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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

Our loving Father in heaven has fashioned the Church in the image of Jesus Christ. As Eve was endowed with Adam's nature in order that she might be "a helper like himself", so in somewhat the same way Holy Mother Church participates to a degree in the two natures of Christ her Head: she possesses elements of both the divine and human. Divinely founded and vivified, she can neither change nor be separated from her Spouse in heaven; human in her membership and environment, she adapts herself to the needs of her children on earth. She is a marvelous embodiment of permanency and change.

In our age of self-evaluation, the Church has manifested an acute awareness of this singular duality. Clearly in evidence in the thought of the Supreme Pontiff for the past twenty years is the spirit of *renoval*, an ideal which imports both an adherence to the old and an adaptation to the new.

At the call of our present Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, the Conciliar Fathers of Vatican II have rallied to the *aggiornamento*—an up-to-date re-presentation of the unchanging principles which are the well-springs of the Church's doctrine, government, and worship.

The same spirit was applied to a particular segment of the Church by his predecessor, Pope Pius XII, who urged those in religious life to devote themselves to the *renovatio accomodata*—a revitalization of the spirit of their founders in accordance with modern times.

At the risk of sounding pretentious, the new editorial staff of THE CORD would like to state that it approaches its task in this same spirit.

Every Franciscan in America is most assuredly indebted to the late Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., whose seraphic charity and zeal brought THE CORD into existence in 1951; we are grateful also to his associates and their successors, whose efforts have carried on his work.

In the first number of the review, Fr. Philotheus stated that, "The primary purpose of THE CORD is to aid in effecting among us a deeper knowledge and more ardent love of the Franciscan way of life." This is

GOOD MORNING, GOOD PEOPLE

the unchanging principle, the spirit of THE CORD, which we reaffirm heartily, and to which we here pledge adherence.

The passage of only twelve years does not demand, certainly, a great change in the manner of presenting an original ideal. For this reason, our adaptation of old to new will be quite modest. There are, however, three points which we should like to note in this regard.

In the first place, in keeping with what hopefully appears to be a resurgence of serious study in our day, we intend to emphasize in the pages of THE CORD a *doctrinal*, rather than a simply devotional or practical, presentation of Franciscanism. Secondly, since our review is dedicated to promoting the knowledge and love of the Franciscan way of life, we shall try to limit our subject matter to *spirituality*, thereby excluding the strictly historical or social aspects of our heritage. Thirdly, since the adherents of any given school of spirituality are bound to observe not only the tendencies and practices peculiar to their own school, but also (and more especially) those that pertain to Christian perfection in general, we purpose to extend our view beyond the limitations of strictly Franciscan subjects, and to include considerations of *general Christian perfection* in so far as they are relevant to Franciscans; our scope, then, will be to present a Franciscan view of spirituality rather than a view of Franciscan spirituality.

In fine, we envisage THE CORD as *A Monthly Franciscan Review of Spiritual Doctrine*.

Since assuming our editorial duties about four months ago, we have been deeply edified and encouraged by the interest and cooperation which our Franciscan brothers and sisters have manifested in regard to THE CORD. We hope that we shall be able to match your charity by presenting to you in our pages something of value. We are grateful for the grace of having some part, however small, in the development of Franciscan holiness. May God bless our efforts.

The Editor.



Poverty Is To Love

Fr. Bruce Ignatowski, O.F.M. Cap., S.T.L.

Poverty is "the pearl of great price." This is evident even in the attitude of those who criticize, charitably or otherwise, the manner of the observance of poverty in today's world. In fact, criticism emphasizes all the more that the soul of the gospel is poverty.

In answer to a questionnaire mailed to the subscribers of *Jubilee* magazine, readers expressed their various views of what they would like to see accomplished by the Second Vatican Council. The October, 1962, issue contains many opinions. One priest replied: "I think poverty is 'old hat' for many of our Orders . . . In the order of things today, it is an outdated idea and should be reformed." Another reader was convinced that "there is need for more dedication to the ideals of the primitive life . . . A return to the ideals of St. Francis would be a start."

Whether there has been a relaxation of poverty in certain quarters is not the scope of this

conference. Allowing that there is a grain of truth in the sampled opinions, a review of the nature of poverty, the vow and spirit of poverty, and the highlighting of a few apt quotations from the lips of our Lord and our holy Father Francis, would be of value and use to those striving after perfection according to the Rule of the Poorello.

Theological Basis for Poverty

According to St. Thomas Aquinas, "The principal end of religious life is the attainment of perfection by means of certain exercises by which obstacles to perfect love are removed." We know very well from St. Paul that covetousness is the root of all evil. This is true because it smothers love. On the other hand, poverty must be the root of all good, because it destroys covetousness and promises the highest perfection of the gospel. This can be said even though the perfection of the gospel is achieved through charity, for, as St. Bonaventure teaches, "A man's heart is never free to love God perfectly until it has been set loose from all attachment to the perishable things of this world." Is it any wonder, then,

POVERTY IS TO LOVE

that for St. Francis of Assisi and St. Bonaventure, the spirit of the gospel is the spirit of poverty?

St. Augustine, the great Bishop of Hippo and Doctor of the Church, has the following to say on this point: "We are more firmly attached to earthly things when we have them than when we desire them. After all, why did that young man go away sad, save because he had great wealth? For it is one thing not to wish to lay hold of what one has not, and another to renounce what one already has; the former are rejected as foreign to us, the latter are cut off as a limb." The conclusion drawn by the Angelic Doctor is that "voluntary poverty is the first foundation in the attainment of the perfection of charity."

The archenemy of charity is wealth, which entices and distracts the mind. Our Lord was emphatic on this fact: "A rich man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of heaven." In the words of St. Gregory, "By preventing the good desire from entering the heart, riches destroy life at its very outset." St. Ambrose enlarges upon this, declaring that, "as riches are the instrument of all vices, because a man with money in his pocket has the means to carry out his desire in the matter of all the vices and sins that he has a mind for, so the renouncing and divesting of oneself of all things for Christ engenders and preserves all

virtues." Truly then, to love is poverty.

The Marrow of Christ's Tidings

The fountain and framework of the writings of the theologians on poverty, the inspiration and sustaining power of the saints in its exercise, is found in the life and teachings of our Saviour. The "tidings of great joy" is the God-Man's especial love for poverty. Christ's espousal of poverty was a radical departure from the imbedded notions of his time. "Before the coming of Christ into this world, poverty was looked upon as the greatest evil. The poor were held in contempt, and often were the slaves of the rich."

Though the very life of the Redeemer bespeaks his love of poverty, this was insufficient to satisfy the Sacred Heart. So tremendous was his love that he voiced his affection on many occasions. But nowhere did he speak so plainly and devotedly as in the Sermon on the Mount. There he developed his program, the principles on which the Kingdom of God was to be based. Its very first pronouncement was: "Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Mt. 5:3). "If up to that time the world had only contempt for poverty, and estimated the value of a man according to his wealth, if the words 'good' and 'rich,' 'bad' and 'poor' were almost synonymous, the divine Master made detachment from

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the goods of this world the pillar, as it were, of the new order he had come to set up. And justly so, for attachment to earthly goods, excessive engrossment with temporal cares, are irreconcilable with the striving for Christian perfection . . . It is the first condition: 'If you will be perfect, go sell what you have and give to the poor, and come follow me.'²² It was *the* way the Saviour wanted us to die to self—"Unless the seed fall to the ground and die, it cannot grow" (Cf. Jn. 12:24). Poverty, impelled by love for Christ, lays the ax to self-love and to love of this world. And from poverty there arise many fruits.

In the conversation between Christ and the rich young man, we have the enunciation of the evangelical Counsels. By his example, he gave confirmation and authorization to these Counsels. In the words of Father Faber, "He chose it when He came among us Himself. He has given all His saints a similar instinct. He has revealed himself as having a special love for the poor. He has pronounced a solemn blessing upon the poor forever. He has made poverty the easiest road to heaven."²³ Hence, nowhere are the maxims of this world so opposed to the maxims of the Kingdom of God as they are in their views about earthly possessions and their use.

The French have a proverb: "As happy as a poor man." How

could this be otherwise, since the kingdom of heaven is his? St. Bernard says that "the love of poverty is more than a virtue; it is a beatitude, the first and foremost of beatitudes. To the other virtues great things are promised, but to this one the possession of the kingdom of heaven is given, not promised; for already in this world it is given to it."

Furthermore, Jesus Christ promised promotion to the poor in spirit.

The promises of Christ do not stop here: He promises more than that to the poor in spirit. But can there be anything more than the kingdom of heaven? Yes, because there are promotions in heaven as there are here on earth for good soldiers; and He promises to the poor in spirit a promotion and pre-eminence high above the rest . . . St. Peter said: 'Lord, we have left all things and followed Thee. What then shall we have?' He answered: 'Amen I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His majesty, you too shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Mt. 19:28). The Saints declare that this dignity and pre-eminence is to be understood as belonging to all those who have imitated the Apostles in the state of poverty, confirmed by vow, such as Religions who die in the grace of God. They say that they will hold this pre-eminence and dignity, that

at the Day of Judgment they will not stand before the divine tribunal so much to be judged as to be the assessors in judgment with Christ, and as such to approve and confirm the sentence of the Saviour. So say expressly St. Augustine, St. Bede, and St. Gregory; and it is the common opinion of the doctors.

God rewards the poor in spirit not only in the next life, but also in this, and that very handsomely . . . God takes into account our weak nature and would not even in this life leave without reward those who renounce all things for His love. So He adds immediately, beyond the promise mentioned: 'And whoever for love of Me shall leave house, brothers and sisters, father or mother, wife or children, or any property or inheritance, shall receive a hundred-fold, and life everlasting' (Mt. 19:29).

The Vow and the Virtue

According to the opinion of Saints Cyprian, Basil, and Jerome, even in the days of the Apostles there were those who bound themselves to the observance of poverty by means of a vow. They base their judgment on the punishment inflicted upon Ananias and Sapphira, recorded in the Acts of the Apostles: because they had hidden part of the proceeds from the sale of their inheritance, they were punished with sudden death. To these famous early Christian writers the severity of their

punishment indicated that they were under a vow.

Binding oneself to the observance of the evangelical Counsels by means of vows is an essential element of the religious state. The religious state cannot be a state of perfection without the vows, because it presupposes a continual obligation of striving for perfection. After all, the very word *state* signifies something stable, something permanent. The religious state is therefore inconceivable without vows from which this obligation arises.

The practice of the vows is not enough, however. The vows must be impregnated with their respective virtue. What about the virtue of poverty in particular? While the vow divests one of all exterior and temporal goods, the virtue of poverty goes further, by forbidding all undue love of temporal goods. It is the virtue of poverty which Jesus extolled so singularly in his Sermon on the Mount.

The virtue of poverty has certain degrees. There are six degrees, in the opinion of some spiritual writers. The first is the renunciation of earthly goods for the love of God. The second consists in interior detachment. The third aims at doing without superfluous things. The fourth goes a step further, striving to do even without necessary things. The fifth is the bearing in a joyful manner, of all the consequences of poverty.

The sixth and highest degree, the crown of all the others, is attained when one bears privations willingly, even in sickness. "Holy poverty, then, removes the greatest obstacle to perfection, but in order to reach the summit, one must not only avoid vice, but also practice virtue. Seraphic poverty fosters virtues in her followers in the most marvellous way. Our holy Father himself attests to this when he says, speaking of most high poverty: 'It has made you poor in temporal things, but has exalted you in virtue.'"⁷⁶

The One Great Passion of St. Francis

It was the keen delight of the saints to lack even the bare necessities of life. Tenderly they recalled the moving words of the beloved Master: "The foxes have their holes; the birds of the air their nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay His Head" (Mt. 8:20). The saints longed most ardently to share in Christ's destitution. They had the right estimation of poverty. Indeed, they spoke in raptures of it. But none spoke better or more tenderly than the Lark of Umbria.

Our holy Father St. Francis was the most impassioned lover of poverty. He found in it not only his lady and bride, but all of his joy, his sweetest consolation, nay, life itself! Why was poverty his one obsession? Because it was his

mother in virtue of having been espoused by Jesus Christ. How is poverty a mother? We were conceived in poverty amid the destitution of the crib, and we were born amid the nakedness of the cross. Francis recognized poverty as the inseparable companion of the Redeemer throughout his early life. Over and above that, he regarded poverty as the queen of all the virtues. For him, the spirit of Christ was the spirit of poverty. Unquestionably, the spiritual life of St. Francis was Christocentric, with a literal imitation of the poverty of the Crucified.

St. Francis was introduced to Pope Innocent III by Cardinal John of St. Paul with the words: "I have found a most perfect man who desires to live after the manner of the holy gospel, and to observe evangelical perfection in all things." How clearly these words indicate that to live a life of poverty is to live after the manner of the holy gospel, and that, in so doing, one practices perfection in all things! The Cardinal perceived that to live poorly was the marrow of the gospel. So if we ask why St. Francis embraced poverty with such unprecedented love, the answer must be that he beheld in poverty the basis for evangelical perfection. For him it was the soul of the three Counsels and religious vows. We have his testimony: "One day the brothers asked him by what virtue we become dearest to

Christ, and he answered, 'Poverty, my brothers! Know that poverty is the special way to salvation, for it is the food of humility, and the root of perfection, the fruit of which is manifold, though hidden. Poverty is the treasure of which we read in the gospel, which was hidden in the field; to buy it, you sell all; and in comparison to it, all that can be given for its purchase is to be accounted as nothing.'"⁷⁶

By his Rule St. Francis differentiated his Order from the old monastic ideal which recognized communal property. "For it was his aim to live once more in a stupendous manner the life of Christ, Who had no stone whereon to lay His head."⁷⁷

The Little Poor Man of Assisi understood and practiced poverty in this literal sense of the Scriptures. Nonetheless,

"We must never forget that poverty for the great lover, St. Francis, was a means and not an end in itself. It was an imitation of Christ's life on earth, and therefore in reality a sublime expression of his love for Christ. It is incorrect, therefore, to write, as has been done, that St. Francis would have paraphrased St. Augustine thus: 'Be poor, and do as you will.' For one may perfectly well be poor, even by choice, and yet love no one. Poverty without love is valueless in the sight of both God and man."⁷⁸

Looking Ahead

St. Francis revolutionized the concept of the religious life as well as his society. This spiritual and social revolution is actually still in progress, and will go on as long as there are followers of the Poverello. For the message of St. Francis is valid for all ages.

In the prayer for the success of the Second Vatican Council we pray for a kind of new Pentecost. This can be achieved only if there be a renewal of individual hearts.

For Franciscans this can mean nothing but a reappraisal of the utter importance of poverty, and a revitalized earnestness in its observance for the love of Jesus Christ. We have our Rule and Constitutions; we have heard many talks on poverty; we have read much on St. Francis and the other saints of the Order. If we have grown tired in doing good, we must allow the strength of Christ within us to refresh us. If we have not, we must double our efforts in order to spread the fire of Christ throughout the world. It is enough to know that God wills it. "I have come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled" (Lk. 12:49). For today's world the fire must be fanned—fanned anew, igniting all, sweeping the world in spirit-transforming conquest for the crucified King. The kindling wood of this fire is poverty. A poverty that is love at its best.

- ¹ Ignaz Watterott, O.M.I., *Religious Life and Spirit* (tr. A. Simon), St. Louis, Herder, 1950, p. 308.
- ² *Ibid.*, p. 308f.
- ³ Frederick W. Faber, *Notes on Doctrinal and Spiritual Subjects*, Baltimore, John Murphy & Co., n.d., vol. II, p. 234.
- ⁴ Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J., *Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues* (tr. J. Rickaby), Chicago, Loyola Press, 1929, p. 379f.
- ⁵ John of Meerle, O.F.M. Cap., *Capuchin Spirit and Life* (tr. & adapt. E. Roets, O.F.M. Cap. and B. Birtle, O.F.M. Cap.). (Printed Manuscript). Mission Press, S.V.D., n.d.
- ⁶ Hilariin Felder, O.F.M. Cap., *The Ideals of St. Francis of Assisi* (tr. B. Birtle, O.F.M. Cap.), N.Y. Benziger, 1925, p. 86.
- ⁷ Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., *The Franciscan Message to the World* (tr. & adapt. H. L. Hughes), London, Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1934, p. 25.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*

The Holy Name Monogram



ly to cultivate a habit of devotion in place of the vice of blasphemy to which many of them apparently were addicted—a fifteenth-century visual aid to education.

This use of the monogram is an excellent example of a fine old Franciscan trait which we, having inherited, should try to practice; the knack of introducing divinity into the market place.

It goes back to our holy Founder, of course, but then, like everything Franciscan, it can be traced easily back to Christ himself. For it was he who literally and uniquely brought the divine down to earth. He who "was in the beginning with God . . . was made flesh and dwelt among us," so that, by becoming "what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have handled," he might tell us in our own terms, having made them his, just what God is like.

No Other Name

Fr. Stephen Clare Doyle, O.F.M.

One of the more frustrating experiences of life is coming upon a person whom we have met, and not being able to remember his name. The face is familiar, but we are unable to connect it with a name. This does not happen with those we know, but only with those we have met once or twice. When we know the person, then we also know the name. The two become identified. The mention of the name immediately brings the image of the person to our mind. As our knowledge of the person grows more intimate, our love for him increases, and his name becomes more and more personal. When we met him it was "Mr. Jones." As we became acquainted, it was "John." When we became close friends, it was "Jack" or even a more personal nickname that indicated our close relationship. We know the name because we know the person.

We find a similar transition in the names of God through the Old and New Testaments. When Moses encountered the living God in his burning bush, he asked him his

name. God, in his reply, did not strictly give his name. God replied, "I am who I am." Then he added, "This is what you shall tell the Israelites: I Am sent me to you." (Ex. 3:14). Thus the verb to be in Hebrew, *Yahweh*, became the sacred name for the God of Israel. So sacred did it become to the Jews that it was never pronounced.

They knew that they could not say much about God, least of all his name. They also knew that they were his people. He had bent low to them, and so they must say something about him. From their Canaanite neighbors they borrowed the words for gods and lords, and applied these plural terms to the one true God, to indicate that he is more powerful than all of their false gods. *Elohim* and *Adonai* were substituted for the sacred name which no pious Jew would pronounce. They had to give God a name, for he is completely "other." Only he could know his name, because only he could know himself intimately.

When the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek for the Jews spread throughout the world, the scholars rendered *Elohim* and *Adonai*, the titles that the Jews had given God as circumlocutions, as *Kyrios*, which comes into English

During his pastoral year Fr. Stephen is studying for the Licentiate in Sacred Theology at Catholic University. During the past few years, he has been associated with Interim, a theological review by the editors of Holy Name Province.

as *Lord* (cf. *Kyrie Eleison*). The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is *Kyrios, Dominus, Lord*. He is truly a hidden God, yet a God who has revealed himself to his people. Even they could not know his name, however, for that expresses his essence, his inner being. But one could know God through his works and revelation. He is the Creator of all things, the protector, father and king of his people. He is *Lord*.

From the very beginning of the Old Testament, paralleling the theme of the true God, we find the unfolding mystery of the one whom God would send to his people. Already in the first chapters of Genesis we are promised the Seed of the Woman who would be at perpetual enmities with the seed of the serpent. As the story of salvation opened wider and wider, it was gradually seen that the Seed would be the Messiah, which is translated into Greek as "Christos" and into English as "The Anointed One." He would be anointed, made sacred, so that he might be the liberator of God's chosen people. He would lead them, redeem them, and liberate them from their straitened ways. They did not yet know his name, but they knew some important things about him. He would be the Seed of the Woman, the ruler that would spring from Juda, the expected of the nations, the Angel of the covenant whom they desired, and he would come to his temple.

Yahweh and Messiah: Lord and Christ

As we have seen, only God could know his own name, for only he could know himself. And God does know himself from all eternity. His knowledge of himself embraces all that he is. This knowledge is essential, containing within itself his very essence. It is likewise personal. It is the Word, the Son of God begotten from all eternity. He is the Father's knowledge of himself; he is the Name of God, whom only the Father can know. Because they have the identical essence and nature, he, too, is Yahweh. He is Lord.

He is the Son of God, consubstantial with the Father from all eternity. "But when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4). Yahweh, the Lord himself, was to be the Messiah. He would lead his people from their straitened ways into the width, fullness and plenty of the Messianic age. Yahweh himself would be the Salvation of his people Israel. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." "And of his fullness we have all received grace for grace" (Jn. 1:14-16). The Lord entered into history as the Saviour of his people.

He is Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and yet

he is the anointed one, the Messiah. The human nature was anointed by the divine nature. The person possessing both is both God and Saviour. At his birth he was given a name above every name, a name that expresses perfectly who he is. Jesus means *God will save*. More properly and completely the Holy Name means: Yahweh leads from the narrows into the wide open place. The God-man came to lead us from the narrows of slavery to sin, into the freedom of the Kingdom of God.

Now men could know God's name, because they could know the God-man. "For the grace of God our Saviour has appeared to all men . . ." (Tit. 2:11). This would not be a nodding acquaintance with a person whose name we would forget. It would be an intimacy with God which could not be hoped for: "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" (1 Jn. 1:1). But Love would not stop even there. We could now know his name because we could know him with an intimacy that could not be imagined: "If any one 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).

Our Lord is the very revelation of God. "He who sees me sees also the Father" (Jn. 14:9). When we

come to know Christ, we come to know God. The Jews could not really know God's name, for his communication with men was not completed until he sent his Son. Knowing the Son, we know the Father and can call upon the Holy Name. The Jews could praise God's name, but they could not know it. "O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth" (Ps. 8:1). We can glorify the name of God, too, for the prophecy of Malachia has been fulfilled: "From the rising of the sun even to its setting, my name is great among the nations" (Mal. 1:11). Unlike the Jews, however, we can also know the name that we glorify. ". . . God also has exalted him and has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

This is the name that we can know, glorify and call upon, because "The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared . . ." (Tit. 3:4).

The Power of the Holy Name

Among the ancient Jews a person's name had far greater significance than we ordinarily attach to it today. The name not only stood for the person, but was a real ex-

pression of his inner being, and of his purpose in God's plan. In the very beginning of the Old Covenant we find Abram receiving a new name from God. "This is my covenant with you: you shall be the father of a multitude of nations; you shall no longer be called Abram; but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:5). At the beginning of the New Covenant a similar naming took place. Simon, son of Jona, was told: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church . . ." (Mt. 16:18). There can be no doubt that God willed the name of his Son to express his very being and mission. It was left neither to his mother nor his foster father to choose a name for him. The angel told Mary God's will in the matter, and the reason for it. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21; Lk. 1:31).

This name is so rich and powerful that, as one author puts it, "The name of Jesus is a compendium of all the titles which the Old Testament employs to describe the nature and work of the coming Messiah." St. Bernard tells us that, like Isaias, we may say many things about Christ, but we have said them all when we say JESUS. He is the child that is born to us, the son that is given to us. Dominion rests upon his shoulder. His name is called Wonder-Counselor, God-

Hero, Father-forever, Prince of Peace. His name is called Jesus!

It is a powerful name because it expresses the power of God himself. It is not a name that was arbitrarily given because it sounded nice. It was given because it fit. The power of God is in it. Jesus is "God who will be our salvation."

This is the name that is able to obtain anything from God, because it is the name of his Son: ". . . if you ask the Father anything in my name he will give it to you" (Jn. 16:23). This is the name that opens heaven to us. We cannot enter by our own name, ". . . for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved" (Acts, 4:12).

Devotion to the Holy Name

The spread of devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus was accomplished by the Franciscan Order. We find that many great saints, like Bernard, preached on it, but the great devotion which we find in the Church today owes its origin to Saints Bernardine of Siena and John Capistran, the Apostles of the Holy Name. Their efforts met with great opposition, and St. Bernardine was even called upon to defend the doctrine before the pope.

When we remember the words of St. Paul: "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend," we find it difficult to realize why anyone would oppose devotion to the Holy

Name. It seems however, that a good bit of superstition had crept in with the devotion. There will always be those who, though unwilling to lead Christian lives, are ready to grab at anything that will promise salvation without any effort. They erroneously think that calling on Christ Jesus is a substitute for living "in Christ Jesus." For them the symbol of the Holy Name became a magic amulet against every kind of evil. They are the ones to whom Christ addressed the words: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Their superstition caused a cloud to descend on the legitimate and wonderful devotion to the Holy Name which St. Bernardine was preaching. In reaction against the superstition of a few, some powerful theologians wanted to do away with the devotion completely. They were like the reformers of whom Chesterton speaks. They found the Church with a headache and wanted to cut off the head.

Bernardine was called to Rome to defend the devotion in the

presence of the papal court. He did it so well that the pope commissioned him to preach the Holy Name up and down the Italian peninsula. His successful efforts for the Holy Name of Jesus have merited for him the official title of patron of press agents and public relations workers.*

St. Bernardine's efforts, as well as the traditional Franciscan love and devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, springs directly from the spirit of our order. It comes from St. Francis himself. The love and respect which Our Holy Father had for that name are too well known to need repetition. For him it was an essential expression of the love he had for the person of the God-man, first-born of every creature. As Herald of the great King, Francis was naturally the Herald of his Holy Name. His heart, bursting with love for Christ, could not help singing out joyfully with the King's Mother:

HE WHO IS MIGHTY HAS
DONE GREAT THINGS TO ME
AND HOLY IS HIS NAME!

*cf. *Franciscan Herald and Forum*: Feb. 1957, p. 69.

The Hidden Life

I admonish you frequently, my dearest brethren, to refrain from evil deeds and to avoid the defilements of this world. However, I am moved by today's reading of the holy Gospel to tell you that you should exercise great caution even in the good works which you perform, lest you seek human praise or applause for the things that you do correctly—that is to say, lest the desire of praise creep in, and cause the external act to lose its internal merit. For, according to our Redeemer's teaching, there were ten virgins. And, although all of them indeed are said to have been virgins, yet not all of them were admitted inside the door of blessedness. And the reason is that some of them were outside seeking glory because of their virginity, and so neglected to have oil in their lamps.

But first of all, we should ask what the kingdom of heaven is, and how it is that these virgins are said to have been both prudent and foolish. For, seeing that the kingdom of heaven is changeless precisely because not one of the reprobate enters it, how then can it be compared to virgins who are foolish? By way of answering, we must realize that the term "Kingdom of Heaven" is used frequently in Sacred Scripture to signify the Church of the present time. For example, Our Lord says somewhere else that, "The Son of Man

will send forth his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all scandals;" but in the kingdom of the blessed, where peace is supreme, no scandals could be found to be gathered.

Now, each of us experiences life in the five bodily senses; but the multitude of the faithful is gathered from both sexes; and, since twice five is ten, therefore is the holy Church said to be like ten virgins. Moreover, since the evil members have been mixed in with the good, and the reprobate with the elect, therefore is the Church proposed correctly as being like virgins who are both prudent and foolish.

For there are many who practice self-restraint; who guard themselves against external desires and are drawn by hope to interior things; who mortify the flesh and long for the homeland above; and, hoping for eternal rewards, they do not seek any human praise for their labors. Certainly, such as these do not put their glory in the words of men, but rather hide it within their own consciousness. But there are also many who, while indeed afflicting their body by abstinence, yet on the basis of that very abstinence, long for the applause of men.

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Homily XII on the Gospel* (Mt. 25, 1-13).

[Tr. A.M.]

Franciscans and Christian Unity

Fr. Roger Maltzerath, S.A.

Years, perhaps even centuries, may be needed to evaluate fully and properly the effects of Vatican Council II. This is true because the Council signifies a movement rather than an event, and a movement that is a powerful, pulsating, new surge for the future.

One result, however, is already in marked evidence. The Catholic world is opening its mind, heart, and efforts to the cause of Christian Unity. As Hans Küng comments in his remarkable book, *The Council, Reform and Union*, after the announcement by the Pope that an ecumenical council would be convoked: "Almost overnight the reunion of our separated brethren has ceased to be the concern only of a brave little vanguard, themselves objects of admiration, ridicule, pity or hostility; it has become the concern of the universal Church, even in purely Catholic countries, and of the Church's leaders; something to be not only proposed in theory but worked out in practice . . . Within the Church today there is

a longing and striving and praying for reunion of a totally new power and intensity."¹

Franciscans have every reason to be in the forefront of the new efforts to bring about Christian Unity. Their spirit, their approach to life, their characteristic theology makes them especially suited for this work. The motives impelling loyal sons and daughters of the Church to work and pray for the visible unity of all Christians in the Mystical Body of Christ are the same for all. Franciscanism, however, gives a special impetus to hear and to respond.

In considering the reasons, then, why Franciscans should be interested in Christian Unity we have a twofold set. The first are those incentives of a general nature which exist in our day, and which are at the foundation of all work for the unity of Christians in the Catholic Church. The second set are those characteristics of the Franciscan spirit which lend themselves in a particular way to the fulfillment of Christian Unity efforts. The two sets are, of course, not mutually exclusive. Rather, they reinforce each other. The motives that stimulate a lay Catholic, for example, to some act of devotion should all the more move the Religious. So, too, the special

¹Besides teaching theology at the Atonement Seminary in Washington, D. C., Fr. Roger finds time for work and writing in the promotion of Christian Unity. He was recently chosen to be a Contributing Editor of the new Paulist Journal *The Resistant*.

characteristics of Franciscans are all the more reason why the general reasons for Christian Unity should appeal to and find an adequate response from Franciscans. Our first consideration, therefore, is a description of the Franciscan spirit and then, through the viewpoint of at least some broad characteristics of Franciscanism, the more general reasons behind our work for Christian Unity today.

The spirit of St. Francis is a many splended thing: humility, poverty, simplicity, love of God, devotion to the Gospels, to the humanity of Christ, to the Eucharist, to the Church. Whatever may be the essential or most characteristic note of Franciscanism, St. Francis himself gave a clear expression of his spirit at the outset of his apostolic life. After he had renounced his possessions before the Bishop of Assisi, he went forth clothed in a mantle, singing the praises of God. To everyone who sought to restrain him or question him, St. Francis declared without hesitation: "I am the herald of the Great King."

The ideal of St. Francis, and the goal he set for himself, was the renewal of Christian life. His single-minded purpose was primarily to live himself a life according to the Gospels as purely and perfectly as he could in imitation of Christ. But the Poor Man of Assisi, out of his great-souled love, also desired to open up to all the

wonderful secret of happiness. He would lead all men to follow Christ and the principles of the gospel. In the service of these evangelical ideals, St. Francis became *vir catholicus* as well as *totus apostolicus*. His devotion to the Church was so great that Pope Innocent declared "Truly, this is the pious and holy man by whom the Church of God shall be restored."

Franciscan Charity

Out of these elements in the life of St. Francis has come Franciscanism. Franciscanism, like the spirit of St. Francis, is a many faceted jewel, but one of the most shining aspects of it in its approach to life and to God is charity. The seraphic ardor of St. Francis has always been a primary source of inspiration to his followers. In a particular way charity holds a primacy in Franciscan theology. The masters of the Franciscan school, no matter what their special objectives may be, all aim to show the way of love to souls, and to bring them to intimate union with God. St. Bonaventure, the theologian of love, in the words of Gilson, wished to "... reconstruct human knowledge and the whole universe with a view to the unique place of love."³ Dominicus, the Subtle Doctor, indicates that the whole wide gamut of God's relations both with himself and with man is intimately connected with the primacy of love.⁴

Finally, as Fr. Cuthbert, O.F.M. Cap., declares, "The primacy of charity is the secret of Franciscanism, the well-spring of its energy, the source of its power and the strength of its poverty and abnegation. Without charity, without love for the Incarnate Word the order would collapse."⁵

Within the framework of charity and under its gentle but strong impulse the needs of our times for Christian Unity become imperative reasons why Franciscans should throw their great energies into this cause.

At the present time in the world, it has been estimated that there are approximately 500 million Catholics in a total population of about 3 billion people. This means that only one-sixth of the world population belongs to the Church of Christ. If we add to the number of Catholics all other Christians, the proportion of Christians to non-Christians remains substantially the same. And the proportion of non-Christians is increasing daily.⁶ It is now considered that in Asia the percentage of Catholics is less than it was in the time of St. Francis Xavier. No one, of course, questions the survival of the Church. The promise of Christ is firm that the Church will remain until the end of time. Rather, the problem is one of greater effectiveness and advancement in the modern world. If Christianity is to make its proper impact on the world, it would seem that we must

have the strength of a united Christendom. Then it will be possible to say, "See, here is the Church of Christ", and the very fact of its inclusion of all Christians will be a singular motive of credibility.

Another tremendous problem of the day is the threat of Communism and militant atheism. The Church has always had paganism in one form or another to combat, and materialism as well as secularism are not new as enemies, but the religion of Communism is a modern and deadly serious opponent of the Church today. The Communist Party is organized in approximately 86 countries. It has a hard-hitting, organized, devilishly clever, and ruthless offensive, constantly shifting but never yielding in its aim of achieving supremacy. Communism will never overcome the Church. We have the certitude of faith for that. But Communism can—as it most certainly has—weaken the Church in this or that part of the world, and hinder the Church in its appointed tasks. The help of a united Christendom in fighting the Red menace would surely make the battle more successful.

Under needs of the day may also be included those matters which could be accomplished by the Catholic Church alone, but which could more easily and certainly be brought about through a united Christendom. The injection of new peoples with particular gifts

to match some particular needs of the Church would undoubtedly help to solve these problems. The additional help would be secondary and accidental, but nevertheless highly useful.

Regard for the Bible: In recent years the movement among Catholics both on scholarly and popular levels to understand and appreciate the Scriptures has been steadily growing. Pope Pius XII's Encyclical on the Bible (*Divino Afflante Spiritu*; *A.A.S.*, 35, 1943, 297-326) has been a magna charta to the Catholic biblical scholar. Yet the widespread love of the Scriptures among Catholic people is by and large still not what it might be. The introduction of many Protestants in the Church could bring with it a ready-made love of the Bible which would forcefully produce a new wave of enthusiasm for the Word of God and the deposit of Faith.

Participation of the laity: The Vatican Council will undoubtedly set forth solid principles for the more vital participation of the laity in the work and prayer of the Church. Such a trend has been steadily mounting in the writings of theologians and in the practice of bishops. The laity are needed today as never before to consecrate the world to God. In a secularized society laymen are the only ones who can bring the message of God's love to the world. To do this they must realize their dignity and their duty. Partially it will come

through an understanding of their limited but real power, obtained in Baptism, as participants in the priesthood of Christ; partly it will result from a better understanding of the real meaning of a Christian life and the active part a Christian must play in the life of the Church; in part it will eventuate through a more lively participation in the liturgy and the sacraments; but partly, too, it could well come about through the acceptance of non-Catholic Christians into the Church. Non-Catholics do not necessarily have a better appreciation of the place of the laity, but they do have strong views on the participation of the faithful in worship, they do use laymen extensively in apostolic work, and they see the importance of the laity as carriers of the Gospel into a materialistic world.

Interiorization of devotional life: New life is a stir in Catholic devotional life. The key dynamic approach to catechesis is bringing about a greater devotion to Christ—the Word of God, the liturgy, and the sacraments. The central place of God in worship and devotion is receiving more and more attention. There is no insinuation here that these elements have not always existed in the Church and among the faithful. Reaction to the Reformation, however, tended to emphasize secondary devotions—all good in themselves, like veneration of relics—but nevertheless external and secondary. More

primary and interior devotions are asserting themselves in the lives of the faithful today. The accession of large numbers of non-Catholic Christians into the Church will not add to the Church anything essential that she does not already have. But these Christians may help to bring about a greater realization of the treasures that we as Catholics do possess, and especially the tremendous value of a dedicated spirituality that has its focal point in a more elevated interior life of devotion to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Devotion to Christ

A second outstanding characteristic of Franciscanism is its devotion to Christ. God revealed His love in Christ, and it was to Christ as to an irresistible magnet that St. Francis was drawn. Once united to Christ, St. Francis went forth, the herald of the great King, the King of love, who revealed his love through his Sacred Heart, his passion on the cross, his supreme gift of the Eucharist.

Franciscans caught up the spirit of Francis, and succeeding generations followed his lead in considering Christ as the center of all things. St. Bonaventure declares that: "Christ is the central pivot; all things revolve around him and it is in him that all things must be reunited, just as the lines drawn from a circumference are rejoined in the indivisible unity of a center."

point.⁷⁷ Christocentricity naturally became the characteristic note of Franciscan theology.

Fr. Maurice Grajewski in his study "The Concept of Franciscan Theology" states:

Ever since St. Bonaventure indicated that *incipendum est a medio, quod est Christus* (a beginning must be made from the center, which is Christ), the friars elaborated their theological systems upon a Christ-centered world-view. For them Christ is the capstone of the Church. In their Christology they saw fit and proper to extol Christ as highly as possible.⁸

Commitment to Christ is an eminent reason why Franciscans should work for Christian Unity. More and more the imperative contained in Christ's prayer for unity, "That they all may be one" (John 17:21) is ringing in the ears of people of our times. As Catholics we claim that the Catholic Church has unity, that it is the Church established by God. Yet not all those who call themselves Christians are in this Church. It is, then, both an imperative of charity and a measure of devotion to Christ to expend serious efforts that the union of all Christians be accomplished, and that the will of Christ find fulfillment in fact.

In the United States alone it is estimated that from 250 to 350 different Protestant denominations exist. In any large city it is easy to see one church next to another: Methodist, Lutheran, Protestant

Episcopal, Baptist, Presbyterian, and on and on. How confusing all these divisions are to people. What a scandal it is that those who claim that all men should follow a loving Master fight and differ among themselves in a thousand different ways. How necessary it is to end these divisions!

Dedication to Christ has another significance for Christian Unity. Many theologians today say that the fundamental difference between Catholics and Protestants is not so much the Bible, or justification, or the priesthood of all the faithful, but rather an understanding of the Incarnation of Christ. From this difference in comprehending the full import of the Incarnation come the basic difficulties between Protestant and Catholic over the nature of the Church founded by Christ.

Thus, for example, in the Protestant view, Christ did not legislate for the future, did not give a determined structure to a church, did not establish an authority with provision that it should perpetuate itself, and did not continue his existence in the Church as in his Mystical Body. Further, according to Protestantism, the Bible does not indicate at all that God uses any other means to communicate with men except directly through Christ. The Church as an intermediary between God and man is alien to the Gospels in the thought of Protestants.

The Catholic view on all these

points need not be reported here. What is relevant, however, is that all the differences basically stem from an understanding of the Incarnation. In the Catholic view, the Word was in very truth made flesh. This means that Christ entered the world concretely at a point of time, into a whole network of social relationships, and into a universal, salvific work that had as its foundation his presence. Belief in this real intervention of Christ in the world gives logical rise to belief in his continued presence, mystical but real, in the organization he founded to continue his work. True, the Church has been subject to many awkward, humiliating, and even contradictory positions and situations. It has needed the reform of its human elements many times. But then, Christ also submitted to all the humiliations inherent in the assumption of a human nature. Franciscans, who know Christ so well, and who see him so clearly in the good news of the gospel, have the only foundation stone upon which the structure of Christian Unity can be built.

Devotion to Church

A third characteristic of Franciscanism is devotion to the Church. This comes logically from dedication to Christ. One who is committed to Christ is naturally concerned with the Mystical Body of Christ.

St. Francis' devotion to the Church is well known. The dream of the Pope that the Poverello would uphold the walls of the Church was not an empty vision. The Seraphic Saint furnished the Church with an uplift of tremendous vigor and strength. His loyalty and obedience to the Holy Father was a potent inspiration throughout the medieval world, and it has sent Franciscan missionaries far and wide ever since.

Today the Church is engaged in a mighty council. Vatican II may very well be the most important event in modern times for the Church. Indications are not wanting that the effects of the Council will bring about a new synthesis in Catholic theology and in the spiritual life of the faithful. A new golden age in the life of the Church is not far away.

Councils, however, like the Church itself, do not operate in a vacuum. They need the cooperation and the ratification of the whole Church. Historians are now agreed that some of the resolutions of the Council of Lyons in 1274 and the Council of Florence in 1439, both councils of union which brought groups of Oriental separatists into the Church, failed ultimately because they were not fully accepted by the clergy and people. The present council, too, if it is carefully considered deeply, needs to achieve their full effects, needs the acceptance, cooperation, and

the obedience of priest and people alike.

What is the purpose of Vatican II? The Holy Father put the matter succinctly in his first encyclical. After quoting from the Gospel of St. John 10:16, "There shall be one fold and one shepherd", he declared:

This fond hope compelled Us to make public Our intention to hold an Ecumenical Council . . . This event will be a wonderful spectacle of truth, unity, and charity. For those who behold it, but are not one with this Apostolic See, We hope that it will be a gentle invitation to seek and find that unity for which Jesus Christ prayed so ardently to His Father in heaven.⁹

In his address at the opening of the Council, the Pope spoke in almost the same words:

Unfortunately, the entire Christian family has not yet fully attained this (Catholic) visible unity in truth.

The Catholic Church, therefore, considers it her duty to work actively so that there may be fulfilled the great mystery of that unity, which Jesus Christ invoked with fervent prayer from his heavenly father on the eve of his sacrifice.¹⁰

Over and over again the Pope has emphasized his strong desire and the great need for Christian Unity. Yet, everyone agrees that the direct purpose of the Council is not to negotiate such unity at this time. Cardinal Bea, head

of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, said in an article written before the Council opened: "The immediate aim of the forthcoming Second Vatican Council is not the union of the Christian world, or even reunion with particular religious groups."¹¹ The general purpose of the Council is rather the renewal of the Church. Through this renewal, and through the representation of the Church to the world, it is hoped that all non-Catholic Christians will heed the invitation to come home.

All of these aspects of the Council are so many additional reasons why Franciscans should be interested in the work of Christian Unity. They fit in perfectly with the Franciscan approach to life through Christ, through charity, through prayer and penance. A pastoral issued by the Dutch

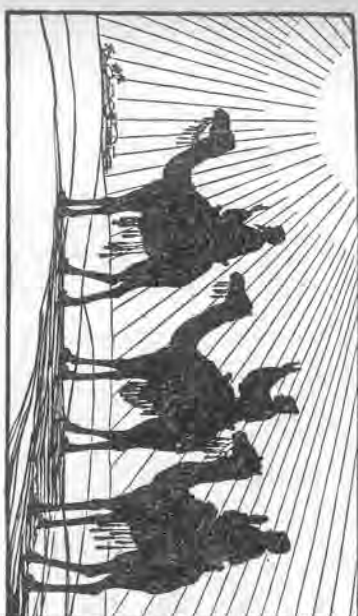
hierarchy before the Council referred to the duty of all Catholics in this way. We may apply the words in even greater extent to Franciscans:

The Holy Father considers the council not merely an affair of the bishops who are gathering with him in Rome. For the Pope, the council is a renewal of the life of the Church. Every faithful Catholic must take part in this council by realizing and renewing his own Christian existence. The Council is something for the whole Church, and every member of the faithful has to contribute his part. For that reason the Pope urged all faithful to do penance, and to open themselves to God.¹²

The need, the challenge, the call to work for Christian Unity is clear.

- 1 Hans Küng, *The Council, Reform and Union* (Trans. by Cecily Hastings), New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961, p. 1.
- 2 Cf. Cuthbert Gumbinger, O.F.M., Cap., "The Primacy of Charity in Franciscan Étienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*, New York: Sheed & Ward.
- 4 Cf. Maurice Grajewski, O.F.M., "The Concept of Franciscan Theology", *Franciscan* 5 op. cit., p. 232.
- 6 "Two-thirds of the world's people are still outside the Christian fold. The proportion of non-Christians is increasing daily. There are more non-Christians in the world tonight than ever before." Associated Press report of Dr. T. Watson Street's report at a Protestant consultation on world missions, Montreal, N. C., October 1962.
- 7 *In Luc.* c. 20, n. 23, VII, 508 b.
- 8 *ibid.*, p. 21.
- 9 *Ad Petri Cathedram*, June 29, 1959. Cf. *The Pope Speaks*, v. 5, n. 4 (Autumn 1962).
- 10 Cf. Text in *New York Times*, Oct. 12, 1962.
- 11 "The Council and Church Unity" in *America* Press pamphlet, *The Second Vatican* 12 Reported by NC in the Catholic Press.

God's Son Manifested To Men



The most glorious feast of the Epiphany which we are celebrating is replete with both splendor and religion. On this day the Son of God, but recently born into the world, was shown forth to men by a most splendid manifestation.

There are two mysteries of the Christian religion which, surpassing all others, lay claim to the principal place: Christ's birth to mortal life, and his resurrection to immortal life. These two events are the hinges of the entire Gospel. Just as it was necessary that the Resurrection be grounded and established by many proofs during the forty days until the Ascension, so that, every shadow of doubt being removed, a strong belief might take root in the hearts of the faithful, so, likewise, was the birth of Christ made known and proved during the forty days until the Purification of the Virgin, lest the world be able to hide itself, as it were, behind a cloak of feigned ignorance.

But it is today, to the blessed Magi, that the birth of Christ was most clearly and patiently shown forth, in a fashion much more resplendent than its revelation to the shepherds in the stable by an angel, or to the just Simeon and devout Anna in the temple.

Today's Gospel is brimful with the glory of Christ. As the Son humbled himself, so does the Father exalt him, thus:—*He who humbles himself shall be exalted; now he did empty himself; . . . wherefore, God has exalted him.* To the Magi in the far reaches of the Orient the star proclaims the glory of Christ; they in turn proclaim the same glory in Jerusalem; the oracles of the Prophets proclaim it in the midst of the gathering of the wise ones; the gifts of the Magi proclaim it adoringly; and the angels proclaim it, warning the Magi in a dream.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi,
Sermon on the Epiphany
(*Omnia Opera*, X, 195)

The Triad of Christian Perfection

Fr. Augustine McDermitt, O.F.M.

On the occasion of his own golden jubilee in the sacred priesthood, Pope St. Pius X addressed to the priests of the world an exhortation entitled *Haerent Animo*.¹ Although the burden of the Supreme Pontiff's message is the holiness to which priests should aspire, his recommendations can be adopted with profit by all followers of Jesus. For every Christian, with due regard to his particular state in life, and in accordance with the individual graces granted to him by God, is obliged to become holy. There is incumbent upon every member of the Church the duty of which the Holy Father reminds the priest, *scilicet*, that "he should direct his entire life in a superhuman course, so that whatever he does . . . he does according to God, under the inspiration and guidance of faith." To do whatever one does according to God! What else is this than to live the life of perfection, to which all followers of Jesus are called?

The Papal Doctrine

The direction of one's life according to God, avers the Pope, consists in a "habit of one's mind, a sort of natural union with God"

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(*op. cit.*, p. 566). Now, since in the present order of grace the union with God to which we are called is certainly a supernatural one, this latter phrase may be somewhat puzzling at first sight. It would seem, however, that the Holy Father uses it in order to emphasize the need for the Christian to make the supernatural order his own. In other words, the disciple of Christ must so relate his daily life to God that he becomes totally immersed in, and familiar with, the supernatural environment in which he lives. Taking God into consideration must become as normal to him as the ordinary occupations of his natural life. And by extending the relation toward God over the entire range of his capabilities, by making it the "habit of his mind", the Christian answers his vocation to grace. The objective union with his heavenly Father.

This habitual disposition, which God, in which he has been constituted by the sacrament of Baptism, becomes subjectively significant. By making the supernatural order his psychological frame of reference, he responds to God's adoption of him with his own personal effort toward union with the Pope does not hesitate to call "sanctity of life", is acquired by

our own will under the influence of divine grace. And grace in turn is obtained by the practice of prayer (*op. cit.*, p. 564). This life of prayer which, as St. Pius reminds us, was both taught and exemplified by our blessed Lord, is itself a habitual disposition whereby the person striving for sanctity frequently turns to God for help in the business of daily living. It is not the thoughtless recital of formulas out of mere habit, but rather "conversing with God, speaking to him devoutly" (*op. cit.*, p. 565). It is that spirit which our present Holy Father, Pope John, describes so beautifully in a recent letter to Women Religious:

All of you, whether dedicated to a contemplative or an active life, should understand the expression, "life of prayer". It entails not a mechanical repetition of formulas but is rather the irreplaceable means by which one enters into intimacy with the Lord, to better understand the dignity of being daughters of God and spouses of the Holy Ghost, the "sweet guest of the soul", who speaks to those who know how to listen in recollection.²

While this love and practice of prayer is not formally identical with the soul's quasi-natural union with God of which St. Pius speaks, yet it is intimately connected with it, being both its practical expression and an effective means of intensifying it.

Now are the quasi-natural union with God and the life of prayer to

be acquired? One of the noteworthy characteristics of the *Haerent Animo* is its outstanding practicality. The Holy Father has not presented his priests here with a mere rhetorical incitement to sanctity; the quondam parish priest points out for his readers some very concrete practices designed to nourish the holiness consonant with their priestly vocation. The manner in which he treats of these practices lends to his teaching a significance which extends beyond the priesthood itself to all those who would strive for Christian perfection. For, while the Pope urges the cultivation of several virtues which pertain more particularly to the sacerdotal vocation, he lays unmistakable emphasis on three exercises whose use is advantageous to all. These three are the practices of meditation, spiritual reading, and the examination of conscience.

In working toward the attainment of the dual disposition which is union with God and mental prayer, "the principal thing," writes the Pope, "is to set aside a certain amount of time daily for the meditation of things eternal" (*op. cit.*, p. 565). It is this habit of daily meditation which actually brings about and preserves in the soul the union with God which we spoke of above.

In the second place, the Holy Father recommends the practice of spiritual reading: "It is very important that to the daily con-

sideration of divine matters the priest join the reading of pious books, especially those which are divinely inspired" (*op. cit.*, p. 569).

