit. Ph. Boehner, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 1.
- 1945 2. *The Tractatus de praedestinatione et de praescientia Dei et de futuris contingentibus*, edit. Ph. Boehner, FIP Philosophy Series 2.
- 1946 3. *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, by Allan B. Wolter, FIP Philosophy Series 3.
- 1947 4. *Intuitive Cognition. A Key to the Significance of the Later Scholastics*, by Sebastian Day, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 4.
5. *Three Saints' Lives* by Nicholas Bozon, edit. Sr. M. Amelia Klenke, O.P., FIP History Series 1.
- 1948 6. *Avicennae Metaphysica*. Pro manuscripto, reproduction of the Venice edition of 1508 (Exhausted).
7. *Imperial Government and Catholic Missions in China During the Years 1784—1785*, by Bernard H. Willeke, O.F.M., FIP Missiology Series 1.
8. *From Sunday to Sunday*, by Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., SLS 1.
- 1949 9. *The De Primo Principio of John Duns Scotus. A Revised Text and a Translation*, by Evan Roche, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 5. (Exhausted).
- 1950 10. *The Negotiations Between Ch'i-Ying and Lagrène 1844—1846*, by Angelus Grosse-Aschoff, O.F.M., FIP Missiology Series 2 (Exhausted).
11. *The Eucharistic Teaching of William Ockham*, by Gabriel Buescher, FIP Theology Series 1.
12. *De corredemptione B. V. Mariae*, by Juniper Carol, FIP Theology Series 2.
- 13—15. *Ven. Ioannis Duns Scoti Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, 3 vol., reprint of the Wadding edition (Exhausted).
- 1951 16. *The Psychology of Love According to Saint Bonaventure*, by Robert P. Prentice, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 6.
17. *Evidence and Its Function According to John Duns Scotus*, by Peter C. Vier, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 7.
18. *Seven More Poems* by Nicholas Bozon, edit. Sr. M. Amelia Klenke, O. P., FIP History Series 2.
19. *Walter Burleigh, De puritate artis logicae (Tractatus brevior)*, edit. Ph. Boehner, O.F.M., FIP Text Series 1 (Exhausted).
20. *William Ockham, Summa Logicae. Pars Prima*, edit. Ph. Boehner, O.F.M., vol. I, FIP Text Series 2, vol. I.
- 1952 21. *The Psychology of Habit According to William Ockham*, by Oswald Fuchs, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 8 (Exhausted).
22. *The Concept of Univocity Regarding the Predication of God and Creature According to William Ockham*, by Matthew C. Menges, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 9.
23. *The Revelations of Margaret of Cortona*, by Bishop Ange-Marie Hiral, O.F.M., SLS 2.
- 1953 24. *Theory of Demonstrations According to William Ockham*, by Damascene Webering, O.F.M., FIP Philosophy Series 10.
25. *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Bonaventure*, by Sr. Emma Jane M. Spargo, Holy Names Sisters, FIP Philosophy Series 11.
26. Peter Aureoli, *Scriptum super Primum Sententiarum*, vol. I, edit. Eligius M. Buytaert, O.F.M., FIP Text Series 3, vol. I (vol. II in press; vol. III—VIII will follow).
27. Guidonis de Orchellis *Tractatus de Sacramentis ex eius Summa de Sacramentis et Officiis Ecclesiae*, edit. Damian and Odolph Van den Eynde, O.F.M., FIP Text Series 4.
- 28—29. Henry of Ghent, *Summae quaestionum ordinarium*, Reprint of the 1520 edit., FIP Text Series 5, vol. I—II.
30. St. John Damascene, *Dialectica*, Version of Robert Grosseteste, edit. Owen A. Colligan, O.F.M., FIP Text Series 6.
31. *Examination of Conscience According to Saint Bonaventure*, by Ph. Boehner, O.F.M., SLS 3 (almost exhausted; new edit. in press).
32. *In Journeyings Often*, by Marion Habig, SLS 4.
33. *The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi*, by Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. and Sr. M. Frances Laughlin, C. M. I. C., SLS 5.
- 1954 34. *William Ockham, Summa Logicae, Pars Secunda et prima Tertiae*, edit. Ph. Boehner, O.F.M., FIP Text Series 2, vol. II.
35. *The First Gospel, Genesis 3:15*, by Dominic J. Unger, O.F.M. Cap., FIP Theology Series 3.
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45. *John Duns Scotus, A Teacher for Our Times*, by Beraud de Saint Maurice transl. Columban Duffy, O.F.M.
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47. *Saint Bonaventure's De Reductione artium ad theologiam. A commentary With An Introduction and Translation*, by Sr. Emma Therese Healy, Sisters of Saint Joseph, Erie, Pa.; Works of Saint Bonaventure 1.
48. *Mary in the Franciscan Order. Proceedings of the Third National Meeting of Franciscan Sisterhoods*, Nov. 26—27, 1954. Volume III.
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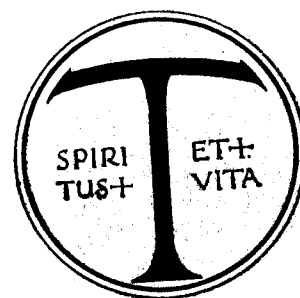
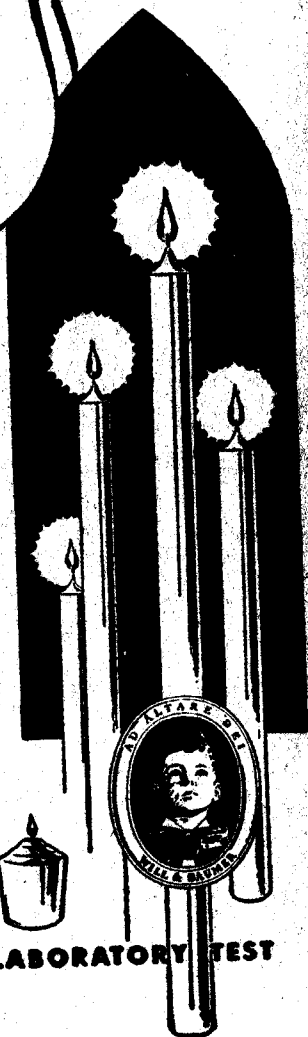
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FRANCISCAN BRIEFS



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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

THE QUEENSHIP OF MARY

I

In the Book of Esther we find recorded a dramatic episode in Jewish history. It occurred around 480 B.C., when the Jews were in exile. The scene was the glittering court of Xerxes the Great, or Assuerus, as the Hebrews pronounced it. The Persian prince was lord and master of the whole Eastern world, from Ethiopia to India, and ruled with an iron hand. Though Xerxes himself was not an evil man, Aman, his prime minister, was cleverly and unscrupulously cruel, especially in his hatred of the Jews. He finally managed to convince Xerxes that Persia's greatest enemy was not any of her foreign foes but the subject Hebrew people who were weakening the empire from within. He connived a wholesale massacre that would wipe God's chosen people off the face of the earth. The facts were made public. The date was set. In all the hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the empire the terrible edict was published. The Jews, however, turned to prayer and penance, and implored God to save them from destruction. In this crisis there was one ray of hope: unknown to either the king or the prime minister, the queen was a Jewess.

It had happened in somewhat strange fashion. When Xerxes had returned from his conquest of Greece, he had ordered a tremendous celebration that went on for days. The princes of neighboring states and the governors of the Persian provinces had been invited to the banquet hall that they might glimpse the power and glory of Xerxes the Great. On the seventh day of the feast, the impulse had seized him to have Queen Vasthi brought to the banquet hall that he might display her beauty before his guests. But Vasthi was proud, and had refused to have her royal dignity exhibited before the roistering nobles. The consequence of her affront to the royal will had been deposition. Thereupon Xerxes had sent couriers to every province of the empire to select the most beautiful maidens they could find and to bring them into his presence that he might choose a successor to the deposed Queen. And of all the beautiful maidens in the Persian empire, Esther, niece and adopted

daughter of Mardochaeus the Jew, had seemed most desirable to the mighty Xerxes. He made her his Queen, and raised her up from her lowly estate. At the advice of Mardochaeus, however, she had said nothing of her Jewish origin. Mardochaeus, on his part, had kept close to the royal court that he might watch over his lovely Esther as much as possible. That was how he happened to discover a plot against the King's life. He relayed the information to Esther, who brought it to the King. The conspirators had been punished and Mardochaeus' name, according to Persian custom, had been put on public record as a benefactor of the King. But this had occurred months ago, and now when the Prime Minister Aman was planning to exterminate the Jews, the name of Mardochaeus was gathering dust in the royal archives. There was no way of bringing it to the King's attention; no way, unless Queen Esther would act for him. But this was no easy matter in an age and a nation wherein kings were hailed as gods and women regarded as mere slaves of male pleasure. It was, in fact, strictly forbidden for any of the King's women to enter his presence unless called for. The penalty for disobedience was quite effective. It was death.

Yet Queen Esther could not ignore the message of her foster father. *Remember the days of thy low estate and speak to the king for us and deliver us from death* (15:2). She asked her people to pray and fast with her for three days and three nights; then, arraying herself in her most splendid attire, she presented herself with fear and trembling at the throne-room of her lord. When Xerxes saw her his face darkened with anger. To the trembling girl he seemed like one of God's avenging angels. Thinking that all was lost, she grew faint and sank to the floor. But then, as Scripture says, God touched the King's heart and his anger turned to compassion. He extended his sceptre as a sign of pardon, but Esther did not see it. She had fainted with fear. Xerxes rose from his throne and lifted his Queen tenderly in his arms. "*Fear not,*" he said to her, "*thou shalt not die; for this law is not made for thee but for all others*" (15:12-13). "*If thou shouldst even ask one half of the kingdom, it shall be given to thee*" (5:3). So Esther was allowed to plead for her people, and the King reversed his edict. It was not the Jews that were wiped out, but their enemies. Queen Esther had saved her people.

Sacred history, no less than profane history, repeats itself. Queen Esther was God's token or sign of greater things to come. And it is to honor the fulfillment of that token that the Church has introduced the Feast of Our Lady's Queenship which we will celebrate for the first time this year. For, as Pope Benedict XIV put it: "She is that most beautiful Esther whom the King of kings so loved that for the salvation of His people He seems somehow to have granted her not a half but the whole of His kingdom and all of His power" (*Gloriosae Dominae*, Sept 27, 1748).

II

Certainly there are many reasons why Mary can be called "Queen." Metaphorically, any woman who excels others in loveliness, virtue, sweetness, graciousness, or any other perfection could be called "queen." Esther was the beauty queen of Persia even before she wore the bridal ring of Xerxes and Queen Vasthi's golden crown. And because Mary's beauty was flawless—because she was all-fair and there was no spot of imperfection in her, she is *Queen conceived without original sin*. Because she was full of grace, she is *Queen of all Saints*. Because she was the handmaid of the Lord, she is *Queen of Virgins*, where "virgin" means one consecrated or dedicated to God in love.

But Mary is more than queen in metaphor. She is queen in fact and in truth. There are three ways in which a woman may be truly queen: as Queen-mother, as Queen-consort, and as Queen-ruler. When Elizabeth ascended England's throne a few years ago, it was as Queen-ruler. But there were two other titled queens in her family, neither of whom had ever ruled England: Elizabeth, her mother, who was queen because she had been the consort or wife of King George VI, and Mary, her grandmother, because she was the mother of King George. In Our Lady all three titles are present. For when the King of kings searched for another Esther, He chose a queen who would mother Him in His infancy, who would stand beneath His cross, and who would rule with Him one day in heaven. Mary is the Queen-mother of the Annunciation; the Queen-consort of the Crucifixion; and the Queen-ruler in her Assumption and Coronation.

1) Mary became Queen-mother at the Annunciation. "*Be not afraid, Mary,*" the angel said, "*for thou hast found grace with God.*"

And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be king over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:30-33).

2) But Mary was also to be Queen-consort, the feminine companion and associate of the Saviour-King in His redemptive work. For in consenting to the incarnation, Mary consented to become *Queen of Martyrs*, to sacrifice not merely her own life, but Him who was infinitely more precious. For the Child she was to bear was a Jesus, that is, a saviour, a redeemer. Mary had no illusions on this score. And even if she had, they would have been quickly dispelled. First there was Simeon's prophecy; then the flight into Egypt. We may wonder if Mary could ever forget the heart-piercing cries of those Judean mothers whose babes had been torn from their arms and slaughtered by Herod's soldiers. And as the years passed, the pattern grew clearer. There was the incident when Mary and Joseph had to search three days for their twelve-year-old Jesus, only to find Him sitting calmly in the midst of the Temple doctors discoursing with them. And to Mary's gentle reproach He had answered so strangely: *"Why did you seek me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?"* And Scripture tells us that neither she nor Joseph understood the word that he spoke to them, but adds that *his mother kept all these things carefully in her heart*. And the more she pondered them, the more she began to realize that this Son she had come to love as any other normal mother, did not belong to her. And she knew that if she would share His ideals, His hopes and aspirations, as she had shared His childish confidences, she too must be concerned about His Father's business. Sometimes we forget that Mary was only about fifteen years older than her son, hardly the difference between the oldest and youngest child of a large family. And when Joseph died, it was Jesus who became the man of the house, who supported His mother. In those years they were much more like two dear friends than mother and son, and when Our Lady heard her Son speak of His lost sheep, her own heart must have burned within her and she must have longed to share His redemptive work as far as possible.

There were two occasions when Christ addressed His mother as "woman." Significantly, they were at the beginning and at the end of His public career: at Cana, when He was embarking on His messianic mission, and on the cross, when His career reached its climax. You may find a footnote in your Bible pointing out that "woman" is not a term of contempt or reproach. But that is not all that can be said of the word. It is still a strange term for a son to use in addressing his mother, and the meaning of that term takes on deeper significance when we turn to the first pages of Genesis. When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the serpent that tempted them: *"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel"* (Gen. 3:15). It was in reference to Mary that God made this promise, for through her Son she would crush the devil's power. Just as the "Son of Man" was Christ's messianic title, the title by which the prophets referred to Him, so "Woman" was Mary's messianic title, the name under which her coming was foretold. And it is here that theologians see an indication that the human race was promised not only a new Adam, a redeemer, but also a new Eve, a co-redemptrix. But here we must tread cautiously. We know that Christ alone is our redeemer in the full and strict sense, for His death was the price of our sin and by it He purchased for us sanctifying grace, which is the Christ-life in our soul. But as Eve played a part in our downfall, God willed that a woman should be partner in our redemption. If Mary had any power of intercession with God, any ability to merit grace for her children, she owed it to her Son. As Eve was the fruit of Adam's side, so Mary was the first-fruit of the lanced side of Christ. But just as Eve in union with Adam became the *mother of all the living*, so Mary in union with Christ was to be the source of that more abundant life that Christ could give. And that is why the woman at the foot of the cross is not so much Queen-mother as Queen-consort. For Mary had come to surrender all her maternal ties that Christ might become the world's ransom. No two souls were ever so closely knit as that day on Calvary. Christ suffered that we might become *sons of God*; Mary suffered that we might become brothers of her First-born. In that moment, then, they were no longer mother and son but the man and the woman. And

to proclaim that truth for all ages to come, the Son of Man turned to the Messianic Woman and said: "*Woman, behold thy son.*" And looking at John, who in that moment had become a type of all those begotten in Christ, He added: "*Behold thy mother.*" To the King of kings Mary became Queen-consort; to us she became mother.

3) But it was not enough that Mary be Queen-mother by divine election, or Queen-consort by personal conquest. She must also be Queen-ruler. That is why her Annunciation and the Crucifixion had their sequel in her Assumption and Coronation; for it is in heaven that she exercises the fulness of her Queenship.

Unlike Queen Elizabeth II of England or Queen Victoria before her, Mary is not simply a feminine monarch, a substitute king, wielding her power independently of the King of kings. The Papal declaration is clear on this point: "Only Jesus Christ, the God-man, is King in the full and strict meaning of the term" (*Ad coeli Reginam*). On the other hand, Mary is not simply a minister who executes commands or proffers advice. As Albert the Great put it: "The Blessed Virgin has not been called by the Lord to be a minister, but an associate and a partner." Mary in truth has regal power, but her power is her Son's power, and she exercises it in Him and through Him. This is something unique and unparalleled in any other king and queen. Christ has given Mary the fulness of His power. He neither can nor will refuse her anything. Mary, however, on her part, can neither will nor ask for anything contrary to the will of her Son or the welfare of His kingdom.

The fulness of royal or ruling power is threefold: legislative, like that of the Congress; judicial, like that exercised by the Supreme Court; and executive, like that with which the President is invested. In Christ's kingdom, His will is law. But because of her "intercessory omnipotence," her irresistible power over the will of Christ, Mary's will also is law. The perfect judge tempers justice with mercy; and it is our Blessed Lady who exercises in a special way this role before the divine tribunal. For her, to exercise justice is to lead for mercy; which is why we hail our Holy Queen as *Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope*. Mary also shares the administrative or executive power of her Son. As *Queen of*

Angels, Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Confessors, and All Saints, her jurisdiction extends to the length and breadth of His kingdom. The angels obey her commands, the devils tremble at her footstep. But it is especially as Mediatrix or dispenser of all grace that she administers the economy of salvation. As Saint Bernard said: "God wished that all He gives us should come to us through the hands of our mother."

III

If there is something tremendous and dazzling about Our Lady's Queenship, there is something more comforting and consoling to know. Like Esther, she has not forgotten her "low estate," when she was one of us. Themistocles told his youngest son that he was the most powerful person in the whole of Greece. "Why?" asked the youngster. "The Athenians command the rest of Greece; I command the Athenians; your mother commands me; and you command your mother!"

Perhaps we can say the same. In *Problem Island*, the Ruler Primus does not wear a crown as a sign of his kingship but a little chain about his wrist, to remind him that the authority he possesses chains him to the service, not the exploitation, of his subjects. Mary too, as the Curé of Ars said, will never rest so long as there is something to be done for her children. And that we might know how to reach her, as *Queen of the Rosary* she taught us how to pray. But if our rosary requests are to have the force of law, they must spring from a humble and contrite heart. Like Esther, Our Lady of the Rosary at Fatima asked that her people pray and do penance, that they amend their lives; for only then can she bring that crowning gift of peace—with God, with our neighbor, and with ourselves—that is somehow the *raison d'être* of her Queenship. Perhaps this is the reason why at the very close of the Litany of Loreto we pray: *Queen of Peace, pray for us.*

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

The following has been adapted by the editors from an article by the late Fr. James Heerinckx O.F.M., which appeared serially in *Antonianum*, 1938. The translation is by Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M.

All theologians and spiritual writers agree that the essence of Christian perfection is charity. Christ Himself made this unmistakably clear. When the doctor of the Law asked Him: "*Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?*" Jesus said to him,

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God
with thy whole heart,
and with thy whole soul,
and with thy whole mind.'*

This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like it,

'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'

On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets" (Mtt. 22:37-40). Saint Paul echoes the words of Christ when he gives first place to charity in the spiritual life: *But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection* (Col. 3:14). Love is the summary of all the Commandments and the fulfillment of the Law (Rom. 13:8-10). Faith itself (Gal. 5:6) and all the other virtues together, have their value and efficacy from charity, and without it they are nothing (I Cor. 13:1-13). Saint Augustine says: "Where there are the beginnings of charity, there are also the beginnings of justice; where charity is practiced, justice is practiced; where charity is dominant, justice is dominant; and where charity is perfect, justice is also perfect."¹ Saint Thomas writes: "The perfection of Christian life consists *per se* and essentially in charity, which manifests itself primarily in love for God, and secondarily in love for neighbor."²

¹*De natura et gratia*, c. 70, n. 84, Migne, P.L. 44, 290.

²*Sum. theol.*, II, q. 188, a. 3.

All the faithful without exception are bound to strive for this perfection and charity. *For this is the will of God, your sanctification* (I Thess. 4:3); *even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish in his sight in love* (Eph. 1:4). In a very special manner religious and priests are bound to tend to the perfection of charity, for they are obliged "to lead a holier interior and exterior life than the laity, and having done this with true virtue and righteousness, to set before the laity their good example."³

Even from the little that has thus far been said, we can clearly see the tremendous importance and absolute necessity of love. But love is of a two-fold nature: affective and effective. Now the question is: Can affective love alone lead to perfection? Is it true that one who focuses his loving affection on God and thus allows the Holy Spirit to work within him, is thereby accomplishing the will of God and his own sanctification?

Many pseudo-mystics have fallen into this error and have greatly de-emphasized the personal activity of man, even to the point of excluding it entirely. The accepted Catholic doctrine, however, is this: We ourselves, with the help of God's grace, work out and accomplish our own perfection. *Now he who plants and he who waters are one, yet each will receive his own reward according to his labor. For we are God's helpers* (I Cor. 3:8-9). Saint James tells us: *You see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only* (Jas. 2:24). For without active co-operation with divine grace on our part, merit, virtue, and perfection would not be intrinsic and proper to the soul, but merely external, and hence would soon disappear, or remain only as figments of the mind.

But in the work of perfection no half-hearted human co-operation is sufficient; this is a task requiring strenuous, unrelenting labor, constant vigilance, the spirit of mortification, and self-denial. We are often inclined to forget that Christ pointed out the spirit of renunciation and sacrifice as the fundamental principle of perfection. *And he said to all, "If anyone wishes to come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it; but he who loses his life for my sake will save it"* (Lk. 9:23-25). Saint Paul, the faithful interpreter of Christ's doctrine, teaches plainly that the spiritual

³*Codex Juris Canonici*, c. 124, coll. 592.

life is a battle between the flesh and the spirit, between the old man and the new. And he insists repeatedly that we must deny and mortify ourselves. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, that we should live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live* (Rom. 8:12-13). *And they who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires* (Gal. 5:24).

Accordingly, all the Catholic schools of spirituality have taught that the spirit of mortification and self-denial are necessary. All men, throughout their entire life, are attached to the flesh and to the three concupiscences, and all are inclined to satisfy the cravings of the senses, even in opposition to right reason. Hence, if we wish to persevere in goodness, we must resist the flesh and deny our sensual tendencies. It is required that our virtues be positive and perfect, the results of honest striving; for our co-operation with divine grace must not be *active* merely, but positively *strenuous*. We must put forth every effort to accomplish the difficult and arduous task of following Christ.

Every school of Christian asceticism, therefore, emphasizes the necessity of charity, personal co-operation with grace, and the spirit of self-denial. But from here on there are differences. Spiritual writers in general divide the various schools into two main classes: those that stress love, and those that stress self-denial. Saint Francis de Sales is commonly regarded as blending the Benedictine and the Dominican schools. Trusting in the help to be furnished to man's re-born nature, he places love before everything else in order to make the practice of self-denial somewhat easier. He does not, however, exclude mortification, but he recommends that it be practiced in a temperate and gentle manner so that the desired end may be more easily and surely attained. Saint Francis de Sales thus represents the first class of schools. The second class is exemplified by the Ignatian and French schools of the seventeenth century. Although the authors belonging to these schools do not deny love to God as the purpose and end of asceticism, they nevertheless place the first place, especially for novices, to mortification and love of the cross or the crucifixion of the old man, as the surest way to true and effective love. These authors seem to fear that un-

less one is trained in self-denial right at the beginning of his religious life, he will not progress far in true love of God but will fall into delusion, since his love will be more emotional and imaginative than genuine.

Unfortunately, however, most of the recent spiritual writers have had little to say about the Franciscan school. Surely Franciscan spirituality is distinctive enough and important enough to merit a thorough examination, covering not only self-denial in the strict sense, but also personal co-operation with divine grace or ascetical activity. With this in mind, the present writer has tried to set forth the relationship between charity and ascetical activity, and the ends assigned to both in the Franciscan school.

The relationship between charity and ascetical activity and the scope of each is extremely difficult to establish, yet it is a matter of the utmost importance and should be given thorough consideration. This relationship is a fundamental in ascetical theology, and one that provides countless practical working principles and exerts a tremendous influence upon the entire spiritual life.

Many have written about Franciscan spirituality. There is assuredly no dearth of books on the subject. Yet, one or another isolated study is hardly sufficient to establish clear and definite principles based on sound ascetical theology. Hence it often happens that the untrained reader is misled by the rules of perfection some of those authors have recommended, rules that are insufficiently expounded or else over-done; and almost always the norms of practical conduct advocated by such authors are of little value, if not positively dangerous.

It is our intention, therefore, to look into this matter from an historical point of view and to determine from this the role of charity in traditional Franciscan spirituality. We must note in passing, however, that there are many differences among the various spiritual authors of the Minorite Orders who have written about charity and asceticism in the past seven centuries. Furthermore, some of them have been considerably influenced by other schools and consequently do not have as much of the seraphic

⁴Cf. Krautkraemer, OMFCap., *The Spiritual Life According to Franciscan Masters, The Franciscan Educational Conference*, VIII, pp. 107 ff., (1926) and L. Bracaloni, OFM, *La spiritualita francescana, Studi Francescani*, XXXI (1934) 144-46.

spirit as we could expect.⁴ In this paper, however, we shall treat only those doctrines which have always been accepted as characteristic, distinctive, and proper to the Order.

That the importance of charity may be presented the more clearly and intelligibly, we shall first look into the sources of seraphic spirituality. Then we shall consider the specific character of Franciscan charity, and lastly we shall show that charity is the center and soul of our Franciscan life.

I. THE SOURCES OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

Saint Francis

Normally, every school of spirituality has its origin in the spirit of the founder. To become acquainted with the distinguishing characteristics of the various schools, then, we must look mainly to the spirit of the founders themselves. This is especially true of the Franciscan school. Although there are differences among the spiritual writers of the Minorite Orders, there is still a certain family likeness that unites them to our Seraphic Father. Generally speaking, this family likeness is clearly discernible in their basic ascetical principles.

Our Seraphic Father Francis was not a spiritual writer in the accepted meaning of the term, but he did leave us some documents that give a very clear idea of what was going on in his mind. His life and the example he gave to his first companions also help us to know the spirit that guided him.

Without doubt, Saint Francis was wholly evangelical. This is perhaps his most characteristic quality. He desired nothing but to absorb the Gospel teaching of Jesus Christ and to imitate His divine example. Since charity, however, is the first and greatest command of God and the special precept of Christ, we can safely assume that for Francis, too, charity was supreme. Indeed, we can hardly fail to observe that the dominant note in the life of the seraphic Saint was love. At all times and in all circumstances, he gave first consideration to love. Love permeated all his actions and motivated all his undertakings. Love was the wellspring of his admonitions and exhortations, the theme of his preaching, the source of his joy and exuberance and radical simplicity. Ultimately, it was love that crowned all his virtues on Alverna's heights,

and it was love that gave the title "Seraphic" to our holy Father himself and to his Order. Contemplating our Seraphic Father's passionate love for Christ, Saint Bonaventure was moved to exclaim: "Who can describe the burning love that inflamed Francis, the friend of our Spouse? For he was completely absorbed by the flame of divine love as by a burning coal. He was suddenly aroused, stimulated, inflamed by the call of the love of God as though the strings of his heart had been plucked by the plectrum of a voice."⁵

The immediate object of Francis's seraphic love was Jesus Christ in His Sacred Humanity, especially in His crucified Humanity. The love of Francis for the Crucified is expressed in the Franciscan seal of the crossed arms; one is the arm of the wounded Christ, the other is the arm of the stigmatized Francis.

Since Francis loved Christ so intensely, he longed to conform his own life as closely as possible to his divine Master's and to practice all His virtues in the most perfect way. Love impels the lover to adopt the characteristics and habits of the beloved and to become as much like him as possible. The ideal of the Poverello was to imitate the Christ of the Gospel and to be like Him as far as the imperfections of human nature would allow. But the virtues that Francis acquired did not of themselves enable him to reach his goal; rather they were the expressions of his loving desire to become like the Master he adored.

Seraphic poverty, for example, was a visible expression of the Poverello's love for Christ. It was the virtue that Francis loved and practiced most radically and in the most spectacular way; but he did not love it for itself nor did he take consolation in it as an end in itself. Francis loved poverty purely and simply because Christ had loved it and had made it the necessary condition and means for attaining evangelical perfection and for leading the apostolic life. The same may be said of the other virtues that characterize the primitive Franciscan ideal. They all stem from personal love for Christ.

Obviously, then, we can hardly err in calling charity or love of God the source of all the virtues that distinguished our Seraphic Father.

⁵S. Bonaventura, *Legenda major*, c.9, n.1, VIII, 530 a. Cf. Celano, *Vita II*, n. 196.

The School of Franciscan Theology

If we must look to the founder of an Order to discover its true spirit, we must next turn our attention to the theologians of that Order to discover how they set forth the spirit of their founder in the systematic of their ascetical theology.

Among the great theologians in the Franciscan school of spirituality, first place is always given to Saint Bonaventure. Unquestionably, Bonaventure ranks among the greatest teachers of ascetical science, and, as Pope Leo XIII asserted, he easily holds first place in mystical theology.⁶ The Seraphic Doctor was deeply filled with the spirit of Saint Francis, and his doctrine is a perfect technical exposition of the mind of our holy Founder. Burning charity, refinement of thought, and intimate union with God distinguished him in life, and these characteristics are easily discernible in both his philosophical and theological works. Even when involved in the complexities of scholastic method, he never fails to dwell upon topics that tend to enkindle a more intense devotion and a more profound love of God. This was the primary purpose of all his writings, and everything he wrote was impregnated with his own burning love and deep knowledge.

As the Roman Pontiff, Sixtus V, says of Saint Bonaventure: "... while writing with profound learning, he nevertheless unites with it an equal ardor of love for God. Thus he moves his readers by his teaching and enters into the intimate recesses of their souls. Then he pierces their hearts with seraphic darts and floods their hearts with a wonderful sweetness of devotion."⁷

We should perhaps mention in passing that the Seraphic Doctor was greatly influenced by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who in turn is largely responsible for the affective element in the spirituality of Saint Bonaventure.

The second great leader of the Franciscan school is Blessed John Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor. In matters pertaining to dogmatic and speculative theology, Franciscan scholars from the fourteenth century on have followed Scotus rather than Bonaventure. Although Scotus barely touched the field of mystical theology, it is dogmatic and speculative theology that provide spiritual writers with a solid basis in fact and truth, and consequently his influence on Franciscan spirituality has been very great. In fact the influence of Scotus in speculative matters far outweighs that of Bonaventure, and in Franciscan ascetical works he is frequently given more consideration than the Seraphic Doctor.

⁶Cf. *Acta Ordinis Minorum*, IX (1890) 177.

⁷*Bulla Triumphantis Hierusalem*, 14 Martii, 1488.

Saint John bore witness to the fact that "God is love." (I Jn. 4:8 and 16). Taking this sentence as a foundation, Scotus built a wonderful theological structure whose stones were cemented together with the mortar of love. For him, love is the complete synthesis of the religious life. It is the reason for all the communications of the Most Holy Trinity to creatures, and it is the necessary condition for creatures, born of the love of God, to attain to their final end. The whole spiritual life, from justification to mystical union, is determined primarily by a progressive increase of infused charity. Finally, the eternal union of the elect with God is consummated in love.⁸

Thus, despite the apparent formality and involved technical style of his writings, Scotus is truly deserving of the title "Doctor of Charity."

Some Fundamental Points in Franciscan Theology

It is not our purpose here to present all the characteristic tenets of the Franciscan school of theology. It will suffice merely to consider in passing some of the more fundamental doctrines that have bearing on the relationship between charity and asceticism.

Seraphic theology considers God under the aspect of infinite perfection and goodness which continually flows in good works and demands above all a return of love. This aspect of Franciscan theology is especially noticeable in the teaching of Duns Scotus. As he puts it so exactly: "God not only causes love and charity but He is love and charity as such."⁹ But since God is infinite and most perfect love, by that very fact He loves Himself in an infinite manner and wishes to be loved by others. As Scotus expresses it: "He first loves Himself ordinately and consequently not inordinately, in a jealous or envious fashion. Secondly, He wills to have others as co-lovers."¹⁰ The sole and total reason for divine communications to creatures, therefore, is this love.

The first thing God decreed was the Incarnation of His Son. For even had Adam not sinned, the Word of God would nevertheless have assumed human nature. To use the words of Scotus: "Speaking of the love of someone outside Himself, God wished to be loved by something else able to love Him, and even though no one should fall, He provided for the (hypostatic) union with the nature that was to love Him

⁸Cf. Longpré, *La philosophie du B. Duns Scot*, Paris: 1924, esp. pp. 140, 149, 159; among the most recent and readable discussions of Scotus' doctrine is that of Béraud de Saint-Maurice, *John Duns Scotus, A Teacher for Our Times*, Saint Bonaventure, N. Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1955.

⁹*Oxon.*, I, d. 17, q. 3, n. 31, X, 93a.

¹⁰*Oxon.*, III, d. 32, q. un., n. 6, XV, 433a, corr. ex ms. Assisi 137, fol. 174b.

in the highest degree possible."¹¹ Thus Christ is conceived in relation to God even before He was conceived with reference to the world. Christ of course, is the Redeemer of mankind by reason of His most holy Passion. But what is prior and essential to Christ is that He is the Glorifier of the Most Holy Trinity by the love He bears the Trinity in His Heart.

Secondly, Infinite Goodness deigned to create men, that He might love them, communicate Himself to them, and be loved by them in return. Hence it was in Christ, because of Christ, and through Christ that men received existence, and Christ became the *first-born of all creation* (Col. 1:15).

Even the pre-vision of Adam's sin did not, according to Scotus' view, make the Incarnation of the Divine Word—not to mention His Passion and Death—necessary, not even hypothetically necessary—that is, on the assumption that God willed to receive satisfaction sufficiently equivalent to the offenses committed against Him. And yet God's supreme love triumphs completely over the evil by a new decree of mercy, that of the Incarnation of the Word together with His sorrowful Passion and ignominious death, as well as the whole economy of the Redemption with all the graces that would arise therefrom. Thus because Christ could have redeemed man by other means and yet freely chose this way, we are bound to love Him very much, "more so," as Scotus says, "than if this had been necessary, or the only way we could have been redeemed. He did this, then, primarily to draw us to His love, and because He wanted man to be attached to God even more."¹²

Almost the entire Franciscan school, and many theologians outside the Order, have held this opinion of Scotus concerning the motive for the Incarnation. As God became incarnate because of love, so too, because of love, He revealed Himself to us and redeemed us. All human activity, therefore, should be subordinated to the demands of love, and in so far as love can be the end of a deliberate action, one ought to render to God charity for charity. The theologians of our Order view primarily under the aspect of the good not only God but also created beings and by this goodness of being they mean the essence. From this arises Voluntarism, or the doctrine that holds the primacy of the will over the intellect and a certain independence of the will from the intellect. Just as the Thomists profess Intellectualism, so the Franciscans hold fast to Voluntarism, which is one of the most widely known doctrines of the Augustinian-Franciscan school.

Saint Bonaventure has this to say: "...since the theological virtues

¹¹Rep. Par., III, d.7, q.4, n.5, XXIII, 303b.

¹²Oxon., III, d. 20, n. 10, XIV, 738a.

have as their object that which is uncreated, so they are the more perfect the more they unite with and join with that object . . .; charity is the greatest (unitive) virtue among the theological virtues, and consequently its performance or act makes men more like God than the others. Consequently, as regards the uncreated object, the more noble manner of understanding is through touch and embrace, rather than through sight or insight."¹³ Although the act of love cannot function without some knowledge, nevertheless, according to Saint Bonaventure—whom the Franciscan mystics follow and support—the extension of love is much broader than knowledge. For the faculty of cognition is not able to attain to the Supreme Being except through vision of Him, but love is able to reach Him through goodness, and in so far as He can be touched and enjoyed.

Thus, since Franciscan theology lays emphasis on Voluntarism, it subjects the intellect to love and extols the personal activity of man and his cooperation with divine grace.

According to the teaching of Saint Thomas and his school, theology is more of a speculative science than a practical one.¹⁴ The Franciscan school, on the contrary, considers theology an affective and practical science. This is not the place to discuss whether or not Saint Francis was opposed to learning. But this much can be said: undoubtedly he was opposed to vain or mere speculative knowledge that is not carried out into some kind of action. On the other hand, he advocated affective, practical knowledge that results in love of God. This is clear from his writings, especially his *Testament*, where he says: "And all the theologians and persons who administer the most holy words of God, we must honor and respect as people who minister spirit and life to us." It is in this spirit of "ministering spirit and life" that Alexander of Hales, the founder of the Franciscan school, regards theology not as a theoretical but as an affective science.

The Seraphic Doctor insists upon this even more strongly. He regards theology, in so far as it is an affective science, to be principally ordained to make man become good, and in so far as it is wisdom or complete knowledge, to be something more than mere knowledge and to involve affection and spiritual relish. According to Bonaventure, this is the end and the fruit not only of Sacred Science but also of "all science, so that in all, faith may be strengthened, God may be honored, character may be formed, and consolation may be derived from the union of the Spouse with His beloved, a union which takes place through charity, to the attainment of which the whole purpose of Sa-

¹³III Sent., d. 27, a.2, q.k, ad6, III, 604b.

¹⁴Summa, I, q.1, a.4.

cred Scripture, and consequently, every illumination descending from above, is directed—a charity without which all knowledge is vain. . .¹⁵

According to the Subtle Doctor, theology is a practical science, for as Saint Paul exclaims; *Love is the fulfillment of the Law* (Rom. 13:10). The *praxis* or action theology is concerned with is love, and practical theology is nothing more than a theology of charity. This practical knowledge “was not developed to escape ignorance,” as Scotus tells us, “but because of our inner needs, namely, to control our passions and actions.”¹⁶ The ultimate end of theology is not the knowledge or vision of God but the love of God seen face to face. It is in this love that Scotus primarily places eternal beatitude. Hence, the saints “seek to know God more and more in proportion to the extent that they love Him, and finally their interior acts by which the will commands exterior acts are so ordained that the will arrives at the vision of God. And this vision is ultimately ordained for the love of God Himself.”¹⁷ Yet the practical truths of this science “are repeated frequently so that the hearer may be more efficaciously induced to put into action those things which are here presented persuasively.”¹⁸ Such is Scotus’ opinion.

Since almost the entire school of Franciscan spirituality follows the basic principles set forth above, it has a distinctively affective character. Love is the characteristic note of Franciscan learning and of Franciscan spirituality. To know is to love. Often, indeed, to love is better than to know. Even in the highest reaches of speculation, Franciscan theology places love as the Alpha and Omega of truth, as the queen of the intellect, as the infinite Good, which is formally the beatitude of the elect; and thus love becomes the supreme purpose of our entire life.

(To be continued)

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Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M. (Transl.)

¹⁵*De reductione*, n. 26, V, 325b.

¹⁶*Oxon.* I, c.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, prol., q. 4, Comment., n.84, VIII, 243a.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, n. 42, VIII, 286a.

THE HOLY FRIARS OF SAXONY

HOLY NICHOLAS: FRIAR AND TEACHER

I. His sanctity even in childhood.

7. Now when God through the merits of holy Father Francis had multiplied the friars throughout the Province of Saxony, He willed that the seed of the father’s holiness should bear fruit in his sons. And so, out of the riches of His goodness, He poured into some of them His abounding grace in order to show clearly how all who follow that holy father on the path of perfection in our Order are guided by Him in their activities and how He takes care of them always as His beloved children. Therefore after the death of Saint Francis, when the friars of the Saxon province began to offer to God the sacrifice of a contrite heart and exemplary life, a certain schoolmaster named Nicholas, seeing the exemplary humility and ardent devotion of the friars, entered their Order and became a truly holy man, a mirror and pattern of the whole religious life.⁷

8. Since Nicholas had been born during Saint Nicholas’ night, he kept the name of that saint whose life even in boyhood he had begun to imitate, for he was a child with a good disposition. After he had passed from that tender age into the years of adolescence, he began to make progress in the things of God: not only did he acquire the solid foundation of scholarship but he strove also to develop his character and to cultivate chastity. He was so successful in this that during the whole course of his life he never committed a deliberate mortal sin nor did he ever stain his body through the petulance of the flesh. When he had reached manhood and had mastered the habit of perfect learning, he became headmaster of the students at the Church of Saint Sebastian in Magdeburg. At this place a flourishing school existed which was attended by students in great numbers. During his lectures he often interspersed some wholesome and edifying word on God so that at times his hearers were moved to sobs and tears. Also on the days when a Latin sermon was customarily delivered in the Cathedral, he urged his students to attend, advising them not to neglect good works for the sake of study and learning. And as Friar Daniel, who was a pupil of his at that time, used to say, he not only taught his students effectively but he also edified them by his spirit of prayer, by the austerity of his life, and by all his exemplary conduct.

⁷Chroniclers seem remarkably silent concerning Friar Nicholas (but see note 10, below). From the fact, however, that he knew the Friars soon after the death of Saint Francis and had John of Neustadt as his confessor and secretary, we may reasonably conclude that he was already a Friar about 1250.

II. The mortification of his body.

9. Nicholas shunned the pleasures of the flesh, and in order to restrain his body from the craving for carnal delights he tamed it, cruelly scourging himself with thorny rods. Once a devout Religious by the name of Gerard visited him to hear the word of salvation.⁸ In the chamber where Nicholas used to study and sleep he saw underneath his bed the scourges with which Nicholas vigorously punished his flesh during temptations. And when this Religious inquired about the purpose of these rods he was told that they were very good for keeping in check the lusts and leanings of one's flesh.

III. His entrance into the Order.

10. Once while Nicholas was in the Church of the Canons of Saint Sebastian, where he was head of the school, he was standing near a pillar and gazing upon the large wooden cross which was in the center of the church facing the choir. As he was praying and weeping devoutly, lo! the Crucified bent down to him and spoke to him of the way of salvation as a friend would speak to a friend. This loving conversation made his heart melt away in sweetness of spirit and inflamed it mightily into a fire of even greater devotion. When this furnace of divine love had been set aflame within him he began to spurn all wordly comfort and to yearn only for entrance into the religious life.

After a while this master left his father and mother, who were both living, and entered the Order of Friars Minor in which he lived for more than thirty years. There he made a steady progress not only in the science of Theology but also in all sanctity and virtue so that he bloomed among his brothers as the lily among thorns.

IV. His piety during the time of his novitiate.

11. So great was the fervor that burned within Friar Nicholas while he was a novice in Magdeburg that he slept very little or not at all; for day and night he was at prayer. As a novice he had the key to a certain oratory with a private altar. This oratory adjoined the choir of the church. Here during the day, when the church was empty and closed, Friar Nicholas could hide himself away from the company of the friars and beseech the Lord's forgiveness for his shortcomings and pour out his fervent prayers. One day he was engaged in his customary devotion before the altar of Saint Peter and Paul, and while he was gazing with compassionate glance upon the image of the Crucified, the latter spoke to him and consoled him wonderfully by the sweetness of His words.

⁸This seems to be the same Gerard mentioned later, in n. 22.

V. The complete forgiveness of his sins and his vocation to the priesthood.

12. Friar Nicholas continued to bewail even his slightest sins and to recount his years in bitterness of soul, besides lamenting over the sins which he would have committed if the mercy of the Saviour had not prevented him. And while he was so incessantly disturbed by them, the Lord *Who heals those of contrite heart and forgives sin in tribulation* assured him of the complete remission of his sins by deigning to grant him the following vision.

This happened during the third year of his entrance into the Order, on the Thursday within the Octave of Pentecost. He was sitting in choir chanting Matins with the others when he beheld a ray of unknown light issuing from the altar and approaching his breast. He lifted up his eyes in amazement at the new light which had appeared so suddenly, and behold! he saw Christ standing before the altar, from Whose radiant Body the light issued forth. The Lord said to him: "Overcome by the insistence of your tears, I forgive you your sins because I am good." By this gracious vision of Christ he was filled with such joy that on that day he felt nothing but the all-pervading happiness of Christ's presence. And on the following day when he recalled that his sins were forgiven him, he began to render joyful and jubilant thanks to God.

13. Now this friar was a man of such humility that he would not approach the dignity of the priesthood until he was so constrained through Holy Obedience that he could no longer refuse this honor. When his superiors decided that he should receive the Holy Priesthood and be ordained on a certain Saturday, he kept a vigil throughout the night from Friday to Saturday, preparing as diligently as possible, watching all the night in prayer. But he became afraid he might faint during the conferring of Holy Orders if he did not have a little sleep. So in order to give his weary limbs a short rest he lay down after his night-long vigil and began to doze fitfully. Then, while he was between waking and sleeping, there appeared to him the Holy Trinity with the Ever-blessed Virgin, and speaking audibly they deigned to show to him how worthy he was in the sight of God to offer Him that most august Sacrifice. For the Father, offering to him His Son, spoke to him in this manner: "Go with confidence to receive the Order of Priesthood. Behold, I offer you My beloved Son that you in turn may offer Him to Me in the Sacrament of the Altar for My glory, and for His own and that of the Holy Ghost, and for the benefit and consolation of the whole Church, both the living and the dead." The Son also spoke to him; "Behold! I offer Myself to you that you

in turn may offer Me in the Sacrament of the Altar to My Beloved Father for His and My praise and glory and for that of the Holy Ghost as well as for the welfare and benefit of the whole Holy Church." Likewise the Virgin-Mother Mary said: "Behold, I offer you my beloved Son by the Holy Ghost for my praise and glory and for the welfare and benefit of the whole Church, both for the living and the dead." Consoled and strengthened in God by this vision, he bravely approached and received Holy Orders for the praise and glory of the Holy Trinity.

14. Now that he was a priest and had begun to celebrate Mass and to handle the Sacrament of the Lord, he realized his own worthlessness and the majesty of the most sacred Victim. Then so great a fear overcame him that he often celebrated Mass all a-tremble and for about a year he always said Mass with these unspeakable tremors. But when the year had turned, that sweet Consoler of the sorrowful calmed him by some marvelous but secret revelation and so sweet was the communication that from then on he always said Mass with an exceedingly great eagerness and joy and went to the altar filled with happiness.

*VI. The devotion he felt when saying
his Mass and Office.*

15. So diligent was Friar Nicholas in guarding against any negligence at Mass that, as he used to tell his confessor, he was more concerned to avoid distractions than he was about the salvation of his own soul. He said his Office with such devotion, integrity, and attention that his confessor and secretary, Friar John of Neustadt (who later was Provincial of Saxony),⁹ related that sometimes Nicholas would recite his entire Matins without a distraction or a mistake in one single word.

*VII. The Blessed Virgin cures him of
his headaches and sadness.*

16. Because of his excessive vigils and fastings, Friar Nicholas had done such mischief to his poor head that he was in an agony of fear lest in this life he would never recover the strength and courage to give God the generous service that was His due. But finally he put his trust in God and through love, praise, and worship he offered himself as a burnt-offering of most sweet odor. Friar Nicholas also begged the Blessed Virgin that through her intercession she would obtain for him the glory of God, the grace of never becoming a useless

⁹Friar John of Neustadt, Civitate: tenth Minister Provincial of Saxony; elected in 1298 and died the next year on the return journey from the General Chapter of the Order of the Friars of the Blessed Virgin (see *Acta Franciscana*, II, p. 107, and p. 584).

burden to himself and to others, or by his infirmity a hindrance to the welfare of his neighbor. While he was imploring our Lady with unspeakable groanings she, who is close to all who sincerely invoke her, suddenly appeared to him. In her hand she carried a pyx of ointment with which she anointed him, thereby fortifying him to such a degree that the strength she granted him never again left him, and all the weaknesses contracted by previous excessive mortification were healed forever.

*VIII. His abounding gift of prayer
and supplication.*

17. Now while Friar Nicholas was a lector in Leipzig it happened that a certain novice, who longed to attain to the same fervor and perseverance in prayer, tried to do so by secretly eavesdropping on him. For a long time the novice imitated him in his vigils and prayers until at last he had to give up his attempt because of constant headaches and pains in all his senses. When this was related to Friar Nicholas he remarked: "He cannot follow me." By this he seemed to mean: "The great gift of prayer that has been given to me is not for everyone."

Another friar, who had heard the following from Nicholas' own mouth, told us that the latter took such a delight in praying for the salvation of all mankind, that he wished he could be present in every part of the world. He also wished to know all the sins of every human being so as to be able to pray and weep for every poor sinner in person and to recover for him the lost graces of God.

*IX. How he fulfilled prelaties in the Order,
and was highly esteemed.*

18. Friar Nicholas thoroughly despised all honors of this world for love of the glory in the world above. Yet, He Who called Aaron to the summit of dignity also called Friar Nicholas to ascend higher. Step by step he was promoted to the offices of the Order, first as lector in several different places, then as guardian and later as custos of great and deserved fame.

Since he knew that the love of Christ consists in feeding His sheep, he feared lest he stubbornly resist Divine Providence. When therefore his superiors called him to various offices he obeyed with such humility as though God Himself had imposed them in person and had summoned him to accept.

When he made a prolonged stay at the University of Paris for the sake of study he shone with such sanctity of life among the other stu-

dents that by his good example he gained everyone's spontaneous affection and was honored with the profoundest reverence as a saint. And to show to the whole student body the splendor of his merits, God conferred on him the grace of healing whereby he cured a number of sick persons by the mere laying on of hands.

X. God sends him a drink by an angel.

19. In time Friar Nicholas completed his studies and prepared to return to his homeland. As a companion, he brought back with him to his province a certain cleric from Saxony, Henry of Wittenberg, who had been invested at Paris and was still a novice.

While they were traveling together, Friar Nicholas did not give up his usual devotions but, as was his custom, he traveled slowly, and while on the way he would go each day to visit and celebrate Mass in some church he came upon.

As the two were wending their way together they had no one to provide food for them in their hunger save God alone. So one day when the heat was very great, as it gets in France during the summer, it happened that Friar Nicholas began to suffer a burning thirst and to faint for want of a drink. When he saw that no one would take pity on them with some refreshment, he turned to the Fountain of Life whose Blood he had drunk that day, and most earnestly pleaded with Him to provide them with a drink of water out of the abundance of His mercy. And lo! the God of all consolation came to their aid and by a divine messenger who all at once appeared before them. He refreshed them in this manner. As they were trudging along, half-dead with thirst, suddenly someone in the garb and appearance of a poor man came up to them carrying on his staff a cruse of the very best wine. When he had joined them he greeted them in a friendly manner and asked them whether they wished to drink. With a deep sigh of joy they answered: "Gladly!" So he made them sit down on the embankment along the ditch in the field and, offering them his little vessel, made them drink generously; and with a happy smile he urged them to continue drinking to their heart's content. When both had drunk their fill, the messenger of God took back the cruse and remained standing in front of them. But after a little, he again offered them a drink. And when they had drunk a second time and stood up to continue their journey, he said: "You must drink once more." Taking a third drink, they gave thanks to God and His servant. And filled with happiness at God's infinite goodness, they resumed their journey. But behold, the stranger was no longer to be seen, and so they began to

praise the name of the Lord, for his eyes are always upon the poor and He does not forsake those that hope in Him.

XI. How the rains fell and did not drench him.

20. One day while they were going on their way the rains came down so torrentially that they were drenched three times, so much so that because of all the rain even their drawers clung to their bodies. Friar Henry, who was much quicker than Friar Nicholas, went ahead of him and when he finally looked back he saw Nicholas slowly following far behind, with his hands extended towards heaven and praying so devoutly that Friar Henry's fervor was aroused merely by beholding him, and he too felt urged to pray. After a brief interval of calm, the weather seemed to turn again towards rain, and Friar Nicholas began to worry about Friar Henry's handsome habit which was quite new. Therefore he speeded up his pace and hurried on to join him. When they had been walking together for a while the clouds prepared for another downpour. Friar Nicholas lifted up his eyes towards heaven and said: "O dear Lord, if it pleases You, we are wet enough!" And at his humble petition Almighty God spread over them His protection against the downpour and divided it in two so that although to the right and left of them the ground was drenched, the two friars in between wandered on without a drop touching them. Seeing this stupendous miracle, they both sang the praises of the Lord Who "has heed of the poor and needy one" and on this evil day condescended to deliver them from the torrent of rain. Friar Henry, then a novice but later a distinguished lector in our Order, would never reveal this miracle during Friar Nicholas' lifetime, but when the latter was dead he related it to the friars as a testimony to his sanctity.

XII. On the spirit of prophecy that dwelt in him.

21. Friar Nicholas was a man of a remarkably pure conscience, and this purity sometimes prompted the Holy Spirit of God to reveal to him what was hidden from others. It happened one time that the Lord Bishop of Havelburg fell dangerously ill while residing at Magdeburg, and the physicians despaired of his recovery. When Friar Nicholas was discussing the illness of the Bishop with another lector, he remarked among other things: "If I were the father confessor of the Lord Bishop of Magdeburg, he is the one I would warn to prepare for death by duly cleansing his soul of sin, for he will die sooner than this sick bishop of Havelburg." His brother-lector was very surprised at

this because the Bishop of Magdeburg seemed well and strong. But the outcome showed clearly that Friar Nicholas was filled with the spirit of prophecy for soon afterwards the Lord Bishop of Magdeburg died, whereas the sick bishop continued to live for a time, just as Friar Nicholas had predicted.

22. Once Friar Gerard, a truly religious man, had the misfortune of concealing a certain sin for a long time. But Friar Nicholas knew of it by the Holy Spirit and revealed it to him as clearly as if he had seen it with his own eyes.

At another time a number of friars had gone to the land of the infidels with much toil and danger and returned after fulfilling their mission. It was revealed to Friar Nicholas by the Holy Spirit which of the friars had labored more assiduously in preaching the Gospel and this Friar Nicholas told to one of the friars in a friendly conversation.

*XIII. How it was revealed to him that he
was to enter into the highest
choir amid the joy of the Holy Angels.*

23. While Friar Nicholas was lector in Erfurt there came to visit him a certain upright and devout Father who was desirous of being instructed in the way of salvation. Friar Nicholas had him brought to the study that he used and spoke to him earnestly and effectively on the state of glory and the way that leads to it. After his edifying conversation he put this question to him: "Now let me ask you, if God had revealed to someone that he was most assuredly to be transferred to the choir of the Seraphim, should that person be burdened any longer with such external labors as you see me engaged in, preaching, hearing confessions, lecturing and all the rest of the tasks a lector must accept in our Order?" The Father humbly answered: "You are a better judge of this than I am." Then Friar Nicholas said: "If only it were God's Holy Will and pleasing to the Almighty Lord, how gladly would I be freed from all this, because by God's revealing light I know that my poor body will not stand this life much longer."

From these words the Father surmised that by reason of his great fervor which bore him up to God, Friar Nicholas would be equal with the Seraphim in heaven in the ardor of his love and in his eternal reward. This the same priest also learned more clearly from other trustworthy friars as well as from Nicholas' confessors. For Nicholas had told them of his revelations either in the intimacy of friendship or in confession, and they understood that he knew for certain by God's promise that after this life he would dwell forever with the highest choir of angels.

*XIV. How it was revealed to him that
the office of lector is pleasing
and acceptable to God.*

24. Now, Friar Nicholas wished to spur this Father on to gain souls and to prove to him clearly that the office of lector in our Order, if carried out humbly and exemplarily, is both acceptable and meritorious in the sight of God. He therefore told him how he learned the Will of God concerning this point by certain revelations: "God graciously vouchsafed to reveal to me that I should suffer these hardships in the Order patiently, because they are for His praise and glory and the salvation of our neighbors.

"Once when I was anxious about a sermon for the next day and was yet loath to neglect my regular prayers on account of it, the Holy Spirit, Who teaches the heart and mind of His devoted servants, spoke to me by a mysterious inner voice so as to free me of all doubt as to His good pleasure. He said, 'Yours is to build temples by the word of God and to decorate the interiors with gold, as it were, so that by the sighs and groans that arise so often from the pain of contrite sorrow, the hearts of men may be worthy to become pure dwelling-places of the Living God.' For by the doctrine made public in preaching and in the instructions given to the people in confession, their hearts are cleansed in due time so that God may abide in them as in His holy temple and dwelling-place."

25. And on another occasion he said: "While my soul was wholly enrapt in meditation on heavenly things, I heard the voice of Christ within the shrine of my heart telling me: 'My great love for the Blessed Peter arose from this, that I saw him aflame with desire for the salvation of souls;' as if He meant to say: 'I will love you in the same way if you, after the example of Blessed Peter, strive by wholesome preaching to gain souls for Me and to foster and preserve them in constant fear of God.' Since I have been taught this by Him Who holds the Chair of Authority in heaven, I do the work of an Evangelist. I shall never weary of the exercise of my ministry which I took upon myself for the weal of souls and the glory of God, but I shall persevere in it to the end."

*XV. How it was revealed to him that he
should pray for everyone in the world.*

26. While he was lector in Hildesheim he was prompted by the spirit to go out to a certain place within the friars' territory to preach to the people. These people thirsted for the word of salvation just as he with all his heart desired to sow the seed of his preaching for the glory of

God. But when he had come at the place where he was to preach, a messenger suddenly arrived with an order to summon his companion, Friar John of Bucholte, to return to the friary immediately and without any excuses, and not to be tardy about it. Friar Nicholas naturally was greatly disturbed at having to abandon his sermon this way. But God, Who is faithful and accepts the good will for the deed when the latter is impossible, spoke to him saying: "You would like to convert the whole world, but since you can not accomplish this, gather the whole world to your heart and pray most fervently and devoutly for all poor sinners. Then there will be many who will be converted and saved through your prayers and merits, even though you know nothing about it." From these words it is evident how precious in the eyes of God was the prayer of Friar Nicholas, which God promised to apply not to one person alone but to many. Moreover it is also evident that any prayer offered at times for a family or a whole nation will never be wasted, for God, heeding such earnest prayer, will save many and will give them direction and strength in the way of salvation.

XVI. How Friar Nicholas was assured of his entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.

27. During the four days before the Feast of Mary's Assumption, Friar Nicholas was filled with joy at the certainty he felt of entering into heaven and the company of the saints. But he so ardently yearned to be taken there with the Blessed Virgin, that he scorned all earthly food. God beheld his desire from on high, and on the feast-day He revealed to him that for the salvation of many his sojourn here on earth had to be lengthened. But lest the deferment of his hope should pain and afflict him, God promised him with great certainty that he would obtain his promised crown and would without any doubt be happily gathered into the company of the Holy Angels who are called Seraphim. And while he still ceaselessly longed to be *dissolved and dwell with Christ*, yet he was soothed by this promise and did not refuse to keep on laboring, because this was the Will of the Lord.

XVII. His death.

28. The day was at last approaching when the Lord would call him to the joys of heaven from the prison of this flesh and from the ordeal of work well done. Eight days before he took to his bed he began to lose his strength and become sick in his whole body. On the third day before he left this world, when he could no longer resist yielding to his excessive weakness, the friars flocked about him as to a sainted father for doctrine and edification, and entreated him to leave with them

as a keepsake some consolations and such wholesome counsels as would inspire them to serve Christ more faithfully. Friar Nicholas then realized that the dissolution of his body was near at hand and that without danger to himself he might reveal to them a few of the things he had been shown. So in order to confirm and strengthen them wholesomely in the fear of God, he told them how the Blessed Virgin with many other holy virgins had twice appeared to him in greatest glory while he was on his bed of pain and had joyfully encouraged him to die with full trust in God.

He also recounted how three weeks before, when he was in contemplation at about the hour of Prime and was revolving in his mind the merits of Saint Catherine, to whom at that time he was devoting his prayers, Saint Catherine appeared to him in great glory and splendor. He was so enrapt in utter amazement at the brightness of her radiance that he was drawn to look at her untiringly. But while he was entirely absorbed in this heavenly delight, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary also entered in such luminous beauty that it almost darkened the brilliance of Saint Catherine and wholly outshone it. And all this beauty enkindled in him so great a delight that he felt nothing but loathing for this life and became inflamed with a great yearning for the glory of God's Saints.¹⁰

After he had told these things and had received the Sacraments, his most holy soul was delivered from the flesh and absorbed into the abyss of heavenly radiance.

Thus this holy friar went to God.

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (Transl.)

¹⁰In several other chronicles such a vision is related of a Friar Electus, who was buried at Kiel (as was Friar Adolph, nn. 54-55, below), but we would hesitate to identify him with Nicholas. The latter could possibly be the Nicholas buried at Neuss about 1275 (cf. *Chronicle of the twenty-four Generals*, in *Anal. Fran.*, III, p. 240; Bartholomew of Pisa, *Book of Conformities*, A. F., IV, pp. 325-26).

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

NEW ARCHBISHOP: His Holiness Pope Pius XII has raised the Vicariate Apostolic of Rabat to the dignity of Archiepiscopal residential see, immediately subject to the Holy See. At the same time the Most Reverend Amadeus Lefevre, O.F.M., who had been Vicar Apostolic with titular church in Eguga, was transferred to the residential archiepiscopal church in Rabat.