Thirdly, the Pontiff counsels the practice of examination of conscience, stating that "the benefits acquired from pious reading and the meditation of heavenly things will be richer for the priest if he forms some plan by which he may know whether he is striving religiously to carry out in his life the things about which he has read and meditated" (*op. cit.*, p. 571).

As we have pointed out, the three particular practices which the Holy Father suggests for priests are applicable to the religious life of every Christian, since anyone who is earnestly following Christ thereby seeks the quasi-natural union with God of which the Holy Father speaks. More than this: it would seem that if the Christian desires to be successful in his pursuit of that union, then he *must* use these three means. The reason for this is that these three exercises are precisely aligned with, and ordered to the supernatural development of, the three principal faculties of human conduct—intellect, will, and external operation.

St. Bonaventure tells us that theology provides man with a light whereby he learns what he should believe, how he is to live, and the manner in which he must be united to God.³ The purpose of theology, then, is to relate a

man's entire being to God by ordering to him the activities of intellect, external operation, and will. The three exercises of which we speak have precisely the same purpose. In enabling a man to know, and serve God, they help him to fulfill the purpose for which, after all, he has been placed on this earth.

We may summarize what we have said so far by stating that the effort toward union with God which represents the Christian's personal response to the vocation to grace is founded in the practice of meditation, spiritual reading and examination of conscience. A closer look at these exercises will disclose how this is so.

Practical Application

The key to union with God is Jesus Christ himself. His sacred humanity, truly belonging as it does to him who is the all-perfect God, is entirely and uniquely holy. The man Jesus, therefore, is the model of holiness for every other man and woman. And, since holiness, or union with God, is our goal as Christians, we must strive to conform our humanity to that of Christ. We should do well, consequently, to make Jesus the focal point and primary object of our spiritual reading, meditation, and examination of conscience.

The most effective and practical beginning will be, perhaps, to take a long objective look at ourselves as compared with our blessed Lord, to observe the discrepancy

between us, and to select the single virtue which will best begin to bridge the gap. The selection of a particular virtue to pursue need not entail a lengthy self-analysis. The faithful practice of the general examination of conscience will provide a ready answer: if I were living in the physical presence of Jesus, what trait in my personality would embarrass me most frequently? in my life among his mystical members, what fault keeps coming to the fore? Striving to acquire the opposite virtue is the way, at the present time, in which I shall become more holy.

The realization that I am just now beginning, perhaps at a relatively late date in my life, should not distress me. The past is gone; it is *now* that God offers me this particular grace; now is the acceptable time! Neither should I be cast down by the awareness of the great dissimilarity between myself and the Master. I must expect to become yet more aware of this as growing closer to him, I shall perceive ever more clearly how truly holy he is. Nor should I worry that perhaps I have not really come to the heart of the matter—to my basic fault. The thing is to begin! I am working under the influence of God's grace. If only I shall make a start, he will redirect me should I set out on the wrong path.

Spiritual Reading

Having now selected the virtue in whose practice I shall attempt

to conform myself to the Model, my spiritual reading will be influenced by this choice. I should do well to direct a part of my reading to what spiritual writers have to say about this virtue. A balanced reading program which embraces the speculative, practical, and devotional aspects of a particular virtue would be quite beneficial.

This study of the virtue in itself may be supplemented very profitably by reading about its pertinence to my particular state in life. If I am a religious, I should not neglect to learn from my Rule and Constitutions what relevance this virtue has to the spirit of my institute.

Approaching the matter more closely, I should concentrate, as St. Pius suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 569), on Sacred Scripture. The entire canon of inspired writings is redolent of Jesus, who is their very essence. The Bible reveals the history which St. John has distilled into his Prologue: preparation for the incarnation of the Word, the Word himself, and the effects of his dwelling amongst us. Since the lines of the plan of salvation history are not always obviously perceptible, I shall profit, especially at the beginning, from consulting a commentary on Sacred Scripture, or reading an account of the life of Christ.

More specifically pertinent to my general purpose of conforming myself to Jesus, I should study the Gospels, which are the very heart

of Sacred Scripture. Here I shall become acquainted with the Galilean himself—with the Son of Man as he revealed himself to other men. And, to come to the very core of the matter at hand, I should read about our blessed Lord precisely in so far as he is the model of this particular virtue. To read the gospel narrative in the light of a single virtue is a thrilling and rewarding experience.

Meditation

But the fuel is not the fire; it exists only that the fire may feed upon it. And spiritual reading is the fuel that supports the fire of meditation. Of the three exercises of which we speak, meditation is clearly the keystone. It is the habit of meditating daily, writes Pope

Pius X, that brings about and preserves the state of mind which is union with God (*op. cit.*, p. 566).

The object of spiritual reading is to learn; meditation is primarily an act of love. The same Holy Father describes it as a "reflection within one's heart" (*op. cit.*, p. 567; cf. Jerem., 12:11). Since we cannot love what we do not know, my meditation must begin in my intellect. But it takes up where intellect leaves off. Essentially it is loving the good which the intellect presents. Because meditation is primarily an act of love, and loving is a personal engagement, it would seem advisable to direct one's reflection not to things, but to persons—to the Most Blessed

Trinity, Our Lord, his Virgin Mother Mary, the saints; to consider, for example, not the virtue of poverty, but rather the poor Christ.

In considering our Lord under the aspect of this or that particular virtue, I should bring to bear the things I have learned in my spiritual reading. My knowledge of the virtue, and also of its place in my state of life, will be present. But here again, the person of Jesus will be the primary object of my reflection. Knowing what this virtue means, recognizing its bearing on my own vocation, and, finally, meditating on how our Lord actually practiced it, must certainly lead me to love him for what he is.

We have mentioned in passing that meditation, as an act of love, is a personal engagement. This means that just as I approach Jesus, so also does he approach me. It is here, in affective meditation, that I learn not only *what* he is, but more especially *who* he is. In a supernatural manner—especially by means of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost—I can be led gradually through the things that I know about him, to that indefinable, familiar knowledge of his very self which is friendship. In anticipation of the beatific vision, I may by divine grace encounter the personality itself of the Incarnate Son of God.

Particular Examination of Conscience

As the old saying goes, where there is smoke there is fire. The reason for this is, of course, that smoke is a sign of fire; even when one cannot see the fire, the smoke indicates its presence. In life, whether natural or supernatural, actions are the signs expressive of love. The love engendered by meditation flows into daily activity. It is important for us to note that this overflow of love takes place spontaneously. If a Christian sets aside some time each day for the express purpose of loving our Lord, then, man being what he is, it must follow of necessity that his external actions will reflect his love. For this reason, it may seem that the inclusion of a definite resolution in one's meditation is superfluous. But this is not entirely true. While the practical resolution is not of the essence of meditation, it does have two outstanding advantages: it channels our love into those areas where it is most needed to irrigate the soil of our daily lives, and it yields fruit whose tangibility gives us a means by which we may estimate how potent our love really is. For these reasons, the wise follower of Christ will fill out his spiritual life with a diligent adherence to the practice of particular examination of conscience.

In attempting to achieve and

sustain union with God, I have not made some vague decision to "be better". Having observed in my general examinations of conscience that the lack of a particular virtue makes me especially different from Jesus, I have set out to make up the deficit in that part of my personality. I have read about that virtue; I have loved Jesus in his possession of it; I must now strive to practice it myself. This is what makes this examination to be particular: the expenditure of a few moments a day to consider whether I have practiced this individual virtue, and to plan what I shall do in the immediate future. My effort should be a positive one. I am not so much interested in becoming unlike myself, as I am in becoming like the Master. This means that I shall resolve not only to avoid a particular fault, but to perform a positive act of this virtue. My planning should also be practical: I shall be more kind to this particular person, be more patient in that concrete situation, undertake this act at a specified time of day. And, finally, my effort must be persistent. When I first embark on this course, my examination may consist for some days or weeks in a simple acknowledgement that I forgot the resolution which I made, together with a resolve to try to remember it the next time. But if I persist, then some day, with God's help, I shall pause and remember. And at that moment, I shall have begun to acquire the

knack of speaking, thinking, acting, like Jesus Christ.

This, then, is the triad which makes up my personal response to God's call to grace. The faithful practice of these three exercises will, with the help of that grace,

bring about in me that disposition which is Christian, essentially and in the fullest sense of the word, the possession of Christ in my mind, Christ in my heart, and Christ in my hands.

¹ *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, XLI (1908-09), 555-577.

² Letter II *Tempio Massimo*, July 2, 1962; N.C.W.C. tr., p. 5.

³ St. Bonaventure, *Reductio Artium ad Theologiam*, ch. 5.

I beseech Thee, O Lord, that the fiery and sweet strength of Thy love may absorb my soul from all things that are under heaven, that I may die for love of Thy love as Thou didst deign to die for love of my love. — *Prayer of St. Francis*, recorded by Ubertino da Casale in *Arbor Vitae Crucifixe*.

If occasionally a subject sees things which would be better or more useful to his soul than those which his superior commands him, let him sacrifice his will to God and strive to fulfill the command of his superior. — *St. Francis' Words of Admonition, III*.

There are many religious who, under the pretext of perceiving better things than those which are commanded by their superior, look back and return to the vomit of their own will. And these are homicide because by their bad example they cause souls to be lost. — *St. Francis' Words of Admonition, III*.

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

In his discerning little volume entitled *Saints for Sinners*, Archbishop Alban Goodier describes poignantly the anguish of soul which our own St. Margaret of Cortona experienced in those decisive moments of her conversion back to God. Here she was, despised by the worldly ostracized by the pious, swept along by confusion to the very brink of despair; there was no one in all the world, it seemed, willing to take her hand and guide her to her Father's house. Then suddenly the distressed and repentant Margaret remembered that there was a community of friars in the vicinity. Perhaps the sons of St. Francis would understand. Timorously she knocked at the door. Its opening signalled the beginning of a life of intense sanctity for the woman who would become known as the Franciscan Magdalen.

What of the friar who opened that door? Was he priest or brother, young or old, portly or gaunt? did he grumble because the knocking distracted him from his chores? or did he, perhaps, welcome the respite afforded by a few moments of chatting with some interesting traveller? and was he perplexed, and maybe a trifle apprehensive, to recognize the caller as the notorious mistress of the nearby villa?

We shall never know. His identity remains forever a secret. One thing we can surmise, however, of the anonymous friar: he must have been as kind and gentle to Margaret as Jesus Christ himself.

He teaches us a lesson, this nameless Franciscan. His brief encounter with Margaret, a most ordinary incident in the course of a quite uneventful day, was the sacrament of the moment, fraught with consequences of which he never dreamed.

Last month **THE CORD**, following the example recently set by some of our Sisters, modified its habit somewhat. We hope our reader like our new style; it is part of a general effort to present our Scripps patrimony as effectively and extensively as possible.

We were so excited about our "new look" in January, that we forgot to tell you the name of the artist who designed our new cover. He is Fr. Francis X. Miles, O.F.M., of Holy Name College in Washington. We are very grateful to Father for his assistance. We are indebted also to two ladies at Catholic University—Miss Clare Fontanini, Head of the Art Department, and Miss Anne R. Conway—for their valuable suggestions regarding our general format.

The Editors

Basic Footprints

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

The most fundamental and profound question pertinent to life's challenge and solution was asked and answered by St. Francis with revealing simplicity and humility: "Who are you, O God, most dear, and who am I, your worthless servant?" As in all his succinct statements and exclamations, Francis implied a wealth of meaning that could result only from deep and dedicated meditations. His "My God and my all!" is evidence of his grasp of the basic philosophy of life that must be appreciated and applied zealously if man is to fulfill his purpose on earth. In order to achieve this with some measure of success, man must know himself: a long, arduous study, demanding patience, perseverance and, especially, proper procedure.

Knowledge of Self

Self-identification is the prime requisite of life in order that one

be able to make one's way through it to the end for which it is meant. Once this is established, at least to some fitting degree, then and only then can the process of real, dynamic living begin. Perhaps it may serve to emphasize the work entailed in achieving self-identification or self-knowledge to refer to the vast study demanded in the medical profession of just one element of our being—the body. It is a lifelong occupation which can never be resolved entirely. There is an axiom among medics which says, "The doctor who stops studying ceases to be a doctor."

Among the more predominant failures and presumptions of mankind is the habit of over-simplification. There can be many causes of this. One authority referred to the prevalence of disintegrated education as the main cause of insufficient sound, logical thought and action. Some have termed it a "buckshot" system, wherein a spray of effort is released towards a disjointed variety of subjects. We have only to consider a young man of today receiving a high school or college diploma because he survived and passed with some success the established curriculum.

We are proud and happy to present Fr. Celestine Regnier, who is an old friend of THE CORD. Father is Minister of Novices at Our Lady Queen of Peace Priory, Middletown, N. Y.

And the tragic fact often is that after years of education the young man knows practically nothing about himself: what life is, why he is on earth, what means he must employ to fulfill the purpose of his existence. It is not idealistic to hold that education should be directed primarily to these matters, for the most important issue, after all, is the knowledge of one's self and how this life is to be lived in fulfillment of its basic make-up and demands.

This failure of oversimplification and presumption is octopus-like, for its tentacles may spread from the area of primary education into the sacrosanct field of religious life. For example, one has merely to consider how much the Bible is read, not only during the formative years, but throughout religious life. It is far from fiction to say that among religious there is a prominent degree of vague familiarity with Scripture—even to the point of the Gospels being unread throughout one's entire life. Or, again, the statements and proclamations of the Holy Father remain largely unknown, and even unconsidered, as major guides and counsellings of vocation in life. Why should this be? One reason may be that such material was seldom, if ever, presented and emphasized as basic during formative years of training. One was left too much to himself to find

his way along the religious path and some, therefore, have never recognized the main guide-sign of sound religious formation and life.

It is something of an axiom that the closer one is to something, the less he sees of it. Familiarity, as are told, breeds contempt. Perhaps it would be more precise to say that it breeds a taking-for-granted attitude, whereby appreciation and knowledge are not so much a matter of depth and basic values as of surface view, of thin veneer. As religious, we should know how true this can be, and therefore recognize the great danger again which we must be ever on guard by regular, zealous evaluation of the fundamentals of our life. Francis pointed the way with his terse comment: "What a man before God, that he is and nothing more." This contains several very obvious and highly important implications. Self-identification, to put it another way, judgment of one's religious status, is a fundamental requisite for the fulfillment of our vocation, and it can only be achieved by a fervor regarded for truth and all that involves. Here the danger of presumed security and surface may be lethal, for they can lead to the dross of spiritual mediocrity, presumption of vocational integrity and a serious absence of that Franciscan character which Francis was so careful to identify as the true mark of his followers.

Basis of Self-Knowledge

Serious vocational assessment must be judged on proper relation to God, and is achieved by daily assiduous meditation, spiritual reading, examen of conscience, recollection and applied love of the Blessed Sacrament. If we are to evaluate our status as Franciscans we must turn first to God, then to ourselves. We cannot know ourselves unless we first know God, otherwise we run the risk of Luke's warning, "Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee, be not darkness" (Lk. 11:35), as well as Jeremiah's denouncement, "For my foolish people have not known me: they are foolish and senseless children: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jer. 4:23). Because we are surrounded daily by what may be termed the atmosphere of our vocation—habit, community life, format, schedule: the over-all spiritual setting—there is danger that all these gradually comprise the sum and substance of our religious status rather than being the aids they are meant to be. And it is also quite possible that one's Franciscan character may be little more than the spiritual aura which extends automatically from religious surroundings. As a result, there may be something of the attitude of that taking-for-granted elements which comprise Franciscan identification.

Who Am I?

St. Francis was very aware of the failures that could strike within his ranks, and for this reason he took special care to point out the special virtues that must characterize each one of his followers. In the third chapter of the rule, he wrote: "I counsel, admonish and exhort my friars in the Lord Jesus Christ that they should be meek . . . humble . . ." No doubt he chose his words carefully and with intent, urging that his direction be analyzed and examined to the core in order to comprehend the extent of its meaning and the duty imposed. Francis established clearly the prime occupation of all who were to accept his way of life: to know one's self as thoroughly as possible; to judge and identify one's status based on one's relation to Almighty God. This relationship, he insisted, would be achieved only by a progressive knowledge of God, which in turn would enable a person to know himself. Repeatedly Francis described the scope and importance of this concern: "O great God of glory, my Lord Jesus Christ, I entreat you, put light into the darkness of my mind. Give me the right faith, and perfect charity. Help me to learn to know you, O Lord, so well that in all things I may do everything in true keeping with your holy will."

A further direction by Francis for the avoidance of the pitfall of

surface judgment and presumption was his stern reminder: "Nobody ought to flatter himself over anything that a sinner can do." He declared flatly that the only thing of consequence in this life is love of God and of one's fellow men. The implication was and is, therefore, that knowledge and love of God must receive total, dedicated effort by his followers, and that in order to do this there must be a realistic view of the virtues predominant in his rule. Also, each one should gauge his application of Franciscanism by an honest and convincing regard for himself. This is exemplified in Francis' account of his own status: "To myself I seem to be the greatest of sinners, for if God had pursued a criminal with the same mercy, the man would be ten times more spiritual than I." With these words Francis drew the full circle of the character, life and spirit of his followers: a deep and abiding love of God and a thorough self-effacement through humility and meekness. "Who are you, O God, most dear, and who am I your worthless servant."

Who Is God?

The Franciscan vocation—and the term extends to all three Orders—consists in a progressive immersion of one's self in the knowledge and love of God. It is not a knowledge *about* God. There is a world of difference between

knowing about God and knowing him. The former enables one to describe God's attributes, to preach about him; the latter spurs one's heart to lunge towards him, fervently declare one's love of him and to seek an abiding union with him. This love is centered on one principal fact that God is perfection: he is all things, the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega. As perfection he warrants our total praise, honor and glory. The absorbing conviction that God is everything perfect comprises the core of Franciscan spirituality. Man is made to praise God; if he is not doing this, he is not doing anything. Glory to God is, therefore, man's fulfillment; by it he is doing what is meant to do. The Franciscan vocation is best summarized in the *Benedicite* canticle of Sunday Lauds.

Consequence of This Comparison: Joy

For the Franciscan, knowledge of God involves comparison: the one hand, love of God flows the awesome, while one's own effacement embraces a deep humility and meekness. Contemplation of the perfect automatically reveals the extent of our own perfection and worthlessness; reaches the point where we are overwhelmed that God has something to do with us at all. It searches for faint similes: the pauper . . .

noble father and the prodigal . . . the master lavishing his hospitality on the wretched. But while lowliness is the Franciscan trait, constantly referred to by its representative name, Friars Minor, it does not reflect a dark, brooding quality, forever wallowing in the abyss of failure. Quite the contrary. It is here that we come to understand the true meaning of the frequently misused term, Franciscan Joy. From progressive concentration on Perfection there springs an ineffable joy, for perfection sponsors praise and glory. A man is happiest when he experiences some hint of perfection; it may be in the sunrise, a voice, in music or art, or in some exceptional feat of human endeavor, as in the case of Colonel Glenn after his tri-orbital flight. One cheers, applauds. The greater the hint of perfection, the more the praise, to the extent that one may even jump and shout for joy. The fact that one is far distant from such excellence in no way detracts from the joy of praise; rather it magnifies it. One feels forever blessed at having in some measure partaken of such greatness.

Thus did Francis consider God in his perfection. He was awestruck. Overwhelmed! "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 your love, who are dignified to die for love of my love." And again: "... you,

O Lord, are the sovereign good, the eternal good, from which everything good has its being and without which there is nothing good." The Franciscan stresses throughout his life the fact that he was called from nothing into existence with the astounding privilege of partaking of Infinite Perfection, to share in divine nature, to know as the Infinite knows himself. From all this there flows an exquisite joy all the more emphasized and heightened by the fact of his own vast unworthiness. In man, says St. Thomas Aquinas, "two things may be considered: what there is of God, and what there is of man. Of man there is whatever points to defect; but of God, all that makes for salvation and perfection." Therefore, love and humility—humility and meekness—the essential fabric of Franciscan life.

Our Father Francis

When death was imminent, Francis bade his brothers farewell, and from his lips came the statement that must ever be the watchword of all his followers: "Happy they who will persevere in what they have begun . . ." There can be no doubt that in his last moments Francis was aware of the vast possibilities of his disciples wavering along the course: of surface regard, of presumption of the qualities so carefully stressed in his rule, of a taking-for-grantedness

flowing from little else than the religious decor of religious life. As Sister Death approached, he seemed preoccupied with the trials and failures of his brothers: "Farewell, my sons all, in the fear of God, and abide in it always. For great trial is coming upon you and tribulation is drawing near . . . See, my son, I am being called by God, I forgive my brothers, the absent as well as the present, all their offenses and failings . . ."

In life and in death Francis sought in every way possible to make clear the vocation of all who were to submit to his way of life. When he was considering a rule for his disciples he made it clear he wanted nothing of Dominic or Benedict, meaning that his was a special way, and that the Franciscan vocation was a very precise one, to be lived fully, with all energy and application to the basic elements: knowledge and love of God by means of daily, zealous application to the spiritual sources of progressive religious formation, and a true identification of self in the virtues of humility and meekness. "My God and my all," therefore, must be considered by all not so much as a spiritual con-

viction uttered by St. Francis, but as the characteristic mark of every Franciscan. Nor is it something to be uttered merely in prayer, he lived in every consideration and circumstance. As death closed in Francis recited Psalm 141, and this he left to his followers as Franciscan legacy for the Majestic of God and his love, and the lowliness of his servant, the Friar Minor. Psalm 141 may well be regarded as basic material for vocational examination: "I cried to the Lord with my voice, with my voice I made supplication to the Lord. In this way where I walked, the have hidden a snare for me. There is no one that has regard for my soul. I cried to you, O Lord. I said, You are my hope, my portion in the land of the living. Attend to my supplication, for I am brought very low . . . I have fully bypass the spirit and meaning of those words. No clear activity, no emphasis on the standard can undermine what is expected of all followers of St. Francis. In the end it shall be expected of each one that he or indeed, a Friar Minor.

Nature And Grace

Fr. Geoffrey C. Bridges, O.F.M.

"God observe attentively the motions of nature and grace; for they move in very opposite and subtle ways . . . Nature is unwilling to be mortified, or to be restrained; grace studies the mortification of self, resists sensuality, seeks to be subject . . . Nature is afraid of being put to shame and despised; grace is glad to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus."

Nature

We recognize immediately that the author of the *Imitation* is using "nature" in a limited sense. He is identifying it with concupiscence. This is not the "nature" upon which grace builds, according to the famous saying. The meaning of "nature" in the context of the Christian person, an integral being of nature and grace, is: all that natural endowment, bodily and spiritual, which grace perfects.

Man is a composite of body and soul, made in the image of God. His body is an organism of magnificent complexity and unity; system within system in harmony; endowed with powers of replenishing, replacing, reproducing. In its perfections it is both a theophany and a "most lovely hymn" to God, as Augustine would say. It reveals some little portion of the ingenuity of the Creator.

Man's soul is a closer image of the Creator. If we adopt the distinction between image and likeness of Augustine, Bernard, and Bonaventure, then as a natural being the soul is made in the image of the triune Creator. By its self-

Fr. Geoffrey holds a Doctorate in Philosophy from the Franciscan Institute of the Santa Barbara Province, he has contributed articles to THE CORD and the WAY OF ST. FRANCIS, has been active in the FEC, and is Spiritual Director of three Transients of the III

awareness, self-consciousness, it mirrors the Father, who knowing himself "speaks" the Word; by its intelligence it mirrors the Word, who proceeds from the self-awareness of the Father; by its will it mirrors the Holy Spirit, the personification of the love of the Father and Son for the Godhead. There is unity of essence and trinity of powers.¹ The likeness of the soul to God is the work of grace, and will be mentioned below.

Body and soul make man, not either alone. But the body is made for the soul, to express it, to open it out, to give it fullness. The body is disposed to perception, perception to knowledge, and knowledge to love. Man knows and loves and evinces emotions through body and soul. The union is so close that in this life without the body there is no psychic life. On the other hand, the body in time becomes the image of the soul; for the soul little by little impresses its image on the body. We recognize this. We can tell a personality from careful study of a physiognomy.²

The embodied spirit is the human person. He is the image of God, made "a little less than the angels." Nevertheless, we must take man in his concrete reality—he is a fallen son of Adam. The mark of his parentage is on him.

An impulse to disunity and disharmony mars the image of God. This is concupiscence. The body can be an obstacle as well as a

help; it can cripple spiritual activity. It obeys and cooperates with reluctance. In its affectivity it strains against the control of reason. It submits to discipline with reluctance and a battle. This is in part due to the nature of the body. As St. Thomas says, "The conflict coming of opposed desires does not arise exclusively from matter. For since man possesses sensibility he cannot but feel pleasure and desire for pleasurable things, and many of these are contrary to reason."³

Deprived of the gift of integrity, the body is given over to its own law, the law of matter, which is part is hostile to the spirit. The soul is incapable on its own to give itself wholly to God, and the body is incapable to give itself wholly to the soul. There is unity, but tension. The law of the flesh wars against the law of the mind. "I am another law in my members, warring against the law of the mind, and making me prisoner to the law of sin that is in my members." The remains of sin, both original and actual, become a part of man's present personality. And here can interject a further dimension of human nature and existence. Before a child's moral consciousness blossoms, pre-conscious attitudes are formed. Underneath consciousness and conscience (in what we call the super-ego) percolate unconscious norms and attitudes, of which proceed emotional

actions, conscious attitudes, and seemingly conscious choices. These prepositions to good or evil, which apparently continue to arise after moral conscience is formed, can be generated by parents, teachers, associates. It is surely a result of original sin that man is liable to form unreasonable standards along with the reasonable in the pre-rational period — unreasonable standards which can be the seed of pathological disturbances in later life. Hence, the content and tendencies on this lower level are a part, though not ineradicably, of man's nature. And the erroneous norms and attitudes, e.g. that all authority including God's is arbitrary and unreasonable, are another source of disunity and disharmony in the human person.

Notwithstanding the possible or actual disruption of personality through influences just mentioned as well as through sins emerging from concupiscence, we must recognize another, saving tendency in man. There is in him an impulse to integration and harmony. The human organism as a psychological unit contains a basic tendency to actualize, maintain, and perfect itself. It is an interesting fact that the noted psychotherapist, Carl Rogers, has discovered this tendency in an experimental way to his counseling. He bases his client-centered therapy on this tendency, proving that in the conditional circumstances of "unconditional positive regard" nature

develops and rectifies itself.⁴

The discovery that nature is positive in its tendency was a revelation to Rogers. Actually, it is part of the traditional Christian view of man. Scheeben forcefully states this position:

Every being, whatever its state may be, has in it an active power and tendency to strive for its own good, to realize good in itself, even though not without external help, and thus gradually to grow up to its perfection, to reach this goal, and to move toward the last end commensurate with it. In particular we maintain that nature as such remains in rational beings, in spite of any derangement and disorder of the faculties resulting from abuse. . . . And this power must not be thought of as dormant; it is endowed with a permanent inclination and aspiration to develop itself and to exercise its activity as soon as an object is presented and incidental obstacles are removed.⁵

Man's nature, his natural endowment, then, consists of a body-soul composite, good in its very substance; because all that God made is good. In its dynamic condition of development it is urged on by natural needs of a psycho-physical, a social, and a spiritual nature, and it is guided by an inherent tendency to strive to realize the good of the organism.⁷ This is not to deny the fact of original sin, or the possibility of actual sin. The human personality is

indeed hampered by the clouding of the intellect, sluggishness of will, and the difficulty of the higher faculties to control the irrational, emotional, and impulsive components of his nature. But the powers are good, the tendency to integrity and growth is always active.

It is this nature, good but hampered, which grace builds on. It is this tendency to self-realization which grace fortifies and lifts to a new level.

Grace

Man as purely natural never existed. He came into being with his nature transfigured by divine life. Man was never destined to realize simply his natural potential. From the beginning he was ordered to a goal transcending his natural powers. Proximally, he was made in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. When he fell, he lost the supernatural likeness but retained the natural image. His vocation now is to return. He is called to a resurrection, to the likeness which he once knew.

It is sanctifying grace which now as before primarily constitutes man in the likeness of Jesus Christ. This is the freely given gift of God which transfigures the nature of man, lifts it up to share in the divine life.

God did not have to create; because he is good and wanted to,

he created. When he created he again freely chose to share his nature with a created nature, that he might share the joy of loving God. This first co-lover in the plan of God was Jesus Christ. In his image God freely chose to make all creatures, but especially rational beings who would be co-lovers with him of God. To make it possible for a finite human to live up to his destiny he gave a proportionate share in his divine life through sanctifying grace. Even though man in heady pride, not content with his share in the divine life, aspired to an even greater share and so sinned, God did not rescind the essential nature of his plan. For the sake of Jesus Christ, and because of his merits, the plan continues, though under somewhat different terms.

The point to be realized first is that the gift of a share in the divine life is a gratuitous bestowal on the part of God. There is nothing in man which demands it, nothing that merits it. What he becomes, what he is able to do, is far beyond his nature. He receives a supernatural nature. If we ask why did God do it, we must answer again, because he is good and he wanted to.

What God freely chooses to do through sanctifying grace is to transfigure a human person, building up the created image into supernatural likeness. It was above that man is an image of the Trinity in so far as he has the three-fold powers of intellect,

reasonness, intellect and will in one soul. Through grace these powers are focused on God, and enabled to operate in a manner proportionately like unto the way God acts. He is given a share in the divine life. This is the divine likeness.

It should not be imagined that this imparting of likeness is simply the casting of a royal robe over the soul, at it were; it is not merely an external sign or symbol. A thorough interior transformation takes place. God imparts something of himself, something of his divine sanctity, something infinitely superior to human nature, that interiorly transfigures man. It does not make man God; Christianity does not teach pantheism. It makes him God-like by giving him a nature like to God's. By nature we mean a principle of acting and being acted upon. He who before was purely human, with entirely human limitations, on even his highest faculties of intellect and will, now is transformed by a divine principle, sanctifying grace, so that now his intellect is capable of attaining hold of the mysteries of God and his will is able to love God thus apprehended. He is now capable of doing that which before was infinitely beyond his powers; he has a new nature.

Scott, with a variation on an old image, speaks of the soul as being transformed as a lump of charcoal is transformed in fire.⁸ Through union with fire, charcoal is changed into the likeness of

fire; what before was cold is now burning hot; what before was dull black is now flaming yellow-gold. The charcoal can now do what the fire does: it can heat, give light, burn. But the charcoal is still in its essence charcoal, not fire. So, through the medium of grace God inflames the soul, giving it powers it never had before nor could ever acquire unaided. He gives the power to know and love as God loves and knows. This is divine life. "Thus it is that grace deifies us, makes us share what constitutes the nature of God, and thereby establishes us, through the complete intimacy of knowledge and love, in a fellowship of love with God, whom we know and love in Himself and for Himself, as children know and love their Father."⁹

The God thus known and loved is found within. For grace institutes the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in man. Community of knowledge and love is initiated between three divine Persons and this human person. "If any man has any love for me . . . he will win my Father's love, and we will both come to him, and make our continual abode with him."¹⁰ The Father draws man into intimacy and familiarity with him. But in order that man may not hesitate in awe as he asks, "How can I, a creature, be on such intimate terms with God the Father," he, as it were, confers on man the right to such familiarity by adopting him into his family; he makes him his

adopted son. He who made man in the first place because of his Son, now confers on man a likeness of the sonship of this Son. "You have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ."¹¹ Similarly, man is assimilated to the Son with whom he is a son of the Father, and to whom, therefore, he is a brother. He is assimilated to the Holy Spirit, who is the bond of his sonship with the Father and his brotherhood with the Son through love. Thus man can dare to enter into the very life of the Trinity and give to the Father the love of the Son and the Spirit, and to each of these the love of the other Persons. Man can give God to God by means of grace, and so the life of God is accomplished in him.

Love or charity is thus the chief fruit of grace, if it is not simply the other face of grace as Scotists teach. Charity consists in the willing of God in his infinite goodness. It is praising him, thanking him, rejoicing with him because of his infinite perfections; wishing his good, working for his glory; choosing to live the life of God; making oneself available to God; appreciating the divine life wherever found: in God, in oneself, in one's neighbor. Love is all of these responses; grace makes

them possible; the greater the grace in man the greater the potential for this response of love. Looking at the transformation effected by grace along with its accompanying sonship and dwelling, one may be inclined to ask: Why am I so insensible to all this? Several answers may be given. For one thing, grace and its effects constitute a mystery, as mysteries in this life we see through a glass darkly. Another answer may be that we simply do not stop to estimate often enough and deeply enough who we are and what we have become through the gift of grace. We need constantly to be urged: Recognize, O Christian, your dignity. Thirdly, as consequence of the second, we are not be using the powers conferred by grace to the extent possible. These things are best known when experienced.

Grace Builds on Nature

The more a Christian lives the life of grace, the more authentic the personality that he develops. Nature and grace become one. Peguy has said: "The tree of nature and tree of grace become one tree—grace grafted on nature—and yield divine fruit. ^{a sense,} grace fulfills a potential in nature. Not that grace is nature to nature; but that supernatural life is possible only because nature is already living the natural of knowledge and love. The

that transform are supernatural; the potency to receive the gift is the part of man's nature as a rational creature, subject to the power of God.

It is not simply the intellect and will of man that is supernaturalized by grace. That tendency toward integral personality noted above is realized beyond all natural expectation. As there is an infinite gap between nature and grace, so there is an infinite gap between a natural personality and an integral Christian personality. Grace is the bridge from the finite to the infinite.

It is important to note, however, that in the meaning of the dictum, "nature builds on grace," is included the fact that the more integral and perfect a nature is, the better is grace able to build on it. Holiness is wholeness, as Gold-burner expounds in a book by that title. Holiness is more difficult but possible when the body physically is disordered. It is most unlikely when man psychologically is disordered, when he has personally disorders. Confessors and counselors can testify that seldom is there seen the miracle of grace perfecting and rectifying a disturbed personality. Scruples, nervousness, and other personality disorders need to be straightened out with the best natural means, though admittedly grace is an aid. As the natural personality is normalized, the development of the Christian personality is normalized.

ed: grace builds better as the foundation improves.¹²

Man's vocation to grace, then, is a vocation to divine life and divine sonship. It is a call to union with the three divine Persons, and through union with them to develop into a Christlike person.

Some modern existentialists present a penetrating analysis of the essential role of love in the development of an authentic personality.¹³ They reveal with new clarity and detail the old paradox, that the best expression of love to self is the love of another that forgets self. It is through such love that a man best realizes his authentic personality. We have seen that love is the other face of charity, its first and noblest fruit. We can take the further step, and state that supernatural love, love of God and neighbor, is the essential means for developing the authentic Christian personality. A man becomes what he loves. With the help of grace he loves the divine life, and he becomes what he loves, a living expression of divine life.

The prayer at the Offertory of the Mass is fulfilled in every such man: "O God, who in a wonderful manner didst create and ennoble human nature, and still more wonderfully hast renewed it; grant that, by the mystery of this water and wine, we may be made partakers of His divinity who vouchsafed to become partaker of our humanity, Jesus Christ Thy Son."

Franciscan Life Of Prayer

St. Francis' Thought on the Place of Contemplation
in the Franciscan Vocation

Fr. Dacian Bluma, O.F.M.

- 1 Cf. St. Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, p. III, c. 9, n. 3.
- 2 Cf. J. Mouroux, *The Meaning of Man*, 41-58.
- 3 *De anima*, 8, ad 7.
- 4 Rom. 7:23.
- 5 Cf. C. R. Rogers, "Some Directions and End Points in Therapy," in O. Mowrer's (ed.), *Psychotherapy: Theory and Research*, pp. 44-68.
- 6 J. Scheeben, *Nature and Grace*, p. 54.
- 7 Cf. J. Nurnin, *Psychologists and Personality*, p. 241-246.
- 8 *Opus Oxon.*, II, d. 26, n. 4.
- 9 J. Dujat, *The Theology of Grace*, p. 73.
- 10 Ja. 17:21.
- 11 Rom. 8:16-17.
- 12 Scheeben, pp. 50-54.
- 13 Cf. W. Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology*, pp. 214-234.



PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Breathe in me, Holy Spirit,
That all my thoughts may be holy;
Act in me, Holy Spirit,
That my work also may be holy;
Draw my heart, Holy Spirit,
That I may love only what is holy!
Strengthen me, Holy Spirit,
That I may defend all that is holy;
Guard me, then, Holy Spirit,
That always I may be holy.

St. Augustine

It seems to be characteristic of souls intent on giving themselves to the service of God, to find themselves wrestling with an age-old problem: how to find the right balance between the active and the contemplative life. Something of a tug of war goes on within: love demands expression in service for God and neighbor; yet such zeal must needs be purified in the furnace of solitary prayer if it is to be kept true.

Arguments for one and the other can be piled up for endless pages from the writings and experiences of the saints. It seems to be a law of spiritual development: certainly it is an experience rarely sidestepped in such development, typified by Martha and Mary—both friends of Jesus.

Today's tempo of activity is at an all-time high. As a result the problem becomes more acute. Apostolic activity is needed as

never before, we are encouraged by our spiritual leaders, yet they are among the first to warn us of the heresy of action—empty movements without soul or grace, and so doomed to failure.

As Franciscans we almost instinctively look to our founder for an answer. Did Francis face this problem? What was his thought on it? Did he provide for it in his Order? Let us try to discover his solution in his life and writings.

1. Point of Decision

Shortly after they had returned from Rome with the verbal approval of their young community, the question seems to have been discussed by Francis and his little band: whether they should give themselves to the service of their neighbor or devote themselves exclusively to prayer. "Dedicated as they were to advancing in virtue, they discussed together whether their duty was to mingle with their fellowmen or to withdraw to solitary places."¹

So already in the very infancy of the Franciscan community the question comes up. In the fervor of their vocation, after being received by the Church, their

Fr. Dacian brings many qualifications to bear upon this. A Doctor of Sacred Theology (Actonianum, Rome), the Assumption Province's Sacre Theologie in Lake Geneva, Wis. Besides conducting research for the history of his province, he is active in conducting retreats for religious.

generosity to give themselves wholly to God brings serious doubts to their minds about the pitfalls of mingling among men. We are told that Francis guided the solution of this problem, after prayer and consultation, in favor of the apostolic activity.² It is St. Bonaventure, however, who gives us a vivid account of the personal problem this had been for Francis.³

We find him discussing the question openly with his followers, weighing the pros and cons. On the face of it, the number of arguments for the contemplative life overwhelms those of a life of service. But then, the single argument in favor of the latter is enough in the mind of Francis to convince him decisively.

The arguments in favor of the purely contemplative life, as Francis expresses them, are these. Being an unlettered man, I feel that I have little talent for preaching, but that I have much more grace for prayer. There is, moreover, much more benefit for my poor soul in prayer, where I gather the fruit for my spiritual needs, and certainly there is less danger to be found here than in going out among men, where the distractions and temptations can be harmful to my spiritual advancement. And finally, prayer puts me in direct communication with God, the source of goodness and holiness, whereas, working with people, I

must constantly appeal to the way of looking at things,

to understand their mental problems and weaknesses. It makes my union with God most difficult, and since I am weak, endangers my attraction for prayer.

Formidable arguments these, it would seem that an improved array of even stronger ones would be needed to outweigh a decision in favor of the contemplative life.

And yet, one reason alone is enough to convince Francis and set his mind at peace. This is the example of the Savior. If, as Francis puts it, Jesus, the Son of God and Supreme Wisdom itself, had decided to save himself for the salvation of the world in word (preaching) in kindness (miracles) and suffering (Passion), then, since he is our model and exemplar, "it seems to be more pleasing to God for me to interrupt my retirement and go out for such work."

So the decision was reached, that in favor of apostolic activity yet it is worth noting how Francis phrased his conclusion: "I interrupt my retirement." He did not abandon it entirely, as we shall discover. Francis found a practical solution for himself and for Order in this matter by preserving the attraction for prayer. After all, the reasons he had adduced in favor of a life of prayer remain very real, and would not allow him to overlook the dangers he encountered in his activities.

(b) Personal Practice

We can picture Francis and his early followers, as his early biographer describes their manner of life, leaving their "places" (as yet they had no friaries), to appear in the cities preaching penance and the message of the gospel and begging food for their sustenance, and then returning to their place of gathering for recreation and rest, praising God. These gathering places were located apart from the city to provide them with the solitude needed for prayer, yet they were close enough to make the cities easily accessible to them for their apostolate.⁴

Despite this arrangement, we soon find Francis going off at intervals for protracted periods up into the mountains, hill tops, isolated spots, there to give himself to serious prayer.

He frequently sought out solitary places so that he could turn his thoughts wholly to God.... He had a most secure haven in prayer; and not prayer that lasted a few moments long, but prayer that lasted long, full of devotion, and marked with the quiet composure of humility. If he began in the evening, he scarcely finished by morning.... At night he would go out to pray in the abandoned churches located out in the wilderness.⁵

In this we can suspect that Francis shrewdly observed the practice of Our Lord Himself, and carefully planned his own life

along the same pattern.⁶ Also in imitation of the Savior, he took some of his companions with him to these places of retreat:

It was his practice to divide up the time allotted to him for meriting grace; so accordingly as he saw fit, he devoted part of it to the welfare of his neighbors, and part he spent in the happy retirement of contemplation.

He took with him a very few companions to whom his holy way of life was more familiar than to the rest.⁷

This program in his life remained characteristic to the very end.⁸

III. Places of Retreat

This personal practice of Francis of going off to isolated spots for periods of time in order to give himself to serious prayer left its mark, not only on the memory of his biographers and early companions, but also on the visible landscape of the Italian countryside. Visitors and pilgrims even today can see for themselves where Francis had spent hours in prayer, and find evidence of Francis' love for contemplation.⁹ These "retreats" then, are a proof of the seriousness of Francis' intent to preserve this life of prayer within himself, and their very number attests to the fact that this practice was no mere accident or inspiration of the moment, but was a deep-rooted conviction of his. We can enumer-

ate some of the following places where Francis had his cave or hermitage, most of these on mountain tops overlooking wide expanses of beautiful landscape. The Carceri near Assisi, Monte Casale, La Verna, Lake Trasimeno. Then, further south, around the Rieti valley, the hilltops of Greccio, Poggio Bustone, and Fonte Colombo.¹⁰

It becomes apparent to the pilgrim, even today, that these places were chosen for their solitude and out-of-the-way character. It took no small effort on the part of Francis to reach them. This brings out even more clearly how important it must have been to Francis. Despite his decision to give himself to the activity of the apostolic life, where there was so much work to be done, he deliberately took the time to make his way to these far away places to find a suitable environment for prayer. All this, when he could have simply slipped into any one of the many churches or cathedrals to pray.

These places were dear to Francis because of the religious experiences he had encountered there. We know that some of the most unusual graces were received while he was at these places.¹¹ It is no wonder that he wanted his followers to preserve them as places suitable for prayer.¹²

IV Francis' Attitude on Contemplation in the Franciscan Vocation.

Francis' personal practice seems quite clear. He cultivated the contemplative life in his soul by such periodic retreats, hermitages. Did he, however, press himself on this matter as regarded to his Order?

As founder and lawgiver of the Order, Francis' distinctive attitude toward the spirit of freedom he allowed his members. Yet, despite this freedom, he does express a preference and even offers a piece of legislation in favor of the contemplative practice in the Order. One time, a visiting cleric in Spain met Francis and told him about the manner of life of the followers in Spain:

They brethren in our land who dwell in a poor hermitage have so arranged their way of life that half of them should be busied in domestic care and half should have leisure for contemplation. (Accordingly every week the active half took the place of the contemplative and the contemplative returned from rest to toilsome tasks).¹³

Francis' joy turned to song a blessing on hearing this, as asked God: "Bless, I pray, the brethren with Thy most bountiful blessing . . ."¹⁴

On another occasion he expressed how truly Francis' practice is, by saying:

"These are my knights of the Round Table, who keep themselves in remote, desert places, the more earnestly to spend their lives in prayer and meditation, deploring the

sins and the sins of others, plain of life and humble of manner; whose holiness is known to God, but at times unknown to their brothers and to the people.¹⁵

The unmistakable expression of Francis' attitude toward the contemplative life and its place in the Franciscan vocation, however, is revealed in the set of rules that he composed for this purpose. Breathing the simplicity of the apostles, it begins thus:

Those who wish to spend the time religiously in hermitages, should be three brothers or at most four together. Let two of them act as mothers, and have the other two as their children, or at least the one. The former two should lead the life of Martha while the two others lead the life of Mary Magdalene.¹⁶

In a few short paragraphs Francis set up the following program, which has to do with prayer, the cloister and silence. Besides mental prayer, which is their main occupation, the Friars gather together for Divine Office at the appointed times during the day, including Matins at midnight. The cloister of the contemplatives is protected by their conferes acting for the part of Martha, who provide for the necessities. Each friar has his own cell (cave, hut) to allow for greater privacy in prayer. Silence can be broken after Tierce for the sake of fraternal charity and for necessary obligations. There is much that could be said about this short piece of

legislation, coming as it does from the pen of St. Francis himself. Let the following remarks suffice, as relating to our thought.

Here we have a legitimate form of life established (by the founder) within the framework of the Franciscan way of life, which provides the liberty of living a more serious life of prayer. The location, cloister, silence and small number clearly indicate its main objective: contemplative life.

It is not, however, an institution for an exclusive few, as if apart from the Franciscan community, but it is a provision for the good of all and any who desire it. This is clear from the fact that Francis wanted the "Marys" to exchange places with the "Marthas", thus allowing all to profit from this set-up.

It has a distinctive Franciscan trait even in its hermitical way of life, namely, fraternity. Three to four constitute a community. They live together, conscious of their dependence upon each other and helped by it. Divine Office in common, eating together and even speaking after Tierce (asking alms of their mothers "like tiny poor people", as Francis put it), provide this fraternity or brotherliness, characteristic of the Franciscan vocation.

All this did not go unnoticed by his followers. Francis' personal practice, his favorite places of retreat, his encouragement and legislation left their mark on the

Feast Of The Purification Light Of The World

Fr. Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.S.

The Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated each year on the second day of February. The significance of this feast can be grasped more easily if we examine it under the popular English name by which the day is known, namely, Candlemas Day. By way of a digression, a reference to another popular day will make the matter clearer.

The word Christmas means, literally, "the day of the Mass of Christ," and we understand that this day is so called because Mass is offered in honor of the anniversary of Jesus Christ's birth. On Christ's birthday, Mass is offered in his honor; so the twenty-fifth of December is called Christmas Day. With this explanation of Christmas in mind, we return to a look at Candlemas Day, the second of February. Candlemas Day is the Feast of the Purification of our Blessed Mother; but it is

also the day on which the Church annually blesses the candles which are used in its ceremonies throughout the year. Mass is not offered in honor of the candles, but in association with the ceremony blessing them. The reason for blessing the candles on this particular day and the significance of the feast celebrated can be made clear by an examination of the prayers of the ceremony for blessing the candles, and the prayer for the Mass on the feast.

The Feast of the Purification now celebrated in honor of the Lady, as it has been for many centuries; but formerly, it was considered to be a feast in honor of our Lord. The celebration of the feast in honor of our Lord is the earliest observance can account for the Church's assigning the blessing of candles to this day. It is fitting to have the ceremony of blessing, if we but realize the symbolic relationship between the candle and the mystery of the feast. As we shall see, the candle is a symbol of Christ, is blessed on the day that we commemorate his first entrance of Christ, the Light of the World, into this fallen house.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

On the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Holy Mother Church gives praise and honor to the Mother of God in memory of the day on which, in fulfillment of the Jewish Law, she presented her child and herself to the Lord in the temple. The Mos-
aic Law (Lev. 12:2) declared a woman to be legally unclean after giving birth to a child. In order to be freed from this legal guilt, she had to present her child in the temple and at the same time to make an appropriate offering for sacrifice. As an obedient daughter of the Law, Mary fulfilled the prescriptions required for her purification. Accordingly, forty days after the birth of Christ, she and Joseph brought the child Jesus to the temple to present him to his heavenly Father; they brought also the gifts of the poor, namely, two turtle doves, "one for a holocaust, the other for a sin offering" (Lev. 12:8). The offering of the turtle doves for a sacrifice and the prayer of the priest over her accomplished her purification. (This purification was a mere legal formality for Mary Immaculate, who never knew the taint of sin.) In presenting her Son to the Lord, Mary was obeying the will of God as expressed in the Book of Exodus: "Sanctify unto me every first-born that openeth the womb of the children of Israel" (Ex. 13:2). The angel Gabriel had announced to her beforehand that "the Holy One to be born shall be called the

Son of God" (Lk. 1:35). Mary thus presented the Holy One to his Father.

"And they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord" (Lk. 2:22). He whom they took up and presented to the Lord was none other, as St. John wrote, than "the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world" (Jn. 1:9). The coming of the "Light of the World" into his Father's house is the occasion for the celebration that Mother Church makes each year on the Feast of the Purification. As befits a real body, the Church, Christ's mystical Body, carries out its celebration in words of prayer and in actions accompanying the words. The action of carrying blessed candles thus has symbolic meaning.

The lighted candle is a symbol of Christ, "the light of men, the light (that) shines in the darkness" (Jn. 1:45). On the Feast of the Purification, in commemoration of the presentation of Christ the Light of the World and the Light of Men, in the temple to the Lord, Holy Mother Church celebrates symbolically by means of the lighted candles which the faithful carry in procession to give praise to the Lord. These candles are blessed in solemn ceremony and made sacramentals of the Church, so that they may become aids and symbols for a more intense spiritual life for the faithful. The lighted candle is not

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only a symbol of the living Christ; it is also a symbol of Christ living in the souls of men. The use of the candle as a sacramental has deep spiritual significance. An examination of the prayers for the ceremony of the blessing of the candles as well as the prayers of the Mass will help us to understand the relationship of the ceremony to the feast.