NEW FRANCISCAN BISHOPS: 1) The Most Reverend Eustace (John) Smith, O.F.M., was elected bishop of the titular church of Apamea Cibotus and named Vicar Apostolic for the Latin Rite in the Vicariate of Beirut, Lebanon. The new Bishop and Vicar Apostolic is an alumnus of the Province of the Holy Name of Jesus (New York). Born in Medford, Massachusetts, August 22, 1908, he entered the Order on August 16, 1927, and was ordained June 12, 1934. Sent to Rome for higher studies, he pursued courses in Sacred Theology at the Athenaeum Pontificium Antonianum, and in Sacred Scripture at the Biblical Institute. He then spent a year in the Holy Land studying at the Franciscan Biblical Institute in Jerusalem. He received the degree of Lector in Sacred Theology from the Athenaeum Pontificium Antonianum and the Licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Biblical Institute. Returning to America he taught Sacred Scripture at Christ the King Seminary, Saint Bonaventure University, N. Y., until the beginning of the Second World War, when he was chosen to be secretary to the Delegate General for the Order in North and Central America. In 1946 he went to Rome as the private secretary to the Procurator General. At this time he was appointed by the Sacred Congregation of Religious as Apostolic Visitor to Egypt for special affairs. After the General Chapter he again returned

to America where he was re-assigned to Christ the King Seminary. He was Visitor General of the Order in 1952, and Master of Clerics at Holy Name College, Washington, D. C., until the autumn of 1955 when he was again assigned to Christ the King Seminary. He was professor of Sacred Scripture there when he received his appointment to Lebanon. Bishop Smith was consecrated by Archbishop Amleto Giovanni Cicognani, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, assisted by Auxiliary Bishop Leo R. Smith of Buffalo and Auxiliary Bishop John E. McNamara of Washington, as co-consecrators. Archbishop John F. O'Hara, C.S.C., of Philadelphia delivered the consecration sermon.

2) The Most Reverend John Anthony Nuer, O.F.M., was given the titular Church of El Batanu and named Auxiliary to His Excellency Bishop Ghattas, who is Coadjutor to Alexandrinus, Patriarch of the Copts. The new Bishop was an alumnus of the Province of the Stigmata of Saint Francis (Tuscany) and had been associated with the mission in Upper Egypt. Born in Tamia, Fayum (Egypt) on August 28, 1914, he entered the Order October 27, 1936 and was ordained June 13, 1943. An exemplary religious, sociable and gentle, he held the position of Consultor to the Religious Superior. His elevation to the episcopal dignity crowns the energetic apostolate of his confreres of the Tuscan Province among the Catholic Copts, who have already formed many Franciscan Coptic priests in their house of studies in Cairo and in the Franciscan-Coptic Seminary in Ghiza. Bishop Nuer's appointment is also a precious testimony of the Holy See's appreciation of our Order's attempt to establish a native Coptic clergy.

NFM, VI (1956) 1; 1-2

FRANCISCAN COPTS IN UPPER EGYPT

Although the Franciscan Order originated in the Latin Church, it is nevertheless Catholic, which means that it is universal. With this in mind, the missionaries from the Province of Tuscany laboring in Upper Egypt collaborated with the native secular clergy when the mission was first established in 1697, until the time was propitious for the forming of a regular clergy, the Coptic Franciscans.

The term "Copt" ordinarily applies to Egyptians, although there are Christians following the Coptic Rite in Ethiopia also, which was brought there by Egyptian missionaries. The Copts or Egyptians broke away from the Church through schism, and during the Arab invasion accepted Turkish Islamism which still prevails among them. Nevertheless, about three of four hundred thousand remained faithful to Christianity, of whom about ten thousand retained unity with Rome and are known as "Catholic Copts." These Copts have five bishops, one of whom holds the title of patriarch.

In 1928 the mission superior blessed a new Seraphic College in Assiut, to which was added in 1939 the Oriental Franciscan Seminary in Ghiza, offering courses in philosophy and theology. Today this Egyptian mission has ten priests of the Coptic Rite, one of the Melchite Rite, six lay brothers of the Coptic Rite, and two novices. There are fifteen clerics and forty students in the Seraphic College.

NFM, V (1955) 11, 29-30.

SUPER MUROS TUOS, JERUSALEM, CONSTITUI TE CUSTODEM. The Very Reverend Angelicus Lazzeri, O.F.M., former provincial of the Province of the Stigmata of Saint Francis (Tuscany) was elected Custos of the Holy Land by the Most Reverend Definitorium General. The new Custos sailed for Beirut on December 1, 1955, bearing the standard of the Holy Land. Al-

though the journey from Beirut to Jerusalem, through Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan was without official ceremony, nevertheless the Custos was greeted all along the way by many religious and civil authorities, together with his confreres.

On December 6 the Custos was solemnly led from the Port of Jaffa into the Holy City. Civil authorities awaited him, professing the various Catholic and Orthodox Rites, and also representatives of all the communities of religious in the city. During the chanting of the *Benedictus*, the procession reached the Basilica of the Most Holy Savior. While the *Super muros* was being chanted the new Custos genuflected before the main altar, prayed for success in his new office, and took canonical possession.

On the afternoon of December 8, the Custos entered the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and opened the closed door while the *Te Deum* was chanted. He thus took possession of this Basilica also, of which he is *ex officio* the Guardian. Finally, on December 11 he took canonical possession of the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem. These three entrances concluded the installation of the new Custos, for whose work in the homeland of Christ we implore heaven's blessing.

NFM, VI (1956) 1, 3.

OSLO, NORWAY: The Franciscan Fathers of the Dutch Province have two parishes in Oslo where they conduct retreats, give conferences, and instruct catechumens as part of their regular work. The Parish of Saint Halvard in Oslo number 375 Catholics, a lay apostolate association, and a Third Order youth group. Two priests and a brother are in charge of the parish. The Parish of Saint Ansgar in Kristiansand number 160 Catholics. The work here is carried on in the same way as at Saint Halvard's.

Fr. Wilhard Hartman, O.F.M., is

chaplain at the Florida Hospital in Bergen. He also has good contacts with the students at the University of Bergen, where he teaches.

Fr. Leo van Eekeren, O.F.M., who held the post of Rector at the novitiate of the Sisters of Saint Francis Xavier in Sylling, was called by sudden death on January 1, 1955. He had been a missionary in Norway since 1927 and had come to be highly re-

garded by all. With few exceptions, all the priests of the Oslo Diocese attended the funeral services. His obituary, published in the local paper, was almost a panegyric, and a Protestant minister wrote a long and laudatory article about him in the Sylling paper, extolling the virtues and zeal of this admirable Franciscan apostle.

NFM, V (1955) 11, 29.

✚ ✚ ✚

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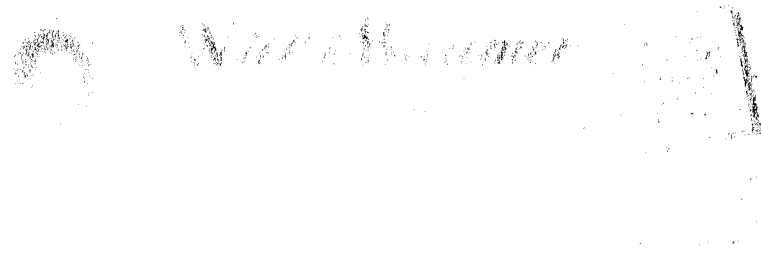
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the CORD

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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

SIN, THE BETRAYAL OF LOVE

In previous conferences we analyzed some of the positive implications of that pithy line from Saint John: *God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:16). Because love is Trinity and we are framed in its image, our destiny as human beings, as children of God, and as religious can be summed up in a single line. We were created by Love to fall in love with Love itself. Such is our destiny.

True love, however, is an outward movement, a giving and sharing of what we have and are with others. As such it broadens and matures us, vivifies and sanctifies us. As love grows, our horizon and interests expand until only an infinitely lovable God can exhaust our capacity to give.

But if unselfish love leads to life, happiness, and the ultimate ecstasy that is heaven, by the same logic sin should lead to death, misery, and the utter loneliness that is hell. For basically sin is but a betrayal of true love, a yielding to self when God and duty require the exercise of that charity which *is not self-seeking* (I Cor. 13: 5). In the present conference we shall review some of the consequences of this refusal to *abide in love*. They are illustrated graphically in the first record of human sin, the story of Eve.

I. Eve's Test of Love

That love should be tested is but fitting. For the paradoxical thing about it is that we cannot share or give ourselves completely without being loved in return. Why, for instance, does God require our love? Because it profits Him? Hardly; for then He would not be infinitely perfect. As Aquinas explains: "God seeks His glory not for His own sake but for ours" (*Sum theol.* II. II, q.132, a. 1 ad 1). For unless we give our hearts to Him, He can never thrill us someday with the eternal gift of Himself.

This reciprocal character of love creates a dilemma which each lover must solve for himself. Does he love merely because he is loved or would he continue to love even if he received nothing in

return? The test is simple. If he continues to be faithful even when others appear to withdraw their love, his own is genuine. That is why Christ made the love of enemies the test of Christian charity. If you love those who love you what reward shall you have? He asks, implying that such love has already received its recompense. You therefore are to be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt. 5: 48). But God loves us not for what He can get out of us but for what He can give us.

Once we have grasped this, we can understand the significance of Eve's temptation. The biblical account (Gen. 3: 1-6) is enlightening. Why had God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree in paradise? asks the devil. Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat, replies Eve in surprise. So bounteous were God's benefits, so great His generosity, so distracting the delights of His garden, that Eve even forgot there was a tree they must not touch. But the devil is careful to call it to her attention. Even when she remembered the forbidden fruit, however, Eve recognized instinctively that God was good. He would not hold back anything from them, she reasoned, were it not dangerous or harmful. God hath commanded us that we should not eat [its fruit] and that we should not touch it, she explained, lest perhaps we die. But the devil sows the seed of doubt. No, you shall not die, he declares. He will tell her the real reason. God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil. Eve looks at the tree. It does not look dangerous, but good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold. The seed of doubt takes root. Could the serpent be right? Is God holding out on them? Suspicion grows like an ugly cloud, blacking out every remembrance of God's myriad proofs of love. God cannot keep her from becoming like to Him, she thinks indignantly. And reaching up, she plucks the fruit and eats. Then the horrible truth breaks upon her. She has been tricked. Like every sinner after her, she finds the forbidden fruit as bitter as wormwood (Prov. 5:4).

Eve is sorry; but not because she has offended God or created a painfully difficult situation for her husband. She is only sorry and frightened for herself. Her love is still self-centered. In failing God she can no longer be true to man. And so her first sin of selfishness

leads to another. Pretending to have found happiness, she reaches up from her fallen state to drag Adam down with her. Having lost God and heaven, she is determined not to lose her husband, even if it means taking him to hell. And so the great downward movement of selfishness begins. We cannot disrupt one of the bonds binding man to God, or man to his fellowman, without weakening or imperiling the other. Had Eve remained faithful, Adam could have loved both God and Eve; but in committing what may have seemed to her a purely personal sin, she makes Adam choose between her and God, between her pleasure and grace-life for her children. For well she knows that if Adam falls, the whole human race will be blighted with original sin. But because the wickedness of a woman is all evil (Ecclus. 25: 18), she does not hesitate to seduce him and through him to betray their unborn children. She, whose very name means mother of all the living, belied that name and brought death to her offspring. Truly might John say: He who does not love abides in death (I Jn. 3, 14).

Here we see the frightening consequences of sin. Not only does Eve fail to become as God. Through her selfish act in seeking to become like God despite God, she loses the very sanctifying grace that made her a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), together with the preternatural gifts of bodily immortality and perfect voluntary control of those instincts of nature that prompt her to seek only her own good. She becomes a creature of death. Having tasted evil, her will is weakened. And understandably enough. For if the will be our power of altruistic love, the faculty which frees us from seeking only our own good, then Eve, by deliberately and freely seeking herself in defiance of her obligations to God, husband, and children perverted her will. No wonder God in punishment permitted her natural cravings to grow strong and rebellious. She no longer finds it easy to fulfil her natural destiny of perfect love, for she is always in danger of being dominated by a selfish possessiveness and craving for affection. Her greater power to love becomes a greater power to enslave, so that there is scarce any evil like that in a woman (Sirach 25:18). Her mind, once used solely to discover how to help her husband and serve God, becomes an instrument of selfishness. This so-called darkening of the intellect does not make it less clever, only its cleverness is no longer what

Christ called the *prudence of the children of light* (Lk. 16:8), but what Paul pictures as the *wisdom of the flesh* (Rom. 8:7). Far from finding heaven, Eve loses even her earthly paradise and is condemned to pain and distress (Gen. 3: 16).

II. Sin as Selfishness

In every sin, Eve's tragedy is somehow re-enacted. For like hers, all sin is the sordid story of selfishness, a search for one's immediate or apparent good at the expense of God or fellowman. Like hers too, all sin is anti-social. It leaves its scars on the human race; indeed, it is not content until it has crucified the Son of God Himself. And having betrayed the very purpose of his existence, the sinner *abides in death* (I Jn. 3:14) and asks to be sent to hell.

That sin, the antithesis of love, is ultimately selfishness hardly requires proof. It is clear from what Christ said of the Last Judgment. (Mt. 25:42-46). If we are damned it will be because we have refused to feed Christ in the person of the hungry, or have turned a deaf ear to the needy, to those in prison, the homeless, the poor, the naked, those physically, mentally, or spiritually sick; in short, because all wrapped up in our own concerns, we have neglected the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. Or consider the capital sins in detail: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy and sloth. Do they not all stem from inordinate self-love with its threefold concupiscence? Or examine your own conscience. Study those oft-repeated sins and imperfections that mar the perfection of the gift of yourself to God. Why do you tend to cut corners in your worship of God? Why so careless or listless in recting your Office, in attending or celebrating Mass, in performing your prescribed prayers or community exercises? Why are you given to vanity, jealousy or envy? Why are you so prone to indulge your taste for food or drink at the expense of your spiritual health? Examine any fault, great or small, and you will find selfishness at the hub of the trouble.

III. Consequences of Sin

As Eve discovered, sin is no shortcut to happiness. It only leads to misery, death, and the utter loneliness of hell. Misery comes in

its wake, for as Paul warns: *Tribulation and anguish shall be visited on the soul of every man who works evil* (Rom. 2:9). Where the natural law is concerned, which even pagans have *written in their hearts* (Rom. 2:14), much of the sinner's sorry plight stems in great measure from the nature of the violation itself. It was this truth that prompted the Stoic maxim: "Virtue is its own reward and vice its own punishment." But in a broader sense, it is true perhaps to some degree of every sin. For if man's very destiny is to love, and love is the fulfillment of the law (Gal. 5:14), how can the human heart find true happiness by stifling the most divine element in itself, its capacity for unselfish love? As Eve's sin cost her paradise, so personal sin robs the soul of the deep peace and joy that comes to those who walk with God as once our protoparents did in the cool of the garden.

But the sinner not only hurts himself, he hurts others; for all sin it anti-social. Like Eve's selfishness, it leaves its scars on the human race as such. It can initiate a chain reaction more devastating than an atomic or hydrogen bomb. Both sacred and profane history give us such striking examples. David's unguarded glance, for instance, led to adultery, then deceit, corruption, the betrayal of loyal soldiers, finally murder and the death of an innocent child (2 Kings 11-12); Amnon's ravishing of his sister Tamar with all its sad consequences (*ibid.*, 13); or Henry VIII, that "defender of the faith," whose private affair with Anne Boleyn lost all England to the Church. No sin, in the last analysis, is purely personal or affects the individual alone. Even interior sins are reflected on one's countenance; and if nothing else the Mystical Body is weakened.

To show what sin has done and continues to do to the human race, God gave us the frightening object lesson of Calvary. For as we have said elsewhere, "What is the story of Christ's career on earth but the case history of the interaction between a perfect human nature and an environment tainted with sin? Not that the Jewish nation of Christ's day was particularly degenerate. Quite the contrary, the Jews had been specially favored by God. Taught by His prophets, enlightened by His Law, protected by His providence, they possessed an enviable standard of morality that set them above any pagan civilization of their day. Yet the shadow of original and actual sin also blighted their race. Their mental outlook,

their moral behavior, their vices and virtues reflected the influence of the sins of the parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents all the way back to man's first defection in the Garden of Eden. Sin, we might say, created the culture-loving Sadducees, the warped spirituality of the Pharisees, the misinterpretations of the Rabbis, the school system of the Scribes. It gave us the weakling Pilate, the greedy Judas, the brutal temple guard. It produced Caiphas, that parody on the priesthood. It turned the Sanhedrin court of justice into a living lie. Sin plaited the crown of thorns, knotted the bloody scourge, and hewed the beams of the cross. Here was a milieu created by sin. And into this world, God sent His beloved Son as a perfect man. And what happened? The devilish logic of sin pushed on to its inevitable conclusion. It nailed Christ to the cross. This is the terrible, frightening lesson of the Passion. In the anguished mind, the tortured soul, the broken heart, the disfigured body of Christ, we read what sin—yes, our sin—does and is still doing: ravaging the Mystical Body of Christ." (*Book of Life*, p. 71). The passion of Christ is a ghastly reminder that human sin has cosmic consequences.

And because the sinner denies his destiny, becoming a detriment to his fellowmen, he deserves to die. And if God does not strike him down at once, it is only because in His mercy, as He tells us, *I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezech. 33: 11). But where the individual continues to provoke the wrath of God by continuing in his sin, there is a progressive growth in selfishness. For to remain apart from God, one must continually repulse the advances of divine grace, and with each act the sinner grows more selfish. With each successive step, the sinner, like Eve, becomes more calloused towards the consequences of his sin for others. There is a progressive narrowing of horizons and interests, a kind of spiritual introversion whereby the sinner becomes completely and hopelessly self-centered. If Judas is any norm for judging the patience of divine mercy, then no man is damned that God has not looked full in the face, over and over again entreating him to return, but he deliberately turns his back on God and his fellowman's interest and walks into eternity refusing to love. Perhaps we are not far wrong in believing that no man is in hell today who has not made himself either hope-

lessly or dangerously selfish. Hopelessly selfish, because by his habitual self-seeking and continual refusal of grace, he so conditions himself that he no longer cares to convert; dangerously selfish, because the social consequences of his sin make him a positive menace to his fellowman. When such a point is reached he forfeits his right to live; indeed he has lost the whole reason for his existence, so God takes him from this earth and gives him just what he always wanted and deliberately sought—his miserable tiny self. And that is hell, where everyone is utterly alone because everyone is wrapped up in himself. The very creatures the sinner once sought for the happiness they would bring, become hateful and disgusting. Once instruments of pleasure, now they but torture and burn. But the maddeing thing about hell is not the pain of its mysterious fire, which paradoxically enough, a human soul might endure and even be ecstatically happy, if only it still possessed the loving vision of God; no, it is the loss of God who can be possessed only through the unselfishness of true love, that drives the dammed soul to despair. And that is why even were God to open hell, the sinner could never escape for he has never learned to love unselfishly. He has corrupted the innate goodness of the will as a faculty of altruistic love by repeated acts of selfishness until like a warped and twisted limb it is no longer capable of reaching out to God. His only reason for hating hell is the discomfort it brings to himself, so that even if God were to unlock its gates, the sinner would still be chained by his own selfishness. He would carry hell with him.

But even where the selfishness of sin stops short of such corruption, it still wreaks its havoc. Nor are the cloistered walls immune to its ravages. Some of the worst examples of selfishness can be found at times among those who by profession have dedicated themselves to the more perfect observance of Christ's dual law of charity. If a community where charity rules recreates something of earthly paradise, as Saint Augustine declared, then the religious wrapped up in his own selfishness can create a little hell within the monastery. "There are false monks," wrote Augustine, "and I know several. Reprobates are they in whom the charity of Christ has no part, who while living in community with others are hateful, spiteful, turbulent, disturbing by their raucous conduct the peace of their brethren, seeking always for a chance to speak against them, just

as a fractious horse in double-harness not only does not help to pull the wagon, but torments his team-mate with his kicks" (*Enar. in ps. 119, 3*). Such might well ponder those words of John: *He who does not love abides in death* (I Jn. 3:14).

But sin not only crucifies man by bringing misery to the individual and pain to the human race. It also crucifies divine love.

Sometimes the sinner tries to delude himself into believing that sin cannot matter to God, for how can an infinitely perfect being be hurt? For in anthropomorphic fashion he can only conceive something mattering if its absence produces pain or hurt. It is true of course that we cannot take anything from God, and in this sense sin cannot hurt Him. But we can keep Him from giving Himself in love to others, and nothing in this whole wide world is so important, or matters so much to God as that. For if the Three Divine Persons, to assume the impossible, could no longer share the divine essence in that inner give-and-take that is their very life, they would cease to exist, they would die. Neither man's creation nor supernatural destiny, it is true, result from any intrinsic necessity. They are free gifts of divine altruism. Still, nothing is closer to the heart of the Trinity, to use a human metaphor, nothing so like, and therefore so much a participation in, their inner life as the gift of the grace-life to a created soul. No wonder then that Paul could warn the sinner: *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Hebr. 10: 31).

Indeed our love matters to God! When a soul not only refuses Him love but prevents Him from giving Himself to others, it incurs the terrible wrath of God. If divine anger ever flashed in the eyes of the gentle Christ, it was when He spoke of those who destroyed the faith of His little ones by scandal. He would tie a millstone about their necks and drown them in the depths of the sea. He knotted a scourge for the temple profiteers who made the practice of religion a burden for the common people. His terrible curse fell upon the Scribes learned in the law who educated unto death instead of unto eternal life (Lk. 11, 45-52).

And not only is God concerned about what we do to others; He is vitally interested in the love of our own heart. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore have I drawn thee taking pity on thee* (Jer. 31,3). In his beautiful autobiographical poem

the "Hound of Heaven," Francis Thompson relates how divine love pursued him relentlessly, till it finally caught up with him, a derelict of the gutter, and made a man of him again. Or take the story of Saint Peter, Magdalene, or Judas. Was anyone more madly in love with human souls than the Divine Shepherd? No mother, He assures us, loved her child more than He loves us. The ardent love between a bride and her husband cannot compare with God's love for us, as we learn from the Cantic of Canticles. Can we claim our love does not matter?

But it is almost as if God were afraid someone might accuse Him. "You are infinitely happy in the possession of the divine essence. How then can you be hurt?" So what did God do? He gave us the power to hurt Him in the literal and real sense of the term. He took to Himself a human heart that we might break it, human eyes that we might cause them to fill with tears, a human soul that could run the whole gamut of human emotions. And all this to prove that our love does matter. He loves us so much that He gives us the power to make Him sorrowful or glad. In more than one sense, the crucifixion is an object lesson. Not only does it dramatize what sin does to human nature, but it is the poignant story of how our sin cuts the heart of God. Our sin blinds His eyes lest they find us out; it presses a crown of thorns on His brow to take His mind off us; it spikes His arms to the cross lest they embrace us; pegs His feet lest they pursue us; lances His heart lest it imprison us.

And the inexplicable proof of His love is this, that God does not strike us down but lets us stumble on in our self-chosen misery, until we discover our mistake and come back conscience-stricken like Magdalene to weep at His feet. The cross shows us better than anything else that God is love, and that sin can crucify one who is God Himself.

As the bride of Christ, or His intimate friend, abhor all deliberate sin for the ugly thing it is. To seek our own pleasure or passing enjoyment at the cost of His pain is a kind of spiritual sadism. *Let us therefore love, because God first loved us* (I Jn. 4: 19).

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY (II)

II. THE THEOLOGICAL VIRTUE OF CHARITY

Charity is the supernatural virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake and our neighbor because of God. It will not be necessary to consider here those things which are handled by theologians regarding the nature of charity. It will suffice for our present purpose to discuss briefly the things that pertain to the subject we are examining, that is, charity and its perfection through active exercise.

The Object and Nature of Charity

The Franciscan school, as has already been pointed out, considers God primarily as perfection and infinite goodness, continually abounding in all good. Saint Francis viewed God as He is described in the synoptic gospels, as the heavenly Father of the immense human family, Who embraced all His children in the vast sweep of His merciful providence.

Love of God has the dual nature of friendship and of desire. The first has as its formal object the goodness or absolute perfection of God. It deals with the good in itself, without any relation at all to creatures. The second considers God as our own personal good, as loving us and communicating Himself to us. In this form of love great emphasis is laid on the tremendous benefits of God by which He manifests His love for us. He has shown this by "creating us, by redeeming us, and by preparing and disposing us for the Beatific Vision."¹

According to Catholic theology, the motive or aim of charity, at least in the final analysis, must be the infinite perfection of God and not the good received or expected from God. For Saint Bonaventure, however, charity includes not just love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) alone, but also love of desire (*amor concupiscentiae*) by which one longs to see and possess God. To love God because of Himself is not simply to love Him without any hope of reward; it is also to desire union with Him and to desire to possess Him as our final end and beatitude, and not some other secondary good. The formal object of charity is God, the highest good, under the aspect of goodness. Hence

¹Scotus, *Oxon.*, III, d. 27, b. un., n.8, XXV, 361a.

it not only includes the absolute goodness of God, but also His relative goodness.

Blessed John Duns Scotus, and many Franciscan theologians after him, proposed a stricter and more precise teaching on the formal object of charity. According to Scotus, love concerns friendship only, a friendship by which we love God as goodness in Himself without reference to creatures; for Scotus this is charity *sui juris*. He defines it accordingly: "That affective virtue which perfects the will in so far as it has the affection of justice (*affectio iustitiae*) I call charity."² Scotus, however, does not exclude the desire that strives for God as good in Himself, but only the desire that seeks our own good. According to him, the love by which we strive for God as our own good is not charity but the virtue of hope.

The renowned mystic, Blessed Angela of Foligno, speaks of this pure and perfect love that contemplates God solely as the absolute good, in the following words: "I do not want to serve or love because of some reward; I want to serve and love because of the incomprehensible goodness of God."³

Yet, the love we render to God Who first loves us must be duly considered; for this love prepares and disposes us for the pure love of friendship.⁴ The love God manifests to us and the benefits He unceasingly showers upon us should move us to love Him and to ascend to the love of friendship. For this reason the spiritual writers of our Order frequently recommend this kind of love as a means of enkindling perfect charity.

A beautiful example of this occurs in the twenty-third chapter of the First Rule of the Friars Minor, where our Seraphic Father exhorts his friars to love God with their whole heart because of the benefits received from Him. From this they should proceed to the love of friendship, however, for he goes on to say: "Therefore we should desire and wish for nothing, and nothing should please and delight us, except our Creator and Redeemer and Saviour, Who alone is the true God, Who is our complete good, and every good, and all-good, the true and highest good, Who alone is good (Lk. 18:19). . . Who alone is holy, just, true, and upright."

Scotus himself accepts this motive—which is only secondarily necessary for charity—as well as the primary motive which impels us to

²*Ox.*, III, d. 27, q.un., n. 2, XV, 356a.

³Sainte Angele de Foligno, *Le livre de l'Experience des vrais Fideles*, ed. M.J. Ferre, (Paris, 1927), 354.

⁴*Cf. Rep. Par.*, III, d. 27, q. un., n. 9, XXIII, 482b-483a.

love God as goodness in Himself, for he says that "both of these (motives) must be present for the most perfect kind of love."⁵

The virtue of charity inclines us to love not only God but also the God-Man, Jesus Christ. At the time of Saint Francis, Christian theology and iconography were quite reserved toward the sacred humanity of Christ as the Incarnate Word and the King of Glory. Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and the Cistercians were almost the only exceptions. But Francis of Assisi, as everyone knows, cherished a tender devotion and a deep personal love toward the humanity of Christ, especially His suffering and rejected humanity. Just as Francis loved God as his Father, so he loved Christ as his older Brother Who assumed a human body for us, redeemed us from the bondage of sin by His passion and death, and interceded with the Father for us, even in our guilt.

Following closely in the footsteps of Our Seraphic Father, Franciscan writers, perhaps more than any others, urge devotion to the humanity of Christ. The three traditional forms of this devotion are to the passion, to the Holy Eucharist and to Mary the Mother of Christ. But in addition to the aspect of piety here involved, it is also necessary to consider the aspect of dogma. In Seraphic spirituality, Jesus Christ holds first place, and He is considered—and in an absolute sense—the only Mediator between God and man. Consequently the Franciscan school reduces all things to Christ, and is pre-eminently Christocentric.

Whoever loves God with a genuine love must of necessity want Him to be loved by all men. Saint Bonaventure says: "Love does not merely desire to enjoy God's sweetness and to be close to Him, but it also wishes and longs for the fulfillment of His will, for the spreading of His worship, for the exaltation of His glory. For love wishes that God be known by all, loved by all, served by all, and honored above all things."⁶ All men are members of one great family, whose God is the Father and His Only-Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, together with the Paraclete. Therefore all men are "*sons of the Most High* (Lk. 6:35), brothers of Jesus Christ and consequently brothers of one another. Following the example of Jesus Christ, therefore, each one of us has the duty to help his fellowmen so that throughout the entire human family a union of filial charity toward the Father and fraternal charity among men may be restored, fostered, and preserved.

To love someone means to wish him well; accordingly we must desire every good for our neighbor. On this point Saint Bonaventure is explicit: "Love of neighbor not only desires his corporal welfare and

⁵Rep. Par., III, d. 27, q. un., n. 9, XXIII, 483a.

⁶De sex alis Seraphim, c. 2, n. 5, VIII, 133b.

temporal prosperity, but also and above all his eternal salvation."⁷ According to the Scotistic school, charity toward ourselves and toward our neighbor consists in this, that we wish and desire that we ourselves and our neighbor may come to love God as infinitely perfect in Himself. We wish this love of God however, neither for our own nor for our neighbor's benefit but solely that God may receive the glory that is due His absolute perfection. In like manner, the virtue of charity does not rest in one's neighbor as an ultimate end, for creatures can be loved properly only as a kind of intermediary object and indirectly, as a means toward the love of the infinite Good to Whom every act of true charity directly tends.⁸

On this account we can say that charity toward God and charity toward our neighbor are specifically identical. For as Scotus says: "The *habitus* of a direct act (*actus directus*) and of the indirect act (*actus reflexus* is the same."⁹ According to the Subtle Doctor, therefore, the reason for the specific unity of charity toward God and charity toward our neighbor is not the divine goodness in Itself in so far as it is the object of glorification in eternal beatitude in which our neighbor becomes or is able to become a partaker—as Saint Thomas and Saint Bonaventure hold.

The Franciscan Order is essentially apostolic. "Saint Francis . . . wished to live not for himself alone, but led by zeal for God, he wished to help others."¹⁰ For this reason he set up a way of life that would be not only contemplative but also active. Thus the Friars Minor, imbued with the spirit of Francis, have as their ideal the so-called "mixed life"—a life of contemplation that overflows into apostolic activity. It is on this account that our Order has always shown a special love for the common people, for all who are in misery and need help, for all who reflect the poor, lowly, suffering, and rejected Christ. Another characteristic of our Order that follows from its apostolic form is love and devotion toward the Church, which is the family of God on earth and the mystical spouse of Jesus Christ.

The State of Friendship with God

All theologians teach that the state of friendship between God and man which is produced by the infused virtue of charity, is brought about by sanctifying grace. As Saint Bonaventure puts it: "Charity is

⁷Ibid.

⁸Oxon. III, d. 26, q. un., n. 2s, XV, 379ab.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Brev. Rom.-Seraphicum, 4 oct. ad Laudes.

joined with the grace that renders one pleasing, and which is consequently called *gratum faciens*, for it renders man acceptable to God. Hence it is called charity (*caritas*) not simply because it possesses something which is dearly loved (*carum amatum*), but also because it makes man dear to God (*carum Deo*).¹¹ And the Subtle Doctor affirms this: "Through grace, or charity, the soul is formally made acceptable to God and in a very special manner."¹² Many other Franciscan writers follow this line of thought, insisting that the theological virtue of charity and sanctifying grace are really the same. But we shall discuss this point later.

Now, the love of friendship demands a certain equality among friends, for friendship makes men equal. There must be something in common among friends, something that places them on some kind of equal plane. In the same manner, divine charity also calls for an equality, though a relative one, between God and man.

This bond of love that exists between God and a just man is called by Duns Scotus a super-friendship (*superamicitia*) rather than an ordinary friendship. The Subtle Doctor speaks in such terms, however, not because he denies that there is no union of the good, or of the mutual love of benevolence between God and man, but because he takes the word "friendship" in a strict, Aristotelian sense which posits equality from the very notion of friendship. But equality in its proper signification is impossible between God and created beings. Still, according to Scotus, a kind of friendship is possible. "In an even more excellent manner is God lovable, possessing goodness as He does and returning love for love, so that it is possible to have a friendship with Him that could be called a superior or super-friendship."¹³

Moreover, for true friendship love must be gratuitous, that is, a person must love his friend for himself and not for any personal advantage or utilitarian motive. Thus in the Scotistic school charity is described as gratuitous and pure, more insistently, perhaps, than in any other school. For according to Scotus, charity properly so-called requires that God be loved because of His own absolute perfection, without any reference to creatures.

The Virtue of Charity and Sanctifying Grace Are the Same

Charity is always connected with sanctifying grace, and thus it renders a man dear to God and makes him a friend of God. Many theolo-

¹¹*Sent.*, d. 17, p.1, art. un., q. 3, I, 299a.

¹²*Oxon.* IV, d.1, q.k. n. 31, XVI, 94a.

¹³*Ibid.*, II, d. 27, q. un., n.4, XIII, 249a. (Assisi codex 137).

gians of the thirteenth century stated that charity and sanctifying grace are the same. Saint Bonaventure did not deny the probability of this opinion, yet he followed those who placed a real distinction between the infused virtue of charity and habitual grace.

According to the judgment of Scotus, however, the virtue of charity and sanctifying grace are really the same. "Grace is a virtue and is identical in reality with charity itself."¹⁴ "Both," argues Scotus, "as such are offered equally to the children of the kingdom and the sons of perdition. . . , both enliven virtues as their [supernatural] form, neither can be [supernaturally] dead; both unite us perfectly to our ultimate end, in so far as it is possible in this life. If they were assumed to be distinct, one of the two would be superfluous, in as much as the other would suffice."¹⁵

There is, however, a formal distinction between the two. For, to quote Scotus again: "Charity is said to be that which makes God dear to the one possessing it, but in such a way that God is regarded as lovable rather than as loving, whereas grace makes God pleased with someone so that grace regards God as loving and accepting one rather than as someone who is loved."¹⁶

This, briefly, is the opinion of Scotus on the identity of charity and grace.

Charity, the Queen of Virtues

From what has already been said, it is clear that charity is the most eminent of the virtues. Franciscan writers have often discussed its excellence, but none more emphatically than Scotus. "Charity," he says, "since it is the most excellent virtue of all, perfects the will according to its most perfect act, which is to love."¹⁷ And he goes on to explain that ". . . since the theological virtues have as their object that which is uncreated, they are the more perfect the more intimately they are united and joined to that object. And moreover, the spiritual edifice is said to be founded on faith, raised up through hope, and completed by charity, for all the theological virtues, charity has the greatest power of uniting and hence its acts make men more like God."¹⁸

Charity is the queen of virtues. Just as the will has command over all the other powers of the soul, so charity rules over all the other virtues. Saint Bernardine of Siena writes: "Charity is the queen of vir-

¹⁴*Rep. Par.*, II, d. 27, q. un., n.3, XXIII, 135a.

¹⁵*Oxon.* II, d. 27, q. un., n.4, XIII, 249a.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷*Rep. Par.*, III, d. 26, q. un., n. 19, XXIII, 475b.

¹⁸*III Sent.*, d. 27, a.2, q.1 ad 6, III, 604b.

tues. She can in fact be called the empress of the virtues, for she governs all the others. Charity has this supereminence over all other virtues because, even though she does not elicit the acts proper to the others, she nevertheless commands them and renders them meritorious."¹⁹ And Saint Bonaventure has this to say: "Just as a tree derives its nourishment, life, and vigor from moisture, so the entire spiritual development of man derives the same from love. Love is infused in so far as it is received within us, and it is diffused in so far as proceeding from within us, it broadens the affections to include the love of many things and moves all the powers of the soul to perform good works."²⁰

Furthermore, according to Saint Bonaventure, "love is the root, the form, and the end of the virtues."²¹ "For charity unites, conforms, and links our will to God Himself as our moving principle, our guiding norm, and our peaceful end. Therefore, just as God is the efficient cause in so far as He moves us, the formal cause in so far as He guides us, and the final cause in so far as He gives us peace, so charity itself, by reason of its operation, has the office of the three causes."²²

Without charity the virtues are perfect only *secundum quid* and only as regards being, but not *simpliciter* and as regards well-being. For they must ordain and guide man to his final end, but they cannot do so without charity, which is their directive form, giving them help in ordaining and regulating. This is the opinion of the Seraphic Doctor. "For charity," he says, "is the weight that inclines and brings about the operations of all the virtues toward a good end."²³ And "just as heavy bodies tend toward a central point through the force of their weight, so the spirit tends toward the highest good through the weight of love."²⁴

The Subtle Doctor is in perfect agreement with the beautiful teaching of the Seraphic Doctor. "If charity alone regards the ultimate end immediately," he explains, "the other virtues will not regard the ultimate end except through the medium of charity. . . and therefore are imperfect without charity, for they cannot be directed (toward the ultimate end) without charity."²⁵

It follows, then, that all the virtues are nothing more than different manifestations of the one virtue, charity, which contains all the other

¹⁹Quadragesimale de Evangelio aeterno, sermo 3, De excellentia divini amoris, a.2, c.2, *Opera*, (Venetiis, 1745), II, 19a.

²⁰I Sent., d. 14, dub. 1, 6, I, 255ab.

²¹Brevil. p.5, c. 8, V, 262a.

²²II Sent., d. 28, a. 1, q.2 ad 6, II, 885b.

²³III Sent. d. 27, a. k, q. 3, III, 598a.

²⁴Ibid., d. 36, a. un., q. 6, III, 806b.

²⁵Oxon., III, d. 36, q. un., n. 26, XV, 684b.

virtues. Thus David of Augsburg says: "Charity is one virtue possessing in itself all other virtues; but because it has so many different effects which are brought about by circumstances and causes from without, and which it opposes when bad or tends toward when good, it takes on diverse offices or names."²⁶

Obviously, charity is the supreme virtue according to the Franciscan school of spirituality.

²⁶*De exterioris et interioris Hominis Compositione libri tres*, (Ad Claras Aquas, 1899) 226s.

(To be continued)

Fr. James Heerinckx, O.F.M.

Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M. (Transl.)

THE HOLY FRIARS OF SAXONY

HOLY FRIAR ROBERT

I. His life of work and prayer

67. So intensely did the ancient members of our Order cultivate the spirit that manual or external work never interfered with holy prayer; instead, it made them even more eager to keep silence and carry out other works of piety.

68. In the province of Saxony there was a certain laybrother by the name of Robert.¹⁶ By trade he was a stonemason and almost daily he was occupied in the service of the friars. Yet, even in his daily labors he did not allow his spirit of devotion to grow cool, but rather, by continually arousing the inner man, he arrived at the height of perfection.

While he was still a novice he built for the friars of Halberstadt an ambulatory connecting the refectory and infirmary with the guest house near the kitchen. In all things which pertained to his work of building he was aided and encouraged by the good will of his superiors. I knew this friar and was greatly concerned about him lest his external labor might quench in him the spirit of holy devotion and draw him away from his spiritual exercises. But God, who always looks out for the humble, saw the services of charity and the humility which he showed the friars in his labors. And because of his prompt obedience God not only increased in him the grace and spirit of devotion, but also gave him so much grace that even more than all the other friars in the convent he was fervent in prayer and desirous of praying always. Even when he was taken up with his manual labor he would curb his tongue so carefully that rarely, if ever, would he speak an idle word all day, much less a harmful one. And when he climbed down from his building in the evening, he set things in order as he could and hurried to prayer with a certain anxiety of mind. In the evenings he kept a long watch in prayer and spent a long time in meditation. I heard many good reports about this laybrother, especially from another laybrother who had known him well before he entered the Order and to whom Robert in turn with all the trustfulness of friendship told many details of his experiences in the Order.

¹⁶In recounting the vision of Friar Robert (numbers 69ff, below), the *Liber Miraculorum et Visionum* calls him Rupert (A.F.H., II (1909), p. 78). Since the final number of our account (n. 73) speaks of the choir he built at Erfurt, Robert must have done this in 1232. The building was destroyed by fire in 1291, and not completely rebuilt until 1316; by that time Robert or Rupert was long since dead and his memory enshrined in the *Liber Miraculorum*.

II. How Holy Obedience merited for him to see Christ on Christmas Day.

69. After he had made his profession in the Order and had finished the new building, he was appointed to look after the friars' kitchen and to cook for them. He also very willingly performed whatever his superiors commanded him, and in all his duties he showed himself the servant of everyone.

70. One time during the fast after the Feast of All Saints it occurred to him that he should dispose himself in a special way for the Feast of Christmas and prepare diligently for the graces he hoped to receive. So he began his fast by cleansing his heart thoroughly by a good confession and by probing deeply to see whether anything was hidden there that might offend the eyes of the divine Majesty. His confessor was Friar Siegfried von Dorstat to whom he made a general confession of all his sins which he could call to mind and which might disquiet him in any way in his devotion. After he had made his confession he begged the guardian not to send him out for Christmas, but to leave him in the convent, that he might more easily give himself up to prayer and devotion. With great kindness the guardian told him that he would gladly comply with the request, provided the lack of friars did not necessitate his being sent out; and that in the meantime he would think it over carefully, since it was quite some time before the friars would go out. The guardian added that if he could not help sending him out, he should go willingly with a ready soul and in the merit of holy obedience, and if he bowed his head humbly in holy obedience God would give him greater grace on the feastday and increase the fervor of his spirit. When Friar Robert thought it over, he felt remorse that he had asked the guardian not to send him out; he feared that in this request he had sought merely his own will and had transgressed his vow. He therefore resolved in his heart that he would leave the matter entirely to Divine Providence and would not pester the guardian again about leaving him in the convent.

71. But when the feast was near at hand, Divine Providence disposed the guardian to send him out as companion to Friar Conrad von Popellendorp, a devout and religious man. When they arrived in the town called Brucoscherleve, Robert gave himself to devotion and prayed much while his companion was busy hearing confessions. Since he had chosen to contemplate the Holy Infancy, his mind was wholly taken up with the boundless love which God had shown toward sinful and mortal man in the Incarnation. Nor did he weary of this meditation, and so it happened that in the evening on the feast of Saint Thomas the Apostle,

when his companion had retired, Friar Robert continued to watch and pray. Then the Blessed Virgin appeared to him and placed into his hands her Son our Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a most beautiful Boy. But when he had seen the Boy, he was so pleased with His incredible loveliness that he paid but little attention to the most Blessed Mother. While Friar Robert was finding great joy in the pleasing appearance of the Boy, His Mother after a short while took the Boy back from his hands with some impatience, and immediately disappeared. At this poor Robert was greatly disturbed and was fearful lest he had offended either Mother or Son, and had been robbed of Christ's presence because of his sins. He therefore redoubled his devotion and began to devote himself to prayer with great fervor, hoping that on Christmas Day God would deign to look upon him and grant him once more some such sweet and heavenly consolation.

III. *The great consolation he received from the apparition of Christ.*

72. On the Feast of the Holy Innocents, when his companion, who had busied himself all day with preaching and hearing confessions, was thoroughly tired and had hurried to bed, Friar Robert remained at his devotions and continued in his fervent prayers. As he was persevering untiringly in his prayers, Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him with His wounds all afresh and showed him such warm familiarity that in the sweetness of his soul he could not refrain from breaking forth into sonorous song and joyful jubilation.

His companion, however, awakened by this loud noise and rejoicing, did not know that Friar Robert was taken up in the sweetness of contemplation. He therefore asked him how long he intended to stay up and why he did not lie down and go to sleep. Later Friar Robert told a dear friend among his confreres that he had received such great interior consolation from that vision and every day still felt it within himself that he would prefer to hop on the ground like a frog all the rest of his life and never live under a roof rather than sadly lack that divine consolation.

IV. *His honored death.*

73. This same Friar Robert was later transferred to Erfurt where he built a beautiful and impressive choir for the friars. He died in this convent while chapter was being celebrated, just as many of the friars were arriving for it. He was laid to rest with great pomp and his funeral was attended by great numbers of friars and of laypeople of both sexes.

I who compiled this for you was also present and saw this funeral; I ascribed it to Friar Robert's sanctity that by God's Providence he was buried so gloriously, because in this way God gave him special honor.

After his death I saw the iron chain which in the spirit of penance he used to fasten on each arm.

(To be continued)
Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (transl.)

THE NEW RUBRICS AND THE LITTLE OFFICE OF OUR LADY

When the Sacred Congregation of Rites issued a General Decree March 23, 1955, "On Reducing the Rubrics to a Simpler Form" (effective this past January 1), no mention was made therein of its application to the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As a result, there has been considerable discussion, controversy, and doubt among canonists, rubricists, and the Sisters themselves who would be primarily concerned in the question. Even in Rome, an informed source tells us, there has been a difference of opinion on the part of authorities and jurists. More than one question in ecclesiastical journals bears witness to the division of answers.

Thus the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record* (November, 1955) carried a comment to the effect that the new Decree does not in any way touch upon the Little Office. The author, G. Montague, argues from the silence of the Decree, to conclude that it concerns only the Divine Office of the Roman Rite. Besides, it expressly states that "what things are not expressly mentioned here are considered to be unchanged." On the other hand, a recent number of the *Review for Religious* with equally sound logic claims that the Decree does apply, since the Little Office is a part of the text of the Roman Breviary. We can bolster this argument by mentioning that the new edition of the Romano-Seraphic Breviary, to be issued this coming year with embodiment of the new rubrics, will omit the Aves, etc., in connection with the text of the Little Office.

However, it is now quite certain that the Sacred Congregation intends the new breviary changes to apply to the Little Office, even though it has not issued a formal decree to that effect. The Superior General of the Sisters of the Poor of Saint Francis (Frascati-Rome; Hartwell, Ohio) presented a list of questions (drawn up by Fr. John de Deo Oldegeering, OFM, Cincinnati) to the Sacred Congregation. After some delay an audience was granted to Sister Paula, the Assistant General, by Monsignor Enrico Dante, Prefect of the Ceremoniere Pontificia, in the name of

the Sacred Congregation. In this audience, November 26, 1955, the Monsignor explained that he would answer the questions orally, since anything in writing from the Congregation would have to bear the seal of the Cardinal-Prefect, and this was not considered necessary in this case.

Accordingly, it is evident that the following changes are to be introduced into the recitation of the Little Office.

1. Omit the *Aperi Domine* (which does not seem to have been customary in the Little Office anyway) and the *Sacrosanctae*.
2. Omit the *Aves* at the beginning of the various Hours.
3. Omit the *Pater* at the close of Matins (when this Hour is separated from Lauds in private recitation) and at the end of Lauds (together with *Dominus det, etc.*).
4. Omit the *Pater, Ave, Credo* after the Final Antiphon following Compline.
5. Omit the Commemoration of the Saints. However, as will be evident below, Franciscans may retain the commemoration of Saint Francis.
6. Omit the Final Antiphon of Our Lady except after Compline. Therefore Lauds, Prime, etc. end simply with *Fidelium, etc.*

In the interest of clarity we present that portion of the questions and answers which affect the Little Office used by the majority of Sisters. Other questions touch more directly on the edition of the *Officium Marianum* prepared by Father A. Bea, S. J. (translated by Fr. Aurelian Scharf, O.F.M., Newman Press), which the Frascati-Hartwell Sisters have adopted as a Community. The text is very explicit, to leave no point overlooked:

1. Does the new Decree of March 23, 1955, governing the recitation of the Divine Office, affect the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary? *Yes.*
2. If the Decree affects the Little Office, then:
Will the *Ave Maria* at the beginning of the Hours be omitted? *Yes.*
Will the *Pater Noster* at the close of Matins and Lauds and the Little Hours be omitted? *Yes.*
3. Will the Commemoration of the Saints be omitted? *Yes.*
If so, must the Commemoration of Saint Francis (for which we have an Indult) be omitted? *No. You may insert it in the Office where you now have it, as something special for your Congregation. Make a conclusion after "participatione gaudere" in the Oremus, using "Per Dominum nostrum" (long conclusion).*
4. If the Commemoration of All Saints is omitted, will the Oration after the *Benedictus* of Lauds and the *Magnificat* of Vespers be

followed by all the usual versicles (*Domine, exaudi orationem. . .*), and will the versicle *Fidelium animae* close Lauds and Vespers? *Yes.* Will Prime, Tierce, Sext and None close with the versicle *Fidelium animae*? *Yes.*

Will Compline close with *Benedicat*, the Final Anthem of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and *Divinum Auxilium*? *Yes.*

After several questions on the Bea edition, the text continues:

5. When the Office is said in common, who intones the *Te Deum, Benedictus, Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis*: the Chanter or the Hebdomadary? *Do as you wish.*
—Is the Sign of the Cross to be made at the beginning of the *Benedictus, Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis*? *Yes.*
—If the Office closes with the versicle *Fidelium animae* and the choirs are in a standing position, will it be correct to kneel just before this versicle in order to finish the Office kneeling, or should the choirs remain standing? *Do as you wish. It is correct to keep the position you are in when saying this versicle at the close of Matins and Lauds and the Little Hours, and the Regina Caeli after Compline.*
6. Finally, Monsignor Dante said: "This is the substance of the whole matter. The new Decree does affect the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, it is not obligatory, so you can continue in your old way or follow the New Decree, but it is *either or*; the two may not be mixed. I would advise you to follow the new Decree and go along with the Church." Monsignor Marchetta, who was also present at this conference, remarked later: "When this New Decree is declared a law, all will be obliged to follow it, as the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary is part of the Breviary."

From a practical viewpoint, toward implementing this questionnaire (which seems to decide the question definitely enough), it is in order for the Mother Provincial (or the Superior General) to decide whether or not her jurisdiction will or will not adopt the changes. The individual houses should not make the change of their own initiative, to achieve uniformity within the whole Province or Congregation. Once adopted, it should be followed completely, since a mixture of the old and the new is expressly prohibited. At the same time, should a group decide not to use the new Rubrics but wait for a more official pronouncement, I should think the individual Sister in private recitation might of her own initiative make use of the new rubrics, provided again that she is consistent in this.

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.

A NEW ROMANO-SERAPHIC RITUAL

Bound in red leather and embossed with a symbol of the Holy Spirit and the Tau of Saint Francis, the new (third) edition of the Romano-Seraphic Ritual presents a most pleasing appearance. Issued this past November with the approval of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, it embodies almost all the latest changes in the blessings of the Church and includes several variations in the Ritual of the Friars Minor and those families subject to the Minister General of the latter. Unfortunately, its printing was just too early to include some of the changes of Holy Week, such as the Blessing at Table for the closing days of Lent. One of the omissions already apparent was the blessing for the chalk on Epiphany; another, the revision of the ceremony for the renewal of vows this past April 16.

Several new features will undoubtedly be of interest to the Sisters as well as the Friars. Among these is an annual Consecration of the Seraphic Order to its special Patroness, Mary Immaculate, to be made either on December 8 or on the Feast of Mary Queen of the Franciscan Order (December 15). There is a new rite for the celebration of a priestly Jubilee, even a rite for wedding Jubilees (for use in parishes), new forms proper to the Second Order for a renewal of vows on March 18 (the anniversary of the reception and profession of Saint Clare) and for the celebration of profession-jubilees. In imitation of the Transitus of Saint Francis, and appendix to the Ritual now contains a similar ceremony for the Death of Saint Clare, which (according to the *Acta Ordinis*, 1956, p. 42) is not limited to the exclusive use of the Poor Clare Nuns but can be used also by Friars and Sisters.

Older rites and ceremonies have been revised and somewhat shortened, with the result that the Manuals of Prayer for the various Provinces and Congregations will likely need revision. Thus the annual Consecration on the Feast of the Sacred Heart omits the *Veni Creator* and the *Magnificat* and more clearly separates the Act of Consecration from the Act of Reparation; both can now be recited in the vernacular in an approved translation (General Norms, n. 9, p. 2). A corresponding revision has been made for the Consecration on the Feast of Christ the King. The renewal of vows (April 16), the departure-ceremony for missionaries, and the rite used in celebrating the profession-jubilee of a Friar have received some abbreviation. In regard to the latter, most Friars will likely be relieved to know that the Jubilarian is no longer burdened or festooned with a flowery head-gear and need not receive the staff. In this ceremony and several others English may now be used for the petitions, the act of renewal of profession, etc.

Some of the changes introduced affect the wording of formulae essential to the Franciscan life. Masters of clerics will welcome the revised form of the oath before Solemn Profession, since it no longer carries reference to the Subdiaconate. Tertiary Brothers of the First Order are no longer called Oblates; and their profession is made according to a new wording. In the formula for simple (temporary) profession in both the First and Second Orders (and that of cloistered Tertiaries) the familiar *sine proprio* is replaced by *in paupertate*, another instance of more express legislation for the state of poverty of the simply professed Religious, who indeed lives in poverty but still has his *proprium* to some extent.

All who use the Romano-Seraphic Litany for Rogation Days and otherwise, will find the list of Saints identical with the revision of the latest Seraphic Breviary, but with several additions, including Saint Pius X. Choir-directors may note that the General Norms (n. 5, p. 1) remind us that the Order has the custom of standing for all hymns, responsories and psalms, even when the Most Blessed Sacrament is exposed, unless otherwise noted (which is certainly noted for the *Tantum Ergo*); and (n. 7, p. 2) that the *O Salutaris* or another similar liturgical hymn at Benediction is to be begun as soon as the priest or deacon opens the tabernacle.

According to a decree of the Most Reverend Augustin Sépinski, O.F.M., which prefaces the work, the Ritual must be used by all Friars and Nuns subject to the jurisdiction of the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor. The use of the Ritual is both permitted and recommended to Nuns of the Second and Third Order subject to the jurisdiction of the local Ordinary, and also to the Friars and Sisters of Franciscan Congregations aggregated to the First Order. The Constitutions of the latter groups will no doubt state whether or not the Ritual is of obligation among them.

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.



THE SISTERS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

A few years after the Right Reverend J. L. Spalding set about organizing the Peoria diocese in central and northern Illinois, he found among his multitudinous tasks the urgent one of providing for the new diocese's orphans who looked to him as father and sole provider. In November of 1890 Sister Mary Pacifica Forrestal heard the request of the prelate and travelled with three companions to Metamora, Illinois, where the diocesan orphanage was to be opened. Metamora is a historical Illinois town about eighteen miles from Peoria.

By 1895 ten other women had joined Sister Pacifica and the band gained approval of their constitutions to found a new and independent branch of the Franciscan family; the official title of the Congregation is The Sisters of Saint Francis of the Immaculate Conception. That same year the new community added to its original charity the work of caring for the aged of the diocese. The first residence for the aged was established in Peoria as Saint Joseph's Home. Likewise, that year saw the novitiate of the new order opened with its headquarters in the new home.

The orphans, the aged; next came the children, as the Sisters answered the call to help teach the children of the diocese. The first school staffed was Saint Mary's at Metamora. Other schools were accepted at intervals during the past half century.

The years 1901 and 1904 saw the Peoria home for the aged enlarged. In 1903 the community answered a call coming from outside the Peoria diocese and opened a second home for the aged at Springfield, Illinois. Springfield was both the see city of that diocese and also the state capital. The new Saint Joseph's Home there was opened in two old mansions on the present site of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral and rectory of that city. Later the home residents moved into a new structure located on a scenic farm south of the city. In 1954 a new wing was completed providing quarters for the Sisters and for more residents.

The community opened two more houses outside the diocese after the home venture; a school at Palmyra, Missouri, and another at Quincy, Illinois. The care of these two missions was relinquished when the work of the Sisters became increasingly heavy within the Peoria diocese.

The Sisters had no motherhouse as such until 1914 when the

present motherhouse on the west bluff of Peoria was built. An additional building, Sitio Hall, was added in 1937. At present, the motherhouse provides space for the novitiate, the Aspirant school, a private nursery and kindergarten, and a private music school.

The year 1917 saw the beginning of an added field of work for the Sisters. That year Saint Mark's Hall was built on the west bluff in Peoria and opened as a residence for working girls. A second similar residence in downtown Peoria was staffed by the Sisters for a brief time. Saint Mark's Hall's facilities have been expanded and the residence is still maintained by the community.

The most recent field of work that the Sisters have entered is catechetical instruction at Aledo, Illinois, where a center was established in 1938 to care for the instruction of the Catholic children attending public schools within a radius of some 500 square miles. The instructional needs of this particular mission produced the nationally known and used Peoria-Aledo Plan of religious instruction. The work sheets which, together with the Pflaum Messenger publications form the basic texts of the plan, originally were written and mimeographed at the Aledo center by the Sisters in residence there. News of the success of the plan spread rapidly; today, the sheets are sent from the Aledo center to every state in the Union, to Alaska and to the Hawaiian Islands—wherever children need instruction in the Faith and cannot attend a parochial school. Other similar centers have been established in the diocese. The Sisters at the Aledo center also conduct a private kindergarten to help support the work.

The community today numbers about one hundred and fifty active members. While continuing the care of the diocesan orphans (the present orphanage is named Guardian Angel Home and is located near the motherhouse in Peoria), providing homes for the aged and working girls, and maintaining catechetical centers, the community's members are now chiefly engaged in teaching throughout the schools of the diocese. During the first half of the present century the Sisters accepted call after call to the poorest of the diocese's parishes, often teaching without compensation. Only recently have a few Sisters been assigned to high school teaching.

The foundress, Sister Mary Pacifica, became the first Mother General and lived to watch her community grow and expand under her successors, the late Mother Mary Catherine, the late Mother Mary Benedict and the present Mother Mary Ursula. The community has continued as a diocesan organization and has worked under the guid-

SISTERS OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

ance of Archbishop Spalding and his successors—Bishop Edmund Dunne, Archbishop J. H. Schlarmann, and the present Bishop William Cousins.

For the teenage girls who early feel the call to serve Christ in one of the many charities of the community, the Sisters conduct a private high school at the motherhouse which is accredited by the Catholic University of America. These girls are known as Aspirants to the religious life. The school's curriculum is similar to that of the local high schools. The extra-curricular program includes music, sports, and similar activities found in other high schools, but it also includes activities specifically planned to help nurture the potential vocations. The students spend their vacations with their families. Girls may enter during any year of high school.

After the completion of the high school work or its equivalent, girls of normal physical, mental and moral health may enter the community as candidates. The period of candidature lasts from six to nine months. When this period has been successfully completed the candidates receive the habit—a simple black dress, scapular and veil with a white headband, coif, collar and cord—and their names in religion, and begin two years of further religious training as novices. At the end of this period the novices may take temporary vows for three years and renew them for two more years before making final profession.

While the spiritual training of the beginners to the life of the community has been easily provided, the professional training of the future teachers has posed a problem. Before the years when the demand for college credits became widespread, the Sisters were trained by professional women who came to the motherhouse to conduct classes. Later, the professed Sisters would attend summer sessions at various colleges and universities. In 1938 the novitiate was transferred to Springfield, Illinois, so that the young Sisters might receive instruction at the local Catholic college there. However, in 1951 the Catholic University of America approved the establishment of a teacher training college at the motherhouse and the novitiate was reestablished at the motherhouse in Peoria. The present program permits the prospective teachers of the order to complete a large portion of their college work before beginning their active assignments and subsequently continuing their studies while in service and during the summer sessions.

Like their spiritual father, Saint Francis, these religious have seen the need of their own time and have tried as he did and under his inspiration to answer the local call to restore all things to Christ.

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NOTICE

The Franciscan Institute offers a CERTIFICATE IN FRANCISCAN STUDIES to those students who fulfill the following requirements.

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up to eighteen credits. (The numbers refer to the section "The Franciscan Institute" of the *Announcements* of St. Bonaventure University Bulletin, School of Graduate Studies):

- 1) Theology: History of the Franciscan School, Parts I-VI, listed under nos. 525, 625, 725, 527, 627, 727;
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- 3) History: History of the Franciscan Order, Parts I-III, listed under nos. 540, 640, 740.

III. Successful passing of the corresponding examinations.



FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

THE THIRTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Friars Minor of Saint Anthony's Seminary, Santa Barbara, California, together with those of the Old Mission, will be hosts to the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Franciscan Educational Conference, August 12-14, 1956. The meeting will open Sunday evening, the Feast of St. Clare, and close on Tuesday evening. The annual (civic) Fiesta of Santa Barbara will open in front of the Old Mission on the evening of August 15th; the Friars attending the conference are cordially invited to remain the rest of the week and enjoy the Fiesta.

TOPIC: The Executive Board of the FEC, at its meeting in Indianapolis, November 25, 1955, chose as the topic for 1956:

FRANCISCAN LIFE TODAY

The goal of the meeting and the individual papers and discussions will be, more specifically, to study our Franciscan life and rule in the light of official, papal (and other) directives for religious life today. The Holy Father has called for a RENOVATIO ACCOMMODATA of the religious spirit and life, observance and apostolate. We in the United States have not, perhaps, beyond a National Congress of Religious in 1952, given full and due consideration to such an ideal or the specific directives it has elicited. We hope that the Santa Barbara meeting will prove one step in that direction. Perhaps future meetings can consider more particular phases of our Franciscan life and its needs in our modern setting.

BOOK REVIEW

Works of Saint Bonaventure
Volume I: *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*
Sister Emma Therese Healy, C.S.J.
The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., 1955
pp. 158; \$2.25

Under the title of the Works of Saint Bonaventure, edited by the Rev. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M. and Sr. M. Frances Laughlin, S.M.I.C., a new series of translations of St. Bonaventure's works have made their initial appearance. In Volume I, the skillful translation of the *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam* is rendered by Sister Emma Therese Healy, C.S.J. The *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* now in press will soon be available in Volume II.

In Volume I the Latin text of the *De Reductione*, accompanying the English translation, is prefaced by an introduction and followed by a commentary. This volume is divided into four parts: Introduction, Text with Translation and Graph, Commentary on the Four Lights, and the "Lumen Exterior, Inferius et Interior" in the light of the "Lumen Superius."

The Introduction in Part One elucidates the occasion and the inspiration of the work, assuming some of its possible sources. An explanation of the terms of the title follows in a concise and clear epitome. In Part Two, the translation evidences scholarly precision in declaring the Seraphic Doctor's doctrine. Part Three analyzes the "Lumen" according to the mind of St. Bonaventure. Part IV culminates

the thesis, which intends to "prove that the arts or all secular studies must be grouped under theology." This is shown in the three chapters: the Relation of Philosophy to Theology, the Theory of the "Reductio" and the "Reductio" proper.

The present reviewer enthusiastically

received and perused this delightful volume. Nor was he disappointed—either in the pleasant appearance of the cover or the careful and attentive presentation of Bonaventurian doctrine. May others derive similar pleasure in accepting this new volume of the *Works of Saint Bonaventure*.

Fr. Edward M. Wilson, T.O.F.



1906 CONGRATULATIONS TO FR. THOMAS 1956

The Editors of the CORD wish to extend sincere congratulations to the Very Reverend Father Thomas B. Plassmann, O.F.M., on the occasion of his Golden Sacerdotal Jubilee. May God grant him many more years of fruitful labor in the Master's service.



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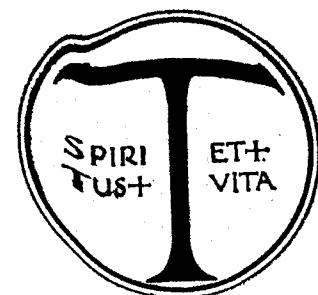
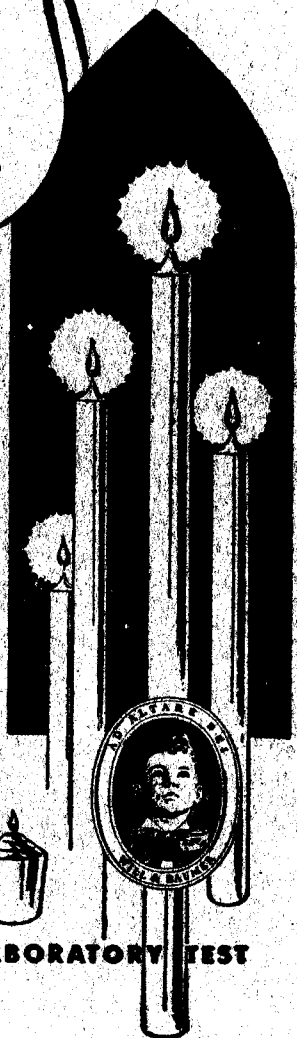
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the CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

VOL. VI., NO. 7, JULY, 1956

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THE MONTHLY CONFERENCE

THE CHALLENGE OF SIN

In probing the full meaning of that line from John: *God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (I Jn. 4:16) we also studied the meaning of sin as the antithesis of true love. From our last conference, we saw it to be something ugly; ugly in its nature, for selfishness is a perverted form of love; ugly in its consequences, for it leads to misery, death, and hell for the individual; it crucifies mankind metaphorically and Christ literally. But if sin is as ugly as all this, how can a God of love permit it to work its malice unchecked? Sin and its inseparable consequences must have a positive aspect; it must be able to fit into the grand plan of divine love.

Evil has always been a great philosophical mystery. Some have tried to explain it in terms of ditheism—a god of evil and a god of love. This error, too, is a guess at a great truth, for in a sense, to explain evil we must create another “god.” And that is precisely what we do through selfishness. We make our ego, our self, the ultimate goal of every action, the end-all and be-all of our existence. And this is another way of saying we deify ourselves, we create a rival god.

Suffering itself is not so mysterious, for we see that it is in great part the result of an abuse of our freedom. What creates the problem, however, is the suffering of the innocent. We can understand why the lawbreaker should be punished for his infraction, his personal sin. But why should children suffer for the sins of their parents; husbands for the sins of their wives, or vice versa? Can this be the will of an all-just God? Is not God unfair to the innocent? The answer to this question is not merely of academic value. It has practical consequences. For in discovering how the evil of sin is compatible with the goodness of God, you are brought face to face with your personal task in meeting the challenge of sin. So let us consider the facts.

I

Could God have made us individualists? By that I mean, could God have created us in such a way that we would not be hurt or influenced by the sins of others? Perhaps He could have, but only under certain conditions: First, by making us less like Himself, and incapable of ever fully sharing in His own inner life; and the second condition—which is really a consequence of the first—that we should no longer be men or women, no longer human. And after all, it is rather nice to be human. If there are some things that even the angels envy man, I wonder if one of them is not the joy in a young mother's face as she holds her first son. But she could never experience such joy if that same son did not have the ability to break her heart. Then there is the eagerness with which a young married couple plan their own home. Yet their working, their sharing an existence together, would never be possible if divorce or separation were not also an ugly possibility. The thrill of a young nun on her profession day; or that of the priest with the oil of ordination still moist on his palm; the warm handclasp of a friend; the tears in a mother's eyes when her Johnny comes marching home again—these human joys are possible only because human suffering is also possible. Only by destroying all the human relationships that make up our lives could God have kept others from hurting us—and kept us from sharing in their joy. The human race is so intimately one that the very fact that we love one another gives to each of us the power to make others sad and saddened by others in turn.

Furthermore, suffering and pain were meant to be a deterrent from sin. Yet if we are honest with ourselves we shall admit that purely personal punishment alone will never keep us on the path that leads to heaven. To appeal only to this sanction is to neglect one of the most powerful motivating forces we have. For recall that we have the power to be unselfish, the power of our free will. Indeed this is the highest of our faculties, our strongest ally in this war against utter selfishness. Hence, it is also our greatest weapon against sin, a strengthening force that helps us to be what we should be. The realization that our own actions will not merely harm ourselves but also others whom we love can make us careful when

nothing else can. It is not uncommon to find careless Catholics developing a sense of responsibility and becoming conscious of their religious obligations when they have to set a good example to children they truly love.

II

But we may still ask: *Is it just that we should be hurt by others?* Let us consider the facts sanely and objectively, first as regards spiritual damage, then as regards physical suffering. No doubt the greatest spiritual loss one could suffer would be to be deprived for all eternity of the beatific vision of God. From what we said earlier of hell, we know that no sinner is damned except through his own fault. But what of innocent children who through no fault of their own are deprived of the blessing of baptism? Does not this entail some injustice?

By way of answer, we might note that only recently some theologians have raised the question of whether God in His providence may have provided some special or extraordinary means whereby they may be saved. While these suggestions run counter to the generally accepted position of theologians, they are indicative perhaps of the fact that the last word has not been said on this thorny question. But even if we take the common theological view that such children will never see God face to face, is there really any injustice on God's part? After all, the beatific vision is not something we have a right to, or anything that is due to us by nature. It is a pure gift of munificence on the part of the Blessed Trinity. And not only is it to be a gift on Their part, but having created man a social being in Their own image, They require also that man receive this gift of love only through the charity or loving cooperation of his fellowman. If it be true that no one is damned save through his own fault, it is also true that no one is saved except through the charity of another. And while those who through their own sin and self-seeking deliberately prevent a child from ever living with God in the ecstasy of heaven will indeed incur the divine wrath, for *it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God* (Hebr. 10, 31), still it would be as irrational to accuse God of injustice as to call a woman unjust who chooses one suitor in preference to another.

And in fact, we might go further and point out that it is actually a tribute to God's mercy and generosity that He has enabled some human souls, through no merit of their own but because of the love and generosity of their parents or others, to enter heaven by the grace of baptism. Such would not have been the case had Adam not sinned, for in paradise death was unknown and every soul personally would have had to choose heaven or hell. Consequently, we may well suspect that many more are in heaven today through dying before they were capable of losing their baptismal innocence than would have been had Adam not sinned. At any rate we cannot level any accusation against God for the fate of unbaptized children, particularly since He loves each one of these souls enough to be crucified for them.

But what shall we say of other instances where individuals suffer because of others? We need only look at the dreadful housing conditions in certain slum districts to realize that children brought up in such sections have an almost unsurmountable handicap. Never having had a normal childhood, living in coarseness and amid brutality, they are burdened with problems in early life that only a mature adult should be asked to face. And they suffer in consequence. Virtue becomes doubly, triply, or even inhumanly hard at times. Is this justice? we might ask. These are indeed sad sights. And yet if we tend to excuse people living under such conditions, what of God? Surely He is more merciful than any human being. Who was it who forgave the woman in adultery? Not the self-righteous Jews, not even the normally kind and understanding common folk. No! It was Christ. Who took in the crooked tax collector, despised by the devout, and made him into Saint Matthew? Peter was so conscious of his own sinfulness the day he discovered a miracle-worker in his boat that he cried out: *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord* (Lk. 5:8). So concerned was Christ with those unfortunates who were more sinned against than sinning that the *Pharisees and the Scribes murmured saying, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them"* (Lk. 15:2). And when His enemies pegged Him to a cross He continued to pray for them because *they do not know what they are doing* (Lk. 23:34).

Perhaps we are far better off so far as salvation is concerned in the present fallen condition of man than had Adam not sinned.

Who knows how we should have fared in our trial or test of love, for such a trial we should all have had to pass, had we been born with original innocence. A third part of the angels fell without an excuse (Apoc. 12, 4). Would we have done any better than Adam or Eve?

Granting then that God does no spiritual injustice to man, what of physical pain and suffering so often inflicted on the innocent? Is this not something incompatible with the idea of a good and just God? To this we can only answer, if there is any injustice involved then it should be proportionate to the innocence of the victim. And by that norm we should have to admit that God inflicted the greatest of injustices upon Himself in the person of the *Man of Sorrows* and upon His beloved Mother, Queen of martyrs. Consequently there must be another answer. And Christ Himself pointed it out to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus after His crucifixion. Not only were their eyes blind to the bodily presence of Christ but to the spiritual significance of suffering as well. But as Jesus began to explain the Scriptures to them, something of His own feeling must have crept into His voice, that attitude almost of eagerness that prompted His remark before the passion: *There is a baptism I must needs be baptized with, and how impatient I am for its accomplishment* (Lk. 12: 50). For as they confessed later, *Were not our own hearts burning within us when he spoke to us on the road, and when he made the scriptures plain to us?* (Lk. 24: 32) explaining to them why it was fitting that *Christ should undergo these sufferings, and enter so into His glory* (ibid, v. 26).

If everything ended with this life, perhaps it might be difficult to adequately account for the physical suffering and anguish that often strikes at those innocent of sin. But we know that whatever the innocent may be called upon to bear in this vale of tears the day will come when *God will wipe away every tear from their eyes* (Apoc. 7: 17), and with Saint Paul they will be forced to confess that *the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that will be revealed in us* (Rom. 8: 18). And who should know better than Paul who was privileged both to glimpse heaven and to feel pain as few men have ever felt it (2 Cor., 11-12)?

III

Suffering then must have some purpose in the divine plan. What is it? For one thing, pain is educational for the individual. Man is part animal. In fact as someone ironically defined him, he is the perfect beast. For at times indeed, the animal is very much in evidence. Like the dog that gets hurt chasing cars, the animal nature in man will learn to stay away from forbidden things only by suffering pain. Before a child comes to the use of reason, he learns by personal discomfiture not to touch fire or a hot stove. So too God provides a natural control of animal appetites in the pain that accompanies overindulgence.

But if suffering the consequences of our own mistakes and sins is educational, the suffering of the innocent can be redemptive. A biological analogy will best illustrate this spiritual truth. The most primitive and simplest forms of living organisms are the unicellular animals like the amoeba and paramecium or the one-celled plants like the bacteria. If the cell wall of an amoeba be pricked with a microneedle, the protoplasm oozes out and the little animal dies. Yet if you cut your hand with a knife drawing blood, you do far more extensive damage, objectively speaking, than the pin prick in the cell wall of the microorganism, yet the damaged cells in your hands do not die. The body musters its defenses, blood vessels dilate, the white corpuscles or phagocytes rush to the rescue devouring the invading bacteria, the blood clots and cicatrization begins. In a short time the wound is healed and your body is even stronger than before. You may have developed some new bacterial immunity in the process. Now God has created the human race organically one. Supernaturally we form one mystical body with fellow Catholics. Even those outside the mystical body proper profit by its health and spiritual vigor.

When we suffer innocently for something we have not done, what are we actually doing? If all suffering in the present dispensation is somehow occasioned by sin, either personal misdemeanors or the sins of others, then in bearing pain and suffering we are paying the penalty of sin, our own or that of others. And if innocent of personal fault, we do this willingly, even gladly, for a supernatural motive, we are doing precisely what Christ did in the

passion, taking the consequences of another's sin on ourselves. In our own way, we atone somehow for that sin. No wonder Paul could write to the Colossians (1:24): *I rejoice now in the sufferings I bear for your sake; and what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ I fill up in my flesh for his body, which is the Church.*

We should view suffering and pain, the effects of sin, for what they really are—a challenge. The sufferings of others have evoked some of man's most heroic accomplishments and brought out the finest traits of human nature. More than anything else they cause us to break through the shell of self-centeredness and make our hearts go out to others.

What are some practical applications we might make? For one thing we should not take a defeatist or pessimistic attitude towards the evil in the world, but rather consider it a challenge. In the language of the Christopher movement, we too can change the world. In fact that is the practical meaning of Christ's redemption. Though He paid the price of sin, He did not simply restore human nature to the status it had in paradise before the fall. What He did was to give us the grace, the power, the means and inspiration to redeem ourselves. The world after all is our world. We are responsible for it and for everyone in it. Can we like Cain disclaim to be our brother's keeper without also like him becoming an outcast from the human family? But while our obligation to love is universal, nevertheless in practice those who comprise the social circle in which we move will have the greatest claim to our concern. And in specific instances our responsibility will be proportionate to our capacity to counteract the effects of sin. It is greatest, of course, as regards our personal life and conduct, for we are to be first of all captains of our own soul. And here we must be on our guard against both discouragement and self-pity. Whether our handicap be congenital, or of our own or others' making, we should not lose courage but set out manfully to win back the lost ground for Christ. As for others, we ought to forgive them any personal affront, showing them the mercy we hope to receive from God. *Do not judge, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged; and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you* (Mt. 7: 1-2). After all, what do we know of

the subjective guilt of those who in the eyes of men appear to be wicked? What do we know of the extenuating circumstances there may be in their background, their education, their native endowments, their environment, the measure of grace and light they have received! There is but one safe procedure, that enjoined by Saint Francis when he admonishes and exhorts his followers "not to despise or judge men. . . but rather let each one judge and despise himself" (*Regula FF. Min.*, c. 2). And even when the malice of others makes our own life miserable, we must ask Christ for the courage to repeat His prayer: *Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing* (Lk. 23:34).

And as for the physical suffering and distress we too often meet with in our environment, we must do what we can to alleviate and remedy it. Like the man who fell among robbers on the way from Jerusalem to Jericho, those unfortunates whom we can easily help become our responsibility in charity. Busy about our own business, even though it seems to be the work of God, we may, like the priest and Levite, view such hapless souls as no concern of ours. Yet does not the very fact that God has let us pass their way mean that He wished the sight of them to arouse something of the Good Samaritan that is in every normal human heart? We must do what we can to bind the wounds of those afflicted with moral or physical misery, pouring on the oil of kindness first, but adding the smarting wine of correction when necessary, and paying for their care with the ~~coin of personal sacrifice~~. Only then shall we be meeting the challenge of sin courageously. If, as we indicated in a previous conference, the selfishness of men can set up chain reactions for evil that may if unchecked extend to the end of time, Christ has counted on the unselfishness of our love as the counterweapon through which He will ultimately complete the redemptive work began on Calvary.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY (III)

Charity, the Essence of Perfection

The question of charity as the queen of the virtues is intimately connected with the question of charity as the essence of perfection.

"Something is considered to be perfect in so far as it attains its own proper end, which is the ultimate perfection of the thing," as Saint Thomas says.¹ But all the supernatural virtues strive to unite us with God, our final end; hence they are all integral parts of perfection. But which virtue in a special manner and of its very nature unites us with God so that it can be said to be in itself the essence of Christian perfection? The most common opinion among theologians and spiritual writers is that the perfection of Christian life consists *per se* and essentially in the virtue of charity. What, then, does the Franciscan school teach in this regard?

At the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth century there were many Friars Minor, the so-called Spirituals, who placed the essence of evangelical perfection in poverty. The most outstanding among them was Ubertino of Casale who openly professed the doctrine that "Jesus, the Wisdom of the Father, has placed in poverty the hidden treasure, and all must be sold to buy it. And Jesus led others by His example to observe it and clearly pointed out that evangelical perfection consists in poverty. . . For there will be no perfection lacking to the one who weds this virtue with complete faith, with the most ardent love, and with inviolate observance. Not only is poverty a virtue, it is the perfection and the queen of all virtues, for through observing it one attains to the height of all virtues; and above all it makes the one who observes it more like Jesus the Son of God. Hence in its renewal lies the perfection of every state."² It was in opposition to this doctrine of the Spirituals that Pope John XXII wrote and taught that Christian perfection consists principally and essentially in charity, and that poverty without charity is of no value.³

Although Saint Francis did not explicitly teach the excellence of charity, his life, which is the main source of his teaching, clearly indicates that among all the virtues he gave first place to charity.

¹*Summa*, II-II, q. 184, a. 1

²*Arbor vitae crucifixae Iesu*, 1. 5, c. 3 (Venetiis 1485).

³*Bulla Ad Conditorem*, 8 Dec. 1322.

Saint Anthony of Padua, the Order's first Lector in Theology, reduced total perfection to love of God and love of neighbor.⁴

The renowned teacher and ascetic, David of Augsburg, who has had tremendous influence upon our spirituality, taught that charity is the mother, nourisher, measure, and form of all the virtues. In fact, in his opinion charity is the one virtue that possesses every virtue, for virtue is nothing other than well-ordered love.⁵

Saint Bonaventure clearly upheld the supremacy of charity, for he wrote: ". . . it should be known that the bond of perfection is charity, to which Christ the Maser of all things reduces the Law, the Prophets, and all the teachings of God."⁶ According to the Seraphic Doctor, the reason for this, as we have already seen, is that charity is the form and the end of all the virtues, the influence directing the actions of the virtues to their ultimate end, which is common to them all. Without charity there can be no perfect virtue, for it "alone leads man to perfection,"⁷ and by the highest right and privilege should charity be called "the perfection of all the virtues."⁸

Duns Scotus was by far the greatest champion of Voluntarism. If the will holds primacy in man over the intellect and over all the other powers, it follows necessarily that the most perfect of all the virtues should reside in the will. Moreover, according to the Subtle Doctor, "in the will there are two affections, that of justice (*justitiae*, of the good *as good in itself*) and that of advantage. (*commodi*, of the good *as useful*) but the more noble is the *affectio justitiae*."⁹ This is nothing less than the love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) or charity. Hence Scotus builds and disposes the entire interior life around the supernatural virtue of charity, from the humble degree of justification to the splendor of the mystical life.

Saint Bernardin of Siena, walking in the footsteps of Bonaventure and Scotus, places charity before all other virtues and finds perfection in it. "Just as gold is the most precious and the highest in value among the metals," he writes, "so charity is the highest among the virtues."¹⁰ "More than all the other virtues, charity makes the soul like God, . . . for God is charity, and it is through charity, which is more like to God

⁴*Sermones Dominicales et in Solemnitatibus*, ed. A.M. Locatelli (Patavii, 1895).

⁵*De exterioris et interioris Hominis Compositione libri tres* (Ad Claras Aquas, 1899) 222-227.

⁶*Apologia pauperum*, c. 3, n. 2, VIII, 244b.

⁷*De perfectione vitae ad Sorores*, c. 7, n. 1, VIII, 124a.

⁸*II Sent.*, d. 28, dub. 2, II, 895a.

⁹*Oxon.* III, d. 26, q. un., n. 17, XV, 356a.

¹⁰*Sermo 2, De laudibus caritatis*, a. 3, *Opera*, II, 15b.

than any other virtue, that the soul possessing it is transformed into God, since everything which is similar is more conformed to what is more like it than to what is less like it."¹¹

In the same manner, the representative spiritual writers of the Order, from the Middle Ages to the present time, have taught that perfection consists properly and essentially in the virtue of charity.

Charity Is Active

Charity is not merely affective, but is also effective and active. For the virtue of charity is immediately in the will as in its subject. But the will regulates all human powers and is the principle of all the moral activity of man. Certainly Franciscan spirituality, since it closely adheres to Voluntarism, greatly emphasises and extols the activity of the soul and its cooperation with the heavenly stirrings and inspirations of grace. Hence it is that the theologians and spiritual writers of our Order place genuine love of God in the faithful carrying out of divine commands and in the perfect conformity of man's will with the divine will. Thus Our Seraphic Father exhorted his friars to love the Lord God "with their whole heart, their whole soul, their whole strength and vigor, with their whole mind and with all their might, with their whole power, their whole being, with their whole desire and will."¹²

In the same manner, the representative spiritual writers of the Order, three elements: will, action, and affection. The will, informed by reason, consents to its counsel to desire the good, and not to remain idle, the will proceeds to carry out the good work, calling to its aid the whole family subject to its command, namely, the limbs of the body, the senses and thoughts, that it may accomplish the good or do away with the evil. And when this is done faithfully, as a kind of remuneration or respite from the labor entailed in carrying out the work, an affection arises in the will as a comfort brought about by the sweet coaxing of grace."¹³ The Seraphic Doctor agrees with this when he asserts that "love is the keeping of the law,"¹⁴ and Blessed Angela of Foligno teaches that "the first sign of true love is evident when the lover submits his will to the will of the beloved."¹⁵

Charity, especially in Scotistic doctrine, is less a sense of joy than a continuous act of the will, by which God is effectively served here

¹¹*Sermo 3, De excellentia divini amoris*, a.2, c.4, *Opera*, II, 18b.

¹²*Regula I*, 25, 60.

¹³*Loc. cit.*, 224e.

¹⁴*Coll. in Hexaem.*, coll. 2, n. 4, V, 337a.

¹⁵*Loc. cit.*, 286.

on earth. Since the will of God is the supreme source of morality and of all good, it follows, according to Scotus, that goodness consists essentially in bringing our will into harmony with the divine will and pleasure.

According to Franciscan doctrine, love of Christ does not rest merely in tender devotion and affectionate compassion. Love inclines the lover to take on and to make his own the feelings of the beloved, to assume his ways of thinking and acting, and to conform to him in all things. Hence Franciscan spirituality, following the example of our holy Founder who so wonderfully imitated Christ, exerts every effort to imitate our beloved Lord as closely as possible, and to become as much like Him as possible.

Love of neighbor, which the Friars Minor have always taught and fostered, is also essentially active. It was not enough for the Order to love merely in word and tongue, but it loved in work and in truth. Thus the first Franciscans did not pass their lives in solitude or within the confines of their monasteries, but went out into the world, through the cities and villages, over highways and oceans, to bring the Good Tidings to all men. Following Christ, Who taught man the evangelical truths by word and example, who healed the sick and gave His life for all, the Friars Minor preached both by word and example. They cared for the sick and the destitute, they devoted themselves to the welfare of others, and even gave their life in behalf of their fellowmen. The Franciscan origin of many forms of modern charity—social work, specialized hospitals, homes for the aged and outcast, *Montes Pietatis*,—testifies to the spirit of practical charity that animated the early Friars.

Beyond any question of doubt, Franciscan charity is definitely and preeminently active. It is diametrically opposed to Quietism and to any kind of spirituality that tends to belittle or destroy human activity and substitute total passivity.

Ecstatic Love

To understand clearly the active character of Franciscan charity, it is necessary to consider the concept of ecstatic love by which it is animated.

Scholars have distinguished two medieval concepts of love which they call "physical" and "ecstatic." The physical concept of love appears in the tendency, inherent in every creature, to seek its own good and to perfect itself. Even in loving God, man does not cease to love himself because God is man's supreme Good. The ecstatic concept, however, appears when the lover goes out of himself in some way, sacrifices everything for his beloved, and becomes totally absorbed in him.

As Bonaventure explains: "When the soul, full of love, longs for the possession of God and is not able to obtain Him in the present life, . . . she continually goes out of herself and passes beyond herself through ecstatic love."¹⁸ From this aspect, love is the more perfect the more it breaks man away from himself and frees him from the desire for his own advantage.

Just as the Word Incarnate, by physical conception, is principally considered as God humbling Himself out of love for humanity so as to unite it to Himself, so in like manner humanity is regarded as holy because of its ecstatic conception in Jesus Christ Who has given proof of His love for us by His example, mainly by poverty and humility, and also by His passion and death. This aspect impels us toward personal and intimate devotion to Christ; it makes the Cross brilliant with a clear light; it inspires us to offer and sacrifice ourselves and to engage in all works of apostolic zeal. It makes martyrdom the ideal of the Christian life, if not physical martyrdom, then martyrdom of love; for ecstatic love embraces every kind of sacrifice in order to imitate Christ and to repay Him love for love.

The ecstatic concept of love is more basically in harmony with the emotional make-up of man, especially on the higher levels, than the physical concept; it is also more concrete and practical, more generally accessible; and at the same time it is capable of leading man to the heights of perfection. We can apply to ecstatic love the words of the *Imitation of Christ*: ". . . the lover gives all for all, . . . he has no regard for the gifts but turns himself to the giver above all goods. Love often knows no measure, but is inflamed above all measure. Love feels no burden, shrinks from no labors, would willingly do more than it can. Love does not speak of impossibility, because it knows that it may and can do all things."

These two concepts of love, the physical and the ecstatic, are not, however, mutually exclusive. They are often found in the same person, as for example in Angela of Foligno. Nor has any writer described the physical concept of love in more brilliant terms than Saint Bonaventure, although he himself was possessed of a most tender ecstatic love for the humanity of Christ. Generally speaking, though, just as the physical concept is prevalent in Thomistic and Dominican spirituality, so the ecstatic concept is prevalent in Franciscan spirituality. This is true not only in reference to the spirit of Saint Francis, but also to the teaching of Duns Scotus who maintains the supremacy of that charity by which God is loved solely because of His infinite perfection, irrespective of any creature or of the personal good of the lover.

¹⁸*De triplici via*, c. 2, 4, n. 9, VIII, 10a.

The folly of the Cross pertains to the ecstatic concept of love, for this kind of love continually says and does things that seem unreasonable and impossible. The first example of this folly was given by infinite Wisdom Himself, Who for us descended to utter humility and endured the most terrifying pain; for He sought our love, urged by the desire of His own consuming love. Saint Paul also recommended this folly by his own words and deeds. Certainly Franciscan spirituality has many remarkable examples of it, as we can read in the life of Blessed Angela of Foligno, of Blessed Raymond Lull, and of many others who followed the footsteps of the Poverello.

Charity Is Linked with the Affections of the Heart

We have already seen that the Franciscan concept of love is affective, which means that it resides in the will and manifests itself through activity. The love of desire alone is not sufficient; the ideal demands solid, active love, and to this love all man's faculties and senses contribute their share.

When active charity of will and work have been properly ordered, the Franciscan school feels free to allow the affections of the heart full liberty and justly grants to sensibility its legitimate place in man's spiritual development. Our Seraphic Father urged his followers to love God not merely with their whole intellect, their whole will and strength, but also with their whole heart, with all their affections and desires, with all their human faculties.

Genuine love resides not only in the will and in active cooperation with grace, but also in sensible affection. This is in perfect harmony with our human nature. God has given us a heart not that we should stifle its divinely-ordained tendency to love, but that we should develop and strengthen that tendency and so come to love Him with all our affections. After all, God has explicitly commanded us to love Him with our whole heart, not only with our mind and will; for the affections can aid us powerfully in striving for holiness. When we embrace something good not only because our will commands it but also because our heart desires it, we find that the good becomes much easier and simpler for us to accomplish. Nor does this render the act of the will less perfect or less pleasing to God. As David of Augsburg writes: "This is true soundness of will, when not only out of the promptings of reason one is urged to will and to do good, or to deny and to avoid evil, but also when out of the affection and desire of the soul good is embraced and evil is hated."¹⁸

¹⁸Loc. cit. 225.

Molinos condemned sensible devotion and everything sensible that we experience in the spiritual life. His error was condemned by the Church, but there are still many sound and wholly orthodox writers who mistrust sensibility. Saint John of the Cross, whom the Carmelite school follows rather closely, inculcated self-denial in regard to spiritual consolations and sensible devotion, and he urged this almost to the point of rigorism. Other ascetical writers insist that "you are bound" by the order and absolute command of the will, in accordance with the ultimate end of man, and tend to ignore or discredit the senses and affections.

Franciscan piety, however, is of a more spontaneous nature, and relishes the tender affection of love. It goes without saying, of course, that the Franciscan school opposes the kind of sensibility that fights against the will or stifles it, but not the kind that helps it. In fact, the Franciscan school uses the affections as a means to love God more ardently, whence it possesses a tremendous drive for action; and it places great confidence in the heart as a guide to perfection.

Love for Creatures

What has been said thus far of our sensible nature holds also for visible creation. Monks of Christian antiquity and of the later Middle Ages generally considered nature as a potential danger for the soul, or at least as something imperfect and best let alone. The dualism between God and creatures was partially suppressed by Benedictine piety, especially in the Cistercian reform, through which nature entered into the public worship of God or served as a symbol or sign of devotion. Nevertheless the tension between love of creatures and love of the Creator remained strong, and it is still with us today. Even Saint Bernard, who is highly regarded among the affective saints, did not extol the love of nature but warned against it.

Saint Francis was almost an innovator in bringing visible creation to the foreground. He looked upon all creatures as part of an immense family that has come from God, our most loving Father. Hence he delighted in creatures and called them his brothers and sisters. As Thomas of Celano relates, "he called all creatures by a fraternal name."¹⁹

Certainly, love for irrational creatures is not fraternal charity properly so-called, since irrational creatures are not able to love God nor to possess the love of friendship. As the Seraphic Doctor points out: "If you ask what virtue elicits that act of love by which one loves creatures, in so far as they come from God and belong to God, it must

¹⁹Celano, I, n. 81.

necessarily be said that it is a certain natural piety and affection."²⁰

But creatures are the mirror in which the perfections and divine attributes are reflected, and they are also the ladder by which man ascends to a greater love of God. Franciscan spirituality regards nature in exactly this light, and urges us to seek and contemplate and love God in all His creatures.

Saint Bonaventure writes of our Seraphic Father: "So that he might be aroused to divine love through all creatures, he exulted in all the works of the Lord's hands and though the wonders of their joy he rose to their life-giving Reason and Cause. In things of beauty, Saint Francis saw Him Who is most beautiful, and through the vestiges of Him impressed in nature he found his Beloved. He made a ladder of these things on which to reach an understanding of Him Who is wholly desirable. He drank as from a stream, with an affection of unspeakable devotion, from that Fount of Beauty that he saw in creatures. And as though he perceived a heavenly vision in the harmony of the powers and of the activities given by God to creatures, he sweetly exhorted them for the glory of the Lord, as was the custom of the Prophet David."²¹

Because of his tender affection and love for Christ, Francis especially loved and contemplated those creatures in which he found a likeness to his beloved Redeemer. "He loved little lambs with a special love and a ready affection, because in Holy Scripture the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ is frequently and fittingly likened to a lamb. Thus all things, especially those in which he could find some allegorical resemblance to the Son of God, he lovingly embraced and looked upon most gladly."²² These words of Celano are beautifully exemplified in the *Cantic of the Sun*, that sublimely simple hymn of loving admiration for the works of the Creator's hand.

Saint Bonaventure, animated with the spirit of our Seraphic Father, frequently expressed the same loving reverence for nature. According to him, the whole visible world offers a means for contemplating God, a clue to discovering the wisdom of the Creator, a reflection of the divine beauty, a book written in bold, clear, and striking letters, exhorting the reader to seek God in all creatures so as to love Him in a higher degree. "Open your eyes," urges Bonaventure, "attune your ears, loosen your lips and set your heart in readiness, that in all creatures you may see your God, and hear Him and praise Him and love

²⁰*III Sent.*, d. 28, a. un., q. 1, III, 622b.

²¹*Legenda S. Francisci*, c. 9, n. 1, VIII, 530a.

²²Celano, I, n. 77.

Him and worship Him, and magnify and glorify Him, lest perhaps the whole world rise up against you."²³

This Bonaventurian view of life, which is distinctly aesthetic,²⁴ is best expressed in the *Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, where the Seraphic Doctor describes the world as a medium through which and in which to contemplate God and finally to arrive at mystical union with Him. Actually, it is a technical interpretation or development of the poetic *Cantic of the Sun*. And since this love of creation and reverence for the created world is so typical of the best Franciscan tradition, more will be said of it in the following section of this article.

²³*Itinerarium*, c. 1, n. 5, V, 299b.

²⁴One of the most recent discussions of this is Sister Emma Jane Marie Spargo's *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure*, published by the Franciscan Institute, 1953. (Editor's note.)

(To be continued)

Fr. James Heerincks, O.F.M.

Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M. (Transl.)

BEGGAR IN ASSISI—1223

He sings down newer avenues
Of white obscurity
As of a light on other streets
He knows with certainty.

We do not mourn his darkened sight—
His seeming poverty—
There somehow burns beneath the voice
A richer entity.

Our sudden world is turned about.
The joy takes skylark wings.
The fire of song is in his eyes
And it is love that sings.

—Sister Florian Eggleston, O.S.F.

A VISIT TO CAPISTRANO

It was a hot afternoon in the hills of Abruzzi when Father Paschal Robinson, later Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, and myself were stopping at the railroad station called Busti, or, as the natives call it, Bussi. Incidentally, this is the birthplace of Blessed Bernardino a Busis who, as far as is known, wrote the first Office of the Immaculate Conception approved by the Church.

It was getting warmer and warmer as we waited for the train—but no train came. The rumor reached us that the trains were stopped because of some bloody rioting and killing in the nearby towns. This was no surprise, since the radical Socialist element was disturbing the countryside. Unfortunately, the movement had a peculiarly vicious tinge of anti-clericalism. We were made conscious of this when, a little later, we passed through a crowd of workmen coming from a factory. We were greeted with hoots and hisses, and some even went so far as to throw sticks and stones at the two strange friars in brown.

But to get on with my story—a young man appeared at the station telling us that he had a horse and buggy and was willing to take us to Capistrano in spite of the disturbing rumors. His price was outrageously exorbitant, but we had to reach our destination so off we went.

The trip was uneventful except for the incident of the factory workers. In fact, it turned out to be a grand and glorious buggy ride through hills and dales. Our driver almost fell asleep in the burning rays of the sun, but an emphatic "Avanti!" from my companion quickly aroused him from slumber. I recall how Father Paschal pointed out to me at a turn in the road the distant walls of Aquila, the city so well known on account of Saint Bernardin of Siena, the intimate friend and companion of Saint John Capistran whose city we were about to visit. We had been following a stream which grew narrower as we neared the town of Capistrano. The story is that this name is derived from the Latin *caput* and *strano* or *trano* meaning "the head of the stream."

As we entered the town there was absolute peace and silence. Only a few dogs and chickens greeted us with brief quizzical glances, then went on about their business. We found this stillness rather strange in view of the rumor that had reached us at the station. But perhaps it had been only a rumor after all, and rumors have a way of growing in proportion to the distance they travel.

Whether the driver was suddenly hit by an inspiration to move

fast, or whether he sensed trouble in the air, we never knew; but all at once he pulled out his whip and began to lash the horse so mercilessly that the beast galloped through the narrow streets causing a tremendous racket. The noise must have been heard by the friars in their monastery, which is situated on a hill a short distance from the town.

An event of unusual significance was about to take place. The bells of the friars' church suddenly rang out as if touched by angels, and as we looked toward the church, we saw a procession of friars emerging, the Father Guardian in cope, the ministers in spurlice holding sprinkler and incense. The driver stopped before the procession and lo and behold! the Guardian in wide-eyed surprise came forward to embrace my companion with a joyful: "O Padre Pasquale!" As a matter of fact, so we learned later, the procession had not been meant for Father Paschal and me but the Very Reverend Provincial who was due to appear that day for canonical visitation.

But the surprise of the Father Guardian and of all the friars turned to joy when they saw their mistake, and to make the joy still brighter, we were immediately escorted to the refectory where, among the brethren toasting and saluting us, we partook of a *bichieruccio* of *vino dulce*. Meanwhile, when darkness had fallen, Father Provincial finally arrived—but there was no procession to meet him. Thus ended my first day at Capistrano, the name that adorns the memory of one of the greatest men in its history, Saint John Capistran.

Next day I was permitted to say Mass at the altar of Saint John. Many souvenirs adorn the reredos of the altar, among them a large hat and a walking stick that the Saint had carried on his journeys through Hungary, Germany, Italy and other countries of Europe. I spent nearly all day in the library that Saint John had left to this convent. There were books dealing with geography, mathematics, various sciences, philosophy, and theology. One beautiful volume was inscribed: "To Father John from the Holy Father." All of the books showed the neatly written signature, "Fra Joannes a Capistrano." Every book was bound in sheepskin and showed the wear and tear of much use. The story goes that Saint John used to carry these books on the back of a donkey on his missionary trips. They also reveal the sources of the extraordinary knowledge and versatility that mark his sermons.

Saint John is the hero of Belgrade were, in the company of the famous general Hunyadi, he defeated the Turks and saved Christendom from conquest. Stern of demeanor and serious of temperament, Saint John is yet one of the most colorful figures of his day. When he preached the churches could not contain the crowds. Although for the most part

he used the Latin idiom, the power and unction of his words seemed to reach the hearts of all regardless of the language he spoke.

The friendship between Saint John and Saint Bernardin is of unique interest: the former serious, grave, hard to approach, matter-of-fact; the latter smiling, cheerful, charming and friendly to all. Somehow the one supplemented the other. They remained faithful in friendship until death, and we must ascribe to their wonderful blending of temperaments and supernatural endowments the triumph of the cult of the Holy Name of Jesus, which stands out as the crowning glory of these two great missionaries of the Franciscan Order.

It is this cult of the Holy Name of Jesus that made Saint John Capistran the "Apostle of Peace" and the "Apostle of Europe." Standing at the embattled walls of Belgrade, he ushered in a new year by exhorting the crusaders with the words: "We go forward secure in the name of Jesus; confidently we take the path that the New Year opens." When later in that fateful year of 1456 the Turks paralyzed the city of Belgrade with their dreadful hosts, Saint John, lifting up his crucifix for all to see, gave the order to the crusaders to shout the sacred name of Jesus three times. The enemy was crushed and Europe was saved.

This was the climax to a long list of fatiguing labors for the cause of peace. This great Franciscan had traveled over most of Europe in the name of the Supreme Pontiff, restoring peace between ruler and city, pope and prince, nation and nation.

In the midst of labors for Jesus the Saviour, Saint John died at Glok (at present in Yugoslavia), October 23, 1456. He was canonized in 1691. On October 4, 1955, Pope Pius XII solemnly opened the fifth centenary celebration of his death.

Very Rev. Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.



THE HOLY FRIARS OF SAXONY

FRIAR JOHN VON OSTERWYCH AND HIS THREE SONS

I. Their entry into the Order

29. In the city of Magdeburg there was a respected citizen named John von Osterwyck, a very rich man, who guided by divine inspiration, entered the Order with his three sons. Although he was an old man, he surrendered himself wholeheartedly to the following of Christ. And his sons also labored so industriously to please God that they made great strides in the spirit of religion and happily completed their lives in our Order.

John von Osterwyck, father of the laybrother Friar Frederic, was almost a centenarian when he entered the Order. Still, he enjoyed such good health that he could be appointed brother porter, though his eyesight was growing weak. One night when he was walking through the convent in the dark there suddenly appeared before his eyes a heavenly light which preceded him in every part of the convent he visited, lighting up his way in every direction with brilliant rays. But when he beheld the Divine Goodness of Christ coming to his aid in this extraordinary manner, he began to glory in his heart and to attribute to his own merits what was a free gift of God. The Lord therefore just as suddenly withdrew that light from him so as to turn him back into the way of humility. In this way our friar was recalled wholly into the path of the Fear of God.

II. The life of Friar Frederic:

his yearning for Christ

30. The laybrother Friar Frederic, who was the eldest son of John von Osterwyck, had spent his younger years in the fear of God and in all perfection. In his riper age he began to have such a yearning for the life to come, that he hardly ever thought or desired anything but to see Jesus. For he hoped that after the death of the body he would rejoice and exult in the glory of the Father forever.¹¹

III. His longing for Christ and how he was carried away in contemplation.

31. The following is related by Friar John of Neustadt, a true religious who later became minister of Saxony: Friar Frederic the laybrother fell ill, and during his sickness he frequently received the Sacrament of the

Lord's Body in Holy Communion. This frequent Communion began to set his body aflame with heavenly desire. As a result after his recovery he had such an all-consuming impatience for death and such a pining for the glory of heaven, that this yearning more than the weakness of his convalescence made it all but impossible for him to eat or drink or sleep. For a boy one year old could not have kept alive on what he ate. As this yearning grew stronger in him from day to day there finally came a day when he was praying so ardently and was so completely ravished up to God, that from then on he was forever with Him, and for the remaining twelve years of his life his heart was never for a moment separated from God. During all these years indeed, whether he was eating, drinking, or even resting, he longed so much to die and to be with Christ that he could not think of anything but the beloved Bridegroom.

When he made his condition known to the saintly Father Nicholas, whose story we told above, Friar Nicholas charged him that in this life he should never make known to anybody such a precious and unheard-of grace. When Friar Nicholas told the Minister General of this favor, the General testified that this grace surpassed any gift of working miracles and even that of recalling the dead to life.

IV. How he fell into ecstasy while engaged in spiritual conversation.

32. Once Friar Frederic was in earnest conversation about God with the holy Friar Nicholas and Friar John of Neustadt. While he was listening to what the two were saying he became fired by their words, and began to speak in ravishing language on the nostalgia felt by a devout soul while it is bereft of the embrace of the Beloved and separated from God in this miserable life on earth. With the Psalm he exclaimed: "Woe to me because my sojourn is so prolonged. . . As the hart panteth for fountains of water, etc." And while he was speaking thus, his longing grew so acute that almost at once he was caught up in an ecstasy under their very eyes. His soul soared into the sweetness of interior vision and, with eyes closed but streaming with tears, and face lifted up to heaven, he leaned his head against the wall near which they sat; he became utterly unconscious of everything less than his joyous rapture into God. The other two had to wait a long time for the ecstasy to pass, but at last he partly returned to himself moaning and breathing deeply and exclaiming: "Oh!" As if to say: "How can one ever express the sweetness of such rapture and the height of the soul's ascension." But seeing that in his deep absorption he did not know where he was, Friar John softly said to him: "Good Father, never mind." And so these

two began a simple talk on everyday matters until they slowly succeeded in recalling him completely to himself.

V. His last years and his teachings.

33. I met this holy Friar in Borch where he died as a member of that community; he drew near, leaning on a kind of a crutch, walking feebly and limping along in great weakness. The first thing I said to him was: "Dearest father, and when are you going home to Heaven?" In answer he quoted the psalm: "As the hart panteth for water." And he added: "But never did any hart so thirst for water as I am thirsting for that blessed Kingdom."

34. At another time I desired to confer with him about the salvation of my soul and to hear a few words of inspiration. When I visited him he was already bed-ridden but he discoursed in such a devout and fervent fashion on the love of God, and how God is to be loved above all things for Himself, that he could hardly form his words because of his excessive earnestness. So deep was his delight while he spoke these words of life that I became alarmed lest his intense feelings should carry him beyond his strength.

Later at this same conference he taught me how to pray. "For the first two years of a man's conversion no exercise is more needful than constant prayer. One must likewise beg God to grant him the grace of weeping always, even as we ought, over our sins and the most bitter Passion of Christ. And as he labors in these things without intermission, let him learn to break his own will and to be humble towards all. After he is thus well tried let him advance to that meditation which leads to union with God and the reward of His saints. But this is most certain: that any soul which resists distraction and strives solely towards the enjoyment of God and of His angels and saints will soon be possessed of more than ordinary love and will attain to such joy and happiness of heart that it cannot be described in words. Therefore the Psalmist says: "Blessed the people that knoweth jubilation; and here is what he means: Jubilation is that joy which can not be explained in words."

Concerning this joy Friar Frederic said to me: "In the short time that it takes a man to pass through the church, God sometimes grants him such ineffable consolation that he is filled with an excess of sweetness and an abundance of joy, and so great an overflowing of inner peace comes to him that, even if God refused to give him anything more in the life to come, he would feel fully rewarded for all his toil in God's service."

"But that a man may more easily attain the fervor of true devotion, should he find himself heavy with sloth and sleepiness at the time of prayer, let him pray orally, make genuflections and deep bows, and prostrate himself before God in prayer, until he attain to contemplation. Then let his prayer be mental rather than vocal, for the Holy Gospel says: "When you pray, do not multiply words." It is enough simply to have an ardent desire for the solace of divine consolation. For such desire is itself a continuous prayer, since prayer is nothing else than the steadfast tending of the mind towards God, even though it break forth here and there into vocal prayer lest it grow weary."

*VI. How near the end of his life, Friar Frederic
praised the Order of Friars Minor.*

35. Once in the presence of many friars, Friar Frederic praised the Order of Friars Minor because of its strict adherence to the Rule and the austerity of its poverty. Among other things he said: "I rejoice much over my entrance into this holy Order and the pure life led in it, and I look forward to that heavenly reward promised to those who make profession in this most sacred Order. This reward, indeed, I prefer and value more than what would have been my reward if, having stayed in the world, I had built a hundred monasteries and amply endowed them with my temporal goods. Such things would not have promoted my salvation as much as the simple observance of my Rule and unremitting loyalty to the attainment of perfection."

At one time this holy laybrother Frederic was also the Guardian. For the Custos of that time had been received with such genuine joy when he entered the convent that upon his departure he said to the brother who accompanied him outside the city, that is, our Friar Frederic: "I place this house of the friars under your guard until I return."

Holy Frederic died full of sanctity in Borch in the Custody of Magdeburg in the year of the Lord.

FRIAR HENRY HIS BROTHER

I. His holiness of life.

36. Friar Henry [Heydenricus], blood-brother of Friar Frederic the laybrother, was a man of wondrous devotion. At the hand of the Heavenly Guide he humbly embraced every means to perfection until he came at last by the path of righteousness to the very summit of perfection. Although he was rich in every virtue, he made such little headway in scholastic lore and learning that when he was ordained a priest he hardly knew how to say Mass. For he did not study much in the books of parch-

ment and sheepskin, but more untiringly did he pore over the books of his conscience. For he knew well that the true science of the devout student is the vision of Him Whom to see but once is to learn everything. He had three virtues that were most remarkable: he was humble, charitable, and a man of prayer.

II. His charity and humble submission.

37. He showed his holy humility not only by doing reverence towards all with whom he lived, but also in doing the lowliest and humblest tasks for them with a heart full of joy. For he was not a mean hand in the tailor's art, and therefore, even with all his other work, he never failed to patch the old tunics of his brothers. And he did this with such humility, charity, and devotion that he often declared he would not exchange these lowly services of love and charity towards others for the honor of being a lector in the Order.

III. His kindness and benevolence.

38. So great was his love for the friars that he could never say no to any demand they made; in fact, his first word was always, "Gladly!" But when he had already made the same promise to another friar, he would answer the newcomer: "I have to do this or that now for Friar So-andso, but when I have finished it, I'll gladly do what you want."

IV. His joyful manner of praying.

39. So great was his love for prayer that it was his delight to steal away from the others whenever it was convenient and give himself to devotion and interior prayer. It was his custom during the daytime to work at patching the tunics of the poor friars and to do his other manual work. But towards evening when he wished to offer his night prayers and private devotions to God, he would seek a spot where, all alone with God, he could enjoy the intimacy of devout and prayerful converse and pour out to Him the love and longings of his heart.

Sometimes when he thought that he was all alone the other friars would spy on him from a hiding place in order to learn his method of praying. By this means they found that at times he would begin his prayers by assuming the role of a beggar standing at the door of a rich man. In this manner he would insistently beg God to grant him the alms of His grace and strengthen him in His service, praying in these or similar words: "Oh my Lord, I, Your subject, slave, and a poor sinner, have come to You to ask for an alms. In Your goodness give me a little something, whatever may please You, towards the forgiveness of my sins either for my welfare and the glory of Your name, or for the consolation of Your Holy Church and the conversion of all poor sinners, so

that by Your loving kindness and grace all sinners may return to You and serve You faithfully and perseveringly according to Your most Holy Will."

And while he was thus lying prostrate in prayer pouring out his heart in sobbing and wailing, he sometimes knew that his prayers for sinners were heard and that God at his insistent pleading would grant life everlasting to those particular souls for whom he had prayed. And when the thought of that everlasting glory came to him and he would meditate how great and transcendent was that reward to which we are all most assuredly called, he would begin to sing for sweetness of joy and holy hope. After long hours of prayer, when he dared keep watch no longer, he would seek his poor cot with a song in his heart, and gently fall asleep in sweet contemplation.

V. How he was given revelations at prayer.

40. Once it happened that he was praying for the absent friars. During this prayer God revealed to him that some friars were still far afield who planned to stay overnight in his convent. And so he hastened to the brother porter and told him not to lock the gate until these friars had arrived.

VI. How Christ offered him an apple during Mass.

41. God's great love for Friar Henry is shown from a miracle which he is said to have experienced. It happened once that he was away from home with another friar and the two of them went to the altar to say Mass and to offer the Immaculate Victim to God for the welfare of the living and the dead. When he had started offering the Mass, he beheld the wooden statue of the Blessed Virgin on the altar with the infant in her lap. The Infant stretched out its hand and showed him a beautiful apple, graciously nodding to him to accept the gift offered to him. Friar Henry was afraid his companion might see it and that if people heard about it, he would be tempted to vainglory; and so long as his companion was looking, he did not dare take the apple. So he kept his eye on his companion, wondering whether he too saw the kindness of the Boy, for then nothing could be hidden. Since the Infant continued holding the apple out to him, he gathered up his courage and said to the Infant, "Oh, but I am afraid my companion will see it!" Then the Infant, as if indignant because Friar Henry would not take the gift, withdrew his hand and Friar Henry, trembling with joy at having had this gift offered to him, finished saying the Mass he had begun.

42. Friar Henry revealed this miracle in confession when he came to die, adding that many times afterwards he had regretted his refusal of

that apple. From this miracle we can get an idea of the holy simplicity and humility of Friar Henry because he did not dare to accept the apple. Hereby too is manifest the devotion he had towards Our Lady and how pleased the Ever-blessed Virgin was with his holy life.

We can well believe that this friar had many revelations which in his humility he would never make known to others.

(Conclusion)

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (Transl.)

MARRIAGE OF ST. FRANCIS WITH LADY POVERTY

So final are the marriage vows that once taken they are co-existent with life itself. To death only belongs the task of terminating such a solemn act of the will. With the same note of finality St. Francis uttered his 'I do' when he took unto himself, as his bride for life, Lady Poverty. With all the joy and happiness that fills a wedding day Francis, "superabundans gaudio" (II Cor. 7,4), so pronounced his vow, "Hoc est quod volo, hoc est quod quaero, hoc totis medullis cordis facere concupisco." If the Poverello has attained universal recognition as the joyful saint it is in part due to the truth that he really and most sincerely, from the day he espoused Lady Poverty, lived with her 'happily ever after'.

One of the most beautiful prose poems of the Middle Ages is the Sacrum Commercium. This beautiful piece of Franciscan literature depicts the mystical espousal of holy Francis with Lady Poverty. The contents of this masterpiece of simplicity reveal and reflect the first and happiest days spent with Lady Poverty at Rivo Torto.

We have often heard the familiar phrase, "If only these walls could talk." Such a hypothetical soliloquy must be left to the elasticity of the imagination. Remaning within the realm of the imaginative but adding the note of practicality, suppose that we as Franciscans who profess a unique love of poverty were given the opportunity of a personal chat with Lady Poverty. Given such a hypothesis the following excerpt from the Sacrum Commercium is presented as a norm in judging to what degree our conversation with Lady Poverty would resemble that of our holy father. That there should be a literal agreement is beyond our capacity especially since the burden of our vow and the safeguarding of the virtue of poverty compels us in many instances to be satisfied with a preservation of the spirit of poverty.

We have just reached the climax in the narrative of the Sacrum Commercium wherein St. Francis and his companions have finally reached the top of the mountain where Lady Poverty dwells and are now preparing for the descent.



... On descending from the mountain they led Lady Poverty to the place in which they were staying, for it was about the sixth hour.

And when all the things were prepared they urged her to eat with them. But she said, "Show me first your oratory, the chapter room, the cloister, refectory, kitchen, sleeping quarters, and stable, your beautiful chairs, polished tables and buildings. I see none of these but only you, happy and gay, abounding with joy, filled with consolation, as though you were looking for all things to be supplied to you as you wish."

They made answer and said, "Our Lady and queen, we your servants are tired from so long a journey, and in coming with us you have labored not a little. Therefore, let us first eat, if you so wish, and thus strengthened, all will be fulfilled as you bid."

"What you say is pleasing," she said, "but now bring water so that we may wash our hands, and towels with which to wipe them."

They quickly brought a half-broken earthen vessel filled with water, for they had none that was whole. And wringing their hands they looked here and there for a towel. When they did not find such, one offered to her the tunic which he was wearing that she might wipe her hands with it. With a gesture of thanks she took it and with her whole heart glorified God Who had befriended her with such men.

Then they led her to the place where the table was prepared. But when she reached it, she looked at it, and seeing only three or four crusts of barley or bran bread placed on the grass, greatly marvelled and said within herself, "Who has ever seen such things even to everlasting generations? Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, Who hast care of all; for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt; Thou hast taught Thy people by such works to please Thee."

And so they sat down together, giving thanks to God for all His gifts.

And Lady Poverty commanded the cooked food to be carried in on dishes. And behold, one dish was brought in filled with cold water, that all might dip the bread therein; for there was no abundance of dishes nor much of cooked food.

She asked that at least some fragrant uncooked herbs be offered to her. But not having a gardener and knowing nothing of gardens, they gathered wild herbs in the woods and placed them before her. Then she said, "Bring a little salt that I may season the herbs, for they are bitter."

"Wait, O Lady," they said, "until we enter the city and we will bring it to you if anyone should give it to us."

"Give me," she said, "a knife so that I can clean off the crust and cut the bread because it is very hard and dry."

They said to her, "Lady, we do not have a blacksmith to make swords for us; for now, however, use your teeth in place of a knife and afterwards we shall look for one."

"Do you have a little wine?" she said. They answered her saying, "Our Lady, we do not have any wine, because the chief things for a man's life are bread and water. Besides it is not good for you to drink wine since the spouse of Christ ought to flee wine as poison."

After they were filled, rejoicing more in the glory of their indigence than had there been an abundance of all things, they blessed the Lord in Whose sight they found so great grace, and then led Lady Poverty to a place where she might rest, since she was tired. And so she cast herself naked upon the hard ground. She then asked for a pillow to rest her head. They immediately brought her a stone and placed it beneath her.

When she had slept a most sound and quiet sleep she arose upon a sudden and asked to be shown the cloister. They led her to a certain hill and showed her the whole world as far as she could see, saying, "This is our cloister, Lady."

She beckoned all to sit down together and she spoke to them the words of life saying, "Blessed are you, my sons, by the ord God Who made Heaven and earth, you who have received me in your house with such a fullness of charity, that I seemed today to be with you as in the paradise of God. Wherefore, I am filled with joy, I abound with great consolation, and because I was so slow in coming to you I beg forgiveness. Truly God is with you, and I did not know it. Behold what

I have desired I already see, what I have longed for I now hold, since I am with them on earth, who reflect for me the image of Him to Whom I am equal in Heaven. May the Lord bless your fortitude and receive the works of your hands.
Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

SAINT IGNATIUS AND THE FRANCISCANS

On March 11 this year, millions paid homage to Saint Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. A nation-wide tribute, which was part of a world-wide observance of the Ignatian Year, marked the 400th anniversary of the death of the little Basque soldier who recruited a new army for the Church.

While there is a vast difference between the spirit and aims of the Jesuits and the Franciscans, it is interesting to note that Saint Ignatius received much of his spiritual formation under Franciscan influence.

It was a Franciscan friar, Ambrose de Montesino, who translated into Castilian Spanish Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ*, one of the chief instruments in the conversion of Saint Ignatius. After a wordly life as a page at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and as a swash-buckling young soldier, Ignatius was wounded at the siege of Pampeluna in 1521. The only books available to while away the tedious and painful hours of convalescence were Ludolph's *Life of Christ* and a volume of the *Lives of the Saints*. So eagerly did Ignatius read and re-read Montesino's translation that echoes of it, even straight phrases from it, are found in his *Spiritual Exercises*, written years later.

It was with the Franciscans that Ignatius stayed on his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1523—even then they were custodians of the holy shrines. The chief influence of the Franciscans on Ignatius, however, and on the future of the Jesuits, was exercised in 1541, after the Bull of Paul III authorized the formation of

the Society of Jesus. By the vote of his companions, Ignatius was elected General of the Society. He refused office twice. Finally, yielding to the treaties of the brothers, he agreed to a retreat and to leave the decision to a Franciscan confessor. This was Father Theodore of the convent of San Pietro Montorio. There Ignatius retired for days of prayer and meditation. In the end, after a general confession, he accepted Father Theodore's counsel to take the burden as the first General of the Society of Jesus. It might also be of interest to note in passing that it was the same convent of San Pietro that Father Pamphilus da Magliano, O.F.M., saintly founder of Saint Bonaventure University, died November 15, 1876.

The official seal adopted by Ignatius for the Society is the monogram of the Holy Name of Jesus. How often in his early days of preaching in Italian cities must he have seen the monogram inscribed over the doors of churches and convents—the result of the preaching of the Franciscan Saint Bernardin of Siena.

According to some historians, Ignatius was a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis before he founded the Society of Jesus. His testament, which may still be seen in his native Pampeluna, seems to point to his having been a Franciscan Tertiary.

Thus in pleasant fraternal recollection, the sons of Francis join the sons of Ignatius Loyola in observing the Fourth Centenary of the Basque soldier-saint whose Society has won so many victories for Christ. His feast is celebrated July 31.
I.J.H.

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the CORD

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE TRANSFORMATION IN CHRIST

In these monthly conferences we have been seeking to explore some of the implications of that line from Saint John: *God is love and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him* (1 Jn. 4:16). Our first consideration was the creative aspect of divine love, how a Trinity of Persons whose name is God fashioned man in its image so that he is destined as a social being even on a purely natural plane to give and share his life with his fellows. We learned further how God uses this natural altruism to prepare man for his supernatural destiny, reeducating his mind and heart so that he may be fit someday to enter a heavenly home as the adopted son or daughter of a divine family. By her religious vows a woman marries into that family in promising ever to love, adore, and obey as her husband the Firstborn of the Eternal Father, whereas, a man, by forswearing every human tie that might keep him from following *the Lamb wherever he goes* (Apoc. 4:14), is admitted into that chosen circle of Christ's closest friends whom He loves with an affection surpassing that of David for *my brother, Jonathan* (2 Kings, 1:26). And because the Son is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, the religious who abides in Christ's love, *abides in God and God in him*.

But we also saw how God's creative love is scorned by sin or selfishness and what such abuse of love entails. It brings death and misery to the sinner in this life and creates hell and purgatory in the next. And because all sin is anti-social, it crucifies both God and man, creating at the same time the challenge of sin.

In our last conference, we told how Christ's redemptive love met that challenge and gave to us the power as it were to redeem our world by restoring as far as possible the ravages wrought by sin. This is a personal, an individual task each one of us has to perform. But as we continue this work begun by Christ filling up *what is lacking of the sufferings of Christ for his body which is the Church* (Col. 1:24), a marvellous transformation comes about, so that we might say in truth, if sin killed Christ, then love can make Him live again.

Humanly speaking, Christ died too young. His work had hardly

begun. Only one little province of the vast Roman Empire knew Him. Just a handful of the world's population ever met Him face to face. True, hundreds, even thousands, may have heard Him speak, but what were thousands, even hundreds of thousands, when the whole world hungered for His message? What might He have done had He lived! He knew men's weaknesses as well as their strength. He could have emptied our hospitals, our prisons, our asylums. He had the answer to all mankind's problems, political, social, economic. And yet He died in the prime of manhood, died that you and I might live. Or should we rather say, He died that He might live again in you and me. For did He not say as He went to His death: *The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remains alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit* (Jn. 12: 23-24).

How will Christ live again? I think we find the answer in an event that occurred during the first Christian persecution. It was about noon. A little group of men had just climbed the long steep road from Galilee up through the Lebanon hills. They did not pause at the top to look back at the magnificent view of the Jordan valley, for they were pressed for time. Their leader must reach Damascus as soon as possible. Already its sun-blazed domes and minarets gleamed white against the sand-colored upland. This Pharisee was still young, but already his name was a terror to Christians. When Saint Stephen was stoned, he looked on with approval. In the persecution that followed, he canvassed Jerusalem from door to door dragging forth men and women until the prisons were cluttered. Even now he carried credentials to the rulers of Damascus commissioning him to bring back any Christians he should find there.

He was almost at the city gates when a blinding light shone about him. He fell to the earth. A voice chided him: "*Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?*" Trembling, he looked up to see the glorified Christ before him. And he said, "*Who art thou, Lord?*" And he said, "*I am Jesus, whom thou art persecuting*" (Acts 9:4-5).