The Five Prayers of Blessing

In the *first prayer* of the ceremony, the celebrant begs almighty God to "bless and sanctify these candles for the use of men, for the health of bodies and souls . . . (and) . . . graciously hear the voices of thy people which desireth to carry these candles in their hands, unto thy honor, and to praise thee with singing . . ." This prayer is said ". . . on this day (that thou) didst fulfill the petition of just Simeon." The candles are blessed on this day, the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, on which the Gospel of the Mass gives the account of the parents of our Savior bringing him to the temple and of Simeon receiving him into his arms with joy. Simeon was a very old man who had served God faithfully all his long life, and because of his fidelity had been told by the Holy Spirit that he should not die until he had beheld the face of the Messiah. The day he had been waiting for had arrived, and

the Holy Spirit's promise to him was about to be fulfilled. The man recognized the Infant immediately upon his entry into the temple. Going up to the parents he took the Child in his arms, gave praise and thanks to God. "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast presented before the face of all peoples: a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for thy people Israel" (Lk. 2:29).

In this first prayer of the ceremony of blessing candles, reference is made to the feast being celebrated. The invocation is made "Thy most Holy Name, and the intercession of the blessed Mary ever virgin, whose face we this day celebrate." On the feast, now dedicated to the honor of Mary, the Church calls to mind the momentous event that came such great joy to the aged Simeon. It was the sight of the Infant Savior which filled the soul of the old man with delight; in the ceremony today, the candles blessed and carried with joy give honor and praise to God. These candles, lighted, suggest the love of the Savior, who sacrificed himself for mankind, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for thy people Israel. During the procession in which the faithful carry the candles, the words of Simeon are sung, reflecting and repeating

joy of the old man and the praise and adoration he offered to God, who was pleased to send his Son to earth.

The *second prayer* of the blessing expresses even more clearly the close association of the blessing of the candles with the mystery of the feast:

Almighty and everlasting God, who on this day didst present thine only-begotten Son to be taken in holy Simeon's arms in thy holy temple, we humbly beseech thy mercy, that these candles which we, thy servants, would take in our hands, for the magnifying of thy name, to carry them lighted, thou wilt deign to bless and sanctify and to kindle with the light of thy supernatural benediction, so that by offering them to thee, our Lord God, we may deserve to be presented worthily, lighted with the holy fire of thy most dear charity, in the holy temple of thy glory.

As fire is a symbolical expression of that sacrificial love which is prepared to give homage to God by an entire surrender of self, so these lighted candles which we carry in procession today are a symbol of the sacrificial love of Christ, as well as a symbol of the sacrificial love of the faithful who offer this wax as a pledge of themselves in a tribute of adoration. This thought can be understood more clearly by reflecting on the extraordinary light burning before the Most Blessed Sacrament. This light is a perpetual sentinel by which

due honor and adoration is offered to Jesus sacramentally present in the tabernacle. Those carrying the candles are presenting their homage to their Lord. This second prayer of blessing makes a real analogy between our act of presenting the lighted candle to the priest and the act of the parents of Christ presenting their Son in the temple. We carry these candles to remind ourselves of the Christ whom they symbolize, and we walk in joyful procession praising God just as Simeon did when he held the Infant in his arms. In various ceremonies of the Church throughout the year, these candles that are blessed today will be used, and each time they are lighted they either symbolize the presence of Christ or represent us, his children, in the house of the Lord.

The *third prayer* of the blessing ceremony expresses the transforming effect of Christ in our life that is symbolized by the lighted candles. As the aged Simeon was transformed and transfixed with boundless joy at the presence of the Infant Christ, the "Light of lights", so are we to be transformed and uplifted by the presence of Christ symbolized by the candles:

O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light, who enlightenest every man that cometh into the world, pour forth thy blessing upon these waxen candles and sanctify them with the light of thy grace; and be pleased to grant that, as these

lights, kindled with visible fire, dispel the darkness of night, so our hearts, being enlightened with invisible fire, the effulgence of the Holy Spirit, may be delivered from the blindness of every vice, that with the eye of the mind purified we may be able to discern those things which are pleasing to thee and useful for our salvation; whereby after the dark trials of this world, we may be found worthy to enter into the light that is never obscured; through thee, Christ Jesus, Savior of the world. . . .

The *fourth prayer* of blessing indicates that this transformation of our hearts is effected through the work of the Holy Spirit. This prayer refers to the prescription of Moses concerning the oil lamps to be kept burning before the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of the presence of God among his people. In blessing the candles the priest beseeches God that these wax candles may serve as an outward light to signify the inward light of the Holy Spirit that should fill our minds.

The *last prayer* of blessing continues the plea to God to fill the hearts of his faithful with the light of his Holy Spirit:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who on this day appearing among men in the substance of the flesh were presented by thy parents in the temple, and whom the venerable old man Simeon, being filled with the light of thy Spirit, recognized, received, and blessed, be pleased to grant that we, enlightened and

taught by the grace of the same Holy Spirit, may know thee rightly and love thee faithfully, who with God the Father livest and reignest.

While these various prayers God to bless and sanctify the candles, there is a higher, or deeper, and hidden plea supernatural help and supernatural strength for the souls of the faithful and the clergy who will use of them. Blessed and sanctified these candles become sacraments, that is, material things which the Church uses in order to bless God and to obtain spiritual benefits. The wax of these candles is a thing natural and material, but for a sacred purpose. Used in sacred way, the material element becomes an instrument of a means of obtaining divine grace upon the user of the sacrament. The prayers that are used in blessing and the use that is made of the candles specify the particular grace and spiritual benefit that is sought from almighty God when these candles are used. help of the Holy Spirit if we are seeking in order that we may direct our attention to and "know thee rightly and thee faithfully" through the work of Jesus Christ our Savior. hope and our confidence in the efficacy of our prayers and the of these blessed candles is strengthened and confirmed as we join upon the prayers of the Mass, the Feast of the Purification

The Prayers of the Mass

In the *Introit* of the Mass, the Mother Church makes use of the words of Psalm 47: "O God, we ponder your kindness within your temple. As your name, so also your praise reaches to the ends of the earth. Great is the Lord and wholly to be praised in the city of our God, in his holy mountain." Mindful of the many benefits received from God, and in particular the great benefit of the presence of his divine Son, our Savior, we declare that we shall go into the temple to give thanks and praise to him: into his temple, because we celebrate today the presentation of the Son of God in his Father's house. Mary and Joseph bring their firstborn, who is the "firstborn of every creature" (Col. 1:15), into the temple to fulfill the Law of Moses: "Sanctify unto me every firstborn that opens the womb among the children of Israel" (Ex. 13:2). The temple of God is a holy place, a house of prayer, and there we offer praise and thanks to God.

The *Gradual* of the Mass contains the words of St. Augustine, which the Church incorporates into the liturgy for this day: "The old man carried the child; but the child ruled the old man." All the wonderful things we have received, we owe to the goodness of the all-mighty God. "As we had heard, so have we seen in the city

of the Lord hosts, in the city of our God" (*Gradual*, from Ps. 47:9). What a great gift has been given us in Christ, our Lord! Just as Simeon was privileged and delighted to receive his Lord in the temple, so are we privileged and so ought we to be delighted to find our Lord in the tabernacle in his churches throughout the world. The venerable Simeon was privileged to hold the Savior of the world in his arms, and wise with the wisdom of both years and grace, he was wholly submissive to the will of his Lord: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace." And so it ought to be with us—we carry the lighted candle in our hand, symbolizing Christ, our Lord; in the light of this candle, we ought to be guided in our life, in all our actions, by the same Christ, our Lord.

"Grace is poured out upon your lips; thus God has blessed you forever." These words of the *offertory prayer* (from Ps. 44:3) describe and praise the beauty of the Savior. The Church acknowledges the greatness of the Son of God as well as the loftiness of his message and the beauty of the life he gives to men, and she gives the proper praise and adoration. As the aged Simeon acknowledged the Infant as the Savior, the "light of revelation" and "glory of thy people," so we, on this day, recognize and praise the Savior who has come to us. We reaffirm our

submission to his holy will, and pray for the reception of those spiritual blessings that he came to bring us. The burning candles that we carry will mark the refining and purifying effect of his grace upon our lives. The spiritual gifts that we shall receive will renew within our souls the love for Christ that will influence, as it grows, all our living.

St. Bonaventure, in one of his sermons on the Feast of the Purification, sees a more particular significance of the feast for those who are anointed of the Lord. The Seraphic Doctor recalls the words of the Epistle of the Mass, and applies them specifically to the clergy, and especially to the hierarchy. The Epistle is taken from the Book of Malachias:

Lo, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me; and suddenly there will come to the temple the Lord whom you seek, the messenger of the covenant whom you desire. Yes, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who will endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears? For he is like the refiner's fire, or like the fuller's lye. He will sit refining and purifying (silver), and he will purify the sons of Levi, refining them like gold or like silver that they may offer due sacrifice to the Lord. Then the sacrifice of Juda and Jerusalem will please the Lord, as in the days of old, as in years gone by (Mal. 3:1-4).

The sons of Levi were members

of the priestly tribe, chosen by God to be his priests of the old testament. Applying these words to the new covenant, established by Christ, St. Bonaventure refers to the passage to the priests of the Law, the bishops of the Church, and all the members of the clergy. The Feast of the Purification has special significance for those who offer the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. The trials and difficulties that the clergy endure are in the practice of purifying them and drawing them closer to the Heart of Jesus, their Savior, who longs to be with them, and all of us, to him. "Abide in me, and I in thee" (Jn. 16:4). Jesus desires that all become so united to him that they become one with him. Heart ("Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart" Mt. 11:29), that what St. Paul will be true of us, "It is now longer I that live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). The light Christ must burn in our hearts that "... in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). The light of the charity of Christ is the fulfillment of Malachias' prophecy, "there will come to the temple the Lord, whom you seek. Into the temple of our hearts the Lord shall come, and 'who will endure the day of his coming'?"

Symbolic Actions

The consideration we have of the prayers of the ceremony of the blessing candles and the pre-

paration of the Mass of the Feast of the Purification will have greater significance when we realize that the prayers are accompanied by the actions. In the present context, the actions refer to the carrying of the candles. We come singing and carrying candles that we may adore our God, and so present our petitions to him. Our prayers of petition embrace all our needs, but especially the supernatural needs of our souls. The practice of using candles to represent ourselves and our needs is emphasized on this day, although the practice continues throughout the year. On this day of Candlemas, it is the custom for the faithful to receive blessed candles which they take home with them and light at different times of special need or danger. When we light a blessed candle during a storm, for example, we are praying to God for safety from harm. At other times, when we place a votive candle before an altar or a statue, we are using this light to represent ourselves and our prayer to God. Above everything else, the lighted candle is a symbol of Christ. At Mass, the light of the candle shines to Christ who is present as the priest of the Sacrifice. The candles burning at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament recall the light of Christ in the real presence of Christ in exposition on the altar, the glowing sanctuary lamp is a reminder that Christ is present in the tabernacle. On this day, then,

the candle, as a sacramental, receives such attention in the Church's liturgy that its true significance as a thing made holy by the blessing of the priest for the honor of God is made clear to us. The blessing of the candles on the Feast of the Purification reflects the Church's appreciation of the meaning of the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple. This appreciation is demonstrated in the external action of the blessing and use of candles to symbolize Christ our Savior. The blessed candle is truly a sacramental, whose proper use obtains for us from God, through the prayer of the Church, spiritual and temporal favors.

By way of summary and conclusion, the significance of the Feast of the Purification is twofold: first, in the ceremony of the blessing of the candles and in the Mass of the Purification, the feast signifies our remembrance and the external demonstration of our understanding of the entrance of the Child Jesus into the temple, as he was carried there by his Blessed Mother and received into the outstretched arms of holy Simeon. Secondly, the significance of this feast is to be found in our appreciation and realization of the great gift of the Son of God to us, the giving of himself to us in his real presence in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, and in the love of his Holy Spirit within our souls. This twofold significance of the

Feast of the Purification is manifested, finally, in the plea of the Oration of the Mass: "Almighty, eternal God, we humbly beseech thy majesty that, as thine only-begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance

of the flesh, so you may lead us to be presented to the minds purified. Through the Lord, Jesus Christ thy Son, liveth and reigneth with the unity of the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen.



As we look round Western religions, whether forms of Christianity or not, we cannot help seeing that external activity—together, of course, with obviously necessary virtues—is considered almost the mark of a prosperous denomination. Certainly we Catholics have agreed that it is one mark—that a religious Society that is inactive no claim upon our attention; indeed, we Catholics are usually aware of too much zeal in this respect. But Catholicism stands alone, like in regarding its exact opposite—I mean retirement and contemplation as being at least equally important; in fact, the Church goes even further than this, and tells her children that the life of complete seclusion undertaken rightly, is the highest life that can be lived on earth permits, for example, any monk or nun professed to an active or active life, to enter, without question, any contemplative order that receive them; but not the reverse process. Here, too, it must be said that such a life is not undertaken with a view to greater activity afterwards; it is not retirement for the sake of rest and movement; it is the life itself that is the object.

Robert Hugh Benson, *The Mystical Body and the Church*
Sheed and Ward (Canterbury Books), p. 39.

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Good Morning, Good People

May the Lord give you peace!

Some six weeks ago, Fr. Ermin Klaus, who with an over-assist from St. Anthony sees THE CORD through press and safely into your hands, was faced with a dilemma: should March be green for St. Patrick, or purple for Lent? His devotion to the Church prompted him finally to let liturgy prevail over path (Irish on his mother's side), and with a premature tip of his hat so to speak, to St. Pat on the February cover, he elected to remind readers this month of the Holy Season of Lent.

During the early Spring of the year, the world of nature presents to the senses the vestiges of its apparent winter, gradually, however, one becomes conscious of occasional thaws, activity, whose progressively quickening tempo presages the fullness of life. The season of Lent, which inherits its name from the Saxon word for Spring, offers a similar contrast: while the present motif is one of mortification, there is an ever-increasing promise of sequent life. The latter theme gives meaning to—indeed, it glows the former. The ultimate message of the season is that life springs from death.

This principle of life from death is universal. "Whether heart or life it be, which yields Thee harvest, must Thy harvest be danged with rotten death?" asks the poet. And Truth responds, "Unless the grain of wheat fall into the ground and remains alone. But if it die, it brings forth much fruit."

The reason for this law is to be found in the very nature of life and the mystery of its existence is solved, in the last analysis, by For loving means willing another, wanting the other to be, to live the other's living may be willed only at the cost of some denial of and the ultimate expression of self-denial is death.

Our natural existence itself depends on the willingness of the Eternal Word of God to empty Himself and to be made like us, our elevation to the life of grace depends on the willingness of the same Word Incarnate to humble Himself even to the death of the cross. Our very existence as creatures is explained by the Incarnation, adoption as sons is made possible by the Redemption. The cross, symbol of death, is illumined by the body of Jesus Christ.

The Editors

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Franciscan Concept Of Mortification

Fr. Benedict Ballou, O.F.M.

The unique way of grasping the Franciscan concept of mortification is to focus one's attention on the noble and generous Assisian as he like the prophet Esaias, "ate" and digested the inspired message of the Holy Spirit. With the keen spiritual insight granted to him as he turned his back on the vanities of time, young Francis searched beneath the letter of the holy gospel and discerned the portrait of the God-Man. Jesus Christ, as few, even among great saints, have seen. Realist as he was, the features in this gospel Master-piece of the Son of God were not simply a portrayal in color and physical beauty. It was a clear outline of the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, taking on human nature, and finding in that nature "the image and likeness of God." That image and likeness, however, had been distorted by the fall of Adam. It was to wipe away the

stains that had accumulated on this divine image, and to restore it to its original likeness that was the purpose of Christ's coming.

Jesus would present man with the opportunity of correcting the disorders found in his nature. He would hold out to him the possibility of escaping the slavery into which sin had cast him. He would not only unfold to man the perfection to which his human nature could reach, but would, through "his power and glory" extend to him the privilege of being assimilated into his divine nature. "He has granted us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption of that just which is the world" (II Pet. 1:4). As he was the Son of God by nature, he would have everyone become sons of God by grace. "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are" (I Jn. 3:1). This is, in part, the image that caused St. Francis to blink his eyes in wonderment. It was this overwhelming attractiveness of a God crucified out of love for him that

No expert in things supernatural, Fr. Benedict has devoted many years to the spiritual formation of future priests, both in the Franciscan and Dominican, and to directing young writers. He is presently Spiritual Director at St. John Vianney, Diocesan Shrine, East Aurora, N. Y.

sent his blood pounding through his veins like "waters in flood." It was under the spell of this love that Francis turned aside from the deceptions of this world and proceeded to become the "Herald of the great King."

Although Francis was enraptured by the vision of the divine Redeemer, he was compelled by his fallen nature to look back upon himself. As he tells us, he rated himself as the lowliest among sinners. He was most conscious of the infinite distance between himself and the Crucified One. He groaned in the very depths of his heart over the apparent impossibility of effecting union with him. How could he even dream of bridging the gap between himself and Jesus? Here he was, a weak human being, infected with the passions that were unloosed in nature by the sin of Adam. A storm was raging in his soul that only a word from the Divine could calm. He was, indeed, a temple of the Holy Spirit, but a temple which the flesh and the devil were plotting to overthrow. It is true that his nature was not wholly corrupt. There was still a way of escape from this woe-ful condition. In spite of the words of the great Apostle that "his wrestling was against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high," he was provided with all the spiritual equipment needed to overcome these inimical powers. Through union with the divine Conqueror of the Cross he could make war on

this unruly human nature
 vanquish the evil one. "If God
 for us, who is against
 (Rom. 8:31).

Francis was no idle dreamer, was a man of action. Deeply heart lurked a spirit of chivalry that would dare all for his Jesus Christ. He was not one who had been sheltered from the world around him. He was brought up in a town where he was obliged to use all his strength to further themselves in the lines of business of the time mingled frequently in the life of the town. He had, moreover, experienced the pleasures of gazing intently on a glass of sparkling wine of that region and quaffing its contents. He had gained the reputation of being a rollicking leader of the streets as he tripped through the streets of Assisi singing ballads. He may have thrilled more than one occasion to more than one woman with his flirtatious smile on a face of countenance. While, it is true, he had no grounds on which to base out Francis as a moral delinquent, yet, it would be unfair to say that he was immune from temptations around him. The influence with sin is indeed the defeated in life, but, even with temptation is an ever seeking to draw the of a man, making him in this combat of life.

With courage born of that was fundamentally

Francis chose the Gospel of Jesus Christ as his guide-book. He read it to the very last detail and determined to follow it. He, as an alert knight, stood in salute to this sacred volume and accepted the arduous challenge of its contents. Clear and distinct it emphasized the requirements for the person who would walk in the company of the divine King: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Lk. 9:23). Such a meaningful proclamation coming from the lips of the divine Leader only served to intensify the desire in the heart of Francis to face up to this challenge that he saw in the life of Christ. All his doubts were banished. Jesus, the Eternal King, had told him it was possible to follow him, and to reach him. He would go in pursuit of this divine Ideal and dare to be assimilated into his life. He, who was Truth itself, had promised as much. He wanted it that way. At the same time he had marked out in very definite terms, the way to him. This is no draft army. This is not a mob. This is not for a weakling. This is the royal road to life, rough and trying on human nature, yet, a form of living which requires a growing up in him who is the real Christ" (Eph. 4:15). The way to follow after Christ amounts on the part of every Christian, a daily drawing near to the absolute maturity found in him who was perfectly human and

humanly perfect.

Dr. William Menninger, one of the most eminent psychiatrists of our time, discusses maturity in this way: "Psychological maturity entails finding greater satisfaction *in giving than in receiving*; having a capacity to form satisfying and permanent loyalties; being primarily a creative, contributing person; having learned to profit from experience; having a relative freedom from anxiety with a resulting serenity and not a pseudo-absence of tension; and accepting and making the most of unchangeable reality when it confronts one."

Psychological maturity is an ideal state, and few reach it; "on the other hand it would be a serious error not to indicate that many, if not most people, can approach it. No matter what the psychological injuries of infancy or childhood may have been, they rarely, if ever, are insurmountable barriers to reaching a state of near-maturity. As we become less selfish, less prejudiced, or more considerate, more creative, more generous, more cooperative, more intelligent, we become more mature. The only hope for the future is that more persons will approach closer to maturity and that the next generation has a much higher level of maturity than we, the present generation."

Did not St. Francis, in his peace prayer, sum up in a simpler form this desire for serenity of mind and maturity? "O Lord, make me an

instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

The only pressure exerted in the all-embracing call of the divine Master is the magnetism of a love which prompts us to make a return of love to him "who has first loved us," and has gone to the extreme in love by "laying down his life" for everyone of us.

If Anyone Wishes to Come After Me

No one can look himself in an ivory tower, and simply gaze out on life through a window of self. The way to life is not peering through a window, but by passing through a door, and that "door" is Christ. "I am the Door," He tells us. Moreover the path leading from this "Door" is "narrow", and hemmed in with many a shock to an unruly human nature.

It was the challenge of striking out on this road that thrilled the strong heart of this warrior of Christ, the Poverello of Assisi.

person will, the uprisings of cupiscence. He had fought battle between flesh and the evil one, ready to struggle against a foe whom Jesus had unnamed in the desert. The allurements of this world never led him to betrayal of him to whom he was undying allegiance.

From the very beginning of his career Francis appreciated the internal conflict in man arose from a misuse of his free will. He understood that this flare for dependence, which prompted the demon to say to man "you will be like God," brought on his loss with God. The first step back to his Maker must be in submission; this rebellious will. If man hopes to be restored to friendship with God, he has to strike a rebellious blow against this rebel within him. This decision is, however, in his own hands: "If anyone wishes

In this program of Christ, which fits like a frame around a portrait of the life of St. Francis we can readily discern the gradual unfolding of his concept of God's creation. St. Francis never deepened human nature. He never had an attitude of contempt, any more or any creature of God. If there was ever a man who came to recapturing Paradise on earth, it was St. Francis. Yet he was no mad idealist who dreamed the disorders in human nature. He had experienced, as any

"Can you drink of the cup of which I am about to drink?" Can you follow me all the way to the mountain of the Crucifixion? Of course. He was indeed willing to go after Christ; to abide by the conditions required for enlistment in his ranks.

He would put his life on the line for Christ. The sacrifices might indeed be great, but the love within him was greater. He would fight the good fight; he would rest his hopes in the strength of the Master. His love was such that he was convinced in his heart that nothing could separate him from his divine lover. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or hunger, or nakedness, or danger, or the sword?" With his will set on this pursuit of his divine Master, Francis began to clothe himself with the armor of preparation.

Let Him Deny Himself

In facing this combat Francis would, out of love for Jesus, hold nothing in reserve. He wanted to be free to give his undivided love to Christ. This desire for freedom consumed his soul that he carried out a determined counter-attack on the unruly appetites within him. He began this siege by freeing himself from everything material, by pursuing a life of poverty that has few counterparts even in the lives of the saints

of God. This act of mortification released him from the sensation of possession which can readily tie a man down to the things of earth.

The more closely one studies the mortified life of St. Francis, the more evident it becomes that he was seeking that holy freedom which Jesus had secured for man by his death upon the Cross. With his detachment from material things now accomplished, Francis was ready to attack his unruly passions in order to bring them under control of reason, and to free him from the rebellious uprisings of these cravings. He would withstand the allurements of the world by bringing under control those sense faculties that brought him in contact with it. In his modesty, especially in dealing with those of the opposite sex, he would not so much as gaze intently on their countenance when in conversation with them. He would guard himself against all unnecessary contact with women, and inspire his brothers to avoid even suspicions that could arise from such meetings. He was unwilling to believe any evil reports about his brothers. In his love for silence, and well-aware of the eloquence of good example, he, on occasion, walked quietly through the streets of Assisi with a brother, not so much as exchanging a word or a glance with him. To reduce the craving for food to a minimum, he fasted frequently as an act of mortification. On one

occasion, out of imitation of our Lord's fast in the desert, Francis spent a forty-day fast on an island on Lake Trasimeno. While Francis was very severe with himself in such matters, he did not lack the good sense to know that all were not able to measure up to such strictness. He forbade his brothers to wear penitential instruments of torture, lest pride be aroused by such practices. He was always ready to relax the precepts of the rule for the sick. There is told the homely story where one of the brothers, unable to endure the severe fast of the community, cried out in the middle of the night: "I am dying, brothers, dying of hunger."

Francis, on hearing this cry, got up and hurried to take care of the starving brother. He had the table set . . . and himself started to eat, inviting the others to do the same act of charity, so that the weak brother would not be ashamed. The mortification of St. Francis was directed by the same supreme motive that guided him in all else, namely, love. He must be free: free to love Jesus without any obstacles to block his way to him.

While we may discern the wisdom, the love, and the great balance of St. Francis in all these voluntary mortifications, he is no less remarkable in the involuntary mortifications coming to him from life and its circumstances, never losing sight of the hand of Provi-

dence reaching out to him, mould him in his sublime presence. These involuntary mortifications far superior to those which we take upon ourselves—are what we know as the cross.

Let Him Take Up His Cross

The concept of mortification practised by St. Francis was lack its essential element and visualized in the wisdom of the Cross. The love of the Cross seized the heart of Francis and he prayed in the little chapel of Damiano and there heard words of Jesus from the Cross: "Go, and rebuild my Church. From that moment on, the Cross became 'a pillar of a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night' guiding him to his goal. He must the poor garments of himself and his brothers with it. From suffering Saviour on the Cross whetted his deep thirst for suffering. He longed to share more and more intimately in the redeeming work of the Cross. He accepted the trial and attached it to the Cross of Jesus. Who can ever get that dramatic moment when this little man, worn and weary, the service of the Master, his body reduced to skin and bone by voluntary acts of self-denial standing on a peak at the Alverno and crying out to the Crucified Lord: 'O Lord, let me die: one that I may feel in

feeling. Rather, it was a love based on the solid foundation of doctrine as gathered from the inspired word. He saw the Cross as the instrument of salvation for the whole human race. He gazed upon the Redeemer of the world "cancelling the decree" of death against us, by "nailing it to the cross," to the point of "disarming the evil spirits" lined up against us (Col. 2:4).

Francis saw the human race as washed in the river of "the Blood" of Jesus, and as channelled to human hearts through the seven-fold stream of the sacraments, from this reservoir of the Cross, thus securing "peace" for man in His Blood (Col. 1:20). What may have seemed "foolish" to some, became a "power" to Francis, as he proclaimed this message of the Cross to others. In his love for the Cross, his heart overflowed in deep joy, "rejoicing in being considered worthy to suffer" for the name of Jesus. He endured the jibes of his own people. He bore up under the jealousies of his own brothers. No cross seemed too heavy. As St. Paul, "He gloried in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world was crucified to him and he to the world" (Gal. 6:14). The simplicity and power of his preaching flowed from his "determination not to know anything, except Jesus Christ and him crucified." With Christ "he was nailed to the Cross," and in his enthusiasm for the Crucified, as

a loyal member of his Mystical Body, "he rejoiced in sufferings, seeking to fill up in his flesh, what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, for his body, which is the church." As Father Haring, a great moral theologian of our times, says: "Renunciation prepares the way for joy in creatures that is deep and pure, similar to that of St. Francis of Assisi." Still, all renunciation is but a means to an end, and the end and crowning triumph of life comes only when Jesus takes us into his life.

Follow Me

These words "follow me" are the marching orders of the King of kings, addressed to every man, woman and child on the face of this earth. There is a ring of triumph in them that enthralled St. Francis. This was all that he needed. He could go on projecting this spirit of Christ in every thought, word and action.

Beyond the tone of triumph in the words "follow me," there was also a command. Stand at attention to me, by surrendering your will to mine. Be ready to give up all that you are and all that you possess by complete self-denial. Accept every cross in a spirit of joy. Be my herald to your fellow men.

These were the marching orders received by this "good soldier of

Christ" from his divine commander. He heard them for the first time, and he determined never to turn back upon his Leader. In his solitude in answering, in his recklessness in pushing his material and human support, detachment from personal things, and in freedom of that few men have so completely achieved on this earth, St. Francis pledged allegiance to his King, moved only under the command of his General, taking the long his guidebook and the Cross as his counsellor, until that he triumph when he departed to his eternal home. In the last close to the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, his little body was able to contain the burning love within it, he cried out to God, bring my soul out of prison of my body, that I praise thy name forever.

If one picture is worth a thousand words, how much more so is the picture of true evangelical mortification portrayed in this masterpiece of living of this delightful and loved Saint of Assisi? How sketch of the mortified man who so closely followed Jesus that the faithful of his time felt that the Son of God had walked upon this earth in his person. Francis; no: this is Christ.

Meditation For Sisters On Our Lady's Fiat

*O fertile field where He took dwelling sweet . . .
(Early hymn for the Feast of the Annunciation)*

Sr. Mary Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.

Since the Middle Ages, the Annunciation has been one of the four principal feasts of Our Lady. In France it is known as *la fête de la Pentecôte*. Its message is truly a message of springtime, one specially needed by harassed teaching Sisters and their Sister-associates as they try to harmonize the many activities of each day. For these, the glad tidings of the Annunciation can be looked at helpfully under four headings: a habit of expectancy, glorification of the ordinary, development into unique self, abandonment.

Mary was a prepared heart.

She was waiting. While she did not know what the next manifestation of God's love would be (there had been so many before!) she held herself ready, so that she would not miss it. "The fact that she saw the angel and heard his voice was due to the obedient subordination

of her senses to the supernatural life, the life of God's grace" (Adrienne Von Speyr, *The Word*, p. 9).

For Sisters to cultivate this alertness on the natural as well as on the supernatural level is not only possible but fruitful. A few years ago in visiting a southern campus I interrupted an elderly Sister about a tree with cream and coral blossoms which I now would recognize as a magnolia. "I don't know what it is," she replied (she had lived most of her religious life near it): "I'm not interested in botany." Developing an awareness of the differences among things can serve as a welcome distraction from the trivia which tend to interfere with spiritual receptivity. It is easy to overlook God's presence in the world by nature and His presence in the soul by grace. The union of these two presences is involved in what Gerard Manley Hopkins meant by *inscape*: "These things, these things, were here and but the beholder/Wanting; which two when they once meet, / The heart rears wings . . ." ("Hurrahing in Harvest").

The prepared heart lives on silence and humility. The relevance of the first to Gabriel's news is too obvious to be more than noted. 'Sit ye with Mary stone-still at God's feet and listen to Him alone,' says the *Ancient Rite* about another Mary. Thousands of active religious, it is true, long in vain for external silence and eagerly look forward to the eight days of this blessing guaranteed them each year by the Rule. Yet these can find an entrance into the grace that the Annunciation symbolizes through a five-minute walk, in which they notice how the ferns are pushing up their clenched leaf-hands and the just-back robins hopping over the spring snow. They can unite themselves with this grace by standing briefly at a window before a March landscape in the company of Mary invisible.

The second virtue, humility, is also exercised by this paying attention to the "other than self," by a welcoming regard for God's creatures. Even everyday human happiness, which tends to make supernatural progress more possible, lies along the road of such humility. The way Mary was discovered by Gabriel's praise in the Annunciation drama shows how little her own perfections absorbed her consciousness. In her humility she thought of God; she thought of His beautiful creation, including her human fellows; she was gloriously free, however, from

thought of self. "Forgetting herself entirely, she had no desire to serve the Lord by entire silence in the interests of his salvation." (Dom E. Fliche, *Our Lady in the Liturgy*, p. 22)

The lament "We don't take the time to live!" is unimpressively common these days, but true for all the time it takes time to be human. Our Lady's humility was the most perfect of all, except for that of her Son. The stress leaders in liberal arts colleges place on education for living (or loving, in the Franciscan tradition) is misplaced. In its depths, such education is based on the belief that life, as within it, love, has to be approached reverently, in the leisurely spirit of the Annunciation. "Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and the Roman centurion encountered God because they carried within themselves the unanimity and the inward expectancy which lived in her is the prototype of human nobility and perfection: Mary of Nazareth (Athanasius van Noenen, O.P.).

"The Unforgettable Welcome Cross and Crown, June, 1961, 157).

The very concept of virginity suggests a waiting for fulfillment. Mary's virginity was like a field awaiting the Divine Seed. *O champ fertile où il a plu d'éclore*
Pour tous ceux qui espèrent
moissonner le Salut
En s'exclamant: Alléluia

OUR LADY'S FLAT

(Sixth-century hymn for the Annunciation)

Father and Noenen calls a virgin a chalice, a deep, beautiful valley expecting the heavenly rain, and goes on to assert that every true man—person who is fully human—is a virgin. (*Ibid.*)

A prepared heart is so only by grace. Even Gabriel, the Mighty One, was astonished by the beauty of Mary, a beauty caused by grace. The way that love makes a young wife radiant can give some hint as to how ever-increasing grace transformed Mary so as to draw from the angel that joyful tribute, "Full of Grace," used here as if it were a proper name. Mary is indeed in her brightness the apocalyptic woman, and this coming of Christ to her anticipates the Parousia of her Divine Son after the course of ages.

For the religious, as for every Catholic, Holy Communion is the Annunciation of each day. It is both source of grace and pledge of glory. Father Richard T. Gordon, in commenting on Mary's faith, says: "We too, by lovingly contemplating our God, just as truly within us at Communion time, will also become more deeply immersed in the mysteries of faith and will finally experience the saving revelation of our God" (*The Liturgy of the American Ecclesiastical Rite*, February, 1962, p. 91). The Gospel stress that it is by faith we are saved. Certainly it is

by unfaith that Sisters are "lost" in the critical moments of each day, when decisions involving charity or prayer-life are to be made. Following a vocation as many try to do so in the contemporary scene is like walking a tight-rope; yet such could not have been Our Lord's intention. It hardly seems in accord with the spirit of the Annunciation. What, then, does a call to the religious life entail?

Religious vocations are often considered by the world odd or freakish. One Franciscan amusingly referred to herself on a state university campus as an animated antique. Actually, while habits may be out of the ordinary, religious life, as the Annunciation reveals, is the "divinizing" of the ordinary, not an ascent into some extraordinary sphere. Externally, Our Lady was like the other girls of Nazareth in the accomplishment of her duties, in what Cardinal Merry del Val called the sanctifying prose of daily life. The Incarnation, Christ Himself, came to her without any fire of glory as had surrounded the gift of the Ten Commandments; rather,

He came all so still
To his mother's bower,
As dew in April

That falleth on the flower.
This emphasis on the ordinary is not always evident in paintings of the Annunciation, a subject which has been popular in religious art since its first representation was painted on the wall of the fourth cubicle of Priscilla's cemetery in

pristine Christian days. There, the scene was unspectacular even to the point of showing Gabriel without wings. Jan Van Eyck, on the other hand, pictures Mary in a Gothic church, complete with stained-glass windows, while the Holy Ghost as dove descends towards her on a beam of light. Simone di Martino, an earlier artist, gives to his gold-and-white Gabriel wings that glisten like peacock feathers; eight angels face surround a dove that hovers over the rich setting where Mary in an ivory chair recoils from her angelic visitor with a modesty that is almost coquettish. Giotto's version is somewhat better: a poised virgin on one knee, arms crossed, head crowned with braids held high. She is serenity itself.

But the most successful—and a type of the ordinary as well—is the *Annunciation* of Fra Angelico, done fourteen years after Van Eyck's. The dove symbolism is retained. The Virgin, her deep-green mantle complementing her rose-colored gown, receives Gabriel in a simple courtyard, under the blazing blue of an Italian sky. John Ruskin has drawn attention to the daily-life character of this masterpiece:

The angel is perhaps something less majestic than is usual with the painter; but the Virgin is only the more to be worshipped, because here, for once, set before us in the verity of life. No gorgeous robe is upon her, no

lifted throne set for her.
(Cried in Maisie Weston)
The Splendor of the
Rosary, p. 62)

Religious, like Mary, can expect the ordinary people can eventually find consolation in the fact that the Mother of God is in the respect, as in so many others, the model.

Another idea that some individuals have about the religious life is that its superior persons and their subjects into molds. Various examples, are living relationships, but the notion persists. Actually the threefold ascent known as the truest, unique selves. Adrienne Speyr describes Mary thus: "She only became herself when she came to express her need. She persevered in her will and it did not imprison or restrain her—on the contrary, it was a liberating form, the form she was to shape and free her whole being" (*Op. cit.*, p. 6). If it is a giver who is free, not the one who closes up within the confines of a narrow idea of self-protection, it goes about worldly affairs not by self-interest. Mary was occupied thinking of God and other human beings to be concerned about self. "How had it be done, for I know not man's needs no more than the world's simple girl who wishes to carry out God's will. All her life had Lady's freedom, rooted in the

OUR LADY...

THE LADY'S HAT

celebrate Conception (the Masses for March 25 and December 8 have the same Epistle and Gospel) was one of integrity, a choice among goods, not a choice between good and evil. The Dominican Ananias van Noeren treats this latter too beautifully in his article *Chosen* (p. 161). Chosen, ordered to above (p. 161). Chosen, always lessens freedom, and thus that full flowering of selfhood that depends upon freedom. The world finds it hard to comprehend the abandonment which a religious vocation entails.

those closest to the person entering have this difficulty, as did **Joseph**

is Mary's regard. Later announced—the promptings of grace—all also not fail to bring their consequence of misadventure.

... But more serious **is the**

of the first days, the temptation to
dwell here in abundance **comes**

to the postulant herself. "So com-

material things, on money in

...we are **we in-**
fected by fear, that simply to

really to mean it seems to be mad-
and

Caryl Houselander, *The Road of God*, p. 24). Here, the

example of Mary can
teach, and
new courage. All her
bring

throughout life the Sister will en-

...upon

...the spirit of poverty

Then too one can remember that Mary was asked not to do something but to let something be done to her.

In the last century or so, a clear connection has been established in sermons and devotional writing between Christmas and Calvary. A similar connection exists between the Annunciation and Good Friday. Sometimes these two days even coincide. In medieval art the two events are occasionally depicted on one canvas. Mary accepted all, conscious in a vague if not a specific manner of what her assent would mean:

And Mary knew the fire-flower
Close within her womb;

And down the years the flaming hour,

The embered tomb.
(Ruth Forbes Sherry,

"Annunciation Coronat")
It isn't the postulancy, nor the

juniorate where the cost of the assent becomes clear, and alas, for

many, too high. The real times of trial are the middle years and even

beyond. Yet the ascent of marriage vows also brings crosses never

expected on the nuptial day. A readiness to keep either promise

moving ahead step by step with

God, is fostered by devotion to the Annunciation, which is so often on

**Catholic lips in the form of the
Hail Mary. Father Raoul Plus**

imagines Mary at the time of the Annunciation thinking thus:

"*Fiat*? I know that word; it is a word of agony. In thirty-three

years I shall hear Christ sigh it

most relevant? **here.**

under the olive trees of Gethsemane" (*Mary in Our Soul-Life*, p. 31). Even though this passage accredits Our Lady with a more precise foreknowledge than we can ascribe to her, it renders effectively her realization that her yes was linked to the Passion. All annunciations of a religious vocation lead to a Passion; only when this fact is quietly accepted, even welcomed, can peace ensue.

A ready heart; the prose of every day turned into divine poetry by grace; *fiat* as a key to real fulfillment; the yes that never changes,

no matter what appearances it—here are four facets of the annunciation mystery which may bring a message of spring into the hearts of those who vowed themselves for life by the Son. March brings its somnolence of the time when a ray of light says (through Saint Bernard) the *Paradiso*,

carcar si volle della nostra vita
May this season be for us
Sister everywhere one of true hope and happiness rooted in the graces of the Annunciation.

St. Francis On Knowledge

The Apostle says, "the letter kills, but the spirit gives life." Those religious are killed by the letter who do not desire to follow the spirit of the word of God, but want only to know the letter of the word and to explain it to others. On the other hand, they are vivified by the spirit of the word of God who do not attribute to themselves everything that they know and desire to know in Sacred Scripture, but rather their word and example refer it back to the most high Lord, from whom all good truly comes.

— *Words of Admonition*

Doctor Angelicus

Fr. David A. O'Connell, O.P., S.T.D.

Because of the ardent love of God so evident in his writings, St. Bonaventure has been called the Seraphic Doctor. St. Albert the Great is known as the Universal Doctor in recognition of the encyclopedic range of his learning. The keen edge of his intellect won for Dante Scotus the name of Subtle Doctor. And to St. Thomas Aquinas was given the title of Angelic Doctor. Why?

Our first impulse is to regard him as chiefly a tribute to his angelic purity and the extraordinary holiness of his life. He too deserved the compliment

Alexander of Hales paid to Bonaventure: "Behold a true Israelite in whom Adam seems not to have sinned." Surely the best-known event in his life is his ejection from his room of the temptress his soldier brothers hired to lure him from his Dominican vocation. Of this Pius XI once said: "If St. Thomas' purity had failed at this critical moment, it is very likely that the Church would never have had an Angelic Doctor."

Yet chastity is only a condition for contemplation, and this Saint remembered the angels still more by

the elevation of his mind. As one writer says, he is the Angelic Doctor "because he was living spiritually with the angels in heaven though lingering with his body on the earth."

But St. Thomas has other claims to his title. Intellectually he was a genius, whose penetration of truth approached the sublime understanding of an angel. For these lofty intellectual gifts as well as his holiness, Pope Leo XIII in 1880 proclaimed him "Patron of all universities, academics, colleges, and Catholic schools."

There is another reason for naming him *Doctor Angelicus*, a doctrinal reason, we might call it: he is the expert on the angels. His study of the angelic world is so thoroughly developed that he is the acknowledged master of this part of theology. Gathering together the teachings of the Fathers and other writers on the subject, he organized with marvelous skill a doctrinal synthesis of immense importance.

In this brief sketch we cannot even outline, still less explain in any detail, the theology of the angels. We will limit ourselves to some comments, hardly more than marginal notes, on the value of this contribution to theological science, especially for a better

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understanding of the natural and the supernatural orders.

A Help in Understanding the Natural Order

Though well worth having for its own sake, a knowledge of the angels develops as a by-product a fuller appreciation of the whole of nature. Theology presents angels as creatures who are just as much a part of the natural order as we are. Just as a man, all of him, both spirit and flesh, is part of nature, so an angel, despite his totally spiritual way of being and operating, is part of nature.

Angels are superhuman, but no more supernatural on that account than we are because of our superiority to animals. Guardian angels and their charges belong to the same natural order as shepherds and their sheep. In other words, the natural order includes the purely spiritual world above us as well as the purely material world below, with man in between, a unique merger of spirit and matter.

Learning about the angels thus enlarges our view of the universe; theology enlightens us far more than astronomy or space travel about the full size and shape of creation. Only the believer and the theologian can draw a chart tall enough to map the whole of nature; no atlas or planetarium will display the angels for us. In this way we learn to look up as well as down when we take the

measure of man. As we become more aware of the vastness of the spiritual world above us, we understand ourselves better too; knowledge of the angels really puts us in our place. Man is indeed the lord of visible creation, but he has countless invisible superiors in the larger world above.

Another way of putting this is to say that the spiritual, itself speaking, is not the same as the supernatural. Though we often use the terms interchangeably (see a book on the supernatural, *Christian, life is titled The Spiritual Life*), there is an immense distance between the two. The spiritual activity of an angel's mind and will is just as natural as thinking and willing. Perhaps the most striking illustration of the difference is that the damned have a truly spiritual life in Hell but have no supernatural life while ever.

A Help in Understanding the Supernatural Order

As it broadens our knowledge of nature, so does the tract on the angels deepen our appreciation of the supernatural, the life of God. When theologians define the supernatural as that which is above the natural as that which is above the created nature, they have in mind the angels as well as men. Granting that the angels are not merely superhuman life, but a share in Trinitarian life, and participation in God's nature, and even angels have only as

from God. By spreading out for us a fuller picture of the natural order, the theology of the angels opens up a clearer insight into the mystery of the Christian life of faith and charity.

For one thing, the study of angelic life makes evident our absolute need of grace, not only to work our way to heaven but to cope with dangers on the way. We are by nature no match for fallen angels. This part of theology shows the dimensions of our enemy as well as the strength of our resources. If we are "a little less than the angels" by nature, we are much more than the demons by grace.

The superiority of divine faith over all natural knowledge, no matter how perfect, is manifest when we see that even angels would not know supernatural mysteries unless God revealed them. We can draw comfort from learning that even the Seraphim find such truths as the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Real Presence too profound for their unaided natural powers. Gabriel, as well as Mary, found the Incarnation too large a truth to know and to hold without God's help.

The sublime worth of divine charity is forcefully shown by the description of the testing of the angels. They also needed infused charity to love God as they should and to earn heaven. By one act of love they merited the fulfillment

of grace in the life of glory. A single act could win the vision of God for us also. It is not a difference in charity's power of meriting, but a difference between human and angelic natures, that leads God to require from men ordinarily many meritorious acts rather than one.

Conclusion

Compared to the thirteenth, the twentieth century pays little attention to the angels. Outside the Church even their existence is often questioned. Baudelaire's famous epigram, "The devil's cleverest trick is to make men think he does not exist," describes a strategy so successful that nowadays skepticism seems more common than belief regarding all creatures higher than man.

As in so many matters, here also the guidance of St. Thomas liberates us from the narrowness of the age and leads us to full awareness of our Catholic heritage. Frank Sheed has often pointed out that without theology a man is not living mentally in the real world but in a fictitious world dreamed up by his own fancy. Angels are part of this real world, and they should be, to use Mr. Sheed's phrase, part of "our mental landscape." The Angelic Doctor is the ideal guide around this world of nature and grace.

Miracle Of The Ages

Fr. Valentine Long, O.F.M.

Do you know what I should like to have seen done? A birthday party thrown in St. Peter's Square as a preliminary to the historic opening of the Second Vatican Council some months ago. The idea, far from interfering with, would have aided the greater business then to follow in the assembly hall. For of course the proposed outdoor party would have served no less a purpose than to honor, as the venerable Mother of Christendom, the Catholic Church.

Accordingly, there would have stood on an immense table in St. Peter's Square, when the delegates arrived from around the world, a mountainous cake all studded over and ablaze with almost 2000 candles. This would have made an impressive sight. It could not but have reminded the delegates of the unique durability of the Dear Old Lady thus honored, and might even have softened the varietal of attending heretics to a better understanding of her maternal appeal for unity. For, in the flicker of so many suggestive candles, these

estranged children could have missed the hint of her origin, nor have failed to discern their unknown mother for the first time. From admiring have come to know more about her and perhaps in the end to submit to the embrace of her strong and tender arms.

Cardinal Newman, who of course knew of her endearments, years of like estrangement, has on record his sympathetic opinion to such who grope as once he did. "Oh, long sought after," he wrote to them of the great mother souls, "desire of the eyes, joy of the heart, the truth after shadows, the fulness after forestastes, the home after storms, come to her, poor wretches, for she it is, and she alone, who can unfold the meaning of being and the secret of destiny."

Could a plea more apt have been printed, say, on cards and distributed to the non-Catholic arrivals at the Council? If only that day a party had been arranged, also should have been done at the moment any of "our estranged brethren" caught sight of the enormous cake in St. Peter's Square, if it had been there, would have been the first to get into their hands the

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appropriate card. But how many, in such an international gathering, could have understood the words? The question raises no problem. Their English charm, translatable in what idioms, need not have remained foreign to a single linguistic group in attendance. Would not the translations of so worthy an appeal, and their proper circulation, be worth the effort? Perhaps the K of G, but anyhow not the tangle of UN, could have managed the job.

Presumably, if the party had been off, the various guests standing around the largest cake on earth would have wanted to drink a toast to the council's venerable hostess. Do not think for a moment that this would have outraged the occasion. The Catholic Church, an advocate of temperance, which means controlling and not abolishing, has always held in high repute the Psalmist who thanked God for the gift of "wine to gladden men's hearts". The words are not likely to shock her who gave us the Bible and remains its custodian. Nor need I add, but will just the same, that she would never think of holding a feast for her Divine Founder: that He once changed water into wine and at the Last Supper converted wine into His Own Precious Blood. No, the Catholic Church with her sacred memories would not in the least feel diminished to have had a toast proposed to her health.

Who better deserves one? Her

survival in the world proclaims her a continuous miracle of the ages. Her history, including the many scandals she has lived through, cannot but arouse admiration. She has known enemies of terrifying power during her long experience, and they have used it to the utmost of their diabolical cunning to destroy her. They have century after century failed. They might as well not have tried. The indestructible object of their fury thrives on persecution: she can really take it. And her endurance against the forces of external evil, her ability to withstand the internal threat of scandal, along with her tremendous secret of growth, her unmatched power to make saints, to inspire martyrs: all this has concurred to give the Catholic Church a prestige unparalleled on earth, and is itself a recommendation of the heavenly doctrines she holds in trust from her Founder, Jesus Christ.

What is the story of the Church but a chain of evidence that she stands in the world the indestructible guardian of those doctrines? She would rather die than surrender them: only she cannot die. If she could, the historic threats of malice from without and corruption from within would long ago have killed her. But she has survived both. She has become her own sufficient proof that the Most High wants her in the world, and intends to preserve her in the world, to guide the wayward human will. Her truths of the first

Fr. Valentine needs no introduction to many of our readers, since his books and essays on a myriad of subjects have earned him great popularity. Father is Guardian of the *Monthly of Holy Name Province*, Lafayette, N. J.

A Heart Undivided

Fr. Marcellus A. McCarty, O.S.A.