That was the beginning of a great saint's conversion. Saul, the persecutor, became Paul, the apostle. The vision left him temporarily blind so that he had to be led to Damascus. There he fasted three

days and nights awaiting baptism by Ananias. During those hours of darkness the words of Jesus kept ringing in his ears. Even after his baptism when he went into retreat in the solitude of the Arabian desert, they kept coming back. Christ had not said: "Why do you persecute my disciples, my followers, my friends?" but "Why do you persecute Me?" Somehow this Catholic Church was different from the synagogue, different from the Roman state, different from any other organization the world had yet seen. In some mysterious way it had become a part of Christ, even as food or drink become a part of the body, but with this important difference. Paul was still Paul; Peter was still Peter. They still retained their own personality. Their individuality had not been swallowed up. Still for all that, Christ had taken up a new existence in them and through them. He had so identified Himself with them that it made little difference whether it was the soldier of Annas who struck Him in the mouth or Paul who struck Him in the Church. To the first He said: "*Why dost thou strike me?*" (Jn. 18:23), to Paul, "*Why dost thou persecute me?*"

This idea intrigued Paul. More and more he realized why Christ could say: "*Amen I say to you, as long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it for me*" (Mt. 25, 40). Paul prayed over this truth, he dreamt about it, he preached it, he lived it. "*You are the body of Christ*" (1 Cor. 12:27), he told his converts. "*Christ is head of the Church,*" he explained, "*we are members of his body, made from his flesh and from his bones*" (Ep. 5: 23, 29). To live the life of grace, to practice Christian virtue, meant to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* (Rom. 13:14). When he talked of the sacraments, once again it was in terms of the Mystical Body. Baptism is our incorporation, for *in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body* (1 Cor. 12:13). And because our head has been crucified, we share in His redemptive death as well as in His resurrection. *Do you not know that all we who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into his death? For we were buried with him by means of baptism into death in order that, just as Christ has arisen from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall be so in the likeness of his resurrection also* (Rom. 6:3-6). The Eucharist for

Paul was both a symbol and a cause of Christian solidarity. It knits us closer to Christ and to one another. *And the bread that we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord? Because the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread* (1 Cor. 10:17). Marriage was a great sacrament (Eph. 5:32) because it symbolizes the union of Christ with His body the Church. The Mystical Body was Paul's answer to racism. *For all you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor freeman; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus* (Gal. 3:27). When he pleaded for purity it was the same motive he used. *Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot?* (1 Cor. 6, 15). When dissension arose in the parish at Corinth, he reminded them that *if one member of the body suffers anything, all the members suffer with it* (1 Cor. 12:26). And just as the sound and healthy tissues bring back life and health to those diseased, so too the weak members are strengthened by the virtues of the Church as a whole. And when some of the Colossians became sympathetic towards heretical doctrines, Paul told them sharply: *Such a one is not united to the head, from whom the whole body . . . attains a growth that is of God* (Col. 2:19).

From the declarations of His Holiness Pius XII we know that "the Mystical Body of Christ and the Roman Catholic Church are one and the same" (*Humani Generis*). And we know too its members are linked together by many bonds, such as profession of the same faith, acknowledgment of the authority of the Vicar whom Christ left as the Church's visible head, acceptance of its sacramental system. But if a Catholic is to be a living, active cell and not a dead or weak member sapping the strength of Christ's Mystical Body rather than contributing to its vigor, he must be enlivened by sanctifying grace which is nothing else than the Christ-life in us.

An analogy may help us to understand in what sense grace can be called the Christ-life. A living being, we know, is more than a mere machine. No matter how carefully we handle it, the longer the machinery is operated the more it wears down. Bearings become loose, parts weaken and wear and finally something breaks. But take the miracle of living bone and muscle. The more they are exer-

cised the stronger they become. Unlike the lawnmower which can only improve the lawn but not itself, the man pushing it not only trims the grass but discovers that the exercise stimulates the circulation of the blood, tones the muscles, gives him a glow of health. This is but another way of saying that life grows by living. The very functioning of the life processes causes the organism to grow and expand, to increase and multiply. Human life begins with a speck of protoplasm that weighs but one fifty-thousandth of an ounce. But even before the babe is born that bit of life has increased not a million or even a billion, but twenty-six million, million times. Supernatural life is much the same. It too tends to grow, to expand, to produce new life, for sanctifying grace is a kind of supernatural physique transforming the substance of our soul so that it becomes a supernature, a principle of supernatural life. Identical with the infused habit of charity, as Franciscan theologians tell us, it vitalizes our will enabling us to love in a supernatural manner.

To clarify this point somewhat we might recall that there are various degrees or levels of life. A flower is one of the most beautiful of living things, yet no flower ever saw its own beauty, or smelled its own fragrance, or heard its own rustling in the wind. To this degree, its life is imperfect. It lacks that form of living associated with feeling and sensation such as an animal possesses. Yet sense life too is limited. A dog can see, hear, taste and feel. It can even howl at the moon, yet no dog ever wrote a moonlight sonata. Why? Because it lacks the higher intellectual and affective life which makes man a creator of culture. But there is a still higher form of life, that which elevates man's soul to a supernatural level or plane. Indeed the difference between a soul in the state of grace and one living on a purely natural plane is greater than the difference between a man and the grass on which he treads or the cat he may pass on the street. For under the influence of this grace-life even the most insignificant actions take on a quasi-infinite value, in the sense that nothing short of eternity itself will be long enough to reward even so small a favor as a glass of cold water given in charity.

Incidentally the fact that grace is a principle of superlife explains, for instance, why there are certain things we cannot give away to others even by the so-called "heroic act." A man may dig

ditches to make money to pay off his debts, or in the olden days of the bond servant, to buy his own or another's freedom. But there is one thing he could not give away, the increased bodily vitality that came through the exercise of digging. So too with sanctifying grace and the actions it supernaturalizes. They have a triple value, meritorious, satisfactory, and impetratory. While we may ask for something either for ourselves or others, and make satisfaction for our own sins or those of the souls in purgatory, we cannot give away the increase in the grace life itself that such supernatural good works merit any more than the laborer can sell the health that is the fruit of his working. For every good act performed in the state of grace augments the grace itself. That addition is not something clinging to the soul like another garment. It penetrates its being, becoming a part of our supernature like food becomes a part of the body tissue. Grace works like compound interest, each increase accruing to the original capital, each new addition making its earning power the greater. Thus by repeated good actions we build up our supernature, we develop our supernatural physique in much the same way as muscles are developed by exercise.

This growth can be slowed down by venial sin, just as the metabolism of the body is altered by toxic poisons. It can be killed entirely by mortal sin. Yet theologians commonly teach that when the sinner sincerely repents, God in His mercy restores the degree of life and grace ~~possessed~~ before his fall. And so the grace-life continues to grow until a man reaches spiritual maturity. Yet because we are always children in the spiritual life, the fulness of the grace-life is never completely attained. Only in one human soul was such maturity achieved, that of Christ.

Christ, we must remember, was not only God. He was also man. He had a body that could grow weary, a heart that could be broken, a mind that could know, a will that could love. He was like us, the Apostle tells us, *in all things except sin* (Hebr. 4:16). Because His created nature was human, it could be supernaturalized by grace. But because it was created it was also finite, and like a chalice, could be filled up. And it was filled to the brim at the very first moment of the Incarnation. Practically, this meant that no matter how perfectly He prayed with His human mind and heart, no matter how

much He suffered in His human body, no matter how much He surrendered His human will in love to His heavenly Father, the grace-life or supernature could not grow or expand as it does in us. Did this mean that only in the most perfect of men, sanctifying grace could merit no increase of grace or that only in Christ this divine life could not produce new life? No, it only meant that God had to fashion for His divine Son a new, a mystical body, in whose members this grace-life might flow, and in each and every part of which He might be undivided. That body we know is the Catholic Church. As a living member, you have His life in your soul. That is why Saint John could write: *Of his fullness we have all received, grace for grace* (Jn. 1:16). That is why He Himself could say: *"I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly"* (Jn. 10:10). Truly He could claim: *"As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remain on the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing"* (Jn. 15:4-5). Where the Christlife of grace is, there too is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Mystical Body.

If we understand this, we can also comprehend why we are necessary if Christ is to increase, if His grace-life is to grow and expand. Baptism implants the seed of grace, but we must nourish and tend it if it is to grow.

Each seed, we know, is determined in root or germ. A grain of wheat never sprouts into barley, nor does the kernel of corn develop into an oak. A hen may be set on duck eggs, but they never hatch out baby chicks. So too the grace-life in your soul may die or fail to sprout, but if it grows at all it must flower into a personality that is Christ-like.

In all growth, however, two factors exercise a determining role, heredity and environment. Hydrangeas, for instance, can be made to bear blue flowers instead of their usual white ones by treating the soil with iron compounds. But they never become bluebells or violets. The characteristic form or shape remains. So too with the Christ-life in the human soul. It will not simply result in a rubber-stamp likeness of Christ, but will be influenced by the environmental factors. This is another way of saying, it will develop in a particular and individual way, influenced by a person's

character, talent, the milieu in which he is born, works, and dies. Nevertheless, for all that, it will still bear the distinctive Christ-like form. *For those whom he has foreknown he has also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son that he should be the firstborn among many brethren* (Rom. 8:29). In this sense every one of us in accord with our personality traits, sex, talents, strength, must bring Christ into our concrete environment. Or better, we must make Him live again in every sphere of human activity.

And so we begin to understand dimly why paradoxically He needed to die that like the grain of wheat buried in the earth He might be multiplied in those whom Paul declares are *begotten in Christ Jesus through the gospel* (1 Cor. 4:15). What He could not do nineteen hundred years ago as a Galilean carpenter He achieves through His Mystical Body, visiting every corner of the world and continuing His redemptive work down through the centuries to our own day.

Christ. . . dies now no more, death shall no longer have dominion over him (Rom. 6:9). Indeed, the Eternal Highpriest still lives on in the sacerdotal powers of His priests. Christ the Divine Teacher still speaks through the infallible Magisterium of His Church. Christ the King still rules in the person of the Holy Father, Pius XII. But what of Christ the Man? What of the carpenter who spent fifteen years at a workman's bench to teach us that labor was not a form of slavery but of service? What of the very human Christ who wept with Martha and Mary over the death of their brother? What of the compassionate Christ who dried the tears of the Widow of Naim, who defended the poor, who fed the hungry, who cheered the sick? What of the Christ who loved to have the youngsters crowd around His carpenter's bench to see what He was doing? What of all the simple, everyday virtues He came to teach by His example? What of Christ the Man?

He too must live again. And because millions of generous souls are determined that He shall live, they have made their own that prayer of Cardinal Newman: "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 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."

And so it is in nuns' chapels of perpetual adoration or in homes where families have pledged themselves to the practice of nocturnal adoration you may still see the Christ who stole away into the hills to spend whole nights in prayer. Sisters who staff your local hospitals, who care for the homes of the aged or poor, are reliving Christ's charity to the sick and the needy. In the thousands of teaching brotherhoods and sisterhoods we find Christ the educator present once more. Every Christian father and mother who considers marriage a career, not a sideline, perpetuates Christ's love for little children. Every young man and woman who still prizes Christ's purity, preaches from His sermon on the Mount: *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God* (Mt. 5:8). In each of them Christ is forging a personality like His own.

Every religious, then, who is a bride of Christ or, like His apostles, an "alter ego", should be living the right kind of a double love-life, doubling for Christ in everyday life. Or perhaps we should not refer to it as a double life, for as Paul realized the spiritual union to which we are committed is not perfect until we can say with him: *It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me* (Gal. 2: 20). Only then is the cycle of redemption complete.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ACCORDING TO SAINT BONAVENTURE

There is no point in searching through the early Fathers of the Church for testimony saying that the Virgin Mother of God was taken into heaven body and soul. The oldest documents on the Assumption belong to the sixth century.

Although from then on the Fathers rarely spoke of this privilege of Mary, there is nevertheless no doubt that a strong conviction was taking firm root in the minds of the faithful that the body of the Mother of God, inasmuch as it was the virginal and the immaculate home of the Incarnate Word, was preserved from the corruption of the grave and was assumed into heaven immediately after death. This privilege was far from having the number of brilliant adversaries that the Immaculate Conception had. Already in the Middle Ages it was quite universally held, as we learn from the writings of Saint Thomas, Saint Albert the Great, Conrad of Saxony, Bartholomew of Bologna, and others. Among these writers, the Seraphic Doctor is surely not to be ranked as the least. In his sermons he flatly states that the Assumption is a fact and elegantly describes the triumphal entry of the Virgin into Paradise. For this reason, we shall divide our discussion into two articles. First, we shall treat the fact of the Assumption; then, briefly, the glory of the Virgin after the Assumption.

I. The Fact Itself

The term "Assumption" will be used here to denote that outstanding privilege by which the Virgin, undefiled and immune from the corruption of the grave, was bodily transported to heaven immediately after death.

Strictly speaking, the Assumption is concerned only with the transference of the body of the Mother of God into heaven. It does not include the notion of death because it does not necessarily postulate death. However, Mary did actually die. Although there were once some who denied this or called it into question, it is positive that the Seraphic Doctor cannot be included in their ranks. He affirmed the death of the Mother of God, and alleged as proof either original sin, which he thought she contracted, or the fact that otherwise the mother would seem to be elevated above her Son: "It was not proper that the Son of God should have an immortal mother, since he himself was mortal" (III 78b; IV 904b).

Since it was the common lot of men, Mary too underwent death; however, her body was left intact and incorrupt. For how could that body be turned to dust which had not experienced the disorder of concupiscence? "Just as the Glorious Virgin in her life and conception suffered no corruption through actual concupiscence, so in her death and expiration she did not suffer the corruption of dissolution and the worm; which was most appropriate to the unbroken and incorrupt flesh of her virginal womb" (IX 715b). For this very reason the Mother of God is compared to the Ark of the Covenant which symbolizes integrity. "This (integrity) made her light by freeing her from the weight of carnal impulses. It also made her incapable of decaying by separating her from contact with rottenness which resides in a work of flesh. After all, what is virginity but a kind of incorruptibility? . . . On the other hand, what is sensuality but rottenness? Because of concupiscence, therefore, we are born to rot. Consequently (Job 17:14) (If) I must call corruption, my father, we will deservedly disintegrate bodily since we are corrupt and bear in us the cause of corruption" (IX 715b). Although such an incorruptibility of the body, strictly speaking, should be distinguished from the assumption, it is so closely connected with this that the two themes are usually treated together.

But it was not only incorruptibility of body that the Seraphic Doctor claimed for the Mother of God. He claimed her assumption into heaven also. He expressly teaches that Mary is now in heaven *secundum conjunctum*, that is, body and soul. Further, her coronation was "not just in spirit but also in the festive robe of her body" (IX 700a). In another place, he says that "the body of the Mother of God was glorified in the assumption of her soul" (IX 692a). And again: Mary, "is there bodily" and "the excellence of the Virgin's glorification is had in both soul and body" (IX 82b).

From the above, the Seraphic Doctor's position becomes obvious: after dying, the Blessed Virgin was raised from the dead and given the privilege of being assumed into heaven in a glorified body.

He also looked for arguments to demonstrate the privilege. The first one considered by the Seraphic Doctor is based on the supreme happiness of the Blessed Virgin reigning in heaven. We know that the Blessed Virgin is enjoying supreme happiness in heaven. But her joy would not be perfect unless she were there as a person; in other words, unless she were there *secundum conjunctum*, body and soul.

If the objection is brought up: Why would Mary not fully and perfectly enjoy heaven without her body? the Seraphic Doctor answers

with the teaching of Augustine: "Because, according to Augustine, 'the minds of the saints in some manner are not able to be totally absorbed with God. This is because they retain a natural longing for their bodies' " (IX 690a).

The second reason, no less striking, is the one which the Seraphic Doctor tries to draw from the divine maternity. He teaches that the perfection of the heavenly Jerusalem consists in a kind of "conversion" by which the blessed are carried back to God the Creator. This type of conversion would be proper to Christ and the Blessed Virgin and other creatures, each in its own way. In Christ, the conversion was "as that of a supposit into its subject, by identity of person." In the glorious Virgin, "as that of an originator into the one originated, as a mother to her son. The rest of the saints, on the other hand, are turned back as the ones who received origin to the One who gives origin. A special conversion is demanded for the Virgin Mother, who thus places a special kind of perfection in the heavenly city." This would be out of the question unless she were bodily in heaven "since according to her body she was the originator. Christ's soul did not come from her soul, since the soul is not passed on, but His body was from her body" (IX 690a).

When he interprets these words of the Psalm, he also alludes to the divine maternity: "*Thou has set on her head a crown of precious stones.* (Ps. 20:4). The Seraphic Doctor declared that by these precious stones Christ is symbolized, "by whom the Virgin Mary was crowned, a crown excelling all creatures in value since the gem had to be mined from her own being. Hence, it can be concluded that she is worthy to be crowned not only in spirit but also in the robe of the body" (IX 690a). He also applied the Scripture text: *I dwell in the heights, and my throne is on a pillar of cloud* (Eccli. 24:4), to the excellence of the glorification of the Virgin in body and soul.

We cannot overlook the fact that the Seraphic Doctor uses no argument from tradition to prove the corporal assumption of the Mother of God. This is not strange, however, because even Saint Bernard, in whose steps the Seraphic Doctor closely followed, nowhere makes a clear-cut use of such an argument. This is common to the writers of the Middle Ages. Although they hold this truth they rarely mention it. To support this statement, it is sufficient to cite Richard of Saint Lawrence who says: "Mary was assumed into heaven both body and soul by her Son, as it is indeed believed, although not preached" (*De laudibus B.M.V.*).

Whatever may be said about that, it is evident that Bonaventure not only asserted but also tried to prove the corporal assumption of Mary: "The body of Mary. . . is piously believed and proven to have been glorified in the assumption of her soul" (IX 692a).

Some one may ask what sort of theological weight the Seraphic Doctor gave to this doctrine. In answer we may say that, although it is not easy to determine accurately the meaning of the phrase "piously believed," it can not be doubted that the Seraphic Doctor held for certain the truth of the bodily assumption as a doctrine based on reasons of fitness and resting on the authority of Scripture. We cannot ignore what he so brilliantly wrote about the Gospel story of Martha and Mary: "This Gospel is applied to the Assumption of the Virgin, not by some human inventiveness, but by divine inspiration, because in this text the Holy Spirit has hidden a commendation of the Virgin as regards the number of her prerogatives, for the preservation of which he adds at the end: *Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken from her.* Yes, Mary has chosen the better part in both grace and glory" (VII 277b).

It is worthy of note that Bonaventure defended the Assumption as a unique privilege of Mary.

It is certain that at one time there was a popular opinion which held that Saint John the Apostle had been assumed. Indeed, even Saint Thomas held this opinion: "The resurrection of others is put off until the end of the world except those to whom it is granted by privilege beforehand, i.e., to the Blessed Virgin and, as is piously believed, to John the blessed evangelist" (*Expositio super symbolum apostolorum, ed Venetiis, 1593, XVII 68b*).

This is all contrary to the mind of the Seraphic Doctor who openly opposes this view by saying: "There is an opinion that the Lord assumed him (John the Apostle) in body and soul, and that in this assumption he died and lived again. . . This opinion. . . because it has no authority, can be as easily dismissed as it is brought forward" (VI 529a).

II. The Glory of the Assumed Blessed Virgin Mary

Since the Seraphic Doctor tends to be diffuse when speaking of the sublimity and excellent dignity of the Mother of God above all angels and saints, it will be easier to explain his teaching in summary form.

When the body of the Mother of God was lifted into heaven it was "the day of the fulfillment of her glory." It caused Saint Bernard and the Seraphic Doctor to be carried away with emotion when reflecting on it. Bernard wrote: "Who can do it justice? The glorious queen

of the earth on this day bids us adieu and passes out of sight while heaven's army of legions march out to her! The Son wraps her in a joyous embrace and lifts her above every creature" (Bernardus, PL 183, 416). The Straphic Doctor goes further by saying: "Whatever honor creatures may confer on her, it is nothing in comparison to the all-surpassing honor which the Creator confers on her. The whole Trinity goes out to meet her, not by actually moving, but by imparting their favor, by princely joy, and by giving glory which makes her like God. Of Christ her Son, however, we understand literally what is said: *The King rose to meet his mother*. Rising from his throne, he moves the entire mechanism of his empire to honor his mother. Behold, this is the Solomon who commands the princes, tribunes, leaders, and magistrates of all Israel to advance and escort this Ark of the Covenant into the Holy of Holies, that is, into the empyrean" (IX 694a).

Someone may ask: Can any convincing arguments of fitness be produced to attest such a glory of the Virgin? Indeed, quite a few.

First of all there is the divine maternity by which the Mother of God reached such a peak of glory that in heaven she is revered by Christ himself. "Jesus reveres His mother" (IX 694b). This should not seem strange because, although "the person of the mother is infinitely lower than the person of the Son" (III 206b), nevertheless, it is consonant with reason that Christ should manifest reverence for Mary. "Is it breaking any law if the Son reverences His mother? No, because the eternal law commands that the natural order be observed, not perverted" (Augustinus, PL 183, 416). This applies all the more to the Mother of God because her maternity was so much the more perfect. "Jesus reveres. . . not just any mother but a mother. . . of unique sufficiency because without union with male seed, she was sufficient for the task so that she had the power to conceive by the Holy Spirit who granted this to her. Moreover, she was of unique magnificence because until then no mother had generated God, and yet after the birth she remained a virgin. She was also a mother of unique watchfulness and solicitude because no mother loved as she did, and no mother was so full of anxiety" (IX, 694b).

To these reasons another should be added. Mary was exalted in heaven because she was intimately associated with Christ in the work of salvation. The patriarchy, which Adam had in relation to men and Eve in relation to women, so that they would sit at the right hand of God (that is, they were to have the better things) was transferred to Christ and Mary, his mother, because, just as Adam and Eve were the

destroyers of the human race, so Christ and Mary were the rebuilders of it. Hence, it is written, . . . *Let another that is better than she be made queen in her place*. . . (Esth. 1:19). For this reason also "all saints by crediting their crowns to her, crown her through whom, after God, they admit they were crowned" (IX 701b).

Since the amount of glory depends on merit, the third reason for this marvelous exaltation of the Mother of God is that "from perfect merit she passed. . . into glorious reward" (IX 699b). The abundance of the merits of the Mother of God was wonderfully increased by the constant daily practice of virtues while she was still on earth with us, but especially from the conception of the Word till His death on the Cross, where with a motherly affection that words cannot describe she suffered together with Christ. "O my soul, who is able even to think how much joy arises from contemplating that Mother of mercy, the Queen of love and mercy, lying with her Infant in the manger, with whom all choirs of angels are associated as with their Queen! She no longer goes about seeking her Son with tears. Although she lost her dearest child for three days, she now looks upon him with an eternal joy. She no longer flees in terror from the eyes of Herod into Egypt. No, her Son ascends into heaven and Herod plummets into hell. She is not now in anguish over the many things which the Jews did to her Son, to whom all things are subject, while she stood close to her only-begotten Son dying on the pillory of the cross. Certainly, she must have then cried out in anguish: *Oh, who will let me die for you, my Son!* (II Kings 18:33). She does not now weep the bitter tears which she did when a disciple was given for the Master, a slave for the Lord, a near stranger for her only-begotten and well-loved Son. Yet, this pitiable person who once seemed to us so filled with sorrow is now immeasurably above every creature, reigning in the palace of the Trinity with Christ her Son" (VIII 65b-66a). Moreover, her perfect chastity, poverty, and humility gave the Mother of God a very special crown of glory: "Who is more chaste than Mary? Who poorer? Who more humble? To these three virtues which came to full flower in her corresponds a triple and wonderful throne" (IX 694b).

Perhaps we would be able to comprehend more clearly the marvelous exaltation of Mary in heaven if we would reflect on her immense charity by which she attained such beauty of soul that, shining like the sun, she is found most like the eternal Sun of Justice. "The luminous Virgin in her assumption was actually brighter than the sun. . . because she was then more like the Source of all brightness than the sun. . . just

as a certain star is brighter than others, if it is known to be more than our earthly sun, so among rational creatures, that one is brighter than all approaches more closely the Eternal Sun, the Fountain and Origin of all beauty. Such a creature is the Virgin queen. If, according to the words of Saint Victor, 'the force of love transforms the lover into an image of the beloved', then Mary, since more than any other creature has been transformed into his likeness, can be called 'the splendour of the eternal light and the flawless reflection of the God of majesty, the image of his goodness.' Hence she is more beautiful than the angels and all the other creatures" (IX 691ab).

Finally, this was to be expected because even on earth the Mother of God excelled all the saints and angels in grace. Naturally in heaven through a great excess of glory, she would also be exalted above every creature. ". . . Whatever dignity or glory was granted to (the saint) was partially, was completely granted to the holy Virgin" (IX 696a).

Then the Seraphic Doctor argues in reverse order thus, "(Mary) was exalted above choirs of angels in glory, therefore, she was more in the summit of grace" (I 174b).

From this we can see that the doctrine which the Seraphic Doctor maintained about the Assumption was clearly Catholic. He did not merely describe, with Saint Bernard, the celestial glory of the Mother of God as she is now reigning in heaven. He did more. He said quite openly that she was carried there body and soul. Nor did he merely assert the privilege of the Assumption, but found arguments to support it. Moreover, he defended this privilege for the Virgin alone, contrary to the opinion of many others.

Anyone who would want to study this question and would remember the brevity with which medieval authors spoke of the Assumption, could easily see how important is the contribution of the Seraphic Doctor.

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SAINT FRANCIS AND MARY

An Order traditionally devoted to the Blessed Mother of God could not but have got its inspiration from its founder. The Franciscan Order certainly received its love for Mary from Saint Francis. As scholars uncover or establish with more certainty texts relating to Saint Francis, they confirm the fact that the Poor Man of Assisi was not only the Herald of the Great King but was also the faithful Knight of the Great Queen, "Mistress of the World."

In this paper I shall attempt merely to set down the undoubtedly historical texts that evidence the solid devotion of Francis for Our Blessed Mother. For the historicity of the texts I shall rely on the work of Raphael Brown, Franciscan Tertiary who is on the staff of the Library of Congress. His work is entitled *Our Lady and Saint Francis: All the Earliest Texts Compiled and Translated*.

1. The Portiuncula

We might say that the Portiuncula chapel is the symbol of Saint Francis' love for Mary. There his love for her blossomed and bore fruit. And one might add that the restoration of Saint Mary of the Angels betokened the revival of devotion to Mary and the return to Christ.

While we do not know that the twenty-five by fifteen-foot chapel of "Saint Mary of the Little Portion," also called "Saint Mary of the Angels," was given to Saint Francis by the abbot of Monte Subasio (above Assisi), we do know that during the second or third year after his conversion (c. 1210), Francis, after repairing two churches near Assisi, next

went to another place not far from that town, called the Portiuncula, where there was a church built in former times to honor the most glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God. But it was then deserted and no one took care of it.

When Francis saw it thus ruined and abandoned, he was moved with pity, because his heart burned with especially fervent devotion toward the Mother of all goodness and the sovereign lady of the world. And he began to stay there all the time in order to repair it.

For he perceived that, in accordance with the name of that church, which had in former times been called Saint Mary of the Angels, a number of angelic visitations took place there. And he remained there on account of his reverence for the angels and his special love for the Mother of Christ.

And while he stayed in the church of the Virgin Mother of God, with continuous longing he prayed to her who had con-

ceived the Word, full of grace and truth, that she should deign to become his advocate. And by the merits of the Mother of Mercy he himself conceived and gave birth to the spirit of gospel truth.

The blessed Father used to say that it had been revealed to him by God that among the other churches in the world built in her honor, the Blessed Virgin loved this church with a special love. Therefore the Saint loved it more than the others.

Francis, the shepherd of a little flock, led his band of twelve brothers to Saint Mary of the Portiuncula—and the graces of heaven went before them—so that where the Order of the Minors by the merits of the Mother of God had its beginning, it might develop with her help.

The Saint loved this place more than all the others in the world, for here he began in humility, here he advanced in virtue, here he came to his end in joy, and when he was dying, he recommended it to the brothers as most dear to the Virgin.

Although he knew that the kingdom of heaven had been established in every place on earth, and he believed that divine grace can be given to the elect of God everywhere, yet he knew by experience that the "place" of the church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula was filled with more abundant grace and frequented by the visitation of heavenly spirits.

Therefore he often used to say to the brothers:

"My sons, see that you never leave this place. . . For this place is truly holy and the home of Christ and of His Virgin Mother. Here when we were few, the Most High increased us. Here He enlightened the souls of His poor by the light of His wisdom. Here He inflamed our wills with the fire of His love. Here whoever prays with a devout heart will obtain what he asks for, and if he offends, he will be more heavily punished. Therefore, my sons, hold this place worthy of all reverence and honor as truly a dwelling of God which is uniquely cherished by Him and His Mother."

And yet despite his great love for the little place, Francis would rather sacrifice its ornaments than abandon poverty and would rather give away its *New Testament* which the brothers needed for their lessons at Matins than leave unaided the poverty of others.

Once the Saint's vicar, Brother Peter Catani, saw that Saint Mary of the Angels was crowded with brothers who had come from a distance, and there was not enough alms to provide them with what they needed. So he went to Saint Francis and said to him,

"Brother, I don't know what to do, because I haven't enough to provide for these troops of brothers arriving from

everywhere. Please let some of the property of the novices expenses in time of need."

entering the Order be set aside, so that we can turn it for our Saint Francis, whose counsel was inspired by heaven, replied: "My very dear brother, put away that kind of piety which acts against the rule for the sake of any man at all."

And Peter asked: "Then what shall I do?"

He said, "Strip the altar of the Virgin and take away its various ornaments, since you cannot provide for the needy in any other way. I would rather have you strip the altar of the glorious Virgin, when necessity requires it, than to make even the slightest move against our vow of poverty and the observance of the gospel. Believe me, the Blessed Virgin would prefer the gospel of her Son to be perfectly kept and her altar to be stripped than that the altar be adorned and her Son scorned. The Lord will send someone who will restore to His Mother what He has lent to us."

At another time, at Saint Mary of the Portiuncula, a lamb was brought to Saint Francis, and he gratefully accepted it because of his love for the innocence and simplicity which are natural to lambs.

He told the little lamb both to pay attention to the divine praises and to avoid bothering the brothers in any way. And the lamb, as though it sensed his saintliness, carefully obeyed his instructions. also went into the church and, without being told what to do, would kneel down. And it would bleat before the altar of the Virgin Mother of the Lamb of God as though it wanted to greet her.

For when it heard the brothers chanting in the choir, it Saint Bonaventure narrates also the cure of Brother Morico, who before he entered the Order, was cured when dying by some crumbs of bread which Saint Francis sent to him mixed with "the oil taken from the lamp that burned before the altar of the Virgin."

2. Why Saint Francis Loved Mary

"He [Francis] loved the Mother of the Lord Jesus," says Celano, "with a love that cannot be described, because she had made the Lord of Majesty our brother, and through her we have obtained mercy."

Unquestionably Saint Francis loved Mary in the first place because she is the Mother of God. And he must have honored her other privileges and titles, as one must infer from his statement that "through her we have obtained mercy," and from Celano's assertion that "Francis' devotion was to the mother of all goodness and the sovereign lady of the world." Thomas of Celano was perhaps poetic, but he did un-

questionably reflect the reasons for and the spirit of Saint Francis' love of Mary.

Was Saint Francis the first to call the Portiuncula by the name of Saint Mary of the Angels? We do not know. But the name does suggest two more reasons why Francis must have honored the Blessed Mother: her Queenship of the universe and presumably of heaven.

3. Saint Francis Sings to Mary

In the last chapter of the First Rule Francis incorporated the following "Prayer, Praise and Thanksgiving."

Almighty,/Most High,/Most holy and sovereign God,/Holy and just Father. . . /We give thanks because,/Just as through Your Son/You created us,/So by that true and holy love of Yours,/With which You have loved us,/You caused Him to be born/True God and true man/From the glorious ever Virgin/Most blessed holy Mary,/And You wished/Us prisoners to be redeemed/By His cross and Blood and death.

Francis, besides frequently mentioning Mary's part in our redemption, also composed two, and possibly three, prayers to her. Celano says that Saint Francis "rendered special praises and poured forth prayers and offered his devotion to the Mother of Jesus—in how many and in what ways, it is not humanly possible to tell"; and Saint Bonaventure says that "after Christ, he placed his trust especially in her." His first companion, Bernard, before joining the Order, "often had him as his guest in his home. And he used to see him praying all night, very rarely sleeping, praising God and His Mother, the glorious Virgin."

In the last chapter of the First Rule, Saint Francis besought the "glorious Mother, the most blessed Mary ever Virgin. . . to give thanks" to the Lord for all that the Savior has done for us.

In the Office of the Passion, which he had composed and which he recited daily, Saint Francis began and ended each of the seven parts with the following antiphon:

Holy Virgin Mary/There is none like you/Born in the world among women./Daughter and handmaid/Of the most high King/And heavenly Father,/Mother of our most holy Lord /Jesus Christ,/Spouse of the Holy Spirit/Pray for us with Saint Michael the Archangel and all the Virtues of Heaven and all the Saints/To your most holy beloved Son,/Our Lord and Master.

The "Salutation to the Blessed Virgin" is certainly the most beautiful hymn to Mary from the lips of Saint Francis:

Hail, holy Lady,/Most holy Queen,/Mary,/Mother of God!/
You are forever Virgin,/Chosen by the most holy Father in

heaven,/Whom He consecrated,/With His most holy beloved Son/And the Paraclete Spirit,/You in whom was and is/
All plenitude of grace/And all good!/Hail, His Palace,/Hail, His Tabernacle!/Hail, His Dwelling!/Hail, His Vesture!
/Hail, His Handmaid/Hail His Mother/And all you Holy Virtues/That by the grace and light/Of the Holy Spirit/Are infused into/The hearts of the faithful,/That from faithless Souls/You may make them faithful to God!

An organic sequel to the previous "Salutation to the Blessed Virgin" is the "Salutation to the Virtues" and its probably historical subtitle, "with which the Blessed Virgin Mary Was Adorned and with Which a Holy Soul Must Be Adorned."

Hail, Queen WISDOM!/The Lord save you/with your Sister,
Holy pure SIMPLICITY!

Holy Lady POVERTY!/The Lord save you/with your Sister
/Holy HUMILITY!

Holy Lady CHARITY!/The Lord save you/with your Sister,
/Holy OBEDIENCE!

All you very holy VIRTUES/The Lord save you,/who proceed and come from Him.

There is not a single man/in the whole world/Who can have one of you,/Unless first he dies.

Whoever has one/and does not offend the others/Has all./
And whoever offends one/Has none and offends all.

* * *

And each one confounds vices and sins.

Holy WISDOM/Confounds Satan/and all his malice.

Pure holy SIMPLICITY/Confounds all the wisdom/of this world and of the flesh.

Holy POVERTY/Confounds all greed and avarice/and anxiety about earthly things.

Holy HUMILITY/Confounds pride/and all the men of this world/and everything that is in the world.

/Holy CHARITY/Confounds all diabolical and sensual temptations/and all sensual fears.

Holy OBEDIENCE/Confounds all self-will/and all sensual will,/And keeps its body/obedient to the spirit/and obedient to the neighbor,/and makes man subject/to all the men of this world/And not only to the men/but also to all animals and wild beasts,/So that they can do with him/whatever they wish,/As far as God from above allows them.

Saint Francis not only frequently prayed to the Blessed Mother, but also "in her honor he used to fast with great devotion from the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul until the feast of the Assumption."

4. Saint Francis Especially Loved the Poor Virgin

In stressing the grand concept of all-embracing and all-pervading poverty—a poverty that is well reflected in the spurious “Prayer for Peace,” Francis termed poverty “the companion of the Son of God,” and Pius XI was inspired to add: “Francis loved poverty so much because he regarded her as the companion of the Mother of God.”

“Saint Francis often recalled with tears the poverty of Jesus Christ and His mother. And he declared that this virtue was the queen because it shone with such superior brilliance in the King of Kings and in the Queen, His Mother.”

5. Saint Francis Preached to All the Poverty of Mary

Because Francis considered poverty the queen of virtues, he naturally tried to communicate his ideal to all men. In his *Letter to All the Faithful* he pointed out to them that Jesus, “though He was rich above all things, nevertheless wished with His most Blessed Mother to take poverty as His choice.”

To the Poor Clares, Saint Francis wrote shortly before his death: “I, little Brother Francis, wish to follow the life and poverty of our most high Lord Jesus Christ and of His most holy Mother, and to persevere in it to the end.”

To a brother who had expressed the suspicion that a certain poor man was “rich in will,” Saint Francis said, after making the brother apologize to the man and ask him to pray for him, “Brother, when you see a poor person, a mirror of the Lord and his poor Mother is set before you.”

And in Chapter IX of his First Rule, Francis urged all the brothers in their begging

to strive to follow the humility and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . And if it is necessary, let them go begging. And they should not be ashamed, but let them rather remember that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living almighty God. . . was not ashamed and was poor and homeless and lived from alms—He and the Blessed Virgin and His disciples.”

One day when he was sitting at a meal, a certain brother recalled the poverty of the Blessed Virgin and told about the destitution of Christ her Son, saying to him that the Blessed Virgin Mary was such a poor little woman that she had nothing to give her little Son to eat.

When Saint Francis heard this, he immediately rose from the table, sighing with intense grief and groaning and sobbing with pain. He left the table and ate the rest of his bread on the bare ground, weeping very much.

When Francis exhorted everyone to feed the birds on Christmas, in honor of the birth of the Christ Child, he recalled

not without tears how on that day the poor little Virgin was surrounded with poverty and need—how on that night the most Blessed Virgin Mary laid the Son of God down in the manger between an ox and a donkey.

In all the poor he saw the Son of the poor lady. He bore naked in his heart the One whom she bore naked in her hands.

6. Relics of Saint Francis' Devotion to Mary

It is not certain with just how many Blessed Virgin churches and chapels Saint Francis was associated in his work. In Wadding's *Annales* Father Bierbaum found evidence of at least twelve which the Saint either acquired or built.

There are tiny chapels usually named Santa Maria in several of Saint Francis' favorite hill-side hermitages, such as Monte Alverna, Mont Luco (above Spoleto), the Carceri (above Assisi), and the Eremita di Cesi between Todi and Terni. In the Eremita chapel Saint Francis had fifteen brief inscriptions painted on the walls, including one which read: *Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.*

Among the relics of Saint Francis himself which are preserved in his basilica in Assisi is a small crucifix five and a half by three and a half inches, made of walnut and probably dating from the twelfth century, which the Saint is believed to have used. The Blessed Virgin figures in five of the scenes sculptured in relief on its broad sides, representing the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Crucifixion and the Entombment.

Mr. Raphael Brown intends to study and write on *The Hermitages of Saint Francis* and from him we shall expect to have authoritative decisions on the history of the Madonna which disappeared from Santa Maria degli Angeli centuries ago, of the Byzantine Madonna which the Capuchin Fathers residing in Celle, near Cortona, say Saint Francis venerated, and of the Madonna in San Francesco trans Tevere.

7. The Portiuncula Indulgence

Whether Saint Francis obtained the Portiuncula Indulgence from our Lord through the intercession of our Lady we do not know. The vision and the request of Saint Francis are not mentioned in the earliest documents. However the concession by the newly elected Pope Honorius III to Saint Francis at Perugia, in late July 1216, is supported

by documentary evidence. The following dialogue brings out the main points of the Pope's concession:

And at once, taking Brother Masseo with him as companion, he [Francis] went to Perugia, where the Lord Pope Honorius was staying at that time.

And when he was in the presence of the Lord Pope Honorius, after bowing reverently to him, he said to him very humbly: "Very holy and blessed Holy Father, may Your Holiness know that I recently repaired for you in honor of the Virgin Mother of God a church for which I would like to have, if it pleases Your Holiness, an indulgence without any donation to be offered.

The Lord Pope replied: "Francis, that cannot properly be done, since whoever seeks an indulgence should earn it, and in order to earn it should make a sacrifice."

And the Pope added: "How much of an indulgence do you want? Do you want one year or several?"

And then Saint Francis did not answer him.

Then the Lord Pope, perceiving that Saint Francis was not satisfied, said to him: "Do you want three years?"

And Saint Francis did not give him any answer.

And the Lord Pope repeated again: "Do you want seven years?"

And then Saint Francis answered and said: "Very blessed Father, I am not asking for years but for souls."

And then the Lord Pope said to him: "And in what way do you want souls?"

Saint Francis said to him: "Very holy Father, may it please you and Your Holiness, through the merciful heart of Jesus, to grant THERE a plenary indulgence of all sins—to be confirmed by you in heaven and on earth—from the day of baptism until the day assigned by us and the hour of entering the church—and this for every penitent who is well confessed and contrite and has made full satisfaction. For great are the marvels that God continuously performs there."

And then the Lord Pope replied and said: "Francis, you are asking for a great thing, nor is it the custom of the Roman Church to give such an indulgence."

Then Saint Francis answered: "Very holy Father and Lord, what I am asking is not on my own behalf, but on behalf of Him who sent me here, that is, my Lord Jesus Christ! And of this I have many witnesses, that is, the glorious Virgin Mary and the heavenly angels who were present then!"

And after the Lord Pope heard this, he could not raise an objection against him. But marveling at those words he repeated three times with intense emotion, "It pleases me that you have a plenary indulgence. And so be it as you request—in the name of Jesus Christ—and as you wish!"

And then the Cardinals, hearing this, said to the Lord Pope: "Take care, very holy Father, not to grant such an indulgence to Brother Francis, for if you do so, you will dissolve the one far beyond the sea, and also you will completely annul the Indulgence of the Apostles Peter and Paul. Therefore we beseech you to revoke it or otherwise to modify it, so that the fore-mentioned ones may not be destroyed."

And then the Lord Pope replied: "We have given and conceded it, so it is not right to destroy it but rather to confirm it. For you do not know the intimacy and friendship which this poor little Brother Francis has with the Lord Jesus Christ."

And he added: "And who is he who would dare to set himself between those two, that is, Christ and Francis? And who could separate them?"—as if he were saying: "no one."

Therefore the Cardinals then said to the Supreme Pontiff: "Very Blessed Father, if this Indulgence cannot in any way be revoked, let it at least be modified."

And then the Lord Pope said: "That is agreeable to me and is right."

And when Saint Francis had been called into the presence of the Cardinals, the Lord Pope said to him: "Francis, we concede to you the Indulgence which you requested, so that whoever truly penitent and confessed shall come and enter the Church of Saint Mary of the Portiuncula—it is our wish that he have a plenary indulgence of all his sins. And we grant it to you only for a single natural day for all the years of the world, beginning at the First Vespers and lasting through the whole day, until the Second Vespers of the following day."

And then Saint Francis merrily and joyfully gave thanks to God, and bidding the Supreme Pontiff farewell at one, he began to leave.

Seeing this, the Vicar of Jesus Christ, the Lord Pope Honorius, called him and said to him: "O you simple fellow, why are you thus going away, and what did you come for? Tell me, are you taking away with you anything about the Indulgence which you requested? Don't you see that, although the Indulgence has been granted to you, nevertheless it has not been confirmed for you by the testimonial of a bull?"

Saint Francis replied and said: "Holy Father, for me your word is sufficient, and I want nothing else. If this is the work of God, He Himself will manifest His work and preserve it in the hearts of faithful persons. Therefore I do not want any other document or charter except the Blessed Virgin Mary; and Jesus Christ will be the notary and the angels will be the witnesses!"

And after saying this, Saint Francis left and went to Assisi.

8. Mary Picks Francis to Aid Dominic

The Bollandists considered the following vision probably historical because it is found in the two thirteenth century sources.

Once when Saint Dominic was in Rome seeking to obtain the confirmation of his Order from God and the Lord Pope, during a certain night while he was watching and praying in a church, as was his custom, he saw in a vision the Lord Jesus, sitting at the right of the Father, rise up in anger to slay all the sinners on earth and destroy all who were committing iniquity.

He stood in the air with a terrifying expression, brandishing three arrows against the world sunk into evil: one with which He would transfix the haughty necks of the proud; another with which He would cast out the entrails of the greedy, and a third with which He would pierce the flesh of those who yielded to concupiscence.

While no one could withstand His anger, the gracious Virgin Mary appeared. And falling to her knees she embraced His feet and begged Him to be merciful to those whom He had redeemed and to temper justice with mercy.

The Son said to her: "Do you not see how many outrages they inflict on Me? My justice does not permit so many evils to be unpunished."

Then the Mother said to Him: "As you know—who know all—here is the way by which You will bring them back to You. I have a faithful servant whom You shall send into the world to announce Your words. And they will be converted and seek You, the Saviour of all. And I shall give him another servant as an assistant who will do similar work."

Then the Son said to His Mother: "I am appeased and I accept your plan. Nevertheless, show Me these whom you wish to assign to so great a task."

Then the Lady Mother showed Saint Dominic to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the Lord said to her: "He will perform well and zealously what you said."

Likewise she showed Him Saint Francis also, and the Lord similarly praised him.

Saint Dominic therefore carefully studied his companion in that vision, for he did not know him.

The next day he met him in church and recognized him from among those whom he had seen during the night. Running up to him, he embraced and kissed him saying: "You are my companion. You are to run along beside me. Let us stand together, and no opponent shall prevail against us!"

He also told him about the vision.

And henceforth they were like one heart and one soul in God.

9. The Blessed Mother Confirms the Stigmata

One hundred and fifty years after the death of Francis, Bartholomew of Pisa imagines the scene that must have taken place at the moment of Saint Francis' death.

It is to be believed that the Mother of the highest King Christ, herself, whose custom it is to go to her dying devotees, undoubtedly came to meet her devotee Saint Francis, who was marked with the stigmata of her Son. For she showed during his life that she loved him with special affection, by manifesting herself to him many times; so it is all the more plausible that she gave him the grace of meeting him when his soul left his body and of conducting him into heaven.

Fifty years after the death of Francis, the Blessed Virgin intervened to reconfirm the fact of the stigmatization. Although a private revelation, it was fully attested by several Franciscan superiors. Brown, quoting the *Acta Sanctorum*, tells the story:

Saint Francis is reported to have appeared to a certain friar on Mount Alverna and to have described to him in some detail the stigmatization, bidding him to make this revelation known. But as the friar delayed in making it known, an angel commanded him to disclose it. Still he hesitated and prayed to Mary for guidance. Then the Mother of God appeared to him, accompanied by angels, and said:

"Consider certain the words about the stigmata of Saint Francis which you asked me to obtain for you from my Son. And do not fear or delay to reveal them, because it is the will of my Son that they be disclosed."

10. The Blessed Virgin Honors Saint Francis

Several interventions of Our Lady and Saint Francis also occurred after his death.

A certain woman in the district of Arezzo in Tuscany had endured the pains of labor for seven days and was already turning black. Everyone had given up hope for her.

She made a vow to Saint Francis. And as she was dying, she began to call upon him for help.

After making the vow, she quickly fell asleep. And Saint Francis appeared to her in her sleep, and called her by her name, Adelasia. He spoke to her in a kind way and asked her whether she recognized his face.

She answered: "Indeed I recognize you, Father!"

The Saint added: "Do you know how to say the 'Salve Regina, Mater Misericordiae?'"

She replied: "I know it, Father."

The Saint said: "Begin it—and before you finish it, you will safely bear your child."

In saying this, the Saint cried out in a loud voice and disappeared.

At this call, the woman awoke and fearfully began to And when she was praying the words, "Thine eyes of mercy" and mentioned the Virgin's womb, all of a sudden, before she finished the prayer, she gave birth to a handsome baby safely and with joy, uttering thanks to the Queen of Mercy, who had deigned to have pity on her through the merits of Saint Francis.

The Lord Transmundo Anibaldi, a Roman Consul, at the time when he was exercising that function in the city of Siena in Tuscany, had a certain blind servant Nicolo whom he liked very much and who was very efficient in serving him. The latter suddenly developed a serious infection in his jaw, and the doctors predicted that he would soon die.

While he was taking a little sleep, the Virgin Mother of Christ appeared to him and urged him to make a vow to Saint Francis and to visit his tomb without delay. When he arose in the morning, he told his master about the vision. The master marveled, but followed after him in order to see what happened.

When the master reached Assisi, he found his friend before the tomb of Saint Francis, where he had been suddenly cured.

* * *

A certain woman in Apulia had for a long time lost her voice and the faculty of breathing freely. When she was sleeping one night, the Blessed Virgin appeared to her and said: "If you want to get well, go to the Church of Saint Francis in Venusia, and there you will receive the good health which you desire."

The woman arose, and as she could not breathe or speak, she indicated to her parents by gestures that she wanted to hasten to Venusia. Her parents consented and traveled there with her.

When the woman entered the Church of Saint Francis, while she was praying fervently, she vomited a mass of flesh and was freed from her affliction, before the sight of everyone.

Joachim Daleiden, O.F.M.

✢ ✢ ✢

The name of this prayer may sound strange to those not initiated in the Latin language. Angelus commemorates the story of the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the Mother of Jesus. In Latin, which was the language first used for the prayer, the opening word of the prayer is *Angelus*, "the Angel." Hence the name.

When "the fullness of time had come" (Gal. 4:4), as determined in the Providence of God, in the days that King Herod was ruler of Judea (Luke 1:5), God sent Gabriel, one of his Angels who assist at his throne in Heaven (Luke 1:9), to a little town of Galilee, called Nazareth. Here there lived a humble young lady, who was a virgin, but who was espoused to the very holy man, Joseph. He, as the Virgin herself, was a descendant of the royal family of the great King David. The Virgin's name was Mary, a name that well befitted her, since in her day it probably was popularly taken to mean "Lady," and its scientific meaning may be "Highness," or "Exalted One."

Entering her home unannounced, the Angel must have found Mary at prayer—the perfect occupation for receiving this message. He greeted her: "Hail, Full of grace." "Hail," represents the Greek of Saint Luke, which really means "Rejoice." It has commonly been asserted that St. Luke merely interpreted the usual Hebrew greeting, "Peace be to you," since the Angel no doubt spoke in the Aramaic language, Mary's language. Today, however, scholars incline to think that the Angel used a term that actually invited Mary to rejoice, a term that is found in some Messianic prophecies. And so the Angel's first word would indicate that he came to announce the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Messiah who would bring joy to the world.

The grace that Mary possessed so fully and by which she is in turn possessed so fully is sanctifying grace. This she had received already at the first moment of her existence, when she was immaculately conceived in her own mother's womb. Mary was so full of grace that she possessed more than all Angels and men taken together. Besides sanctifying grace, the fullness of grace meant here includes also the very exceptional, entirely unique and fundamental favor that God bestowed on Mary and about which the Angel came to tell her, her divine, virgin Motherhood.

After that greeting the Angel assured Mary: "The Lord is with you." This phrase, found rather frequently in the Sacred Scriptures of the Old Testament, expresses the fact that God is with Mary in a very special manner, because he is conferring on her a most exceptional and difficult office. In it she will certainly be successful, since God himself, the Lord Omnipotent, will give all the help needed.

Whether at this point the Angel pronounced the special praise of Mary, "Blessed are you among women," is not certain, since it is missing here in a few of the more important manuscripts. No matter. It is certain that, not many days later, Saint Elizabeth, under divine inspiration, uttered the praise of her cousin Mary. The clause is couched in Hebrew idiom for the superlative degree, and means that Mary is more blessed than all other women.

All in all the divine messenger's praise was surely exceptional for a young Jewish lady of lowly station. Small wonder that in her humility, Mary feared at hearing such praise bestowed on her. Still she remained entirely self-possessed and kept pondering what manner of greeting this really was. The Angel quickly informed her: "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found grace with God." The Angel, in other words, said, "Mary, you are most pleasing to God; He is granting you a very great favor." Continuing, the divine herald unburdened himself of his message:

"And behold, you shall conceive in your womb and shall bring forth a son; and you shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and he shall be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he shall be King over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

What a wonderful child the Angel promised Mary! What? A child to Mary? But how? "How shall this happen?" asked Mary, looking for an explanation, since "I do not know man." She wished to say that she had made a firm and sacred resolve never to make use of a wife's rights with her spouse. She had decided, undoubtedly under divine guidance, to remain a virgin always, even though for protection she espoused Joseph, who had also determined to remain a virgin.

The Angel did not leave Mary in doubt for long. He assured her:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; and therefore the Holy One to be born shall be called the Son of God."

How delicately and simply stated! Mary will remain a virgin while at the same time she will be the greatest mother ever to exist, the Mother of the Son of God. This will elevate her to the highest dignity a mere creature can receive even from God. All this by the miraculous creative power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Love Divine.

Then, by way of re-assurance, though Mary had not doubted the Angel's message, he gave her a sign of the truth of the message: Elizabeth, her cousin, is with child. She who had been sterile and who was now beyond the child bearing age conceived a child by God's omnipotence. "For nothing shall be impossible with God." Neither, therefore, shall the virginal conception of Mary's divine Child be impossible.

Now the Angel is waiting. Her message has been delivered. God in his infinite goodness did not wish to force motherhood on Mary, even Divine Motherhood. God, too, is waiting . . . waiting for Mary's answer. In a sense, God made the Incarnation of his Son and the consequent redemption of mankind depend on the consent of the Redeemer's Mother. He wanted her to share in the closest way in her Son's work of Redemption, not only in the distribution of the grace acquired, but already in the very first act bringing Redemption. And the first step would be Mary's consent, free and generous, to be the Mother of the Redeemer, to make it possible for the Son of God to be born of our race and to offer himself for man's Redemption. What will Mary's answer be? Without delay, most humbly but resolutely she replied:

"Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done to me according to your word."

Mary meant to say, "I am the lowly servant of the Lord Almighty. Let him achieve in me, and with me, what he has expressed in the message that you have brought. God's holy will be done."

The Angel's mission is ended. He left as quietly as he had come. Saint John states the mystery simply:

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:41).

Immediately upon Mary's consent to be the Mother of the Messiah the Holy Spirit wrought the marvel of the Incarnation of the Son of God in the immaculate sanctuary of the Virgin Mary's womb. Pope Pius XII, quoting Saint Thomas, writes in his encyclical on the Mystical Body, "In the name of the whole human race," She gave consent for 'spiritual nuptials between the Son of God and human nature.' " Thereby she became the Mediatrix and Spiritual Mother of all men as well as the Mother of God's Son and our Redeemer.

By Dominic J. Unger, O.F.M.Cap., "The Meaning of the Angelus"
Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago, Illinois

FRANCISCAN PERFECTION. Cesaire de Tours, O.F.M. Cap., translated by Paul Barrett, O.F.M. Cap. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1956. Pp. X-193. \$3.25

This book, the author says in his Introduction, was written "for the benefit of our younger brothers in Religion and out of filial love for our Holy Father St. Francis." These two aims establish both the level and the keynote of the treatise; it is directed toward the needs of beginners in the spiritual life, and is therefore couched in simple language and in the form of appeal, exhortation, and guidance; and it is permeated with love for the Franciscan ideal.

Although the book contains nothing new, either by way of matter or presentation, to anyone familiar with the Franciscan literature produced in the thirty-odd years since the author first wrote it, it is still a useful and readable volume based on reliable sources.

The translation is good, but one could wish that the translator had done a little more revising in the matter of certain slightly out-of-date expressions and points of view. MFL

COME, HOLY SPIRIT. Leonce de Grandmaison, S.J., translated by Joseph O'Connell, S.J. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956. Pp. 117. \$2.95

To those who like their spiritual books brief, practical, and to the point, this little volume will seem written to order. Originally, the chapters that make up the book were little meditations used in conducting triduum for lay apostles. The meditations, naturally geared to the requirements of lay apostles, are psychological rather than theological; but anyone who takes his Christian life seriously will find much food for thought in them—and much reason for offering to

the Holy Spirit a humble and contrite heart.

Unfortunately the translation is not up to standard. The reader is quite likely to be annoyed by the frequent lapses into loose—if not erroneous—grammatical constructions. In general, however, it reads smoothly, and probably follows the style of the original French. SMF

LAUDA SION. Compiled by Thomas Rust, O.F.M. New edition revised by Leopold Kitt, O.F.M. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press, 1955. Pp. 168.

Franciscan choirmasters will be happy to see this new edition of the old and long out of print first edition of *Lauda Sion*. It contains texts and melodies, old and new, for litanies, antiphons, and *ritualia* proper to or especially popular in the Franciscan Order. The present reviewer has not checked how far the new Seraphic Ritual will affect some of the material in *Lauda Sion*, but in any case it should still be a welcome book to any Franciscan choir-loft. SMF

GOD AND HIS CREATION. Edited by A. M. Henry, O.P. Translated by Charles Miltner, C.S.C. The Theology Library Volume Two. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1955. Pp. xi-511. \$6.50

This second volume of theology for laymen continues the high level of excellence we admired in the first volume. The treatment of the various problems relative to God and His creation are handled briefly but adequately, clearly, and competently. For the reader who wishes to study these problems more extensively, bibliographies follow each chapter. A short section entitled: "Reflection and

Perspective" is appended to each discussion for the purpose of helping the reader understand more fully the implications of what he has read, and of guiding him toward further independent study.

Since the Theology Library is edited by the Dominicans, it is natural that the Thomistic view of things should predominate. There are, nevertheless, occasional bows to the Franciscan school, and since the general tone of the Library is modern and eclectic, the reader is not conscious of any objectionable one-sidedness. There is at least one question posed by the editor that should stir some kind of response in the Franciscan reader—the question of beauty. "How does it happen," asks Fr. Henry, "that the beauty of the world holds relatively such a small place in Christian thought and such a large place on the contrary in pagan thought, and even in the religious thought of all times outside of Christianity? Still does not *Le Chant du monde* of Giono sound pagan? Does not a film like *Farrebique*, in which the whole creation of land which exhales its splendors and its noises, shock many Christian eyes and ears? And we do not speak of the beauty of woman whom the Church alone praises, in the words of the *Canticle of Canticles*, to the glory of the Blessed Virgin.

"It would nevertheless be necessary here to take note of certain exceptions, and of one at least of which everyone thinks: St. Francis of Assisi, the singer

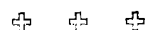
of nature, in his *Canticle of the Sun*.

"Is there not in that, aside from the exceptions, and especially these last centuries, a gap? Might not our theology have something to recover? Is it sufficiently schooled in certain inspired authors: the author of the Book of Genesis, of Job, of Ecclesiasticus, etc. A distinction is certainly to be made between pagan thought and Christian thought on the beauty of things and of beings. Do the fears of Christians (as expressed, e.g., in the *Imitation of Christ*), bear on the nature of things or on the subject who contemplates them and who is afraid of himself? Is it possible, is it desirable, that theology and the life of Christians moderate those fears?" (p. 307).

The answer to these vitally important questions can be found precisely in the almost totally buried (for the average Catholic) treasure of Franciscan philosophy and theology, which has traditionally upheld the aesthetic view of life. It remains only for us to formulate the answers and to present them in a manner understandable and acceptable to the modern mind.

A word of warning: Any thoughtful Catholic who exposes himself to the Theology Library will be brought face to face with a realization of how little he knows and how much he is obliged to acquire if he is to qualify in any way as an informed Catholic.

The Theology Library belongs on the bookshelf of every Catholic home and every religious community. SMF



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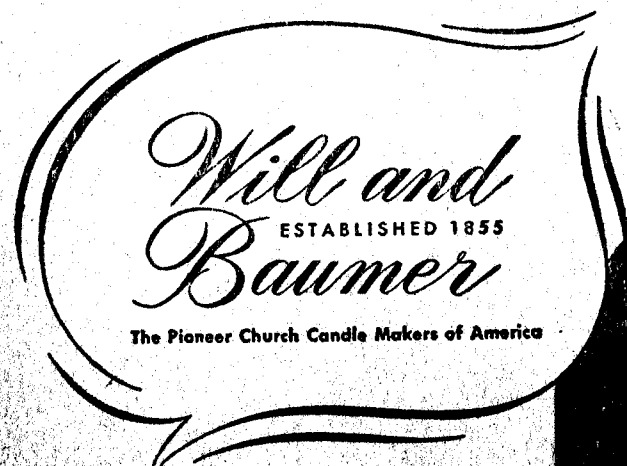


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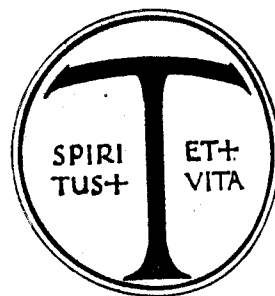
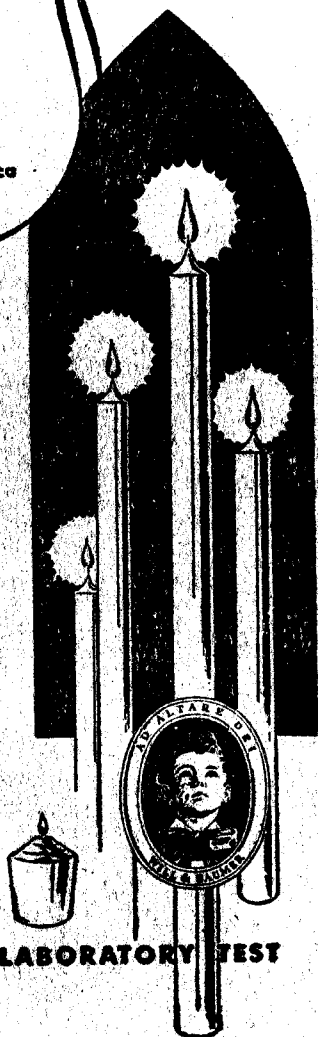
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the CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

VOL. VI., NO. 9, SEPTEMBER, 1956

the CORD

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

In analyzing the meaning of those words of John *God is love* (I Jn. 4:16), we have traced not only the creative aspect but also the redemptive characteristics of divine love and have indicated how the redemptive cycle is completed only by our personal transformation into Christ. For Christ still lives on in His Mystical members through faith and love. But it is not enough that we are incorporated by baptism or believe the truths He came to teach. As Paul tells us: *We are to practice the truth in love and so grow in all things in him who is the head, Christ* (Eph. 4: 15). The grace-life must grow until we attain to *perfect manhood, to the measure of the fullness of Christ* (ibid. 13). Now the virtues necessary to bring about this complete transformation into Christ were outlined by Our Lord in the beatitudes, for the "kingdom" to which they refer is nothing else than what Paul calls the Mystical Body. The basic requirement, the fundamental condition, the rock-bottom virtue we need to have is described by Christ in the first beatitude: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven* (Mt. 5:3).