A few years ago I had the wonderful privilege of assisting, on two successive days, at the Reception and Profession of some young ladies in the Franciscan Order. The ceremonies were beautiful and inspiring. Here were many young girls, hungry for God and for the things of spiritual life, motivated by an ardent desire for holiness, burning with zeal for God, for souls, and for the observance of the holy Rule, imbued with the desire of giving themselves totally to God without counting the cost, and filled with the resolution of never taking anything back.

For me—and for you, too, I am sure, whenever you witnessed these ceremonies in your own Community—those two days were like a renewal of spirit. Years ago, perhaps many years ago, you and I personally experienced the joy and wonder of such glorious days, the day of our Reception of the holy habit, the day of our Profession of the holy Rule. In entering the Franciscan Order, we too made a

As is evident from the present article, Fr. Marcellus is well acquainted with his subject, both from the legal and practical standpoint. A Professor of Canon Law at Holy Name College in Washington, Fr. has devoted much time to the direction of Sisters' Renovation programs.

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total offering of ourselves to God. Motivated by love and generosity, we joyfully made that offering, gladly gave to God not just a part of ourselves, but all that we are and all that we have. Having given that, we had nothing more to give.

Then, however, the apostles passed. We were no longer, as we were, in the limelight, the objects of admiration on the part of those who witnessed our profession. Heretofore, we were the center of the work lay ahead of us; the practice of the life we had professed. We went to the place we were to work assigned to us. For the following year: years of work, prayer, of success and failure, of joys and sorrows, perhaps of disappointments and even of disillusionment.

That is why assisting at the ceremonies of a Reception or Profession is like a fresh, purifying breeze. The sight of the youngsters, so eager, gives rise in us to a sort of nostalgia; we are like that; we want to be like the young ones; we want to live the Franciscan ideal.

All of this brings home to us in a very simple manner something of what is meant by that mysterious term about which we have heard so much—Renovation—a movement which received an official universal impulse in the General

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Congress of the States of Perfection, held in Rome toward the middle of the year 1950. In English the movement has been called the movement or Renovation, words which in an attempt to describe what is contained in the Latin name *Renovatio Accommodata* signify Renewal and Change.

The *Renovatio Accommodata* differs especially in two points from the spiritual renewal or uplift described at the beginning of this paper. In the first place, the renewal experienced at the ceremonies of Reception or Profession is something purely personal, while the Renovation (we will use this term in English) is something corporate, collective and official, planned for all the members of the State of perfection. In the second place, the personal renewal of spirit may be something merely transitory, while the official Renovation is of a permanent nature, attempting to lay down some basic rules for a solid formation in the interior life and an adaptation to modern needs.

If you take a look at the very beginning of your Constitution, you will get a better understanding of the purpose of the particular wording of the Constitution, two ideas are there set forth in clear focus: the general aim or primary aim of your Community, namely, the sanctification of its members; and its special object or secondary aim, namely, some work or works of the apostolate. These are the very two points with which the Renovation is concerned. The official name of the movement is, as we have already mentioned, *Renovatio Accommodata*. It is an adapted renovation. It aims, therefore, at

(1) a renewal of the interior life and spirit of each and every institute, and (2) an adaptation of this renewed life to the needs of the modern apostolate. It has been defined or described as "a movement, directed by the Church and to be accomplished in accordance with the mind of the founder of the institute, of the renovation of the means used by the States of perfection for the personal sanctification of the individual members and for the works of the apostolate, in order that these means may more efficaciously serve the aims proper to each individual State of perfection, aims to be achieved in the concrete circumstances of modern society." The States of perfection, as you know, are three: Religious Institutes properly so-called, Quasi-religious Institutes or Societies of men or women living in common without vows, and Secular Institutes.

There is no question here of reform of the institute, nor of a relaxation of religious discipline, nor of any spirit of compromise between the States of Evangelical perfection and the world. None of

these would be Renovation. It is rather a question of deepening and strengthening the life of perfection, and rendering it more effective in fulfilling the purpose of its existence: the sanctification of its members and the works of the apostolate. The apostolate, if it is, as it should be, the fruit of the interior life, will never be an obstacle to that life. The apostolate is the overflowing of a heart deeply in love with God.

As far as an adaptation of the Community to the needs of the apostolate today is concerned, that is a matter to be resolved principally by our superiors. Times change, it is true, but it is not always necessary that *everything* change with the times. St. Francis founded the Franciscan Order in the thirteenth century. He had a particular end in view, and he used particular means to achieve it. Of these means, some were adapted to life in the thirteenth century, some are adapted to life in any century. Two modern errors have to be avoided: the idea that any and every method used by a founder is, as it were, consecrated and therefore can *never* be changed; and the idea that any method used by a founder and now centuries-old cannot be valid today and therefore *must* be changed. No matter how good and noble our intentions may be, it would be imprudent for us to discard immediately whatever is old and to adopt

immediately what is new, the Franciscan attitude—and the equally true of the attitude of the Institute—is essentially one of submission to the Church and her authority. Our point of view and outlook will always be determined by the answer to this question: "What is the mind of the Church?" And any change in servances will always be subject to directives issuing from the See.

There is another very important element to be considered. Religious Orders, Congregations, Secular Institutes do not come being by chance. Their foundations are raised up by divine providence to meet particular needs of the Church. These holy men and women possessed a spirit peculiar to themselves with which they imbued their foundation. In mission to Holy Mother Church they had their way of answering the problems peculiar to their time. They would have their way of answering the needs and problems of the age in which we live, but it is most necessary that the minutes and their members in prayerful study of their Constitutions and the history of their Institute and foundation come thoroughly imbued with the spirit of their founder and his foundation. How, for example, would St. Francis act if he were laboring for God and with men in the twentieth century? How

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the immediate founder or founder act?

Our Holy Mother the Church has always been concerned with the well-being and progress of her children who have embraced any of the States of perfection. Thus at the States of perfection, there have been two General Congresses, both held in Rome, the first in 1950, the second in 1957. At the end of each Congress, Pope Pius XII addressed the delegates who took part in them.

With the approval of the Holy See, National Congresses have been held in other countries. In the United States there have been two, one in 1952 and the other in 1961, both of them held at the University of Notre Dame, in South Bend, Indiana. In addition, since 1952, the University of Notre Dame has sponsored a yearly Institute of Spirituality for Sisters, held for one week every summer. Experts have been invited to address the Sisters and work with them in the various fields of the religious life. The proceedings of each Institute of Spirituality, as well as those of the two National Congresses held in our country, have been published. They contain a wealth of information and instruction. Fordham University has published some important volumes on various aspects of the formation of Sisters, and

The Newman Press in Westminster, Maryland, has published numerous books, translated from a French series concerned with problems of the religious life; unfortunately, some of the latter are out of print.

All of the foregoing is a progressive fulfillment of the wishes of the Holy See with reference to the *Renovatio Accommodata*. A further development of a particular nature remains to be mentioned. This is the action of individual communities themselves, setting aside periods of intensive formation in the spiritual and religious life for members of their institute. From the merely human viewpoint, this has involved for superiors a considerable sacrifice of time and personnel, a fact which shows their love and concern for their subjects and their desire to implement the wishes of the Holy See. Such periods, given various names such as Renovation, Renewal, Tertiaship, range from three weeks to six months. Much thought has been given to a consideration of the groups that would participate in such a Renovation. It seems that the ideal group would consist of those who have been professed from ten to fifteen years.

The arrangement and implementation of such a program has great importance. It seems to me that, since Sisters are the most *talked at* women in the United States (what with conferences, days of recollection, and annual

retreats), they should be given a greater opportunity during these times for reflection and for spiritual reading. The program should be arranged so as not to exhaust them by giving them too much nor to bore them by giving them too little. And, above all, the poor things should be given a chance to get a good physical rest!

There are two good articles on the whole idea of the *Renovatio Accommodata*. An excellent article, treating it in general, has been written by Rev. Jordan Aumann, O.P. under the title "Religious Life and Modern Needs" and will be found in the *Review for Religious*, Volume 13 (1954), pp. 169-178. Another good and excellent work, treating the whole question from the Franciscan viewpoint, will be found in Volume 37 (1956) of the *Franciscan Educational Conference*. The whole volume, under the title *Franciscan Life Today*, is entirely devoted to the *Renovatio Accommodata*.

Most important of all, the mind of the Holy See is shown in the documents emanating from Holy Mother Church. The documents giving the norms that should guide the movement of adaptation and renovation are especially the following: the three papal Constitutions of Pope Pius XII, namely, *Provida Mater* (February 2, 1947), *Sponsa Christi* (November 21, 1950), and *Sedes Sapientiae* (May 31, 1956); the Decree *Salutaris*

atque of the Sacred Congress of Religious (March 26, 1950), the Allocutions of Pope Pius XII to the two General Congresses of the States of Perfection (December 8, 1950, and December 9, 1951).

So far so good. However, let us talk about you and the idea of personal renovation and renewal. Let us try to fathom the basic and dignity of your vocation, so that you will continue with God's help, in your endeavor to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you are called" (Eph. 4:1).

Personal Response

In the year 1949 I saw a picture entitled "Green Dolphin Street." Somehow or other, that picture is firmly implanted in my mind. Let me tell you about it.

The scene was laid in a seaport town of 18th or 19th century England. There were two families involved: in the one, there was a young officer of the British Army; in the other, two young ladies, one bold and forward, the other shy and retiring. As you saw the plot begins to thicken. The girls were in love with the boy. The shy and retiring one loved the shy and retiring one. One day he told her all about it. Imagine her happiness!

It happened that he had to go out to sea. In the course of his journey, the ship stopped at a particular port, and there the young hero was dragged off his bed, and missed his ship.

He was fearful of being charged with desertion, he made no report to his superiors, but instead, made his way to Australia to find a new way of life.

While there, he thought of the girl he loved, and one day he wrote to her, asking her to come and marry him. But said to relate, when he wrote the letter he was under the influence of drink, and he addressed it to the wrong girl! It was the bold young lady who received it, and in her joy she showed the letter to her sister!

The film shows the heart-broken girl running over the sands of the seashore towards a convent set high on a hill. There she poured out her sorrow to a wise old mother superior. The superior tried to comfort her, and then sent her home with a little book that would help her.

In the meantime, the boy in Australia was waiting at the dock when the ship carrying his bride-to-be arrived. When he saw her, he nearly fainted, realizing that somehow or other he had made a mistake. However, he decided to try nothing and make the best of it. He married her.

The years passed. The shy girl had entered the convent and was now, I think, in her novitiate. Her sister and brother-in-law left Australia for a visit to England. Upon their arrival, he learned that the girl he had loved was now in the convent, and on the day before his profession he sought and obtained permission to visit her.

And here, I think, is the reason why I find this picture so unforgettable. The two of them—the novice and the man she had loved—are there in the garden, standing close to a life-size Crucifix. After a while, she says to him: "I am here, not because I lost your love, but because I found a greater love," and she pointed to the Crucifix!

There is the answer to the "why" and the "wherefore" of the religious life: "I have found a greater love." The religious life finds its meaning, its significance, its fruitfulness, the very reason for its being, in love. It is all a question of love. Religious consecration is the most obvious thing in the world for one who has fallen head over heels in love with Christ, true God and true man. In the writings of St. Augustine there is a very beautiful passage addressed to virgins. He says to them:

Love with all your hearts Him Who is the most beautiful of the sons of men; you are free, your hearts are not fettered by conjugal bonds. . . . If then you would owe your husbands great love, how great is the love you owe Him because of Whom you have willed to have no husbands? Let Him Who was fastened to the cross be securely fastened to your heart.

By your sincere and generous consecration to Christ of all that you are and of all that you have, you give glory to your Beloved.

And what is this thing called glory? Philosophers tell us that glory is "clear knowledge with praise." Since we are human beings with human ways of thinking, it is a great help if we can find some homely example that serves to enlighten or clarify our relationship with Christ. For me, one of the best examples of "glory" or "clear knowledge with praise" is to be found in the case of a girl who chooses one particular individual for her husband rather than another. If I were to describe to her what her love really means, she would probably think I was away off somewhere "on cloud nine." However, her love actually comes down to this: of all the possible men to whom she could give her heart—and there are hundreds of them—she chooses this particular one and gives her heart to him. And by giving him her love and her heart, she gives him, as it were, praise and glory, because she thus acknowledges his virtue, his goodness, his excellence, over anyone else.

Isn't this something like what you do in emptying your heart of every human love incompatible with the love of Christ? You do something still more wonderful. In the spirit of faith and supported by divine grace, you reject the human love which you can see, and you show your preference for Someone Whom you cannot see! You give Him your whole love, your undivided heart, thus ack-

nowledging His goodness, supreme and infinite love. His excellence, and through Him glory. "Him (Jesus), you have not seen, you love, though you do not see him believing, you exult with a speakable and triumphant 1:8).

Women in Love

Religious profession is think like a marriage—a union purely and entirely spiritual course—in which you are united by the bonds of love your Bridegroom, present unseen. On the day of your profession, you took Jesus "to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, richer, for poorer, in sickness in health, until death" being together. And on the day of your final profession, when the cross is sealed forever, may we not say for you the beautiful prayer: "the blessing of the wedding 'Bless, O Lord, this marriage, we are blessing in Thy name that she who wears it, keeping . . . in unbroken loyalty, remain at peace with Thy heart to Thy will, and may love him (i.e. Jesus) always in love."

In espousing yourself to Him you are not seeking all that you would maintain and this mutual love between Jesus, you cannot call "ivory tower". You are

and more to become on heart and one mind with Him—the heart undivided! "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). His life, His mission, His interests must become yours. The interests of Christ are the love and glory of His Father and the love and salvation of men.

Every heart of your heart must repeat the words of your beloved Jesus and become the mainspring of your life: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49). With complete unselfishness, you slowly but surely make His attitude to mankind yours: "The Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a redemption for many" (Mk. 10:45). You know full well that the name Jesus means Saviour and that this sweet name runs like a golden thread throughout His life; you too must be a saviour. To the weary, the heartbroken, the unloved, you say in all sincerity: "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened and I will give you rest" (Mt. 11:28).

Nothing can destroy your love for Christ and for those whom Christ loves. "Many waters cannot quench clarity, neither can the heat drown it; if a man should pour all the substance of his house of love, he shall despise it as nothing" (Cant. 8:7). That's what we have done, and you are constantly trying to live up to it: you

gave all the substance of your house for love.

Many are the demands made upon you and your time, but with the help of your dear Lord, you will continue to love and to give yourself. "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).

In consecrating yourself to Christ, you do not lose that glorious prerogative of a woman: motherhood. On the contrary, your motherhood is increased; your children are spiritual, and their number is legion, and your task is to bring forth Christ in them. "My dear children, with whom I am in labor again, until Christ is formed in you!" (Gal. 4:19). And all that you have to face—all the loneliness, the trials, the struggles, the fatigue, the work, the tiredness, the monotony, the disappointments, the misunderstandings, the injustices, as well as a host of other things!—what are all these but the pangs of spiritual childbirth, bringing forth Christ in all the souls with whom you come in contact, or for whom you sacrifice yourself in the silence of the cloister. This is the fruitfulness of your chastity. "To be your bride, my Jesus," prayed the Little Flower, "to be through union with you a mother of souls!"

On the day of your profession, Sister, the words of the Instruction for the marriage ceremony could very easily have been adapted and

then applied to you:

As you know, you are about to enter into a union which is most sacred and most serious, a union which was established by God Himself. . . . This union is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate, that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life, and are to be expected in your own. And so you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

Truly, then, these words are most serious. It is a beautiful tribute to your undoubted faith in each other, that, recognizing their full import, are nevertheless so willing and ready to pronounce them. . . .

Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life,

always make them generous. Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. . . .

May this love with which you join your hearts together never fail, but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. . . .

Yes, Sister, you have loved greater love—Christ. Live your creation to the hilt! "Walk in a manner worthy of the calling which you were called" (Eph. 4). You have taken Jesus "to have to hold, from this day forward, better, for worse, for richer, poorer, in sickness and in health, until death" brings you to the face to face. And I make bold to say that Jesus has taken you to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death" brings you home. The Beloved takes His love one as she is, with all her faults and failings. Not that He wants her stay that way, no. But there is divine ambition, if we may put that way, that she will become ever holier and lovelier in His sight.

A HEART UNDOING

the CORD

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Good Morning, Good People

May the Lord give you peace!

Everyone knows that the numerous appearances of the Risen Christ to His disciples constitute indisputable proof of the fact that He rose from the dead. Guaranteeing as they do that Jesus Christ now occupies the office of Messiah with all that it implies, these appearances are a truly official function and significance. But the Son of God has well how to execute an office in a truly gracious manner. One of His Lord's visits with His friends after the Resurrection are also laden with a touchingly personal quality.

Jesus returned to His followers not only as Lord, but also as brother. The angel at the empty tomb directed the women on the first morning to "go quickly and tell his disciples" (Mt. 28:7). Himself told them to "go, take word to my brethren" (Mt. 28:10). In Jn. 20:17, The Master's designation possesses that same human value which characterized His last discourse to His Apostles, to whom He gave the promise, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (Jn. 14:18). Shortly after His return to this life He hastened to tell them that pledge.

It was perfectly clear to His disciples that Jesus lived among them again, not only personally but, in point of fact, bodily. Their account of the events of the first Paschal season manifests their own conviction that the body which they beheld and touched was the body which had died on the cross, and that the Jesus with whom they now conversed and ate was the very same whose public life they so intimately shared. And some twenty-five years later, St. Paul put it out to the people of Corinth that their bodies would live again, not because "Christ has risen from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (I Cor. 15:20).

Not a few non-Catholic students of Christianity have adopted the opinion from time to time that the Resurrection was a mere sophisticated event than the corporal phenomenon described in the books of the New Testament. It was, they assert, a spiritual resurrection of Jesus in the hearts of His followers. Their position—although fortunately has held a curious allurements for some few Catholics—well—not only distorts the revelation presented in the gospel but would also deprive us of a most attractive aspect of the resurrection. His enduring humanity.

To the everlasting glory of man—this "speck in the universe"—Jesus lives forever with human life. In a body like our own, but for its identification. He sits at the right hand of the Father. The Lord of Heaven to the carpenter, the son of Mary. And over the two-thousand years since the first Easter Sunday, the very same human perfection of the man Jesus which was admired and loved by His contemporaries has attracted countless men and women, drawing them to aspire to a sharing in the exaltation.

The Editors

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

A Minor, A Message, And A Mission

Fr. Robert R. Monahan, O.F.M.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you" (Jn. 14:27). For 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 . . . the Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). "Do not think

that I have come to send peace upon the earth; I have come to bring a sword, not peace" (Mt. 10:34).

Here is a paradox! From the lips of the very Prince of peace falls the assertion that He brings the sword, not peace; that He proclaims conflict, not harmony; that He intends division, not unity. What, then, is this peace that Christ has left to men? Do we, as the sons and daughters of Francis the Peacemaker, cherish this ideal

A member of Holy Name Province, Fr. Monahan is presently assigned to St. Vincent's Shrine, Arch Street in Boston where he is kept busy as confessor, director, and instructor of con-

with the same love and zeal as did our Seraphic Father? Perhaps the phrases, "May the Lord give you peace", and "*Pax et bonum*" have lost their significance for us. May-be they have become "as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." If they have, then our Franciscan vocation needs to revitalize them.

What Peace Is Not

The peace which Christ promises us, and which Francis quickly discovered, is not at all like the peace we imagine. "Not as the world gives do I give to you"—not in monetary terms, pleasure, fun, community status. In arriving at genuine Franciscan peace we must avoid two extremes. We shall not find peace in the absence of suffering or opposition; nor is it to be found by running away from the din and confusion of the active apostolate. The God-man Himself teaches us this. His public life, though short, was riddled with hostility, hatred, the surging press of crowds of people; it ended ultimately in painful and ignominious crucifixion. Yet He is the Prince of peace. Contradiction and antagonism wove a similar pattern into the life of St. Francis. True, he struggled with the thought of leaving the world completely to find peace in the silent lofty heights of La Verna, rather than in the teeming market place of Assisi. But once he had chosen the mixed life, he was nevertheless at peace with

himself.

The other extreme to be avoided in our search for peace is the notion that religion, and even religious life, is a device to give peace of mind. They who hold this would use God to their own advantage. This concept of peace is self-idolatry. It makes God a means instead of us serving Him. Spiritual life becomes a religion instead of theocentric. The phrase, *peace of mind*, reveals itself the shallowness of the True peace depends on something deeper: it is founded in the peace of the spirit. No one can be at peace of mind if there is not peace in the spirit. We need peace as a total person, not only in our mind. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" (Mt. 22:37). Thus, the logical peace of mind will be down, because it does not penetrate deeply enough into the depths of our lives.

True Franciscan Peace

Genuine Franciscan peace, therefore, is found neither in secluding ourselves from the world nor in cleverly manipulating it. God included, for He always satiate our personal desires. Our Lord tells us what true peace consists of: "I have spoken to you all things I have [not yourself] you all peace. In the world you all

But take courage, I have overcome the world" (Jn. 16:33). Here is the touchstone of true peace! As a plant sinks its roots into the earth and grows by absorbing the minerals, so Francis sought and anchored his whole heart and soul in the God-man. By absorbing the spirit of Christ he grew into the perfect likeness of the Prince of peace. Francis' entire life reflected the boast of St. Paul: "I glory in whom I have believed;" and from this conviction flowed the peace and unanimity of the Poorfriars. Francis found peace because he had found Jesus.

The theologians of the Franciscan School, like St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus, have grasped on a speculative and rational level what their spiritual father perceived on a practical and intuitive level—that the Word Incarnate is the alpha and omega of all creation. Christ is the exemplary and final cause in the creative act of God, and He is thus the blueprint for order and harmony and peace in the cosmos: He is also the architect of peace and serenity in the microcosm of God's creation, the soul of man.

By an incredibly unswerving and total imitation of the crucified Christ, St. Francis experienced in his soul the wisdom of St. Paul's cry: "Christ is our peace" (cf. Eph. 2:14). Franciscan peace and the universal Franciscan peace movement therefore find their well-spring deep within the heart of

the God-man, and in Him alone.

All creation finds its perfect balance, harmony, and expression in the sacred humanity of our Savior, and again, it is this same humanity that will stake the thirst and craving of the soul for genuine Franciscan peace and serenity. As the sons and daughters of St. Francis, we must dedicate ourselves in earnest to his cherished ideal of peace. We have not the luxury of a choice in this matter; the Little Poor Man urges us: "Even as you proclaim peace with your lips, be careful to have it more fully in your heart." We must empty our hands of all the personally contrived tools and methods for achieving peace of soul. Peace is not a victory achieved by struggle, but a gift received by loving surrender to Jesus in our brothers and sisters. Francis' surrender to Christ commenced when he heard the voice from the crucifix at San Damiano, and culminated glorious-ly at his stigmatization on La Verna.

Achieving Franciscan Peace

It was by emphasizing the ideals of poverty, brotherhood, and humility, that St. Francis put us on the royal highroad to peace. We make our surrender to Christ and find peace through progress in these three ideals. Through poverty we control the ceaseless clamor of the human spirit for the goods of this world. There can be no deep and

lasting peace in the spirit which is torn and preoccupied with pre-serving material possessions. He who would find peace must surrender to Christ what he has refused until now to give up.

Franciscan peace is both the fruit and the blessing of a true understanding of brotherhood and littleness among the followers of Francis. It is their duty to be mild, peaceful and unassuming, calm and humble. These are virtues necessary for one who would be in a real sense a Lesser Brother to all men. The spirit of true brotherhood restrains the desire to lord it over others, and it places one among his brothers "as he who serves." Peace and harmony reign in that society whose members see one another not as obstacles or annoyances, but as brothers and sisters united and living in Christ. Some years ago, a motion picture entitled *The House of Strangers* depicted graphically the tragedy of a family united only by the house in which it resided. Franciscans who live in community must be especially vigilant against this sort of thing, since there is a constant possibility of their existing as self-sufficient little islands on the lake of the friary or convent. The consequent combination of physical proximity and spiritual disjunction would be hardly conducive to strengthening the bond of peace in a community. Peace thrives on mutual understanding and interest, activated by a genuine

willingness to serve in the isolation can corrode the spirit of the Third Order.

The name *fraternity* is designated and preserved in the Franciscan Third Order, signifies that their members are not a group of Catholics together by mere chance, but that they are united in Christ. The Franciscans, they are Lesser Brothers fused into one family by the bond of peace. To all three the words are applicable: "with all humility and meekness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, careful to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

If peace is to become a reality for us, we must strive for it by means of surrender. Our means of surrender might well be this direction might well be with an examination of our lives in the light of the three of poverty, brotherhood, and peace, so that we may turn out everything that causes us to regard to poverty, for instance, I may discover that I indulge myself in the recreation, creature comforts, unnecessary travel. Such to self can serve to the peace human spirit to the point it is discontented with less than this indulgence.

that I find no peace with these things, nor do I have peace without them. I am restless and discontented: I am not at peace.

In my human relationships, I should look for causes of discord between myself and others. Is such discord caused by a fault of mine? Do I search for peace in the service of others? Do I treat the members of my society or community truly as brothers and sisters? Am I genuinely interested in their well-being?

Am I in fact a Friar Minor, a Lesser Brother? Do I seek peace by viewing myself as an "unprofitable servant?" Do I contribute to the group as "the who serves?" Or do I, perhaps, consider myself as a sort of special gift to my associates, bringing to them indispensable talents and personalities? The Friar Minor should not try to be more than he is—a minor. The object of all his interest should be not himself, but the dignity of others in true brotherhood. For he is a friar.

When such poverty, brotherhood, and the will to serve are lived and practiced, the peace of Christ is assured to each member. Within the Peacemaker, in his accidental directness and practicality, marked out in his Rule the path to peace. We need not search elsewhere. Franciscan peace is achieved in practice by surrendering oneself to Jesus in one's brothers and sisters through poverty, brotherliness, and littleness.

When we were received into the Order, we passed among our fellow Franciscans to receive the kiss of peace, while the choir sang the Psalm, "How good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together." This twofold symbolism is the core of the practical aspect of Franciscan peace—Lesser Brothers living with one another in peace. The two are inseparable—brotherhood and peace. We cannot have one without the other.

Spreading Franciscan Peace

As friars we are heirs to the greatest peace legacy ever given to man. The Franciscan peace movement shared by all three Orders in the Middle Ages is unsurpassed in the history of Christianity. The message of St. Francis to the world is a message of peace: "Go out two by two about the several parts of the world, proclaiming peace to the people." He considered the restoration of peace to be his special mission. But we cannot glory in the past accomplishments of the Franciscan peace movement, and idly sit by watching our own modern world torn to shreds by hatred, suspicion, and bigotry.

To state that mankind is desperately searching for peace today is to belabor the obvious. Hundreds of local, national, and international organizations are dedicated to securing peace; millions of dollars have been spent in promoting

St. Margaret of Cortona, Penitent

Sr. Mary Francis, P.O.

If serenity in sorrow is a state notably difficult of achievement, a still remoter goal in the beginnings of a contemplative life is calmness in contrition. It is remote, in fact, to a point reaching even beyond obscurity. For it may seem a dubious goal. Should we be calm about our miscreancy before God our Creator? Are we to take the fact of our sinfulness casually? Before deciding that we have a problem, we must realize there is a double confusion of terms involved here, the first specious, the second very soundly etymological.

The specious confusion arises out of equating calmness with casualness. The contemplative who appears calm about her faults and failures, her inner or apparent betrayals of grace, is thought to be casual about them. Yet, calmness and casualness are only superficially synonymous. They may sometimes be two des-

criptions of one state of habit of action. But in the life of the inner life of contemplation they are opposite poles. A contemplative is a person fully in contemplation. There has been no casual contemplation. The terms, in this sense, are mutually exclusive.

The etymological difficulty of contrition being a verbal breaking into pieces, has broken shattering, and pulverizing a relation to calmness? We can utilize only one type of man and an object to his will in calmness, and he is the man. Similarly, that breaking of a hard heart into pieces when true contrition is considered properly accompanied with and means, quite probably with writhings and heavings. Peter in the beginning and for weeks souls, it is. Certainly it was the case of St. Margaret of Cortona. Yet, this is properly only because of heart and soul which were the roots of one's being, for the and interior for outcry. It is soul speaking its proper language of silence before God. What, then, are we to do from the appearance of a converted prostitute publicly

MARGARET

seeing her rise from a rooftop in thirteenth-century Cortona at midnight, and with such agonized sobbing as to rouse the long-suffering citizens of the town from their slumber? They must, incidentally, have been a very charming and patient lot, those simple folk of Cortona. We are told that Margaret's gesticulations and outcries were heard to tears of edification. It is to be feared that such a natural demonstration might have aroused twentieth-century Americans to tears of rage. One needs one's sleep.

To look at the raw fact of St. Margaret's repentance for her profligacy and the manner in which she expressed it, we have to put aside our sophistication, our embarrassment at the theatrical we shall see nothing at all but a very disasteful exhibition. One remembers the priest of J. F. Powers' pen, embarrassedly telling his fellow-priest, a drunkard re-averaging from a siege of it and all too loudly decrying his sins and running down a litany of accusations against himself,—"Hell, he lives a hell." Many religious would probably sympathize with the nun, though they would agree it is in rather more delicate degree.

Then we have tried to adjust ourselves to what offends our supposed without good taste, and considered the matter objectively, we come upon a truth much more profound, both psychologically and

spiritually speaking, than what concerns "good manners." There is, after all, a far more vigorous awareness of the meaning of sin in Margaret's self-defamations on the rooftop, her ambition (mercifully aborted by her confessor) to slash her lovely face with a razor, and her extreme harshness toward her beautiful body, than there is in many modern dissertations on the "guilt complex" which talk down the malice of sin to an ominously "refined" whisper. Still, one finds that as the years went on, St. Margaret steadily lost her taste for such demonstrations.

When did she come to the first realization that there is so much mental luxury in these things? We are warned that pride lurks in the ostentatious penance. Not so many caution us against the indulgence there is in it. We hear that certain saints longed to be held in contempt, and went to quite some lengths to insure the scorn of their associates. Most of us probably find this is not only a bleak project, but an unreal one. It requires all the virtue we can summon from the union with Christ just to meet the ordinary challenges of each day. Holy popes have declared themselves ready to canonize the religious who simply keeps his holy rule perfectly. And honesty compels us to admit that most of the time at least, we like very much to be loved by others.

Yet, what religious has not had his moments and hours of grace

Sr. Mary Francis, of the Poor Clare Monastery in Roswell, N. M., is widely known as an accomplished poetess, author-ess, and playwright. Expert in the Franciscan art of bringing Christ into the market place, Sister brought *Our Blessed Mother to off-broadway last Nov.*, when *Blackfriars* produced her operetta, *Lady of Mexico*.

that struck him with a lightning flash of insight upon his own soul, when he saw something of the real hideousness of sin,—his sin, his betrayals, his refusals? At such times, the contempt of others would have been a genuine solace. There are moments, hours, maybe days and weeks when our severest penance is the love and esteem of others. We are granted to see something of our lowliness, and denied the comfort of being treated as suits our lowliness. We all have our moments when we would like to take to the rooftop and tell the town and the universe that we are really a very rotten sort of person. We experience the desire to be treated somewhat as we deserve. There are times when slaps and kicks would be a great consolation. But the hours fade, and the half-emotional, half-spiritual reaction against ourselves subsides. We revert to our ordinary state of sensitiveness at the least slight or snub or even forgetfulness.

It is doubtful that Margaret of Cortona reverted thus. If her emotional response to the grace of self-knowledge was so sensational, it is likely because the genuine contrition was so terrible, and not sporadic but abiding. The inner tumult needed these extravaganzas of penitence if the frail creature was to continue to live at all. One more stroke of the bow across those strings, our father Francis told of his angelic fiddler, and I had died! One title more of grace to see

herself as she was in the God, and very likely the wild-eyed Margarete had had a little cell in Cortona. Why blame her for allowing her luxury of shouting defiance against herself? Who can be so supercilious before the saint say she did not do well. Take to the roof?

There would come a more terrible day when Margaret would forego these equalizing thrills, and prostrate herself in her silence before God; when the whole being would be torn sorrow and love, and the sorcery of her soul would be as demanding than the first gasp of purgation. Knowing oneself a sinner is not so shattering as knowing oneself a sinner loved by God. At the last, the contemplation must forego the bizarre confusion being despised, for the recompense of being loved. "If You would not forgive, how could I stand tall?"

Out of the hysterical girl on the rooftop in Cortona was to come more enduring model of protest for us all. Margaret who became from the house-top her own concubinage, was to become Margaret silently bearing the burden of those who thought her was the demonstrations of a free woman, and later the woman who agonized alone and without before God. This is the model

and carried out of the fierceness
and the violence of repentance so
fatal to our western twen-
tieth-century sense of good breed-
ing, but surely not obnoxious in
the sight of God as our polite com-
munity's frightful aplomb in
the midst of our betrayals of grace,
are obnoxious.

Margaret's first wild contrition led her to that searing calm contrition which is the abiding sorrow for sin typical of the true convert. Such contrition is too painful for oratories, too mortified for the luxury of public declamation, trying too much at the very roots of the soul for any kind of expression unless it be the "a! a! a!" of the prophet, the "O God!" of the soul stricken with a sense of its sinfulness, but more stricken with the sense of God's love which it cannot support.

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Then, there is the affair of the handsome little son. He must have been handsome, with a mother so uncharacteristically beautiful that the very biographers marvel how the most predatory of her austerities could never completely destroy the loveliness of her face. And we can suppose that the young lord of Montpeliana to whom this girl gave herself was not of mean stature either.

That Margara should drag this poor little one into the fierce heart of his austerities is shocking to

us whose compassion is more superficial than that of the saints. Jane Frances de Chantal stepping over the body of her adored Celeste-Benigne certainly never loved him more than at that heart-breaking moment. And if we look a little more deeply into the situation our saint had to face, we realize that the very fact that Margaret subjected her son to the same harsh *modus vivendi* that she elected for herself is proof enough that she loved him. Had he been for her nothing more than the very incarnation of her sin, to be hated as the sin was hated, she certainly would have thrust him out of her life. She could have immediately placed the little boy in the care of others, even abandoned him as unwed mothers abandon the innocent fruit of their sin to this day. But he was much more than a pretty and insistent reminder of what worldlings would call "better days," but which Margaret called days of high treason against God.

This small person who probably looked very like his beautiful mother was part of her soul as well as her body. And so she took him into the desert of penance with her. He was to have no chance to be what she had been. He was to be a small (and likely unwilling) John the Baptist, giving testimony with unutterable poignancy both to sin and to contrition.

Margaret's psychology in doing this could well be called something

less than sound, if we stop at face values. A child so repressed and penanced, so forcibly thrust into austerities far too stern for most adults, so robbed of the innocent joys of childhood, could likely end as a sensational libertine, not the saint Margaret was determined he should be. But this is to follow human reasoning alone. And there are inspired courses which defy human reason and, in the end, transcend it.

It appears that the unnatural childhood did have some unhealthy psychological effect on the boy, for we have been handed down the pathetic incident of the youthful frater (Margaret later succeeded in her burning desire to make a friar out of him) who overslept the Matins bell and was roused by his superior with a gentle tap of the ruler. The awakened boy screamed in terror and wrenched the small ruler from the superior's hand. Then, as quickly, he reversed this line of action and began to tear at his face in remorse for the first outburst. Psychologically, it is only what we would expect from such a son of such a mother. But, at the last, Margaret was proven right and the excellent psychological prognoses wrong. The boy became stable and persevered to death in religion.

What are we to think of all this? Perhaps that Margaret of

Cortona is given to us in our spiritual etiquette to the candancy of spiritual things must humble our well-thrilled before the gesticulating scenes on the rooftop in Cortona, and her shudders at the sight of a child. She reminds us that the sensational trappings of religion will one day be remembered as luxuries to the soul bowed alone before the terrible memory consuming love of God. She witnesses that our deepest fears may sometimes be obliged to appear as harshness, and that we seem to inflict pain on our loved ones but only because we caught up into a greater love the appears.

St. Paul's poignant words in loving you more, I be loved could scarcely be more pathetically demonstrated than in the peace-warm-hearted mother of a boy become the woman with a shaven head and wasted face, going out to the child the hand of penance. St. Margaret is a living sign of contradiction in times when profligacy flourishes but has acquired station, and when hard hearts have fallen into disrepute and become obsolete. We can be that Margaret's least effort for developing her personality by God's irony, her flames through the centuries

He Talked Himself To Death

"Esio Fidelis Usque Ad Mortem"

Fr. Zachary Grant, O.F.M. Cap.

The people of Seewis in Switzerland had come in large numbers to their church to hear the truth of the Catholic faith from the lips of Father Fidelis Roy, the Capuchin. The year was 1622. With keen interest they waited as the saintly figure with flowing beard and grave countenance mounted the pulpit. His manner was deliberately calm. In the town many were openly hostile to him. But here in the church they were eager to be led out of the confusion brought on by the heresies of Bernin. The air was silent with devotion.

Upon reaching the pulpit stand, the friar found a note there. The message was short. "Today you preach, but never again." With-out hesitating, he placed the slip of paper to one side and gazed down on the people. His power, he knew, thundered out the text of St. Paul: "One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism."

Suddenly the doors of the church

burst open. Armed soldiers rushed in. Father Fidelis stopped. He watched the men in the lead battle the guards at the entrance. They pushed down the aisle toward the pulpit. There was no defense. He stepped down, walked quickly through the sacristy and out of the church. The soldiers pursued, fell upon him, and struck repeatedly with their swords. With a prayer of forgiveness on his lips, Fidelis died bathed in blood.

This dramatic end of a preacher's life climaxed three months of intensive activity against heresy in Switzerland. As an envoy of the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide* just organized in Rome, the fearless Capuchin preached in all the districts where the heretic was entrenched. Like his Divine Master who castigated the scribes and pharisees for their hypocrisy and false teaching, St. Fidelis of Seewis continued to preach, although each sermon added fuel to the hatred of his enemies. He knew his actions and words could end only in a bloody death. But his voice must continue to echo the truth of Christ without faltering. The heretics had already seriously damaged the simple faith of the people. Fidelis died because he

The CARD is happy to present again the story of Fr. Zachary. Recently appeared in the part of Assistant Master of Fr. Zachary in Milton, Mass.

would not preach with words of appeasement and flattery.

From the very beginning of the Church, when Christ first issued His command to teach all nations His truth, the by-word has always been, "Faith comes through hearing." Preaching the word of God retains a paramount importance in the life of any apostle. Christ Himself set the example, preaching throughout the length and breadth of Palestine. St. Francis of Assisi preached in the cities and towns of Italy. And in the pattern set by his Seraphic Father, the voice of St. Fidelis filled the cantons of Switzerland.

By 1619, when Fidelis first began to preach, Zwingli's doctrines had become firmly implanted in Swiss soil. Many princes propagated the false teaching by the force of arms. By 1622 Fidelis had earned a reputation as a holy and forceful preacher in the Capuchin churches at Aldorf and Feldkirch. That year Count Alwig of Sulz expelled all heretical preachers from the district of Praetigau. But not all the soldiers were sympathetic to this move. The Count asked Fidelis to travel throughout the district instructing the people in the truth that had been wrestled from them. Thus, Fidelis knowingly set himself on the road to martyrdom.

What did such a martyrdom accomplish? Was it not better to avoid the inevitability of such an end by prudent restraint, so as to

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be available for the work of in future years? Fidelis was forty-five years of age when he died.

Martyrdom is an act of love well as of love — and there always some mystery when it is involved. So it is only to be expected that we can possibly see a practical motive for God's missive will. And then again, speculation may be as foolish as attempting to decide why He suffered His passion after three years of preaching, instead of waiting at least ten or fifteen years giving more time to the formation of His Apostles, could He not have effected a more solid foundation for His Church?

The one thing that St. Fidelis will always be known for is that all others is precisely his reason to stop preaching in the last grave threats to his life. His martyrdom thus symbolizes a swerving fidelity to truth despite all opposition. He would not surrender the ignorant to the jaws of heretical death by remaining silent. No other fact of his outweighs this. Indeed, everything seems to have prepared him for Saint Fidelis became a Capuchin friar at the age of thirty-four entered the Order shortly after ordination to the priesthood in 1612. No doubt the example of his brother, already a priest in the Order, had some influence. He was not a hasty decision. He was acquainted myself with

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several orders, but I found that he appealed to me so much as the Seraphic Order of Capuchins." On October 4, 1613, he made his profession of vows as a follower of St. Francis of Assisi.

For the next several years Fidelis led the hidden life so necessary for the work of the apostle. He was occupied in theological studies, which gave him the solid foundation for his pulpit career. In 1618 he was sent to Rheinfelden, and in the following year to Feldkirch. His short apostolic life had begun.

As a preacher St. Fidelis was concerned both with the moral and also with its supernatural setting (dogma) and support (the sacraments). His motto could well have been "*Beatus vir qui in lege domini meditatur*." The law of God is the safeguard of man's immortality in the supernatural order. And perhaps Fidelis owed his success to the clarity with which he explained the relationship of law to dogma and to life. For he was an expert on law. When he delivered his doctorate in Canon and Civil Law *summa cum laude* from the University of Freiburg in 1611, the rector of the University, John Anthony Zimmermann, testified, "In the whole city and university of Freiburg, no one could be found equal to him in juridical knowledge."

Less than a year Fidelis was as Mark Roy) practicing as adviser to Baron D. John

William of Stotzingen. He soon found that the respect for law that burned in his soul was not shared by all lawyers. Deceit and injustice had a place in their company. The offer of a bribe made to him by a colleague turned his mind from the pursuit of the law of men.

Mark Roy had entered upon higher studies at Freiburg in 1598 when he was twenty-one, and completed the courses for a Doctorate in Philosophy before undertaking the study of law. But before its completion, he felt the pangs of uncertainty regarding his place in life. This prompted him to accept an offer by a group of students to accompany them on an educational tour of the main cities and universities of southern Europe. For six years they travelled France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. During this tour Mark found surety in his relationship to God and men.

Away from the pressure of study, yet occupied in mentally and emotionally stimulating activities, he found great solace in the spiritual practices he followed on these travels. His day began at four A.M. with prayer which was followed, whenever possible, by Mass. Daily he recited the rosary and the office of the Blessed Virgin. Saturdays he fasted in her honor.

When the tour ended in 1610, Mark returned to complete his juridical training at Freiburg. There also burned within him an intense desire to serve the poor and despised, to give them the pro-

tection of the law. In his short span as a practicing lawyer he became known as "the Advocate of the Poor." Yet it took the hard hand of experience with man's law to turn him toward the consecrated service of God's law.

Considering the fact that Mark turned his aspirations towards the religious life so soon after his law career began, we must conclude that the thought of it must have entered his mind at least during the years he had travelled Europe. Undoubtedly the fear that he was burying his talents may have temporarily dissuaded him. Upon seeking admission to the Capuchin Order from the superior of the Swiss Province, he was advised to be ordained a priest first. Thus there would be no waste of talent, but rather a more perfect use of it.

As a priest and a Capuchin, Father Fidelis became a champion of God's law in the best traditions of the Franciscan Order. He defended the law by first living it, for the law of God is the Holy Gospel of Christ, the Son of God. And the Franciscan life, which Fidelis vowed, is the life of the Gospel as demonstrated by Francis of Assisi.

The method which Christ used to propagate and promote His law was the spoken word, by His instructions to His disciples and His preaching to the people — from the private discourse with Nicodemus to the Sermon on the Mount. And the Franciscan method is the

Gospel method.

Before the time of St. Francis preaching was confined for the most part to those with the pastoral care of souls, that is, the clergy. This apostolate was exercised predominantly in the parishes and churches. The preaching men such as St. Bernard, was a thin itinerant preachers who had been authorized by the Holy See, prior to St. Francis' request, Pope Innocent III had approved the petition of the *Humilitati* and the Catholic Poor Men to preach wherever they wished. Hence we must acknowledge that the original mode of apostolate life was not renewed solely by St. Francis. But the widespread influence of this type of apostolate resulted from the extensive use made of it by the newly founded members orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans.

The decision of Francis, however, did not develop merely the historical impetus; it was a direct result of his desire to be the Herald of the Great King, the hearing the Gospel of St. Mark in the beginning of his conversion he had the parish priest order him to him the section containing the mission of the Apostles. What he heard that the true apostolate consisted of all earthly things goes forth to preach the Kingdom of God and penance, he knew this was to be his life: *preaching*. Thomas of Celano

Francis "began to preach so that Francis began to preach to all with the ardor and peace of spirit, edifying his hearers by his simple speech and in a modest manner. His word was as a burning fire, penetrating the heart and filling the minds of all with wonder."

As a direct result of his preaching, Francis attracted the attention of Bernard of Quintavalle and the other first companions. They too had to take up the task of preaching. He addressed them, as Celano says with the words, "Fear not if you are regarded as mean and contemptible and ignorant, but preach penance with courage and simplicity, trusting that the Lord, who has overcome the world, will speak in you and through you by the Spirit to move all to be converted to Him and to observe His commandments."

When the number of friars reached twelve, Francis journeyed to Rome to obtain the approval of the Church on his manner of life and the authorization, to preach. Pope Innocent III interviewed him himself, and willingly gave Francis the right to preach to all whom Francis would approve. "You then, brothers, with the blessing of God, and preach penance to all as God will ordain to inspire

the march of preachers because their number increased — by tens, then by hundreds, and even within the lifetime of Francis by the thousands —

these latter-day Apostles carried the message of the glad tidings of Christ to the people. They went where the people were. There was no time to wait for the people to come to them.

The moral atmosphere of the times, aggravated by the petty squabbles of princes, demanded such evangelical procedures. And the Friars Minor supplied that need. They penetrated every country of Christian Europe. With Saint Francis himself showing the way, they found themselves in the very center of the Moslem world — at the Sultan's feet.

The content of the sermons the friars preached was, in the beginning, entirely moral — an exhortation to a better life through penance and the observance of the commandments. This had to be, since few of the friars were learned in theology. But when priests and scholars joined the Poverello's ranks (among them St. Anthony), the moral points could be backed up by theological reasoning and Scripture. And yet the friars' sermons never lost the moral overtones. The people had to be taught how to live. Teaching the learned how to think was someone else's work.

The moral content governs Franciscan preaching as a direction of the Rule of St. Francis, for in the ninth chapter we read that "when they preach, their language be well-considered and simple, for the benefit and edifi-

cation of the people, discouraging to them of vices and virtue, punishment and glory."

With this background of law Fidelis of Sigmaringen fitted very well into this tradition. His was not the task of confronting the heretics on the university level in order to manifest the unreasonableness of their thought or their theological instability. His work was to show the people that the moral law needed the guidance of an infallible Church and the support of a sacramental life. For doing this fearlessly and well he incurred the anger of the heretical princes. He was murdered because he refused to be silenced. He would not quit the pulpit.

The Seraphic Father expected all his friars to preach. He accepted no excuse for dispensing oneself from this obligation. *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* records the well-known incident involving Brother Rufino. When Francis told him to preach in the church

at Assisi on a special occasion, Rufino protested that he lacked the gift and courage to preach. Francis would not listen, but instead sent Rufino to preach with his habit, to ascend the pulpit only in his undergarments. By the unusual command, he emphasized that a Friar Minor is always a preacher.

When Fidelis of Sigmaringen mounted the pulpit that holiday of April 24, 1622, he was in his forty-fifth year, the same as his Seraphic Father had reached. His preaching life had lasted six years, equaling that of his Beg Master. And as Christ died in bloody death of the cross, Francis ended his life a crucifix. Fidelis too continued *via crucis* unto death. His vocation, fully foreseen, continues to remind those who profess the low Francis of Assisi that he must always preach by their words and words the message of the Gospel while standing in the shadow of the cross.

The Third Order In High School

St. Martin Croft

St. Francis, our holy Father, made it clear to his followers that God has called us to this vocation not only for our own sake but also for the sake of the many. This

makes the apostolic nature of the Franciscan vocation more apparent. Yet it would be a mistake to think of the many teaching Sisters, who are the Third Order, as being only a shadow of the cross.

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perhaps of their responsibility to promote the works of the apostles.

Pope's Encouragement

Pope John XXIII, in the *Encyclical Mater et Magistra*, says, "Education to act in a Christian manner . . . will hardly succeed, in our opinion, unless those being educated play an active role in their own formation, and unless formal instruction is supplemented by activity undertaken for the sake of gaining experience. In social education, organizations of the lay apostolate must be accorded an important role."

Pope Pius XII had stated earlier that it is the responsibility of religious educators to train responsible and enlightened apostles for the salvation of the world. In order to achieve the end of this labor, the Holy Fathers have envisioned the Franciscan way of life as a means to the spiritual renewal of society.

From 1221 to the present day, Pope Honorius III to Pope John XXIII — twenty-six popes have given their attention to, and

St. Mary Crucis, of the Third Order of St. Francis (with the III Order at Alvernia, Italy). No address in the theologian's work, but the Third Order is the primary source of the new works.

expressed their will on, the thoroughly evangelical spirit of the Third Order of St. Francis, urging that it be cherished and developed among the Catholic laity. Listen to the Vicar of Christ of blessed memory, Pope Benedict XV: "We exhort the children of Mother Church, wherever they may be, eagerly to embrace, or earnestly to persevere in the Third Order of St. Francis, wonderfully suited as it is to the needs of modern society." Pope Leo XIII was no less specific: "Would that all Christian peoples might flock to the Third Order." When he was questioned about the need for a spiritual awakening in society, this same pontiff cried out, "My idea of social reform is the Third Order of St. Francis." St. Pius X looked upon the spread of the Third Order as his personal duty. He began his urgent appeal in this regard by stating, "We deem it necessary, beloved sons (notice the word necessary), to let the world know more and more what the Third Order is; and that, according to the spirit of its founder." Pius XI declared that it is the spirit of perfection carried into the family, into everyday life, the ordinary life of the world. But it was the angelic pope, our late Holy Father Pius XII, who, with that truly mystical insight that characterized his guidance of the faithful, brought us to an awareness of the urgent need of the growth of the Third Order. Speaking to the

tertiary youth of Italy, he placed not only upon them, but upon all co-redeemers, the terrible responsibility of propagating the Third Order, when he declared that, "Society has need of the Franciscan spirit for its very existence."

This conviction common to so many of the Supreme Pontiffs indisputably places on the conscience of those of us who are Franciscan educators the obligation of propagating our particular approach to the spiritual life.

Now, the Third Order is the most fertile opportunity we have to fulfill this apostolic responsibility, this obligation of redeeming society by bestowing on it the Franciscan vision, by helping it grow in Franciscan attitudes. Through our establishment and direction of Third Order fraternities we can lead our students, who are the specific charges of our particular apostolate, not only to a knowledge but also to a love and practice of the Gospel precepts and counsels.

General Goal

It seems hardly necessary here to attempt an essential definition of Franciscanism or of the Third Order. Let it suffice to say that the spirit we have to impart to our students, and through them to society at large, is an evangelical spirit, a life lived according to the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ that the particular emphasis to be placed on their spiritual perfection is Christocentric. That the particular devotion must practice in order to achieve this Christocentric mentality is those which are concerned with the life of our Lord, viz., the life of the Altar, the Cross; that they should understand that this approach to God is Marian; that focal point is the Blessed Sacrament; that it is a life of that highest poverty which is not only moderation in the use of creature but most essentially complete detachment from them and abandonment to the will of a Father which lovingly embraces the dispositions of Divine Providence; that it is life according to the spirit of the Gospel—a conscious and consistent striving to realize the perfection of the Beatitudes; that it is, finally, a life of Seraphic love, an attachment to the whole being to God.

Needless to say, such a vision requires a specific program, a definite plan of attack, and so sublime will ever be realized in a haphazard way. And so, in time. So much so, that in Richard Cardinal Cushing, Cardinal Protector of the Third Order in the United States, we say, "I pride myself on two things: first that I am a priest; secondly that I am a member of the Third Order."

This brings us to some of the questions. How can we make

holy work in Third Order an effective means of realizing these objectives? And what specific training can we give? I should like to present a survey of what I believe can be done, and what we are actually attempting to do in the St. Joan of Arc Fraternity in Chicago, under the guidance of Fr. Albert Nimeth, O.F.M., Spiritual Director. To achieve the objectives that I have mentioned, we envisioned a four-year plan, with our material and approach related to the emotional and intellectual maturity of the four grade-levels in high school.

Specific Means

We start immediately with the freshmen. They are admitted not into the fraternity proper, but into an inquiry group which, for psychological reasons, we call an inquiry. Now, not all the beginners in the fraternity go through this year of training, but only those who as freshmen become interested in the fraternity. For them we use as a kind of basic text *The Perfect Joy of Saint Francis* (St. Francis, 1952). This book was chosen for its simplicity of style and very vocabulary, rather than for its complete historical accuracy. Despite the deficiencies in this regard, it does give to the novice an appreciation of Francis, his life, his spirit, his

ideals, and his work. The freshmen do the reading alone, write down ideas and questions, and bring them to meetings for general discussion.

Apart from instilling this appreciation of the ideals and spirit of St. Francis, it is necessary to begin to help the new members in developing their personal spiritual life; so, already in their freshman year, we help them to grow in the appreciation of Holy Mass and Communion, spiritual reading, the sacrament of Penance, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and the place of Mary in the spiritual life. The students are encouraged to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament during their free moments at school, upon arriving, and before leaving.

Perhaps the most difficult part of this freshman training is the inculcation of spiritual reading. Some of these young people approach this as an entirely new experience—the very sight of a book on things spiritual frightens them. We encourage the moderators to start them out by reading a passage with each one individually. Then the moderator lets the student explain the idea contained therein, and tell how he would apply this to himself. From this discussion the moderator can gauge the student's reading and comprehensive level. On the basis of this evaluation she makes out an individual bibliography for each student in her group. This, of course, requires

extensive reading on her own part. Toward the end of the first semester the particular examen is taught, and the students are shown how to incorporate it into the weekly confession.

We also begin in freshman year to educate the students generally about the structure and work of Third Order. A great help in imparting this information is a little pamphlet entitled *Do You Know?*, published by the Capuchins of the Commissariat of India.

Notice that in the last point we begin to acquaint our freshmen with the structure of Third Order. This is a groundwork for the material they will have to cover in their sophomore year. All the basic spiritual practices that they began in freshman year will continue throughout their four-year training, but each succeeding year has its own intensive program above and beyond these fundamentals.

On becoming postulants in the sophomore year, the students review the life and spirit of St. Francis, but this time from the Saint's own point of view, using as a basic text *The Words of Saint Francis* (ed. James Meyer, O.F.M., Chicago, 1952). They also study the lives of St. Louis of France and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, the patrons of the Third Order. The big task of the postulancy is acquiring an understanding of the Rule. For this work the pamphlet

An Explanation of the Rule of St. MacGee, Cincinnati, 1938),¹ full, or even *The New Carmel, the Third Order* (Marion W. O.F.M., Chicago, 1962),² we help the students at the beginning to see their ideal of personal perfection in relation to the personal perfection of Christ, so that they learn to distinguish between devotions and devotion, and grow in a personal love of Sacred Heart, a knowledge of Kingship, and their relation to Him and to each other in the Mystical Body, The Papal Line, *Mystici Corporis* and *Mystici Agnus* provide great help in imparting this view.

After this two-year period of training, the students have secured the status of a junior in the school, and may be admitted to the novitiate. During this year, try to bring them to an understanding of the Third Order, full living of the Christian life. Here we stress the Christian participation in the priestly **Christ.** We try to show the relationship between the importance of the Franciscan life of charity. The novitiate enters the relationship between the Franciscan asceticism and the relationship between the Rule and the commandments of God. He acquires a more mature understanding of the sacraments. The reading that he does at this time is taken primarily from the Testament, which contains

basic text for the novitiate. The books of special study are the Gospels on the Mount, the Gospel Second on the Epistle of St. John, and First Epistle of St. John, and readings from the Epistles of Saint Paul, Peter, and especially Paul. They also study Chapter II of the Nov Constitutions, which concerns the way of life of the Third Order.

During the senior year, the students learn to translate their personal spirituality into action. The special emphasis here is training for the active apostolate. They learn practical ways of contributing to spiritual reform in the home, in the parish, and in society in general. The seniors are responsible for discovering real needs, and for organizing the fraternity's response to the needs which they have discovered. For example, one apostolic endeavor of the fraternity was the catechetical introduction of children confined to a convalescent hospital, a work which demanded that the members live up their Sunday afternoon prayer time. During another year, they gave time on Saturday to visit the Sisters of Providence in their school for retarded children. Other work has been the visiting of hospitals and the distribution of Catholic literature. During free time, and throughout the year, they collect clothing, which they distribute through Martin de Porres Center and Friendship Center to prepare the seniors

for transfer into an adult fraternity, we try to instill in them the importance of the Third Order in the Church by helping them to study the teaching of the Holy Fathers on the Third Order. The basic text here is the *Franciscan Herald and Forum* (Official Organ of the North American Federation of the Third Order of St. Francis, Chicago, monthly). But they also study *Franciscan Vision of Life* (ed. Mark Hegener, O.F.M., Chicago, 1958), *Rome Hath Spoken* (Chicago, 1958), the Papal Encyclicals on Third Order, and *The Gospel to Every Creature* (Bp. [now Card.] Leon Joseph Suenens; Louise G. Duffy, Westminster, 1957).

We believe that this program is effective in helping to fulfill our responsibility to propagate the Franciscan way of life and help to bring about a renewal of society. The practical question is, how can the school provide for such a program? An organization that will lend itself to the operation of this program can be very easily worked out.

First of all, the program will call for one meeting a week of not less than an hour on each of the four levels, with supplementary instructional material made available to the students for study and meditation on the days between meetings. More meetings would be

preferable, especially during the novitiate, but they are not necessary. A number of moderators are required so that groups can be kept small. It is desirable that no single moderator be responsible for more than twenty students in the course of a single year. If it is necessary to have more than one moderator on a given level, these should plan together to see that exactly the same material is being covered. The moderator should confine herself to the task of spiritual instruction, leaving the administration itself of the fraternity to the Prefect and Council, and its activities to the student membership. This gives the students an opportunity for leadership and a sense of responsibility with respect to the actual working of the fraternity. The general moderator is responsible for the training of the Prefect and Council. Apart from the regular group meetings, the Prefect and Council hold special leadership meetings once a week.

Once a month the entire fraternity comes together for a special meeting, direction, and a conference with the spiritual director. Besides that, the Prefect and Council provide for special family meetings several times a year, which are both social and instructional.

We believe a great deal in personal attention. It would seem that almost every service rendered to young people today has been

personalized except those who aim at developing their spiritual life. Here, I feel, we have had to take into consideration techniques of Jesus. He always a personal service. He was with individuals. Witness miracles: how many people cured without His personal touch and this in matters pertaining merely to the body. St. Francis used a personal approach to his biographers that no one ever has into his face, but that he was away knowing that Francis was personally interested in him. It may be more time-consuming, but it is also more effective. And we deal with these young people person to person, those of us who are Sisters must not forget we are not theologians, we are not equal directors. The work of the Holy Spirit in which we are called to participate is that of inspiration. In order to achieve this end, order to inspire, we must cultivate friendship with these young people. *Friendship* is the word not familiarity. This does not mean that we have to sing their songs, join in their dances, or speak their slang. It most assuredly not mean that we participate in their dissipation. But it does mean that we have to allow them to participate in our life, as we would in the life of an apostolate. We each one know that we cannot do for himself alone. We each one know that we

have to offer is desired — indeed, known to you" (Jn. 15:15). I believe that if we are going to reach young people today we must have just this approach. Ridding ourselves of a better-than-thou, aloof, and officious big-sister attitude, we must establish bonds of true Christian friendship, real spiritual ties, attitudes that are becoming to members of a family united under one Divine Head, the older ever responsible and solicitous for the well-being of the younger. Then, and only then, can we really hope to inspire and lead our younger brothers and sisters through the difficult adolescent years to spiritual maturity. As Pope Pius XII stated, "The world has need of the Franciscan spirit for its very existence." Third Order is our opportunity to bring spirit to the world.

The Sayings Of Brother Giles

Gino Concetti

The Sayings of Brother Giles remains explicit norms set down by Blessed Giles of Assisi regarding the pursuit of the ideal of evangelization.

Brother Giles is a frequent contributor to the *Franciscan Review*, in which this column is by a Franciscan friar who writes under the name Thomas Donnelly.

geical perfection. One of the first companions of Saint Francis, Blessed Giles charts a journey to holiness which is marked by Franciscan candor and simplicity, good sense and realism; these traits, forerunners of Saint Bernardine's humanism, reveal the tough spiritual mettle of the farmer become a knight of the Seraphic round table.

Giles casts his thoughts in plain language frequently colored by humor and popular wit; at times he conceals his point behind the figure of contrast or paradox, but always in such a way that the truth is as apparent as the light which filters through a crystal.

The doctrine of Blessed Giles stands on a single fundamental premise. The journey of man in his present situation is affected by the double fact of grace and virtue, of vice and sin. The former, he explains, "are a ladder and road leading to heaven," while the latter "are a ladder and road leading to hell." Confronted by these two, man has simply to make a choice: he may journey to heaven by practicing virtue, or to hell by following vice. The choice is there because of the very nature of things; it remains only for man to choose wisely, i.e., to select the way which is better for him and which conforms more to his nature and purpose.

The Christian who wants to make a good choice must allow himself to be seduced neither by the world's suggestions nor by the persuasion of worldings. He must set himself against the current, escape the fascination of the world, and embrace what is pleasing to God. Although this seems a stupid blunder if judged on temporal values, yet in the light of the primary purpose of man's creation and the very reason for his existence, it is seen to be the only logical

and wise choice.

It is a fact, Blessed Giles, out with a trace of bitterness, "man hates everything that he loved, and loves all that he hated." Why this inverse values? whence comes such an absurd evaluation? Giles answers it to man's failure to make his body and spiritual things agree to apply faith to everyday life. An example of this attitude is being questioned by the philosopher asserted that he believed the gifts of God are great, but he passed that it is difficult to keep bear in practice everything one believes. To which Blessed Giles replied that holy people those who have tried to put in practice the ideal of evangelical perfection, and have suffered a deficiency by "the whole doing" putting it into practice. He truly believes, he concluded, his faith into practice; faith does not suffice for accounting one's salvation.

Once this choice has been made, it is necessary for one to acquire virtue. One cannot ascend to the summit of perfection without proper acconterment of capacity and of the intellect. To render the soul rich and exalted in the sight of God, Blessed does not concern himself with the theoretical question of what is more necessary, and there are more necessary, and there more urgently in need of perfection. All the virtues are perfect.

asks the soul beautiful to God
not among the theological
the first place belongs to
which is so necessary that
about it nothing is pleasing to
"Volunt," writes Giles
which lacks love and charity in
looking in the eyes of God and
its saints." Nor is love the special
privilege of any particular soul,
every one, preexisting from his
moral and cultural condition, can
reach God, providing he wants it
it is possible — to cite Blessed
as an example — for a simple old
soul to love God more fervently
than does a learned man like Saint
Francis.

other gifts to increase, and is the defensive bulwark of God's grace. Blessed Giles is of the opinion that not all possess it, at least in its higher degree. But whoever does possess it has "a very great gift."

Humility fulfills a function somewhat analogous to that of fear. Giles treats of it in connection with the knowledge of God, perfection, and grace. "No one," he writes, "can come to knowledge of God except by the way of humility." Humility is directly opposed to pride, the capital vice which caused all the great falls, from Adam to the Pharisee in the Gospel. On the contrary, "all the great and wonderful things that have happened have been accomplished by a bowing of the head, as is shown in the Blessed Virgin, the Publican, the good thief, and others." Humility is an important factor in making progress toward the summit of perfection. The way of ascent is proportionate to the degree of interior descent. "The way to go up," affirms Giles paradoxically, "is to go down." Finally, the fruits of humility are abundant, but the more excellent are becoming pleasing to God, achieving peace with men, rooting out all evil, and acquiring an accurate self-evaluation.

For the attainment of perfection and of social peace, however, the virtue of patience is very useful. He who is fortified by patience sustains misfortune and injuries joyfully; for him the way is open

to understanding and love, which contribute to the maintenance of individual and social peace. Besides, observes Blessed Giles, any motive for reacting to incidental injuries is taken away by the fact that evils redound principally to the one who perpetrates them. The degree of our patience is a measure of our greatness.

Among the virtues which are more exposed to danger Giles counts chastity. "Turn this way and that," he writes, "above and below, here and there; you will find that there is nothing else to do but to fight against the flesh, which desires day and night to betray you." Giles does not conceal the unstable and tragic condition of the flesh which makes it subject to rebellion. Picturesquely he writes that "our flesh is the

forest wherein the devil can find wood." And he adds that the demon is so well trained in warfare that "he will not desist in overcoming a man while he knows that the man has flesh." Patience is one of the many obstacles to adhering to God, who does not know how to free his passions and free himself from the vice of impurity but by the path of grace. . . .

The method which Blessed Giles suggests for putting these counsels into practice is the evangelical method enunciated by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Anyone, all, in renouncing self, in joyfully accepting his own cross, in doing good in its entire extension and intensity, can attain to a high degree of perfection and of conformity with Christ. If only he so

REVIEWS AND PRE-VIEWS

THE **CORD** plans to bring periodically to the attention of its readers past and future events pertaining to the Franciscan view of the spiritual life. Aided by a friar from each of the jurisdictions (Friars Minor, Conventual, Capuchin, Third Order Regular and Atonement), Fr. John Forest, Assistant Editor, will edit the feature. Our readers are especially invited to submit notes to Fr. John Forest at his office (St. Rosemary Priory, 174 Ramsey St., Paterson 1, N. J.), but they are asked to keep in mind that these items should be: 1) pertinent, at least remotely, to the Franciscan view of spiritual doctrine, and 2) of general interest.

Pilgrimage of Pope John to Assisi

Although undertaken some months ago, our Holy Father's pilgrimage to Loreto and our own sanctuary at Assisi in October, 1962 was an event that will live long in the memories of Franciscans. Besides being newsworthy, Pope John's visit to the Basilica of St. Francis provides the followers of the Poverello with food for thought, for it represented, in a sense, history re-lived.

Seven-hundred years ago, almighty God revealed to the Supreme Pontiff Innocent III that the young man whom he had betrothed in a dream would do great things for the Church, saving it from the perils which faced it at that time. And now, on the eve of the opening of the Vatican Council II, Pope John XXIII journeys to the tomb of the Poor Man of Assisi to obtain God's blessing for

the Conciliar Fathers, gathering in the city of Rome.

Several Franciscan periodicals have given excellent coverage to this memorable pilgrimage of His Holiness; we should like to bring the following to your attention:

The Companion of St. Francis and St. Anthony, published by the Conventual Franciscans at Carey, Ohio, presented an excellent pictorial study in its January, 1963 number.

The *Franciscan Herald and Forum*, published by the Franciscan Herald Press in Chicago, carried in its February, 1963 number some very good pictures, together with an English translation of the Holy Father's Allocution at the Basilica.

Sisters' Meeting

Marian College, in Indianapolis, was the site during the Thanksgiving week-end, 1962, of the

Eleventh Meeting of the Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods. The theme of the congress was *The Holy Eucharist and Christian Unity*.

Among the papers enjoyed by those privileged to attend were the following: "The Ecumenical Movement in General," by Fr. Roger Matzerath, S.A.; "The Kerygmatic Approach to the Eucharist," by Bro. Isidore McCarron, O.S.F.; "The Eucharist, Bond of Christian Unity," by Fr. Sylvester Makarewicz, O.F.M.; "The Dogmatic Foundations of the Unity of the Church," by Fr. Sabbas J. Killian, O.F.M.; and "A Survey of the Eucharist as the Bond of Unity before the Council of Trent," by Fr. Berard Marthaler, O.F.M. Conv. Each of the papers was followed by a lively discussion in which the Sisters took part.

The presence at the meeting of the various black, brown, and grey habits, all worn by daughters of the one Seraphic Father, was a thrilling expression of the individuality in solid union which marks Franciscanism. Attendance by several Superiors General and Provincial was concrete evidence of their interest in furthering the knowledge of theology among their subjects. Yet, the sight of the many participants did remind one of the communities which were not represented, and the evident value of these meetings stirs the hope that attendance at them will continue to increase.

Papal Tribute to Franciscan

Speaking to an audience of two thousand visitors on June 1963, Pope John reminded us that it was the feast of the Holy Name, and assured them of his own fervent devotion to the "most beautiful and sweet Name of Jesus."

The Pope went on to speak of the man who had been responsible for the spread of the devotion, St. Bernardino of Siena. Expressing the fond hope that Bernardino soon may be declared a Doctor of the Church, he presented a special challenge to Franciscans, reminding them of Saint's custom of inscribing the Holy Name of Jesus on a stone at the base of a new building as an act of faith and love. A picture of the monogram designed and used by St. Bernardino appeared in the January, 1963 number of THE CORD. The symbol may be seen even today on some buildings in Siena and its environs. Testimony to the efforts of the fifteenth-century apostle of devotion to the Most Holy Name.

The thought occurs that the twentieth-century Franciscan might take up the challenge of the Holy Father by trying to prepare private lives at least, to prepare this devotion, thereby carrying on the work of our sainted cousin.

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

During this vivacious time of year, when "the song of the dove is heard in our land," the truly Franciscan heart cannot but thrill to the joyous melody of May. But yet more precious than song of the dove — or even of that jester, the mockingbird — is another seasonal air: our Lady's Litany of Loretto.

Perceptive souls will detect a more than casual similarity between these two sounds of May.

To the listener whose interest is exclusively ornithological, bird-song is the annual expression of natural instinct. He whose view of life centers upon man finds in the same melody a blessed balm for mankind. The man of faith both acknowledges and transcends these two horizons: to him the spring-song of a bird is explained ultimately by nature's unconscious hymn of worship to its Creator; it is the mystery of a living thing expending a small portion of its tiny life, throwing away a bit of its substance, to glorify Him who made it out of nothing.

It is not a distortion of truth, perhaps, to state that one may discern a similar division among those of us to whom May again brings the public recitation of the Litany of the Most Blessed Virgin. To the inattentive the Litany represents the mechanical repetition of the familiar phrases of the annual "May Devotions"; while no one, surely, would deny that the very attendance at this devotion has its value, yet a merely physical presence does leave something to be desired. More advanced souls will view the recitation of this beautiful prayer as the source of many graces, both for others and for themselves: the recurring plea to our Mother to *Pray for us!* cannot fail to bring our Lady's blessing down on her children. But, while fully conscious of the necessity and reality of the gift of grace even for the most perfect of men, we venture to assert that Mary's litany is, in its full significance, an act of glorification — of worship given to God through veneration of His Blessed Mother.

One acknowledges, to be sure, the implicit presence of repentance, thanksgiving, and petition in this prayer. But the formal nature of the Litany is that of praise. Recounting as it does the glories of Mary — those of the Old Testament and the New, her mighty prerogatives and little virtues, her historical deeds and mystical titles — it is the song of a child telling his mother all the things he likes about her, and, out of sheer joy, glorifying God for what she is.

The Editors

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MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Bond Of Brotherhood

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

The more one studies the Seraph of Assisi, the more one begins to perceive how God used him as an instrument of His divine wisdom. God seems to have given him the gift of understanding human nature, and to have shown him the best means whereby we may arrive at our ultimate goal. This becomes especially apparent as one studies his writings, and witnesses the manner in which he couples the various Christian virtues; e.g. in his "Salute to the Virtues" he says: "Hail, Queen Wisdom! May the Lord save you with your sister holy pure simplicity! O Lady, Holy Poverty, may the Lord save you with your sister holy obedience!" At first glance, one wonders what connection simplicity has with wisdom; yet a little reflection upon it will help us to see that the two must go hand in hand, if one wishes to remain a true follower of Christ.

selves," Francis reminds us, "neither a house nor place nor anything. . . . This is the sublimity of the highest poverty which has made you, my dearest brothers, heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven: poor in goods, but exalted in virtue." Thus Francis showed that it was his desire that Lady Poverty should strip the friars of everything they possess, but in return that it will make to them a gift of the only virtue which really counts — seraphic charity. He continues: "And wherever the friars are and meet other friars, let them show to one another that they are of the same household. And let one make known his needs with confidence to the other; for if a mother love and nourish her child of the flesh, how much more faithfully should one love and nourish his spiritual brother!"

In the sixth chapter of the Rule of the Friars Minor, we witness another instance of Francis' genius for coupling virtues. "The Friars shall appropriate nothing to them-

Fr. John, Assistant Editor of THE CORD, is chairman of the retreat band of the Province of the Holy Name.

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The Family Spirit

ly love. He will view everyone and everything not through the telescope of "YOU" but rather "I" and "ME". And when a Franciscan views life in this fashion, he gets nothing but a distorted vision of what the Franciscan life should be.

If we were to scan the writings of the Poverello, I am convinced that nowhere would we find a more beautiful expression of the ideal of Seraphic Charity than in this chapter of the Franciscan Rule. It gives us a glimpse of the real Francesco Bernardone. Francis, as we all know, shied away from any titles of distinction and honor — he would have himself called nothing other than Brother Francis, the minister of the Lesser Brothers. And if Francis had a pet peeve, I do not think that I would be wrong in stating that it was his insistence upon "*fraternitas*". Anyone coming to join his little band of penitents had to become a "brother" to the group; he had to blend in with the whole, or he was sent away. In his First Rule Francis uses the term "brother" 104 times, and in the Rule of 1223 he uses it 47 times, and 12 times in his Testament. And let us not forget that if the day-to-day custom of addressing every member of the First Order (priests and brothers alike) as "Brother" has fallen into oblivion, we must still sign ourselves officially as "*Frater*" or "Brother". The official signature of the Minister General of the Order bears witness to this statement.

Being brothers, however, was not enough for Francis of Assisi. He wished that a family spirit would prevail among those who enrolled under his banner. He wanted his brothers to feel that they had the confidence and support of one another. This seemed all the more important to him, if he wanted them to be effective apostles in the world. Perhaps Francis was driven into the arms of the God of Charity by some of his contemporaries. Their conduct was anything but complimentary to those who were in possession of the Gospels, who were supposed to be followers of the God of Charity. As Francis listened to the rantings and ravings of these fanatical reformers, he must have been thoroughly disgusted with them. If indeed he had to assume the role of a reformer, he would do it, but his manner would be that of the Divine Reformer who won over the world through love. Yet he knew equally well that before he and his brethren could win over the world, they must first be able to witness the fruition of love among themselves.

But Francis was not satisfied with any type of love for his brethren. He reminded them of the love of a mother for her children. You and I have perhaps witnessed the depth of a mother's love as we beheld her willingly giving up her life in order to spare the life of the child she

brought into the world. Wonderful though this love is, Francis would have a still greater love of his brothers; he would have a spiritual, supernatural love which transcends all material considerations and has but one goal in mind — the spiritual good of my brother Franciscan. Each of us could profitably examine his conscience in the light of this ideal, and I am sure we would find much room for improvement. How often are my actions regulated not by solid principles but rather by the principle of human respect. I find myself willing to compromise just to maintain my popularity among my brethren. And if I am a superior, do I ever really stop to think of the judgement that awaits me, and the answer I will make to my eternal Judge for the subject who could have been helped to greater goals, except for my personal indifference towards him? Indeed, all of us could stand being a little more generous with our love and our time.

This is why I feel that Francis was not the dreamer people often picture him to be. Francis was in touch with reality; hence, he foresaw that just as in any normal family difficulties are bound to arise, so would it be with the Franciscan family. Therefore he said: "And let one make known his needs with confidence to the other" It is the most natural thing in the world to turn to those closest to us for advice and help when we

need it. Yet is this not one of the paradoxes of nature, that often the last ones we turn to for help are those closest to us? But should it really be that way? No! Certainly, not according to Francis' way of thinking. The Poverello wanted his friars to feel that in their brother they had someone who was vitally interested in them as individuals. And this vital interest is nothing other than a manifestation of that spirit of Franciscan reverence for the dignity of the human person. Reverence demands that I accord an object the respect and attention that its inner worth demands. And when I behold a confrere, I begin to realize that here is a creature possessing a unique participation in God's life, the object of God's special affection which called him to a state of closer friendship with his Creator, through the Franciscan life. What my confrere does with his life will not affect my relationship with him. For my part, I must continue to see God's image in him.

In the tenth chapter of the Rule, speaking of the admonition and correction of the friars, Francis presents a beautiful picture which shows us that he always kept the image of his friars, as objects of God's special affection, in mind. Here he says: "And wheresoever there are friars who know and feel that they are not able to observe the Rule spiritually, they ought to and can recur to their Ministers. But the Ministers should receive

them charitably and kindly, and show so great familiarity toward them that they may speak and act with them as masters with their servants, for thus it ought to be, that the Ministers be the servants of all the friars." Here seniority is reversed, and Francis wants the superior to act with the subject as though the subject were his master and superior, and to listen patiently and attentively to what the subject has to say. Where could we find greater expression of reverence for the human person than in these words of the Poorcello?

Individuality

Yes, we Franciscans must begin by being realists; we must learn to deal with beings as they were created by God. Francis never intended to have his followers cast in a common mold. He stood in awe before the human person, and felt that his mission in life must be to help this person become what God intended him to become. Hence, when I regard my confrere, I shall see in him a creature formed to the image and likeness of God — gifted with a soul that defies destruction — and destined to live on with God forever in heaven. God loves this person and has arranged each smallest detail of his life. There must remain an element of mystery about this person — for his inner freedom may not be violated, and there are

details of his relationship with God which I could hardly glean from his external conduct. I must learn to cooperate with him in his freedom, whether I have authority over him or not. To be sure, this will call for a great deal of understanding, tact, gentleness, patience, delicacy, and even self-effacement. My confrere is free, and it is with a free man that I must work, both for his present as well as for his ultimate good. My relationship with him, therefore, is a serious duty for me, since I am responsible before God for the fulfillment of that duty. If I perform it well, then by the very fact that my confrere arrives at his perfection, I can feel that this is partly my work and my contribution to the good of the Seraphic family. And let's face it, we will never fulfill this obligation unless we put our best into this relationship with our fellow Franciscans.

This is the picture of every MAN, but especially of the MAN who is my religious CONFRERE, member of my religious family, bosom friend or pet aversion — be he who he is — one thing is certain — He is God's handwork and a sacred mysterious world in himself, designed for perfection and for eternity where God is awaiting his arrival. A view other than this is an unrealistic one; it fails to take into account the deep reality of PERSON in any relationship. If only we Franciscans could begin to view our fellow-Franciscans in this light, attempting to understand them not in the light of MY make-up and MY personality, but rather in the light of the way God created and endowed them, what a new world would open up before us?

enthusiasm, their zeal for souls. Project yourself, however, fifteen or twenty years hence, and I would wager that this once enthusiastic group, save for a select few, will have turned sour through disappointment or disillusionment, through misunderstanding. Most of them will be satisfied to coast upon the sea of indifference, and only a comparatively few will have turned their crosses into crowns. Why should this be so? Perhaps these few may have the misfortune of meeting up with a superior who is too accustomed to the limelight, and is unwilling to share it with anyone, let alone a subject. Or perhaps their own equals, motivated by a spirit of jealousy will help suppress the good they could otherwise do for God and souls. This must never be the case in the Seraphic Order. Francis had the ability to bring out the very best in each of his brothers, and we must cultivate this same ability. A helping hand, a word of praise given at the right moment, can serve to lift a person from the valley of despondency to the mountain of hope. And what have I lost in the act? Nothing! As a matter of fact, I have gained merit, and perhaps also the undying gratitude of him whom I have helped.

Let this suffice for the theorizing. I am sure many must be asking themselves by this time: How can we, twentieth-century Franciscans, implement the ideals expressed by St. Francis on charity in the sixth chapter of his Rule? Surely a whole treatise could easily be written on this question, but space demands that we confine ourselves to a few practical considerations.

Program of Action

1. APPRECIATIVE ESTEEM OF YOUR NEIGHBORS' GOOD QUALITIES. All of us are quick on the draw when it comes to finding fault with others, but we are seldom willing to admit their good qualities. Would not religious life be a rather drab existence if we all had the same endowments of nature? "Variety is the spice of life" we are told, and nowhere does variety work greater good than in religious life. For here you have a select group of individuals, brought together by a loving Providence, with special talents to give to God and souls, through the Church and the Franciscan Order. Take a group of novices or newly professed religious; witness their

2. SHARE YOUR LIFE WITH YOUR FELLOW-RELIGIOUS. Your confreres in religion could make use of all the affection you can spare them. You need not fear

being too miserly here, for the only person you can cheat here is God, and this possibility diminishes and disappears if you love your neighbor for HIS sake.

We Franciscans were never meant to live as hermits. Francis wanted instead to have his friars receive the benefits (both spiritual and material) which life in common brings with itself. Hence our activities, and even the apostolate, must be regulated in such a manner as to allow some time for our fellow religious. Speaking to a group of hospital Sisters on April 24, 1957, Pope Pius XII reminded them that "you must guard against those things which take you away for too long or too often from the common life." It is not difficult to envision a religious to whom his work becomes of paramount importance, and who begins to withdraw by degrees from his community. Unless such a religious reorders his life, giving proper time and attention to his confreres, he is headed for almost certain self-destruction. My community is a necessity for me, and I for it. Recreation is not an appendage to the religious life; it is just as much a part of it as are prayer and work. And it can be equally meritorious if undertaken with the proper intention.

3. LEARN PATIENCE AND HUMILITY. St. Francis said: "Where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor loss

of composure." Where you have any given number of individuals taken from different racial and national backgrounds, from varying degrees and types of culture, you are bound to have some irritation. But we must not let the irritation assume proportions it should not have. Think of the oyster. When a grain of sand finds its way into its shell, the oyster moves over and makes a pearl out of the drab intruder. People, however, are not oysters, and when anything gets under their skin or on their nerves, the by-product is seldom a pearl. Yet we can turn these irritations and annoyances into pearls of great price for eternity by bearing patiently with them. To be sure, it may take a great deal of humility to remain patient under provocation, but it will spare us the misery of atoning for words we wish had never left our lips.

4. LEARN TO LAUGH AT YOURSELF. A Franciscan must never take himself too seriously. The egotist can never bear having anyone laugh at his efforts, even his failures, nor can he ever laugh at himself. But then we would hardly say that an egotist is an ideal Franciscan. We will learn to work faithfully, we all want to be successful in the work obedience assigns us, but if we make a mess of things, we won't be disheartened, but rather shrug our shoulders saying: "Well, I did it with a pure intention. I tried my very best."

Here again humility will be one of our greatest assets.

5. CULTIVATE A CHEERFUL SPIRIT. A smiling heart is always in order, even in the cloister. How often have I wished that those perennial reminders in our convent corridors could be changed to read "SMILE" instead of "SILENCE". Don't label me a heretic, please! A smile does not break silence, nor does it interrupt my union with God, but it does pay honor to God whom I see in my fellow-religious. A smile is contagious, it radiates cheer; a

frown too is contagious, but it radiates only gloom and despair. And Francis of Assisi always reminded his followers that the only person entitled to be gloomy is one in the state of sin. Nothing pleased him more than a cheerful spirit. And let us not forget that a smile, the external expression of a cheerful spirit, springs not from the head but rather from the heart. Its essence is love. We will find that as our spirit of cheerfulness increases, so will our spirit of charity. We will develop into the optimists that Francis so much wanted every Franciscan to be.

Franciscan Bibliographical Index

Sister Mary Sheila, O.S.F., *Developing the Franciscan Spirit Through Reading: a Selective Bibliographical Index*, St. Gabriel's Hospital, Little Falls, Minn., 1961, pp. v, 100.

Sister Mary Sheila, O.S.F., of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, and author of the article on p. 145 of this number of the THE CORD, has performed no small service in compiling this partial index of Franciscana. Modest and unpretentious, the work "is merely selective, and is not, therefore, an attempt to present all of the available material on Franciscan spiritual thought" (p. iv). Nevertheless, the editors of THE CORD think that this work would be very valuable, especially to young Franciscans and those who train them.

Part I lists, and briefly describes the contents of, forty-five books (in English only), divided according to subject; Part II presents a subject-and-author index of pertinent articles drawn from nine periodicals. The work, comprising 100 pages, is mimeographed and bound in a soft cover; we have been unable to determine its price.

The Friar And The Lady

Fra. Jeremiah Crosby, O.F.M. Cap.

It was the summer of 1866. The Italian city of Genoa was suffering from one of its severest plagues in centuries. The cholera had swept down upon the seaport a year before, first cutting off the life-stream of a few people but, increasing now with the summer's heat, it mercilessly claimed its toll.

Terrified citizens fled the city as hunted men before the enemy. Shops were closed. Docks were deserted. Streets were empty, except for the bodies of those the cholera had claimed.

It was August now. And the cholera was at its height. The bishops had ordered special prayers and services to relieve the suffering, but still the cholera crept on, claiming hundreds of lives. It seemed that prayer alone was not what God wanted.

Up on the hill overlooking the city, in the peaceful chapel of the Immaculate Conception, a robust but tired friar clad in the brown Franciscan robe knelt in prayer. As he knelt there he came to realize what it was that God

wanted. Looking up at the image of his Immaculate Mother — that Mother who once had stood watching her Son lay down His life for His friends — Brother Francis Mary of Camporosso solemnly offered to lay down his life for his friends.

Our Lady interceded with her Son, who accepted the offering in a month. And today the simple Capuchin lay brother is known as the saviour of his city. It is for this reason, probably more than any other single act of the life which he spent for others, that the humble friar who offered his life to redeem Genoa from the plague was declared a saint by Pope John XXIII last year on the feast of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

Boyhood

The life of Francis Mary can best be explained in its relation to our Lady, for it was to her that he had consecrated his whole being. All the extraordinary grace which turned countless sinners back to God, all his powers of prophecy, of his heart-reading, of his continual union with God, can be understood only in relation to Mary, for it was to her that he accredited them all.

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Mary had brought Christ into the world, and Christ had given her to all His members that she might be their Mother too, so that, through her, they might return to Him. It was only natural then, that Francis Mary would give himself completely to her as a child. She was simply his Mother.

Mary played the leading role in his life from its beginning. He was born in 1804 on December 27, the feast of St. John, the disciple to whom our Lord had given His Mother from the Cross. His parents were simple peasants who ran a small farm in the rugged countryside of the Italian Riviera.

In his early years, while Anselm his father tended the sheep in the hills, Maria his mother instilled in him ideals which he would carry with him throughout his life. During their free time the Croese family used to visit the many shrines to our Lady which dotted the countryside around their home in Camporosso. The most famous of these was the shrine of Our Lady of the Lake. Here that love for Mary typical of the Italians flowed over into their many acts of devotion. John used to watch them with all the wonderment of a growing boy.

In the evening after the work was finished, Anselm, Maria, John, and his two brothers and sister, would gather in their little home set high in the hills to recite the family rosary. It was not long before our Lady showed her approval

of this family custom, as well her predilection for "Little John."

One day when he was twelve, it happened that John was coming home from the fields when he came upon a group of young boys who were acting impurely. He too was at the age of great trial and, for a moment, stood motionless watching them. Before he was overcome by the same temptation, he suddenly felt his arm seized by what felt like an invisible hand which pushed him homeward. Later, when he was in religious life, he confided that the force was his Immaculate Mother, who had saved him from the occasion which otherwise would have sullied his purity.

John kept this secret to himself and returned to the fields. However, it was not for long. A year later he fell dangerously ill with a disease which the doctor could not diagnose. But he could diagnose its effect: it would be fatal.

The family immediately turned to Mary. Surely she who had guided them all these years would not abandon them now. They prayed to Our Lady of the Lake, entrusting their son and brother to her care. Almost miraculously, from the time they began to beg her intercession "Little John" began to feel better. They soon were able to carry him to the shrine to thank Mary for her wonderful gift. Within a few weeks he was back in the fields.

It was this cure which helped

In this article Fra. Jeremiah, a clerical student at the Capuchin Seminary of St. Mary in Crown Point, Indiana, sums up the Marian devotion of our most recently canonized confreere.

to convince young John that Mary had a certain special love for him. It was only natural that he would show his love for her in return.

He used to gather his friends around him to tell them about the glories of his heavenly Mother. If there was time to spare, he would lead them on little pilgrimages to the many shrines and altars dedicated to the Mother of God in the area, much like children of our day go on hikes. On their way they would visit the sick, the poor, and the needy, offering them all the help that they could.

Vocation to Religious Life

When he was eighteen, he felt he was being called to join the Conventual branch of the Francis- can Order. Leaving home would be hard on his family — not to have his help in the fields nor his company at home, not to hear his voice at the family rosary — but this is what God wanted, and that was all that mattered. It was what Anselm and Maria wanted too.

After two years with the Con- ventuals, he began to wonder if this was really what our Lord and our Lady wanted him to do. One day while he was at prayer in the church of Our Lady of Grace, Mary presented him an actual grace which answered his prayer. He happened to notice a young Cap- uchin friar deep in contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament. This was what he needed; he was

called to join this branch of the Franciscan family.

He received the brown habit of the Capuchins on December 17, 1825. The superiors had decided to give him the name of the Order's founder, St. Francis. In addition to this, John asked that he be given the name of his heavenly Mother. They consented. From now on he would be known as Brother Francis Mary of Camporosso.

Profession

The year in novitiate flew by quickly; his profession signalled the beginning of a new type of life: the apostolate of continuing the work of the redemption and sanctification of souls. On Decem- ber 28, 1826, he was assigned to the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception in Genoa. Here, under Mary's maternal guidance, he would spend the rest of his life. And from here, through the grace which comes through her, he would continue the work of her Son in saving souls.

As he did at the time of every important event in his life, Francis Mary received permission to visit the shrines of our Lady before he began his new work. There was the Church of Our Lady of Guard- ia, the Church of Our Lady of Acquisanta and, finally, the Church of Our Lady of Grace where Mary had first given him the gift of recognizing his Capuch- in vocation. In his visits here he

displayed those Marian character- istics which would remain with him the rest of his days.

His simple devotion to the Mother of God has something different from that of other saints. He seems to have had an inner feeling of the abiding presence and power of Mary all about him. "She is the Mother of Divine Good- ness," he often said. He gave him- self to her as a child to a Mother. This affected his words, his de- votion, and his whole manner of acting. It was simply childlike, full of confidence and abandon- ment to her maternal care.

Francis Mary first ministered to the sick in the infirmary, but after three years the superiors, aware of his evident holiness and pru- dence which was even then apparent, appointed him to the task of questor.

The Capuchin questor was a familiar sight to the Italian in those days. One often saw the brown-robed man with a plain wooden Rosary hung from a white cord going about the cities from door to door begging alms for the bodily needs of the community. Questing was difficult for Francis Mary. His inwardness, lack of learning, and natural simplicity produced a natural fear of the work. Yet, this was the work of holy obedience; and hadn't our Lord said that we are like His Mother when we do the will of God?

After a few years questing in the

hills around Genoa, the job seemed to be too much for him. He had great temptations to ask to be re- lieved of the position, that he might spend more time in the sol- itude of the monastery. But then he thought of our Lord, and how He never hesitated to do the task assigned to Him. He left the matter in the hands of his heavenly Mother.

Mary then showed what hap- pens when her children trust in her care. Not long after this severe trial, Francis Mary was called into the superior's room where he heard the decision he once had dreaded: he would be sent to the city to quest. This is what God wanted. In his humorous way he accepted, saying, "I am good for nothing, but I am prepared for anything!" The next forty years gave him the chance to be prepared for anything.

Our Lady's Questor

Life in Genoa can be viewed from many angles: from the houses of the worker-families, where simple faith was the rule; from the mansions of the rich up in the hills, where one found a good deal of complacent pride; from the shacks around the docks, inhabited by the rough sailors, whose hearts were frequently as- calloused as their hands. Francis Mary came to them all. But he was not alone. He brought his Mother along with him, and, as he fingered her rosary while trudging

along the streets, it was she who gave him strength to carry on.

Before he left the monastery each morning, Francis would visit the chapel of her Immaculate Conception, begging her to guide him through the day, offering all his labors to her. Leaving the chapel, he went about the city, returning spiritual favors for the people's material offerings.

It was not long before the tall, dark, and austere lay brother became the center of attraction. People felt drawn to him, sensing his union with God. The poor welcomed him with open arms. The pride of the rich melted in face of his humility. He was the only one who was allowed free access to the great docks of the city.

The word of his holiness quickly spread: tales of immediate cures, stories of hardened hearts being read like a book, even accounts of prophecies fulfilled were heard. Soon they began calling the quiet, unassuming friar who walked about their streets praying his beads, "*Il Padre Santo*, the holy father."

Inwardly he would cringe at the name. And he would try to stop them, saying, "I am not a priest; I am a lay brother. And," he would add with a touch of comedy, "I am not holy; I am a great sinner." Nevertheless, the name stuck. And that for good reasons.

Once a ship was nearing the port of Genoa loaded with men and

supplies. However, before it reached the harbor, a violent storm lashed down upon the panic-stricken sailors, who knew that they would perish.

In the midst of the shouting and turmoil, the captain shouted out, "Men, if Christ doesn't save us now, we'll all go down to the bottom. Let us pray to our Blessed Lady and to the *Padre Santo* that at least our lives might be spared." The sailors quieted down a bit and began to pray.

Suddenly above the ship a brilliant light appeared, surrounding the figure of a Capuchin friar. He was kneeling with arms outstretched in the form of a cross. His eyes were raised to heaven as though beseeching our Lady to have mercy on them. The vision lasted only a few minutes, but when it left, it took the storm along with it.

The sailors came to the Monastery of the Immaculate Conception after they landed, to thank their benefactor. When he came out to them he answered their words of praise, saying, "No, my dear men, it was not I who saved you that night; it was our Blessed Lady. All that I remember is that while I was in prayer that night, I seemed to see a ship in danger of being wrecked. I prayed to our Lord, that, for the love of His Mother, He might save the poor unfortunate sailors from their danger. So you have to thank our Lord and our Blessed Lady, not

this poor lay brother."

The response was always the same: Go thank our Lord and Lady.

"Go and pray to Our Lady of Grace," he would say to those who asked for favors, "and tell her that I sent you." Invariably their request would be granted. It was the gospel all over again. The blind saw. The lame walked. . . .

All the miraculous wonders which he worked never sullied his humility. His childlike simplicity was such that in the midst of paeans of praise, he would feel no pride at all. After all, he reasoned, hadn't he asked our Lady to do it?

The mystical aura which surrounded him kept him above the pride of worldly concerns that he might penetrate their spiritual qualities. When people praised him, he merely passed it on to Mary. He reasoned that she was all-powerful. Thus he put into practice the *Memorare* of St. Bernard which he loved to pray throughout the day: "never was it known that *anyone* who fled to thy protection was left unaided."

Often the strong and muscular friar would return to the monastery in the evening completely exhausted. Many times he would carry home much less than he had received. Like his father St. Francis, he had given his alms to those less fortunate than himself. However before he could go into the peace and solitude of the cloister,

he would have to comfort and console the crowd of people who waited in the courtyard for his return. There, beneath the statue of the Madonna, he would listen to their endless litany of troubles, sorrows, and requests.

When he had finished listening to the people, he would enter the Church, now dim with the shadows of a setting sun. While votive candles flickered patterns on the walls, the weary friar knelt alone at the feet of his Immaculate Queen telling her of his day's work and forwarding all the people's requests to her hands.

In 1866 the people's requests were all the same. Virtually the whole city besieged him to beg our Lady to deliver them from the cholera. Francis Mary had done all he could to console families who stood by helpless while their loved ones died. He had prayed fervently to our Lady that the scourge might pass. But, just as it took her Son to save the world, it would take another victim to save Genoa.

Death

One night when he was with the brethren discussing the crisis, he said quietly, "My dear brothers, I want to put an end to it all and go back to God. Pray for me that I may obtain this grace." A few nights later he solemnly offered himself to God in front of the altar of the Immaculate Conception. It was at this time that God revealed to him that He had

accepted his offering, and told him that he would die in a month.

Francis now made his last pilgrimage to the shrines he loved so dearly, asking our Lady to guide him in his last few days on earth.

On the 15th of September he was sent to bed with a serious illness which soon was diagnosed as the cholera. He was given Holy Viaticum and then asked for one final request: that he might die in the oldest and roughest habit in imitation of the poverty of Christ and Mary.

To those who asked him to pray to our Lady for a miracle, Francis would say, "If God wants me, I must go. May God's holy will be done. If He accepts my sacrifice and calls me, I am well content." God was calling him. On the 17th he received Extreme Unction. While the prayers for the dying were being recited by the brethren and a Lady. And it's all about surrounding his bed, with his last their love for each other.

breath he whispered the names of Jesus and Mary. These, his last words of farewell to the earth, were his words of greeting in heaven.

Almost immediately, wonderful signs began to be worked through his intercession. The first came within minutes. When the doctor came to examine his body, all the signs of the cholera had disappeared. Within a few days they had completely vanished from the whole city.

As the miracles of Francis Mary increased, so did the devotion of the people. They, especially the people of Genoa, have been instrumental in proclaiming the story of their *Padre Santo* to the world. It really is a very simple story. It's a story that could happen to anyone who would play his part in it as Francis Mary played his. It's just the story of a friar and a Lady. And it's all about surrounding his bed, with his last their love for each other.



Let those who are appointed to be over others glory in that superiority only as much as if they had been appointed to the task of washing the feet of their brothers; and the more their distress at losing their superiority would outweigh their distress at losing the office of washing feet, so much the more are they placing their soul in grave danger.

—*St. Francis' Words of Admonition, IV.*

Developing The Franciscan Spirit Through Reading

St. Mary Sheila, O.S.F.

From time to time over a period of years, various Franciscan leaders have raised their voices to call for a more complete realization of the original spirit of the Seraphic Father in the lives of his followers. They have re-emphasized the essential need for instilling in Franciscan novices and clerics a deeply-rooted Seraphic spirit. They have urged all who deal with the formation of both men and women religious to re-examine the strength and vitality of the genuine Franciscan spirit as it exists in their charges. They have attempted to stimulate an intensified reaffirmation of the Franciscan vocation in all those who, of whatever age or sex, wear the habit and cord of St. Francis.

Thirteen years ago, the Rev. Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., noted theologian, philosopher, and co-founder of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, expressed grave concern over the

apparent lack of understanding of their vocation on the part of Franciscans in general. In the first number of the then newly-founded magazine, *THE CORD*, Father Philotheus pointed out the factors preventing religious from becoming truly Franciscan:

... the essential spirit of Our Holy Father Francis may be lost sight of amid the superficial and sentimentally romantic concepts of Franciscanism so enthusiastically popularized today. And to this must be added the still greater danger of our becoming infected with those erroneous and even pernicious concepts of Franciscanism which at best can produce nothing but spiritual sterility. At the opposite extreme are those among us — unfortunately not a few — who are completely indifferent to, and wholly devoid of, any concept of Franciscanism whatsoever...

It is a deplorable fact, and one that has been brought to our attention time and again by the Ministers General of our Order that all too many of us seem but dimly aware of what our vocation as Franciscans requires of us. Apparently we do not understand with sufficient clarity and penetration what it means to live

Librarian at St. Gabriel's School of Nursing in Little Falls, Minn. Sr. Sheila came to our notice because of her compilation of the Bibliographical Index described on p. 137 of this number of THE CORD. Sr. is a member of the Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

and think and act in the spirit of our Seraphic Founder and Exemplar.