I.

"Poverty of spirit" as Christ uses the term apparently refers only indirectly at most to detachment from worldly goods. Even that ardent lover of poverty, our Holy Father Saint Francis, hesitated to interpret the beatitude in this narrow sense. In his *Admonitions* he writes: "He who is truly poor in spirit, *hates himself* and loves those who strike him on the cheek" (*Adm.* 14). "Hatred of self" is his description of humility, the humility that leads immediately to the second beatitude of meekness, which prompts a man to love those "who strike him on the cheek."

Perhaps a better translation would be "poor-spirited" as contrasted with proud-spirited, or even "spiritually poor," though the term implies rather a recognition of one's own spiritual inadequacy or weakness, regardless of what virtues one may possess. Christ is contrasting the attitude He expects of His followers with that char-

acteristic of the Pharisees who regarded themselves as spiritually rich, self-sufficient and justified by their own good works.

The Pharisees, we know, were a kind of politico-religious sect which had had a very promising beginning as a reaction against the dangerous and worldly-minded Sadducees. The latter were the clique of Jewish aristocrats which comprised the wealthy and cultured class, including many of the Levites and even the highpriest. They hobnobbed with the Greeks, catered to the Romans, and were tolerant towards foreigners. They sought to break down as far as possible the barrier between Jew and Gentile, and to this end introduced Greek customs and manners. But in admiring pagan culture, they came to admire pagan beliefs. Their faith in the divine mission of the Jews weakened. They questioned the Scriptures, rejecting all but the first five books of Moses. Angels and devils were but Jewish fairy tales. God had created the world, it is true, but He was too busy to bother much about what men did in it. There was no divine providence. Man must look out for himself. Neither, according to them, was there any future life, as we know from the famous case they proposed to Christ about the woman who married the seven brothers (Mt. 22:23-24). And because they denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection, they persuaded men to make the most of it. The Messiah for them was simply a great social leader, a humanitarian who would bring the Hebrews earthly prosperity.

The more religious, eternity-conscious Jews banded into an opposition party. They led an austere life, praying much, fasting twice a week, and donating ten-percent of their income to the temple treasury or other religious works. And in contrast to the internationally minded Sadducees, they stirred up an intense love for national customs and traditions. To protect the revealed law, they added a number of further rules and regulations. But these self-imposed "kosher-laws" or *traditions of the ancients*, as Mark calls them, became so numerous and intricate that they became impossible to observe in practice. It was not long before their scribes or lawyers were devising all kinds of legal loopholes, so that by their casuistry they found ways of getting around the divine law itself. As Christ told them to their face, *you make void the commandment of God by your tradition, which you have handed down*

(Mk. 7:13). A great number of the Pharisees, in Christ's day, had become hypocrites. Their piety was only an external shell of legalism. Still, in their self-conceit, they considered themselves spiritually rich, thanking God they were *not like the rest of men, robbers, dishonest, adulterers* (Lk. 18:11). When John the Baptist preached penance, they turned people away from him. It was enough to be a traditionalist, a "son of Abraham." They needed no baptism of penance, or a Christ who came to save sinners. Small wonder John said to them: "*Brood of vipers! who has shown you how to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits befitting repentance, and do not begin to say, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that God is able out of these stones to raise up children to Abraham*" (Lk. 3:7-8).

Yet we know that nothing shuts the floodgates of divine mercy so quickly and effectively as pride, for *God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble* (1 Pet., 5:5). Or as our Blessed Lady, whose humility was proportionate to her other virtues, put it: God regards the *lowliness of his handmaid*. He has *scattered the proud, put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly* (Lk. 1: 48,51-52). It was not the Pharisee with his good works who *went back to his home justified*, but the publican who *would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but kept striking his breast, saying "O God, be merciful to me the sinner!"* (Lk. 18:13)

That is why Christ places humility as the indispensable condition for transformation into Himself. It is only the *poor in spirit* that shall possess *the kingdom of heaven*. Where this first condition is lacking, nothing else we may have really matters.

II.

Why is humility so important? Why does God resist the proud but give His grace to the humble? The answer is found in those words of John, *God is love*. For love, as we have said so often, is not so much a seeking to get as a seeking to give. And a condition for God's giving is a need in ourselves. Pride or a sense of self-sufficiency is simply another way of telling God we have no need of Him but are doing very nicely on our own.

Beginners in the spiritual life often make the mistake of believing God loves them only for what they are (which is not very

much) instead of also for what He can make of them (which is a great deal). The more pitiable our condition, the more the sight of our misery moves the divine mercy. God taught Saint Paul this precious truth of the spiritual life when He declared: *Strength is made perfect in weakness* (II Cor. 12:9). And it was in this sense that Blessed Claude La Colombiere, the spiritual director of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, could write to a dying nun troubled by the thought of past sins: "If I were as near to death as you seem to be, it would be precisely the number and gravity of my sins that would serve to quicken my trust. So far from being cast down by the realization of one's failures, to be strong in one's boundless idea of the Creator's goodness—that is a trustfulness that is truly worthy of God. It seems to me that the confidence inspired by innocence and purity of life does not give a very great glory to God, for is the salvation of a holy soul, who has never offended Him, all that His mercy is able to accomplish? Surely the trust that gives the Lord must honor is that of an errant sinner who is so convinced of God's limitless mercy that all his sins seem but a speck in comparison to that mercy" (*Lettres spirituelles*, v.I, Lyons, 1727, pp 39-40.)

Not only is God's power manifested in the weak, but it is also the poor in spirit that He chooses to be the special object of His love. When the saintly Sister Josefa Menendez, sometimes called the second apostle of the Sacred Heart, asked Christ why He had ever picked her from so many others for such sublime revelations of His love, He told her bluntly: "If I had been able to find anywhere a creature more miserable than you, I would assuredly have chosen her, in order to manifest the longings of My Heart through her; but not finding one, I chose you. You know, too, what happens when an insignificant little flower devoid of charm or fragrance springs up on a highroad full of traffic. It quickly gets trampled underfoot by the passers-by, who pay not the slightest attention to it, nor so much as notice its existence. And think, Josefa, what would have become of you if I had left you, frail and miserable as you are, to the cold of winter, the heat of summer, to the sport of wind and rain; assuredly you would have died. But because I wanted you to live, I transplanted you into the garden of My Sacred Heart, tending you with My own hands, that you may grow

up under the beams of the Sun with its vivifying and restoring power, whose strength is tempered in your regard, that no injury may come to you. Ah! Josefa, leave yourself, such as you are, to My care, and let the sight of your nothingness never lessen your trust, but only confirm you in humility." (*Way of Divine Love*, Westminster, Md, 1950, pp. 370-1). It was almost the same reply Christ gave to that other apostle of the Sacred Heart devotion, Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque: "If I had been able to find a creature more miserable than you, I should have chosen her," He declared. "Do you not know that I make use of the weak to confound the strong, and that I am wont to show forth my power most strikingly in my little ones and those who are poor in spirit, that they may attribute nothing to themselves?" (*Vie et oeuvres*, Paris, 1915, v.I, p. 137). No wonder then that to be loved by God is both an exhilarating, but also a humbling, experience. For God paradoxically loves us apparently less for what we are than for what we may yet become. It is the lost sheep that provokes the compassion of the Divine Shepherd. Small wonder then that Paul refused to become complacent or take comfort in the great graces or revelations accorded him, but rejoiced rather in his weakness. *Gladly therefore I will glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me* (II Cor. 12:9).

This recognition of our spiritual poverty is not a sometime virtue, but is one that must accompany us at every stage of spiritual development and growth. As Saint Augustine tells us, humility was a virtue unknown to the pagan philosophers and entered the world with Christ (*Enar. in ps. 31*, n 18), and in communicating His life to the members of His Mystical Body, He renders them humble (*In Joan, evang. XXVI*, 16). Consequently, the more one grows in virtue, the more he *puts on Christ*, the more humble he should become. "There is indeed no higher road than that of love," he admits, "but none but the humble walk therein" (*Enar. in ps. 141*, n. 7). Of all the ways that lead to God, he tells us, "humility is the first, and the second, and the third, and no matter how many more times you ask, What is the next? I shall always answer, 'humility'" (*Ep. 118*, n. 22).

When a religious then feels smug or self-satisfied, he or she walks on dangerous ground. Perhaps God regards such as He did

the bishop of the church at Laodicea: *I am about to vomit thee out of my mouth, because thou sayest, "I am rich and have grown wealthy and have need of nothing," and dost not know that thou art the wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked one"* (Apoc. 3, 16-17).

The genuine saints, on the contrary, realize their own basic inadequacy and their sense of sinfulness grows apace with their sanctity. Saint Bonaventure explains the phenomenon thus. The closer we come to the source of light, the more each flaw and imperfection stands out. A window just washed may seem to be perfectly clean until the sunlight strikes it, then suddenly all the streaks and the lint on the glass become visible.

This divine discontent of the saints with their imperfections keeps them both humble and ever striving for greater perfection. There is indeed a profound truth in those words Goethe ascribes to the deity as the angels carry the soul of Faust to heaven:

*Wer immer strebend sich bemueht
Den koennen wir erloesen.*

(Faust II, act 5)

III.

How then is this precious virtue of humility to be fostered? Sometimes God may give special graces to His saints to keep their feet on the ground, as it were. Saint Paul tells us: *Lest the greatness of the revelations should puff me up, there was given me a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet me* (II Cor. 12: 7). But the ordinary means God gives every religious is the study of character weakness as revealed by daily faults and imperfections. The particular and general examen should give one a profound insight into the unflattering side of one's self. Far more important, however, than making a complete inventory of the sins we may have committed or the good resolutions we have failed to carry out, is the discovery of the underlying motivation for our actions. It was in this way that the saints found their fundamental frailties, their deep-seated defects of character, their tremendous capacities for sin.

We know Saint Teresa of Avila's famous description of humility as "walking in the truth" (*Life*, c. 12). But the most important aspect of this acknowledgment of the truth is not so much the

attribution to God of any good we may possess, but the recognition of our own weakness. That is why Saint Bernard defines humility as "a virtue whereby man, through a true knowledge of himself, becomes despicable in his own eyes" (*De gradibus humilitatis*, I, n. 2). We recall how Francis regarded himself. "It seems to me that I am a greater sinner than anyone else in the world," he told Brother Pacificus. And when the latter remonstrated that this was not in accord with the truth and that Francis could hardly say this with a good conscience, the saint explained: "If Christ had shown such great mercy to a criminal, however wicked he might be, he would be much more perfect than I" (*Leg. major*, c.6). And when Brother Masseo asked Francis why all the world ran after him and desired to see him, Francis replied: "The eyes of the most high God, which behold in all places both the evil and the good, could not find among sinners anyone more useless, incompetent or sinful than I. And so He has chosen me, to put to shame what is noble and great and powerful and fair and wise in the world, that all may know that all virtue and goodness are of Him and not of the creature, and that none should glory in His presence, but that he who glories should glory in the Lord, to whom be all honor and all glory forever" (*Actus b. Francisci*, c. 10).

If, like Brother Pacificus, we wonder how a saint of Francis' caliber could consider himself in all sincerity, the greatest of sinners, we find a key to the solution in the fact that humility, like love, has its own blindness. But love's "blindness," as we indicated in our first conference, is in reality a keener and more penetrating vision. If charity sees potential virtues as actual, humility seemingly does the same with vices or sin. It is not that the actual commissions of a saint are great or serious sins, but that the saint sees in what are objectively slight faults or even imperfections those character traits that might well lead to the greatest of sins did not God in His mercy not spare him the temptation. The late Abbot Marmion, who has given us so many magnificent insights into the spiritual life, after listening to the life of Luther read in the refectory, remarked to a companion: "I find every one of his character faults in myself." Perhaps this explains the somewhat subtle difference between the Pharisee (Lk. 18:11) and Philip Neri. The latter, seeing a criminal led to execution, exclaimed: "There but

for the grace of God goes Philip!" Apparently both attributed to God the good they had received. Both gave thanks for not committing the crimes that others had. Yet how different their sentiments! Philip found himself weak; the Pharisee felt himself strong. The Jew prided himself upon the positive perfection he thought he possessed, the sins he had avoided, the vices he had not contracted. The saint, on the other hand, saw the sins of others as something he might well commit if exposed to the same or even lesser temptation. And here lies the real secret of the humility of the saints. While they may condemn the sin, they never make the mistake of putting themselves above the sinner, for they fear they might have done far worse if God's grace had not prevented it. It is no consolation to tell a soldier who spent the duration of the war behind an office desk that he did not desert under fire. Perhaps that is why no true saint is ever really flattered when others praise his virtue. He is too conscious of the latent tendencies dormant in his nature that only too easily could betray him into sin. As Celano remarks, when the crowds sought to canonize Francis while yet on earth, he would remind them grimly: "I may yet have sons and daughters by the flesh. Do not praise me as though I were safe. Indeed no one ought to be praised whose end is still uncertain" (*Legenda secunda*, n. 133). The wise religious then does not close his eyes to what real talents or virtues or accomplishments God may have given him, but he regards them as a coat of paint that covers many a puttied crack, disfiguring mark, or dirty smudge.

IV

Where true poverty of spirit is present it will manifest itself by its spiritual fruits which Christ expressed in the next four beatitudes. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* Francis' humility made him and his faithful followers the meekest of men. As Celano puts it: "They were in truth Friars Minor, submitting themselves to all men, always seeking the lowest place and taking work where they might be likely to receive unjust treatment." (*Leg. prima*, n. 38). And Francis sternly forbade his friars to seek to right their wrongs by an appeal to the Roman Curia (*Testament*), "preferring," as Brother Jordan tells us, "to overcome all difficulties by humility rather than by decrees of the court" (*Chronica Fr.*

Jordani de Jano, n. 13). If we recognize our utter unworthiness of God's favor, we shall meekly accept the injustices others may do us or the trials and burdens we must bear as small price for possession of the promised land. As we know from Psalm 36, from which this beatitude is taken, God's grace will eventually triumph over sin and its effects—even in our own soul. In this present life, however, we shall always taste something of Paul's anguish: *Who will deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7:24).

As Leon Bloy said in the closing line of *The Woman Who Was Poor*, "There is only one great sorrow; not to be a saint." The poor in spirit are blessed with that sorrow. *Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted.* Blessed indeed! For, as the very word "comforted" (to be strengthened with) suggests, God Himself will be "with them" as their "strength" and "consolation."

This discontent with what we are, this disgust with our own lukewarmness, our half-hearted efforts towards improvement, this sense of sin which Paul describes so graphically in the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, should awaken in our soul a fierce *hunger and thirst after justice* or spiritual perfection, for only to those blessed with such a hunger has Christ promised satiety.

And finally, what is so very important, if life with our fellow-men is to be humanly possible, we shall be gentle and understanding of the faults and defects of others. *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.* For only then dare we pray sincerely: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others.*

Far from depressing the soul, then, knowledge of its spiritual poverty should goad it to greater efforts. For no matter what we may seem to have accomplished, like Francis at the close of his life, we shall be prompted to exclaim: "Let us begin to do good, for until now we have done nothing." Religious are sometimes depressed by the recurrence of the same faults week after week despite their best efforts, not realizing that this is God's way of teaching them humility and self-knowledge. It should stimulate them to make up to God for past infidelity by being generous in other ways.

As we have indicated elsewhere, for those who have learned the place of poverty of spirit in the grand plan of transforming

love, "the parable of the Prodigal will be more than a graphic bit of fiction to illustrate divine mercy. It will be the story of their own life. Paradoxically, it is the sense of sin, real or potential, rather than the consciousness of virtue that draws saintly souls to God. Like the misery of the Prodigal Son, their spiritual poverty will turn their thoughts towards their everlasting home. Like Paul, wearied with the struggle with self, they will long to be dissolved and to be with Christ. But the mere unburdening of one's misery before God in this fashion itself produces a wonderful peace. Like the wayward son, religious will find that their Father is not content to wait for them at the door of heaven. He comes down the road, as it were to meet them. In an embrace that is at once a confession of guilt and a kiss of love, they will find the strength and courage to walk arm in arm with God to the threshold of their Father's house" (*Book of Life*, p.70).

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M. ✓

CRY OF FAITH

"That cry of faith
forced the gates of Heaven"

St. Therese of Lisieux

Turn away and laugh
You who turn away and laugh;
I turn away and weep
Rather than behold you
On the day of wrath
Who turn away and laugh
At the cry of faith
That forced the gates of Heaven.
The cry of faith that forced the gates of Heaven!

—Robert Lax

MIRROR OF ST. FRANCIS

That St. Francis of Assisi was the mirror of Christ is his children's glory. That in St. Francis Solano there has been noted a happy reflection of our holy father should cause us to rub our eyes for a better look at this forgotten saint. For whether it was his apostolic zeal, his solicitude and compassion for those ignorant of the Gospel Truth, or his patience practised to perfection in his varied and protracted illnesses, we can't help but be alive to the truth that the Apostle of the Americas did follow with complete fidelity in the sandaled imprints of our beloved father.

As Franciscans our way of life demands that we meditate, and fruitfully so, on the spiritually fertile incidents in the comparatively short life of our holy father. At one time it may be the incomparable love that poured from a heart that never stopped loving once the Passion of Christ was seen in its proper light. Again it might be the joy and the holy expectancy that surrounded the recreated scene of the first Christmas eve. But undoubtedly the meditation on which we all linger, and not without profit, is that which encompasses the last days and the death scene itself of our holy father. In his last and finest hour his final exhortations, his last entreaties, his good-bye blessings either spiritually affect us here or subject us to the accusation of being immune to any influence of our beloved founder. So also to recall the life and especially the sequence of events that occurred during the waning moments in the life of our Spanish brother, and to remain unmoved, one must of necessity have lodged within a sighless breast a heart chiseled from stone. The saying, "as a man lives so he dies," finds justification in the life of St. Francis Solano. Because, like Francis of Assisi, he lived for God, he died in the Lord. Because, as in the case of the Poverello, he lived and died glorifying God, it would not be an ill waste of time and effort to tap this mine of spiritual wealth and so even in our poverty live sumptuously off such an exemplary income.

At the initial pole in the life of Francis of Solano we know that intercession was made to Francis of Assisi imploring him to help make this future Franciscan saint a healthy child. At the opposite pole we are presented with a vivid reflection of the Poverello. The imitation is complete and it remains but for death with its sudden and sobering finality to impose its stamp of approval and to introduce this accomplished saint as a full grown citizen of Heaven. Spanning these two

poles, which like a Franciscan mantle enveloped this gifted soul, is a dedicated life that was Franciscan through and through. From the moment he pronounced his vows he gave signs of becoming a second edition, a reprint, of the original Francis.

Like Francis of Assisi, the Apostle of the Americas was inflamed with the desire to air the Gospels in fields afar. The illiterate call of the heathen was for this Spanish friar the sweet whisperings of the Holy Spirit when transliterated into the language of love. It was so like Francis of old to assemble the Indians before a makeshift crib and there sing of the good God or play his violin by gently drawing his bow in order to draw yet more gently souls closer to Christ. If Francis of Assisi had the power of attraction that filled his Order to overflowing, Francis Solano being of the same mold, also experienced such returns that could only have been the fruit of personal sanctity. In preaching to the Indians on one Holy Thursday, and incidentally they were literally on the warpath, his sermon was so forceful that "not only did he bring about peace but also converted nine thousand to the faith of Christ." Such remarkable results could come only from one who, as the Bull of Canonization qualifies, "was aflame with a love of God and neighbor." Here was the genuine product trade-marked with a gentility and amiability that drew others within the range of his holy demeanor. "He easily obtained from others what the fear and threats of punishments could not accomplish."

St. Francis Solano must be regarded as one of those rare individuals who leaves his mark in time merely by trying to be one of a common group. When appointed to an office it was with somewhat of a distaste that he received the news. And this not because he shunned obligation nor duty but rather because of a muted preference to serve God as an ordinary tool. In this regard he again reminds us of our holy father who, though our beloved founder, desired to have superiors over him and to whom he would tender the most faithful obeisance even if he were a novice.

Upon being asked how she bided her time on Sundays, the Little Flower of Jesus replied, "I think about God, of the shortness of life and of eternity." On another occasion she bemoaned the current reality that "the world knows how to combine its pleasures with the service of God. How little it thinks of death." No doubt the Patron of a Happy Death was besieged with many petitions from his big little saint. If St. Joseph were to answer our prayers for the same request our last days must surely approximate those of St. Francis Solano. Per-

haps we would not conduct ourselves externally in the same fashion but nevertheless the spirit would be there.

Three days before his death, in the temper of the Poverello who insisted on being laid on the ground to die, Francis Solano, with eyes lifted toward Heaven, prayed, "Whence is this, my Lord Jesus, that you were crucified and I am consoled with the comfort of your servants, you were naked and I am covered, you were struck with stones and crowned with thorns and I am burdened with gifts and comforted with every benefit"? In this prayer the very roots of humility are exposed in the dying saint.

Two days before his death, suffering on a bed of pain which had already become a sacrificial altar, Francis could still speak to God with a humble heart flowing over with fraternal charity, "O God may You be glorified in my soul; of such is your worthiness about me that when I was deserving of being cast as unclean dung into a deserted wasteland and being left by all, I now see myself surrounded by these angels, the religious, and eased by their ministries. I rejoice, Lord, that you are God. O how sweet you are!" How Franciscan! Where can we find a greater cause of our joy than in the simple truth that God is!

Death slowly and hesitantly drew the curtain on this beautiful life. It was a life of penance, a life of joy, a life of fidelity, a Franciscan life. After apologizing to his "lazy body", after the manner of the Poverello, Francis Solano died, "with his hands composed in the form of a cross. . . reciting pious aspirations." As you live so shall you die.

Although Francis Solano has been called the Patron of Peru, the Apostle of the West Indies, the Miracle Worker of the New World, he himself would rather have been called simply a Franciscan who died as he lived. *Beati mortui, qui in Domino moriuntur!*

Fr. Regis F. Marshall, O.F.M. J.

OUR LADY OF THE ATONEMENT

Our Lady is the masterpiece of God's creative and omnipotent love. She is the fulfillment of the types and prophecies of the Old Testament and the embodiment and expression of the sacred teachings of the New Dispensation. Mary is the Lily of Israel, the Rose of Sharon, the Ark of the Covenant; she is the Morning Star, the Cause of Our Joy, and the Gate of Heaven as we salute her in the Litany of Loreto. The words of the Apostle find their application to the Queen of Heaven in this way: "All that rings true, all that commands reverence, and makes for right; all that is pure, all that is lovely, all that is gracious. . ."

Our Seraphic Father had a burning love for Our Lady. Indeed Celano tells us that it was so great that it could not be described. "At her feet he poured out a stream of fervent prayer and offered her transports of love so intense and so perfect that they went beyond all human language. His hours of sleep were few; for the most part he spent the night in prayer, praising God and His glorious Virgin Mother." Surely some of his noble spirit is expressed in the words of the Canticle: "Hail, Holy Lady, most holy Queen! Mary, Mother of God, yet a Virgin forever! Hail, thou His palace! Hail, thou His tabernacle! Hail, thou His home! Hail, thou His vesture! Hail, thou His Mother!"

It was surely no accident that the cradle of the Franciscan Order is the little chapel on the Umbrian plains, Our Lady of the Angels. Nor is it difficult to believe that Our Lady often appeared there to her servant and revealed the secrets of her Immaculate Heart. For Saint Francis loved Mary because she had made the Lord of glory our Brother.

In the course of the centuries this love for Mary burned in the hearts of the Poverello's sons. The very mention of her name recalls a whole treasury of Marian devotion: Saint Bonaventure, Saint Bernardine of Siena, Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, John Duns Scotus, Maximilian Kolbe. And these are only the most famous, for the love of Our Lady is identified with every follower of Saint Francis from the first days of Rivo Torto down to the present age.

One illustrious apostle of Our Lady in our own century is the

famous convert to the faith, Father Paul James Francis, S.A. He has been cited as a lover of the poor, as an apostle of Christian Unity, as a noted follower of Saint Francis, and the like. And so he was. But he was prominent for his love for Our Lady, and especially under the title that he himself originated: Our Lady of the Atonement.

This distinctive title had a most unusual origin insofar as it began outside the Catholic Church. It was started at Graymoor in 1901 (or 1900) when Father Paul and Mother Lurana Mary Francis, S.A. (foundress of the Atonement Sisters, also at Graymoor) were members of the Anglican communion. It is not difficult to believe that it was precisely their love for Our Lady that led them into the unity of the One Fold several years after they began their projects in Mary's honor.

In 1901 Father Paul and Mother Lurana composed an "Office of Our Lady of the Atonement" for use in their communities. It is not used in the present composition approved by the Church, but it indicates, even at that early date, their appreciation of Mary in the spiritual life of men. In October 1901 they inaugurated a little magazine, about the size of a ten-cent pamphlet, bearing the title, *Rose Leaves from Our Lady's Garden*. It was intended to be the publication for their organization, The Rosary League of Our Lady of the Atonement, which began at the same time.

In the initial issue of this little work, Father Paul wrote the first words about Our Lady of the Atonement. He had come to Graymoor to make the foundation of his Society in 1899 and Mother Lurana had come the previous December 15, 1898. This publication, *Rose Leaves*, was their first venture into the journalistic field and it is significant that it was devoted to Our Lady and to the promotion of devotion to the Rosary.

"The Blessed Virgin is known among Catholics by many names and is invoked under many different titles," Father Paul began. "Among these are the following: Our Lady of Loreto, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Grace, Our Lady of Victory, Our Lady of Good Counsel, Our Lady of Sorrows, and Our Lady of Mercy. In her wonderful condescension and love the Mother of God has been pleased to reveal herself to the Children of the Atonement under a new name, . . . thus giving remarkable evidence that the honor, love,

and prayers addressed to her as Our Lady of the Atonement she is graciously pleased to accept."

Father Paul spoke of both aspects contained in the concept of Our Lady of the Atonement: her role in the mystery of the Cross and her part in bringing men to and preserving them in the unity of the Church. "We have every reason to believe that the Blessed Virgin specially loves this title—that links her name with that of Jesus in the glorious work of the Atonement wrought upon the Cross. It must bring to her remembrance that blessed Atonement Day when she stood by the Cross of Jesus and heard Him say to her, *Woman, behold thy Son*, and to the disciple whom He loved, *Behold thy Mother*. Then too, Atonement speaks of reconciliation, pardon, peace, of the fulfillment of the prayer first breathed by her Divine Son, so often repeated by herself, that all Christian believers might be One.

"Can we invoke the Blessed Virgin with a title more apt to touch her maternal heart than the one which associates her with Calvary's sacrifice and proclaims her the compassionate Mother of us poor sinners, redeemed by the Precious Blood of Jesus? Hail Mary of the Atonement, my Lord's Mother and mine, pray for me and all who thus invoke thee now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

When Father Paul began *The Lamp* in February 1903, he often used articles dealing with Catholic devotion to the Mother of God, either those he had written or others reprinted from Catholic magazines. Thus his entrance into the Catholic Church on October 30, 1909 was an inevitable step, surely promoted by his love for Our Lady.

In the benign providence of God this Atonement title was permitted to be used in the Catholic Church and in 1919 it was recognized by authorities in Rome. Permission was also granted for a feast of Our Lady of the Atonement, then celebrated on the Saturday of Atonement Week (the week beginning with the seventh Sunday). In 1948 the present Mass and Office of Our Lady of the Atonement were approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites in Rome for use among the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement. The feast of Our Lady under this title has been permanently affixed to July 9.

As Our Lady of the Atonement Mary wears a mantle of red in honor of the Most Precious Blood of Which she is the Immaculate Source and by Which she was redeemed in a unique way. The mantle

is sometimes lined with white and the inner tunic is always blue. In the throne of her arms Our Lady holds the Christ Child, who holds a cross—the symbol of the Atonement—in His right hand. In some instances Our Lady wears a crown; at other times she has a diadem of twelve stars. At any rate it seems that the most essential details are the red mantle of Our Lady and the Cross in the Child's hand.

To someone who asked "Why the red mantle for Our Lady?" Father Paul explained: "The connection of the red mantle with the Atonement is very obvious. It was during the shedding of the Most Precious Blood of her Divine Son, the very Blood He had derived from her own Immaculate Heart, that the redemption of the world was wrought and an Atonement made for the sins of the world by the Lamb of God. Our Lady of the Atonement stood by the Cross when the Atoning Sacrifice was enacted and it is most fitting that she should wear a red mantle accepting our homage and devotion under the title of the Atonement."

Father Paul was indefatigable in his promotion of devotion to Our Lady of the Atonement. He always celebrated the feast with special joy and solemnity, usually with a Mass at an outdoor Shrine of Our Lady on the Sisters' grounds, and at which he usually gave a sermon. Fortunately there are about thirty of his written or spoken pieces on Our Lady of the Atonement which form the basis of this title and devotion.

Again and again Father Paul stressed the twofold aspect of her Atonement Motherhood: her participation in the sacrifice of the Cross by which she became the Co-Redemptrix of the world, and her influence in winning souls to the unity of the Church.

Father Paul paid particular attention to Mary's role in the mystery of the Atonement. "When she saw her Son rejected," he wrote, "cruelly scourged, mocked, and spit upon, and bearing His heavy cross to Calvary and saw Him nailed to the tree, while she herself stood in anguish, her heavy heart was beating in union with His as the crucified redeemer of the world."

But in the mystery of the World's salvation, Mary was no mere spectator. She did not stand by passively; nor did she grieve only for the suffering and death of her Divine Son. She exercised a unique role; she cooperated with Jesus in the salvation of the world, in a secondary and dependent way, but nonetheless effective towards the

salvation of men. Or as Arnold Bonneval has stated: "Jesus and Mary offered their sacrifice similarly to God; Jesus in the blood of His Body, Mary in the blood of her heart."

Father Paul appreciated this truth too. For "by her cooperation with the divine will and her participation in the chalice of Our Lord's suffering and His agony, she became our glorious Lady of the Atonement." For while Christ was the one mediator restoring all men to friendship with God, Mary acted in an auxiliary role (in a supporting cast, if we might use the term) in the drama of the world's redemption. She "was the mediatrix of the human family when she stood at the Cross as Our Lord was lifted up that He might draw all men to Himself." Elsewhere Father Paul declared that "the slain victim taken down from the Cross is laid in the arms of His Mother all covered with His own Blood, and that Blood stains the garments of the Blessed Virgin. How impossible to dissociate either Our Lord or Our Lady from the Precious Blood."

Mary's first function as spiritual mother of men was to win for them with Christ the grace of regeneration. The climax of the Saviour's work was His Atonement—and through it to bring men to at-one-ment with God. According to God's Will only the suffering and death of Christ could reconcile sinful man to a just and merciful God. And so the climax of Our Lady's life took place on Calvary when she became fully the Mother of the redeemed and shared in the work of reconciling man with God.

By an eternal decree a woman was to share in this plan of salvation and sanctification: the Mother of the Son of God. If sharing, then too she must suffer and die. Thus Mary suffered and almost died as she stood at the Cross of her Son. It is her flesh and blood that is bruised, beaten, scourged, and crucified. Mary suffers not just as a heroic Mother, but as the Mother of God. It is true that Our Lady longed to suffer that the world might be saved, but this does not lessen the intense anguish of her Immaculate Heart.

Mary is the *socia Christi*, the companion, the helpmate of Christ. Her office, in a secondary and auxiliary way, was to suffer for the sins of the world and win the kingdom of heaven for men. Saint Bonaventure wrote eloquently of Mary's suffering at Calvary, of her co-atoning with Christ for the salvation of the world. "There is no pain like her pain except that of her Son, which her pain closely re-

sembles in kind. For she was martyred by a marvelous and incredible co-suffering, a suffering which our speech cannot put into words. For she deflected upon herself all those pains, insults, and wounds, experiencing them in her own person, feeling what Christ felt. In her spirit she stood there, a martyr with Him the martyr, wounded with Him Who was wounded, crucified with Him who was crucified, pierced with the sword as He was pierced." Elsewhere he cited the parallel of Mary and Eve and said that just as Adam and Eve were the "destroyers of the human race," so Jesus and Mary "were its restorers."

Father Paul would assuredly concur with the present-day teaching of Our Lady as Co-Redemptrix of the human race. But he pushed the concept further to the role of Mary as Mother of Unity, who longs for the salvation of all men and who prays and intercedes for their salvation unto the end of the world. For just as the mystery of the Atonement continues to be effective in the lives of men, so Mary's function to assist in the salvation of men is operative until the end of the world.

Father Paul said that Our Lady of the Atonement means Our Lady of the At-one-ment, or Our Lady of Unity. When addressing Mary as Our Lady of the Atonement he said that we should "think of her as "Our Lady of Unity," and "consecrate ourselves afresh at her altar to contribute what lies within our power of prayer, sacrifice, and charitable endeavor to bring our separated brethren into the unity of the One Fold under the One Shepherd."

As founder of the Chair of Unity Octave (January 18-25) he stressed Mary's power in winning back to the fold those separated by schism and heresy. "Through her all-prevailing intercession," he declared, "the Holy Spirit will bring about such a world-wide movement of dissident Christians to the center of Catholic Unity that the return of the wandering sheep to communion with the Apostolic See will far transcend in magnitude and importance the lapse of the Greeks from Unity in the ninth century and the Protestant defection in the sixteenth century combined. We dare to make this prophecy not because we have the vision of the Seer but because we believe that God the Father Almighty will answer the prayer of His Son, Jesus Christ, and that Our Lady of the Atone-

ment will have a leading part to play in this glorious accomplishment."

Again and again in his writings and sermons he appealed to the faithful to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin for the cause of Unity. After explaining the use of the word *Adunatio* (literally "at-one-ment" as the Latin form of the title, Our Lady of the Atonement, which is *Domina nostra Adunationis*) he went on to conclude his sermon in this fashion: "Let us look up to her all radiant on her throne, our beautiful Mother of the Atonement, apparelled in the crimson robe of the Precious Blood, interceding at this moment for the great At-one-ment; and may we never cease to unite our prayers with hers that the scales may fall away from the eyes of our separated brethren and that they may understand that the Great Shepherd whom Our Lord appointed as His Vice-regent on earth is *their* Father and *their* Shepherd."

Such is a brief exposition of Father Paul's teaching on Our Lady of the Atonement. It might be called a single concept of salvation through Mary—with a dual aspect: her part in Calvary's sacrifice and her part in the extension of Calvary through the centuries and through the world by which men are brought to that unity of faith, worship, and government in the One Church of her Son. The idea is surely not new, for the fathers of the Church spoke of both aspects of Mary's love and intercession. Saint Augustine referred to Our Lady as *Mater unitatis*, Mother of Unity, and said that all men are reborn in the Church because of Our Lady's love. Saint Cyril of Alexandria closed his sermon at the Council of Ephesus with the famous words: "Hail Mary, Mother of God. . .by whom every creature is brought to the knowledge of the truth; by whom holy baptism and the oil of gladness reach the faithful, by whom churches are established all over the world, by whom nations are brought to repentance—what more shall I say—by whom the only begotten Son of God enlightened those who were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. . ."

The Mass and Office for the feast of Our Lady of the Atonement, approved in 1948 for use by the Friars and Sisters of the Atonement, combines the dual note of Calvary and unity. Thus the lessons for the second nocturn are taken from the famous words of Saint Bernard about Mary's spiritual martyrdom (same as Our Lady

of Sorrows, September 15), while those of the third nocturn are from Saint Augustine's commentary on the seventeenth chapter of Saint John containing Our Lord's prayer for unity, while the lesson of the Mass is taken from the book of Judith. These words were first uttered by the grateful inhabitants of Bethulia after Judith had slain their enemy, Holofernes. But this valiant woman was only the type of another daughter of Israel whom God used for the salvation and sanctification of the entire human race and to whom they pray in their needs. The Gospel for the feast day corresponds with that portion used for the third nocturn from the seventeenth chapter of the Beloved Disciple.

In addition to the liturgical texts of the feast, other prayers are approved for the members of the Society of the Atonement. There is the Threefold Salutation, written about fifty-five years ago by the Graymoor founders and redolent with the spirit of Franciscan simplicity; the Act of Consecration to Our Lady of the Atonement composed in 1948; the litany of Our Lady of the Atonement, approved in 1925; and a little prayer used by members of the Unity League established at Graymoor: "Our Lady of the Atonement, intercede for us, that the prayer of your Divine Son may be fulfilled: *That all may be one.*" These prayers have indulgences granted by the Holy See to members of the Society of the Atonement and their associates.

At the present time there are sixteen chapels, churches or religious institutions that bear the name of Our Lady of the Atonement, the most impressive being in Baguio, Philippine Islands, built by funds which Father Paul collected in 1920. But the statue or painting of our Atonement Mother can be found in other parts of the world too—Baghdad, Japan, Canada, Rome, Assisi, as well as in the United States. Devotion to Mary under this lovely title is spreading slowly and gradually, but consistently from year to year. A special novena is held annually from June 30 to July 9 by the Atonement Friars and Sisters and monthly novenas are held, beginning on the first Saturday of each month.

And so it is that one of the youngest members of the Franciscan family has its special feast for the all-holy Mother of God. How remarkable are the ways of God's providence that this feast and devotion began less than sixty years ago, even outside the Catholic

Church. But through His love and His guidance of a few chosen souls, this is now a recognized feast of Our Lady, emphasizing two points of doctrine so much in prominence at the present day, Mary as Co-Redemptrix and Mary's function in the Church. May this name and devotion contribute, even in a small way, to the deeper understanding of Mary's prerogatives and to a greater exaltation of her glorious privileges so that in loving Mary, men may realize the truth of the statement from Saint Pius X: "There is no surer or easier way of uniting men with Christ than Mary."

Fr. Titus Cranney, S.A.

RETURN OF LOVE

God streams His love unto us,
Pierces through us,

And we give back a little.

The rest is hid in jugs
And gives a glow.

The rest is hid in
Shadow of the tomb,
Lies hid behind
The shadow of a rock.

Roll back the rock,
Which is Christ's sepulchre,
And let our Lord
Return unto His Lord.

Roll back the rock,
Unwind the cerements,
And let the Light
Go back into the Light!

—Robert Lax

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY (IV)

Spiritual Joy

Charity, when adorned with the characteristics we have previously mentioned, of its very nature drives away sadness, enlarges the heart, and begets joy and happiness. This joy, however, is not the ludicrous effervescence that proceeds from vanity, nor is it the empty hilarity that characterizes an idle and uncultivated mind. On the contrary, it is a spiritual joy that proceeds from true fervor and manifests itself in the constant disposition to carry out with alacrity whatever good presents itself to be done.

The cause of this spiritual joy is divine love. Francis and his first followers were full of joy because they were delighted by the infinite perfection of God and by His supreme goodness. They rejoiced because they had become sons of God and brothers of Jesus Christ through the divine mercy. They took delight in the many benefits they received from God and felt happily secure in the paternal care that divine Providence bestowed upon them. They exulted with unrestrained pleasure whenever they found their Beloved in His visible creation, and their delight overflowed into sensible affections. There is no doubt that their intense joy arose from God and was ordained toward God, and had nothing in it either of worldly frivolity or pious sentimentality.

Our Seraphic Father was extremely solicitous that spiritual joy should be preserved and fostered in himself and others. "And in this Francis had the highest and most remarkable zeal, although from the beginning of his conversion to the day of his death he afflicted his body; but he did this only because he was continually desirous to possess and keep both exteriorly and interiorly spiritual joy in himself."¹

Saint Francis vehemently fought against sadness among his followers, but he used to recommend to them spiritual joy and insisted upon it in the strongest terms. "Francis once saw a certain fellow-friar whose face was long and sad. He went up to the friar and in no gentle tone said to him: 'It is not becoming that a servant of God should show himself to men as sad and troubled; rather he should be always cheerful.' . . . Francis had such a great love for the man who was full of spiritual joy that as a general admonition he wrote in his first Rule: 'Let the brethren take heed not to appear sad exteriorly and be gloomy

¹*Legenda Antiqua S. Francisci*, ed. F. M. Delorme, O.F.M. (Paris: 1926), n. 97.

hypocrites, but rather let them show themselves as rejoicing in the Lord, merry and gay, and becomingly pleasant.'"² Francis also said that "when spiritual joy completely fills the heart, the serpent pours out his deadly poison in vain. The demons are unable to do anything against a servant of Christ when they see that he is filled with holy joyfulness. But when the soul is sorrowful, desolate, and full of grief, it may easily fall prey to melancholy or pass over into vain joys. . . . When for some reason or other a servant of God is disturbed—as can easily happen—he must arise immediately and betake himself to prayer, and remain in the presence of his Almighty Father until He returns to him the joy of his salvation. For if he should linger in his sadness, that mournful captivity will reach the point where unless it is cleansed by tears, it will bring about permanent rust in the heart."³

Our Seraphic Father, however, was not only concerned that his friars be joyful themselves, but he also insisted that by their example and preaching they diffuse the treasure of their spiritual joy throughout the world. Completely filled with this Seraphic spirit of joy, Saint Bonaventure admonished the friars that they strive with the utmost zeal to rid themselves "of all coldness of dejection and sadness, in which lies hidden the way of confusion that leads to death."⁴ He recommended, on the contrary, spiritual joyfulness "which makes the mind prompt to tend toward the things that are above."⁵

Other spiritual writers of the Order have also held that sadness does tremendous harm to the spiritual life, and that spiritual happiness is the best and the primary means to overcome temptations, to conquer the various difficulties that arise in the spiritual life, to embrace the annoyances and sorrows of life with a generous mind, to serve God with fervor and alacrity, and to love Him to a greater degree.

From this it is quite evident that a certain sense of optimism, joy, and spiritual light-heartedness pervades the whole of Franciscan spirituality, and has established the moral tone and the general outlook of the Order. The true Franciscan, by vocation, is a preacher of joy to the world.

Charity as the Basic Disposition for Infused Contemplation

According to the teaching of Saint Bonaventure, Duns Scotus, and the Franciscan masters generally, the entire spiritual life up to the

²Celano II, n. 128; *Regula I*, c. 7, 34.

³Celano II, n. 125.

⁴S. Bonaventura, *Epist. de 25 memorialibus*, n. 15, VIII, 495a.

⁵S. Bonaventura, *De triplici via*, c. 1, n. 9, VIII, 6a.

full outpouring of the mystical life depends on the progressive increase of infused charity.

In recent years there has been some discussion as to whether or not the mystical life in the strict sense—which consists essentially in infused contemplation—is necessary for perfection. It is not our intention to go into the matter here; but we may remark in passing that there are obviously certain dispositions required for mystical contemplation, for God usually gives such extraordinary grace only to those who are of the best dispositions.

The mystics of the Seraphic Order place the main emphasis on charity as the proper preparation for infused contemplation. Thus Saint Anthony writes: "The just and holy man is raised from the earth by the rope of divine love and hangs in mid-air by the sweetness of contemplation."⁶ David of Augsburg tells us that "this union of the spirit with God [*excessus mentis*] is not accomplished except in the greatest fervor of love and in charity unfeigned (II Cor. 6:6) and in the purest affection of the heart, in which the whole soul, as it were, begins to melt and its customary hardness is softened and warmed by the fire of the Holy Spirit."⁷ According to Saint Bonaventure, "there is no path" to the heights of ecstasy "except through the most burning love for the Crucified."⁸

The entire work of perfection is thus seen as reduced to the practice of charity. Moreover, for the Franciscan school, mystical contemplation resides more in the act of charity as elicited by the will than in the act of the intellect. The Seraphic Doctor in many of his writings confirms this in regard to ecstasy or perfect contemplation. Scotus also teaches that contemplation consists especially in an act of love and of will. Passive contemplation arises immediately from the gift of wisdom, for this gift is mainly affective, perfecting the virtue of charity and the will; and according to the Subtle Doctor, this gift of wisdom and the theological virtue are one and the same.

Since Franciscan writers teach that infused contemplation consists more in an act of love than in an act of cognition, they directly oppose Saint Thomas and the followers of his school who teach that infused contemplation is formally effected by an act of the intellect.

⁶*Sermones Dominicales et in Solemnitatibus*, l.c. cit., 551.

⁷*Septem gradus orationis*, ed. J. Heerincks, in *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, XIV, 1933, 166.

⁸*Itinerarium mentis in Deum*, prol., n. 3, V, 295b.

III. THE ACT OF CHARITY

Because the scope of our treatise is limited, we shall reduce our discussion of the act of charity to three sections. First we shall speak of the manner in which God and our neighbor should be loved, then of the power of charity as regards supernatural merit, and finally of the act of charity in so far as it makes up the beatitude of heaven.

The Manner of Loving

According to the express command of Christ, which is recorded many times in Holy Scripture, we must love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole strength, and our whole mind. This much is clear; but just how is this command of Christ to be carried out in practice?

Evidently it is not necessary to love God in so far as He is worthy of love and must be loved in Himself. For God, "since He is infinite Good, must be loved in an infinite manner. But God alone loves Himself in this manner,"⁹ for He alone is capable of so doing.

According to the opinion of Saint Bonaventure, the totality of the heart, soul, and mind, of which Christ speaks in His commandment, can be understood in two ways. The love of God possesses "the entire heart: that is, it excludes all extraneous affections and thus completely and perfectly rules the heart. This occurs when all the movements of the heart are referred to God through love; and this totality means complete dominion. In another way the love of God is said to possess the heart when it excludes all contrary affections, that is, when nothing is loved above God, or loved as much as God. Thus he loves God with his whole heart who loves Him because of Himself and above all else."¹⁰ Totality in the first sense "does not oblige to the point of complete fullness; in fact, it cannot be possessed before attaining to the state of glory, where we shall look upon God face to face and be continually carried up into Him." Nevertheless, "this commandment does express, as we must know, in what direction we are to tend through love, and no one may think himself perfect until he has attained to that perfection [of glory]." Totality in the second sense can be possessed in this life through the infusion of grace, and "we are bound to attain to this form of complete fullness."¹¹

⁹S. Bonaventura, *I. Sent.*, d. 17, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1, ad 9, I, 295b.

¹⁰S. Bonaventura, *III Sent.*, d. 27, a.2, q.6, III, 614b.

¹¹*Loc. cit.*

According to the opinion of Saint Bonaventure, we are not required to love God above all things in an intensive manner, that is, with a more vehement and ardent affection than we love ourselves. But we must love God above all things in an appreciative manner, that is, we must prefer God and place Him before ourselves and before every created good, even if this good were to be multiplied to infinity. We are bound, however to love God in an intensive manner more than we love our neighbor. "The movement of love toward God is more intense than the movement of love toward our neighbor."¹²

Scotus and his school teach that God can be loved above all things in two ways: extensively and intensively. "Extensively, that is, that a man loves God more than anything else, that he would wish everything else not to be than that God should not be; and intensively, that because of greater affection, he wishes well to God more than to anyone else."¹³ All men are bound to this extensive love; for "nothing other than God, nor all things taken as a whole, can be considered as equal to or like unto God."¹⁴

This intensive love for God above all else is divided by many authors into fervent or tender love and strong or firm love. For example: "a mother is said to love her son with a more tender and ardent love; while a father loves more strongly and steadfastly, for he would expose himself to greater danger for his son."¹⁵ The Subtle Doctor disagrees with this distinction. "Only that is loved the more," he says, "which is loved more steadfastly; for I love that the more to which I wish less evil to happen and for whose saving good I expose myself the more out of love; because to expose oneself is a consequence of love; and here it is a question of that love which is an act of the will, and not of that love which is a passion of the sense appetite. Therefore, though some are said to love more ardently and tenderly who nevertheless do not love more steadfastly, this does not mean that their love proceeds from an overflowing of intellective love; perhaps it may flow from some passion of sense love."¹⁶ Yet, we must love God above all things, not only extensively but also intensively—that is, strongly and steadfastly—so that we would rather wish evil to ourselves, because of some act, rather than to God.

The precept of charity, thus understood extensively and intensively,

¹²S. Bonaventura, *III Sent.*, d. 27, a.2, q.3, f.3, III, 608a.

¹³Scotus, *Oxon.*, III, d. 27, q. un., n. 16, XV, 371a.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

can be fulfilled in this life, but not to the extent of fulfilling all the conditions which are set forth through those additions: "with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, etc;" because in his life there cannot be such a concentration of one's powers that, with all impediments removed, the will can bring about everything it attempts, just as it would be able to do if its powers were united and not impeded."¹⁷

Although Franciscan writers teach that not all love of God is strictly obligatory, nevertheless they do point out that to love God with one's whole heart, soul, and strength is the ideal and the end toward which we must tend with all our striving. For this reason, they strongly urge us to love God as much as possible, without measure, limit, or restriction.

Our Seraphic Father, in speaking of love for God, quoted Our Lord's command, and explaining it briefly, he exhorted his brethren in glowing terms: "Let us all love God the Lord with all our endeavor, with all our affection, with all our yearning, with all we desire and will."¹⁸ "Let us therefore desire nothing, else, wish for nothing else, take pleasure and delight in nothing else but our Creator, Redeemer, and Saviour, the only true God, Who is the perfect good, everything good, wholly good, the true and sovereign good, He Who *alone* is good (Lk. 18:19). . . "Then, let nothing hinder us, nothing keep us apart, nothing stand in our way"¹⁹ in the matter of loving God.

In like manner, Saint Bonaventure, when explaining the perfection of life to religious women, praised the evangelical precept of charity in the highest terms: "Consider attentively, beloved handmaid of Jesus Christ, what love your beloved Jesus requires of you. Your Beloved certainly wishes that you give your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole mind for His love, and in such a manner that in your whole soul, and in your whole mind, no one else possesses any part with Him. . . To *love God with your whole heart* means that your heart is not inclined to love anything more than God, that you do not delight more in the things of the world than in God—not in honors, not in your parents. If, however, the love of your heart is occupied in some of these things, then you do not love God with all your heart. . . To *love God with your whole soul* is to love Him with your entire will without any contrary affection. Certainly you love with your whole soul when without any contradiction you gladly do not what you will, nor what the world counsels, nor what the flesh suggests, but what you know the Lord God

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Regula I*, c. 23, 60.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

wills. Certainly you love God with all your soul when, if it should be necessary, you willingly expose yourself to death for the love of Jesus Christ. If, however, you are negligent in any of these points, then you do not love with your whole soul. . . To *love God with your whole mind* is to love Him with all your memory without forgetting Him."²⁰

Saint Francis established his Order as a fraternity. His religious brethren were not called monks, as in the older Orders, but friars; and the name friar was common to all, superiors and subjects, priests, clerics, and laics. But not only was the Order conceived as a fraternity; it was also and especially a family whose members were to love one another with a familiar, fraternal, and even maternal love—but especially with a spiritual love more tender and strong than the most ardent natural affection. Francis did not want even a mother's love for her only child to surpass the spiritual love he desired to see among his friars. "Wherever the brethren are and may find themselves," he wrote, "let them conduct themselves toward each other as members of the same family. And let the one confidently make known his needs to the other, for if a mother nourishes and loves the child of her flesh, how much more attentively ought one to love and nourish his brother according to the spirit."²¹

We know how faithfully the first followers of our Seraphic Father observed this precept. As Thomas of Celano writes: "It can be truly said it was upon the foundation of constant charity that the noble structure [of the Order] arose, in which living stones, gathered from all parts of the world, were built into a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit. Oh, with what a tremendous ardor of charity those new disciples burned! How greatly love flourished in their devout society! For whenever they came together in any place, or met one another on a journey, which was quite ordinary, there sprang up a spiritual love scattering over all love the seeds of true affection. What more can I say? Their embraces were chaste, their feelings gentle, their kisses holy, their conversation sweet, their laughter modest, their look cheerful, their eye single, their spirit submissive, their tongue peaceful, their answer soft, their purpose identical, their obedience prompt, their hands untiring. . . They came together with longing, they dwelt together with delight, but the parting of companions was grievous for both, a bitter divorce, a cruel separation."²² With due allowance for the rhetorical exuberance of medieval writers, Celano's description of the primitive charity in our

²⁰*De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, c. 7, n. 2-4, VIII, 124b-125b.

²¹*Regula II*, c. 6, 69.

²²*Celano I*, n. 38s.

Order is quite close to the truth as we know it from other sources.

In recommending love of neighbor to his friars, which was no less incumbent upon them than fraternal love, Saint Francis was not content with the kind of charity that merely fulfills the commandment. Rather, he demanded an almost heroic charity, the kind that is ready to undergo every kind of labor and pain for others and is eager to expend itself in any and every work of beneficence. Francis regarded all men as his brothers and sisters, as children of his heavenly Father, making up the immense human family. Because of his intense love of God Francis loved all creatures intensely. Consequently he insisted that his friars love all men not as objects upon which to practice charity, but truly and affectionately and spontaneously as brothers and sisters, as children, like themselves, of our loving Father in heaven. Thus fraternal charity establishes the norms of conduct for Franciscans.

Charity, the Root of Merit

According to the common teaching of theologians, to gain merit in its strict sense of *de condigno*, it is necessary that the good action be done morally, not only with the help of actual grace but also in the state of grace or charity. The Seraphic Doctor writes thus: "Merit is inherent in every virtue in accordance with its proper ordination or disposition toward its end. But charity is a virtue which immediately ordains toward an end and is the means by which the other virtues must be ordained."²³ And in another place he writes: "All the virtues can be defined by charity, for love or charity gives them their power for obtaining merit. If charity be taken away, we cannot say, properly speaking, that there is virtue in the soul."²⁴

However, Duns Scotus teaches with good reason that gratuitous love of friendship, by which God is loved because He is infinitely perfect in Himself and not because of the benefit that the one loving Him will receive, is necessary *de condigno*. "The root of all merit, taking merit in the proper sense, consists in the affection of justice (*affectio justiae*) of the will, not in the affection of advantage (*affectio commodi*), or in the affection of justice that it may ordain or dispose the affection of advantage."²⁵

There is some question among theologians, however, as to whether or not for merit *de condigno* it suffices that the action be done in the

²³III Sent., d. 27, a.2, q. 1, f. 4, III, 602b.

²⁴Ibid., a. 1, q. 1, ad 2, III, 592b.

²⁵Oxon. III, d. 18, q. un., n. 5, XIV, 664a.

state of grace, that is, in charity, with the help of actual grace. According to the Franciscan school it is not sufficient, for besides this it is necessary that the morally good action be positively referred to God with some intention. But what kind of intention is required?

Certainly it is not necessary that a specific intention of directing all works to God be made for each individual act, for in this life it would be practically impossible. Does it suffice, then, to make an habitual good intention? This means an intention which has been made in the past and has not been retracted, but which effectually or virtually is no longer continued and hence does not influence the act when it is performed here in the present time. Many theologians think that this type of intention is sufficient, provided that the intention of charity be renewed as often as the command of charity compels. This seems to have been the opinion of Saint Thomas. But the Franciscan theologians do not think that such an habitual intention suffices.

According to Saint Bonaventure: "For an action to be meritorious it is not necessary that the person always refer it specifically to God. An habitual reference will do. But I call it an habitual reference or direction to God not because it possesses charity, through which it is habitually referred, but because at the beginning of some act or other which is followed by many others of the same kind, it has the intention of being directed to God."²⁶ The Seraphic Doctor admits that for religious this is sufficient. "For at the outset of the religious life they vowed out of love or charity to take up the burden of religion. And whatever they do after this vow, provided it is in accordance with the observance of their religious life, is meritorious for salvation because of their first intention, unless perhaps it should be removed because of the overshadowing of some contrary intention."²⁷ From this it is evident that for merit *de condigno* an intention which he calls habitual is necessary. But in some respects this intention approaches the kind which is now called virtual.

Duns Scotus, however, teaches that an habitual intention, taken in the modern sense, is not sufficient for merit, but that a virtual intention is probably sufficient. He has his to say: "It is certain that the first act (actually referred or directed to God) is meritorious, and it is probable that the second (virtually referred to God) is sufficient."²⁸ Commentators tell us with some assurance that this is the opinion of the Subtle Doctor, as they deduce it from other passages in his writings. There are

²⁶II Sent., d. 41, a. 1, q. 3, ad 6, III, 946a.

²⁷Ibid., 946b.

²⁸Oxon. II, d. 41, q. un., n. 3, XIII, 435b.

many friars who have followed this teaching of Scotus, holding that for merit *de condigno* an actual or virtual intention of directing a morally good action to God as its final end is required.

However, spiritual writers of the Order generally rise above mere controversy over the conditions for merit and advise that good works be directed to God as often as possible with an actual intention. For this intention, as a general rule, is more powerful and efficacious than the other, and increases the merit of the action.

But not all good actual intentions are of the same value and dignity. Virtue is greater and more merit is gained in accordance with the motive out of which it is done—all things being equal. But the most perfect of the virtues and the queen of them all is charity, "for it alone leads man to perfection."²⁹ Hence the greatest care must be taken that all our acts, even the smallest, be motivated by charity. And since acts are more perfect according to the degree of love or fervor with which they are performed, we should strive to do everything with as intense a fervor of love as possible. In conclusion, the Seraphic Doctor admonishes us that a consuming fire of love for God ought always to burn on the altar of our heart, and should be continually nourished and fanned.³⁰

²⁹S. Bonaventura, *De perfectione vitae ad sorores*, c. 7, n. 1, VIII, 124a.

³⁰S. Bonaventure, *De sex alis Seraphim*, c. 7, n. 7, VIII, 149a.

(To be continued)

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART

God is love, St. John tells us (I Jn. 4:16), the love that created us, the love that redeemed us, the love that sanctifies us by transforming us into the likeness of Christ. *For those whom he has fore-known he has also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren* (Rom. 8: 29). The conditions for this transformation, for active citizenship in the kingdom of God, Christ laid down in the beatitudes. The first five emphasize one central theme, spiritual poverty as contrasted with the self-sufficiency of the spiritually rich Pharisee. "Poor in spirit here means the humble." Augustine assures us, "those who lack the spirit that puffs one up" (*De sermone Domini in monte*, I, c. 1). Poverty of spirit, then, is nothing other than that genuine humility that invites God to exalt us (Mt. 23, 12). It manifests itself through meekness, that prompts us to bear sufferings patiently that we may possess the promised land. It engenders in us that one great sorrow described by Leon Bloy, that of not being a saint. But it is a blessed form of mourning for it moves God to come Himself to comfort and console us. This longing to be delivered from our own weakness and sinful tendencies becomes a fierce hunger and thirst that wrings from God that promise, *they shall be satisfied* (Mt. 5, 6). And finally it makes one merciful to others for only such *shall obtain mercy* (Mt. 5, 7).

PURITY OF HEART

I

It remains to consider the conditions contained in the remaining beatitudes, beginning with sixth, the beatitude of the interior life. *Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God* (Mt. 5, 8). The purity of heart referred to here implies far more than what is entailed by the virtue of chastity. To grasp its full meaning, we should highlight it against the backdrop of the legal purity prescribed by the Pharisees. As St. Mark explains: *The Pharisees, . . . do not eat without frequent washing of hands, holding the tradition of the ancients. And when they come from the market, they do not eat without washing first. And there have been handed down to them many other*

things to observe: *washing of cups and pots, and brazen vessels and beds* (Mk. 7: 3-4). This sect scorned the common people literally as "the great unwashed." They criticized Christ for permitting His apostles to eat with unwashed hands: "*Why do not thy disciples walk according to the tradition of the ancients,*" they asked, "*instead of eating bread with defiled hands?*" It was not that the followers of Christ came to the table with grimy nails or fingers that smelled of fish, but merely that they failed to observe these countless ritual washings counseled by the Rabbis. They laid down twenty-six rules, for example, just for washing one's hands in the morning.

These "kosher" regulations were based partly on the law of Moses, partly on what Mark calls the "tradition of the ancients," the Rabbinical interpretation of the mosaic law. In God's original providential plan, these rules served to keep the Jews conscious of their destiny as a race, when they lost their political independence during the Babylonian exile. Oriental culture is replete with symbolism and these legal purifications or ceremonial washings were to make God's people realize they were a chosen group, set apart from their idolatrous neighbors to keep alive the belief in the one true God and in the Messiah whom He would give to the world through them. When they returned from the market places where they brushed shoulders with the pagans, the Jews were to purify themselves, washing not merely their hands but their minds as well, cleansing them of all worldiness and pagan ideas. But in Christ's day, this original purpose had become obscure, the real meaning of these regulations all but forgotten. Like Sinclair Lewis' caricature Elmer Gantry, the Pharisee had mistaken the symbol for the reality. In many instances, at least, he was clean only before the law. He sinned freely in his heart, in his desires, in his pride. To hide this hypocrisy from himself, he seized upon this ritualism with a kind of fanatical eagerness. And like so many who are dishonest with themselves, these Pharisees condemned others who lacked their cleverness to creep through the loopholes their casuists contrived. No wonder Christ likened them to the whitewashed sepulchres dotting the green of the Cedron valley, beautiful to the eye, but within full of decaying flesh and rotting bones (Mt. 23, 27).

Christ abolished once and for all this legal cleanliness, putting in its place a purity that proceeds from the heart. *This people*

honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me (Mk. 7:6). It is not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him, but what springs from his heart, *for from within, out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, adulteries, immorality, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, shamelessness, jealousy, blasphemy, pride, foolishness* (Mk. 7: 21). Thus did Christ do away with the distinction between clean and unclean foods, a change so radical that even the apostles did not grasp its full import. Troubled, they came to him for an explanation (Mt. 15: 15). Peter even required a further revelation after Pentecost to assure him he had not misunderstood (Acts 10:9-15). Exterior works mean nothing, Christ makes clear, so long as the interior disposition is absent. There is a twofold adultery, the one that the Mosaic law punished by stoning, the other which is committed in the secrecy of the heart (Mt. 5:28). When Christians give alms they should not let their left hand know what their right hand is doing. They should not send someone with a trumpet before them like the Pharisees under pretence of calling the beggars together but in reality *that they may be honored by men* (Mt. 6:2). The Pharisees, Christ tells us, *love to pray standing in the synagogues and at the street corners in order that they may be seen by men* (ibid. 5). His disciples on the contrary are to *pray to the Father in secret*. It is not that Christ condemns public prayer, but what He decries is pharisaical hypocrisy. The same is true of His exhortation not to make long prayers, but to pray: *Our Father who art in heaven* (ibid. 9). He refers to the custom of the Pharisees, who under pretence of consoling a widow in her grief, spend long hours at her home living off her meager table (Mk. 12:40). *And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, who disfigure their faces in order to appear to men as fasting . . . But thou, when thou dost fast, anoint thy head and wash thy face, so that thou mayest not be seen by men to fast* (Mt. 6, 16-17). Christ is not condemning good example or any kind of external manifestation of piety or public worship, for He told His apostles shortly before not to hide their light under a bushel, but *let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory of your Father in heaven* (Mt. 5:16). No, these admonitions are aimed at a specific form of spirituality, the legal pseudo-piety of the Pharisee. What Christ wants in its place is a religion that stems from the

heart. This beatitude then might well be styled the beatitude of the interior life.

The interior life of a soul is nothing more than the story of its secret or hidden love life with God. It is made up of countless hidden acts of mortification, penance and prayer. It has a twofold phase; one negative, the other positive; one a gradual detachment from the love of creatures, the other a growing attachment and absorption in God. In the present conference, we shall consider only the first phase, that of withdrawal from the things of the world, reserving for the subsequent conference the positive aspects of the interior life.

II

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

The very name interior life implies a withdrawal from the world, a retirement into the inner recesses of the heart. Without such a separation no true love life with God is possible. In the same epistle that he tells us that *God is love* St. John warns us: *Do not love the world, or the things that are in the world. If any one love the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.* And he adds: *The world with its lust is passing away, but he who does the will of God abides forever* (I Jn. 2: 15-17). John learned this lesson during that intimate talk Christ had with His disciples during the last Supper. Over and over again, Jesus reminded them *I have chosen you out of the world* (Jn. 15:20). And in His prayer to His heavenly Father, He associates them with Himself: *They are not of this world, even as I am not of the world* (Jn. 17:16). And of His very prayer He says: *I pray for them; not for the world do I pray, but for those whom thou hast given me. . . out of the world* (ibid. 9,6).

Christ does not say they are not to be *in the world* but that they are not *of the world*. *I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keepest them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth. Thy word is truth. Even as thou hast sent me into the world, so I also have sent them into the world* (Jn 17: 15-18). From this we must conclude that Christ has chosen His own out of the world.

If they still move in this milieu like the Jews among their Babylonian captors, they are nevertheless a race apart. To the extent they become of one mind and heart with the world, they cease to be the subject of Christ's special prayer: *"Not for the world do I pray, but for those whom thou hast given me."*

What is important, as John makes clear, is whether or not we *love the world and the things that are in the world*. Those who are *in* the world only become *of the world* when they fall in love with it and what it stands for. Here is our practical test. What do we live for? To what have we given our heart? Has our work "extinguished the spirit of prayer and devotion to which all temporal things should be subservient?" (*Reg. O.F.M.*, c.5). Do we find it difficult to tear ourselves away from other tasks to spend a moment with Christ? Have we lost a taste for spiritual things? Do we have an inordinate interest in worldly matters? Do we crave the same pleasures, forms of recreation, as seculars? Is our reading, our conversation exclusively or predominantly of such matters? If so, we may well fear we have fallen in love with the world, perhaps without realizing it.

Worldliness is the great enemy of the interior life. It infects not only the individual patently immersed in the life lived by seculars. In infinitely more subtle fashion it can alienate one's affections from Christ under the guise of an imprudent zeal for work and exaggerated devotion to one's duties. The Little Flower sagely observed that she could never become so absorbed with any assignment or form of work that she could not relinquish it without regret at a moment's notice. We know how our Holy Father Francis destroyed the basket he was weaving because the thought of it distracted him during the time of prayer. While there is a far greater danger, generally speaking, of religious sinning by idleness than overwork, nevertheless the high tempo of the American way of life and its emphasis on activity presents a very real danger to religious in this country. Like Martha, we can become critical of Mary instead of casting a longing glance at the one who *has chosen the best part* (Lk. 10: 42), the only part that *will not be taken away* from us as religious. For, if the religious state admits of a purely contemplative form of life, it does not admit of a purely active one. There is at most a life like that of the Savior in which

activity and contemplation are blended. But the day will come when even the busiest religious must stop playing Martha and be all Mary to Christ.

Separation from the world and its ideals is not simply a matter of counsel for the religious. It is an essential and indispensable element of religious life. As we mentioned in an earlier conference, for the Christian ascetic during the first centuries of the Church the vow of chastity became the distinguishing mark. By their vow, these persons consecrated to Christ were set apart from their fellows, even though they continued to live with their relatives and busied themselves with the affairs of the Christian community. But human nature being what it is, too free contact of these "religious" with the laity led to the loss of fervor and even to scandalous abuses, so that the Church was forced to lay down strict regulations regarding these "orders of widows and virgins". And eventually, towards the end of the third century, we find religious, for their own protection, withdrawing to the solitude of the desert or banding together in monasteries and convents built in such isolated places that contact with the world was virtually impossible. The austere and penitential spirit of such religious, it is true, eventually caused the pious laity to settle in the vicinity of such monasteries so that little towns and villages grew about them, but even then the convent walls and cloistered gardens provided a measure of peace and quiet, so that the religious could still live a secluded life.

In a sense, Francis revolutionized this conception of religious life when, like Christ, he sent his disciples two by two into all the corners of the earth. But in no sense did he abrogate the religious ideal of separation from the world. His instructions in the *Regula bullata* (c.3) on "how the Friars should go through the world" implies that they are not always in the world. The primitive rule is even more emphatic. There Francis reminds his brethren that the Saviour "has deigned to pray to his Father for us . . . saying . . . 'They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I do not pray that thou take them out of the world, but that thou keep them from evil. . . Even as thou hast sent me into the world, so I also have sent them into the world'" (*Reg. prima O.F.M.*). Poverty, too, was to be both a symbol and effective means

of their separation from the world. For as Francis understood it, poverty was not only a detachment from earthly goods or property, but as we have said elsewhere (*Book of Life*, pp. 136-8), it included its ambit both chastity and obedience. It implied a renunciation, in short, of the threefold lust that St. John puts down as the distinguishing mark of the spirit of the world (I Jn. 2: 16). Franciscan poverty, then, in its fullest sense was to be our constant reminder that we are but "strangers and pilgrims in this world" (*Reg. bullata*, c. 6). The Poverello's own explanation of the sixth beatitude is itself significant. "They are pure of heart who despise earthly things and always seek those of heaven, and who never cease to adore and contemplate the Lord God Living and True, with a pure heart and mind" (*Admonitions*, n. 16).

That religious must be separated from the world Francis accepted as self-evident. Even the locations of the first friaries reflect his conviction. The anchorites built their dwellings in the desert, the monks of old in sheltered valleys or on inaccessible mountain tops. Francis tried a practical compromise choosing convents like San Damiano, or the Portiuncula, on the outskirts of the town, far enough beyond the city walls that the friars might not be disturbed in their devotions, yet within easy walking distance of the city gates. But even this was not enough. Periodically, with two or three companions, Francis would climb the deserted slope of Mt. Subasio until they could no longer see Assisi through the blue haze of the valley. And there, in the caves of the Carceri they would relive, if only for a few weeks, the hermetical life of the desert fathers. This custom of Francis and his friars is reflected in his instructions to "those who wish to live religiously in hermitages". They are to be three or at most four. "Let two of them act as mothers and have the other two as their sons," he writes. "The former should lead the life of Martha while the two others lead the life of Mary Magdalene. Let those who lead the life of Mary have one cloister, but each his own quarters in it, so that they do not live or sleep in the same quarters. And let them always say the Compline for the day when the sun is about to set, and let them be careful to keep silence and say their Hours and get up for the Matins; and let them seek first the kingdom of God and His justice. . . And they must not let anybody come into the

cloister where they live, nor let them eat there. And let those brothers who are the mothers endeavor to keep apart from every person and by the obedience of their custos, let them guard their sons from every person, so that no one may speak with them. And let these sons not speak with any persons except with their mothers and with their custos, when it shall please him to visit them with the blessing of God. But the sons must sometimes in turn assume the office of mothers, for a time, according as it may seem to them to be proper." (*On Living Religiously in a Hermitage*).

But this occasional retreat was not enough. Even when the Friars were on the road, Francis obliged them to spend some time in silence and recollection. "In the name of the Lord," he told them as he sent them into foreign provinces after the General Chapter of 1217, "go your way two by two humbly, decorously and in particular amid strict silence from early morn till after Tierce, praying in *your hearts* to the Lord. Idle and useless words are not to be uttered between you. For though you walk abroad let your manner nevertheless be as humble and decorous as if you were in a hermitage or a cell. For wherever we are and go, we have our cell with us. Brother Body is our cell, and our soul is the hermit dwelling inside the cell in order to pray to God and meditate on Him. If the soul does not remain in retirement in its own cell, any handbuilt cell is of little use to a religious." (*Speculum perfectionis*, 64)

III

PRACTICE OF PURITY OF HEART

What are some of the practical applications we can draw from these considerations? Francis chose a difficult form of life for his friars, a form of life that is characteristic also of those Franciscan congregations that live the mixed life of action and contemplations. It is not easy to remain in the world and not become a part of it. The whole history of the difficulties of the first Christian ascetics vowed to Christ while living in the world is a testimony of the power of a secular environment to influence even those possessed of the highest ideals and inspirations. When a white man after months or years in the south sea islands takes on the listless ways of the local blacks and browns and lives according to their

loose moral code, we say he has gone native. His character and principles have been destroyed by the environment.

We have been elevated to a supernatural plane, destined for heaven which is a sharing in the inner life of love of the Trinity. But so long as we remain in this land of exile, there is danger of going native. The *children of light* cannot be content with the moral standards of the "good pagan." Philosophers tell us that happiness in the use of creatures would be the end of man in a purely natural order. Virtue on this level would require nothing more than moderation in enjoying creatures. *Virtus in medio* becomes the norm of a natural morality. But Christians, and above all, religious aim higher. The latter are wedded to Christ. They have consecrated their persons to Him that He may bring them to perfection in His own likeness, that He may be their God and their all. Because Christ was not of this world, even as we, our transformation implies that we bear *in our body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodily frame* (2 Cor. 4:10). The aim of Christian and religious mortification, then, is not merely to achieve the moderation in the use of creature pleasure, but to keep ourselves from falling in love with the world and what it has to offer. A man may not object if his wife associates with others so long as her heart belongs to him. Christ expects as much of His religious bride, His apostle, His *alter ego*.

But if we love the world, we have already given ourselves over to the power of Christ's arch-enemy Satan, whom He tells us is the *prince of the world* (Jn. 12:32). There can be no compromise, no half-measures. *He who is not with me is against me* (Lk. 11:23). *He who loves his life, loses it; and he who hates his life in this world, keeps it unto life everlasting* (Jn. 12:25). And for the soul who has once known Christ, who has shared something of His life, who has tasted the sweetness of His love, there is no going back, no possibility of any happiness apart from Christ. *In the world you will have affliction* (Jn. 16:33).

To live on the truly transcendent plane to which Christ calls us, we must mortify the deeds of the flesh, for this is truly a life according to the spirit. In the beginning this is always difficult. *But take courage*, Christ tells us, *I have overcome the world* (Jn. 16:33). And with His grace we too can follow Him. And having

made the break, we discover to our consolation that it was no vain promise Christ made when He said: *"If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you shall know him, because he will dwell with you, and be in you"* (Jn. 14:15-17). For the gifts of the Holy Spirit give to the soul in grace a facility and ease that makes the practice of virtue a thing of joy. And theologians remind us that it is precisely by combatting the spirit of the world by mortification that these gifts are cultivated and become effective. *We have received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit that is from God*, Paul tells us. *But the sensual man does not perceive the things that are of the Spirit* (1 Cor. 2: 12,14). Where the Holy Spirit in the mortified soul is operative through His gifts, however, the practice of the interior life is characterized by a spiritual sweetness that is in truth a foretaste of heaven. For if Paul says: *Eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of man what things God has prepared for those who love him*, he adds immediately, *but to us God has revealed them through his Spirit* (1 Cor. 2: 9-10).

Mortification, of course, is only a partial answer to the problem. It is essentially negative and would wholly free us from the danger of contagion only if we could be completely isolated from the infectious virus of worldliness. But our apostolate is *in the world* and only a positive antidote can serve to counteract the influence of its ideas, norm of conduct and ideals. What too many religious overlook is that there is no serum that can give us permanent immunization against this continued contact with the source of infection. We may have been schooled thoroughly in the principles and practices of the spiritual life. But we are creatures of memory. And memory, as one first grader aptly defined it, "is what I forget with." For in truth, memory is also man's faculty for forgetting. Psychologists have even determined with some precision the laws whereby it fulfils this function. Ideas that are not used, they tell us, gradually submerge into the subconscious. Unless they are periodically recalled, they become innocuous and cease to be effective. At first only a minimal effort is required to

bring them back, but the longer they are in disuse the deeper and more quickly they sink into oblivion. The moral is that we must use that minimal effort to keep spiritual truths alive and vital. In that penetrating analysis Francis gives of the danger of worldliness in his first rule (c. 22), he reminds his followers of Satan's concern to "choke the words and precepts of the Lord from memory and to blind the heart of man by worldly business and cares." Conferences, meditations and especially spiritual reading are the time-tested means for retaining what Paul calls *the mind of Christ* (1 Cor. 2: 16). Only in this way is it humanly possible to weather the forces of attrition that can, if unchecked, wear away even our strongest convictions.

Renunciation of the world, then, is an indispensable condition if we would live a truly interior life. That is why Francis pleaded, "I beseech all the brethren, in the charity which is God, that, overcoming all obstacles and putting aside all care and solicitude [of the world], they strive with all their power to serve, love and honor the Lord God with a clean heart and a pure mind, which He seeks above all" (*Reg. prima*, c. 22). Only then will we experience something of the blessing of the pure of heart, to see God not merely as the future goal for which we strive, or under the sacramental veil in the Eucharist, but as Francis put it, in the tabernacle and dwelling-place we have made for Him in our hearts.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

Courtesy is one of the properties of the Lord, who serves out sun and rain and all His things which we need for our life, to the just and the unjust alike. For Courtesy is a sister of Charity, and she extinguishes hatred and keeps Charity alive.

St. Francis of Assisi

✓ CAPISTRAN AND HUNYADY

HEROES OF THE GREAT FRANCISCAN VICTORY AT BELGRADE: 1456

The two chief figures in the achievement of the brilliant victory at Belgrade (Nandorfehervar) over the forces of Mohammed II—five hundred years ago—were St. John Capistran and John Hunyady. With perfect fairness we can place these two men side by side not only by reason of the victory they shared but also because of the ideas which had a dominant influence in their lives.

In respect to the beginning of their careers, they are well removed one from the other, both geographically and ethnically; and the external marks of their distinct professions allow one to draw no parallelism. One is a priest, a member of a religious order and a preacher; the other is a commander of troops and a statesman. Nevertheless, the fundamental idea guiding them is amazingly similar. They dedicate themselves to the task of warding off the internal and external dangers which threaten Christianity in Europe, to extirpating the heresies which menace the integrity of the Christian Faith, to breaking the Ottoman power which is preparing the conquest of the Occident. Capistran devotes the greater part of his life to the preservation of Christianity, to the removal of the threats against it; Hunyady considers it his principal task to do battle against the Ottomans. It is the Saint who goes to the aid of Hunyady. It is their common struggle against the infidel that wins for them both immortal laurels and places them inseparably side by side to be remembered by succeeding generations, who find in their exemplary lives the secret of their strength for that battle.

I

The early part of the life of *St. John Capistran* (1386-1415) is quite like that of Hunyady in its outward aspect. At the beginning of the XV century, after completing his study of law in brilliant fashion at the famous University of Perugia, he obtains a position along side the governor of that city. Ladislas, the King of Sicily and Naples, places him at the head of the district of Naples in the capacity of military superintendent; later, he becomes president of the highest tribunal of the whole kingdom; and still later he is made governor—the greatest civil trust—with headquarters at Perugia.

Suddenly, one day, this extraordinary career is terminated. The

rebels take him prisoner and he escapes, but they capture him again. Finally a vision makes him understand that henceforth he shall have to serve the King of Heaven instead of an earthly king, that he shall have to become a Franciscan and apply all his efforts not to personal advancement but to the extension of the Kingdom of God. He was then thirty years old.

From that moment, and with complete dedication, John Capistran serves the *Franciscan Order*, the *Church* and the *Pope*, and does so with a spirit demanded by the exigencies of the times. Foremost among those exigencies was a radical renewal of Christianity. He placed himself at the service of the movement of reform with the same decisiveness with which he altered the course of his own life.

His work begins primarily within the *Franciscan Order*. In a short time he is a leader of the movement of the Franciscan observance promoted by St. Bernardine of Siena. He establishes monasteries and moves princes and nobles to establish them for the Observants and succeeds in having the Popes extend them protection.

With the same persevering care he dedicates himself to *bettering morality* in general. In the accomplishment of his popular mission of setting the course for Europe, he not only obtains magnificent results in Italy but also in Austria, Germany, Bohemia, Moravia, Poland and Hungary. The Popes quickly discern his exceptional *diplomatic qualities* and on several occasions employ his services to promote peace among the Christian princes, to revive their enthusiasm for the cause of unity against the Ottoman peril and to dispose them to make sacrifices for that cause.

It is natural for Capistran who burns with an ardent desire to revivify Christianity to press forward with the utmost enthusiasm in the battle against heretical movements. In the first place he wishes to put an end to the most dangerous heresy of Central Europe, that of the *Hussites*. Accordingly, he seeks by every means an opportunity of entering openly into discussions with the leaders of Prague. He was convinced that he could win them over because of his wonderful preparation and the keenness of the logic. That he was not able to accomplish this was due to the vacillating attitude of those in authority.

His plans of reform, that of setting a new course, he placed under the protection of the name of Jesus. Outwardly this movement utilized the initials of the name of Jesus, I.H.S., but at the heart of the move-

ment was the holy conviction that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend.

He determined to renovate society through the power of the name of Jesus and in his struggle against heresy he desired to prove the power of the name of Jesus. In the battle against the pagan Turks the secret of his victory lay in the faith he had in the name of Jesus.

Almost twenty years after the birth of Capistran there was born into the world another brilliant figure of the Europe of the XV century, *John Hunyady*. His father, a Catholic and of noble origin, received from the king of Hungary, Sigismund, in 1409, the castle of Vajdahunyad as a reward for his valor in the battles against the Turks that began in 1389. The attacks of the Turks which were constantly increasing in number, and which constituted the greatest strategic and political problem of Southern Hungary, caused the young Hunyady to take up the career of arms. King Sigismund met him in Serbia in 1428 and took him to his court. From 1431 until 1433 he served in the court of the Prince of Milan, Philip Visconti, and then he followed Sigismund, who was on his way to be crowned the Germano-Roman emperor. Hunyady also accompanied him to Rome and remained at his side until 1437, the year of Sigismund's death. At the Imperial court he begins to learn of the political problems of Western Europe. He distinguishes himself in various battles and attends with his lord imperial assemblies and councils.

His career is in the ascendancy. In 1435 he is a royal counselor; later King Albert names him "ban" (governor) of Szoreny; then King Ulaszlo elevates him to the voivodship of Transylvania, to the governorship first of Temes and then later, of all Southern Hungary. During the minority of the King, Ladislas V, in 1445, he is one of "the 7 captains" and by 1446 he is Regent of Hungary.

While Capistran owed the rise in his career to brilliant legal preparation Hunyady owed his ascent to the highest positions to his brilliant military capabilities. His first great victory over the troops of the Sultan Murad at Belgrade in 1441 and in the following year his great victory at *Nagyszeben* in Transylvania demonstrated his military genius to the Christian world and focused attention upon him. Very soon legends began to be woven about him. The Pope, Eugene IV, discovered in him the appropriate leader of the crusades which he was going to organize against the Turks and in 1443 deputed to his aid, for the expedition of October, called *the great campaign*, the Cardinal Julian Cesarini who had been the companion of Capis-

tran in student days. The following year the Pope again goes to his aid, but the Ottoman troops, because of numerical superiority, surrounded him and in *Varna* annihilated his army. In this battle King Ulaszlo of Hungary and Cardinal Cesarini lost their lives. After 11 major battles that was the first that ended in defeat. If Skanderbeg had not contained the Turks in the Balkans, the loss of the Battle of Varna would have been fatal to Hungary for the country meanwhile was attacked by Frederick III from the west. Only in 1447, when regent of Hungary, was Hunyady able to think of renewing battle against the Turks, and in this Skanderbeg also joined. But the Sultan prevented their meeting and after two days of bloody battle Hunyady broke out of an encirclement at the cost of enormous losses. The successor of the Sultan Murad, the young Mohammed II, planned a campaign of vast proportions that resulted in the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Because of this event the strategy of the defense of Europe entered a new phase and in it St. John Capistran and John Hunyady played a preponderant role.

II

At first *Capistran and Hunyady* knew of each other only indirectly. Capistran had definitely heard of the heroic achievements of Hunyady in that he was named by the Pope to preach for the recruiting of crusaders for the campaign of Hunyady that ended in the unfortunate battle of Varna. The prelate Cesarini, the great protector of Capistran, certainly spoke much to him of Hunyady. The *Observants*—known in Hungary as the "friars of cseri"—were regarded by Hunyady with particular kindness, as Hunyady saw them minister to the soldiers along with other priests in the campaign. In remembrance of the victory of Nagyszeben, Hunyady had a monastery built for the Observants in Toevis; and later, for the work of converting the Hungarian Hussites who took refuge in Moldavia, he had another monastery erected in Csiksomlyo and a third one in the comitat of Hásromszék (in Kylvá). Aside from this, at every possible occasion, he helped them in the reform of the monasteries in general. All of this could not have gone unnoticed by Capistran for twice he was vicar general of the Observants on this side of the Alps. What was being said at that time is very likely true that Hunyady enjoyed the privilege pertaining to the benefactors that are affiliated with the Order. It was also affirmed and appears quite certain that Hunyady likewise belonged to the Third Order of the Franciscans.

Our two heroes became even more familiar when Capistran jour-

neyed to the north at the invitation of Eneas Silvio Piccoloni, the Apostolic Nuncio to Germany. Capistran was present in *Frankfort* on August 29, 1454, and in March of the following year in *Wienerneustadt* at the imperial diets when the Apostolic Nuncio urged those present to go to the assistance of Hungary. Later on when Capistran, following the instructions of the Pope, undertook a journey to Hungary, Hunyady invited him to the country by a most kindly letter and also induced him to visit his castle at Vajdahunyad to be in his intimate circle.

In Hungary moreover, Capistran gave thought most of all to delivering sermons and discourses in favor of the reform already initiated by him and with a firm purpose of eliminating heresies. It was only when Hunyady took him to the Hungarian diet of *Gyöer* that he obtained a real insight into the political situation of Hungary and of the inevitable danger from the Ottomans.

When the emissaries of *Callistus III*, the newly elected Pope, brought the text of the oath of the new Pontiff, according to which he intended to do battle against the Ottoman power until crushing it; and when the emissaries manifested the call for a new crusade for that purpose, Hunyady and Capistran conceived a magnificent plan. In accordance with this plan Hunyady and Ladislas V, the King of Hungary, would muster an army of an hundred thousand men together with the Serbian Prince Brankovic, the Prince of Burgunday, the Pope, the King of Aragon and the other states of Italy; and if the Pope assured those soldiers and cavalry three-months pay, they would not only drive the Turks from Constantinople but also from the Holy Land. At the same time the Pope and the King of Aragon would have to send a squadron of war ships to the Bosphorus.

As a result of the ardent discourses of Capistran, crusaders came forth in such numbers as to exceed the wildest expectations of all. Since the plan to begin the campaign was scheduled for July 15, 1456, Capistran sent the crusaders to their homes after having taken their oath and promises to call them up for enlistment. But the Turks accelerated their military campaign against Hungary, initiated in May, and suddenly struck in the direction of Belgrade. No help arrived from without. Hunyady's rivals by-passed him and preferred instead the young King Ladislas V, who took refuge in Vienna under the pretense of going on a hunt. On June 30 the Pope's squadron of war was still anchored off Ostia. The entire burden of resolving the situation which was more than difficult rested then on the shoulders of

the "three Johns", who came to be a symbol in history, namely Hunyady, the prelate Cardinal John Carvajal and Capistran.

III

The Captain of the fortress of Belgrade, Michael Szilágyi, immediately sends a messenger to Hunyady and Capistran informing them to come with their forces before it was too late. Hunyady also dispatched a messenger to Capistran asking that he interrupt the process of enlistment and hasten without delay to Belgrade with the forces at his disposal. Capistran embarked immediately with his crusaders in five ships and set out for the fortress on the Danube.

But during the voyage doubt assailed him and in a sorrowful mood he debated with himself the tragic lot of Hungary and Christianity. "The danger of annihilation approaches and there is no one to give help", was his lament. However, while nearing *Petervarad* an occurrence jolted him. While officiating at Holy Mass he had a vision. He saw an arrow come down from above bearing the inscription: "Do not fear John, be calm, continue the voyage undertaken and hasten; in the power of my name and of my cross you will conquer the Turks." Capistran was gladdened immediately and from that moment nothing could shake his faith in victory. *He staked all on a single conviction, the power of the name of Jesus.*

On the 2nd of July he entered Belgrade. His presence enlivened the spirit of the army and immediately he retraced his steps for the purpose of recruiting more soldiers.

Meanwhile on the 4th of July the enemy besieged Belgrade. Two hundred Turkish vessels appeared on the Danube and surrounded part of the city; 150,000 men on the land made the siege complete, with 300 cannons firing at the fortress.

But this did not prevent Hunyady and Capistran from continuing the work of recruiting and of persuading the Nobles of the certainty that the enemy's encirclement of Belgrade could be broken and the city freed.

In fact ten days later with a fleet of two hundred ships Hunyady neared the city of Belgrade, having previously agreed with the besieged forces to attack the enemy fleet from the south. *After five hours of bitter and furious battle, he succeeded in opening a breach into the city and in assuring supplies and succor to the city which by now was hard-pressed from the siege.* While fighting was in progress on the river's waters' on land where a landing had been made, Cap-

istran inspired the soldiers by having them all repeat in unison the name of Jesus.

Although a breach into the city had been opened, all the crusaders arriving camped very close to Belgrade, at Szalankemen, about 60,000 in number: although most of them were Hungarians, there were also many Croats, the army of the King of Bosnia, 600 Poles, 600 Austrians and a modest number of Germans and Bohemians. They were numerous but not well equipped. Their armament in fact consisted of shovels, spades, bows, hoes and other implements of toil; there was a total lack of horses and lances. Many, too, were hermits, religious and tertiaries who were unschooled in the use of arms.

Of this improvised army Capistran assumed command; but Hunyady, on the other hand, led an excellently equipped force of 15,000. The reenforcements of Carvajal were still enroute. However, Carvajal who was unaware of the desperate condition of the fortress of Belgrade had written asking for a postponement of the general assault until the arrival of his forces.

But the Turks, as it was foreseen, anticipated the plans of the Christians. On the 20th of July they prepared for a *general siege* and attacked the following day. They filled in the trenches about the Fortress with various materials and then attempted to enter the fortress through the holes made by the cannons. The battle became intense, but Capistran in his accustomed manner persevered in encouraging the soldiers. Twice the Christians repelled the enemy attack but a counterattack during the night appeared to have brought victory within reach of the Turks. At seven different points the Turkish banners were raised high on the walls. The situation of the beleaguered was critical.

At this juncture, Hunyady, who had been directing the battle from one of the ships, observing the movements of the enemy, *decided to withdraw to a securer position*, there to await a more favorable moment. The decision was made and the order to withdraw was given. Szilagyi executed the order and his regular army withdrew. Only a small number of crusaders remained as a rear guard to protect those escaping.

It was here that *the forceful spirit of Capistran emerged*. He hastened to Hunyady and convinced him to join battle again. Before the convincing language of Capistran, which evinced something beyond the human, Hunyady, the ingenious strategist, a profoundly religious man, yielded and ordered the resumption of battle.

The renewed battle was bitter. When the Christians perceived it to be impossible to hold back the Turks, "they set fire to wood saturated in phosphorus and hurled it and other easily inflammable material upon the heads of the Turks who were in the ditches or scaling the walls". The consequences were indescribable. The clothes of the Turks caught fire as did other wooden objects deposited by the Turks roundabout. There was headlong flight in every possible direction. Burned corpses covered the field and the surviving Turks returned to the place of their encampment.

Thus the outcome of the battle was decided. But Hunyady was not drunk with success. He still expected a new assault from the enormous reserves of the enemy. He *forbade on the pain of death that no one leave the fortress*, that none of the mariners were to bring back soldiers from the other side of the river.

But *the crusaders would not acquiesce in the command of Hunyady*. Their martial spirit fomented disobedience, and the soldiers one after another slipped from the fortress in order to fight with the Turks who were preparing to move off and were now relatively quiet. It so happened that the attacks against some small Turkish groups were successful. When the others witnessed this, they also came in order to help. Thus the number of the fighters was increased.

Capistran did everything to observe Hunyady's command, but when they saw him on the other side of Sava, so many crusaders assembled around him and asked him to continue the battle that he could not resist any longer and he himself fired them with enthusiasm. He was caught up in the desire for martyrdom, and even attempted to secure the most perilous and risky posts in battle. Together with his soldiers he continued to cry out the name of Jesus.

Their attack against the Turkish gun-emplacements was successful. The artillery of Hunyady was rushed to help them. They now began to fire with captured guns, while the artillery of the fortress opened its fire also.

Three times Mohammed attempted the reoccupation of his gun-emplacements, and in doing so was himself fatally wounded in the last assault and lost consciousness. At nightfall the battle was finished. Before another sunrise the Turkish camp was found empty.

IV

As a consequence of this magnificent series of victories and of the very purpose of the crusade itself, the urge to pursue the Turks

was heavy. Capistran and the crusaders, filled with enthusiasm, were in favor of the pursuit. But when Szilágyi told Capistran of the dangers of a persecution, the undeniable defects of the crusaders' equipment, the bubonic plague which was breaking out among the soldiers, and the risk of the newly obtained victory, he gave up the idea and did not even mention it to Hunyady.

But not so the crusaders. A portion of them incited a *revolt amongst the soldiers* who were already divided in two parts: one of them attributed the merit of the victory to Capistran, the other, the major part, to Hunyady or to both of them.

Capistran and Hunyady, during the night, discussed the situation in Hunyady's general headquarters, on the ship. What the matter of the discussion was we do not know. But we can conclude it from the result: *The next morning, Capistran calmed the camp, gave his blessing to the crusaders, disbanded them and sent them home.*

That was the only solution in those circumstances. Capistran understood Hunyady's anxiety: if, in addition to poor equipment, a prevalent disobedience, or even rebellion raising its ugly head in the army, a campaign of pursuit, even if successful, could demoralize the whole enterprise and make of it a venture of pillage and looting. *It would have been necessary to disband this army even if the troops of the prelate Carvajal had arrived at time.*

In any case *this circumstance did not disturb the friendship between the two heroes.* On the very night of the victory Capistran wrote to the Pope informing him of the events that transpired. He enumerated the various critical situations and though he spoke of Hunyady as the terror of the Turks and the most valiant warrior of Christendom, he ascribed the victory obtained, to the special help of God. Similarly, Hunyady informed the king, the archbishop of Esztergom, the palatine of Hungary and the Italian princes.

News of the victory filled the Christian world with joy. In Buda, the capital of Hungary, all the bells pealed forth and torches were lit to celebrate the victory. In Vienna, the refuge of the king, and in numerous other cities, Masses were offered up in thanksgiving. But the greatest impression was made in Rome. The Pope appraised the victory on the 6th of August. All the bells of Rome rang out and the great event was celebrated by a procession of thanksgiving and the Pope urged the chiefs of State to celebrate the victory in a similar manner. Personally, as well as in other writings, the Pope continually praised Hunyady and desired to honor him in a special way for his resounding victory. On the anniversary of the day on which he received

the good news, that is, on *the Feast of the Transfiguration of our Lord, he extended the feast of the whole Church,—Universally.*

Since it seemed to the Pope that the time had come to conquer the Turks decisively, he therefore gave instructions for the organization of a *new crusade* and ordered that the crusade be continued by means of ringing church bells at midday, in keeping with his bull on June 29, which means that from then on Christendom has been remembering in that fashion Hunyady's formidable victory. The prelate Carvajal, who was Apostolic Nuncio to Hungary, without being aware of the orders of the Pope to organize a new crusade had already begun consultations to that end immediately after the victory was obtained.

V

The bubonic plague which began to spread during the battle played no favorites. *Hunyady* himself was stricken with this scourge. They brought him to Zimony in serious condition whither Carvajal followed him on the 5th of August and on the following day Capistran as well. Hunyady, who had on so many occasions exposed himself to the danger of death, was preparing for the end completely reconciled to the will of God. He bade farewell to his fellowmen, to the prelate and Capistran. His last confession he made to Capistran and walked to the church under his own power to receive Holy communion. On the 11th day of August he had himself taken to the chapel which was erected for him and lying upon its floor awaited the call of death. The world mourned his passing and the Pope, in the presence of his prelates, offered Mass for the repose of his soul. The remains of Hunyady were buried at Gyulafehérvár (Alba Julia) in Transylvania.

Gravely ill *Capistran* attended the burial rites of Hunyady. He continued to carry on conferences regarding the new crusade and together with the prelate Carvajal went to see Nicholas Ujlaki in order to ask him to accept the offer of commander-in-chief. But Capistran was sorely in need of rest. In spite of rest his health grew visibly worse. He constantly weakened and prepared himself for death. The greater part of his books and of his correspondence he sent to his native city, situated on the slopes of the sierras of Abruzzi. There, even before the battle of Belgrade he had sent a letter to his loved ones, full of emotion, because he knew he would never again see Italy, his beloved fatherland.

A few days before his death he drew up his testament. He comforted his spiritual sons, the grief-stricken Italian brethren and Hungarians who surrounded him. Meanwhile, preoccupation seizes hold of him. His heart is torn particularly over the misfortune of Hungary which he sees in dire straits and repeats several times: "Alas, poor kingdom of Hungary". It is the 23rd of October and on a bed of straw Capistran willingly surrenders his soul to the Saviour.

Like that of Hunyady, his death was felt by the whole of Christendom. All Hungary was saddened; his own Franciscan Order mourned him and the Pope directed Masses to be said for him throughout all Italy.

* * *

The 500th anniversary jubilee of the victory at Belgrade is at the same time the 500th anniversary of the death of the two heroes of that battle, of John Hunyady and of St. John of Capistran.

The memory of John of Hunyady recalls to mind the exemplar, the model of the Christian leader and of the man of State. The dominant note of his prowess and comprehension in government was *the defense and security of Christianity in Europe*. There still lived in him the spirit of the knights of the Middle Ages, the Age which in his day was breathing its last. He was a true crusader, particularly beloved by the Popes and by the West. According to the Popes Eugene IV, Nicholas V, and Callistus III, he was "the champion of Christ"; according to Carvajal, "the heroic Machabee of the era".

In him is personified that historical truth, which stamped historic Hungary as the *bastion of Christianity*, whose physical and spiritual resistance caused the attempts at the domination of Europe by the Tartars to collapse in the XIII century, and that of the Turks from the end of the XIV up to the beginning of the XVIII to disintegrate, and which will most certainly disillusion the imperial dreams of the Red terror, whose barbarism disguised as socialism has no other purpose than the liquidation of the Christian religion and the Christian social order.

In this perspective we present John of Hunyady not only to the Magyar people and the rest of the people of Historic Hungary but also to the whole world, as *the immortal champion of the idea of a Christian Europe, as the champion of the Church and the Papacy*, as one who never recoiled before the sacrifices demanded by the defense of this cause.

The body of Capistran was interred in the Franciscan church of

Ujhlak in Hungary (now in Croatia). His tomb soon became a place of pilgrimage and the sick in particular have sought his intercession. Among the miracles procured through his intercession, history records a surprising number of the resurrection of the dead.

70 years after the death of St. John Capistran, the Friars transported his corpse to an unknown place of Hungary from the Turkish hordes which in 1526 overran the Southern portion of the country. But *the Christian world did not forget the excellent figure of the great defender of Europe*. When, with the help of the army of Innocent XI, Hungary was saved from 150 years of subservience to the Turkish yoke, the Christian people entrusted this victory to the protection of St. John Capistran again. At Rome, at order of the Pope, the image of Capistran was exposed in the Church of Ara Caeli that the faithful pray for the victory of the Christian arms. Presently he is the heavenly patron of the Hungarian national army as declared so by Pius XI.

The great Family of St. Francis of Assisi looks proudly at the glorious figures of St. John Capistran and John Hunyady. They won the victory of Belgrade with the power of the Holy Name of Jesus and the protection of the Franciscan Saints. Francis of Assisi, Anthony of Padua, Louis, the saintly king of France and the recently canonized Bernardine of Siena, were the saints that adorned the standards of the crusaders. Not only were a respectable number of the soldiers members of the Third Order Secular of St. Francis, but the entire army was incribed in the Spiritual Confraternity of St. Francis, the greatest promotor of which confraternity was St. John Capistran himself.

Thus *their campaign could be considered as a victory of the Franciscan Spirit renewed in the cult of the Name of Jesus and the reform-activities of St. Bernardine of Siena and St. John Capistran*. When, in our days, we discuss the many ways in which to make the Franciscan Spirit the artery of the Life of Holy Mother Church and how to put in practice the expectations of the great Popes of the last 100 years who in innumerable cases called upon the Franciscans to renew the spirit of Christianity, St. John Capistran and his untiring companion, John Hunyady could well be the ideal, in demonstrating to us the strength and efficacy of our spiritual vitality.

Fr. Innocent Daam, O.F.M.

(Bibliographical References on Page 318)

THE SCRIPTURAL STORY OF DIVINE LOVE

In his recent encyclical on the Sacred Heart, *Haurietis Aquas*, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, emphasized several times that we must search the Scriptures for the revelation of the love of the great Heart of Jesus. It is there that we can find the story of His love. It is a strange sort of story because it has not beginning and no end; for it is the story of Love that is eternal in origin and everlasting in destiny. There we find the epic of a Lover Whose delight it was *to be among the children of men* (Prov. 8:31). There also is the tragedy of Love Who was not loved, for *He came unto His own and His own received Him not* (Jn. 1:11).

In Holy Scripture three persons, especially, portray in vivid colors the venture of Love upon this earth. There is Jesus Himself, the "flesh of God", as St. Thomas calls Him, Who, by His own words, makes a self-revelation of the ineffable love of His Heart towards His creatures. There is also St. John whom we might call the mystic of the love of the Sacred Heart, the favored apostle who had leaned "upon the bosom of Jesus" at the Last Supper and who never tired writing about love. And, lastly, there is St. Paul whom we might style the theologian of the love of the Heart of Jesus, to whom was given the grace *to announce among the Gentiles the good tidings of the unfathomable riches of Christ* (Eph. 3:8). They above all others tell us the story of the *mystery which has been hidden from eternity in God* (Eph. 3:9), the mystery of the love of the Sacred Heart which surpasses knowledge (Eph. 3:19). After the example of St. Francis this story can be divided into three chapters.

The Incarnation

The ultimate of love is surrender. The ultimate of Divine Love was the surrender of Christ. God made Himself common out of sheer love.

In the Canticle of Canticles we read: *Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it; if a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing* (Cant. 8:7). This is what God did! He gave "all the substance of His house for love" of us. He became incarnate! St. John briefly, but completely, records the leap of the Almighty Word from Heaven to earth: *The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us* (Jn. 1:14). In the face of this tremendous condescension of the All-Holy God, St. Paul writes:

You know the graciousness of Our Lord Jesus Christ—how, being rich, He became poor for your sakes, that by His poverty you might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). *Though He was by nature God, yet He did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but He emptied Himself taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men* (Philip 2:6,7). St. Paul could write these words because the Son of God was so enamored of His creatures that it was His *delight to be with the children of men* (Prov. 8:31).

The Son of God was willing for love of us, to use the figure of Bishop Sheen, to sheathe the flaming sword of His Divinity in the scabbard of human flesh. In the Book of Psalms Our Lord says of Himself to His Heavenly Father: *Sacrifice and oblation thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast fitted to me: In holocausts and sin-offerings thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I: 'Behold, I come. . .to do thy will, O my God!'* (Ps. 39: 7f. The Heavenly Father accepted the offer of His only Son. And so *when the fullness of time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that . . .we might receive the adoption of sons* (Gal. 4:4,5). It was at Bethlehem, "when all things were in quiet silence", that, as St. Paul says, *the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared* (Titus, 3:4).

It was God Himself Who came. . .no angel, no creature of finite light, no lesser substitute. St. John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, bears unquestionable witness to this fact in his First Epistle: *I write of what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have handled: of the Word of Life. And the Life was made known and we have seen, and now testify and now announce to you, the Life Eternal which was with the Father, and has appeared to us. What we have seen and have heard we announce to you: . . .that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh* (1 Jn. 1:1-3; 4:3). St. Paul testifies to this, also, when he writes that in Christ dwells *all the fullness of the Godhead bodily* (Col. 2:9). St. John shows the motive of the Incarnation: *In this has the love of God been shown in our case, that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through Him* (1 Jn. 4:9). And then he adds the lesson we should derive from such a tremendous manifestation of God's charity: *Beloved, if God has so loved us, we also ought to love one another!* (1 Jn. 4:11).

In the Incarnation we have the first we have the first tangible proof of the overpowering love of the Sacred Heart, *the mystery which had been hidden from eternity in God, Who created all things* (Eph.

3:9). So that we might truly appreciate the universe of love of the great Heart of Jesus, St. Paul makes this hopeful prayer that we *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know Christ's love which surpasses knowledge, in order that [we] may be filled unto all the fullness of God* (Eph. 3:18, 19).

The Incarnation, however, was not enough for God. There was His public life. A love that rings true is expressed in deeds rather than merely in words, just as St. John tells us: *My dear children, let us not love in words, neither with the tongue, but in deed and in truth* (1 Jn. 3:18). St. John had learned this lesson from the Heart of his Master Who, the Evangelists tell us, went about doing good. So empty of self was His love for us that He could have said what St. Paul had written in all sincerity to the Corinthians: *I will most gladly spend and be spent myself for your souls, even though, loving you more, I be loved less* (2 Cor. 12:15).

He summed up His eternal mission of love one day when He told those about Him: *The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a redemption for many* (Mark, 10:45). And to the Pharisees one day, *who loved the glory of men more than the glory of God* (Jn. 12:43), He cried out: *I have come a light into the world. . . I have not come to judge the world, but to save the world* (Jn. 12:46f).

His love knew no shore. He spent His love like a prodigal. He even went begging for men to accept His love! *Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest* (Matt. 11:28). *If anyone thirst, let Him come to me and drink!* (Jn. 7:37).

But His love went without a return. He wept as He said: *Jerusalem! Jerusalem! . . . How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not!* (Matt. 23:37). Our Savior wept on another occasion, at the tomb of His friend, Lazarus. And St. John records the words of the bystanders. This time they had gone to the Heart of the matter. When "Jesus wept", the people who saw Him had been compelled to admit: *Behold, how He loved him!* (Jn. 11:36, 37).

Had they but noticed, they would have come to the loving realization that He loved them, too, just as much. But as the Book of Proverbs said: *There was none that had regard* (Prov. 1:24). God came with a proclamation of love and no one listened, as Isaiah once said: *Lord, who has believed our report? (Is. 53:1). His own received*

Him not (Jn. 1:11). He came to cast fire upon the earth (Luke, 12:49), as He Himself exclaimed one day, the fire of His winning love; but His people would not let it be kindled, as He said He wanted, and warn their cold hearts. *All the day long I stretched out my hand to a people unbelieving and contradicting* (Is. 65:3), a hand that had nothing but love to scatter. But—and this is the crime of history—they repaid me evil for good and hatred for my love (Ps. 53:5). His love went unrequited! No wonder some must confess that the mystery is not that Christ has loved us so overwhelmingly but that we have loved Christ so very little!

The Passion and Death

A love that is not returned often drives many to despair and suicide. But this is because they fail to understand St. Paul's inspiration that *charity is patient* (1 Cor. 13:4). Not so with Christ. He would go on loving to the very end despite the icy coldness and even open hostility of those who were the objects of His unfathomable love. *Jesus, knowing that His hour had come, to pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end* (Jn. 13:1).

With these words St. John opens the greatest love scene in history, the Last Supper, the hour in which our Divine Savior opened the floodgates of His Sacred Heart and let pour out the swelling ocean of His tremendous love. A little while only was He with them (Jn. 13:33), but the wealth of the love He unburdened to His chosen few that night has yet to be exhausted. Tonight He would speak. . . tomorrow He would act! As one Franciscan writer has put it: "He is uttering the swan song of that Divine Love which would on the morrow be nailed fast to the Cross!" (Fr. Silvano Matulich, O.F.M., *The Heart of the King*, Milwaukee: Bruce, 1935, -p. 50).

In terms fraught with divine extravagance the Heart of Christ speaks the torrential love which had been penned up for an eternity! *With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you!* (Luke, 22:15). At the very outset of this first Agape, after the humiliating, loving gesture of washing the feet of His Chosen and after Judas had gone out quickly into the night, Our Lord gives those present something which would thereafter be the hallmark of their love for Him and in return His love for them. . . "a new commandment." *A new commandment I give you, that you love one another 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 for one another (Jn. 13:34, 35). Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends (Jn. 15:13).

This "greater love" He would more than show them on the following day. Now, however, His only craving is to prove to them His own abiding love. For this He uses a bold comparison: *As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you!* (Jn. 15:9). The epitome of Eternal Love has been reached! The Heart of Christ loves us all with the same degree of love that the Father has for the Son, a love so mysterious and incomprehensible that it produced God, the Holy Ghost! Can there be a "greater love"? Now that He has said this, He has said all that needs to be said. Those bystanders at Lazarus' grave were perfectly correct. *Behold, how He loved!*

The next day He was dead. . . murdered. His only crime, He loved too much. *And appearing in the form of man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death, even unto the death of the cross (Philip. 2:7). But He was offered because it was His own will and He opened not His mouth (Is. 53:7).* He was offered because He loved us. St. John and St. Paul never tire in extolling this Infinite Gesture. *I live in the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself up for me (Gal. 2:20). In this we have come to know His love, that He laid down His life for us (1 Jn. 3:16). Walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered Himself up for us an offering and a sacrifice to God (Eph. 5:2). Jesus, though He had joy set before Him, endured a cross, despising shame (Heb. 12:2).*

He became a curse for us all (Gal. 3:12), on behalf of His brethren, His kinsmen according to the flesh (Rom. 9:3). Though they racked His body with pain and spat upon His love, yet would He love them to the very end and find an excuse for their folly: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing (Luke, 23:34).* When they opened His side with a lance and exposed the secret source of His love, they saw only blood and water. But to us they are the symbols of the charity of God which is *poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).*

Holy Mother Church, meditating on the limitless love of Her Spouse, *Who delivered Himself up for her (Eph. 5:26),* can only exclaim in the Exultet: "O admirable height of your mercy which enfolds us! O inestimable loving charity!" The Son so loved us that He gave His life for our salvation! No man had a greater love.

The Holy Eucharist

The Love that was consummated on Calvary is forever perpetuated in the Holy Eucharist. He Who loved as no other could possibly found a means which no other could possibly have found to perfect union with His own beloved. In His love He promised to stay with us, as He Himself told us: *I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (Jn. 14:18). Behold, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world (Matt. 28:20).* He spoke practically the same words through the mouth of His prophet: *I will not leave you, neither will I forsake you (Jos. 1:5).*

This abiding presence He accomplishes through the Bread of the Altar, the daily Incarnation of His profound love for us all. From the tabernacle He calls all weary travelers with the beautiful words of Isaias: *All you that thirst, come to the waters. . . Why do you spend money for that which is not Bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy you? Hearken diligently to Me, and eat that which is good, and your soul shall be delighted in fatness (Is. 55: 1-3). I am the Bread of Life . . . He that eats this bread shall live for ever (Jn. 6:48, 59).* St. John echoes these words of the Master when he writes: *And this is the testimony, that God has given us eternal life; and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life (1 Jn. 5:11, 12).*

Just as during His earthly life, so now from every ciborium and monstrance He goes begging for men only to approach and let Him show them His buring love. *Come to Me, all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28), for I am jealous for you with a divine jealousy! (2 Cor. 11:2).* It is the same Jesus Christ, the same Sacred Heart, that comes to dwell amongst us again, as St. Paul assures us: *Do you not know yourselves that Christ Jesus is in you (2 Cor. 13:5). It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me (Gal. 2:20)!* And when He does come, Heart speaks to heart and says, even as He once told His Apostles: *No longer do I call you servants. . . But I have called you friends (Jn. 15:15).* Here in the Holy Eucharist Love attains its goal: union and enjoyment. *I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn you to Myself, taking pity on you! (Jer. 31:3).*

* * *

The Crib, the Cross, and the Ciborium, the three mysteries that sent our Holy Father, St. Francis, singing and crying in ecstasy, these contain the whole theology of the love of the Sacred Heart. One anonymous contemplative monk digests very beautifully for us the story we have attempted to tell in these pages. He writes: "Loving,

He wished to make Himself like those He loved. This was the Incarnation. To love is to suffer for the beloved. Behold the Redemption. Love draws us to live closely to the beloved. What but this explains the Eucharist? To love is to be united with him we love. See, here is Communion. To love is to rejoice forever with the beloved. We have Paradise awaiting us" (Anon., *Manete in Dilectione Mea*, edited by Rev. Francis Larkin, S.S.CC., p. 13).

And his last sentence deserves bold capitals, for it speaks the mystery of the great Sacred Heart of Jesus:

"THUS HAS GOD LOVED!"

Fr. Mario DiCicco, O.F.M. ✓

CAPISTRAN AND HUNYADY

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES.—Concerning the life and activities of St. John of Capistran cf. BOELCSKEY E., O. Cist., *The life and age of St. John Capistran* (in Hungarian), I-III, Szekesfehervar 1923-1924; HOFER J., C.S.S.R., *Johannes von Capestrano. Ein Leben im Kampf um die Reform der Kirche*, Innsbruck 1936; English transl. by P. CUMMINS, O.S.B., St. Louis, Mo.—London, W.C.; Italian transl. by G. DI FABIO, edited by A. CHIAPPINI, O.F.M., L'Aquila 1955, with an up-to-date bibliography.—As to the life of John Hunyady and additional bibliography cf. VECSEY L., *Hunyadi* (in Hung.), Muenchen 1956.—Regarding the relationship between Hunyady and the Friars Observant cf. KARACSONYI J., *The History of the Franciscans in Hungary until 1711* (in Hung.), I-II, Budapest 1922-1924, passim.—As for the diplomatic activity of the Holy See regarding the defense of Christianity against the Ottomans and the reaction to the victory of Belgrade in the West cf. esp. PASTOR L., *Geschichte der Papste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, I, ed. Freiburg im Br. 1926; English transl. by F. J. ANTROBUS, II, Freiburg 1894; I, Freiburg 1923.—In our description of the battle of Belgrade we follow the account of JOHN OF TAGLIACCOZZO, *Victoria mirabilis de Turcis habita duce Ven. B. Patre Fr. Joanne de Capistrano etc.*, ed. by L. LEMMENS in *Acta Ordinis Fr. Minorum* 1906. While it was not our intention to discuss the dispute as to whether Capistran or Hunyady deserve the primary credit for the victory at Belgrade, we note that Hofer's famous study *Der Sieger von Belgrade 1946*, in *Historisches Jahrbuch des Görresgesellschaft* 51 (1931) 163-212 is based too exclusively of foreign documents that seem weighted in favor of Capistran. Concerning Hunyady's mission which frustrated the expansionist plans of the Turkish Empire cf. BABINGER F., *Mehmed der Eroberer und seine Zeit. Weltenstuermer einer Zeitenwende*, Muenchen 1953.

QUERIES AND REPLIES

QUESTION: Is it customary among Franciscans to ring the bell at the Offertory of the Mass?

Answer: No; the Franciscan *Ceremoniale* makes no mention of ringing the bell at the Offertory of the Mass. Wherever the custom prevails it would appear to be of national or local origin. According to the *Ceremoniale Romano-Seraphicum*, the bell is rung only at the *Sanctus*, at the *Hanc igitur*, (or as the *Ceremoniale* puts it, *paulo ante consecrationem expedit ut aliquod campanulae det signum*), and at the Elevation. At the Elevation the bell may be rung either three times at the elevation of the Host and of the Chalice, that is, at the first genuflection, at the elevation, and at the second genuflection; or it may be rung continuously but lightly (*continue sed modeste*). We may note in passing that the *Ceremoniale* always stresses a light ringing of the bell.

Where it is customary to ring the bell at other times during Mass, as at the Offertory, the *Domine non sum dignus*, etc., there is no reason for discontinuing the practice. In such matters the custom may be regarded as the law. SMF

QUESTION: Why does the Tau cross appear so often in Franciscan symbolism?

ANSWER: The Tau cross is probably the earliest Franciscan symbol, since it was used by Saint Francis himself. Apparently Francis adopted the symbol after the the Fourth Council of the Lateran, at which most historians believe he assisted. In his inaugural discourse, Pope Innocent III deplored the scandals in the Church and announced his program of reform with the thundering text from Ezekiel 9:1-4. The pertinent passage is the command "the Lord to go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and mark Thau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof. In the course of his

address, the Pope explained that "the Tau was of exactly the same form as the cross on which our Lord hung on Calvary. And only those will be marked with this sign and will obtain mercy who have mortified their flesh and conformed their life to that of the Divine Crucified." No doubt Francis was deeply impressed by this proclamation, which so well expressed his own ideal and gave form to his apostolate. In any case, the Tau cross, which Innocent III made the emblem of the reform, became Francis' blazon also. He used it as a signature, he painted it on his door, he put it on his writings. When Brother Leo begged for a souvenir, Francis wrote the blessing from Numbers 6: 24-26, which we call the blessing of Saint Francis, and beneath the words he drew the Tau. Celano (I, 106) tells us that Brother Pacificus, who in a vision previous to the Council had seen Francis transpierced by a cross of four arms, in another vision after 1215 saw him marked with a Tau on his forehead. SMF.

QUESTION: Under the number 272 "The Raccolta or Manual of Indulgences" (New York, Benzinger, 1952) contains a prayer to which is attached "a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions once daily." The words of the prayer: "all that hath been made is created for Thee" seem to express the famous doctrine of John Duns Scotus on the primacy or universal kingship of Christ. Who is the author of this prayer? Are the conditions for gaining the indulgence any different than those required for the prayer before the crucifix: "Behold, O good and sweetest Jesus"? . . .

ANSWER: The prayer to Christ the King is Franciscan both as to origin and content. It was composed by Father Chrysostom Urrutibehety, O.F.M., an ardent propagator of the Scotistic doctrine on the primacy and kingship of Christ. In 1923 he obtained a plenary indulgence

for the prayer from the Sacred Penitentiary Apostolic. The conditions for obtaining the plenary indulgence are the usual ones, that is to say, Confession, Holy Communion, a visit to a church and prayers for the intention of the Holy Father. The conditions consequently are the same as for the prayer "Behold, O good and sweetest Jesus", except that the latter has the additional requirement that it must be said before an image of Our Lord Crucified. Besides the plenary indulgence of ten years which may be gained each time it is recited independently of Holy Communion. Perhaps some are unaware that this prayer is also of Franciscan origin, its author, according to tradition, being St. Bonaventure.

For the benefit of those unfamiliar

with the prayer to Christ the King of Father Chrysostom Urrutibehety, we here give the text in full.

O Christ Jesus, I acknowledge Thee to be the King of the universe; all that hath been made is created for Thee. Exercise over me all Thy sovereign rights. I hereby renew the promises of my Baptism, renouncing Satan and all his works and pomps, and I engage myself to lead henceforth a truly Christian life. And in an especial manner do I undertake to bring about the triumph of the rights of God and Thy Church, so far as in me lies. Divine Heart of Jesus, I offer Thee my poor actions to obtain the acknowledgement by every heart of Thy sacred kingly power. In such wise may the kingdom of Thy peace be firmly established throughout all the earth. Amen. —i—

BOOK REVIEW

HOW TO BE AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE. Stephane J. Piat, O.F.M., translated by Paul J. Olinny, O.F.M. and Barnabas Abel, O.F.M. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press, 1955. Pp. 222.

Despite the unattractive title and the unimpressive format, this little pocket-size paper-bound book is filled with excellent material for the guidance of young lay apostles.

At first blush the title may seem to have little to do with the actual contents of the book, but as we continue to read we see that being "an instrument of peace" primarily requires the right ordering of one's personal life. Since no man lives what he does not have, it is incumbent upon the would-be lay apostle to first develop in himself the virtues and qualities that are so badly needed in modern society. This is the theme of the book. It is a kind of examination of conscience for the lay apostle set up against the standard of the life of Saint Francis of Assisi. The points of examination are of vital importance to all Christian lay

ing, but especially to apostolic activity. They are presented briefly, pungently, and pointedly, and with a penetration and insight into the weaknesses of human nature that allow no chance for subterfuge on the part of the reader. The weaknesses exposed are *his* weaknesses, and he is made to face them squarely. Happily, the chapters are brief enough to serve for meditative reading, and although the book is directed toward the young lay apostle (for the Jesuit, to be exact), most of the points covered can be made to apply to religious as well. SMF

A man has only as much knowledge as he puts into action, and a religious is only as good a preacher as he puts into action. For the tree is known only by its fruit.

St. Francis of Assisi

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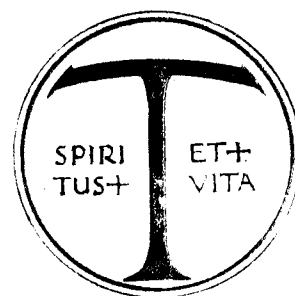
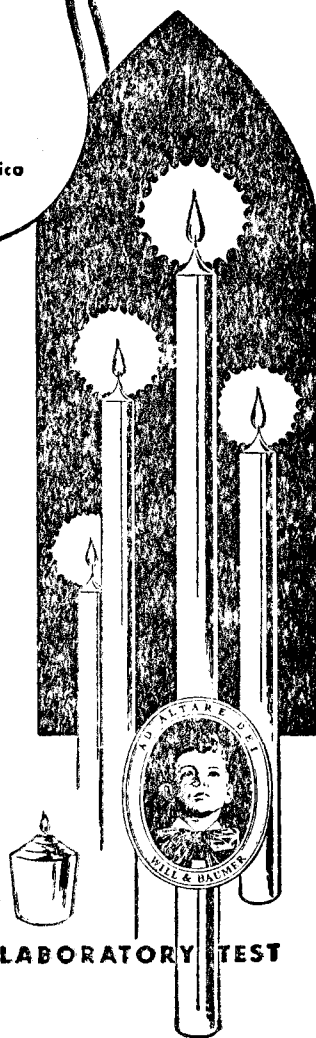
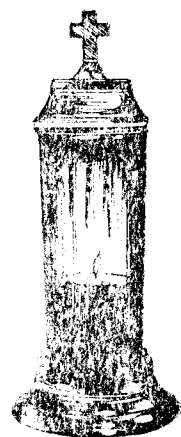
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the CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART II

In discussing the beatitudes as basic conditions for our transformation in Christ, we found the sixth to be the beatitude of the interior life. For as Francis put it, "They are pure of heart who despise earthly things and always seek those of heaven, never ceasing to adore and contemplate the Lord God, Living and True, with a pure heart and mind" (Admon., n.16). The inner love life of the soul, in consequence, comprises two elements: one negative, the other positive. The first consists in "despising earthly things"; the second, in turning our gaze heavenward, uniting ourselves to our "tremendous lover" in adoring contemplation. We dwelt on the first aspect in the previous conference where we saw that separation from the world is essential to the religious life, for "all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life" (1 Jn. 2:16). Deliberate attachment or love for the things that are in the world, St. John tells us, is the great obstacle to union with God. "If anyone love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (v.15). It is the deliberate element in this attachment that is the damning feature, however, for as we implied in the conference on the poor in spirit, spiritual poverty reflected in unwanted sins of frailty and human weakness far from impeding a soul's union with Christ can even become its principal claim on His mercy.

In its positive aspects, the sixth beatitude implies a union of mind and heart with God, which is but another name for prayer. But the "spirit of prayer" as Francis loved to call it, is not only one of the principal or constitutive characteristics of the interior life. Prayer is also the chief means of achieving this union, in so far as this lies in our power. "Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (Jn. 16:24). For the present, then, let us consider the practical problem of vitalizing our daily prayer life, reflecting how we can make it truly an affair of the heart that Christ may have no cause to complain of us as He did of the "religious" of His day: "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (Mk. 7:6).