... The matter should not be dismissed lightly. A religious who fails to reproduce in his own life the ideals laid down by the rule of his Order must realize that he is in grave danger of failing utterly in his vocation. As Franciscans we are bound to live according to the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi... for if our spiritual life bears no resemblance to that of our Father, we must fear to be cut off from the rich heritage promised to his true sons and daughters....

We owe it to ourselves to understand the origin and genius of our vocation as Franciscans and to develop our interior life according to that distinctive kind of asceticism traditionally fostered in the Order. Failure to do this very often results in a hybrid type of spirituality that must of necessity prove ultimately sterile and fruitless.¹

While the concern expressed by Father Philotheus was largely directed to members of the Order in general, he was at the same time particularly disturbed by the apparent lack of a true spirit of Franciscanism among the many religious members of women's branches of the Order, most of whom he described as being "hardly distinguishable by their spirit from members of other congregations."

In this context the phrase, "hybrid type of spirituality" is

deserving of particular attention. Spiritual formation programs are being emphasized today more than ever, owing to the increased demand that religious be able to meet the spiritual and intellectual challenges that confront them in all spheres of their apostolic work. Great emphasis has been placed on the Sister Formation movement in the past several years. Much credit is due to those zealous organizers who have so successfully launched a project to give Sisters the spiritual and intellectual training they need. But for Franciscans there is a very real danger that they may, in their enthusiasm and zeal for this program, lose sight of their own "Franciscan Formation Movement" launched over seven-hundred years ago, and which, if followed out consistently, will truly form them into replicas of Francis — other Christs. It is relative to this point that prudent consideration for avoiding a type of "hybrid spirituality" might be given.

How then, shall we approach a truly Franciscan spiritual development program?

Since it is through reading and study and reflection that the major part of intellectual and spiritual formation takes place, it goes without saying that there is a vital need to give special attention to fostering and developing a love for Franciscan reading. "We become what we read." Therefore the Franciscan who undertakes to intensify

his own vocation has the need and obligation to study all aspects and phases of his Franciscan way of life as it is portrayed by solidly formed Franciscan masters, in order that he may grow in and deepen his appreciation of the life he has embraced. And such an appreciation will gradually and eventually ripen into a profound understanding and mature love.

That there has been some lack of emphasis on the need of applying this means to incite Franciscans to greater heights of seraphic perfection has been felt for some time. Father Cyril Piontek, O.F.M., addressing himself to the subject of spiritual direction, asked the questions:

Is it not a fact that we are but eager to follow the dictates of ascetical writers outside the Franciscan family? Is it not true that our Franciscan libraries are filled to the brim with works of other than Franciscan Spiritual Masters?²

And in 1948, in his encyclical letter, *Divina Providentia*, the former Minister General of the Friars Minor, the Very Rev. Pacificus Perantoni, O.F.M., wrote to the friars in a similar vein:

As far as possible to him, every friar should apply himself to reading notably the works of men in whom our Order has produced its greatest masters — first of all, of course, the books of St. Bonaventure and Bl. John Duns Scotus—in order to whet their mind and add force

to it in the pursuit of fruitful meditation, cultured address, and blamelessness and piety.

In emphasizing the need for recourse to Franciscan sources, Father Pacificus reinforced the observations made earlier by Father Cyril; he further added, however, that it was not his intention to disparage the works of writers of other Orders, many of whom were noteworthy for their contributions, but merely to make it clear that:

... their genius in spiritual matters generally differs in incentive from that of our authors, inasmuch as it does not lead straight to the heady waters flowing from our Seraphic well-springs. Yes, it is possible that their writings may gradually alienate less wary souls from the spirit of St. Francis, or diminish or modify that spirit. We must therefore keep carefully in sight and give prudent consideration to the characteristics which distinguish the genuine way of life from the rest.³

We often hear it said that Franciscans have not produced as notable contributions to spiritual literature as have members of other Orders whose works have skyrocketed to fame or become classics. Yet, is such an attitude validly in keeping with a follower of St. Francis, a man who stressed simple truth rather than profound erudition—who placed the emphasis on the approach of the heart

above that of the intellect? St. Bonaventure, when preaching under pressure of his other many duties as Minister General of the Order, apologized for what he felt to be his own lack of eloquence by saying that "light is as pure coming through a badly painted window, and meat as tasty even if served in a wooden dish."⁵ And along the same lines spoke Thomas a Kempis, whose masterpiece, the *Imitation of Christ* is strongly suggestive of the Franciscan spirit:

.... A simple book of devotion ought to be as welcome to you as any profound and learned treatise; what does it matter whether the man who wrote it was a man of great literary accomplishments? Do not be put off by his want of reputation; here is truth unadorned to attract the reader. Your business is with what the man said, not with the man who said it.⁶

Nevertheless, the past several years have seen the increase in the publication of noteworthy additions to some of the great works previously contributed by members of the Order. Notable among these is the work of José de Vinck, whose translation into English of the works of St. Bonaventure is making publishing history both within and without the Order. Added to this achievement is the work issuing from some of the leaders of the Order among Europeans: Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., Leon Venthly, O.F.M. Conv., Martial

Lekeux, O.F.M., and Valentine Breton, O.F.M., to mention but a few. Among American Franciscans worthy of mention are Theodosius Foley, O.F.M. Cap., Isidore O'Brien, O.F.M., Marion Habig, O.F.M., Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., and Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

Particularly in the realm of periodical literature there is a developing quality, both in content and method of presentation. Ascetical, dogmatic, and moral literature of sterling worth is being presented around the calendar in the following monthly publications such as this review, *Franciscan Herald and Forum*, and *Friar*; the quarterly journals, *Round Table of Franciscan Research*, *Franciscan Studies*, and *Priestly Studies*; and the annual reports of the Proceedings of the Franciscan Educational Conference. Too much emphasis on the value of these latter volumes cannot be made. For over 30 years they have appeared, covering the phases of study undertaken by members of the various groups of friars in all problems of current as well as historic interest, featuring doctrinal, social, cultural and philosophical topics.

Franciscan publishing efforts, too, have been redoubled, with St. Anthony Guild Press, Franciscan Herald Press, and that of the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure serving as outlets for some of the finest in Franciscan reading materials. Offerings of the recently established Franciscan Book Club

have been invaluable, also, in placing before Franciscans as well as the general reader outstanding and notable publications steeped in the Franciscan tradition.

Several independent friar groups have established publication houses: the clerics of the Santa Barbara Province of the Friars Minor; the Graymoor Press of the Friars of the Atonement; the Franciscan Publishers of the Province of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the publication ventures of the Conventual Friars of both the Province of Our Lady of Consolation and of the Province of the Immaculate Conception.

An informative and informal publication issued to Franciscan librarians "now and then" provides much helpful material as to source and availability of recent Franciscan literature. This lithographed periodical, the work of the library section of the Franciscan Education Conference, is produced through the Provincial Library of the Friars Minor of Pulaski, Wisconsin, under the editorship of the Rev. Donald Bilinski, O.F.M. In addition to covering the most recent publications in major areas of Franciscan interest, this brochure, the *Franciscan Librarian Contact*, also publishes addresses given on Franciscan reading and literature at various Franciscan organizational meetings, as for example those given at sectional meetings of Franciscans at the term *Christocentrism*, the

national Catholic Library Association conference.

The Franciscan who is convinced that he can never know sufficiently the many and varicolored facets of his particular type of vocation will have an intense desire to fill himself with all that pertains to that vocation. He will regret that he has only one short lifetime to satiate himself with the abundant spiritual literary treasures which are his means to achieve a more perfect knowledge and love of Christ, as well as as to provide him with clear cut guidelines for reproducing them in his own life.

But he can make a start. He can learn to know his Franciscan life through and through by extensive reading and reflection on all phases of its teachings. He can fill himself to the brim, first of all, with a knowledge of the life and virtues of St. Francis which, after all, forms the center of the entire school of Franciscan theology and philosophy. He can learn to know and love the doctrines which this Franciscan school has formulated. He can develop a love for the practice of those special virtues peculiar to the Franciscan. He can inform himself on the devotions which were so dear to St. Francis, and try to make them his own. He can make his study the lives of all those who expressed the ideals of St. Francis in their own lives. And since the whole of the Franciscan life may be summed up in

earnest seeker will learn the total-

spirit of Christ.

The soul thus cultivated in the garden of Franciscan thought will ever be looking in whatever material comes to hand for the extension of these truths that comprise his particular sphere of spirituality. And once that spirit has been deeply rooted and firmly implanted, he will "find tongues in trees, books and running brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything."⁷ He will be led, then, to seek all that will enrich and extend and intensify his wisdom and knowledge, and to reject all that does not further his search for Christ after the manner of St. Francis.

¹ "Pax et Bonum", v. 1, n. 1 (Nov., 1950) p. 1-3.

² "The Director of Souls," *Report of the Franciscan Educational Conference*, Report of the Eighth Annual Meeting, v. 8, n. 8, (November 1926), p. 237.

³ Quoted from *Guidance Through Franciscan Spirituality*, Report of the Proceedings of the 29th Annual Franciscan Educational Conference, v. 39, (1948) p. 341.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Quoted in *To God Alone the Glory*, Sister Mary Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.; Maryland, Newman, 1962, p. 213.

⁶ Knox trans., N. Y. Sheed: 1960, Bk. 3, Ch. 5, p. 23.

⁷ *As You Like It*, Act. II, sc. 1, l. 16.



If you were so clever and wise that you possessed all knowledge and could interpret every language and could make the most clever investigations into heavenly things, you could not glory in all these talents; for one single demon has known more about heavenly things, and even now knows more about earthly things, than all men taken together. . . .

—St. Francis' *Words of Admonition*, V.

Wanted: More Critical Catholics

Thomas Donnelly

For those of us who have been given the grace of intimate and conscious participation in the life of Holy Mother Church, these are thrilling times in which to be living. We Catholics have been aware for some time now that during the last two or three decades, the Holy Ghost has been stirring the Mystical Body of Christ to something akin to a renaissance. And one of the results already accomplished by the Vatican Council II is the extension of this awareness to the world at large, compelling it to confess that the Church is still very much alive.

While this resurgence probably was prompted in part by the moral goodness of Christ's faithful—who can say what graces were merited for the Church by that Christian heroism so common in recent years?—yet it has been experienced primarily in the intellectual realm. Its principal characteristics are a renewed interest in God's revelation to His children, and an awareness of the current needs of mankind.

This is the first part of an article concerned with some dangers encountered in reading theological literature today. The conclusion will be printed in the June number of THE CORD.

More specifically, we are presently experiencing a lively revival in the study of theology and its cognate sciences. Without going into detail here, we may generally characterize the trends of this renewed study as follows: dogmatic theology manifests a growing concern for the very source of revelation, and a desire to come to grips with the actual human condition; moral theology stresses the importance of positive Christian life motivated by charity; spiritual theology displays an interest in both doctrine and the findings of natural psychology; the disciplines pertinent to Sacred Scripture are enriched by recent developments in philology, history, and archaeology; the science of liturgics acquires new doctrinal depth.

In each of these disciplines there appears a double preoccupation, one with the sources of God's revelation, the other with the life of God's people. The ultimate task of theology is to effect and sustain a union of these two, by so clarifying revelation that it provides a solid foundation for supernatural life. In the light of this, one can easily understand why the environment of the present revival of studies is the Mystical Body of Christ. A theologian is one who works, although at times somewhat

remotely, to bring the revelation of Christ the Head to His mystical members, in order that their life in Him may become more intense.

The renewed effort on the part of theologians to fulfill their task has been matched in a remarkable manner recently by a very enthusiastic reception on the part of a large segment of the faithful. Their eagerness to possess the fruit of the theologian's studies is attested to by their attendance at lectures, participation in study-groups, and — perhaps most evident of all — reading of serious religious literature. Nor is their task a merely passive one; happily, they continue to assume an active role by pressing the theologian toward an application of revelation to the problems which arise in their everyday lives.

In brief, our generation has been blessed with the privilege of witnessing and engaging in a renewed effort by the Mystical Body in its task of continuing the mission of the Messiah. "I came," Jesus said, "that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Jn. 10:10).

Necessity of Prudence

One is aware, of course, that the swiftness with which this tide of theological investigation has engulfed us has caused some apprehension and introduced many tensions. The complexion of the familiar and rather comfortable landscape has been considerably

altered of late. But the Divine Advocate is still with the Church, as He will be until the end of time. To close one's eyes to truth on the grounds that it leads one into unfamiliar or uncomfortable surroundings would be to frustrate His enlivening influence. Rather than occasioning a wringing of hands, then, the present theological effort should summon up our joyous applause.

But, while we welcome this renewal of the effort to understand God's message more completely and effectively, nevertheless it seems to us that it is necessary at this time to remind ourselves of the grave obligation of prudence incumbent on those who are involved in it.

As we stated above, the study of theology in and by the Church involves both professional scholars, whom we may group together here under the name *theologians*, and the Catholic faithful, whom we may call *laymen* in order to distinguish them, not from religious or clergy, but from the professional theologians. Now, each of these plays a dual role: the theologian searches out the meaning of revelation and presents it to the faithful; the layman helps to stimulate the theologian in his search by expressing his needs, and also utilizes the fruits of the theological quest. We shall not concern ourselves here with discussing either the needs of the faithful or the theological method

of the scholar. We are interested, rather, in the other aspect of their dialogue, scil., the communication of the results of study by the theologian to the layman. It is precisely here, we are convinced, that an admonition to prudence is most urgently demanded.

No one will deny, certainly, that the communication of all truth is a solemn trust, calling for honesty, objectivity, and clarity on the part of the one who gives, and openness and understanding on the part of him who receives. In the modern encounter between theologian and layman, the necessity for those virtues is highlighted by two considerations, one perennial and the other proper to our own times.

The first, and more obvious, consideration is that the doctrine which is transmitted is a part of the body of those truths which Almighty God has seen fit to grant to man: it is contained, either formally (immediately) or virtually (through the mediation of extraneous human knowledge) in divine revelation. The fact that this truth is the word of God increases the necessity of the presence of the above-mentioned attitudes in those who deal with it.

The consideration proper to our own times is this: the very circumstances in which the modern theologian speaks to the layman demand these attitudes with an urgency perhaps never before present in the Church's long

history. Our modern media of communication, especially the press, have drawn writer and reader into a high degree of mutual accessibility. One has only to browse through a Catholic book shop or library to be impressed with the vast production of — and implicit demand for — books and periodicals on theological subjects. Today, more theologians are addressing a larger number of laymen about a greater variety of subjects than ever before. While this phenomenon, like the theological revival which it accompanies, is to be gladly acclaimed, it should also serve to remind us of the need for prudence on the part of both theologian and layman. This communication of doctrine is effected in various ways — in lectures, sermons, study-groups, parish bulletins, and the like; while implying the necessity of responsibility in the use of all these media, we speak expressly here of the most common means of communication, scil., the formal publication.

Writers and Readers

Those who publish works dealing with theological subjects should be aware that their positions are finding their way these days into the hands, not only of fellow theologians, but also of a large segment of the Catholic population at large. Inexperienced as most non-theologians are in the subtleties of the theological

both scholars and laymen, of a critical attitude toward the public discussion of theology.

Dangers

Unfortunately, this important tact and discernment are not always in evidence in the present-day dialogue. As a result of its absence, many a person sincerely intent on using modern doctrinal literature to aid and direct his progress in the supernatural life has come out of the experience confused or even injured. While this can conceivably happen to anyone, there seems to be a special danger here for the young. This may be caused by youth's natural predilection for the novel; it could also be true that they do, in fact, read a greater number of recent works than do their elders; possibly the reason lies in the fact that they, being less sure in their personal convictions, and not yet fully cognizant of the entire scope of theology, are more impressionable than more mature readers.

On the other hand, the reading layman should keep in mind that the number of writers in the theological field has swelled recently to vast proportions. This means that, according to the normal course of things human, there will be found a number of authors who are not particularly well-qualified in the subjects about which they write, as well as a number of others who are not especially prudent in the way in which they present their message. Consequently, it is very necessary for the Catholic layman to remember that the ability to put a book together, or the presence of the *imprimatur* on a work, in no way guarantees that the doctrine contained therein is doctrinally sound in every respect. We think, therefore, that in the presence of the veritable torrent of information currently flowing from theologian to layman, there is incumbent on the former a judicious tact, and on the latter a great deal of discernment. In a word, there is an urgent need today, among

istic exploration of the divine message. This change in viewpoint — accidental, to be sure, but nevertheless very real — has inspired some to commit themselves exclusively to the new, and consequently to disregard the old as completely outmoded. Ideas begin to appear to be of value simply because they are new. What began as a genuinely honest devotion to truth turns gradually into crass gullibility, leaving the reader quite susceptible to perplexity and harm.

of fault-finding, but in the sense of making prudent and discriminating judgement of the statements which one reads. The modern Catholic can be aided mightily in his pursuit of perfection by the vast literary output with which we have been blessed. Cautioned, however, by the awareness that some doctrinal literature is being published with something less than complete responsibility, he should approach it armed with the sword of keen discernment. In the second part of this article, we propose to discuss some of the more perilous pitfalls, and some specific attitudes which may help readers to avoid them.

(To be continued)



... If you were handsomer and richer than all others, and even if you could perform wondrous things like putting the demons to flight, all such things could be harmful to you, and do not belong to you at all, nor can you glory in them.

—St. Francis' Words of Admonition, V.

Mary In The Capuchin Family

Fra. Linus Bertram, O.F.M. Cap.

Anima Franciscana est anima Mariana. Yes, the Franciscan soul is a Marian soul. This is so true that the author of *Seraphic Spirit and Life* says: "The Franciscan who is not devoted heart and soul to his most heavenly Mother cannot flatter himself with the thought that he is a true follower of St. Francis nor of his saintly confreres."¹

"For Francis of Assisi, to live was to love. For that reason seraphic love characterized his every act. In fact two loves, which basically are one, wielded a tender tyranny over him: devotion to Christ and devotion, with and because of Christ, to Mary."² "Because of Christ, to Mary."³ "Coming one with Jesus, he felt in himself all the love of the Child Jesus for his Mother; he loved her with the very heart of Jesus. And since his heart had identified itself with the heart of Jesus, the love of Jesus for Mary was his love, and his love for Mary was the very love of Jesus."⁴ As Celano relates of Francis: "He loved the Mother of the Lord Jesus with a love that cannot be described, because she had made the Lord of majesty our brother, and through her we have

obtained mercy."⁵

The Portiuncula is in reality the symbol of Francis' love for Mary. In commanding us to keep the small chapel, he was telling us never to leave Mary.

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 place of God which is uniquely cherished by Him and by His Mother.⁶

His love for Mary was not based only on her Divine Maternity, but also on the fact that Mary shared the poverty of Christ, and thus became a model for the Friars Minor.⁶ Once at a dinner a friar mentioned how poor the Blessed Virgin had been on Christmas Day when she gave birth to the Savior. This was enough to affect Francis strongly. He arose instantly from the table, seated himself on the bare floor, and finished his frugal meal amid bitter tears.

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MARY IN THE CAPUCHIN FAMILY

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Francis felt that no praise could be too great for Mary "because she bore the Lord in her most holy womb."⁷ *Ad Jesum per Mariam* has ever remained an essential trait of Franciscanism. His deep love for Mary could not help but be self-communicative.

Like seeds lavishly scattered about, these spontaneous manifestations of child-like fondness for Mary on the part of Francis have blossomed unto consummate loveliness in his spiritual children. Love for Mary in the Franciscan Order is thus at once a cherished heritage and an accepted challenge, because this devotion, so dear to the heart of its Founder, has engendered in his numerous progeny a filial gratitude and an incentive to imitation.⁷

True to this heritage and challenge, the Capuchins have always had a deep devotion to Mary, especially under her title of the Immaculate Conception. As Fr. Cuthbert Gumbinger, O.F.M. Cap. states: "Though they had able defenders of Mary's great privilege, yet, the special characteristic of their devotion was their silent prayer, and their fervent example, which enkindled among the faithful a filial trust in the Virgin conceived without sin."⁸

We can see the truth of this fact in the great number of monasteries and churches of the Order dedicated to Mary Immaculate.⁹ As the great Gothic cathedrals were the silent prayer of the people of

the Middle Ages, so too were these monasteries silent sentinels voicing the devotion of the Capuchins to their Queen.

But much more than the monasteries do the lives of the Capuchin saints voice their deep inner devotion to their Mother. From the Apostolic Doctor, St. Lawrence, down to the Order's newest saint, Francis Mary of Camposso, Our Lady has been the guide leading them to the Light and Life which is Christ. Francis had given the heritage and challenge; they have accepted it.

St. Lawrence of Brindisi

St. Lawrence of Brindisi was not unaware of this rich spiritual legacy when he entered the Capuchin Order. Devotion to the Mother of God was the most outstanding factor in his life. "It was a chain of love which linked his heart and soul inseparably to heaven."¹⁰ He attributed all the successes of his life, of his priestly career, to Mary. He never began a task unless he first entrusted everything into her hands. In his many travels with his companions, the conversation usually centered about Mary and her privileges.

Apart from the time set aside for the recitation of the divine office and meditation, Lawrence was accustomed to turn upon his favorite topic: the dignity, the sweetness, the virtues, the intercession of the glorious Virgin Mary. His

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choice of words was always dignified, always full ofunction, and modified by tenderness. . . .¹¹

Mary's name was ever on his lips; reciting her Office; saying the rosary; greeting others with "Praised be Jesus Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary!" Blessings were given with the name of Mary in each.

Despite his already great love of Mary, Lawrence endeavored to grow in her love, and this in a special way by giving her to others. His sermons were never so eloquent as when he spoke of her privileges. "In his private conversation, in his cell, in the cloister, in choir, he spoke ever of the Mother of God, exhorting, urging all those who came to him to praise, to venerate, to love Mary, to have recourse to her in every need."¹²

His great *Mariale* proves beyond doubt that Lawrence the scholar was as Maricentric as Lawrence the saint. One thought impregnates all his writings: the sublime dignity of Mary in her Divine Motherhood. The following words which he himself wrote could well characterize his whole life: "Oh, how happy is he who lives under the protection of the Virgin Mother of God."¹³

St. Felix of Cantalice

Devotion to the Mother of God also shone forth in the life of St. Felix of Cantalice.

Before Christmas he used to go round to the houses of his richer acquaintances, and say,

"Have you prepared a room for your expected guest? And when they, being or feigning to be astonished, asked to whom he referred, he would reply, 'Why, who else could it be but that great Lady, who is about to give birth to the Saviour? Make haste and prepare a room where she and her Son may dwell!'"¹⁴

He would spend whole nights at prayer before the Blessed Sacrament and the altar of Our Lady. One night Mary came to him, and placed the infant Jesus in his arms. There for a few moments he spoke with Love Incarnate before returning Him back to Mary.

When questioned about how he could pray so well without going to a book for meditation,

the Saint replied that he was possessed of a breviary which consisted of six letters, five being red and one white, namely, the five sacred wounds of our blessed Lord, and the holy Mother of God. "If," added he, "I had the grace to understand these six letters perfectly, I would not yield to any doctor or theologian of the first rank. Pray to God and his holy Mother that I may understand better."¹⁵

St. Conrad of Parham

Mary Immaculate played a major role in the life of St. Conrad. She it was who brought her devoted son to the heights of sanctity and union with Christ. As a young boy he recited the rosary daily on his way to school. As he grew, he found great delight in visiting

Marian shrines near his home. He joined the Confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary for the conversion of sinners, and constantly wore Our Lady's scapular. Before he entered the Capuchin Order he made this resolution: "I will always endeavor to have a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and will earnestly strive to imitate her virtues."¹⁶

And keep the resolution he did, especially after he entered the Order. What joy was his when he was sent to the shrine of Our Lady of Altoetting. Here it was that he could be found almost every morning for forty years serving Mass at Our Lady's altar. While serving, he held intimate communication with Mary and her divine Son. On one occasion a witness testified: "I noticed how his glowing interior devotion became manifested exteriorly. As he knelt at the altar, rapt in prayer, glowing balls of fire seemed to proceed from his lips and rise upwards to the miraculous picture of Our Lady."¹⁷

This humble Capuchin Brother is perhaps known most for his devotion to the Immaculate Conception by his continual recitation of the Little Crown. He did much to spread devotion to Mary under this title. Mary on her side would not be outdone in generosity. His tongue and the finger around which he constantly wore the chaplet have been saved from corruption.

Worthy of note is Brother Con-

rad's practice of the True Devotion to Mary according to St. Louis De Montfort. While not only wearing the scapular of Our Lady, St. Conrad gave thousands more of these scapulars to the pilgrims who visited the famous Bavarian shrine. Truly his whole life radiated Mary.

St. Francis Mary of Camporosso

Marie Croese was very careful to nourish a childlike devotion to Mary in each of her children. Devotedly the family recited the rosary each day. For John Croese, youngest in the family, this was the beginning of a life dedicated to Mary. He who would one day bear the name Francis Mary placed himself entirely in his Mother's hands from his earliest years. When he was twelve, Mary forcibly took him into her hands to keep him from an occasion of sin.

What joy was his when he became privileged to bear her name on entering the Capuchin Order. What greater happiness followed when he was sent to the friary of the Immaculate Conception. Here, in the only friary to which he was ever sent, he constantly sang the praises of his Mother.

Daily on his questing tours he would visit the shrines dedicated to Mary in and around Genoa. Those who asked him for help he directed to Mary. On one occasion he told the mother of a child suffering from a tumor in her leg: "As I see you have such confidence

in the Blessed Virgin, go and pray to her in the church of the Magdalen and tell her that the poor lay brother Francis has sent you."¹¹⁸

The child was cured.

During the tragic cholera epidemic which swept over Genoa in 1866, Francis Mary gave himself untiringly to help the sick. On one of the last days of his novena for the feast of the Assumption, he knelt before the altar of the Immaculate Conception and solemnly offered his life to God that the epidemic might cease. God accepted his gift, and shortly after his death the epidemic subsided.

We have seen that in Francis, love for Mary and love for Christ were one, and that he loved Mary

with the very love of Jesus, since he had so identified himself with Him. Because Francis realized that to seek Christ without Mary is to seek Christ in vain, he entrusted all of his sons to Mary. In giving us the Portunucula he truly gave us Mary. In this way, devotion to Mary has come down to the Capuchins as a glorious heritage and a great challenge. It was Lawrence who took up this challenge and championed the glories of Mary, both in his life and writings, at the dawn of the Capuchin era. Lawrence and all the other saints of the Capuchin Order stand as guides for us, pointing out the way to Mary the Beacon, who in turn leads us to Christ the Light.

- ¹ John of Meerte, O.F.M. Cap., *Seraphic Spirit and Life* (tr. Emmanuel Roets, O.F.M. Cap., and Berchmans Bittle, O.F.M. Cap.), Techy, Ill., 1953, p. 343.
- ² Sebastian Falcone, O.F.M. Cap., "St. Lawrence of Brindisi: Marian Saint and Scholar", *Franciscan Educational Conference*, Vol. XXXV, p. 121-142. Washington, D. C., 1954. Hereafter cited as F.E.C.
- ³ Leo Venthy, O.F.M. Conv., *Union with Christ* (tr. James Meyer, O.F.M.), Chicago, 1954, p. 13.
- ⁴ Joachim Daleiden, O.F.M., "St. Francis and Mary", F.E.C., p. 311.
- ⁵ F.E.C., p. 309.
- ⁶ Hilmar Felder, O.F.M. Cap., *Ideals of St. Francis* (tr. Berchmans Bittle, O.F.M. Cap.), N. Y., 1925, p. 396ff.
- ⁷ Falcone, op. cit., p. 121.
- ⁸ Gumbinger, O.F.M. Cap., "Mary Immaculate in Capuchin Devotion and Apostolate", F.E.C., p. 226.
- ⁹ Gumbinger, op. cit., p. 225.
- ¹⁰ Falcone, op. cit., p. 123.
- ¹¹ Falcone, op. cit., p. 124; cited from Lorenzo d'Aosta, O.F.M. Cap., *Vita del S. Lorenzo da Brindisi*, Roma, 1881, p. 106.
- ¹² Falcone, op. cit., p. 127; cited from d'Aosta, op. cit., p. 225.
- ¹³ Falcone, op. cit., p. 128.
- ¹⁴ Amabel Kerr, *A Son of St. Francis*, St. Louis, 1900, p. 65.
- ¹⁵ Kerr, op. cit., p. 66.
- ¹⁶ Joseph Anthony, O.F.M. Cap., *Blessed Brother Conrad of Parzham* (tr. Andrew Newfield, O.F.M. Cap.), Detroit, 1932, p. 127.
- ¹⁷ Joseph Anthony, op. cit., p. 130.
- ¹⁸ Pius Lyons, O.F.M. Cap., *Blessed Francis Mary of Camporosso*, Agra, India, 1930, p. 85.

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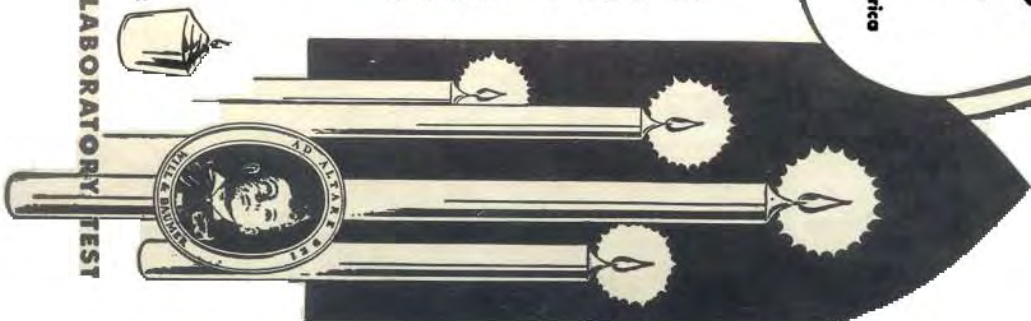
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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW
OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

JUNE 1963

THE LITTLE ONES OF GOD

Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

THE CROSS IN THE CLASSROOM

Sr. M. Roberto, O.S.F.

ST. BERNARDINE AND THE EUCHARIST

Roberto Masi

CHILDLIKE OR CHILDISH?

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VOL. XIII

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

The history of the first five centuries of Catholic doctrinal development reflects the series of human reactions to the divine revelation of the unique fact of the Hypostatic Union. The revelation itself is clear enough: the person called Jesus Christ is God and man. But the effort on the part of Catholic thinkers to explain what this statement means, how it can be so, and what its consequences are, represented a long and sometimes bitter struggle in the Church.

If the squalls of modern theological discussion threaten at times to unnerve us, it would be well for us to contemplate the straight and sure course on which the Holy Ghost guided Peter's bark through the tempests of those days.

In the year 451, the Council of Chalcedon defined the true meaning of the revelation: Jesus Christ is God the Word, the only-begotten Son, one Person who exists in two natures, each of which is distinct and complete; He is perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity. In enunciating this definition, the Church pointed out and corrected the errors of both Nestorianism and Monophysitism, the extremely opposed heresies whose tenets cast into clear relief the broad outlines of the Christological controversies which had raged up to that time.

Nestorius taught that in Christ there is duality not only of natures, but also of persons. Jesus is not, he said, a single person who is both divine and human, but two distinct persons living in perfect agreement in one external body, each of whom perfectly possesses his own nature. Accordingly, the human acts of Jesus are the acts only of the human person, and not of the divine; and, as a consequence, the Blessed Virgin Mary is Mother of the human Jesus, but is not the Mother of God.

A reaction to this division of Christ into two persons, Monophysitism is a good example of over-correction. According to this error, Jesus is indeed a single person, but to such an extent that He possesses only one nature (*none* — single; *physis* — nature). This nature, being divine, so absorbed the humanity of Jesus that although He appears human, He is not really a man at all.

One can appreciate the extremely different viewpoints from which these two errors view the Incarnation of Our Lord. In effect, Nestorian-

ism so emphasizes the humanity of Jesus that it denies He is God; Monophysitism so insists on Christ's divinity that it completely destroys His humanity. Both of them virtually deny the possibility of our redemption and participation in the divine life — if Jesus were only man, He could not bring us to God; if He were only God, we should have nothing in common with Him. It is because the single Person Jesus is completely God and completely man that our life of grace is possible.

Despite Chalcedon's decree and the subsequent constant insistence of Holy Mother Church, most of us find it necessary frequently to check ourselves in order to make sure our thinking does not slide from the true explanation of the Hypostatic Union. Faced with the fact that most non-Catholics today incline toward Nestorianism, we must guard ourselves against the temptation of unconsciously embracing Monophysitism. In consequence, perhaps, of having been constantly drilled as children in the truth that Christ is God, we find ourselves sometimes in danger of forgetting that He is also — and to the same extent — truly man.

The Church has presented us with a firm anchor for our thinking in this matter in its doctrine on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The fact that Jesus has a physical heart of flesh just as we do is a graphic reminder for us that He is a man in every sense of the word, "endowed with intelligence and free will and the rest of the internal and external faculties of perception, sense appetites, and all natural impulses" (Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Haurietis Aquas*, May 15, 1956, no. 49 [NCWC ed.]). An understanding of this doctrine, therefore, is guaranteed to preserve us from following any tendencies which we might have toward Monophysitism. It also serves to keep before our eyes in a very vivid manner the astounding fact that the Son of God is, in a very real and true sense, our brother.

Frequent meditation on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, as suggested in this Encyclical Letter (no. 71-107) will help us to penetrate more deeply into this mystery, and incite us with the desire effectively to return the love with which that heart beats for us.

The Editors

The Little Ones Of God

Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

The greatest service which the atheistic existentialist philosophers have rendered their contemporaries is perhaps to have brought into very sharp focus the ancient truth that if man is everything, then man is nothing. Man is everything for these thinkers in the sense that his human existence as actually lived is the most important reality, and consequently the principal object of their concern. According to them, God does not exist. And, like the godless men described by the Psalmist, "their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness" (Ps. 13:3): man, being without a God, without purpose, without a soul, without a future, is the most absurd figure in a completely senseless universe. And although he does in fact exist, yet his existence is entirely unreasonable, a sort of malicious practical joke perpetrated upon him by no one. Hence the paradox: man is both everything and nothing.

This pessimistic doctrine runs counter to all human experience. The characterization of

reality as totally unreasonable by these apostles of the absurd is an implicit admission that the reasonable does exist; their very searching for a way to solve and explain to others the problem of existence supposes and upholds the validity of human reasoning.

The records of man's thinking testify to the fact that his reason has always taught him that he is neither everything nor nothing, but that he is the handiwork of an absolute, eternally existent, personal being whom he calls God. Contingent man is created by the uniquely necessary Being: his very contingency — that is to say, his indifference to existence — demands that since he himself exists, so also must God exist; hence, man is not everything. Nor, however, is he absurdly nothing: his Creator being all-perfect, man's existence is purposeful.

The creature man, therefore, very definitely is something. But where does he stand in the scale between being nothing and being all? The answer to this question is also a paradox, but a real one this time, because it is based on the reality of creation: man is something both little and great. He is little because he is created, great

THE LITTLE ONES OF GOD

because created by God. Because of what he himself is, man is something little; because of what God is, man is something great. Brought out of utter nothingness into existence by the almighty and intelligent Creator, man's littleness derives from self, and his greatness comes from God.

Divine Revelation

What our reason tells us about man is verified by God's revelation to us, only from a different viewpoint. Rather than teaching us profound philosophical truths in a speculative manner, the Bible points out to us their important practical implications in an existential way. But while God's way of teaching us through His revelation is rather more casual than the inexorable workings of human reason, yet the message of the former illuminates and heightens the teaching of the latter: the Bible reveals man as both smaller and greater than his reasoning alone showed him to be. Because of original sin man stands even smaller before God; but by his vocation to grace he has also become ineffably greater. And here again, the littleness comes from within man himself, while the greatness is bestowed upon him by God.

Since the purpose of the Bible is to teach us what bearing the divine mysteries ought to exert on our lives, the burden of its message

is that if we are to attain to the greatness that comes from having God as our Creator, we must acknowledge our own littleness before Him. God will take care of fulfilling the greatness, if only we shall keep in mind the littleness inherent in our origin from nothing. We may state this in another way: by the goodness of God our greatness will be realized if, remembering that we are little, we regulate our lives accordingly.

In the Old Testament, man's littleness before God is expressed most frequently by the corporate trust which Yahweh's people are to have in Him: it is only by confiding in him completely that the Jewish nation will attain to greatness. "For He is the Lord, our God: and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand" (Ps. 94:7). In the New Testament our Lord brings the virtue of littleness to completion by adding a new dimension: the Christian's relation to God is filial, the love of a little one for its Father, as Jesus taught so beautifully in the Sermon on the Mount.

The Franciscan Spirit

Our holy Father St. Francis knew what man is worth. With the insight so common to the close friends of God, he understood with limpid clarity that man's essential and fundamental attitude before God must be that of littleness. And although unschooled in philosophy

and Sacred Scripture, he perceived unmistakably that if a man were truly convinced of his littleness and regulated his life accordingly, God would give him greatness as well. In Chapter IV of his Rule of the Friars Minor, he admonished his friars that they should sojourn in this world "serving the Lord in poverty and humility", i.e., being aware of their littleness before God, and expressing it in these virtues. And the greatness? "This is that summit of highest poverty which constitutes you, my dearest brothers, heirs and princes of the kingdom of heaven; which has made you poor in earthly things, but raised you up in virtue. May this be your portion, leading into the land of the living."

Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word of God, is the exemplar and model of all holiness; His gospel message presents to us the entire complex of virtues to be cultivated by those who would be His disciples. Down through the Christian ages, many souls have fallen in love with Jesus. As men will do, each has been attracted to a particular characteristic of His personality. Those who by divine Providence have founded schools of spirituality have concentrated upon a particular aspect of Christ and His message, thereby selecting an approach to Christianity which sets themselves and their followers apart: some have emphasized His wisdom, others His obedience, still others His office of Redeemer, and

so through the various schools. It is a most singular thing that when Francis Bernardone fell in love with Jesus he was unswervingly drawn to that virtue which is essential and fundamental to man the creature: he was overwhelmed by the *littleness* of the Son of God. This is the wisdom of the Power-ello; this is the reason why his way is the very marrow of the gospel.

Every follower of St. Francis loves to speak of the Franciscan Spirit, that elusive quality which distinguishes us from other Catholics and binds us together as members of the Seraphic family. Yet, when we attempt to define it, we are forced to confess, as did St. Augustine in regard to the nature of time, "If no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to someone who does ask me, I do not know" (*Confessions*, 11, 14). Poverty is there, certainly, and great charity; love of Our Lady is important; and the devotion of brotherhood . . . One could recite a veritable litany of all the virtues which the good Franciscan strives to practice, until one came to the conclusion that being Franciscan is, after all, just about the same thing as being a good Christian. But since Franciscanism, like all schools of spirituality, is a particular approach to, and peculiar expression of, the way of Christ, it seems legitimate for us to set ourselves the problem of trying to isolate a single attitude

or virtue which colors and orders Christianity for us. We submit that the radical Franciscan virtue is the imitation of the littleness of Jesus.

Littleness

What do we understand by littleness? By the virtue of littleness we mean the honest conviction that the most intimate part of our persons — the ego, or self, which is shared with no one — is important only in relation to God its Creator and, for His sake, to its fellow creatures. This is not to say that self is nothing, or of no importance whatever. It is to say, rather, that although it certainly is something — and, as we have seen, something very great at that — yet it is something only because God created it. And, being creaturely, its importance lies radically in God. In order that we may fully appreciate this truth, it is important for us to consider that this creaturely quality of ours is permanently inherent in us: God not only created me, but also sustains me, even while I write these words, in existence. There is no question, then, of my importance having been related to God merely once, during the time when I was being created. As I once became something out of nothing because of God's creation, so now I remain something only because He sustains me in being. My littleness persists, therefore, forever.

Littleness may be described as a relegation of self to its proper place. The little one of God sees things, especially his own self, in their proper perspective. Just as man is not everything, neither is self the center of his personal world. For him who is little, God and neighbor always come first. The ego never intrudes itself into the spotlight. In a word, the person who is little does not take himself too seriously.

Our Lord Jesus Christ

We have ventured the assertion that the essence of Franciscanism is the imitation of the littleness of Christ. Saint Francis loved the gospel because it is there that he came to know the perfect Model of littleness. From the Annunciation to the Ascension, the life of Jesus is suffused with the beauty of this virtue. True, our Blessed Lord did have His moments of glory on earth: there were the times when the amazed crowds acclaimed Him; there were the Baptism, and the Transfiguration, and Palm Sunday. But these events were exaltations of Christ's Messianic office rather than of self. Even so, we have no indication that Francis was particularly attracted to them. It is significant that the mysteries to which he was irresistibly drawn are those in which Jesus most evidently places His Father and His fellow men before Himself — the Incarnation, the

Passion, and the Holy Eucharist.

When we speak of Jesus practicing the virtue of littleness, we come upon a difficulty whose solution leads us straight to the heart of the mystery of the Incarnation. Jesus Christ is a single divine Person. Eternally He possesses divine nature, being in substance the same thing as the Father and the Holy Ghost; by reason of the Incarnation, He also possesses human nature. One divine Person, He is truly and completely God, truly and completely man. Now, we stated above that littleness consists in the conviction that one's self is important only in its relation to God its Creator and, for His sake, to its fellow creatures. If this be so, a problem arises in the case of our Blessed Lord. His self, His Person, is divine, eternal, equal in all respects to the other Persons of the Blessed Trinity. How then, being God, can He consider Himself important only in relation to God and other men?

The answer lies in the understanding of the fact that in the single Person Christ, two perfect natures are united without prejudice to either, so that the one Person is at one time entirely God and entirely man. That Jesus can consider His human nature itself to be little before God is evident, for it is created. That He cannot consider His divine nature to be little is equally clear, for it is identical with the Father's. Nor can he con-

sider Himself in His divine nature to be little in any way. Our Lord can, however, consider Himself to be little in His human nature, as the true man that He is — He is little before God *precisely* as Incarnate. He does not, then, consider merely His human nature little, but — since He possesses this nature truly and completely — considers Himself the man to be little in relation to God.

All this may become somewhat clearer if we look at another aspect of the Hypostatic Union. The Blessed Virgin Mary is not only the mother of Christ's human nature. Nor is she the mother, obviously, either of divine nature or of Christ precisely as divine. She is, however, mother of the divine Person Christ in His human nature, as Incarnate. And so she is truly the Mother of God.

A Hymn To Christ

We have observed above that the gospel description of Christ is permeated with the fact of His littleness. But the New Testament text which elucidates this fact most succinctly is the so-called Hymn to Christ found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 2:6-11:-

Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clinging to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being

made like unto men. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. Therefore God also has exalted him and has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

Concerning this beautiful passage, we should like to make three observations:

1. The historical context of the passage is pertinent here. Attempting to instill into the Catholics at Philippi the spirit of humility, the Apostle urges them to follow the example of Jesus by acquiring the attitude of littleness which shone forth in His Incarnation.

2. St. Paul points out that Jesus is both little and great. Without ceasing to be almighty God, He chose to put aside the glory of His divinity (though not the divinity itself), to assume the status of a human slave, and to come by obedience to death by crucifixion. As a consequence of this, God caused His greatness to shine forth again through the Resurrection and Ascension, and returned to Him the external glory of His majesty as God.

In His Incarnation, therefore, Jesus is the model par excellence both of the littleness inherent in

man by his creatural state, and also of the consequent greatness which God bestows on the man who effectively acknowledges his own littleness. Because Christ chose, even though He is God, to become little as Incarnate, God has exalted Him to a glory exceeding that of every creature.

3. Finally, this Hymn to Christ considers the littleness of Jesus under three aspects, and in doing so provides us with a rather detailed blueprint of what our own littleness should be like. In St. Paul's description of the Incarnate Word, we can discern the expression of Jesus' littleness in His attitude to self, to neighbor, and to God.

Jesus' attitude toward self: Although He is essentially and unalterably almighty God, Jesus did not insist that the glory inherent in His divinity be manifest. And so, while not separating self from divinity, He approached this as *closely as* He could by considering self to be of no account. Further, he assumed the creatural status of being human, taking man's nature as His very own (v. 6-7). Christ's littleness is expressed here as a complete disregard of self. Fully aware of what He is — the infinitely perfect God — He nevertheless does not permit the awareness to flow over into a glorification of self.

Jesus' attitude toward neighbor: Having now assumed human nature, Jesus undertook the sal-

vation of His human brothers. This was accomplished through the practice of the virtue of obedience to both God and man, which led to His death by crucifixion (v. 8-9). Selflessness turns to others, and becomes generosity. Our Blessed Lord is shown here as the completely generous One, despoiling self of dignity, will, life, even honor itself — for the sake of His fellow men.

Jesus' attitude toward God: God then reveals to us through St. Paul how He responded to the littleness of His divine Son become man. Through the Resurrection and Ascension God restores to Jesus that external glory which He had selflessly cast aside. All creatures

recognize that the glory and authority designated by the supremely great name "Yahweh" truly belong to Jesus, and acknowledge His dominion accordingly (v. 9-11).

The attitude of Christ Himself toward God is described in the very last words of the Hymn. It is expressed much more clearly in the original Greek than in the Confraternity translation which we have given above; the Greek text reads: "And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord — unto the glory of God the Father." Even the exaltation of Jesus which restores to Him the external majesty which is ever His, even this redounds ultimately to the glory of His heavenly Father. Jesus the man, "the firstborn of all creatures", is the perfect glorifier

of God. As king of all creation He furnishes the perfect example of the way in which all other men are to glorify and thank God for the benefits which He bestows upon them.

St. Francis of Assisi

Disregard of self, generosity toward others, glorification of God — these are the virtues that constituted the littleness which Jesus both practiced and recommended to those who would live His gospel. And imitation of this threefold littleness characterizes the spirituality peculiar to the Little Poor Man of Assisi.

From the day on which Francis experienced the call to sanctity, he measured himself only in relation to God, and was completely overwhelmed by the comparison: "My God, Who are You, and who am I?" The Testament of our Holy Father is particularly saturated with the humility of "little Brother Francis." Nor did this selflessness remain a sweet and sterile sentiment; it burgeoned forth quite logically into the hard and rigorous practice of actual poverty.

Francis' generosity toward others is epitomized, perhaps, in the choice which shaped the fundamental form of his own life and that of his friars: his selection to the mixed rather than the strictly contemplative life. Everyone who is acquainted with the Seraphic Saint knows the story related in

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the *Fioretti* (I, 1, 16), of how God revealed to him through Saint Clare and Brother Sylvester that he should occasionally relinquish the life of contemplation which was so attractive to him, in order to save and sanctify others. Once the Saint had his answer, once cognizant that he was needed, there was not a trace of niggardiness in his response. Raphael Brown's translation has nicely caught Francis' enthusiasm: "As soon as he heard this answer and thereby knew the will of Christ, he got to his feet, all aflame with divine power, and said to Brother Masseo with great fervor: 'So let's go — in the name of the Lord!'"

Concern for the glorification of God was another of Saint Francis' outstanding characteristics. The praise and honor of God which must have permeated his private prayer also appears frequently in his conversation and writing. Indeed, it is not exaggeration to assert that the glorification of God is a direct consequent of the Franciscan message. For Francis' advice to those of his sons who were formally assigned to the presentation of that message was simply, "Preach the gospel," and an understanding and acceptance of the gospel leads the Christian immediately and inevitably to union with Jesus in the glorification of God. The reason for this is that the gospel is "the good news", whose basic burden is that God our Father has invited us to a sharing

in His own divine life through Jesus Christ; and the immediate human reaction to news like that must be a glorifying of God. This was Francis' primary reaction to the gospel, a reaction which places our Holy Father among those who have understood the kerygmatic nature of Catholic doctrine. His legendary joy and optimism spring from a clear perception that the gospel is "good news of great joy which shall be to all the people" (Lk. 2:10). He considered it his vocation to announce these glad tidings to the world. Had Saint Francis dabbled in Greek instead of French, he might have dubbed himself "keryx", and rightfully so — for he was in very fact "the Herald of the Great King."

Sons and Daughters of St. Francis

This attitude of littleness — in one's own eyes, toward one's neighbor, before God — is the most great and precious inheritance bequeathed by the Poverello to those who follow in his footsteps. Those who are by God's grace so chosen are called to imitate Francis in his following of Jesus, and invited to become in a very real sense, the little ones of God.

Selflessness: The Franciscan strives never to take himself too seriously, never to place himself at the center of his own world. In practice, the external sign of this attitude consists in the observance,

according to one's state in life, of either the virtue or the vow of the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Although the Franciscan does, it is true, observe these recommendations of Our Savior in common with other good Christians, his primary motivation for observing them derives from the spirit of the Poverello: he lives by these counsels in order to imitate the selflessness of Jesus. Observance of the gospel counsels represents to him the disavowal of self as object of his faculties of intellect, will, and senses.

In the spirit of poverty, he refuses to allow self to be the object of his willing. A person who wills all things in relation to self alone is possessive; he desires everything and everyone only for self, and occupies himself with building a small empire which he alone possesses and rules. The Franciscan counters this possessiveness with littleness of will.

In the spirit of chastity, he denies self the indulgence of being the object of his sense experience. He never views his sense faculties as existing exclusively for his own pleasure, comfort and enjoyment.

In the spirit of obedience, he does not regard all things as finding their focal point in self, so that his every judgment is made from his own point of view. Rather, he strives constantly to achieve a selflessness of intellect.

Generosity: This disavowal of self is not a sort of morbid death-wish on the part of the Franciscan. He realizes that he is not nothing; but he is little because his being something is essentially related to God, and to neighbor for God's sake. In regard to neighbor, selflessness assumes the form of generosity, a free and cheerful giving of one's talents, time, and (if one has them) material goods. The entire psychological orientation of the Franciscan is outward rather than inward, because in his eyes those about him are more important than self. This explains why the Seraphic spirit is active rather than passive, why those who embrace it are subject rather than object, seeking "not so much to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love." Every Franciscan is by profession his brother's keeper, willing to involve himself in the problems and difficulties of anyone who needs him. He is not afraid to be put upon or used by others. Rather, with St. Paul he can say to them, "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).

Glorification of God: The Franciscan's sincere conviction of his own littleness calls up in his heart a constant acknowledgment and praising of God, the mighty One who has done great things

for him. God alone exists necessarily; man exists by God's love; existence is a good; God is worthy of all praise! But existence is merely the first of our Father's gifts to His children. It is followed by a torrent of other blessings, both natural and supernatural, which culminate in the chance to live in heaven an everlasting life whose description surpasses human capability. When one who is little becomes aware of all this, what is left for him but to glorify God?

The fundamental Franciscan

attitude, therefore, is eminently realistic, corresponding as it does to man's fundamental creaturely nature. Greatness is the child of a practical awareness of one's inherent littleness. The Incarnate Son of God taught us this lesson by both word and example. The Little Poor Man of Assisi loved and imitated this quality in Christ. Imitation of the littleness of Jesus is the special way of the follower of Saint Francis. As our Holy Father said, "It is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."

St. Anthony Of Padua

On June 16 the Conventual Franciscans at Padua, Italy will solemnly close the four-month celebration of the Seventh Centenary of St. Bonaventure's transferral of St. Anthony's remains to the basilica there. The beginning of the celebration on February 15 was heralded by the letter *Franciscalis Familia* (Jan. 16, 1963) addressed by Pope John to the Most Reverend Basil M. Heiser, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

The Holy Father observed that in our Antonian tradition theology is ordered primarily to prayer and good works. He also urged modern Franciscans to continue St. Anthony's apostolate of peace, justice, and charity. And, noting that St. Anthony's preaching had helped to implement the pastoral decrees of Lateran Council IV (1215), the Pontiff declared that imitation of our confere's holiness will undoubtedly aid Vatican II in its desire to renovate and rejuvenate the Church.

The Cross In The Classroom

Sr. M. Roberto, O.S.F

The complex and disturbing effects of the attack of suffering must be squarely faced by a religious if her vocation is to come to its full flowering. A religious is aware that, in a mystery incomprehensible in its totality, Jesus allows the members of His Mystical Body to cooperate in His redemptive suffering for souls in danger of eternal damnation. She knows that she herself, like all other Christians, is Christ present in the world today. Because she is Christ, she must confront the evil in the world around her. This encounter with physical and moral evil, always bitter and bloody, is the Passion. Therefore a Sister must be prepared for the Cross in its many aspects.

The Cross can be abundantly fruitful in the life of every Christian. It can have a special fecundity in the life of a consecrated virgin, who has given herself up totally to God to be His tool for whatever use He wishes. God may want to use her as a cooperator, by suffering, in His redemptive Passion. The willing embracing of

the Cross by a religious as Providence presents the Cross to her means not only her own greatest holiness and richest happiness, but also the greater glory of God and the greater perfection of the mystical Christ which is the Church.

While the richness of suffering is very great, it is also very mysterious and often very hidden. What a religious is suffering may not appear to be a good to the religious herself. This darkness is part of her suffering. Yet in spite of the fact that the results of her sufferings cannot be seen by her, faith tells her that they are, if lovingly embraced, the touch of Christ on her own and other souls.

While the explicit comfort of seeing the result of her sufferings is often denied her, she may be given an occasional faint hint that her example is a real source of help, courage, and edification to those around her.

Value of Suffering

The very real, if invisible, supernatural value of suffering was understood by the saints. The value of an individual's free cooperation in the redemptive work of Christ was evidently known, for example, to St. Catherine of Siena who

horrified her mother by scourging herself to blood. It was known also to the Curé of Ars when he spent some of his rare hours outside the confessional beating his underfed body with a discipline. A religious in her convent may also happily find implicit recognition of the supernatural value of suffering in the joyfully mortified lives of the Sisters with whom she lives.

Beyond the richness and suffering for her own soul and the souls of others, there lies in the mind of the religious the ineffable happiness of her identity with Jesus, and her joy in the unmerited privilege of cooperating with Him in the climactic acts of His earthly obedience, His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

Types of Suffering

While variations on the subject of suffering are for the most part unsuspected by a young religious, she gradually learns that the main themes are work, failure, physical pain, mysterious and apparently uncaused humiliations, and other more interior spiritual suffering.

The active workaday life of the religious teacher in our contemporary society is dreadfully demanding. In most instances the teaching religious lives on a very crowded time schedule, with the details of her life sandwiched into a highly pressured package. She usually rises hours before dawn,

sometimes with not enough sleep. She often staggers her way mentally as best she can, hoping God will understand, through morning prayer, meditation, and the most important act of the day, her offering of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Then she hastens through a speedy breakfast, and begins a hard-pressed day in the classroom. Even if she has had time to prepare the material she is going to teach, she finds herself under innumerable pressures.

Her lunch hour is spent without time, to put it mildly, for a leisurely meal, since she must soon be out on the playground or back in her schoolroom. The close of the school day, instead of bringing a release from work pressures, merely means a change in the type of work which duty demands. The religious teacher suffers because she must often send pupils home without offering them the opportunity for the guidance or counseling they need. Sometimes even striking needs cannot be attended to. For example, for lack of both time and courage she must leave unexpressed the emotion which grips her when two plain gold rings are brought in for an all-school gold drive. The rings are accompanied by a little girl's explanation, "These are my mommy's and daddy's wedding rings. They don't want them, because they don't love each other any more." Usually the evidence of need for help on the part of a student is

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less dramatic, but the Sister regrets having to let innumerable silent pleas go by without making an adequate response to them, because of the plain lack of time. The student must hurry to the bus or to the after-school meeting of the extracurricular. She herself must start on her round of after-school duties. After various and crowded compulsory activities comes a period of prayer, and then supper. Supper is theoretically followed by a few minutes of recreation. In spite of a superior's most earnest efforts to keep this period free, the time is often consumed by parish devotions or some other activities which the Sister cannot avoid.

Multiple additional duties may crowd into the evening recreation period. Some of these may be the training of parish or school groups, or the important work with the C.C.D., either by personally acting as a catechist or by training adult leaders to catechize.

Pain of Failure

In some cases, failure is second in importance as a source of suffering. While the causes of pain in the life of each individual Sister differ, failure is frequently the beginning of much soul-suffering and much exterior opprobrium. Failure may sometimes be a very real failure to meet the demands of a given job. In other cases it may

be only an apparent failure, measuring up as "failure" only because of the sensitivity or conscientiousness of the Sister involved. In either case, the interior pain is the same. Real failure may be caused by real deficiencies in the personality of the teacher. Apparent failure may be caused by one or more of the various pressures which are brought to bear on her. These pressures, abundantly diverse, may be caused by the interference of demanding parents, by the necessary difficulties of a given classroom schedule, by the large numbers of students with whom she must deal, or by one or the other of her various religious, educational, or ecclesiastical superiors.

A teacher may sometimes suffer greatly from her failure to ascertain whether the prayers and penances she offers for a certain student are having any good effect. Occasionally, she is given a little light and hope. The seventh grader whom she knows to have been away from the sacraments for a long time may actually approach her with, "Sister, I just want you to know that I was able to go to Holy Communion this morning." But such positive evidence is rare. Her hope must usually feed on faith, in darkness.

Power of Failure

For her own survival in the dark tunnel of failure, a religious is

forced to cling mentally to all she has ever read about the value of failure. She remembers reading, not yet very convinced, that failure can be a gateway to holiness. God may use failure as one means of the purification necessary before we can be permitted union with Himself, the All-holy. It is, of course, an effective means, but it makes the natural ego, so proud and self-sufficient, suffer a bitter death. Worse still, the death of the proud ego is only a simulated sleep; if left in placid peace, it rises to carry on the deadly combat with renewed energy. In the more grace-filled moments following severe failure, a Sister realizes that it is only by the actual experiencing of her own weakness that her pride and egoism can begin to be rooted out. She sees that failure is the touch of the loving hand of God as He attempts to free her from the pitiful prison of her self-sufficiency. Since she is a creature of free will, she can be liberated by failure only if she embraces it both with resignation and with love.

Failure has a further effect. When a Sister fails, she is forced to seek the will of God, not for any of the natural satisfactions which usually accompany the performance of duty, but solely because it is His will. She has probably always dreamed of doing great things for God, but when all her efforts result in failure she must abandon her own designs and look

beyond the obvious rewards of success to rest in the Giver of all success. She realizes that God, Who, after all, does not need her small efforts, is more glorified by her freely-given cooperation with His designs, even for her own failure, than by her small transitory triumph.

Physical Pain

Another common source of suffering is physical pain. The complete prostration caused by serious illness, while it may be extremely painful, is probably easier to bear than a succession of small afflictions which allow one, handicapped, to remain more or less on the job. The continual pain-pressures of minor illnesses constitute a continual drain on a Sister's sociability, and keep her human relations under a constant strain. Patience, humility, silence, and unflinching charity may appear to a Sister in pain to be bordering on the heroic. Actually, she is quite probably not a heroine. The natural ego, deformed by both original and personal sin, is simply making a determined strong defensive play for control of the field of personality.

Pain has the psychological advantage over some types of suffering in that it usually bears the clear label "The Will of God." There may, nevertheless, be something of an apparently human element in its cause. A too-heavy work

load for a Sister, or a lack of concern, imagination, or experience on the part of a superior, may contribute to the pain which goes with a physical weakness. Usually, however, superiors are eager to do whatever they can to help preserve the physical welfare of the Sisters in their charge.

But loving superiors and good doctors can do only a certain amount to help eliminate pain. After a Sister and her superiors have dutifully done all that they ought to do to increase her physical health, a Sister may find herself still, while able to remain in the classroom, handicapped in her teaching duties. She may experience the need to sit down at her desk while teaching because she is no longer physically able to stand. She learns to be wary of the taking of strong pain-pills when she must remain in the classroom, because of the beclouding effect these pills can have on her thought process.

In addition to a sick Sister's trials in the classroom are the added burdens of her convent life. Her well-intentioned and virtuous, but normal and healthy, Sisters cannot imagine why she is unable to carry the burden she was originally assigned, or to bear her fair share of the additional duties abundant in convent living.

Throughout all trials a sick Sister is expected by students, other lay people, and her own Sisters to be a model of gracious-

ness, sweetness, affability, and charm. When she is on the rack of physical pain she realizes with striking clarity that these virtues are an order that she can fulfill only with God's powerful help.

Mysterious Trials

Closely allied to the sufferings of physical pain, occasionally by a cause-and-effect relationship, are the multiple humiliations which often descend on the soul pursuing perfection.

A Sister may find herself being severely corrected by superiors for actions in which she had only the best intentions. She may find that a holy and conscientious, and therefore very thorough, superior undertakes the extirpation of her various faults. In this case the voluntary self-annihilation urged by spiritual writers becomes a decidedly secondary, although not an entirely superfluous, factor in her purification. Or she may find that, for some unknown reason, her Sisters suspect her every act of being engendered by the basest motives, whence she is shunned as a possible source of spiritual contamination.

Similar to humiliation in their power to root out pride and self-sufficiency are the various ideological conflicts which a Sister may encounter. These can include real or imagined conflicts with superiors or other Sisters, factions in her religious house, the decisions

of a pastor whose methods she cannot understand, or the opinions of an anti-clerical or anti-religious parish. Perhaps her strongest defenses in these conflicts are prayer, humility in regard to the accuracy of her own judgments, and a very careful observance of charity in both thought and speech.

Deeper Suffering

Suffering can accompany or bring about a turning point in the spiritual journey, so that the landscape is no longer familiar and the accustomed modes of travel are inadequate. The time-honored place for the Sister to look for aid in this crisis is with her spiritual director. If she is fortunate enough to have a good director, one in whom she has confidence, she reveals herself to him with courage, candor, and simplicity. She obeys him absolutely, not allowing herself to question whether or not what she asks of her is actually for her greatest spiritual advantage.

Sometimes a confessor who has assumed that his direction was not desired can be encouraged to give spiritual counsel by a discreet question. In any case, God is eminently faithful. While it is a great thing for a Sister to have the conscious support of being clearly under the direction of a holy and sensitive priest, if this is not possible she reflects that God can

and will supply her spiritual needs.

The only sure refuge of a suffering religious in her spiritual vicissitudes is prayer. Therefore, a Sister knows that she must seriously attempt to pray. Even in times of spiritual dryness she must make whatever effort is within her power to pray well. She deeply regrets, and attempts to avoid the causes for, those periods of meditation which she bobs through in a state of semi-consciousness. Granting that she can remain awake, her prayer often may be a bleak desert. The giddy happiness which flooded her meditation periods during her novitiate days can be replaced by an unfeeling and unknowing dryness. She is apparently unable to contact God. She learns by experience that God can permit prayer at some stages of the spiritual journey, to be another source of bleak suffering. If this is the case, she can only humble herself peacefully before God and adore His will in this, as in all His other dispositions of her life and affairs. If God, absolute Master by every title, wishes to keep her in this poverty, who is she to complain?

Still, since God is merciful, even the prayer of a religious immersed in spiritual darkness may sometimes be illumined by flashes of light. Through her prayer, she may be able to verify the claim of the saints that suffering often marks God's special invitation to

the soul to give its attention exclusively to Himself. A Sister sees that God has Himself reached down to lift her life sweetly, if forcibly, from its customary mediocrity.

Suffering Moves Outward

Now, Jesus and His interests and His concerns become the Sister's sole preoccupation. She begins to long to share more fully in Christ's work, the lifting up of man to be the son of God. She ponders, in and out of formal prayer, Jesus' obscurity, His life of work, His poverty, and especially His obedience, His ever-present eagerness to fulfill the will of His Father. She recalls that only a small portion of Christ's earthly activity was devoted to the exterior work of His public life. She attempts to delve into the inexhaustible riches of the mystery of Christ's love and glory in the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension.

Gradually, her understanding of God's designs for her begins to expand. She gets a slight glimmer of the reality most basic to her life as a Christian, the fact that Christ is the perfect Son of God. She begins to see that every vocation to holiness is a vocation to sonship, and that the baptized Christian is caught up into the Holy Trinity.

While the religious can never separate herself from the contemplation of Christ on the Cross, she realizes that His glory is a nec-

essary outcome of His obedience. Since the Fall, the redemptive Passion must precede the lifting up of man to God. But the Passion is followed by the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the magnificent growth of the mystical Christ-person which is the Church. She does not yet know into what her own passion is to flower, but faith does not allow her to doubt that her life here and in eternity is meant to bloom into a greater richness because of it.

Peace gradually descends on her suffering world, a peace shaped by an intense love of God and of souls, utter self-surrender, and a filial embracing of the divine good pleasure. Secure in this refuge of peace, she begins to build up, within limits imposed on her activity by providential circumstances, the best possible structure of her person and her life.

The Mystery

But the fact that the Cross is, since the Fall, the necessary prelude to our sonship and that the Passion is carried on today in Christ's mystical members, now permeates her life. Her own participation in the Passion becomes consciously centered in the Mass, the total mystery of Christ transforming her present person and her present life.

The Mass cries out to her that Jesus gives himself totally to her.

Now, experiencing in a new way her identity with the Savior, she attempts to unite more perfectly her own immolation with His. Like Christ's, her immolation must be by way of her obedience to God — obedience, in spirit, truly unto death. Like Christ's her obedience may mean suffering, but this is her only means, poor creature that she is, of cooperating in God's action to draw her to Himself.

She makes the total offering of herself, which is her only possible gesture toward that self-creativity by God at the desired Offertory of the Mass. Old Testament knowledge flicker through her understanding, and she remembers the Loloanist, the Temple sacrifice in which the victim was totally consumed. As a religious she has, of course, made herself a holocaust by the taking of the vows.

The Eucharist

Then at the Consecration the Sister shares Christ's mystical death. While the religious knows that a spiritual death must take place in herself, she sees that this death is the condition of, but also a prelude to, a more glorious life. The religious remembers Jesus' prayer to His Father at the Last Supper, "... that they may see my glory." Knowing that she

shares Christ's sonship, she knows that she will also share His glory.

In Holy Communion Jesus comes to her as the Risen Savior. The fabric of the life of suffering being led by the religious is permeated with this reality. With Christ, she is ascending to the Father. Conscious of her membership in the Mystical Body, she hopes that she can aid other members in their ascent. At the Eucharistic banquet this hope takes on its richest color. All the power of the Eucharist in her life must flow back to the Christian community. Self-forgetting charity should characterize her every action and every contact which she makes.

The Eucharist is clear proof to the Christian that God is a God of love. Having received Christ in Holy Communion, the religious wishes to become more consciously and more effectively what she really is, the presence of Christ in our contemporary society.

Looking always at the glory of the crucified Savior, the Sister concludes that to be asked to share in a special way in His redemptive work is a singular privilege, that suffering can be a special mark of God's love. She experiences the fact that if she is able, by God's good grace, to meet Love with love, suffering can be the vehicle of the most stupendous joy.

St. Bernardine And The Eucharist

Roberto Masi

The eucharistic preaching of St. Bernardine, like all the work of the saint of Siena, fulfilled a providential design. Let us place his preaching in its historical context. In 1417, the papal elevation of Odo Colonna as Martin V put an end to the deplorable Western Schism, which had so cruelly divided the Church. It was in that same year that St. Bernardine began his preaching in northern and central Italy. His astonishing success soon made it clear that the wounds and lacerations inflicted on the Church by the schism had found in him a wise physician. Christian society was ill: religious ignorance, with consequent moral and disciplinary irregularities of both clergy and people, neglect of the sacraments, threats of heresy, and the presence of divisive factions tormented Holy Mother Church. What beneficial influence the assured and persuasive preaching of the Saint of Siena was to exert for the consolidation of Church unity, especially

by means of his eucharistic preaching! The Holy Eucharist, "the sacrament of unity and the bond of charity", was the best antidote for the venom of division. And it was to this that St. Bernardine had recourse; to this he directed his preaching; on this precise point he concentrated his effort, in order that he might incite the Christian people to a life of charity, unity, and virtue.

Among St. Bernardine's writings there is no work which specifically concerns the Eucharist. One does find in the collection of his sermons, however — both in Latin and in the vernacular — various discourses devoted to the Sacrament of the Altar. These sermons were generally delivered by the saint toward the end of his course of preaching; the Lenten talks on the Blessed Sacrament were given usually during the last days of Holy Week, thus serving as a preparation for the general reception of communion and the solemn procession which customarily concluded St. Bernardine's fruitful courses. Our saint attached a great deal of importance to these sermons on the Holy Eucharist: he used to say that the time in which he

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spoke of the Sacrament was very precious, because it was the time of harvesting the fruits of the entire course of sermons.

It would be interesting indeed to trace the development of the entire eucharistic theology of St. Bernardine of Siena: the real presence, transubstantiation, the manner of eucharistic presence, the external appearance of the Eucharist, Holy Mass, the effects of the Blessed Sacrament, and the like. Obviously we cannot

examples from natural changes, in accordance with the classical analogical method of theology. Beginning with the more simple forms of change, he proceeds through instances of more profound and difficult change until he arrives at that which is effected in the Eucharist.

Furthermore, in view of the fact that St. Bernardine follows the classical theology of the great theologians without personally contributing anything of importance, such a study would not be particularly valuable. His task was, as a matter of fact, not to theologize scientifically, but to present doctrine to the people. It will be of great interest to us, then, to examine the manner in which he explained the highest mysteries of revelation to untrained people, and pointed out their practical application to Christian spiritual life.

"How many natural changes are there?" asks the saint. "They are so very numerous. Listen to this! The earth generates grass and leaves, flowers and fruits; and when the seed is dried out, it springs up again in its own good time. The earth naturally forms gold, silver, copper, and other metals, as well as rocks and many other things. In all these processes you see natural change. The intellect is overwhelmed, but does not understand the details."

A more profound mutation is that which is brought about by heating. "If you put iron, which is cold by nature, into the fire, it becomes hot itself; though it is hard by nature, it becomes soft; and though dark by nature, it becomes lucent. Again, you can see the change very clearly, but you do not understand the reason behind it."

Deeper still, continues the saint, is the change found in the begetting of life, which goes well beyond appearances. "From the hen's egg you will see the chick born, and yet the external appearance of the egg remained unchanged. So you see generation in nature,

How, for example, did this most skillful preacher present to the untrained minds of so many of his listeners the sublime mystery of transubstantiation? For our saint did speak — and rather extensively — even of this mystery. He took

the Holy Eucharist: he used to say that the time in which he

but you do not understand the intimate process entailed in it." St. Bernardine's object in all this is to point out that there is mystery even in natural change; and the more profound the change, the more difficult is it for us to understand it.

Continuing in this line of thought, the saint states that there is a fourth type of change, which he terms incorporation. This is the assimilation of food, by which a living being is nourished.

A fifth change is the one by which a person who loves is transformed into the beloved, so that they become united in a single will. This is a concept, by the way, to which St. Bernardine brings many rich insights. He speaks, for instance, of the assimilation in love: "If a little drop of wine

were cast into the sea, where would it go? It would not be seen again, and yet it would be in the sea." So also, concludes the saint, the soul is lost and assimilated into God by means of His love.

But all these changes, great and wonderful as they are, do not exhaust the infinite power of God. There exists yet another change, which is higher than all, mysterious and most holy. This change is greater than all the others, which are but shadows in comparison. It is the unique change wherein the substance of bread is transformed into the body of Christ and wine into His blood,

while the external appearances remain intact. "As you can readily see," declared the saint, "not one of those natural changes could be compared to this one in greatness." Then the great preacher urged his listeners: "Come now, all of you! Everyone shout loudly: 'Only one change is that great; it is the one which the priest brings about at the Consecration, a change greater than all the five I have mentioned!' And in response, the crowd roared back: 'The substance is changed into the body of Christ — the bread into his body, the wine into His blood — by the power of the words given in charity and love to the priest. But the appearances remain the same. And this is the wonder of wonders!'"

The Real Presence

As one can see from what we have said above, St. Bernardine presented the mystery of transubstantiation to the people in a rather profound manner. Nor is he any less precise when he speaks to them of the eucharistic presence — of how the body of Christ can be contained in a small Host, and of how He can multiply His presence. Having encountered some difficulties in this matter among his listeners, he insists on the fact that when one breaks the Host, the body of Christ remains entire in every part. To illustrate this, he gives the classic example of a mirror which, broken into

many fragments, reflects the same image as many times. Perhaps some of the people had expressed anxiety when the priest had been forced to break the Hosts into smaller particles in order to give Holy Communion to all who had come to receive it. In this regard the Saint insists: "If you were accidentally to receive one or two or three or even six Hosts, the holy Sacrament would be the very same for you — no greater or no less — as if you had received only the eleventh part of a Host. For God is completely present in the entire Host and in every part of each Host, just as your soul is present in your whole person and complete in each part of your person."

"But how," asked the saint's listeners, "can the body of Christ be entirely present in every part of each Host?" By way of an answer, the preacher brings forth a series of examples. If you take a small vessel and a large one, and fill each of them up to the brim, the same liquid fills each vessel completely, even though they be separate and of different size. Again, if you break a mirror into many parts, each part reflects completely the single image that the whole mirror showed. Or, if you pierce a tub with many holes, the flow of water out of the tub will differ according to the position and size of the holes, but it is the same water, no matter which hole it flows from. In much the same way, the body of Christ is not

multiplied in the Blessed Sacrament.

We have been stressing here St. Bernardine's treatment of two particular points of eucharistic theology, *viz.*, transubstantiation and the manner of Christ's presence in the Holy Eucharist. We could also describe how he used to speak to the people of other truths in a manner which was simple, but precise and theologically solid. And always his instructions were given with a devotion and enthusiasm that rendered the most difficult subjects pleasantly understandable to the untutored people, so that the life of Christ within them was wonderfully nourished.

The Eucharist a Memorial of Christ's Love

If the Eucharist is a sacrament of love, it is in a very special way a pledge and a remembrance of both the love and the Passion of Christ. One of St. Bernardine's sermon themes was God's great love for men, evident in His willing of man's redemption. What proves the love of Jesus for humanity more beautifully or convincingly than the Blessed Eucharist? Love, observes our saint, manifests itself externally: "When one loves ardently within, one should demonstrate that love by an evident sign. Human and worldly love are manifested by external acts. A young man who falls in love will mount a horse, joust, do

battle, and engage in similar things for his love. And men who love worldly glory, or money, or power will reveal their respective cravings by external acts."

The love of God likewise expresses itself externally. It does so in a very particular manner in the Most Holy Eucharist, which is the supreme demonstration of a love without limits. God has done all things through love, in a truly terrifying crescendo: the creation of the world, the creation of man, the Incarnation, and finally the Most Blessed Sacrament, which is the very climax of God's love in which, as it were, He rests and is pleased.

"God created the world, which, as you can see, is so beautiful and so great. Nay, it is a hundred million times more beautiful and great than you can imagine. And He made it for man. Then He created Adam, and infused into him that noble soul of his. And He gave him the company of the lady Eve, for the purpose of generation. But after Adam sinned, Jesus came into the world. And in order that the soul of man might enjoy His companionship, He left the Blessed Sacrament for it, so that until the end of the world man might be united with God... Now, notice here that even the placing of the entire universe at the feet of man was not enough; man was still not united with God. But after He took flesh, having become our

companion, He left to us this spiritual food."

God has given us everything, exclaimed St. Bernardine: the things of the world, the angels, the saints; and finally, He has given us Himself! Jesus has been given to us as a son, by assuming human nature; as a companion, by conforming Himself to us; as our Master, in His preaching; as a Light, in the example of His life; as a Father, who regenerates us to the divine life; as a Brother, in obedience to the Father; as a holocaust, in His Passion; and finally, as our Food, in the most Holy Eucharist.

A Memorial of Christ's Passion

If the Eucharist is a memorial of Christ's love, then just as this love appeared in its fulness during the Passion, so it is especially the Passion of which the Eucharist is a remembrance. It is the memorial of the death of the Lord. This moving subject, rich in piety and doctrine, is discussed quite thoroughly by our saint, who seized every opportunity to promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus. It was St. Bernardine's desire that the memory of the Passion of Our Lord should incite the piety of the faithful, arouse their love, convince and persuade them by reason of the heart of Jesus, so enflamed by the love of sacrifice.

"How," he exclaims enthusiastically, "can the soul which receives

the Body of Christ fail to experience sweetness, seeing that He died and suffered and was crucified in such a bitter way? If you think on the fact that Jesus was crucified out of love, the thought of that love will be so great that it will be pleasing to you. Our Brother Giacomone puts this idea into verse for you when he says that 'the soul's feeling should declare: Lord by your love and Passion, show me the manner of the Incarnation in which You became man in order to manifest Your love!'

Holy Communion

The best part of St. Bernardine's eucharistic preaching was devoted naturally to Holy Communion. He insistently urged parents to see to it that their children receive Communion when they should. He who does not communicate once a year in accordance with the law of the Church, observed the Saint, runs the risk of incurring divine punishment, and even of dying before his time. "And therefore," he warned the men who were listening to him, "if your wife does not get after you to make your Easter Communion, that is a sign that she does not love you, and that she wants you to die so that she can marry someone else."

St. Bernardine also took great pains to point out and explain the dispositions necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Communion.

He used to ask, "With what do you receive the body of Christ? with your mouth? No; it is received with the heart, with the inner soul. St. Ambrose tells us that this Food is taken not with the belly, but with the spirit."

In accordance with the common teaching, the saint held that before receiving Holy Communion one should make a good examination of conscience. "Go about with a broom," he said, "sweeping out all the corners of your conscience, and set everything in order." "It is important to make a good confession, and to prepare your soul to receive the Lord by mortification and prayer." And one time, Bernardine exhorted his listeners as follows: "My brothers and sisters, I must depart from you now. When I have left, make sure, all of you, that you prepare yourselves for this next Holy Communion by going to confession."

After you have made your confession, urged the saint, go to the altar with the most ardent desire of receiving the body of Christ; with the most urgent zeal for the glory of God; with the most reverential fear in the face of this tremendous mystery; with most fervent thanks for this immense gift; with the highest praise for the mystery of God; with most profound humility in the conviction of your own nothingness; with a keen appetite to taste the sweetness of God.

Fruits of St. Bernardine's Preaching

In view of the religious situation around the middle of the fifteenth century, one can only be amazed — as were Bernardine's fellow preachers — at the rich results of his preaching. A vastly increased frequency in the reception of Holy Communion was perhaps the most evident result of his work; possibly it was also the most important, implying as it does a complete renewal of the Christian life.

The saint himself tells us that during his sermon courses he witnessed huge crowds of people receiving the Blessed Sacrament. Speaking of the eucharistic sermons which he preached at Florence in preparation for Easter, 1424, he writes the following: "This preaching was followed by miracles in great number, especially during the six years after those sermons on the Blessed Sacrament. I believe that, after attending the holy services, more than five hundred thousand who had not been communicating have received Holy Communion. In one place, thirty thousand or more received the Sacrament on Easter Sunday, which was a wonderful thing to see."

There is an interesting note to be added here. When St. Bernardine preached his Latin Lenten discourses, he seems to have been influenced by the tradition which permitted reception of Holy Communion rather rarely. But in his

sermons in the vernacular, relying as it were on his own good pastoral sense, he urged everyone to receive Holy Communion many times a month. The records of his sermons show that he preached this at St. Mary of Avigliano in 1440; and we know that while at Perugia, he had thirty young men receiving Communion every week.

If we keep in mind the fact that Holy Communion was very much neglected in those days, we can well understand the importance of the influence which St. Bernardine exerted in stirring up devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and renewing the Christian life of the people. The eucharistic apostolate of our saint served to reinforce the eucharistic revival of the fifteenth century. It is conceivable that this reawakened love for the Blessed Sacrament contributed a great deal to the reuniting of the factions born of the Western Schism, and constituted a divinely provided barrier against the pressure which the Hussites and other heretical sects were beginning to exert from beyond the Alps. And when, some years later, the poison of Protestantism would attempt an infiltration into Italy, it was to discover that the devotion to the Blessed Eucharist which our saint had helped to arouse was the powerful antidote which would render the poison ineffective, and preserve the Church in Italy from harm.

Childlike Or Childish?

Sr. M. Patricia, O.S.F.

What is there about a child, that Jesus should tell His Apostles that they must become "like little children?" The twelve chosen ones had been arguing as to who would obtain the highest place in heaven. They were seeking their own glory and honor, forgetting that their heavenly Father would provide.

Certainly, as Christ saw the little one happily playing there in the sand by the side of the road, He beheld the qualities necessary for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. This small child had no desire for honor, glory, or riches; for by his nature he was as yet detached from such things. Finding his happiness in simple things, he was quite content to be what he was. When the little one raised his head, the Savior looked into the smiling face and noted the childlike qualities of trust and confidence; to a child, everyone is a friend. As Jesus beckoned to him the child came forward, unaware that he was being chosen to serve

as an example of humility and total dependence upon God.

Christ asks not only His Apostles to become childlike; His words were directed to every one of us who wishes to gain entrance into Heaven. But how can we adults become childlike? Perhaps the thought occurs to you that you are not particularly interested in being childlike. You just want to be normal, the implication being that childlikeness is not natural for an adult, or that it hinders one's development into full maturity. If you are of such a mind, you should consider that the qualities implied by the term childlike denote anything but immaturity when they are understood as Our Lord meant them.

Childishness

There is, however, a great difference between childlikeness and childishness. The sight of a tot throwing himself into a tantrum on the floor, crying because he is not able to have his own way, gives us a good example of childishness. This same trait can be seen in an adult who, unable to get his way, refuses to compromise with another, but echoes the childish statement, "If you won't do what I want to do, we won't do anything at all,"

St. Patricia is a member of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis (Peoria, Ill.). She is also something of an authority on Seraphic childlikeness, being Assistant Mistress of Novices. We think that you will be impressed, as we were, by some of Sister's rather original insights into this virtue.

or, "I have decided the matter, and my will must prevail!" The inability of an adult to compromise on certain occasions, when it is the only way to peace and real proof of love for our neighbor, is a sign of childishness.

Childish self-pity is shown in children by sulking — considering themselves the most misunderstood individuals in the world. Learning to have pity for others instead of concentrating it on one's self is part of growing up. An immature adult finds it difficult to overcome childish self-pity; he can become very bitter because his wages, for example, are less than that of his neighbor, or because his lot in life is so much more difficult than that of others. Self-pitying adults in any state of life frequently regret the step they have taken into that state, and complain that their responsibilities are too heavy for anyone to bear. They spend most of their time thinking about their aches and pains, lack of success, and sorrows. Naturally they cannot bring themselves to think of the reasons they have for gratitude and joy, nor the reward that God has promised to those who suffer with resignation and cheerfulness. For He gives us misfortune, suffering, and loneliness in order to help us to make atonement for our sins, not so that we may turn to self-pity and then to resentment against Him.

Oftentimes childishness is manifested in adults by the inability

to subject their feelings to principle. Frequently the expression is heard, "I cannot pray today; I just don't feel like praying." Our prayer-life cannot be based on feeling, because feelings are too unstable. What is important is that we *will* to pray, not that we *feel* like praying. Very few prayers would be said if we waited until we felt like praying. We must learn to rule our feelings instead of being ruled by them. This can be done by subjecting our feelings to the guidance and influence of the will and intellect. God will reward our efforts, for we will go to pray not because we love prayer but because we love God.

Our Seraphic Model

Naturally, as Franciscans we turn to St. Francis to consider how he developed this quality of childlikeness in his life. The chief characteristic of a child is its humility. A child is by nature frank, free from ambition, and realistic enough to view himself as he really is. The depth of St. Francis' humility was his own opinion of himself. He considered himself so inexpressibly low and unworthy because all that was good in him came from God and belonged to God. He was convinced that God had greatly favored him, even though he was the most unworthy of all men.

St. Francis was captivated by the example of the lowliness of Christ,

who thought He is the Lord of glory, lived as one of the least of men, and embraced with special affection the poor and downtrodden of human society. St. Francis sought to imitate this humility of Jesus by loving helpfulness toward others. This type of humility, which he wished his followers to strive for, was the willingness to be concerned with those whom no one bothers about.

Another aspect of Our Lord's humility which St. Francis endeavored to imitate was the contempt and humiliation that He received and willingly accepted from the hands of men. Therefore, in order to follow Christ more closely, St. Francis accepted the shame and contempt associated with the life and poverty of a beggar. As Franciscans, we shall also strive to make this imitation part of our life, by having our heart in readiness to bear with the humiliations and contempt that may come to us from our fellowmen. Too often one finds the mistaken notion that humility is associated with doing a particular type of work. Nothing in mental tasks can automatically make those who perform them humble, any more than the pursuit of more noble ventures necessarily produces pride. The value of different fields of work lies in our attitude toward it. For instance, one who washes dishes and sweeps floors all day may be preoccupied and concerned only with self, whereas one who is engaged

in intellectual formation and professional development may accept all reproaches and practice forgetfulness of self, striving to be accounted as nothing. It is this attitude of giving to God in all things the glory that is due to Him, and of not seeking self-esteem in any accomplishment, that gives one a peace of mind that brings more joy and happiness than all the riches in the world. For even the lowliest and most menial task assumes tremendous value when we use it to glorify God.

Obedience

A small child has complete trust and confidence in whatever his mother and father say or promise. From the study of the gospel, St. Francis learned to take this childlike approach to his heavenly Father. St. Francis sought to be a child of God by doing His will through holy obedience. He based his life on the example of obedience that our Divine Redeemer showed His Father. St. Francis accepted God's will in everything. Since God's will is made known to us through His representatives, the Church and one's superiors, St. Francis sought to live in obedience at all times. Even as Minister General of the Order, he devised a means to be dependent upon the will of another. His concept of obedience was to render perfect submission to the will of the super-

ior out of love for God. St. Francis wishes his followers also to make themselves a holocaust of love through obedience.

Supernatural Motive

In order that we may obtain the merit of obedience for our actions, it is important that our basic motivation be supernatural. Sometimes we are tempted by human frailty to found our obedience on a consideration of the good or bad personality traits of our superior, instead of realizing that this is the medium which God is using to manifest His will. Again, we may be moved to obey because the thing commanded seems reasonable to us. Or our compliance may be born of mere routine habit, or the desire for peace. The obeying of a command from any of these natural motives cannot constitute truly religious obedience. A more subtle form of natural motivation is that found in those religious who have such a childish dependence on the directions of their superiors that their obedience is reduced to a crude representation of the genuine virtue. Seeming never to arrive at maturity, these religious comply because of an inability to face personal responsibility. A mature religious who has a proper understanding

of the true meaning of obedience will be able to make decisions in emergency situations, while yet respecting the authority vested in a religious superior.

In childlike fashion, St. Francis always saw the better side of people. When he walked into the tiny town of Poggio Bustone saying, "Good morning, good people," his greeting was sincere, for he recognized in each of the townsfolk the quality of goodness. If we could only have this insight into those who cross the pathway of our lives, and extend to all the brotherliness of St. Francis! All men are united in the Fatherhood of God. St. Francis loved all creatures, animate and inanimate, because they share in the love and constant care of the great God. How different is this from the spirit of the world, which fails to see in the order and beauty of the universe a reminder of its Creator. Using the many examples of humility and complete trust in God which St. Francis has given us, we should endeavor to develop these childlike qualities in order to become worthy of reception into the Kingdom of Heaven. If we can get ourselves to see in the events of our life — both the joyful and the sad — the pattern of God's love, we shall have taken a big step towards a childlike attitude to God.

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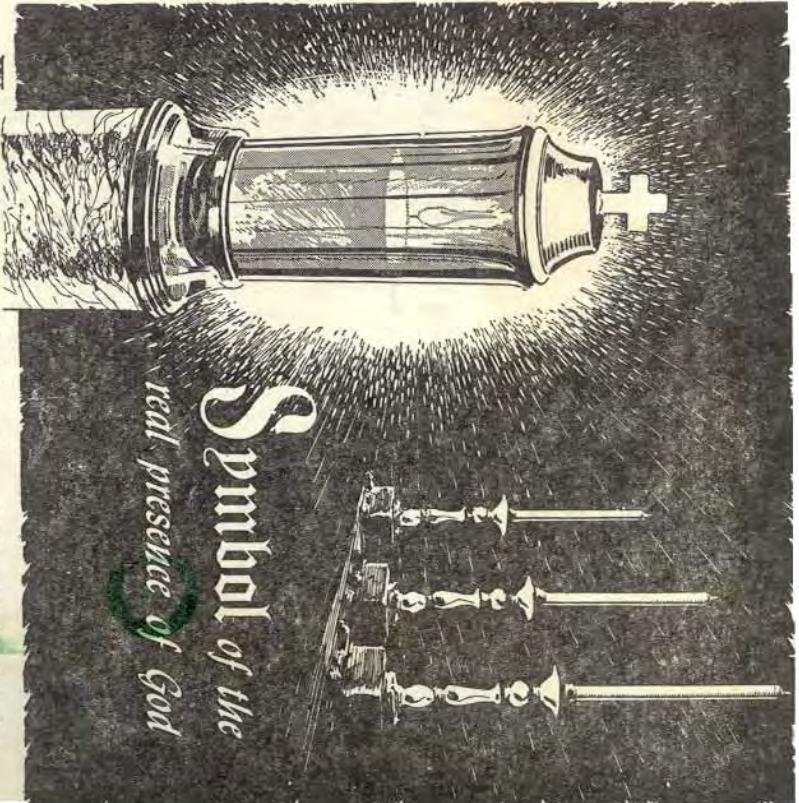
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JULY 1963

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Fr. Tius Cranny, S.A.

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Pope John XXIII

In union with men all over the world we mourn the death of Our Holy Father, Pope John XXIII. While the passing of every Supreme Shepherd saddens the members of his own flock, Good Pope John leaves behind a personal aching sorrow which extends beyond the boundaries of Catholicism. During the relatively brief course of his pontificate, this great-hearted man showed himself to be in a very special manner the universal pastor.

His care was not only for the flock as a whole, but for the individual sheep as well. With the tender interest of a country priest, this Pontiff of all Christendom was ever watchful over the small and helpless of the world. When he was able, he delighted in personally visiting the ill, the orphaned, and the imprisoned. And, although the affairs of the Church confined him mostly to the environs of the Eternal City, the words he addressed to the world clearly manifested his fatherly solicitude for the little ones of all lands. His two most memorable encyclicals, Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris, project his conviction that the health of the world's great institutions and societies derives its importance in the last analysis from the contribution which these groups make to the natural and supernatural welfare of the individual man.

Our late Holy Father's keen concern for the internal unity of the flock of Christ itself was evidenced by his convocation of the Second Vatican Council, whose ecumenicity perfectly expressed the divinely established unity which is rooted in the episcopacy under the petrine primacy. Pope John's own interest in this unity prompted the active part which he personally took in the deliberations of the Council. And it is significant, perhaps, that the first subject discussed by the conciliar fathers was the sacred liturgy, which touches immediately on the worship which the Church offers to God through her individual faithful.

Pope John will be remembered most widely, perhaps, for his awareness of the needs of the other sheep who are not of Christ's fold. His earnest efforts to bring them to the true faith must have reawakened in the hearts of many of them a nostalgic longing to return to their Father's house. And the kind voice with which he invited them was certainly that of the Good Shepherd Himself.

May God grant everlasting blessedness to Good Pope John, universal pastor of souls.

Franciscan Human-ness

Fra. Lester Bowman, O.F.M.

Today it seems that everybody loves St. Francis. He is made the patron of nature-lovers and freethinkers; he is hailed for his poverty by Christians and Communists. But those few who knew and loved him best — those idealistic men who shared his journeys and lived with him in the little shack at Rivo Torto — those men loved him for another reason.

They remembered the night when one of the brothers awakened the little company with loud cries of pain. The poor fellow had fasted so ardently that he had nearly starved himself, and now he was sure that he was dying. Francis got together some food, and — just to be sure that the young friar would suffer no embarrassment — he joined him in a little meal. Such human kindness was characteristic of Francis. This was the Francis who somehow saw

Brother Leo's discouragement and so beautifully blessed him. This was the Francis who got down from his horse and kissed a leper.

The Conversion of Francis

He was not always that way. He said in his Testament that it had once seemed bitter for him even to see lepers. That was when he was a gay young man dreaming of knighthood and glory, fighting for fame in the war between Assisi and Perugia.

Francis had to learn an important lesson before he would ever do anything like kissing a leper. He began to learn it when his imprisonment in Perugia made him seriously ill, so that he came close to death. All the dreams he had built upon his own valor and strength seemed hollow, for his sickness quite undid his valor, and he had only enough strength to ask his mother for a little water. How was it that the great Francesco Bernardino lay there so helpless? He

Friar Lester, of the Province of St. John the Baptist, is a student of theology at St. Leonard's College, Dayton, Ohio.

lay there wanting to regain the strength and joy he had known, waiting for the day that he would find his strong self returned to him in the beauty of the Umbrian landscape and in the glory of battle. But he found that the land's beauty did not have the power to give him back to himself: that was all an illusion. He was no more than a poor, sick, helpless man. He was nothing worthwhile. Nevertheless, God called Francis, saying, I want you. Christ spoke to Francis from the Cross, saying by His suffering, This is how much I want you. Francis was amazed that Jesus should love him, worthless as he was. He gave himself to Christ — and that act changed his whole life. It was as if he would speak as his true self only in saying, "Here I am, Lord, at your disposal." Now his weakness didn't matter, for Our Lord loved him even in his weakness. Now his hopes had a solid basis, for it was Christ's life that he lived: "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). Now his future was secure, for he was in Christ's hands, and Christ would make of him what He wanted.

When Francis came upon that leper as he rode through the plain outside Assisi, his old

horror of disease and ugliness returned to him — for a moment. But who was this but a poor, sick, helpless man like himself? Here was another poor little one whom Jesus wanted, and was even then drawing to Himself by His great love. Was Francis to despise this poor lover of Christ? Was he to disregard this person whom Our Lord was seeking out with His patience and compassion? Francis dismounted, and he kissed and embraced the leper.

Communication

So it was that the humility of Saint Francis brought him to that virtue the early friars so loved, his simple human-ness. Humility makes a person accept himself for what he is: a poor, helpless man. Human-ness makes him accept and love other people in their poverty, and it makes him want others to accept him as he is.

Human-ness makes a person live *with* others. That means more than just being near to them in place. It means making room for other people in his heart, sharing their joys and sorrows, sensing and responding to their needs. It means delighting in the presence of another person — in

his words, his smile, and in the little oddities and mannerisms that mark him for what he is, a childlike person dear to Christ.

The man who is human will be loving toward all those with whom he lives and associates; he will open himself to them, respond to them. To be *with* other people, he has to communicate: he has to talk with others, laugh with them, play games, or take walks, or work together with others. Look at Our Blessed Savior. He was God, infinitely the most important Person who ever set foot on the earth. But He did not seal Himself off from those well-intentioned but ignorant commonfolk we call His apostles. He spent years living with them, talking and eating and resting with them day in and day out, sharing with them the same discomforts and the same little joys.

Human Elements

Every single man is poor and helpless: that is his situation. To the man who is human, then, no one is ever a complete stranger. Such a man is ready to open himself and talk to anyone who comes to him. The Franciscan order has a good reputation for such ap-

proachability. That is only as it should be, for Francis admonished his friars in the Rule of the Friars Minor that when they went about in the world they should speak courteously to *everybody*.

Human-ness makes a man want others to accept him just as he is. He knows how little protection he has from insult and hurt. He counts that helplessness and vulnerability as a bond between him and Christ. Then he has no reason to be shy, or to fear that others may pick at his faults. Then he has no reason to stifle his emotions, to put on a mask of businesslike efficiency, for fear that others may make fun of him. Rather, he opens himself to others and commits himself to them, trusting them to pity and respect his weakness and need to others, trusting to present that very weakness and need to others, trusting that, in their compassion, they will gladly help. What is Franciscan begging but trusting in the generosity of others?

Human-ness makes a man accept and love other people in their weakness and poverty. To start with, people are not pure spirits: they need food, rest, relaxation, and diversion. It is wrong to ignore those

needs. The first thing Our Lord did after bringing the daughter of Jairus back to life was to tell her astounded parents to feed the poor girl. St. Francis constantly admonished his friars not to overdo their fastings.

People have their ups and downs, and are tired and bored and even crabby at times. But then they need someone who is ready to sympathize with them in their discouragement, ready to help them to relax and forget themselves, ready to help them laugh at their own weaknesses and delight in the things that make them childlike. They need someone who is human. Human-ness opens a person to the needs of others and such a person can make life much easier and more joyful for others, and for himself as well.

People cannot help but annoy one another with their foolish little mistakes and misunderstandings. One way to avoid annoyance is to avoid the other person, but then charity is lost and aversion takes over. In an atmosphere of human-ness and communion, where people seek to be *with* one another, aversion cannot grow unchecked like a cancer. When people talk and communicate, they always find

in each other more to love than to dislike.

A little bit of human consideration can smooth over a lot of the faults and mistakes that could cause annoyance. Look at what Jesus did at the marriage feast of Cana. In performing His first miracle, He covered up for someone who had slipped up in ordering the wine.

The real faults of men, the pride, the sin — even these do not destroy the fact that a man is a man. Sin never made a person worthless in Christ's eyes; rather, the sinner aroused His love and pity. Remember the woman taken in adultery. The Redeemer silenced her accusers, and then turned to her. "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned thee? She said, 'No one, Lord.' Then Jesus said, 'Neither will I condemn thee. Go thy way, and from now on sin no more.'" (Jn. 8:10-11).

Sin brings great pain to the sinner, and he needs encouragement and consideration. Once, when a friar who had run away from the brotherhood returned in sorrow, St. Francis deliberately avoided him, wanting to spare the poor man the pain of facing him until he had time to recover from the shame of his fall.

Pride

It is easy to be human when human-ness is a two-way proposition, when love is met with a response of love, sympathy with gratitude, and consideration with appreciation. But it is hard to be human to a proud person. His every word and action seem calculated to convince himself and everyone else that he is independent, that he is *not* merely a man. And yet it is the proud person who is the poorest, the most helpless; for he seals himself off from help by his illusion of self-sufficiency. But deep down inside he is still very much a man, and his humanity comes to the surface in little ways. He has little oddities and mannerisms that escape his self-awareness, and these mark him for what he really is. He is lovable, lovable even in his illusion, for this is a person that Christ loves: he is not lost, for Jesus is able to convert him to his real self. Remember the conversion of Francis.

It is here, with the proud person, that Our Lord can make good use of someone's human-ness. The proud man builds his self-concept on an illusion of self-sufficiency, and he lives wholly within that illusion. He expects others to

respond to the self that he thinks he is. But he enjoys a response to the little things that mark him as mere man, even though he is not seeking that kind of response to himself. At the time, such little things seem unimportant — a smile, a laugh that is laughed *with* him and obviously not at his expense, a word of sympathy when he is having one of his "downs." But someday, something is going to happen to him that will shatter his illusion, and he will be lost, with nothing to cling to. It is at times like this that a person can turn to despair. But at such a time, that little smile, that laugh, which he vaguely remembers, tell him that he has a value that he has never known, he has, somewhere, a reason for living and hoping. Someone's human kindness has left him wide open for Christ to come to him.