The relationship of the religious to Christ can be described in either the bridal metaphor or the language of that rare and perfect friendship one man may have for another. Limitations of space prevent the development of both analogies. Since the majority of our readers are Sisters, our reflections on the life of prayer are couched in terms of spiritual marriage. We leave the interested reader to make his own adaptations for the love of perfect friendship.

I. At the Feet of Christ

There is something poignant about the following item inserted in the classified ads of a certain newspaper. "Lost, *one wife*, somewhere between wedding day and the fifteenth anniversary, in the vicinity of the kitchen sink, PTA meetings, WSCS Cub Scout den meetings, Dollar Day, preschool clinic, Community league, church socials, Brownie Troop meetings, Little League Baseball transportation, music school, grocery store, cooking school, bridge club and spring housecleaning. Has kind disposition, bites only when tired. Lonesome husband will be glad to get her back."

Paradoxically enough, a happily married couple may drift apart, may actually fail each other seriously, while seemingly doing only what is their duty. Marriage counselors and family service consultants have coined the name "middle-age-boredom" for a rather common malady that afflicts married people around their fifteenth anniversary. Each takes the other for granted and becomes increasingly more absorbed in their end of the marriage. The husband is immersed in business affairs, the wife in her household tasks and social engagements. Only superficially are they concerned with the events of each other's day. And thus imperceptibly and unconsciously the center of their respective worlds move apart, until that critical stage is reached where any serious quarrel or misunderstanding can imperil their marriage. And even where separation or divorce does not permanently sever the bond between them, their life together may become a hollow mockery, an outward sham. They are literally bored with one another.

And yet how often sisters make the same mistake. So absorbed

can one become in the work of Martha that she forgets how all important it is to be a Mary to Christ. We are shocked at times when religious who are apparently models of activity in the apostolate, seemingly selfless in the service of others and even hailed as "saints" by the world, apostatize from their order and the Church, because obedience called them to another assignment. Why did they go wrong? Where was the flaw in their service of charity? What did they neglect to do? In a revealing chapter written since his return to the Church, E. Boyd Barret puts a finger on the crucial weakness in his own spiritual development when he says of his early years as a religious. "My ideal was the missionary and above all the missionary-martyr, dying to win pagan souls to God. I saw virtue in terms of activity, of doing things for God. . . My studies would make me a great preacher and writer and apologist. I promised myself 'to wear myself out' in external labor for Christ. . . Of course, I meditated faithfully every day, and I spent my holy hours in pious adoration, but always I was impatient to get away to work. I admired those who, like Carmelite nuns, tried to live in the presence of God, but I thought the practice was unnatural and virtually impossible. I didn't understand what it meant. I felt sure it was not for me; in fact, that I would 'break my head' if I attempted it. . . Whenever I heard Christ calling to me to come up close to Him, to come into His presence, I was somehow reluctant to do so. I loved Christ—but I was afraid to near Him! Sure! I'd work for Him—I'd work hard! But, no, thanks! I wouldn't lie down to sleep at His feet!" (A Shepherd without Sheep, p. 16-18). Only too late did he come to realize that this intimate union with Christ, this sitting, so to speak, with Mary at Christ's feet, is the essential element, the "only one thing needful" (Lk. 10:42) in one's religious life.

When the novelty and thrill of those first years in Christ's service wear off, when spiritual dryness which alone can mature our love for Him replaces the consolation once felt in prayer, when the business of being a good bride to Christ appears realistically as arduous work requiring the continual curbing of self-love, then comes the temptation to hold something back from one's daily sacrifice. Mortifications diminish and even cease altogether on pretexts of health. While it is possible, the time of prayer is cut

short in favor of "more pressing tasks." We are no longer so eager to spend our free moments in His presence. Only with reluctance we tear ourselves away from other tasks to attend the community prayers. Though we would not dare admit it even to ourselves, we are becoming bored with Christ. To hide the ugly insinuating suspicion from ourselves, we bury it beneath a flurry of activity. After all, is it not His work we are doing? Yet, were we but honest with ourselves, we would see it is His work rather than His Person that draws us. As we know from His revelations to Margaret Mary Alacoque and other chosen souls, the Sacred Heart must often feel like that lonesome husband. "Lost, one wife, somewhere between religious profession day and the fifteenth anniversary, in the vicinity of a schoolroom, a kitchen stove, a hospital ward, house visitation. . . Will be glad to get her back."

Someone has said: "Making a marriage work is like running a farm. You have to start all over again each morning." Never take Christ's love for granted. Rather imitate the Little Flower who used her feminine ingenuity to prove anew each day her love for her bridegroom. This was especially true of her prayer life. Indeed so much was Christ a part of everything she did that one might say of her what was said of Francis, that it was not so much that she prayed as that she had "become a prayer" (Celano, *Vita Secunda*, c. 61). Religious sometimes forget that advancement in prayer should ordinarily accompany advancement in the spiritual life. We should not simply mark time, or rest content at some intermediate plateau. In virtue of our religious vocation, spiritual writers assure us, we are called to the highest forms of acquired prayer. And this is particularly true as regards mental prayer. To prove this thesis adequately, however, would take us too far afield. But the interested reader might read, by way of introduction to the subject, that excellent little work of Father Boylan, "Difficulties in Mental Prayer". In this conference, we shall content ourselves with some simple prayer techniques and considerations that may profit even the beginner in the spiritual life. For progress in prayer is ordinarily conditioned by personal effort. And this law seemingly holds good for all stages of prayer that are not properly mystical, even that of acquired contemplation.

-II. Public Prayer

Of all the prayers recited by religious, that of greatest intrinsic worth is their office, for as 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 deputed by the Church for this purpose" (*Mediator Dei*). Deputed by their profession for this task, most religious realize, theoretically at least, the unique importance of this prayer which excels purely private prayer for the simple reason that it is not the individual but the Person of Christ who praises God in and through His mystical members. They understand too that the more completely they surrender themselves to Christ for this purpose, giving Him not merely their voice or the rubrical posture of their bodies to honor His Father, but mind and heart as well, so much the more will they share in the priceless fruits of this prayer. Intrinsically social in character, it can be their most effective way of helping those they love or of acquiring the special graces they need.

Practically, however, it is quite another matter. Despite all that has been written about the magnificent sentiments expressed in the psalms, the office remains one of the most difficult prayers to recite devoutly, particularly when the Latin language is used. Even if one knows Latin, the psalms are not readily understandable. Written in an unfamiliar idiom, replete with archaic expressions and the peculiarities of oriental poetry, their austere meaning and classic beauty can be fully appreciated only after much study. Because many are unwilling to expend the necessary effort, or because any hope of success seems practically impossible, they eventually resign themselves to reciting the office out of a sheer sense of duty, offering it to God in the spirit of sacrifice as they would do with any other uncongenial task. They have abandoned all hope of making it a personal prayer, or deriving from it any measure of sensible devotion as Francis and the saints seemed to do.

Surely this was not the ideal envisaged by the Poverello when he imposed an office for clerics and laics, particularly when the office was the only prayer specifically mentioned by the Rule. Its recitation was rather to be a matter of mind and heart, as

Bonaventure assures us. Francis wished the psalms to illumine our minds and unlock the door of our hearts that the omnipotent God might enter therein to give us both the grace of compunction and a grasp of divine things (*Expositio super Reg. FF. Min.*, c.3).

The bride of Christ may be more ready to make the necessary effort to recite her office devoutly, if she realize its importance to her divine Spouse. Men and women, we are told, view marriage in a different light. For a woman it is her whole world, whereas for a man it is but one aspect of his life. His work occupies a place and importance in his mind that a woman does not always appreciate. A wise wife, nevertheless, accepts the fact and adapts herself accordingly. She will develop an interest in her husband's career even though it be something foreign to her inclination and talent. This sacrifice of her own likes and dislikes for his sake creates a firmer bond between the two. Christ your bridegroom is also a man. And we know that He had to remind even the most perfect of women: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49). That business is not only the salvation of souls but also to "glory the Father" as the "firstborn of many brethren". On earth, this business was paramount. All other human relationships were pushed to the background as we know from that incident when His mother and cousins came seeking Him during a sermon (Mk. 3:31). In heaven too it is still His great concern, for as head of the mystical body He still "intercedes for us at the right hand of God" (Rom. 8:34).

You can never fully share Christ's life, if you let what is so important to Him merely bore you. Elsewhere we have indicated some techniques for rendering that prayer more devout (*Book of Life*, p. 57-8). But there is really no substitute for chanting the psalms intelligently (*Psallite sapienter!* Ps. 46:8). A praiseworthy step in this direction is the introduction of the English version of the office in many communities of Sisters. Even this, however, does not dispense completely with a study of the psalms. To appreciate their hidden beauty and poetic imagery, we must know not only their literal or accommodated meaning but also circumstances of authorship and the conditions under which they were composed. Many of the psalms of the Little Office, for instance, were chosen because in an accommodated sense at least, they praise virginity

and stress the bridal theme and can thus be a constant reminder of your sublime vocation as "Sponsa Christi". A practical way to study the psalms, for instance, would be to select one each day as subject of spiritual reading, marking such passages as have a special personal appeal that they may aid your devotion during recitation the following day. The "Gloria Patri," etc. at the end of each psalm can remind you of the essential purpose of this task you perform for the mystical Christ. Even though the "Aperi" is no longer required in choral recitation, this prayer or its equivalent might well be recited privately in preparation. Note that essentially it consists in a glance upward to the Father in heaven ("Open my mouth, O Lord, that I may bless your holy name. Cleanse my heart, etc. . .") and a glance at Jesus tabernacled on the altar ("O Lord, I offer these hours to you in union with that divine intention with which you yourself while on earth offered praise to God"). What better way to remind Him and yourself that as His bride you are one mind and heart with Him in this most important aspect of His work!

As a sacrifice, perhaps, the Mass is more of the nature of an action than a prayer. Nevertheless, its essential action (consecration and communion) is enshrined in a truly beautiful prayer service that, with the divine office, forms the core of the Church's liturgical prayer. While there is no obligation to follow the mass with a missal, this can be highly profitable to the extent that it enables one to be more consciously united with the celebrant's action, emphasizing the truth that he represents you, a member, as well as Jesus, the Head, of the mystical body. In practice, however, the attempt to follow the priest often degenerates into a frantic dash through the missal that destroys all devotion. Far better is the practice of following the priest in leisurely fashion, reciting a few of the prayers reflectively and skipping over others. Varying the selections from day to day aids devotion. Like the psalms of the office, the structure of the mass and the meaning of its individual prayers can also be made the subject of spiritual reading. In this way, you can share more and more in the work of your divine Spouse, making His Father's business your own.

III. Private Prayer

Since monotony is the great bane of devotion, the wise religious will vary her prayers to some extent. No intelligent wife feeds her husband the same dishes, regales him with the same stories, or wears the same dress day after day. In similar fashion, Christ's spouse will find a challenge to her feminine ingenuity in varying her way to saying the stations, or the rosary, or any other prayers which have commendably become a part of her daily offering to her Lord. I have indicated elsewhere how the Way of the Cross can be adapted to one's daily moods and needs (Book of Life, p.74). Father Milde, O.S.B. has suggested some techniques for the rosary (Cath. Digest, Oct. 1944, p. 9). The Franciscan Crown can even more easily be recited in a variety of ways, particularly since it is only necessary to recite the decades to honor the mysteries, meditation on them not being required. With repeated Hail Mary's, it is difficult to be attentive always to each word. More feasible is the use of a "rhythmic method" where we emphasize only a single phrase of few words of each Ave. If it is a pressing need that prompts our prayer, we could stress "pray for us now. . ."; if it is for the dying or happy death that we pray, the account could be on "at the hour of our death." If we wish to meditate on the joys of Mary's crown, stress "the Lord is *with thee*", recalling at the same time how Christ was with Mary at the annunciation or incarnation, or how she became the first "Christopher" at the Visitation, or how Christ must have looked to her on Easter morn or the day the angels escorted her to heaven. Some complain that even though the Crown is the most highly indulgenced of the rosaries, occasionally they prefer to consider Mary's sorrows, especially when their own heart is heavy. However, there is no reason why the Crown cannot be recited while meditating on Mary's earthly martyrdom. For every one of Mary's joys was either prefaced or followed by some great sorrow. The annunciation, like every great grace, came in all probability only after God let his mother-to-be taste poverty of spirit as no other human person ever would. Psychologically there is no other way of explaining her reaction to the angel's greeting, or her "Magnificat" in praise of the humble. The visitation, too, was preceded by one of the most tremendous tests of faith any woman had to

endure. What proof did Mary have she had conceived the Son of God save the angel's word? How could she be sure this apparition was not an illusion, or the devil masquerading as an angel of light tempting her to pride? How long did she endure these torturing doubts? How long before God rewarded her faith through Elizabeth's inspired recognition of her hidden motherhood and those comforting words: "Blessed is she who has believed, because the things promised her by the Lord shall be accomplished" (Lk. 1:45). The joy of Christmas, too, came only after weary hours of canvassing David's city from door to door, when by all human reckoning God seemed to have forsaken them. The joy of the Magi's visit was almost blotted out by the heartrending cries of those other mothers whose suckling babes were slaughtered before their very eyes. The finding of her boy in the temple became the joy it was only because it came as the sequel to an anguished and desperate three day search. The resurrection was prefaced by the nightmare of Calvary; the assumption and coronation by that sense of emptiness and homesickness that only the mother of such a Son could feel. Yet when Christ saw only a likeness of that loneliness in the Widow of Naim, He could not bear the sight but brought her son back to life. But Mary endured this martyrdom for years until, as some believer, her heart broke for very longing to be united with her Son. Indeed each joy of Mary was purchased at the price of a great sorrow. The beauty of the Franciscan Crown is that we can meditate on the one while honoring the other.

Lack of space prevents us from saying more than a word on mental prayer which is so essential to the interior life that it might almost be regarded as its spiritual barometer. We have already alluded to Father Boylan's "Difficulties in Mental Prayer" which should be required reading for every religious professed more than a few years. Among the countless profitable suggestions, he reveals how vocal prayers (e.g. the Our Father, or any of the community prayers) can be made the subject of our "meditation". In this way we often discover the many beautiful facets of these prayers that went unnoticed before, and thus our ordinary community prayers take on new vitality. We know that the present day methods of "meditation" represent an attempt to crowd the whole of the medieval monks' day into the space of half an hour or more. Their

spiritual reading period is represented in reading the matter of meditation. As they worked in silence, they reflected upon what they had read, applying it to their own life. These considerations prompted ejaculatory prayer during the day, but they bore especial fruit during the recitation of the divine office and during the periods at the end of the day or during the night hours when the religious were free to pour out their hearts in affective prayer before the altar. The general and particular examen resulted in resolutions which meditation manuals recommend as part of the period of mental prayer.

As one progresses in mental prayer as we are meant to do in virtue of our calling as religious, it is not too difficult to recapture something of original medieval practice of mental prayer by extending it throughout the day. This is but another name for the practice of recollection or living in the presence of God and represents the goal towards which we should strive in developing the interior life.

The cure for "middle age boredom" recommended by social psychologists is the development of common interests. Unlike the wife in the world, your divine Spouse is not just superficially but vitally concerned with everything you do. We read in the life of Sr. Josefa Menendez how Christ appeared to her one day as she was closing the convent windows. "Where did you come from?" Christ asked her. "From closing windows, my Lord," she replied. "And where are you going?" "To finish closing them, my Jesus." "That is not the way to answer, Josefa," He chided. "You must say, I come from love and I go to love, for upstairs or down, indoors or outside, you are ever in my Heart." It is not teaching, or cooking, or sewing or typing that you should be doing so much as loving Him. Words in themselves are but arbitrary sounds that are used to express our mind and heart and feeling. Every action that is not sinful can become the sign-language of your love. And this is what is meant by living in God's presence. It does not mean you must constantly think of Christ. A mother is not always thinking expressly of her children or husband while she is baking, or mending or doing some other work for them. It is enough to be doing her work for that intention, for that purpose. So too your "day of prayer" begins with the morning offer-

ing. In diverse ways throughout the day, that intention is renewed. Lest we forget, Christ Himself reminds us, usually with those tiny splinters from His cross, so small at times as to be hardly recognizable, for instance, the bell when we are busiest, that impossible individual we have to work with, to be kept waiting when our time is precious, a little ache or pain, that feeling of tiredness, anything in short that irritates us, tries our patience or requires some special effort to master. With practice we come to recognize these cues and use them to renew our love for our Savior. Thus our work, far from "extinguishing the spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all things temporal should be subservient" (Francis, *Regula Bullata*, c. 5), will become more and more consciously an expression of our love. This is the perfection of purity of heart that is blessed with the vision of God everywhere, for we see Him in every face, we discover Him at every task, we find Him at every turn. Like Josefa, we too may say: "I come from love; I go to love, for Christ is ever in my heart."

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.

"Happy the soul to whom it is given to attain this life with Christ, to cleave with all one's heart to Him Whose beauty all the heavenly hosts behold forever, Whose love inflames our love, Whose contemplation is our refreshment, Whose graciousness is our delight, Whose gentleness fills us to overflowing, Whose glorious vision will be the happiness of all the citizens of that heavenly Jerusalem. For He is the brightness of eternal glory (Hebr. 1,3), the splendor of eternal light, the mirror without spot (Wisd. 7,26).

St. Clare of Assisi

THE LIFE OF MAN WITH GOD

The caption is the title of a book written by the Carthusian monk, Fr. Thomas Verner Moore, and published by Harcourt, Brace and Company, (New York, 1956). The all-important concept of this book, which is due to a combination of spiritual and scientific training, is to show us, as the author says, that each and every human being is destined to be a friend of God.

The technique which the author makes use of in this work was the questionnaire method—a method for which he was eminently prepared, because he spent some fifty years of his life in study, teaching, and research in the fields of psychology and psychiatry where the correct appreciation and analysis of the returns to a questionnaire plays an important role. In choosing this approach to the problem of spirituality, Moore followed the example of William James in his "Varieties of Religious Experience". But whereas James "dashed about in the lives of the saints like a bull in a china shop, holding up to ridicule what he is incapable of appreciating," Fr. Moore makes a careful and honest analysis of his data in an attempt to find out what is the usual devout life in the Catholic Church and to present a general picture of the stages of the spiritual life through which man passes in his ascent to God. In an appendix, he gives a successful rebuttal to the objections that might be raised against his technique.

The response to the questionnaire was very gratifying: two hundred answers were received. The respondents—or collaborators, as Moore sometimes called them—were requested not to sign their names, in order to secure greater freedom and reliability. The answers seemed to be honest statements of facts that really occurred. They came not only from priests and religious, but also from the laity; from a steamfitter and a physician, from housewives, invalids, nurses and teachers, from missionaries and parish priests, from hospital sisters and cloistered monks and nuns; not only from college graduates but also from a tubercular Negro who, although illiterate, learned miraculously to read religious material and that only; from converts and from those who left the house of the Father and were brought back again; from persons who never committed a mortal sin in their lives, and from those who in their youth never heard that sin was an offense against God, but at the most an offense against nice people.

Hence the returns came from ordinary human beings, living in our day, in the midst of modern activity, surrounded by temptations,

harassed by distractions. The author used these returns as pictures to illustrate the typical spiritual experiences to be found in the Church. Rather than drawing on the lives of the saints, the author drew largely on the experience of ordinary members of the faithful. This fact makes the book the more valuable.

The first part of the questionnaire which Moore constructed was a modified version of a scale published by Dom J. B. Chautard, "The Soul of the Apostolate." It consists of a seven-point scale, presenting the seven degrees of spiritual life from the zero level to its very heights. Each individual to whom the questionnaire was sent was requested to estimate honestly the lowest degree he or she ever was in and also the highest.

By spiritual life is meant an earnest attempt to lead an inner life of prayer with Christ and to deny ourselves and take up our daily cross and follow Him. In short, spiritual life is a life of perfection. What is perfection? According to St. Thomas, the ultimate perfection of a thing consists in the attainment of its end. How, man attains his end in the love of the Creator, which Aquinas calls charity. Hence the essence of perfection is charity.

Charity is an act of the will by which man accepts the divine will. When man does so completely and without reservation his charity is perfect. Hence perfection consists essentially in the perfect fulfillment of the will of God—that is to say, His commandments. The essence of perfection, as St. John of the Cross says, "come to pass when two wills—namely the will of the soul and that of God—are conformed together in one, and there is naught in one that is repugnant to the other."

Charity, and therefore the interior life, admits of several degrees. When it is well developed, the interior life is a habitual life of union with God which seems, independent of personal effort, to remain in the Divine Presence or to come before God by frequent acts of recollection in the course of the day. This consciousness of union with God becomes continuous only at the very height of spiritual development. Many persons do not reach that height and are just struggling along to keep the commandments.

As was said, the Chautard scale is a kind of *speculum perfectionis*, as it presents the seven degrees of perfection—or lack of it. These degrees are briefly the following:

- (1) *Hardness of heart*: obstinacy in mortal sin; stifling of remorse; prayer completely neglected.
- (2) *Christian only outwardly*: mortal sin is considered as a slight evil

committed on any occasion; prayer dictated only by temporal interest.

- (3) *Moderate piety*: week resistance to mortal sin; venial sin looked upon as insignificant; some vocal prayers.
- (4) *Intermittent piety*: loyal resistance to mortal sin; weak resistance to venial sin; mental prayer attempted but often neglected.
- (5) *Sustained piety*: mortal sin never or very rarely committed; rarely deliberate venial sin; daily mental prayer.
- (6) *Fervor*: never deliberate venial sin; imperfections heartily resisted; often a quiet, silent gazing into the face of God.
- (7) *Positive perfection*: imperfections energetically avoided; habitual life of prayer; various infused graces of contemplative prayer.

After the respondents had estimated the lowest degree of spiritual life they ever were in, and also the present level, they were asked to answer 30 questions to indicate how far they had advanced and by what means. Example: Can you say that you seek God without ceasing? What works of self-denial and bodily penance do you usually practice? Have you ever entered into a state in which you lost all awareness of your surroundings and sensation of all kinds and were completely absorbed in God?

The ascent to the higher levels of interior life is made from various starting points. Some persons have to climb up out of the depth of serious sin. There are in the book several examples of people who lived in a state of habitual mortal sin, deliberately suppressing all recourse to God, for twenty or more years, but changed their way of life and reached the top of the mountain. Others reached the summit after living for some time in a state of lukewarmness; which belongs to the third and fourth degree of Chautard's scale. They never or rarely commit mortal sin but for years showed little effort or cooperation with God. Out of two hundred answers, eight said that stage six was the lowest in their lives, which implies that four percent of those leading an interior devout life never had committed a coldblooded fully deliberate sin. This poses a problem, for the Council of Trent condemns the statement that it is possible "throughout an entire lifetime to avoid even all venial sins, except by a special privilege of God as the Church holds of the Blessed Virgin Mary." Father Moore, with some other theologians, tries to solve the problem by making a distinction between voluntary and semivoluntary venial sins. He believes that it might be possible, without a special privilege, for one to have lived his life without committing deliberate voluntary venial sins. But

no one could avoid all semivoluntary venial sins, that is to say, sins that one slips into without a cool deliberate choice, such as acts of impatience which one commits without really choosing to do so, but because of weakness of emotional control. Because one is bound to control his temper, such acts are sins, and not mere imperfections. An imperfection, according to Moore, is an offense against a regulation we have imposed upon ourselves, as something over and above what God demands. But the author admits that this concept of imperfection is not shared by all theologians; some deny the existence of any imperfections that are not venial sins.

An intriguing problem is posed by the strange fact that those who are leading a sinless life believe that they are lower and viler than all. Examples are found in the lives of the saints, and a number of positive answers to one of the questions in Moore's questionnaire brought out the same fact. The author feels that perhaps the Thomistic explanation is the only one possible. A holy life leads the soul to see the divine in others, but the human in himself. A truly devout person unconsciously compares the human in himself with the divine he sees in others, and as he grows toward perfection he sees more and more of the divine in others.

If we can expect, writes Fr. Moore, that Christ is going to renovate our whole being, we can hope for the disappearance of sins and imperfections in such a manner that we cannot attribute their disappearance to our own efforts alone. The number of the respondents have noted that. Sometimes the change may come quite suddenly and may be attributed to a special action of Divine Grace. These sudden changes in the moral and spiritual life of man may come as a "conversion experience" in which one suddenly puts an end to a life of grave sin with no preliminary warning or mystic grace of any kind. Or they may come as the apparent result of a mystic grace that suddenly appears in consciousness. These sudden changes, according to Moore's data, take place more frequently in those already leading a very good and holy life. When they come, some or nearly all the clouds of imperfection suddenly and permanently disappear. These facts, the author adds, should hold out hope to one who is struggling against sins and imperfections without apparent success.

Whatever the starting point may be, all those who aspire to lead an interior life have to fight temptations, practice self-denial and penance, and cultivate a life of prayer. The author's psychological analysis of temptation is worth reading. Despite the fact that a person's mind may harbor high intellectual ideals of morality, in the hour of temp-

tation man enters a world of sensory cravings in which the intellectual ideals sink below the level of consciousness. And they remain there unless the power of volitional control comes into play. This power exerts its most effective influence by bringing from the subconscious the vanishing intellectual ideals and former resolutions of fidelity. However, this natural conflict between reason and sensory cravings does not tell the whole story. There is also the supernatural element, inasmuch as God takes an active part whenever we are tempted by giving His grace, if we ask for it. The author discusses also the satanic element in many temptations—an element which was clearly brought out by the answers to his questionnaire.

Three questions of the questionnaire tried to find out something about the subject's habitual mental prayer, his life of self-denial and his attitude toward sufferings and humiliations. The answers of the respondents exemplify Moore's five essays on the life of prayer and of penance.

Moore's data confirm the well-known fact that there are two ways by which a subject may attain to perfection. One is the ordinary way; the other includes the experience of various mystic graces, such as the prayer of quiet, the prayer of union, visions, spiritual betrothal and matrimony.

One may attain to perfection without any of such extraordinary experiences. For, as was seen, the essence of perfection is charity, the love of God; and perfect charity may be attained without any of the mystic graces. The answers to the questionnaire made it clear that such is the way of many devout Catholics. The other group gave evidence of mystic experiences with greater or less frequency.

What is meant by the mystic graces? These are spiritual experiences that unite the soul with God in an intellectual awareness of His presence, or inflame the will and the affection with an ardent love of God, or both things simultaneously. It is characteristic of mystic graces that they establish the soul in peace. The basic principle of Christian mysticism is that true mystic experiences come from God and that man, by his own efforts, can do nothing to bring them about.

Since mystic graces are given independently of a person's own activity, the question arises whether there are mystics, in the theological sense, outside the Church. The answer seems to be that if there are true mystics outside the Church, sanctifying grace must have been bestowed on them by the baptism of desire.

May one desire and ask God to grant him mystic grace? Moore,

with other spiritual writers, makes a distinction between the prayer of quiet, otherwise termed infused contemplation, and the other mystic graces. It is generally admitted that infused contemplation is something that may be desired, but Fr. Moore admits that certain neurotic individuals would constitute an exception to this rule. As for the other mystic graces, the answer of approved spiritual writers is an emphatic "No".

Moore's book deals rather extensively with the mystic graces. Half of the questions of his questionnaire refer to those extraordinary phenomena. The highest degree is spiritual matrimony with Christ, the lowest is the prayer of quiet. Some authors do not number the latter among mystic graces, and Moore on the basis of his questionnaire data, is inclined to think that the prayer of quiet is not a necessary preparation for receiving the other graces.

The prayer of quiet or infused contemplation, as manifested by its psychological characteristics, consists in a quasi-perceptual realization of the Divine Presence and a peace experience which glows with the warmth of the love of God. These psychological manifestations are caused by a gratuitous action on the soul through sanctifying grace. Such a peace experience is by no means a rare phenomenon. Children commence to experience it in its beginnings when they receive Holy Communion. Thousands know it in their morning Mass, their Holy Communion, and during mental prayer. Thus, in a broad sense, the interior life commences when one starts to attend Mass and receive communion habitually every day or to make a daily meditation or both. At first, this peace experience may last only a few moments but it has a tendency to flow over from our morning devotions into the activity of the day. For those who have reached the higher stage of spiritual life, that is to say, who have completely or almost completely overcome mortal sin, this peace experience becomes habitual. But the returns to the questionnaire show that the peace experience of prayer may occur sporadically also in those who have not entirely excluded mortal sin from their lives. In fact, forty-six percent of the respondents who considered themselves to be only in stages three and four of Chautard reported to have had at times this peace experience.

The various stages of infused contemplation are steps in the growth of the love of God. A peaceful love is of the very nature of the prayer of quiet. But, in the beginning, it is what St. John of the Cross terms dark love. When the soul enters into the habitual enjoyment of infused contemplation, it passes into the passive night of the spirit, as the same saint calls it. The formal and essential principle of the pas-

sive night of the spirit is the peaceful glowing love of God. But this love produces suffering in various ways.

Some of these sufferings are due to direct action of God. At some stage the soul commences to really suffer because it has offended God in the past. God gives "His suffering" at first in touches that come and are gone in a moment, but are very keen while they last. St. Teresa of Avila tells us that her sorrow for her sins became so intense that it was painful for her even to live. However, one must not think that the dark night of the spirit is one long continuous period of suffering. It is rather a long stretch of time in which day follows night and night day, but the length of day and night is not constant but subject to wide fluctuations. Besides, we must recognize that God can lead some souls to perfection without making them pass through this dark night of the spirit.

The sufferings that many devout persons undergo during the winter of the spiritual life are not all imposed by divine action. Some are due to natural disturbances of emotional life. Some temperaments will have a tendency to far deeper and more prolonged spells of sadness than others, or to discouragement. The main sources of emotional disturbance are fretful anxiety, including scrupulosity, the tendency to mental depression and—the most dangerous of all—the schizoid tendency to isolation from friendly contacts with others.

After one has entered into closer contact with God by the prayer of quiet and maintained it for some time, one may be given one or more of the other mystic graces.

One such grace is the prayer of union. This is, according to St. Teresa, a state in which the soul "can neither see nor hear nor understand. God implants Himself in the interior of that soul in such a way that, when it returns to itself, it cannot possibly doubt that God has been in it and it has been in God."

Many holy souls never experience at all the prayer of union, but the author finds several examples among his respondents. He asks the question, whether there is any connection between devotion to mental prayer and the prayer of union. Returning to one of his former statistical hobbies, he comes to the conclusion, on the basis of Yale's coefficient of correlation, that devoting all the time that one possibly can to mental prayer is more likely than not to be associated with the prayer of union. But he admits, on the other hand, that one cannot bring about the prayer of union by devoting all one's free time to mental prayer.

Fr. Moore finds in his material a rather large number of visions,

ecstasies, and locutions—that is, interiorly spoken words. A number of his respondents mention having heard words that seem to come from God, of having been outside themselves, and of having experienced a valid awareness of Christ, the Blessed Mother, or one of the saints.

At this juncture, the author brings up the problem of the reliability of such phenomena and of mystic experience in general. He steers a middle course between the one extreme of blind, uncritical credulity and that of scepticism. Most non-Catholics, particularly psychiatrists, consider all visions and "hearing voices" as mere hallucinations. Many good Catholics do not go so far; nevertheless they are very suspicious of these phenomena and they think it best to eliminate them from serious consideration. They believe, too, that those who "suffer" from mysticism are in serious spiritual danger. The author recounts the opinion of a Catholic priest who was not a psychiatrist: to him, St. Paul was an epileptic because of his fall at the time of his vision of Christ, St. Teresa of Avila was a case of dementia praecox, and the Little Flower, a constitutional psychopath.

The author's position is that the various phenomena classified under the phrase mystic graces may be caused directly or indirectly by God. He admits that some of these phenomena have a natural origin and are counterparts due to a heightened imagination; some have a preternatural origin and are due to the father of lies. But the author maintains that some are truly supernatural in character. The author, who practiced psychiatry for many years, thinks that one who has seen, conversed with, and studied typical cases of dementia praecox, and who would then study St. Teresa of Avila in her ordinary life would never be able to say that she suffered from dementia praecox; on the contrary, he would find her a thoroughly normal person. Besides, the author feels that some visions and other mystic graces are so simple and innocent that it is hard to see how they could be in any way a danger to the spiritual welfare of the soul. Instead, the truly supernatural mystic experiences contribute to an increased love of God and to growth in virtues. In order to decide the origin of such phenomena, the author presents the criteria of genuine and false mystical experiences.

The highest degree of interior life is reached in the experiences that are known as spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage.

The phrase "spiritual betrothal with Christ" is applied to a scene in which Christ in some manner manifests His presence to the soul and in which there takes place a little ceremony whereby Christ be-

troths Himself to the soul and the soul betroths itself to Christ. Needless to say, this scene should arise within the soul, without the soul attempting by imagination or any kind of effort to bring it about or to continue it once it commences.

There are several preparatory stages and conditions of the spiritual life which lead up to this mystical grace. The first stage is one which often lasts for years and which sometimes is a bitter struggle with temptation. During this period the soul is likely to receive some, perhaps many, of the mystic graces already described. However, that is not necessary. The usual termination of this period is due to, or accompanied by, the entering upon a habitual life of mental prayer. At the same time, there commences a vigorous life of self-denial, for an essential condition for spiritual betrothal is being completely purged from all affection for creatures.

Spiritual matrimony, as St. John of the Cross remarks, is incomparably higher than spiritual betrothal, but no one enters it without having first passed through the stage of spiritual betrothal. St. Teresa gives the following account of spiritual marriage. The soul "is brought into this Mansion by an intellectual vision, in which by a representation of the truth in a particular way, the Most Holy Trinity reveals itself in all three Persons. . . It sees these three Persons individually, and yet by a wonderful kind of knowledge, which is given to it, the soul realizes that most certainly and truly all these three Persons are one Substance and one Power and one Knowledge and one God alone, so that what we hold by faith the soul may be said to grasp by sight, although nothing is seen by the eyes, either of the body or of the soul, for it is no imaginary vision." During this scene there are various symbolic exchanges of all personal goods, indicative of a true marriage. Christ bestows on the soul not only the joy of sanctity and the consolation of the mystical graces, but also the inestimable privilege of participation in His sufferings and trials and thus He allows the soul to participate with Him in the salvation and sanctification of men. In the state of spiritual marriage there will no longer be painful periods during which the Beloved is absent. The soul may still have various duties to perform and will never omit or in any way neglect a single one. But it will feel that its main occupation in life is to commune in love and adoration with the Eternal World.

Although spiritual matrimony is the highest degree of interior life, the author once more reiterates that it is not necessary to attain the height of perfection. The heights of perfect love of God may be attained without any of the mystic graces at all, or only a very few. So

that one who might even be in the state of spiritual marriage could not say that by that fact he is superior to an individual who has never received any such favor. For the essence of perfection is not found in the mystic graces as such, but in the perfection of charity to which they conduce.

If a person reaches the height of perfect love of God without experiencing the mystic graces, he reaches the non-mystical equivalent of spiritual betrothal or marriage. This equivalent involves the complete renunciation of all that does not concern one, persevered in till the soul arrives at a habitual state of freedom from all fully deliberate venial sin and devotes itself as far as it is possible completely to the service of God.

This remarkable book deserves a rather lengthy review, because the vast experience of the author in the field of psychology as well as spirituality enabled him to make this book, as the publishers observe "the most comprehensive description of the spiritual life available anywhere." The present reviewer has used, for the most part, the author's own words, without continually resorting to quotation marks, which would make the reading rather laborious.

The reading of the book will not only give a great deal of information about the interior life but will also prove practically useful for anyone who aspires to the greater development of his own spiritual life. For further study, one may find in Appendix I, a rather extensive list of spiritual literature.

A full study of the spiritual life could not neglect the mystic graces, but it cannot be said that Father Moore placed undue emphasis on these extraordinary phenomena. If there is one lesson which this book wishes to impart, it is that Christian perfection does not necessarily consist in the experiences of extraordinary graces, but that it essentially consists in the perfect love and service of God.

Fr. James Van der Veldt, O.F.M.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHARITY IN FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY (V)

CELESTIAL BEATITUDE

We have seen that the merit of all human actions depends on charity. Supernatural value cannot be measured according to the exterior act, but according to the interior disposition of the soul and the fervor of the love that motivates the act. It is charity, considered as a *habitus* and as an act, that merits celestial beatitude.

All theologians teach that beatitude consists primarily or essentially in the operation of the rational part of the soul, and that for integral, complete beatitude both vision or act of the intellect and enjoyment or act of the will are essential. But there is some disagreement as to which of the two makes up the formal element of beatitude—in other words, is it in the operation of the will or in the operation of the intellect that God, the object of beatitude, is formally and immediately attained.

According to Saint Thomas, beatitude is an operation not of the will but of the intellect, and of the speculative intellect rather than of the practical intellect.¹ It consists in the contemplation or vision of the essence of God through immediate insight. Also, "the happiness that follows beatitude pertains to the will...; for the joy itself is the consummation of beatitude."²

The Seraphic Doctor, however, although he holds the primacy of the will over the intellect, follows a middle course and teaches that beatitude consists essentially in both the vision of God and in beatific love of God.

Duns Scotus, whom many Franciscan theologians follow, places the formal *ratio* of beatitude in an act of the will or an act of love of God, and says that vision of God is required antecedently only as a condition. For beatitude, our ultimate end, is simply the highest or supreme Good; but the supreme Good must be willed in the highest degree. Moreover, willing is not the consequence of knowing, but just the reverse.³ Certainly the beatific Object is attained also by the intellect, but it is not as complete and perfect a possession as possession through an act of the will. For "an act is not the more perfect unless it be united to a perfect object. Now an act of the will is united to a thing in itself, as it is in itself. However, an act of the will is not united to a thing except as object in the knower. But the beatific Ob-

ject is absolutely more noble in Itself than it is in the one who knows It. Therefore, an act of the will is united to the absolutely beatific Object under a more noble aspect."⁴ Consequently, it is not through an act of the intellect, "but solely through an act of the will that the blessed is distinguished from the non-blessed."⁵

According to the further opinion of the Subtle Doctor, the act of the will in which beatitude formally consists is not an act of desire or longing preceding the possession of the highest Good. It is absolute enjoyment. For he says that to enjoy is "nothing but an act of clinging to the object because of itself."⁶ In other words, "it is an act of friendship (*actus amicitiae*), by wishing God well in Himself, . . . and this act is properly called charity."⁷

IV. CHARITY, THE SOUL OF FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

From what has been said thus far concerning the sources of Franciscan spirituality, especially concerning the nature of Franciscan charity, we can conclude without hesitation or doubt that the center, soul, and life of the Order of Friars Minor is divine charity.

Indeed, it is generally held by Catholic theologians that charity, the state of friendship with God, is the highest virtue and the essence of perfection. Seraphic spirituality claims no monopoly for itself in teaching this. It is simply that the Franciscan school gives more practical importance to charity than do the other schools. Franciscan theologians and ascetics, moreover, attribute many qualities to charity that are denied, ignored, or only slightly recognized by other schools. Among these qualities are the kinship between charity and sanctifying grace, devotion to the Sacred Humanity of Christ, ecstatic love, appreciation of the affections of the heart, love for creatures, spiritual joy, virtual intention of charity as a requirement for merit *de condigno*, and the act of love as the principal element both for infused contemplation and celestial beatitude. Moreover, Franciscan spirituality confers such high excellence and splendor upon charity and adorns it with such noble and outstanding attributes that it is properly called Seraphic love.

Hence it is that charity must be named as the basic quality, the peculiar and fundamental characteristic, of Franciscan spirituality.

As we have remarked before, there were many Spirituals of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries who denied this. Eminent among them was Ubertino of Casale. These men contended that

the distinguishing characteristic of the Friars Minor is poverty and that it is poverty that properly constitutes evangelical perfection.

In more recent times, Father Ubald d'Alencon holds an opinion that is quite similar to the teaching of the Spirituals. In his work, *L'Ame franciscaine*, he asserts that the formal element of the Franciscan spirit is poverty or absolute detachment from creatures, that it is the principle and distinguishing Franciscan virtue, and the origin, foundation, and form of all the other Franciscan virtues. Moreover, he affirms that "poverty is the source and the form of all virtues: this seems for us the essence of Franciscanism."⁸

In favor of this opinion we could quote our Seraphic Father himself. "You are aware, brethren," he said, "that poverty is the special path of salvation, as the nourishment of humility and the root of perfection, whose fruit is abundant but hidden. For it is the treasure hidden in the field of the Gospel, and to buy it everything must be sold."⁹ And in his second Rule the Poverello wrote: "This is that height of most high poverty, which, my most beloved brethren, has set you up as heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven and has made you poor in goods but has exalted you in virtue. May this be your portion, which leads you into the land of the living."¹⁰

But as far as we know there is no other writer who explicitly agrees with Father Ubald. Scarcely had his work appeared (1912) when many writers openly opposed his position, especially René de Nantes and Bracaloni.¹¹

To form a correct concept of the piety of the Friars Minor we must look into the spirit of our Founder. All historians without exception have stated clearly that Francis was wholly evangelical and that he had an eye for nothing except to follow the teaching of Christ and to imitate His example as perfectly as possible. As Celano wrote: "His chief intention, his principal desire and supreme purpose, was to observe the holy Gospel in and through all things, and with all watchfulness, all zeal, all the longing of his mind and all the fervor of his heart, perfectly to follow the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ and walk in His footsteps. He would recall His words with assiduous meditation and dwell on his works with the most penetrating consideration."¹² The reason for his intense and steadfast zeal is found in his tremendous love; for we do not will what we do not love. Indeed, love arouses the lover to adopt the feelings and the manners of the beloved and to be conformed to him as far as possible.

The most outstanding characteristic of our Seraphic Father was

his love for God. For in all his acts he desired nothing except to manifest a pure and immense love for God. It is evident that the immediate object of the Poverello's seraphic love was Jesus Christ, Whom he loved with an intimate and burning ardor.

However, the charity with which Francis loved the humanity of Christ necessarily impelled and forced him to imitate the life and the virtues of his beloved Lord as faithfully as possible. No one denies that he excelled in the practice of evangelical perfection to an admirable degree, even to the very highest degree, as Celano bears witness: "Francis, the herald of God, trod in the footsteps and path of Christ; and he did not withdraw a single pace until he had in a more perfect manner accomplished those things he had set out to do in a perfect manner."¹³

The Seraphic Saint did not practice the various virtues for their own sake, but because they had shone forth so brilliantly in his beloved Master. By striving to practice them himself, he expressed his love for Christ. Yet it is evident that Francis strove toward charity in a special way. Jesus Christ was the exemplar of all the virtues; but He was the exemplar *par excellence* of charity, for *God is charity*. (I Jn. 4:8 and 16). Moreover, charity is the greatest and the first commandment of the Lord, on which the whole law and the prophets depend (Mtt. 22:40), and it is the special command of the Saviour (Jn. 13:34; 15:12). It seems obvious that Francis, because of his love for Christ and desire to imitate Him, favored and practiced charity above all other virtues.

The other virtues that glowed so brightly in our Seraphic Father sprang from the one root of charity and were, in a sense, nothing else but different facets of his love. About the middle of the thirteenth century the great cardinal, Otto de Chateauroux, speaking of the life of Francis to the General Chapter of the Friars Minor, said emphatically that "no science or letters entered into a form of life such as Francis had led; only fervor and devotion to charity. For men would not be led to this life except through a burning ardor and charity."¹⁴ And Pope Pius XI in his encyclical letter, *Rite expiatis*, after having spoken of the main virtues of Saint Francis, adds this: "Is there anyone who cannot see that all these virtues proceeded from the one and same fountain of divine love?"¹⁵

What can be said concerning the virtues in general can also be affirmed of poverty. Francis loved it with a deep love and fostered it with great care. Yet he did not embrace it because of itself or as an

end in itself, but because he longed to imitate Christ our Lord Who for us was born poor, lived poor, and died poor. As Celano writes: "Taking care that his poverty be similar to the Son of God's, which was already scorned by the whole world, he wished to wed it with everlasting charity."¹⁶ In like manner the Seraphic Doctor says: "Francis often with tears brought to mind the poverty of Jesus Christ and His Mother, the Queen."¹⁷

Besides this, Francis looked upon poverty as absolute renunciation and therefore useful and necessary to attain to evangelical perfection and to lead the apostolic life.¹⁸ For poverty, as Saint Bonaventure puts it, "is able to root out sin firstly, through the expiation of past faults, . . . , secondly, through the lessening of the occasion of sin. . . , and thirdly, through the cutting off of the corrupted roots" of avarice, lust, and pride.¹⁹ Poverty also has tremendous value for the practice of perfect virtue, firstly, because through it acquired virtue is tested. . . , secondly, because through it proved virtue is protected. . . , thirdly, because through it protected virtue is more easily guided to its end."²⁰ "Consequently poverty has great worth for the relishing of interior joy, firstly, because of its extrinsic security. . . , secondly, because of its hope for reward. . . , thirdly, because of its superinfused consolation;"²¹ "and fourthly, it has great power for the spreading of the Gospel, first of all because it makes it more credible. . . , secondly, because it renders it more efficacious. . . , and thirdly, because it makes it more acceptable."²²

Considering the remarkable effects of poverty, we do not wonder that it was extolled by our Seraphic Father as the root of perfection and as abounding in fruit and virtue. It conforms perfectly to the teaching of Jesus Christ Who said: *If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell thy possessions and give to the poor, and thou shalt possess a treasure in heaven* (Mtt. 19:21). For poverty is the best way and means to evangelical perfection. However, in itself it cannot be called perfection. For perfection consists in imitating Christ, not only in tending toward poverty but also in striving for the other virtues, especially charity, which is the essential characteristic of Christ and the formal means of reaching perfection. It is for this reason that after Christ recommended the giving up of all temporal goods, He added: *And come, follow me.* (Mtt. 19:21).

The exterior poverty of Saint Francis was widely known and greatly influenced his own times. It was, so to speak, the visible expression and mark of the Poverello's spirit. But it was *Seraphic* pov-

erty, and the soul of Francis is essentially distinguished by a burning and all-consuming love for Christ. The poverty of Francis both springs from charity and prepares the way for charity. The virtue of charity is at once the foundation and summit of the life of our Seraphic Father.

Blessed Giles of Assisi, who absorbed most completely the spirit of our Seraphic Father, confirms the fact that poverty was esteemed by Saint Francis as the imitation of the poor Christ and the means for acquiring evangelical perfection. As Giles says: "Love poverty so that you may be able to imitate the poor Christ and be more free for God."²³

Since Francis was consumed with a burning love for Christ, it follows that he would communicate this spirit to the whole Order; accordingly he explained clearly to his followers that "the Rule and life of the brothers is this, to live in obedience, in charity, and without property, and to follow the teaching and footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁴ Thomas of Celano, who just a short time after the death of Francis wrote his *Vita prima*, described the founding of the Order in the metaphor of building a noble structure of charity.

The anonymous author of the beautiful treatise called *Meditatio pauperis in solitudine*, explained most clearly the question concerning the main, proper, and characteristic virtue of the Seraphic Order. He set up three virtues peculiar to Francis and the Friars Minor: poverty, humility, and charity. This last virtue perfects the servant of God; yet it is not all-sufficient in itself but must be accompanied by works of poverty and humility. For although charity formally brings about the perfection of the Friar Minor, it contains in itself humility and poverty, which flow from it as from a fountain. "From what has just been said it is clear enough, I think, that a Friar Minor, through an act of perfect charity—that is, an act of love of God and of neighbor—is a special worshipper of God. But in accordance with the opinion of the Lord that no man is able to serve two masters, namely Himself and the world or the riches of sin, there is no alternative but to eliminate the latter choice of masters. Since the small cloak of charity cannot cover both, it is necessary to be a true contemnor of the world. But because the Lord so severely curses pride, His worshipper must also completely avoid pride and to despise himself so as to be a perfect servant of God, spurning all pleasures and lusts of the body by charity, rejecting the riches of the world by poverty, and entirely avoiding honors and glory by true humility."²⁵

Although the spirituality of the Friars Minor is drawn mainly

from the spirit of Francis, it also obtains much from the spirit of the theology that flourishes in the Order. Actually, the Franciscan school puts less emphasis on the question of poverty than on the various aspects of charity, for it is charity that has won the widest attention among our theologians and holds primacy in our theological system.

Saint Bonaventure, who after Saint Francis is the outstanding figure in the history of Franciscan spirituality, is distinguished from other theologians by the ardor of his love, the unction of his words, and the intimacy of his union with God. Not without reason has he been given the title of Seraphic Doctor. John Duns Scotus, who in speculative theology has exercised tremendous influence among the theologians of our Order, is truly the doctor of charity. His entire religious construct is raised on the foundation of love and is completed in love. In general it can be truly said that our theologians have not only seen more clearly and in more detail than others the various powers of love, but have also considered theology itself as a practical science of affective and effective love. Likewise, the ascetical writers of the Order, with the exception of the Spirituals who placed poverty ahead of charity, have explained and expounded charity as set forth and commanded by our Seraphic Father, and have left our theologians to establish it as the hinge and foundation of the spiritual life. Therefore, not only because of the spirit of our Seraphic Father but also because of the theological and ascetical teaching of the Seraphic Order, charity appears with unmistakable clarity as the center and soul of Franciscan spirituality.

We are now in a position to make a comparison between the school of the Friars Minor and the other schools of spirituality which lay special emphasis on charity. From this comparison it will also be quite clear that Franciscan piety is affective and rests on the basis of charity.

Tanquerey considers Saint Francis de Sales as setting up his affective spirituality on the basis of many authors of the Benedictine and Dominican schools.

The Benedictine school has quite a number of affective writers, among whom the most illustrious is Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. The liturgical worship of God is the distinguishing mark of Benedictine spirituality. The Divine Office is the *Opus Dei* and it must be given preference to all other things.

The worship of God is the fountain and center of the spiritual life. In the liturgy, God is especially regarded as the supreme Lord of all things and most worthy of religion (devotion), reverence, and worship. Christ is looked upon mainly as the King of Glory to whom the highest

praise, honor, and worship must be given. The purpose toward which Saint Bernard and his school direct their spirituality can be summed up in this: *That in all things God may be glorified* (I Pet. 4:11); that is, subjectively by reverence and objectively by external liturgical worship.

The entire pattern of Franciscan spirituality, however, is affective. Charity is its foundation, center, and scope. It considers God especially as a God of love and as a true Father. From this springs a tender filial love toward Him. It regards Christ principally in His humanity, sees Him as our Brother, leading a poor and humble life and subjected to many sorrows. From this arises a familiar love for Jesus Christ and an earnest desire to imitate Him and to become like Him as far as possible. The characteristic quality of our spirituality can be summed in the cry of Saint Francis: "My God and my all!"

In looking at the Dominican school we find it is more speculative than practical or affective. Following Saint Thomas, it holds that theology is more a speculative science than a practical one; it attributes primacy to the intellect over the will, for which reason it places both mystical contemplation and celestial beatitude formally in the intellect, and it seeks God more through intellectual knowledge than through experimental cognition or love. The distinguishing characteristic of the Order of Preachers is truth, and its aim is "to contemplate and to transmit to others what is contemplated." On his account Dominican spirituality adheres to the physical concept of love, for in this concept unity effects the quality, measure, and ideal of love; the center of the spiritual life is a thinking-union with God brought about by the intellect and the will. This union is more perfect the more one advances along the road of the spiritual life and is most perfect when one arrives at its summit in mystical union. God is regarded mainly as the Word Incarnate Who humbled Himself through His love for man and linked and united Himself with man.

Comparing the Franciscan Order with the Dominican, Saint Bonaventure wrote: "Some (the Friars Preachers) concentrate chiefly on speculation—from which they have even received their name—then on unction. Others (the Friars Minor) concentrate mainly on unction and then on speculation."²⁶ For the peculiar note of the Franciscan school is charity, with love toward both God and creatures. This school, upholding Voluntarism, ascribes to the will primacy over the intellect and the other powers of man and considers and treats theology principally as an affective and practical science. The spirituality of the Friars Minor has always been of an affective and practical nature. There are

very few Franciscan spiritual writers who give spirituality an essentially intellectual nature. Of course Seraphic piety cannot completely avoid speculation, but when it does speculate (Saint Bonaventure is an example), it nearly always unites the affections of the heart with the profound science of speculation.

In direct difference to the Dominican school, the Franciscan school equates the infused virtue of charity with sanctifying grace and also proclaims that the act of love is the chief element of infused contemplation and celestial beatitude. Because it is imbued with the ecstatic concept of love, Franciscan piety brings about an affection that places no limits on itself, but rather going out of itself completely it is carried forward by the tremendous driving power of the mind to Infinite Goodness and is totally absorbed in It. Following this ecstatic concept, Franciscan spirituality has a special esteem for the Sacred Humanity of Christ, which we know our Lord loved because of the example He gave us. For this reason, Franciscans strive to cultivate a great love for Christ and the utmost proficiency in imitating Him; whence comes the spirit of sacrifice, love for the Cross, and a martyrdom of love which overwhelms the soul and inspires charity not merely in an affective manner but also in an effective and active manner. Saint Francis de Sales gives love the principle role in his way of perfection, yet he does not deny that there is a spiritual combat and that there are sacrifices to be endured, nor does he reduce everything to the extreme simplicity that some writers ascribe to him. Obviously they do not pay sufficient attention (and Tanqueray is among them) to the strong bond that unites Francis de Sales to the Seraphic school. It cannot be doubted that he was influenced by the Seraph of Assisi, by the Order's school of theology, and by Franciscan asceticism. It is certain that Salesian piety is highly affective and is remarkably similar to the spirituality of the Friars Minor. This piety, if considered in the Seraphic Doctor and other writers of renown, can be said to burst forth in consuming, burning love.

* * *

By way of summary, let us repeat that Seraphic charity is perfect in its object and purpose and brings about a state of friendship with God. It embraces not only the acts of the will but also of the other faculties and powers of man, and makes ample room for the affections and for spiritual joy. Above all, it refuses to subject visible creation to a position of servitude, much less of enmity. Franciscan writers in general tend to disregard speculation and use the intellect only as the

handmaid of charity; they place all the powers of man in one object, which is the hinge, center, and constancy of the soul. And thus they make the entire spiritual life radiantly clear and simple.

In selecting and applying the means of perfection, the Franciscan school follows charity as its guide and leader. The motive of love animates and permeates this spirituality at its beginning, in its progress, and to its end. Notions of fear and hope should not be excluded. They hold a secondary place, yet should be allowed to exert some influence.

Charity arouses and draws the will and the whole man to all virtuous acts. Charity is the root, the queen, and the mother of all virtues. Since its immediate object is the Lord Jesus, it moves us strongly to imitate Christ and to conform ourselves to Him.

Hence charity is the root of all good and merit, the principle and foundation of all sanctity.

Just as charity is the principle and instrument of spiritual progress, so is it its norm and measure. It is the form of the virtues and contains all supernatural virtues or habits which are nothing more than the various effects and emanations of the one virtue of love. Love is the essence of perfection, and to the degree that a man has progressed in it, to that same degree he has progressed in sanctity and acquired merit.

Finally and in conclusion, charity is the fruit and the reward, the end and the crown of the entire activity of the spiritual life. This is the importance of charity in Franciscan spirituality.

Fr. James Heerinckx, O.F.M.

Fr. Marvin Woelffer, O.F.M. (Transl.)

(Conclusion)

¹Summa, I-II, q. 3, a. 4 et 5., ²Ibid., a.4., ³Oxon. IV, d. 49, q.4, n.4, XXI, 97b-98.
⁴Ibid, q. ex latere n. 20, XXI, 163a., ⁵Ibid. q. 3, n. 11, XXI, 91a., ⁶Ibid. d. 1, q.5, n.3, VIII, 381b., ⁷Ibid. n. 6, VIII, 385b., ⁸OP. Cit., p. 140., ⁹Bonaventure, *Legenda sancti Francisci*, c.7, n. 1, VIII, 523a., ¹⁰Regula II, c. 6, ¹¹Etudes Franciscaines, XXIX, 1913, 656-58, and *Archiv. Franc. Hist.*, VIII, 1915, 467-81., ¹²Vita prima, n. 84., ¹³Vita secunda, n. 210., ¹⁴"Sermons franciscaines du cardinal Eudes de Chateauroux", ed. P. Gratien, in *Etudes Franciscaines*, XXIX, 1913, 187., ¹⁵A.A.S., XVIII, 1926, 165., ¹⁶Vita Secunda, n. EE., ¹⁷Bonaventure, loc. cit., ¹⁸Cf. Bonaventure, *Apologia pauperum*, c. 11, n.15, VIII, 315a., ¹⁹Ibid., c. 9, n. 14-16, VIII, 298b-299b., ²⁰Ibid., n. 17, VIII, 299b-300a., ²¹Ibid., n. 18-20, VIII, 300a-301a., ²²Ibid., n. 21, VIII, 301ab., ²³Dicta, 112., ²⁴Regula V, c. I, 25., ²⁵pp. 116 ff., ²⁶S. Bonaventure, *Coll. in Hexaem.*, Coll. 22, V, 440b.

QUERIES AND REPLIES

QUESTION: Among the prayers after the Holy Communion are there other prayers of Franciscan origin, besides the one mentioned in the last num. of the Cord?

ANSWER: Yes, there are but they are known under other names. For instance, the mystical prayer "O Most sweet Lord Jesus Christ, transfix the affection" (Transfige; an indulgence of 300 days, for priests only), is attributed in our prayerbooks to St. Bonaventure, but in reality it is a pearl of the famous "Stimulus amoris, the work of James Milan, O.F.M., a disciple of the Seraphic Doctor. This work was generally known as a writing of St. Bonaventure until the appearance of the critical edition of his work.—Then, there is another very favorite prayer, the "Soul of Christ, be my sanctification" (The Raccolta etc., n. 131), of which St. Ignatius of Loyola (d. 1556) is commonly considered to be the author. The historical fact is, however, that St. Ignatius used it with great devotion and that he was one of its most important propagators, but Blessed Bernardine of Feltre, O.F.M. (d. 1494), the outstanding defender of the Immaculate Conception in his time, was the author.

QUESTION: Is it true that the members

of the Third Order Secular can wear the medal instead of the usual scapular and cord?

ANSWER: The Procurators General of the Franciscan Families several times made a petition to the Holy See concerning this faculty, but they have always been answered in the negative. It seems, however, we do not need special legislation as to this problem, because we have another provision of the Holy See regarding this question. The Congregation of Religious, in its official answer given on March, 25th, 1922, pointed out that the Chap. III, Par. 6 of the actual Rule of the Third Order Secular gives the power to Superiors of the Tertiary groups to dispense their subjects from the Rule when there is a grave and just reason. Therefore the Holy See declared that the Superiors by this power have the faculty to give permission to their subjects to wear the medal instead of the scapular and cord also. But notice that they have the power only in individual cases. Individual may include more than one person but not the whole group as such, provided each one submits his reasons. It is the Superior himself who judges the sufficiency of the reasons. A special blessing of the medal is not required; nor is it necessary to wear it under the neck.

—i—

"Be faithful unto death, most dear one, to Him to Whom you have promised yourself, and you shall be crowned by Him with the wreath of eternal life. Short is our labor here below, eternal the reward! Be not disturbed by the tumult of the world which passes as a shadow. Let not the false appearances of this deceptive world delude you. Close your ears to the whisperings of hell and cease its onslaughts with all your might. Gladly undergo all ill-fortune and all affliction for the sake of Christ. All this will be done for those who love and follow Him."

St. Clare of Assisi

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

THE GRACE OF GUADALUPE

There is a feast that the Franciscans of America are privileged to celebrate on the tenth of this month, that of Our Lady of Guadalupe, under the title of Patroness of the Whole of America. There is something significant about that line from the Psalms used as the Communion Prayer of this Mass, which is also emblazoned on the Basilica at the shrine: *Non fecit taliter omni natione*. "He [God] has not done thus for any other nation" (Ps. 147: 20). For it was with these words that Pope Benedict XIV described the gift granted America, the grace of Guadalupe.

You know the beautiful story that began the tenth of December in 1531. It was Saturday. An elderly Indian convert, Juan Diego, was on his way to mass at the Franciscan mission at Tlaltelolco just north of Mexico City. Day was breaking as he took the short cut over the hill of Tepeyac once the shrine of the Aztec goddess Teonantrín. All at once he heard a wondrous warbling of birds, sweeter and more cheerful than he had ever heard from songsters before. Then the singing ceased as suddenly as it began. A voice from the hilltop called him. "Juanito, Juan Dieguito!" Though startled, he was not afraid. A strange joy flooded his soul as he hastened up the hill. And then he saw her, looking for all the world like a sweet young Indian maid. Only her robes were sparkling as if she just stepped out of the early morning sun. The rock on which she stood glowed with iridescent colors. Rainbow hues tinted the earth. Even the mesquite and prickly pear became things of strange beauty. And then she spoke. "Juanito, littlest of my little ones, where art thou going?" Except for his Christian name, she spoke in perfect Nahuatl. "I go to mass and to catechetical instructions," Juan explained. "Know, littlest of my little ones," she said charmingly, "that I am Mary, Virgin Mother of the God for whom we all live, Creator of the world, Master of Heaven and Earth. I desire a temple to be built in my honor on this spot so that all may know of my love and compassion, of my desire to help and protect. For I am a Mother, I love you, and to all who love me, I will be a Mother, I will be a Mother, and I will be a Mother."

I desire. I shall be grateful, and will fill your own life with blessings."

Bowing out of her presence as he did with his Spanish lords, Juan began the three mile walk to Mexico City. True to his title "Protector of the Indians," Zumarraga received the convert kindly. But we can understand and pardon his unbelief. He dismissed the Indian telling him to return some other time. Discouraged, Juan Diego trudged back to Tepeyac. Mary was waiting on the crest of the hill. Falling at her feet he confessed his failure. "Pick some noble messenger;" he begged, "they will never believe me. I am like an old rope, a broken ladder, a worthless little man, yes, a worthless little man." Patiently Mary explained that she had thousands of competent messengers to choose from, but she didn't want them. She wanted her "little Diego" to help her with this task. Her look of love warmed his heart. He was no longer tired, discouraged. Next day he would go back to the Bishop as she asked.

When the servants saw Juan Diego in the patio next morning, they told him the Bishop was busy. But the Indian would not be put off. Hour after hour he waited, until finally the servants grudgingly consented to show him in. But the long vigil and fasting had left Diego exhausted. He could only stutter and stammer confusedly as he spoke to Zumarraga. His emotional display displeased the Bishop. And Juan, making a supreme effort to compose himself, repeated Mary's message. "The man is sincere but deluded," thought the Prelate. He explained to the Indian that he must have some sign or proof of the apparition. Eagerly Juan offered to ask Mary for whatever sign he wished. Somewhat nonplussed Zumarraga left it up to "the lady."

But when Juan Diego left, the Prelate sent some men to follow him. They lost Juan, however, in the fog that enveloped him as he approached the site of the apparitions. Disgruntled, they returned telling the Bishop the man was a trickster, while Juan, oblivious of the whole affair, went on to meet the Lady. "Come here tomorrow," she said, "and I shall give you the sign the Bishop asks for." But Juan did not come. For when he reached home, he found his uncle Juan Bernardino—his only kin, now that his wife had died childless—was on the point of death. All through the night and the next day he kept vigil. When Tuesday morning came, Bernardino asked

Diego to fetch the friars to give him the last sacraments. Diego went, taking the short cut via Tepeyac. As he approached the spot, in his simplicity he thought to himself: "Mary will want to detain me with the business of the Bishop's sign." He left the path to skirt the east side of the hill. But as he picked his way through the underbrush, to his dismay he saw Mary before him. Embarrassed, he began to explain his errand. "Be not angry with me," he pleaded, "I shall return as soon as I can." But Mary only smiled. "Am I not thy mother? Art thou not close to my heart? Let not this or any other affliction disturb thee. Even now thy uncle is restored to health."

The weight lifted from his heart, and once again Juan Diego was filled with that indescribable joy. And Mary went on: "Go to the top of the hill and pick the flowers you shall find there and bring them back to me." Though it was bleak December and the ground frozen, Juan did not hesitate. But even then, he was not prepared for the sight he saw at the top of Tepeyac. Gorgeous Castilian roses were blooming everywhere. Gathering them in the cloak or tilma tied around his neck, he brought them back to Mary. Carefully she arranged them with her own hands into some kind of design and told him to show them to no one save the Bishop. When he reached the prelate's residence, the servants eyed him with scorn. They tugged at the tilma to see what he was hiding, but he would not show them until they brought him to the Bishop. "This is our Lady's sign," he said, dropping the tilma and letting the beautiful roses spill to the floor. The Bishop fell to his knees and stared—not at the roses, but at the tilma. For on the coarse cloth of Juan Diego's cloak, Mary had left the miraculous imprint of her herself as she first appeared in the December dawn.

Such was the beginning of the devotion to *Santa Maria de Guadalupe Siempre Virgen*. For, as she told Juan Bernardino when she appeared to cure him, it was under this title that she wished her picture venerated.

Mary appeared on Tepeyac when the New World was in its infancy. Hardly a generation had passed since Columbus first sighted San Salvador. Little more than a decade earlier Cortez captured Mexico City, breaking the back of a pagan and blood-drenched Aztec empire. She came in a moment of crisis. The Protestant revolt threatened the Church in Europe. Lutheranism had grown

strong. Its armies had sacked the Holy City itself. Switzerland had fallen under the Calvinistic blight. England, which was to be the major force in determining the religion of North America, was on the eve of apostasy.

Christianity must strike new roots, deep roots, in the New World. Yet despite heroic efforts to convert the Indian, results were discouraging. It is never easy to love one's conquerors, particularly if they despise or exploit you. And while Spain's official policy, unlike that of England, was to civilize and Christianize, not exterminate, the Indians, in practice that policy met with opposition. A small group of corrupt politicians under the notorious Nuno Guzman controlled the Royal Audiencia, or court of justice. Bent on achieving wealth and power, they fostered the belief that the Indians are "dumb brutes, created for our service," neither capable nor deserving of Catholicism. They hampered Cortez; they threatened Zumarraga with death; they prompted Pope Paul III's bull, *Sublimis Deus* (1538) condemning their racial heresy and declaring the Indians should "not be deprived of their liberty or property or in any way enslaved," but are to be "converted to the faith of Christ by preaching and by the example of good and holy living."

And God knows, the Spanish soldiery were not always models of that "good and holy living." Polygamy among the Indians was rampant. What good did it do to tell the savage that he must be a man of one wife, when he saw how his conquerors surrounded themselves with many women? No wonder that he often accepted baptism more for appearances' sake than from conviction. It was at this critical juncture that Mary chose to appear.

She came not as a noble lady of Spain, but as an Indian maid to an Indian convert. And her first miracles were for her Indian children. But her greatest miracle for this youngest of her family was the spiritual gift of faith and grace. The decade before her coming counted a million baptisms, but they were mostly children of the mission schools or adults that were dying. Over eight million, however, marked the decade that followed. Indeed, in the entire history of the Church, no conquered nation was ever so quickly or completely converted as New Spain.

How could racial prejudice survive when Mary singled out the Indian as the object of her special love? And so a new nation, a

Christian Mexico, was born from the fusion of Indian and Spanish blood. Truly, as Pope Benedict XIV declared: "Non fecit taliter omni natione. . . He has not done thus for any other nation."

We tend to think of the Virgin of Guadalupe as a local patroness, as the heavenly protector of Mexico alone. But such was not her wish. Naturally enough, she chose the heart of New Spain as the site of her appearance, for it was here her Son's Cross was first planted. But she appeared to an American native, not to his Spanish conqueror. If the Indians were her first concern, however, her love did not rest there. It reached out to the entire land. "I am a Mother of mercy," she told Juan Diego, "to thee and to *all who live in this land* who will love me, trust me, and implore my aid." And not only did she unite the Indians and Spaniards as children of her love, but step by step she extended her reign to the whole hemisphere. In 1576, when she came to Mexico City to stop a plague, she was declared official patroness of that city. In 1754, Pope Benedict XIV made her patroness of New Spain, which included the Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California of today, all of which had missions and chapels dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe. When Mexico separated from Spain in 1821, it was the Virgin of Tepeyac that kept Mexico Catholic. As Pope Leo XIII put it, "[Faith] will last. . . so long as this devotion is maintained." In 1933, Pope Pius XI officially extended her title to Queen of the Americas. And lest there be any misunderstanding of this score, our present gloriously reigning Pontiff, in 1945, sanctioned her claim as "Queen of all the Americas," granting permission for the feast and mass entitled: "Blessed Mary Virgin of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Whole of America." It is that mass, Franciscans celebrate throughout the length and breadth of the hemisphere.

As she informed Juan Diego, Mary wanted her shrine to be visible proof of her love, her compassion, her desire to help and protect those who live in her land. We need her blessings—for ourselves, for our nation. For ourselves we require her occasional reminder that the God she mothered is the "God for whom we all live." Yet how easy for Americans to forget this fundamental truth, immersed as they are in personal problems, family duties, business worries and social obligations. Not that these are not legitimate cares, even as Juan's concern at his uncle's illness. But like that unlettered

Indian, men do not seem to realize that their real needs are God's concern also. Even we religious seem to fear at times that God and His mother will get in our way, hindering us instead of helping us. And with something of his incredible simplicity, we try to by pass Mary, hurrying on about our business. We leave the beaten path and plunge through briars and brambles scratching and bruising ourselves till Mary stops us short, reminding us like very dull children: "Am I not thy mother? Art thou not close to my heart?" Even before we voice our needs she knows them. "Let not this nor any other affliction disturb thee," she tells us as she told the "littlest of her little ones," thus repeating in her own way Christ's injunction: "Do not be anxious what you shall eat, nor what you shall put on. Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow or reap or gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you of much more value than they. Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice and all these things shall be given you besides." (Mt. 6:25-33)

Not only do we need Mary to keep us on the path that leads to her in heaven. We also need her miracles for our nation. Communism threatens to wipe out our Christian breed. Its disregard of human life is as frightening as the bloody Aztec sacrifices. Though it fears to attack us directly, it seeks to surround us on all sides until our life is choked off. Even within our land we have our problems. If an idol is a substitute for God, Americans like the Aztecs have their own form of idolatry, be it pleasure, comfort, power, wealth or simply oneself. We need Mary to break the reign of these gods as she broke Teonantrin's power on Tepeyac. Though we profess through our Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal, we have courts of justice in this land of ours where issues are decided by racial prejudice just as intense as any the Royal Audiencia ever knew. Divorce is but a refinement of polyandry or the polygamy that kept the Indian from embracing Christianity. And how many there are who are Christians more for appearances' sake than any real conviction of heart. We need a merciful mother of divine grace to counteract the scandal of the world, to protect us against ourselves, to fuse a new race of the children of God.

In a certain convent of Spain there used to be a beautiful statue of our Lady. Peasants and villagers came to the convent chapel to pray for favors. And Mary worked so many miracles the place became a miniature Lourdes. Then came the wars. Soldiers entered the convent, drove out the religious, stabled horses in the chapel and destroyed paintings and statues. Then one day peace returned, the soldiers left. The peasants crept back to the convent chapel. The beautiful statue was still there but Mary's hands were missing. Some soldier had broken them off. The convent was repaired, the chapel restored, but the Madonna of the broken hands remained. But although the villagers prayed long and fervently, no more miracles were worked at the shrine. And so this legend sprang up. The miraculous power of the statue would return only if some good individual would kneel before the statue and pray: "Dearest Mother, behold my hands. They are generous, gentle, clean. Take them in place of they own and let your blessings flow upon the world once more."

As she told Juan Diego, Mary has thousands of messengers in heaven who are eager to do her bidding. But she needs you. As Jacinta of Fatima put it: Mary's arms are growing tired holding back the wrath of God. She wants your hands to bring the roses from Tepeyac into your convent, your family, your city and your nation. Hands that are generous, gentle and clean of sin. Give them to her and she will fill your life with blessings as she did Juan Diego's. Though you be but a broken ladder, a useless rope, a worthless little person, she can rework the common clay you are made of as she reworked the macquey of Diego's tilma—only this time with the image of her Firstborn, so that someday you may say with Paul: "It is now no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me. And the life that I live in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me! (Gal. 2,20). Only then can the Virgin of Guadalupe rest, for only then will Mary's motherhood be complete.

Fr. Allan Wolter, O.F.M.

THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes may properly be called the platform for the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Saviour announced them in a solemn manner when a large crowd had gathered about Him. It was in the early part of His public ministry. In the Holy Land there may still be seen a high mountain where, as the legend goes, the Beatitudes were first announced to the world. They are recorded by Saint Matthew, chapter five, verses one to ten.

As we look at the Beatitudes casually we may get the impression that they fell from the Saviour's lips without any definite order or sequence, although we are bound to admire the richness of their content and the beauty and charm of each line. His simplicity intrigues us and their power overwhelms us. The leading word, "Blessed," which introduces each Beatitude undoubtedly has reference to the land and the state of the Blessed. They have overcome the worries and sorrows of this vale of tears and have ascended in the wake of the Saviour to their heavenly home. Though they may not yet be in possession of eternal happiness as long as they live in the earth, they will surely attain their glorious reward after they have successfully fought a good fight on earth.

There is order in all of God's works, and likewise, there is order in His words, for our God is a God of order. What, then, is the order or logical sequence in the Beatitudes which appear to fall from the Saviour's lips in such a casual and almost unpremeditated way? Let us recall that frequently our Lord compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a large banquet hall where the Blessed are seated in long rows at table and where Jesus Himself is the generous and loving host. The books of Wisdom frequently refer to this heavenly banquet and Jesus Himself speaks of it in no uncertain terms. It is the mystic Wedding Feast to which all are invited, though not all will heed the call. This is the picture in the Saviour's mind when He announces the Beatitudes, but in order to visualize this picture we must look at the reward that is the second part of each Beatitude. Thus, the poor in spirit are promised the Kingdom of Heaven. Here we have the festive entrance to the great Banquet, and the poor in spirit are the first in line to enter. They are followed by the meek who will "possess the earth." This expression stands for ownership, or rather for the full rights of citizenship. In other words, the second reward implies that those who enter are free and independent citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. As the Apocalypse of Saint John tells us, there are no tears or sorrows

in God's Kingdom. Hence the third reward or endowment of the citizens of Heaven is celestial joy which knows no tears. When the guests are seated, food and drink are passed. Hence the fourth Beatitude promises plenty of heavenly food and drink. The guests now "taste and see how sweet the Lord is."

At this point the Beatitudes seem to raise the position and standards of the guests. From the rank of citizens they are elevated to the rank of princes. Hence the fifth Beatitude speaks of mercy. But mercy is usually exercised by superiors towards their inferiors. Virtue, especially purity of heart, shines forth more brilliantly in persons of higher rank where it may be seen and admired by more. Thus the pure of heart, whether on earth, high or low, will "see God." That is in the sixth Beatitude, or the sixth rank of the Blessed. They are closer to the King who is seated at the head of the table. The peace of the world, though desired in every home and every community, is nevertheless in its larger aspect in the hands of princes. For that reason those who on earth make and exercise peace, whether they are on thrones or in hovels of clay, will be called "the Children of God," because in the Kingdom of Heaven they are seated near the King, as young princes do in royal palaces. The highest reward is attained by those who suffer persecution on earth for Christ and His Church. They are seated on either side of Christ the King, and to them is promised the Kingdom of Heaven in the plenitude of all its joy and glory.

Thus the heavenly banquet is filled with guests who have walked the arduous road on earth and have remained faithful in their struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil. These struggles and these temptations and trials are found in the first part of each Beatitude. The sequence is prompted by the power exercised on the human soul by each of these worldly forces. If, in the rewards, our Lord describes the glory of the Prince of Heaven and of the elect that surround Him, it is evident that in the first part of the Beatitudes He describes and enumerates the various ways in which the Prince of the World seeks to block and divert God's people from the narrow road to the gate of God's Kingdom.

Wealth and earthly possessions are the immediate and most fascinating attractions to man. They are the object of the lust of the eyes. Here belong the vices of avarice, greed, and envy. The greed for power is the next evil in the world. It originates in pride and generates oppression, tyranny, bloodshed and warfare. Against these Jesus holds out the weapon of meekness. Afflictions of all kinds disturb a human existence and make life miserable. These afflictions

may be corporal or spiritual, and they may come from wicked people. The shedding of tears may arise also from remorse for our sins or the sins of the world. Perhaps the most appropriate name for this earth is, "the Vale of Tears", and we need not wonder that Our Saviour foresaw this when He uttered the Beatitudes. The main reason why tears flow so abundantly in this world is the absence of justice and righteousness. Hence, blessed are those who dedicate their lives to bringing about justice in this world, between high and low, between rich and poor, between the nations of the earth. If the leaders were to possess a sense of justice and righteousness, this would be a happier world. To hunger and thirst for justice means to be animated by the zeal of God.

Because there is little justice in high places, there is a lesser degree of mercy. Justice comes first, but mercy is its God-like companion. Look about in the world and you will find that the name and exercise of mercy are being trodden underfoot, and yet God is rightly called, "the God of mercies." All the preceding virtues are easily climaxed by the beautiful virtue of purity of heart. This virtue is assailed constantly by the vice of lust, of sensuality, of intemperance, and those gross defilements that are an abomination to the Lord. Our Saviour loved this virtue and when He places it among the Beatitudes we realize that He speaks from His heart. Again, it is the Prince of Peace, and therefore, instead of the royal scepter He holds the olive branch of peace in His right hand. Peace has always been the greatest boon to mankind, while wars and rumors of wars have destroyed everything that is good, true and beautiful. Truly the peacemakers are the Children of God. The last Beatitude contains a personal request of our Divine Saviour. For, "persecution for justice's sake" is the persecution of Christ and His Church. Here pass before the Saviour's eyes the long lines of martyrs and missionaries who have suffered death for the sake of the Cross and here also belong those multitudes of peoples and nations who in our day are being trodden underfoot by irreligious and impious leaders.

Briefly, we might ask where in the spiritual life do these golden Beatitudes have their place and their function. Saint Bonaventure, the seraphic Doctor, in a book called "Breviloquium," or "Brief Treatise," sets forth in a marvelous manner how all the spiritual forces, graces and virtues are interrelated so as to form a gracious "lignum vitae" or Tree of Life. He also points out that each of the above is destined to counteract one or several of the vices or evil influences in this world. In other words, the seraphic Doctor opens for

us the armory of Satan and the armory of God.

Starting from the root of all evil, pride, he quotes Saint John's brief allusion to "the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life." From these he deduces the seven Capital Sins and shows the wide and varied ramifications.

In the armory of God he enumerates the seven Sacraments and shows how each one of them counteracts the effects of the seven vices. He then points out how the seven virtues aid and strengthen the sacramental graces and how each one of them serves as an antidote to the poison issuing from our sinful nature and the vices. Though three of the virtues are implanted in the soul by God, all of them need man's cooperation and constant exercise. In the higher reaches of the spiritual life we find the seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. These, too, require man's cooperation, but since they are gifts they act upon the soul in a more facile and delectable manner. In fact, through them the Holy Ghost draws us near to God. Above the Gifts we find the glorious array of the Beatitudes. They are not so much virtues or Gifts, but rather states or conditions to which the soul has been raised through strenuous efforts and whole-hearted cooperation. Our Saviour takes it for granted that those who possess the Beatitudes will not relinquish their enviable position but will remain faithful until they receive "the crown of life." The fruits of the Holy Ghost, which are many and varied in number, are seen like little stars about the lofty branches of the spiritual Tree of Life. It must, of course, be remembered that the sap and the driving power in this Tree is the grace of God which the Holy Spirit denies to no one.

Fr. Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M.

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"What you have vowed to God render to Him faithfully and He shall reward you. Look to heaven, dear one, which beckons us on, and take up the Cross and follow Christ Who has gone the way before us: for whatever be the tribulations we have here, we shall enter through Him unto His glory."

St. Clare of Assisi

THE EXPECTATION OF CHRIST

"Cur Deus Homo?" Why did God become man? Why did He, the Unbegotten Word of eternity, become the byword of time-enclosed tongues? Why? Saint Anselm answers his own question in these profound words: "God became man, that man might become divine!" ". . . The Son of God became man", says Saint Thomas, "in order to make us, as it were, gods by His grace."

Whether the Incarnation of the Son of God had been decreed for its own sake or whether primarily for the Redemption of fallen man does not absorb one here. The overwhelming mystery that completely enthalls the soul is that. . . God became man! He, the Law-giver Whom the whole world cannot possibly contain, is "born of a woman and made under the Law" (Gal. 4:3). This season of the year vividly recalls to our minds once again that quiet night "when the goodness and kindness of God our Savior appeared" (Tit. 3:4), that never-to-be-forgotten night on which God the Father showed "in the ages to come the overflowing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7).

Mother Church, contemplating this *Donum Dei*, can only exclaim in the opening words to the feast of the Circumcision: "O admirabile commercium!" Behold, She seems to say in that exclamation, now a Virgin can say to God: "Thou art my Son: this day have I begotten Thee" (Ps. 2:7). Now a shepherd can say with the Seraphim: "Holy, Lord God of Hosts!" Now the creature can say to the Creator: "Abba, Father!" For the "mystery which from ages has been hidden in God, the Creator of all" (Eph. 3:9), the prodigy that stupifies all thought and holds it in suspense, is made flesh and dwells amongst us, as Christ, "the image of the unseen God, Firstborn before every creature" (Col. 1:15), becomes the Son of Man! Incredible though the truth may be, "though He was by nature God, yet He did not think He should cling to His equality with God: rather He stripped Himself by taking the nature of a slave and being made like unto men" (Phil. 2:6,7).

The Incarnation should not have taken the Jews by surprise; it was rooted and inextricably embodied in the Scriptures which they so jealously guarded. And yet they treated the Fact with an indifference bordering on contempt. St. John, in his Gospel and epistles, is overcome by the Jews' disavowal of Christ. At times he lingers to the point of tears on his own nation's rejection of the long-awaited Messiah. This thought must have been uppermost in his mind when he began his Gospel, for no sooner had he finished the first few lines of his narra-

tive than he records: "He was in the world. . . and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (Jn. 1: 10,11). The King, St. John seems to cry out, is set at naught by His subjects!

The Synoptics present much the same sad picture. His people have no room for Him beside their flaming hearths, even less in their frigid hearts. "I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to the sons of my mother" (Ps. 68:9)! Had Israel but "known the gift of God" (Jn. 4:10), it would not have given Him a drafty cave for His palace nor a senseless beast for His court. Isaiah's forbodings were not entirely ungrounded: "The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel has not known Me and My people have not understood" (Is. 1:3). When Our Lord said through the inspired writer: "I called and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded" (Prov. 1:24), it was a terrible indictment of a world that did not know the time of its visitation (Lk. 19:44). It was a paltry return of love to a Love Whose delight it was "to be among the children of men" (Prov. 8:31)! "You know the graciousness of Our Lord Jesus Christ—how, being rich, for your sakes He became poor, that so through His poverty you might be enriched" (2 Cor. 3:9)!

The Incarnation did not approximate the suddenness of a bolt of lightning for the Jews. It happened after centuries of expectation and revelation. To show this, I think it would profit us to go back, even to the dawn of Creation, and for a brief moment watch the gradual blossoming of that "mystery which from ages has been hidden in God, the Creator of all" (Eph. 3:9), which was realized one star-spangled evening "when all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course" (Wisd. 18:14).

The Promise to Our First Parents

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. For six bewildering days Love overflowed into creation and from nothing there came, by a creative act of the Divine Will, such an inundation of prodigies from on high that on the sabbath of rest God could see that all the things that He made were very good. And the best of all the works of God's hands was man, the breath of Divinity, who walked before all creation as the vestige of God, a little less than the angels. To His own image God created him: male and female He created them, their souls emblazoned with the impression of Divine Life, enriched with graces and gifts that transcend the human mind, deified souls that presented lustrous earthly counterparts of God's own divine perfections. Man in grace was an earthly mirror in which were reflected

the divine features of the God-Head. His destinay was a dazzling one!

But before long a sinister streak casts its shadow over Divinity's resplendent canvas of creation, bearing in its ruinous track the foul pigments of hell. It is the serpent, the most subtle of the beasts of the earth which the Lord God had made (Gen. 3:1). The father of lies had chosen his guise well. He cautiously approaches the woman of Paradise and hisses into her curious ears: "Go ahead, eat of this tree. Far from dying you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil! Eat! Your eyes shall be opened to see that you are Gods!" The poison of a jealous asp is under his lips (Ps. 13:3). And Eve, in a gesture that shook the destiny of creation, takes of the fruit of the tree, eats, and gives to her husband who also eats. Indeed, their eyes were opened—that part of Satan's promise was true—but only to perceive that they were naked. It is the first sin, the first hateful, hell-inspired shout of defiance hurled by a petty human creature at his all-powerful, all-holy Creator. It is the first black thread of evil that has since covered creation in a requiem pall of death and desolation. The mirror of God is shattered, His reflection distorted. Eve, the mother of the living, now becomes the mother of the dead.

And so it happened. What was to be a fountain in Adam and Eve transmitting supernatural life to coming heirs was now a stream polluted with death-dealing waters. God's plan was deflected, but not thwarted! He Who in a wonderful manner created human nature would in a still more wondrous way renew it. There was no hesitation, no doubt. Turning a vengeful countenance to the serpent of hell, Almighty God strikes untold terror in that fiendish mind: "I will put enmities between thee and the Woman, between thy seed and her Seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. 3:15)! It is the enunciation of the decree of the Immaculate Conception, the proto-gospel of the New Order, the first hint of Christ.

The Promise to Abraham

Abraham was a man of profound faith and unquestioning obedience. He was an intimate of God and the great Father of the Jewish race. We all know the story of how his faith was put to a test one day by God when he was told to "take thy only-begotten son, Isaac, whom thou lovest. . .and offer him for a holocaust" (Gen. 22:2). Abraham rose in the middle of the night to begin preparations, Scripture tells us. "He who had received the promises. . . 'In Isaac shall they seed be called' offered up his only-begotten son, reasoning that God has power to raise even from the dead" (Heb. 11:18,19).

Because of his ready faith, even in the face of God's apparently contradictory statements, Abraham merited God's blessings: "By my own self have I sworn. . .because thou hast done this thing and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is by the sea-shore. . .And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice" (Gen. 22:16-18). In the light of later prophecies we know that God's promise to Abraham was fulfilled in Abraham's most illustrious descendant, Our Savior Jesus Christ Who was "born of a woman, born under the Law. . .that we might receive the adoptin of sons" (Gal. 4:4,5). For, as St. Paul says earlier in the same letter, Our Lord became a curse for us, "that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, that through faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal. 3:13,14).

Christ and the Prophets

Prophet follows prophet in the slowly climaxing prelude to our Redemption, each succeeding spokesman of God adding more clarifying notes, more force than his predecessor to the approaching drama. Each in turn takes his position in the limelight for a short while, speaks his inspired lines to an anxious world, and then retreats into the shadows of Limbo, there to await the fulfillment of all that he foretells. Each in succession, according to his gifts from God, dissipates a portion of the mist that clouds the radiant star of Jacob which is waxing more brilliant with the shortening of time.

Scripture tells us the story of Balac, the king of Moab, who sent messengers to Balaam, a soothsayer, to bribe him to come and curse the people of Israel who were a threat to his domain. Balaam told the messengers that God forbade his going with them. More messengers with more money came and asked him a second time. And Balaam, in his passion for money, told the messengers to stay the night while he inquired what the Lord wanted him to do, even though he had been fully informed already that it was not God's will that he should go. God punished Balaam by letting him go, but not to curse the people of Israel as he would have done. Balaam is obliged by God to bless them and to prophesy good things of them: "How beautiful are thy tabernacles, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel. . .I shall see Him but not now: I shall behold Him, but not near. A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel. . .Out of Jacob shall He come that shall rule. . ." (Num. 24:5, 17,19).

Micheas, a prophet contemporary with Isaias, makes a very pointed prophecy concerning the Savior, the one which the chief priests and Scribes quoted for Herod at the time of the Magi's inquiry. It was unmistakably clear: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art by no means least among the princes of Juda; for from thee shall come forth a leader who shall rule My people Israel: and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity" (Mich. 5:2).

It is striking to note in this connection that He Who would one day proclaim Himself as the "Living Bread that has come down from heaven" (Jn. 6:52) should be born in the little town of Bethlehem which in Hebrew signifies "House of Bread". St. Augustine sees in this House of Bread a "resplendent manger, in which has lain the food of animals, but also the Food of Angels!" Extending the analogy even further, we can say that He would not only be *born* in a House of Bread, but He would *remain* imprisoned therein until the consummation of the world that we might have Christmas every day of our lives.

God renews again His promise of a Messias to the Jews through the prophet Aggeus in the famous words: "Yet one little while and I will move the heaven and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations: And the Desired of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory. . . (Agge.2:7,8).

Through the mouth of other holy men, such as Daniel and Ezechiel, God gives the Jews more revelations of their coming King. He is to be the Expected One.

The Prophet Isaias

Isaias, called "the great prophet" by the Holy Spirit (Ecclus. 48:25), deserves a category all his own. With astonishing clarity he foretold the coming of Christ in numerous prophecies. "He showed what should come to pass for ever, and secret things before they came" (Ecclus. 48:28), so much so that he seems to be more of an evangelist than a prophet, one who had witnessed rather than foretold the mystery of our Redemption. His words every good Jew knew well.

Time and time again Isaias assures the Chosen People that He is approaching very near: "Be comforted, be comforted, my people. . . the glory of the Lord shall be revealed" (Is. 40:1,5)! And again: "Say to the fainthearted: Take courage and fear not: . . . God Himself will come and will save you" (35:4)! "The beauty of Carmel, and Saron, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the beauty of our God" (35:2). Once more he cries out: ". . . Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold thy Savior cometh. . ." (62:11)!

Isaias gives the Jews several signs. The Messias would come from David's royal lineage: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root" (11:1). He would be born in an unusual manner: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (7:14).

At His actual Birth Isaias thrills with unbounded joy: ". . . O Jerusalem, thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (60:1)! And again: "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have patiently waited for Him. . ." (25:9). "A child is born to us, and a son is given to us, and the government is upon his shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (9:6). Earlier in the same chapter Isaias makes reference to the birth of the radiant Star of Jacob: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: to them that dwelt in the region of the shadow of death, light is risen" (9:2). He would say to the shepherds recently returned from Bethlehem's cave: "Get thee upon a high mountain, thou that bringest good tidings to Jerusalem: lift it up, fear not. Say to the cities of Juda: Behold your God" (40:9)!

Almost as if he had been there on that cold night in the cave with the lonely Savior rejected by His people even before His entry into the world, Isaias writes: "The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel has not known Me, and My people have not understood" (1:3). In many places Isaias dwells at length on the coldness and ingratitude of the Jews which was to be so evident on the night of the Savior's birth. This passage is most striking: "I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. . . But thou hast not called upon Me, O Jacob, neither hast thou labored about Me, O Israel. . . Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money. . . But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities" (43:15,22,24). The Infant God begs of the obdurate Jews: "Put Me in remembrance"; and looking forward to His tremendous Sacrifice on Calvary, He immediately adds: "And let us plead together" (43:26). But the ungrateful Jews, who always set aside an empty place at their Paschal meal for Elias, had no room for Him, their God, in the inn (Lk. 2:7)!

For thousands of years the Jews had sent up to heaven their soulful "Veni, Domine", expressed in Isaias' touching plea: "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens and wouldst come down" (64:1)! They had waited and prayed for centuries for a Redeemer, prayed and waited

for centuries more that the "earth be opened and bud forth a Savior" (45:8). And yet, when He, the Long-Awaited One, came. . .! The pitiful contrast of Bethlehem, foreseen seven centuries before by Isaias ("The ox knows his owner. . ."), speaks volumes!

Isaias had not missed a detail.

* * *

Christ was revealed. He was expected. We have briefly seen that. Had they correctly read the "signs of the times" (Matt. 16:4), the Jews would have run with jubilation to the Desired of Nations. But their expectation of Christ was a leader of devastating might and power over the enemies of Israel, a conception of our Savior depreciating indeed, but in keeping with the nationalistic sentiments of an earthly-minded people. The Jews had strayed far from God's house; and, through constant obstinacy, they had lost much of that close contact with the things of God which formed practically all that was glorious in their long history.

The Jews' infinite loss was our inestimable gain. "Behold what manner of charity the Father has bestowed up us" (1 Jn: 3:1), that He sent forth the Orient from on High to deliver those that "walked in darkness. . .and dwelt in the region of the shadow of death" (Is. 9:2). "God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son" (Jn.3:16), and the Son so loved us that He became poor for us, that "so through His poverty we might become rich" (2Cor.3:9). Indeed, for us! Propter nos homines et nostram salutem! For us the Word of God became an inarticulate Babe! For us Divine Omnipotence sought the support of a woman's arms! "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His way" (Rom. 11:33)!

Venite, adoremus!

Fr. Mario DiCicco, O.F.M.

"When you see a poor person, you ought to consider Him in whose name he comes, Christ that is, who took our poverty and infirmity on himself. For such a person's infirmity and poverty is a kind of mirror for us, in which we ought to behold with pitying regard the infirmity and poverty which our Lord Jesus Christ bore in his person for our sake."

St. Francis of Assisi

MEDITATION ON THE LOVE OF GOD

During the Middle Ages there appeared many ascetical treatises dealing with the means of stimulating love of God in the soul. Of such is the "Stimulus Amoris" of James of Milan,¹ who accommodated the doctrines of Saint Bonaventure to his own way of thinking. This treatise concentrates on perfection, the hindrances to reaching it, and its ultimate completion in mystical contemplation. The following excerpt is a translation of Chapter XVII, which we have entitled: "Meditation on the Love of God."

Because the heart of a contemplative does not cease or should not cease to inquire how to burn with an ever greater love for his Creator, I have composed for this purpose, somewhat as an incentive, these poor stammering words.

First of all, O Man, understand that there is nothing that can so inflame you with love for God as considering the gift of His immense benefits. For in this very fact that you consider how liberal He is in bestowing upon you ineffable goods, you shall know that He loves you exceedingly. And what excites more to love than being loved and desired? Mend, no matter how cruel they are, respond to love, for "they love those that love them" (Mt. 5:46); but such men fail to respond to the love of their Creator, for they are driven on by the devil, that serpent of old. Think, therefore, of whatever benefit you will, and you shall find not a little reason for loving your Creator.

Draw near to Him, then, in this manner. You must think not untruthfully but truthfully, and place yourself before your God just as He is in heaven; and imagine yourself to be His, not your own; and do not doubt that in this way you will ask of Him nothing that pertains to your harm, but only to your salvation. Certainly, all these things that He has done for you are reasons and incentives for love. Why do you not love Him since you are His, since He is ready to give you all things? Do you not love that man dearly who gives you some trifling gift? Why, then, do you not love Him much more Who gives you all things. Who even gives you Himself? Therefore, if you love yourself, why do you not love Him who fashioned you? You have destroyed yourself in the past, and you still go on destroying yourself, and yet you love yourself. Do you not have reason, then, to love Him Who created you, healed you, and continually sustains you? Therefore, say to the Lord: "O Lord, I am Your creature, and You cannot deny Yourself to me."

But before you continue, ponder what you have already said and be inflamed with love. Who can refrain from throwing himself imme-

diately upon God, not half-heartedly but completely, forgetful of everything else, when he considers that God, the greatest good, the delight of the angels, the reward of the blessed, is his very own? God cannot deny Himself to weak and sinful men whose misery no one can express; what will God do for one who may be a weak man and a sinner, but who is converted to Him and searches after Him? God desires us to seek and to receive Him, for He said: "Ask and you shall receive" (Jn. 16:24). I do not know why we labor further. Why do we daily afflict ourselves over nothing when we can possess the Creator of all things? What will we seek further if we can possess every good so easily? Why do we covet a life full of miseries?

O Lord my God, what have we given to You other than injury, in return for Your having given Yourself so freely to us? For it gives nothing to You we possess You, but You have so loved us because You say Your delights are to be with us (Cf. Prov. 8:13) Why do You love us so much that You give Yourself to us more generously than You give anything else for which we may ask? Indeed, I do not wish to possess anything else when I may have my God. I will adorn myself with jewels (cf. Isa. 61:10) and lead Him into the chamber of my heart and rest there with Him. I know well that He desires nothing more; for He desires to enter, and He has been knocking for a long time. I am deeply grieved that I have so long deprived myself of such a good. Therefore I say to Him: "I know that You love me more than I love myself; I will no longer be concerned about myself but I will dwell only in your delights, and you will take care of me. For I can not attend both to myself and to You. As an exchange, therefore, do You attend to my infirmity that You may raise me up, and I will attend to Your goodness that I may delight in it. I am exceedingly enriched with You while You gain nothing from me, nevertheless, I know that you are generous to me and both sustain me and urge me on. How is this? Indeed, that I may realize that I hate myself, but that You love me.

O Lord, if I should wish to discover in all things the signs of Your love, I would be able to express neither the benefits of nature nor of good fortune, not the benefits of grace nor of glory, even though "I should speak with the tongues of men and of angels" (I Cor. 13:1). And thus, since on these things I must be silent, I will sigh a little with Your Son, eternal Father. How great was Your love for man, my God, Who loved him so much that You willed man to be God and God to be man! What more could You have done for man than unite Him inseparably to Yourself? And what shall I say of the weaker sex?

You willed Him Who was Your only-begotten Son to be born of a woman and to be called the son of a virgin. O Lord, You have greatly exalted the human race in each sex; for You willed that Your Son, Who is equal to You, be a man and the son of a woman. You have not shown such evidence of love toward the angels, "for nowhere doth he take hold of the angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold" (Heb. 2:16).

It is indeed a wonder how the hearts of the sons of men are not moved to respond to Your love. When we sinned, what did You have to do other than cast us into the depths of hell, and create in a moment, if You so wished, another and more noble creature? But Your love was so great that even after the fall, You vouchsafed to come to us so benignly, and after we had offended You, You exalted us more than before. Why was this exaltation? Should our fault have deserved exaltation? No, indeed; but lest we flee farther away from You in our misery, You willed to unite human nature inseparably to Yourself. Your love seems the more marvelous, my God, in that You love and exalt those who hate You. Therefore, if You Who are the highest, so exceedingly love us who are nothing, why do we wretched ones not love You, since You are our only good?

Therefore, O God, that You might exalt us, You deigned to be born as an infant; and that you might make us—beasts that we are through sin—into creatures of heaven, You deigned to be placed among beasts in a manger. O wonderful outpouring of divine goodness! O detestable blindness of our eyes! Here is ice, not a heart! Why, O my heart, why do you not melt at this heat? Woe is me! I do not know in what further ways God can seek us; yet after all He had done He still does not have our love. What shall I say? Christ, Who is the refuge of the banished, willed to flee into Egypt. O Lord, should You have to flee, You Who are everywhere? Certainly not, because You surround Your enemies by Your power; but You submitted to this suffering so that You might thereby manifest Your love for me, and so that I might learn to seek refuge with You when I am persecuted by my enemies. O my God, I see clearly that You are all mine and that You desire to possess me entirely!

O heart of stone! O heart that is not a heart! Why should you not be inflamed with love? "Stone melted with heat is turned into brass" (Job 28:2), and you remain unchanged in spite of such heat of love. Therefore you are stone, not flesh. And is it no a matter for wonder that the flesh of a heart can be harder and more insensible than stone? But has not the Lord said that He "will take away the stony

heart out of their flesh and will give them a heart of flesh (Ezech 11:19)? But rather from the fact that a stone is more quickly changed than a heart of flesh, it must be that He gives a stony heart in exchange for a heart of flesh. I say it to our shame. O heart most vile, most vain, most unfaithful! Why do you hate yourself so? Why do you thus wound and consume yourself? Why do you not love Him Who loves you so strongly? O most cruel heart! Why do you love death more than life? Why do you not receive the One seeking you? O stones and creatures without senses, weep for the madness of my heart! In truth, O Lord, if you were to hate me, still would I have to love You because You are my God and alone "my refuge, my protector" (Ps. 17:2, 8) and ruler. But how much the more should I love You, since You love me so exceedingly and pursue me even when I flee from Your benefits? You love me so greatly that You seem to hate Yourself for my sake. Did You not will, Judge of all, to be judged in my stead, and to undergo for me a most ignominious and terrible sentence of death? O my God! What more must You do? Rather, tell me what more could You do? In truth, if an ordinary person should have done this for me I would love him forever; why then do I not love You, my God? Indeed, the outpouring of Your blood which is completely full of charity ought to inebriate me; Your embrace alone should inflame me; how much the more, then, Your terrible passion so full of shame and anguish? Truly, You have desired all of me, You Who have given Yourself entirely to me.

And who demanded this death of Yours, my Lord? What concern need you have had for us, most detestable of creatures? Truly, nothing other than Your exceeding goodness and infinite love demanded this. For if You willed to redeem us only, You could have done so in another manner; but You vouchsafed to accomplish our redemption in such a way that You might inflame us with even more of Your love. O love and desire of the heart! O delight and sweetness of the mind! O love and flame of the soul! O light and brightness of the eyes! O melody to the ears! . . . Why am I not totally drawn by love of You? Why is there anything in me other than love? How can I meditate on any other thing? What is sweeter than Your love? . . . Why am I not trapped by it and held captive? Your love surrounds me on all sides, and I do not know what love is. Alas, why do I remain so unreasonably obdurate? Why does vanity attract me more than truth? Why does the wickedness of a creature entice me more than the kindness of my Saviour? Why do I prefer the stench of dung to the boundless love of my Redeemer?

How exceedingly have You loved man, my God! Not only have You willed to suffer on the cross for him, but You have also visited him in the depths and have led him back with You on high. Could You not have summoned men, O Lord, through some one of Your angels? Did You need to lead him back through Yourself? And do You wish to associate with man? Why do you deign to dwell with man in every place? What does man himself possess other than vileness? Why do You love him so intensely? Even after You arose from the tomb, You willed to appear to man for forty days (Acts 1:3), and having been glorified You wished to eat with him, and giving his peace You gave Yourself to him for handling (Cf. Lk. 24: 36ff). But it was not sufficient, Lord, that You were crucified for man and that You led him out of the depths. It seems that You loved man so much that You were not able to abstain from him. Were you unmindful that we would be ungrateful even for the ineffable benefit of Your passion? . . . How marvelous is Your love, since You could not be separated from men. When You were about to ascend to the right hand of the Father, did You not give that marvelous power to man that he might have You on the altar whenever he wished? Before You underwent death You gave this power to him so that he would not fear to lose You. But why did You do this when You were going to send the Holy Spirit to us? Why do You wish to dwell always with man? Why did You wish to incorporate us completely in Your body and have us drink Your blood? Was it not that we might have one mind and one heart with You, through Your inebriating love? What does it mean to drink Your blood, the life of our soul (cf. Lev. 17:11, 14), other than to unite our soul inseparably with Yours? Certainly this is what You will, this is what You desire, my God—rather my Lord and my Redeemer—this is what You have labored so long to accomplish; indeed, for this You labored from Your infancy, You Who poured out Your blood full of love for us, You have given all this to us. Amen.

Fr. Edward M. Wilson, T.O.F.

Duns Scotus the Doctor of the Immaculate Conception

Question: *Is it really true that Bl. John Duns Scotus, surnamed the Subtle and Marian Doctor, after having defended the privilege of the Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary in his early lectures at Oxford, later seemed to be so doubtful about it, in his lectures at the University of Paris, that we may say: the writing expressing his mature mind only assert the speculative possibility of the Immaculate Conception, not that it has happened.*

The objection is not new; it has been repeatedly moved against Duns Scotus and his School up to our days, but it is unheard of before the first quarter of the 17th century, in which time the chronology of Duns Scotus Commentaries in the Sentences of Peter Lombard was upset by a terrific mistake of the critical editors of his "Opera omnia", mistake that only recently has been redressed by Father Charles Balich and the editors of the monumental Vatican edition of Duns Scotus' works (I. Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, Prolegomena, Civ. Vaticana, 1950, p.1 ff.). A brief account of Prof. Balich's discovery, which has revolutioned the methods of textual criticism since his freshman time at Louvain (cf. Anonymous, *Les commentaires de J. D. Scot*, Louvain 1927), is perhaps the best answer to the 300 years-old objection.

The early lectures in the "Sentences" held by Duns Scotus at Oxford between 1297 and 1301 (probably also at Cambridge), and which he himself quotes as "Lectura prima," and that therefore would constitute the original "Opus Oxoniense", were never printed and are only known to us by a couple of mss., very incomplete, and some questions dispersed in other writings which render the reconstitution of the primitive text practically impossible for the moment. From the other side, ms. tradition gives us evidence that what Hugh MacCaughwell (Cavellus) published at Antwerp, in 1620, with the title of "Opus Oxoniense," and that Luke Wadding, with the aid of the Irish Fathers of St. Isidore's College of Rome, re-edited with the same title at Lyons, in 1639, is not the inaugural commentary of the young bachelor Duns Scotus at Oxford, but his last and capital theological work, a real "Summa theologica", which Scotus simply called "Ordinatio" while he was correcting it, completing it, and putting it in order at Cologne in 1307-1308, when death compelled him to leave his masterpiece unfinished and sometimes illegible, as his disciples testify.

Other mistakes of the 17th. century editions of Duns Scotus'

works, such as interpollations of cancelled texts and of footnotes from other hands, omission of Duns Scotus critical notes and additions, confusion of students notes (reportationes) with Scotus revised texts, etc. have advised us to prefer as a rule the earlier printed editions, such as the incunabula of Maurice O'Fihely (de Portu, archbishop of Tuam, d. at Galway A.D. 1513).

It is also beyond doubt that Duns Scotus commented the 3d. book of the "Sentences," at Paris, more than once, and even if he had not time to discuss the questions concerned with the Immaculate Conception before his expulsion from the University as a popist, by Philipp the Fair in June 1303, he surely disputed those questions at Paris after his return in 1304, and before he received his Master degree in sacred Theology in 1305.

A half-a-dozen different "Reportata Parisiensia" for the question of the Immaculate Conception (*Sent.* III, d.3 q.1), of which not a single one bears the critical note of "Lectura examinata" what would give us a fair guarantee that it was revised by Duns Scotus, forbids us to accept any definitive conclusion about the mind of Duns Scotus in this particular question. Nevertheless, if for the time being we wish to make up our mind about the teaching of Duns Scotus at Paris, we must base it on expressions such as: "Christ preserved Mary from all original sin"; "Mary was preserved from all fault, both actual and original"; "The Holy Trinity, foreseeing from all eternity the passion of Jesus, preserved Mary from all actual and original sin", etc. etc., which we read for instance in the full commentary of Paris, called "Lectura completa" (Cf. Balich C., *I. Duns Scotus et historia Immaculatae Conceptionis*, Romae 1955, p.36).

If however some milder expressions of Duns Scotus in the "Reportata Parisiensia" may lead us to think that Duns Scotus hesitated in presenting his opinion about the Immaculate Conception, in his commentaries of the Sentences at Paris,—what may be explained by the fact that the Professors were obliged by oath to present at least the arguments in favor of the common teaching, in case of doctrinal controversy,—all doubts are dissipated when we read attentively the texts in which he expresses his own mind in his mature commentary, the *Ordinatio*, which the editors of the 17th. century deplorably called "Opus Oxoniense", and therefore considered written before the often incorrect "Reportata Parisiensia", thus giving birth to an inaccurate Scotism, rendered sometimes unbecomingly faulty by attributing to Duns Scotus several spurious works published together in their monumental editions.

The original texts of Duns Scotus questions on the Immaculate Conception have been published twice by Father Balich, and the rigorous critical method used assures us the authenticity of the texts of the *Ordinatio*, which have been welcomed by all critics of the Middle Ages (cf. Balich C., *Theologiae Marianae elementa*, Sibenici 1933 and *I. Duns Scotus doctor Immaculatae Conceptionis*, Roma 1954). The mature mind of Duns Scotus, which most likely is substantially the same in his earlier commentaries, in this particular question of the Immaculate Conception, which he considers object of free controversy at his time, is clearly stated in two different distinctions of the 3d. book of the *Ordinatio*, which bears his last touch.

In the first question of the 3d. distinction of that book, after a thorough discussion of the arguments for the different opinions, which are possible, and considering that the privilege of the Immaculate Conception is "not repugnant" to the authority of the Church and to Holy Scripture, Duns Scotus holds it as "probable" according to his Mariological principle of becomingness: "If there is no disagreement with the Church and Sacred Writ, the more excellent must be attributed to Mary" (cf. Balich C., *Ioan. Duns Scotus*, Roma 1954, p.13). Toward the end of the same question, Duns Scotus states clearly that he has reached theological certainty about the great privilege of Mary. Answering to the common objection of the maculists, that an Immaculate Mary would not have been redeemed by Christ, Duns Scotus who had already given full development to the argument of Eadmer of Canterbury of the becomingness of a perfect Redeemer, again refers to it and boldly manifests his own mind, adding that "Mary needed more the Redeemer than anybody else, and should have contracted original sin, by means of the common propagation of mankind, had she not been preserved from it by the grace of the Mediator" (cf. ibidem, p.16). Finally, in the same 3d. book of the *Ordinatio*, distinction 18, question 1, Duns Scotus again states his theological certainty about Mary's most beautiful privilege: "In heaven is also the most blessed Mother of God, who was never an enemy (of God), neither actually, through actual sin, nor originally, through original sin; she would however have been, had she not been preserved" (cf. ibidem, p. 21).

History of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception tells us that less than one year after the death of Duns Scotus, the Professors of the University of Paris were well acquainted with the opinion and the arguments of Duns Scotus, which later on was called the "Franciscan opinion". In 1316, John of Naples, regent of the famous Dom-

inican College of St. Jacques at Paris, in a *Quodlibet* discussion held at the University, states expressly that Duns Scotus not only had taught at Paris the possibility of the privilege, but had even asserted that it was fitting and that in fact it *had happened* in reality (*in facto esse*). (cf. Balich C., *I. Duns Scotus*, Romae 1955, pages 60-61—68-69). When the controversy around the unequivocal texts of Wadding arose in the 17th. century, Peter of Alva y Astorga, analyzing the writings of a thousand theologians (cf. P. de Alva y Astorga, *Sol veritatis* etc., Matriti 1660; p. 885-888), arrived to the same conclusion expressed in our days by Mgr. Vacandard: the theological arguments of Duns Scotus were surely decisive in his mind, but although they were known to the greatest theologians of his time, and of the following centuries, yet they did not convince everybody at one time. However in the history of the belief of the Immaculate Conception, solemnly defined on Dec. 8th. 1854, Duns Scotus has been and shall remain for ever the subtle and glorious asserter of the popular privilege of the blessed Mother of God (cf. Vacandard E., *Etudes de critique et d'histoire religieuse*, s. III, Paris 1912, p.283).

Fr. Joseph Montalverne, O.F.M.



"...place thy mind before the mirror of eternity, place thy soul in the brightness of glory, place thy heart in the figure of the divine substance and transform thy whole self through contemplation in the image of the Godhead, that thou too mayest feel what His friends feel in tasting the hidden sweetness which God Himself has kept from the beginning for those who love Him."

St. Clare of Assisi

"Pray and watch at all times! Carry out the work you have so well begun, and fulfill in true humility the service of God you have undertaken in holy poverty."

St. Clare of Assisi

QUESTION: I am very much interested in the Liturgical Movement. To what degree have the Franciscans contributed to the liturgy of the Holy Mass?

ANSWER: The Missal of the universal Church contains several prayers which, although not composed by the Franciscans, were incorporated into the liturgy by them. It was the Missal of the Minister General, Haymo of Faversham (1240-1244), which was used not only by the Franciscans themselves but little by little, by the Roman Curia and the churches of Rome, and later extended itself to several countries of Europe. When St. Pius V reformed the liturgy of the Mass, he retained certain of the prayers in the Missal of Haymo which cannot be found in the older liturgy which antedates Haymo's reform. These prayers are: the Antiphon "Introibo", the Responsory "Deus, tu conversus" the "Auffer a nobis", the "Oramus te", the "Munda cor meum", the Offertory prayers "Suscipe, sancte Pater", the "Deus qui humane", "Offerimus tibi", "In spiritu humilitatis", "Veni Sanctificator", "Suscipe Sancta Trinitas", the "Orate Fratres", "Suscipiat"; the prayers at Communion: "Domine, Jesu Christe, qui dixisti", "Domine, Jesu Christe, Fili Dei vivi", "Perceptio Corporis tui", "Panem caelestem", "Domine, non sum dignus"; the "Corpus Domini nostri", "Quid retribuam", "Sanguis Domini nostri"; the prayers after Communion: "Quod ore sumpsimus", "Corpus tuum, Domine"; and the prayers at the end of Mass: "Placeat".

The Final Blessing was likewise introduced by the Franciscans, but was given immediately after the "Missa est", and under a different formula.— It is to be noticed that, with few exceptions, the prayers mentioned show a private character in so far as they are composed in the First Person singular, and not in the plural, as is commonly the case

in liturgical prayers. The fact that Pope Pius V retained them in his reformed Missal proves that they constitute a significant contribution to the progress of the liturgy of the Mass. —i—

QUESTION: "In our daily horarium, we omit Matins from the Office. 1) Do we get the Sabbatine privilege if we omit part of Office, or must some Paters be substituted. If so, how many? 2) The summer Father told us in class that Priests and Sisters who say the Office do not need to fulfill the stipulation of abstaining twice a week."

ANSWER: 1) As to the first question the general rule is that Priests and Religious who are obliged to recite daily the Divine Office or Little Office are excused from the additional obligation of reciting the Little Office in order to gain the Sabbatine privilege. At the General Chapter of the Carmelites, held in Rome in 1947, it was decided that the daily recitation of the "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory" each seven times would satisfy the requirement of the Little Office or the fasts and abstinence in those cases where a commutation is requested. According to this declaration one "Our Father", "Hail Mary" and "Glory" would be enough for each Canonical Hour. But at the same time, the Fathers who were gathered together at the same Chapter did not fail to point out that every devout client of Our Lady should not content himself with so little, but should be reminded of the greatness of the Promise made by her, and that it is her desire that the Rosary be said daily.—2) As to the second question, the Father was quite right, for the abstinence from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays is required only as a substitution of the Little Office in the case of illiteracy or other incapacities (blindness, illness, accident) and inconveniences (For further informations see: Frank G. KRAUSE, O. Carm.: "The Sabbatine

Privilege", art. in "Take this Scapular", Chicago, The Carmelite Third Order Press, 1947, 53-64 pp.; J. M. HAF-FERT: "Mary in her Scapular Promise", Sea Isle City, N. J., The Scapular Press, 1942, 74-83 pp.; E. MAGENNIS, O. Carm.: "The Scapular Devotion. Origin, Legislation and indulgences attached to the Scapular", St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder Comp., 1923, 60-88 pp.; E. MAGENNIS, O. Carm.: "The Sabbatine Privilege of the Scapular 1923 A.D.-1922 A.D.", New York, C. F. Connolly, 1923).

QUESTION: In the United States of America and several other countries there is the costume to recite the Divine Praises "Blessed be God, etc." after the Benediction and the Prayers for the Church at the end of the low Masses. I was told that it is of Franciscan origin but others objected that they never found it under the name of a Franciscan author. What is the truth about it?

ANSWER: In the "Ephemerides Liturgicae" of the year 1890, on the page 483, the Divine Praises in question are attributed to Fr. Felici, S.J., and according to this magazine they would have been composed in 1797. Francis Beringer ("Die Ablassse, ihre Wesen und Gebrauch", 25th edition, Paderborn 1921-1922, with the additions of A. Steinen, I, n. 535, p. 255) spread this opinion widely. But this is due to a mistake because in fact we can find the mentioned Praises among the works of St. Leonard of Portmaurice (d. 1751) with the exception of four invocations. The additional Praises were inserted by the Holy See. The first addition was the invocation of the Immaculate Conception by Pius IX in 1857; then followed that of the Sacred Heart introduced by Leo XIII in 1897; in 1921 Benedict XV inserted the Praise of St. Joseph, and finally in 1950 Pius XII added the newly declared dogma of Assumption. —i—

THE ROLE OF THE LAITY IN THE CHURCH. Msgr. Gerard Philips, S.T.D. et M. Translated by John R. Gilbert and James W. Moudry. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956. Pp. 175. \$3.25.

The author, Monsignor Gerard Philips, as Professor of Dogmatic and Mystic Theology at the University of Louvain, is eminently qualified to discuss the role of the laity in the modern Church. As one of the outstanding spiritual leaders of Catholic Action in Belgium, he is equally well qualified to point out the danger spots and to analyze the weaknesses in the present-day Catholic Action programs. His point of view, naturally, is that of the theologian rather than that of the sociologist, and his aim in this book is to present the theological basis for the lay apostolate and to establish the theological principles upon which the lay apostolate must function. He discusses principally the Church as the visible and supernatural society of the faithful founded by Jesus Christ to continue His work of salvation among men. The role of the laity in this society is clearly brought out in the author's penetrating study of temporal values, of the often misinterpreted doctrine of the priesthood of the faithful, and of the relationship of the laity to the *magisterium*.

Monsignor Philips is no champion of "medievalism." With all due respect for the great achievement of the Middle Ages, he sees no reason for attempting to revive either its spirit or its methods or even its religious mentality. To fulfill her role in secular society, the Church must advance with the advancing times. New concepts are needed for the presentation of ancient truths, and sound interpretations are needed for newly-discovered truths. It is up to the clergy, primarily, to adjust their thinking to the modern world in which the laity must

live and think and act. In other words, they must be taught to love the world that they may sanctify it. Citing Cardinal Suhard, the author writes: "The Christian is not called upon to destroy or vilify the world, but to assume it, to sanctify it, to offer it in homage to God. In such a process lies the true incarnation; it is the invasion of mankind by the power of God in order that mankind may be uplifted and introduced into the realm of divine life." "The voice of the times," continues the author, this time quoting Cardinal Faulhaber, "is the voice of God. *Vox temporis, vox Dei*. The saints are always rooted in their age. They accept it that they might be able to correct it. They say 'Yes!' to the world, the work of God, that they might say 'No!' to the world of sin. They are passionately in love with their age, but with the love of God. With a strong passion they hate the vices of their age, but with the love of God. With a strong passion they hate the vices of their times; but they do not curse their age; they rather wish to redeem it and they are strong enough not to become exasperated, or to capitulate before the delays which are opposed to their zeal."

Viewing the matter with experienced eyes, Monsignor Philips regards the clergy as more or less responsible for the lack of apostolic fervor in the laity. A kind of strangulating overprotectionism, he feels, is the root of the trouble. "A wholesome pedagogy," he writes, "condemns parents who refuse to realize that their children have come of age and can now decide for themselves. Yet this independence is the very purpose of education. The Church knows this—even if all her priests do not seem to realize that lay people are not perpetually children—and she develops among her faithful prudence and Christian strength so that

the exercise of their just liberty may lead them to salvation and not to ruin."

Monsignor Philips has written a book for priests rather than for laymen. Most of the points stressed are directed to pastors and others who work with Catholic Action groups. But laymen, too, will be interested in what Monsignor Philips has to say regarding their own position in the Church, what the Church expects of them, and what other laymen have accomplished in their own way for the glory of God and the welfare of their times. M.F.L.

WOMAN IN THE MODERN WORLD.

Eva Firkel, Translated by Hilda Graef. Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1956. Pp. ix/211. \$3.50

Since the publication in the early thirties of Gertrud von Le Fort's masterly study of woman, *Die Ewige Frau*, several distinguished authors have felt urged to contribute a few ideas of their own to the subject. Among the more recent discussions of "the eternal feminine" is Eva Firkel's book, originally published in German as *Schicksalsfragen der Frau*, and translated by Hilda Graef.

Dr. Firkel has written what amounts to a handbook for women. Practically every phase and aspect of feminine life from conception to old age is treated, and treated with the kind of practical wisdom, breadth, and intelligence that is so often lacking in such studies. This is not too surprising when one considers that Dr. Firkel is at home not only in the field of medicine (she is an M.D.) but also in natural science, psychology, metaphysics, and theology, and that she is a practising psychotherapist.

Much of the book deals with the physiological make-up of woman, her psychological characteristics, and her spiritual potentialities. The tone throughout is matter-of-fact and down-to-earth, the

realities dealt with are basic and fundamental. Practical is perhaps the best one-word description of the book; it is quite devoid of poetry. Married women with growing daughters will probably draw most profit from the book, although women in any state of life, even—and perhaps especially—religious women, will surely find in it much food for serious consideration and self-examination.

To give a vague idea of the book's range, here is a summary of the contents: Part I: Woman's Nature, includes chapter on 1) General Human Characteristics, 2) The Christian Point of View, 3) The Physical Character of Woman, 4) Healthy Psychosomatic Characteristics, 5) Pathological Attitudes of Mind and Soul; Part II: The Development of Women, includes 1) The Young Girl, 2) Between Girl and Woman, 3) The Married Woman, 4) The Unmarried Woman, 5) The Ageing Woman; Part III: Perfected Woman, includes 1) The Final Achievement, 2) Formed Old Age. The final section contains "Vital Questions of Woman — Fateful Questions of the World."

Hilda Graef's translation is more than adequate, but occasionally marred by strange usages, such as "quieten," "nerviness", etc.

The Jacket design by Clarence Geise is striking and attractive. G.S.

A SPIRITUAL READING LIST FOR SISTERS. Compiled by Sister M. Rose Agnes, O.S.F. Joliet: Saint Francis College, 1956. Pp. 39. 25c.

Here is a useful little reading list compiled by a busy Sister for the benefit of other busy Sisters. The material is helpfully arranged into sections that make selection of books according to subject and season a relatively simple matter. The compiler tells us that her list was "designed in particular for the multitude of Marys dedicated to the service of Christ in

His Church as Marthas, ministering to the spiritual and corporal needs of His members—to help them find easily those spiritual fountains and that spiritual food for the refreshment and nourishment of their souls, in the strength of which they will persevere in fruitful labor for Him

Who loved both Martha and Mary."

If the list is not exhaustive, it is intelligently selective and sufficiently complete and up to date to serve its purpose very well. Sisters everywhere should feel sincerely grateful to Sister M. Rose Agnes for her efforts in compiling this list. SMF

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(Francis) "honored all men. That is, he not only loved but respected them all. What gave him his extraordinary personal power was this: that from the pope to the beggar, from the sultan of Syria in his pavillion to the ragged robbers crawling out of the wood, there was never a man who looked into those brown burning eyes without being certain that Francis Bernardone was really interested in him, in his own inner individual life from the cradle to the grave; that he himself was being valued and taken seriously".

Chesterton

✠ ✠ ✠

"The sure foundation of God stands firm, bearing this seal (2 Timothy 2). Francis stood in the war of temptation like a very strong foundation. Did he not, as a renewed foundation, stabilize the structure of the Church, as the Lord had once understood in a vision? He is the first foundation of our Evangelical age. He humbly dug out the foundation, patience squared it up, prayer and contemplation cemented it together, prayer and contemplation

St. Bernardin of Siena

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