Daily Living

In the more ordinary context of daily life, human-ness helps in weathering the little trials and discouragements that are a part of living, and that can make life miserable if they are not relieved. That is why cheerfulness is important in a family. That is one

reason why a cheerful community spirit and pleasant common recreation are important for the spiritual health of a religious community. Human-ness acts as an antibody against the discouragement and boredom that can attack people who live a life of routine. It is in human-ness that people help each other to grow closer to Christ.

Human-ness is an important virtue in life with others, one that should be cultivated. Some people have been blessed with a temperament that makes it easy for them to respond to others. But some people find themselves lacking in this virtue, and wondering how to go about acquiring it.

The place to begin is at the beginning — with humility that makes a person accept himself for what he is, a poor, helpless man. Human-ness needs humility, and any shortcuts in acquiring it produce shallow counterfeits that are very obvious and very disgusting. A person can be affable and approachable in a way that speaks love to another, but he can also do so in a manner which clearly shows that he is using him to "perform a meritorious act" that will raise his estimate of his own sanctity. It is easy to fall

into that error if human-ness is not founded on humility.

The next step in acquiring human-ness is to be aware of the needs and the childlike weakness of others, while not losing sight of their dignity as persons. At first, this awareness probably has to be deliberate and explicit: a person has to "remind himself." But it should never be a matter of forgetting *this person* and imagining some sort of a personification of childlike helplessness.

The concrete practice of the virtue is a matter of communication: talking, listening, laughing, responding to others' moods, others' needs, to what their eyes and hands are saying. At the beginning it requires conscious effort to be communicative, but the effort diminishes with practice, until the direct awareness and natural response to the real and lovable selves of others takes over.

The person who acquires the virtue of human-ness through such a process probably will never realize that he has it. He would have to study himself to know whether or not he has it, and it is the characteristic of human-ness to make the other person the center of attention. But here is

a check-point: is the other person the center of attention? That is a sure sign of the virtue of human-ness.

Back in the early years of the Franciscan Order, when the old friars who had known St. Francis looked back at his influence on them, they probably thought most gratefully of his human-ness. They thought how that quality in

"True friendship is holy, pure, disinterested, sincere, joyful, and not preoccupied with self alone. But there is another bond which is wrongly called friendship. This evil relationship, which masquerades as true friendship, robs us of time and energy, hinders the fulfillment of duty, extinguishes the fires of faith and devotion, endangers honor and virtue, and raises altars to the idols of its own fashioning. This is the vice of attachment in one of its most common forms. With this it is useless to attempt to climb the mountain or holiness. For there is no one more disturbed or more shackled to the things of earth than the soul given to such an alliance."

Dom Henrique Trindade, O.F.M.
The Franciscan's Climb to God.

American Madonna

Fr. Titus Crammy, S. A.

In the little church of S. Lurana, S. A., the founders of Onofrio (St. Humphrey) on the Janiculum Hill in Rome, close to St. Peter's Basilica and near the North American College stands a statue of our Blessed Lady which the Italian people like to call "The American Madonna." There seem to be two reasons for such a name: the friars who live in the little monastery are from the United States; and the coloring of the statue — red, white, and blue. Mary wears a mantle of red in honor of the Precious Blood, her inner tunic is blue and the mantle has a white lining.

But this image of Our Lady is not the American Madonna because of coloring or because of the geographical origin of the friars. It is known more officially as Our Lady of the Atonement, the special title for the Mother of God used and promoted by the Franciscan Friars and Sisters of the Atonement.

Fr. Paul, S. A. and Mother

A frequent contributor to this review, Fr. Titus has gained international renown for his efforts in the Chair of Unity Apostolate. Father is stationed at Graymoor Garrison, N.Y.

Lurana, S. A., the founders of the Society of the Atonement at Graymoor, N. Y. conceived the title and devotion — or were inspired to do so — even while they were Anglicans. After ten years they entered the Church on October 30, 1909 through the special permission of St. Pius X. Among the many favors they were permitted to retain their name and devotion for our blessed Mother as Our Lady of the Atonement.

In the course of years the Graymoor friars and sisters have spread to many parts of the world. With their apostolate of Unity for which they are known, they promote devotion to Our Lady of the Atonement.

Our Lady of the Atonement means that Mary shared in the redemptive mission and sacrifice of Our Lord in a unique and special way. It means that she stood by the cross of her Son as Our Lady of Sorrows and as the Co-Redemptrix of the world. As the Atonement Madonna, Mary holds the Infant Saviour in her arms and He has a cross

in His right hand, the symbol of sacrifice and of Unity.

But the Atonement can be seen in a wider vision than just the sacrifice of Calvary. It is not simply the suffering and death of Jesus, but the sacrificial act by which all men are redeemed and reconciled to God. It is God's redemptive and unifying act for the entire world. And it continues to influence the lives of men today, even on to the end of the world.

In considering Mary as Our Lady of the Atonement we prefer this wider view. This was the concept of Fr. Paul. Mary has a special role in uniting all men with God. She is, as he said, Our Lady of the Atonement. She brings men to the love and influence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for she is the world's Mother and longs to unite everyone to God.

As the Mother of all men, Mary strives to bring her children to full religious unity in the Church. Every baptized person bears a special relationship to her as well as to her Son. And those who are separated from the Church, especially through no fault of their own are the object of her Mother's heart. Mary will not rest until all her children are united at the family hearth of the Catholic Church.

The feast of Our Lady of the Atonement is July 9. It will be kept joyfully celebrated in all the friaries and convents of the Atonement friars and sisters. It is also the patronal feast of the members of the Rosary League and the League of Prayer for Unity, both organizations of prayer and good works under the direction of Graymoor.

July 9 might well be a day of special devotion to Mary for the cause of Christian Unity. This intention is so vital in the world today; it is so important for the welfare of all men, not only of the faithful in the Church. Unity will be achieved through the love and intercession of the Mother of God.

The words of Pope John, with the quotation from St. Bernard, should inspire us with special love for Our Lady, on July 9, and always: "Let us venerate this Mary with every pulse of our hearts, with every movement of our desires and affections, for this is God's will that He wishes us to have all through Mary. This I say, is His will for us; that Mary, caring as she does in all and through all for the unfortunate, may allay our fears, enliven our faith, assure our timidity and abolish our smallness of spirit."

Knowledge In The Supernatural Life

Sr. Mary Maristell, O.S.F.

For many of us — perhaps too many — the notion of the importance of knowledge in the supernatural life strikes a chord of indifference, of calm but firm conviction of its irrelevance, or even of resentment in our hearts. From our very first days in the Order we have been steeped in the Franciscan tradition of serene love. At the same time there was a not-so-subtle intimation that knowledge was important to other Orders, more proper to them than to us because our spirituality is distinctively a way of simplicity and love. All too often there have been discreet warnings, the aim of which was to deter us from full-hearted intellectual pursuits for fear of the loss of this distinct spirituality, the implication being that knowledge was not essential to this simplicity and

love. But have we not failed to achieve the very thing we sought — the growth of love converging all our powers into a unity that mirrors the simplicity of God, as our whole being gradually becomes focused on Him and is restored to the integrity He intended when He created man? We have fallen short, at least in charity if not in justice, by allowing an intellectual emptiness and hunger both in ourselves and in our fellow men. We have stymied even the principle of motivation to reach consummate holiness by which alone each one gives to God the glory due Him, for we have permitted — rather, we have promoted — darkness instead of the light of vision of what God has called us to be. The result is that we who pride ourselves on our call to live the Gospel, have been found wanting in the fulfillment of the gospel proclamation. We have restricted souls to an incomplete vocation and thwarted the maturation of the Christlife in us. We have actually failed to realize our Baptism.

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Purpose of Our Creation

In his book *Theology and Sanity*, Frank Sheed points out that the intellect may be defective at three levels: ignorance in respect to truths it simply does not know; non-advantage to certain truths it does know; non-realization of truths known and adverted to, but not incorporated into one's living.¹ Unless we admit the importance of knowledge in the supernatural life, we fit into the third category just mentioned. Without giving to knowledge its proper value, we may know about Baptism, we may think of it and speak of it, but we do not actualize the potentialities given us in Baptism. In such a condition one fails to attain the full stature of a Christian, and no one can attain to the perfection of Franciscan life if he is not attaining to that which is fundamental to every mode of expression of Christian life.

The Franciscan professes nothing else but to live according to the gospel. This, in summary, means to put on Christ, to be caught up into the Mystery of Christ who is the Incarnate Word, the image and Glory of the Father, the Son of God. It means to enter into the death and resurrection of the Lord of the

universe; to undergo a constant decreasing of self in a continual dying while His life in us increases, transforming us into a spiritual being animated by the Spirit of the Risen Christ who "died for all, in order that they who are alive may live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and rose again."² It means to surrender ourselves in totality as an instrument of the Word, by whom all things were created and by whom all things are being re-created in an order which will reach its climax at the Parousia when He will come to deliver His Kingdom into the hands of His Father. Thus will be manifested the glory of the holy Triune God. This is the purpose of our creation. This constitutes the basis of our dignity as the most noble of all visible creatures. This accomplishes our final perfection and that plenitude of happiness which is concomitant with the vision of the Most Blessed Trinity.

What part has knowledge to play in this stupendous mystery of the Christian life? If we are to find even a rudimentary answer to this question, we must inquire into the meaning of life and the nature of the creature to whom this glorious end has been allotted.

Knowledge

To have life is to possess within oneself the principle of vital activity. Man possesses such a principle on three levels of activity: the level of operations which flow from his own essence, the level of imperfect operations flowing from an elevated nature while we are *in via*, and the level of perfect operations flowing from that elevated nature in its eternal beatitude. On each of these three levels man reflects, ever more perfectly, the Supreme Being who formed the rational creature in the likeness of the divine nature that is pure act, pure intellect, pure will. On each of these levels knowing is the fundamental activity, for the will is a blind faculty following the direction of the intellect. Furthermore, knowledge plays an important role in the interrelation of these various levels.

Philosophy defines man as a rational animal, that is, a being distinguished from the rest of visible creation by that spiritual faculty which is named the intellect. This human power differs from the intellect of God since in God His intellect is identical with all things in His own essence. It differs, also, from the an-

gelic intellect which, though not identical with the angelic essence, intuitively knows all natural things by means of ideas infused at the moment of its creation. Man can know only some things and that by a slow and often painful process of abstraction and reasoning. Because of this power, man participates in not just the being that is God but the intellectual nature that is identical with His being. For this reason Pope Pius XII said that the Creator has placed man, "the unique image of His Spirit, in the world so that with his knowledge, will and activity he may be its lord, making himself in intensity and profundity a reflection of the eternal truth and goodness extensively diffused throughout the world."³

The nobility of this gift of nature has led men to say, as does Adolph Kestens, O.F.M. Cap., in his book *Spiritual Guidance* that "nothing can excel the intellect."⁴ Likewise, St. John Damascene says: "Nothing is more estimable than knowledge, for knowledge is the light of the rational soul."⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas points out the relatively infinite capacity of man's intellectual power when he compares nonintelligent beings, which possess only their own

form, with intelligent beings, which are adapted by nature to possess also the forms of other things. He states: "Hence non-intelligent being is more contracted and limited; whereas the nature of intelligent beings has a greater amplitude and extension."⁶

Were man to have no other than a natural end, knowledge would be of utmost importance. Those who accept the intellect as man's highest power will readily understand Plato's comment in *Charmides*: "If you discard knowledge, you will hardly find the crown of happiness in anything else."⁷ Christian philosophy concludes similarly: happiness lies in the perfection of man's highest faculties; therefore, it consists in the perfection of intellect and will.⁸

Human experience attests to the fact that all men naturally seek happiness. Implicitly, then, they seek the perfection of their highest faculties. Since the perfection of a power is its operation, and since operation springs from the end which is its principle, man must know the objects of intellect and will, namely, truth and the good apprehended. He must see the end that is possible, see it as good. Only then will he act. The degree of hap-

piness he achieves will depend on the degree to which he perfects his powers. This in turn depends on the objective value of the end he seeks.

In the *Compendium of Theology*, St. Thomas says that "the end of the intellectual creature, to be achieved by its activity, is the complete actuation of its intellect by all the intelligibles for which it has a potency."⁹ This actuation depends upon the agent intellect and the first concepts of understanding in such a way that an external agent acts only by helping the intellect and providing it with the means by which it can enter into act.¹⁰ The natural interior light, which is from God,¹¹ and which makes possible man's independent acquisition of knowledge, is necessary in order that man may know things with certainty; and it makes use of the self-evident primary concepts imprinted on it by the Creator in order to reduce knowledge of signs to knowledge of conclusions; for signs are not the proximate efficient cause of knowledge, but reason is, in its passage from principles to conclusions.¹² Hence it is that although God in a most excellent way causes man's knowledge as to both intellectual light and the primary princi-

ples, nevertheless, "a man naturally acquires wisdom and knowledge from God by his own talent and study."¹³ By actualizing the potency of the intellect, the knowledge acquired consists not only of intelligible forms which are the "likenesses of things" but also of "forms perfecting the understanding."¹⁴ When this power is developed to the full, its interior perfection is achieved; but its full development comes only with its reaching its adequate object.

God as Object of Knowledge

Both Scripture and the Magisterium teach us that God is the supreme object of our knowledge and, therefore, as Author of nature He is the end of the development of the natural intellect.¹⁵ It desires this knowledge of Him from created nature according as this nature is proportionate to its natural power. As such it was appointed to be a "witness of His glory" and "has the duty of glorifying and serving Him." This it does in the measure in which it "knows and therefore manifests the glory of God as well as in the way in which it loves God and therefore carries out His will in all things out of love for Him."¹⁶

This knowledge and love of God as Creator, Supreme Lord of nature, and Infinite Beauty known through all created nature, is the internal natural end of the intellect. There is also an external natural end which consists in establishing orderly relationships to God and other spirits by way of adoration, praise, and glory to God; love, respect, and "intimate fellowship" with men "in the enjoyment and service of God."¹⁷

The Life of Grace

Considering only the natural level, we easily discern the intrinsic goodness and greatness of the intellectual faculty. However, in the actual order of things, knowledge has a yet greater function. Man is capable of a life far more sublime than that to which nature gives rise. From all eternity God has intended that man share the divine life of knowing and loving the Infinite Goodness Itself. Utterly beyond the exigencies of human nature, beyond even its power to know, this participation in divine life can exist only if God gives it to a creature. It requires an entirely new structure educed from the obediential potency of the soul. "Far from repressing man, rather it elevates him

wonderfully. For it frees him from the slavery of sin and prepares him for heavenly glory, adorning and perfecting the properties of nature as it does so."¹⁸

This new and elevating structure which we call supernatural life is effected through the wholly gratuitous gift of sanctifying grace, modifying the very essence of the soul, along with the virtues and gifts that modify the powers of the soul. It is important to note that sanctifying grace is not a substance; it does not provide a new nature. Rather, it presupposes man's nature as the substance in which it inheres, impregnating the whole of man, all his faculties, intellect as well as will. Man has a new principle of life by which he shares both the divine nature and the divine operations.

Given to man primarily to equip him properly for eternal beatitude — which, St. John tells us, is to know God and Him whom He has sent¹⁹ — this supernatural life is nevertheless given to him on earth through Baptism. Thus, by our Baptism the process of supernaturalization has already begun, and will be completed in the glorious resurrection which will be the culmination of the movement initiated by the death and resurrection of

Christ. This is the significant truth taught by St. Paul in the flesh-spirit antithesis that runs through the Great Epistles. Already we are enjoying, though inchoatively, that life with the Trinity which is to be ours for all eternity. Already, in virtue of the gifts of faith, hope, and charity, we are subjects of operations of knowing and loving God not only as the Author of nature but also as the Author of grace and glory. Conformity to God though grace makes of man an image of God in a new way, knowing and loving, though as yet imperfectly, even as God knows and loves. At last, on the level of the life of glory, the image will be perfected, for then the operations will be perfected. On that level the light of glory will so transfigure human nature as to effect a similarity with the divine nature as such, while the human intellect will be likened to the divine by bestowal of the power to contemplate the Trinity in Unity; and the act of knowledge will be likened to the divine act, for we shall behold God immediately without species of any kind.²⁰

Infused simultaneously into the soul at the moment of justification, the three theological virtues nonetheless are ordered by nature so that faith has

a priority in as much as we can love only what is known. Faith supplies the supernatural knowledge of the goal to which we have been predestined, and of the means whereby that goal is to be attained. As in the natural order knowledge begets love, so too in the supernatural order faith is requisite for charity. Yet charity, St. Paul assures us, is the greater.²¹ It is right here that we can so easily draw the illogical conclusion that, since our union with God in charity is a more important element of this new life than is knowledge, then knowledge is not important at all. Such a conclusion, wholly invalid, is a mighty obstacle to increasing the intensity of our love, for the degree of love that is to be ours in eternity depends on God's grace and on our response, which is essentially conditioned by knowledge in both the natural and supernatural orders.

Knowledge and Love

During our life in *via* the relationship between knowledge and love in the supernatural order is not so clearly seen. Love enters into such a close union with supernatural life as to seem to be indental — and there are some who

do identify charity and sanctifying grace. The perception which is faith is quite separable from charity and grace; but this separability is not due to the fact that faith is supernatural knowledge; it is due rather to the intrinsic imperfection, the obscurity of faith. Because of this imperfection, faith can exist without charity, but when faith gives way to the charity of the Beatific Vision, that knowledge will necessarily include love. Were faith to exist without charity, it must exist also without the grace of sonship from which charity flows, for charity is filial love for the Father breathed into our souls by the Spirit whose sanctifying power incorporates us into the Son. But sanctifying grace always carries with it the full retinue of virtues and the Gifts of the Spirit. If this grace is granted in addition to faith, then charity must be present also. Since faith can exist without charity, charity takes on an added note of importance. Still it must be realized that charity presupposes knowledge; charity does not exist without faith.

Another note of importance is added to charity in that during the time of striving and progress toward the end, desire and effort to attain the end are of greater consequence.

While the supernatural life is in a state of growth and development, it is in constant need of contact with its source, the divine nature, for only from the Fullness of Life can that life come and increase. This contact is made directly only through charity. Again, however, it must be realized that more perfect knowledge of the end ordinarily heightens the desire for union because there is greater awareness of goodness.²²

Importance of Knowledge

Unduly stressing charity and the moral element of our supernatural life causes a weakening of the intellectual element, whereas it would be more reasonable for us to emphasize the latter. Essentially, sanctifying grace brings about in us a participation in the divine nature. That nature is wholly immaterial, a spiritual nature. Such a nature is not defined by its characteristic activities; we do not designate it as a nature that can love. It is sufficient to have said it is intellectual, for in knowledge there is included love and desire. Thus St. Paul says in Romans that the effect of faith is peace.²³ Paul spoke of a faith that included charity and its effects. The fundamental

power of the spirit, then, is its intellectual faculty. Based immediately on the nature of the spirit, intellectuality clearly and properly characterizes the spirit.

Consequently, since sanctifying grace brings about a participation in the divine nature, essentially intellectual, then we participate in the divine intellectuality; and it is by participation in this nature, likening us to God, that we become sons of God. Hence faith underlies charity, and faith remains the fundamental activity.²⁴

We conclude, then, that supernatural knowledge is of fundamental importance to the perfection of supernatural life, just as natural knowledge is for the perfection of the natural life of the spiritual faculties. But supernatural life presupposes the natural life; it requires the natural life as a substructure. Therefore, perfection of the supernatural life requires not only the supernatural perception of faith, but also natural knowledge, both sacred and profane.

Knowledge and Faith

Natural reason must establish a sound and firm basis for faith. It must probe more and more deeply into the principles

of faith, in order to perfect alone is the adequate object the mind by an ever greater of the intellect, but all the understanding and possession of Truth. Acting with faith, it must penetrate to the reality of every thing in every moment that is offered us, so that we may fulfill our part in the priesthood of Christians by re-turning all to the glory of God. But there is yet more for the natural intellect to do in the supernatural life. The Belgian catechism has expressed this well in answer to the question: "Why did God make you?" The smallest child learns to respond: "God made me to know Him and to make Him known." Even a consideration of charity as the greatest of the virtues brings us to the conclusion that the perfection of charity requires that we perfect our natural knowledge, for there is only one charity — friendship with God and with all who, in the divine society, share in the supreme and infinite Goodness. Our love of friendship for God becomes a consuming desire to bring all souls into that society; it seeks to know Him and to make Him known, and to accomplish this it must use the goods of this world.

Obviously, our knowledge must be of God and of all that He made; it must be both sacred and profane as well as supernatural and natural. God

alone is the adequate object of the intellect, but all the wonderful works He has made and uses to bring us to that final end which is the manifestation of His glory — these lesser things too, intrinsically good in participating His being and goodness, are the proper objects of our intellect. True, man can never be extracted from the course of salvation-history, but salvation-history itself is not properly comprehended unless man is aware of historical values in every aspect of life. If man does not study to know the world, he can not look upon it and say, "It is good." He is hardly imagining God, then, in that respect. Nor will he ever really know the world if he seeks merely singular facts without evident connection with universal principles. Such a storing up of impressions must leave the intellect undeveloped. "Until the intellect itself is perfected by the habitual knowledge of universal and necessary truth, it can only be the subject of dispositions which are easy prey to forgetfulness, inattention, and the movement of contrary passions."⁸²

Unity of Knowledge in Theology

Ultimately, then, all knowledge must be reduced to theol-

ogy. Unless our study is rightly ordered, we cannot perfectly discharge our moral obligation in respect to the Christian vocation. There is need to "acquire the ability habitually to judge reality in the light of faith, and to direct reality to the goals of faith."⁸⁶ Study properly ordered by divine wisdom will of its nature incline us to an orderly and intelligent practice of the works of mercy, which are the means of fulfilling our role in bringing the redemptive action of Christ to the environment in which we live, and by so doing serve as instrumental causes in achieving the final glory. Nevertheless, when we say all knowledge must be reduced to theology, we do not in any way disparage the intrinsic value of profane learning. What we do say is that the full comprehension of any term is found only if it is seen in the light of divine wisdom. Our de-sacralized world has impoverished the very words we use. Tertullian could say that a Christian would be the best citizen, no matter what place he occupied in society, because as a Christian he was obligated to the perfection of every one of his powers in commitment to Christ who lived in and through him, making all things new.⁸⁷ Today, for many of us,

the term *Christian* relates only a part of its total comprehension. This is to cite but one example of the detrimental results of fragmented learning. Profane studies are valuable; they are necessary; but we must strive to restore the full meaning of created things.

The scope of study, then, is vast, but the intellect of its very nature is relatively infinite. To actualize such a potentiality is to perfect the image of God. Just as He knows Himself and all things in Himself, so must we come to know Him and all things in Him. Such a study will have tremendous effects. The soul who learns that the final order of the whole universe is the most important thing to be reached for the glory of God, becomes aware of the vital significance of her place in that order, however trifling in itself that place may be. She awakens to the magnificence of the Creator and the glory to which she is called. She comes to realize the true values of all persons, all things; and, seeing herself in proper perspective, she begins to be humble, surrendering utterly and irrevocably her entire being with all its faculties to Him whom she loves that He might live and act in her and through her. Conscious of her littleness, her

impotence, she nonetheless exults because He who is mighty has wrought great things in her and she reaches out to embrace the universe — even beyond, to embrace the Infinite — for she is confident of the power of the Spirit of Christ within her. The truth has made her free, with the wondrous freedom of the sons of God, and, impelled by the inner dynamism of the Spirit, she will soar ever higher from glory to glory.

Knowledge itself does not assure this marvelous transformation of the creature. St. Thomas, following Aristotle, admits that "knowledge, which pertains to the consideration of truth, has little influence on the moral virtues."²⁸ However,

The Franciscan Ideal

us a love that far exceeds the natural talents of our soul, but this is an infused gift which He bestows freely to whomsoever He will, when He wills, and so much as He wills. The limitations of our natural faculties are never an impediment to our growth in love, but our negligence in developing our gifts to the full is such an obstacle as to keep the soul earth-bound.

Despite the observations that have been made, there may still be doubt about the place of knowledge in a Franciscan life. That doubt should be removed by adverting to the fact that the Franciscan life is essentially a Christian life, and that all which has been said necessarily pertains to the Franciscan way of life. Yet, somehow the opposite notion has been all too prevalent — a false heritage, for St. Francis himself had the greatest reverence for learning and for learned men, admonishing his brethren to esteem highly the teachers of sacred doctrine because they were dispensers of spirit and life. His concern was not to deny the value of knowledge, but to make sure that it always rose from a foundation

greater than itself. Springing up from the depths of the soul in solitude and prayer, it should be exteriorized as the outcome of a hidden, interior spiritual force, thus corresponding with the essential mode of Franciscan life which struck a balance between the contemplative and apostolic. St. Bonaventure tells us that St. Francis wished his friars to be true disciples of the gospel, and "to advance in knowledge of the truth in a way that they likewise grow in unspoiled simplicity."²⁹ From his expressed wish to St. Anthony, it is certain that St. Francis approved of study, and this was made definitive in the Rule of 1223. Yet study was not to be primarily for the purpose of preaching but first and foremost for the friars' own sanctification. Implicitly, this was a recognition of the meaning of perfection: union with God in charity presses one on to bring other souls to Him. The Franciscan, then, ought to study that he may be brought with God's grace to the perfection of his whole being, that he may love more, and from his abundance enrich others.

To St. Francis knowledge came intuitively. Not so to St. Bonaventure. So close in spirit to St. Francis that he is called the Seraphic Doctor, his knowl-

edge was a matter of science. Under his guidance regulations in regard to study were drawn up. Not only was the study of theology made obligatory, but likewise philosophy and the profane sciences since they must be employed in the interests of God. In a small but masterful work, *De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*, St. Bonaventure shows that theology is the unifying and clarifying science, the light of which is necessary if any other knowledge is to be complete and adequate. For this saint, all knowledge was a gift from the Father of lights and was to be returned to the Father by way of love and praise. Present-day biblical studies show us how closely his idea of knowledge corresponded to the biblical concept which involved not the intelligence alone but also the will. Such an attitude toward learning was, moreover, rooted in the tradition of the West. The Fathers were among the learned men of their day. St. Augustine considered a liberal education the only education worthy of the name. He acknowledged the danger, mentioned by St. Paul, that knowledge puffs up, but he asks if we should therefore flee from knowledge and choose nothing rather than be puffed up. Such a choice would indeed be fool-

ish, for the reasoning that upright, and without offense leads to it is fallacious.

We must esteem knowledge. Great ends are not to be despised because they involve risk. Admittedly there are dangers to our distinctive simplicity, our poverty. But there are, too, splendid vistas upon which our minds can open, captivating our wills, and drawing our entire being to the throne of God. To be a Franciscan we must aspire to nothing less than to this radiant vision of life; we must become fully a Christian for whom St. Paul prayed: May your charity "more and more abound in knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve the better things, that you may be

the Mystery of Christ."

Our Franciscan way is truly the way of love, but the perfection of love is by its very nature intrinsically bound up with the realization that knowledge leads to love, and love seeks both an intimate knowledge of the Beloved as well as whatever knowledge will perfect it as an instrument in bringing all souls to know and love the Object of its love. This is basically the supernatural life, the inconceivably admirable vocation of him who is baptized and caught up into the Mystery of Christ.

1. F. Sheed, *Theology and Sanity* (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1946), p. 387.
2. 2 Cor. 5: 15.
3. V. A. Yzermans, *The Major Addresses of Pope Pius XII* (St. Paul, North Central, 1961) Vol II, p. 239.
4. A. Kestens, *Spiritual Guidance* (St. Anthony Guild, Paterson, 1962) p. 222.
5. St. John of Damascus, "The Fount of Knowledge" (New York, Fathers of the Church, 1958), Vol. 37, p. 7.
6. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Chicago, Benziger, 1947), I, q. 14, a. 1.
7. Plato, *Charmides* (Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, 1952), Great Books Vol. 7, n. 173.
8. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, qq. 2-3.
9. St. Thomas, *Compendium of Theology* (St. Louis, Herder, 1958), c. 103.
10. *ibid.* c. 104. Cf. St. Thomas, *Truth* (Chicago, Regnery, 1953), q. 11, a. 1.
11. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 117, a. 1.
12. St. Thomas, *Truth*, q. 11, a. 1, ad 1, ad 4.
13. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, I-II, q. 114, a. 10, ad 3.

14. St. Thomas, *Truth*, q. 11, a. 1, ad 10.
15. cf. Room 1: 18-20 and J. F. Clarkson, *The Church Teaches* (St. Louis Herder, 1960), n. 48, n. 88.
16. M. Scheeben, *Nature and Grace* (St. Louis, Herder, 1954), pp. 78-82.
17. *ibid.*
18. Clarkson, *op. cit.*, n. 647.
19. Jn 17:3.
20. Scheeben, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-5.
21. 1 Cor 13:13.
22. Scheeben, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-9.
23. Rom. 5:1.
24. Scheeben, *op. cit.*, p. 163.
25. T. C. Donlan, "Education for Life Eternal", in *The Thomist, From an Abundant Spring* (New York, Kennedy, 1952), p. 298.
26. *ibid.*, p. 302.
27. 2 Cor. 5:17.
28. St. Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 180, a. 2
29. J. Meyer, *The Words of St. Francis*, (Chicago, Franciscan Herald, 1952) p. 65.
30. Phil. 1:9-11.

FRANCISCAN EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Father Ernest Latko, O.F.M., President of the Franciscan Educational Conference, writes to inform us that the Conference 1963 Annual Convention will be held on August 5-8. This year's host will be the College of Philosophy of the Immaculate Conception Province of the Friars Minor: Immaculate Conception Seminary, Troy, N. Y.

Wanted: More Critical Catholics (II)

Thomas Donnelly

We may summarize what we have written in the first part of this article as follows. At the present time we are experiencing a welcome and whole-

some renewal of intensity in the pursuit of theological studies. This resurgence is accompanied by a very close correspondence between those who write and those who read in the field of sacred doctrine. The mutual accessibility which exists between the theologian and the layman points up the great demand for prudence on the part of the former and of discernment on the part of the latter. Some recent works in theology have been marred by an apparent disregard of this necessity; whether through enthusiasm or thoughtlessness, some writers have been somewhat lacking in prudence in the presentation of their message. It may, therefore, be of some help to those who desire to intensify their supernatural life through reading, to be reminded of some of the trouble

spots which they may encounter. To this end, the following observations are set down.

Thinking With the Church

Holy Mother Church is the divinely constituted guardian and teacher of God's revelation to man. Since this is so, it is not only fitting but also necessary that any discussion of sacred doctrine should first take into consideration what the Church has or has not taught concerning the subject under consideration. This primary principle can be sinned against in three ways.

1. First of all, one may simply neglect the Church's doctrine altogether. The obvious consequence of such neglect is the danger of writing in a vacuum, or in an atmosphere so rare as to be unrealistic. A writer who fails to reckon with what the Church has taught in regard to his subject may compose a beautiful and compelling essay, but one cannot be certain whether or not he is in touch with theological reality. It is important, therefore, that he first create

This is the conclusion of an article, Part I of which appeared in THE CORD in May, 1963.

WANTED: MORE CRITICAL CATHOLICS (II)

a theological climate, as it were, by relating his subject matter as clearly and accurately as possible to established Catholic teaching. While it is true that this relation need not always be made in great detail, or for that matter even explicitly, any theologian worthy of the name will surely have it in his own mind, and will also point it out to his readers if he judges that there is need of doing so. A writer should be aware of the general capability of the audience he intends to reach. If his readers are likely to be unfamiliar with the background of his subject as generally proposed by the Church's magisterium, it does not seem unreasonable to expect that he will acquaint them with it. Where he fails to do this, the wise reader will look to it himself.

2. When a writer does state the Church's doctrine, he must be careful to do so both completely and accurately. Otherwise he runs the risk of misleading his readers by misrepresenting the Church's tenets. Since ecclesiastical pronouncements are not all definitive, it is necessary to evaluate everything that the Church has said in order to arrive at a statement of her position in its present state of development. It would be both unfair and

Afflante Spiritu.

unscholarly, for example to inveigh against the use of form criticism in biblical exegesis on the basis of the early Responses of the Biblical Commission, thereby ignoring the more recent papal observations in the spirit of the *Divino*

In regard to accuracy in stating the Church's teaching, it is admittedly difficult to determine her doctrine with complete certainty in those matters on which she has not expressed herself with finality. Nevertheless, a writer should give his readers some indication of how theologians have generally evaluated the statements she has made. And it would be imprudent for an author to disagree with this evaluation without presenting good reasons for doing so.

3. A third possible fallacy on the part of those who write on matters theological is the paying of mere lip service to those doctrines of the Church which have been clearly and surely enunciated. Occasionally one reads an author who, while protesting mightily that he is upholding orthodox doctrine, has actually assumed a position which is either explicitly or implicitly at odds with what the Church teaches.

He may even take refuge in the assertion that if his position were completely understood it would be seen to coincide with that of the Church. But subtlety seems a poor excuse here; if a writer undertakes to explain theology in the popular forum, he should also be prepared to explain it in terms that can be popularly understood. The gratuitous and blithe assertion that a doctrine does conform to the Church's teaching does not suffice; the burden of showing this lies with the author.

Theory and Fact

Some years ago Catholic writers were wont to complain loudly that the proponents of materialistic evolution spoke of the theory of man's development from lower forms of life as if it were a proven fact. The sophism is not dead; one can find modern Catholic writers who are guilty of treating theories and hypotheses in theology as if they were proven facts. Theology is the science which works toward an exposition and explication of divinely revealed truths. Hence, it is to be expected that over the passage of time various theories will have been elaborated in an attempt to explain the many points of Catholic

doctrine which may be freely discussed. While a writer will naturally select the theory or explanation which seems best to him, it seems only fair that he should advise his readers that he is dealing with theory. It is quite disconcerting to find an author either assuming at the very beginning of his treatise that a theory is a fact, or performing the alchemy of transmuting a theory into a fact before one's very eyes. An example quickly comes to mind in the form of the Thomistic and Scotistic theories regarding the conditioned or absolute predestination of Our Lord's human nature to the Hypostatic Union. Prescinding from one's personal and studied convictions as to whether God predestined the Incarnation with or without an inclusion of consideration of original sin, one must admit that the question remains undecided at the present time. Consequently, a writer who bases a theological essay on the assumption that either of these solutions is an established fact, without so much as adverting to the other theory, is not treating his readers fairly.

Wishing and Thinking

It seems that one of the common causes of mistaking

theory for fact in theology is yielding to the temptation to accept a doctrine as true because it is attractive and workable rather than because of its inclusion in, or intimate connection with, divine revelation. We moderns seem particularly prone to make our wish the father to the thought. There is danger that our preoccupation with a practical theology orientated to man's subjective needs may distract us from the more important and realistic consideration of the objective value of doctrine.

In the comparatively new effort to fathom the intimate manner in which the Blessed Trinity resides in the soul, for example, the present trend is to see a relationship between the human subject and the three divine Persons individually. While this explanation seems to have a foundation in revelation, one must be careful to judge it primarily on its theological plausibility rather than on its attractiveness. There is danger that the very beauty and grandeur of the more recent concept — relationship to the Trinity precisely as Persons rather than to God, Who is three Persons — may draw us to embrace it without first examining its theological validity. It is necessary, when dealing with

this as with other doctrines, that we keep in mind the principle that the mere fact that an explanation is pleasant, elevating, or admirably correlated to human needs, is not in itself a guarantee of its factual reality.

The Pendulum Effect

Just as the Church lives and moves in a temporal situation, so is her proclamation of Christ's message almost always related to the human needs which successively appear in history. In other words, as the centuries pass, the Church emphasizes now this part and now that part of her unchanging doctrine. And without departing from the original deposit of revelation which is Jesus' gift to His Church, Catholic theologians elaborate, with the passage of time, various diverse aspects of her teaching. In this sense, one may say that the Church's doctrine is very frequently in a state of flux. Because this is so, the theologian — as also he who reads theology — must be ever alert to the danger of a pendulum effect wherein one reacts so strongly to any given position as to swing all the way to the opposite extreme. Observers of the theological scene assure us that at the

present time Catholic theology is emerging from a post-Reformation attitude. This emergence is completely healthy in itself, but it is possible that it carries within itself some tendencies toward over-correction. One of the areas in which one is likely to meet an exaggerated reaction today is that of ecclesiology. In their enthusiasm to exploit the rich doctrine of the invisible life of the Church — an aspect which has been somewhat neglected until recently — some writers seem to have forgotten that the Church still remains a visible juridical society. A similar inclination can be detected among some of those writers who presently emphasize love rather than law, or glorify freedom to the prejudice of obedience. It would be well to keep in mind here that when taking a new tack it is imperative to keep one's balance lest one capsize. In the cases just mentioned, it will help perhaps to remember that law is no less law because it is promulgated and observed out of love, and the freedom of obedience lies in the constant renewal of the initial act of submission.

able, the truth of one necessarily implies the falsity of the other. To assume, for instance, that the fact of schism destroys the fundamental unity of the Church, or that her pilgrim state precludes her essential sanctity, is both illogical and erroneous. The solution of the various antinomies which occur in theology is arrived at by the difficult means of understanding them more correctly, rather than by the easy expedient of choosing one to the exclusion of the other. This latter method of solution is, as history attests, the stuff of which heresies are made: the Trinitarian and Christological errors of the early centuries resulted from an inability of some thinkers to establish in their minds a balance between the concepts of unity-trinity and human-divine.

Experimentation

The theologian is never a mere reporter or commentator. He seeks to clarify revelation in terms of his own milieu, and even to educe new truths which are inherent in God's message. This means that theological writing will not always present to the reader a cut and dried set of definitive conclusions. Because of the nature of his science, the the-

ologian probes, investigates, experiments. As the German theologian Karl Rahner puts it,

It is permissible to consider that, in the realm of theology as in the realm of the sciences, it is legitimate to experiment, to work with hypotheses, remembering that, even in their originator's opinion, they may turn out to be barren when tested by the criticism of his colleagues and confers working in sacred theology. Theology is certainly anything but a mummified structure of thought. It can create openings for adventures of the mind and heart, if we have but the courage to embark upon them, and both the courage and humility to retrace our steps as soon as we become aware of having erred. This qualification is made in all seriousness (Inspiration in the Bible, Herder and Herder, 1961, p. 7).

One sometimes wishes that some of Fr. Rahner's enthusiasts might view his efforts with the same sobriety which he himself has expressed in this passage. It seems to this observer that this fact of theological experimentation constitutes the greatest danger for those who read theology today. Theological investigation is it-

self both good and quite necessary. But it does seem unfortunate that so many modern writers, not content with submitting the result of their research to their "colleagues and confers working in sacred theology" by publishing in technical journals and books, have taken to airing their experiments in organs which are not only available to, but actually written for, the general public. If these studies are to be made available to those who are not theologically trained, the writer should at least warn his readers, by marking the work with the clear designation, *Caution: Experimental!*

Conclusion

"Nothing is willed which is not first known." The truth of this axiom makes it imperative that a person who desires to grow in the love of God must strive to know and understand Him ever more clearly. And since grace builds on nature but does not take its place, it is important that the Catholic desirous of growing become familiar with the truths revealed by Jesus. Too many people in our times are trying to solve grown-up questions with answers they learned as children. The evident hunger

for a better understanding of such an extensive scale, it is theology, which is currently not without some dangers. It is evident among Christ's faithful, is therefore a grace for here expressed may have some which we should all thank God. part in helping those who read It is a sign of Christian maturity. But because it is a rather new phenomenon, at least on bring them ever closer to God.

FRANCISCAN SISTERS EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

Mount Saint Clare Junior College in Clinton, Iowa, will be the site on November 29 and 30 of the First Convention of the newly formed Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference.

The theme to be discussed this year is *Elements in Franciscan Formation*. Papers and discussions on the first day will be devoted to *Initial Formation* programs; those on the second day will treat of *Apostolic Formation*.

Following addresses on these aspects of the theme, there will be sectional meetings for discussions. On the first day the groups will be divided into Aspirant and Postulant Mistresses, Novice and Junior Mistresses, Local Superiors, and those concerned with the continued formation of professed Sisters. Sectional meetings on the second day will be related to the elementary school teacher, the secondary school teacher, the college teacher, the librarian, the hospital Sister, and Sisters in other non-teaching areas.

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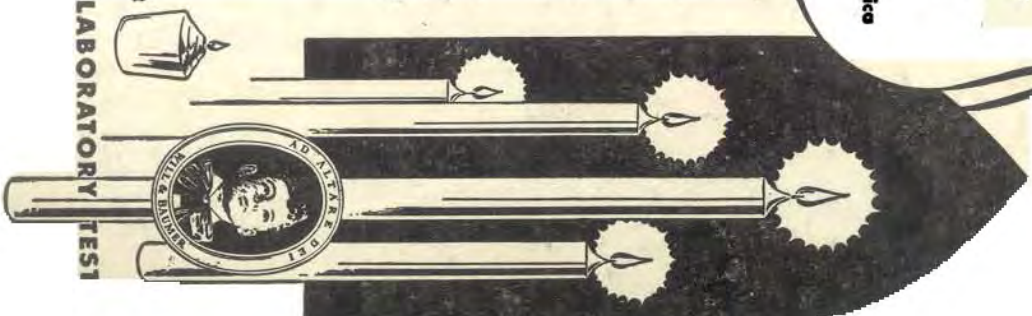
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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW
OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

AUGUST 1963

FAMILIARITY WITH GOD

Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

CLARE OF ASSISI:

WOMAN OF FAITH

Sr. Mary Francis, P.C.

WHAT'S MY LINE?

THE FRANCISCAN BROTHER

Fr. Giles P. Bello, O.F.M.

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

Habemus papam! With this traditional exclamation the College of Cardinals announced to the Church and to the world on June 21, 1963 that they had elected Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini as Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth.

Pope Paul VI, the 261st successor to St. Peter in the papacy, continues the visible succession by which universal jurisdiction over the souls of men reaches down from the Lake of Tiberias to Vatican City.

Our Lord's institution of the petrine primacy as the enduring source of unity and the visible foundation of the Church represents a gift to mankind which is both indicative and worthy of His infinite goodness and wisdom. Each Christian is conjoined immediately to Jesus by the invisible and personal bond of grace which is the divine life. But since man lives in an external sensible condition, Christ founded His Church as a perceptible society. The episcopate, and the papacy which preserves it one and undivided, are the source of a second union between the Catholic and his Divine Master — a visible and juridical union mediated by the successors of St. Peter and the Apostles.

At the present time, when a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the inner Christ-life enjoyed by those who love Our Lord, the election of our new Supreme Pontiff may serve to remind us that the external aspect of the Church cannot be forgotten.

While invisible union with Jesus in grace is man's ultimate — and therefore more important — vocation on this earth, one must not forget that it is the will of Our Lord Himself that this union may be fully attained to only by means of visible membership in the external society which He founded and preserves.

Allegiance to the Vicar of Christ on earth in his triple office of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling is an indispensable requirement for full participation in the life of God's grace. Thanks be to God for providing for the continuance of that office in the election of Pope Paul VI.

The Editors

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Familiarity With God

Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

Familiarity with God was an early disposition with the precocious and lovely Franciscan saint, Colette. As a child she was already touched with a

love, John, in a familiarity that defies an authentic description.

When God commanded man to "increase and multiply" He thereby "fathered" a variety of families. He brought forth families by blood, national families, the family of the human race, and finally, the last in the series, the communion of saints. The first family, that of Adam and Eve, became at once the original reflection of the mysterious Family that is the Blessed Trinity, and again, the ancestral intimation of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The beauty of creation is primarily a harmonious multiplicity, and never is this beauty more pronounced than in human society, and its basic constituent, the family. On this earth you will search in vain to find a more complementary, a more fulfilling blend than the family and its adhesive by-product, familial love. Since hate disperses and pride isolates, in Hell there is no familial life, only a common misery. Hell, then, must be reckoned a strange, unfam-

Regular readers of THE CORD will be happy to recognize in this article the thoughtful and vivid style of Fr. Regis. A member of Holy Name Province, Father is a Professor of Philosophy at St. Bonaventure University.

miliar place, and we pray that it may remain as such. Heaven, on the contrary, as distant as it may seem, is truly very familiar, for there we find the most intimate and permanent of ties, the bond of pure love. Hence the family can be valued as God's treasured, corporate gift to man, His bouquet, and familiarity, its fragrant, aromatic scent.

Going Too Far

To swallow the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt", without reservation, is to submit the mind to the pains of an indigestive interpretation.

If such an utterance were unqualifiedly true, the resultant conclusions would be absurd. Family life would disintegrate from within. The generative seed would simultaneously be the seed of decay. The imperative, "Increase and multiply!", would be an ineluctable sentence of death. As the ancients once staunchly believed, every newborn would be a repetitious curse. Misery would be highly organized. Eventually we must plainly deduce that in life is there death, and God, our dearest friend, His own immortal arch-enemy. But God exists solely as the supreme Good. Evil flourishes only because it has been pre-

conditioned by the good. Evil is the good mishandled and mishandled. "To be" is our original blessing. "To co-exist" is a bonus. Of course familiarity can breed contempt, but only when co-existence, which makes familiarity possible, has been abused and prostituted. From their golden earrings, so beautiful to behold, the Jews of the Exodus, fashioned a molten calf despicable in the sight of the Lord (Exodus 32:2). There is no blessing which cannot be twisted into a blunder.

No doubt most of us have felt the discomfort and strangeness of our first formal, of the starchiness of newly bought denims, the factory stiffness of a pair of shoes, or the inflexibility of an unused catcher's mitt. The first day in school, that initial sermon or speech, our first trip by plane, were so unfamiliar as to leave us unnerved. Familiarity, and the ease of familiarity, comes with usage, habit, and that "feeling at home". Life has certainly lost much of its savor if we have not gladdened to the lived experience of befriending a person, and enjoyed the creative familiarity that moved from a remote smile to a warm handshake to the inner intimacy of a heart-to-heart alliance. Friends are not bought or sold

except by the parasite or traitor. Friends are gained, friendships formed. And bracketing every friendship is a requisite and residual familiarity. The confidence invested, the trust reciprocally exchanged, the security engendered, are the bud of a wholesome familiarity. Needs anticipated, burdens shared, successes bilaterally enjoyed are its blossoms. And the fruit? A genuine love imitative of God's familiar love for us all.

Adam ill-treated the gift of familiarity by contriving to be like God. As the result of his sin, we have inherited a compensatory world. Light and darkness, sickness and health, life and death, are now the disjunctive portions of our daily fare. The pleasures of the body are relished, but with the prohibitive knowledge that the same body can be racked with an agonizing disease. The blustery winds of a winter's season are tempered with the awareness that they will soon become the soft, gentle breezes of a sun-tanned vacation. Familiarity too is a coin with two sides. Was it not a privileged familiarity mishandled that became Lucifer's downfall? He who was so near to God thirsted for singularity. He got it. Today no creature is more distant from God than he. The

light-bearer, endowed with a tremendous candle power of grace but eclipsed with pride, became the prince of pitch darkness, unable to cast even the weakest of shadows. Lucifer neglected to keep his place, and in his impropriety trespasses the sacred precincts of familiarity. The same temptation besets us. So that we may not succumb, let it be known that an exaggerated familiarity can opiate a sincere friendship by lulling us into a lack of appreciation, stupify us into taking things for granted, and eventually numb our social sensitivity. The tongue that prays can be the same that blasphemes. The Paradise of pleasure was given to Adam to dress and keep. It has since become the strange land whose thorns and thistles we now work by the sweat of our brow. Likewise, an undue familiarity, a familiarity that has been selfishly monopolized and exploited, can reduce a once fibrous friendship to a flaccid companionship, or worse, to a hardened hate.

Francis The Familiar

Destined to live only a short forty-four years on this earth, St. Francis is the saint of youth, a timeless saint, the most familiar of saints, who is

as fresh as nature itself. "No man has seen God at anytime", wrote St. John (John 1:18). On the other hand, no man has seen so much of God in creation as did holy Francis. His familiarity with creatures, whether animal or rational, is a trait recognized by folk of every land. Where he still remains a stranger to so many is in the truth that his familiarity with creatures was the more successful because of his familiarity with God their creator.

St. Francis would not have appreciated the title of reformer. He saw too much of God's goodness and mercy in this world, so much that did not need reform. He preferred to inform men, familiarize them with the generosity of God's extended hand. As the herald of the great King he was bent on trumpeting God's horn, arousing men to a recognition of His gifts, not the least familiar of which is the gift of ourselves. Though he would label us as strangers and pilgrims in this world, the path we trod toward heaven was to be a familiar one, traced by God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

With amusement we read of the childlike antics of Brother John, "the Simple". So elevating was his regard for Francis

that he would imitate to the very gesture every movement, every word of the Poverello. Nor do we read of St. Francis protesting. Our holy father loved this attempt at a simple familiarity, for it was but a reflection of his own imitation of Christ. The external display of sincere mimicry on the part of Simple John was indeed a refraction of Francis' interior mirroring of the Master. The great Greek mind Parmenides judged all reality to be a oneness, a sameness, a unity; Francis saw in the same reality a family, that beautiful kinship webbed by the paternal hand of a provident Father. He witnessed himself as a member of this family, and with the simplicity of a Brother John tagged creatures with the familiar names of Brother Fire, Sister Death, or Lady Poverty. When it came time to designate the Order he had founded, he chose the most fraternal of titles, "The Lesser Brothers". And lest St. Francis be stamped as the initiator of a humanitarian cause or branded the expert on fellowship, let it not be forgotten that his familiarity was anchored in a filial dependence on God with a proclivity that spoke of a rare reverence for the Creator. Francis loved family living. As members of his household our

love of God is ever to be a familial love. Our communal allegiance to God excludes the singular, the exceptional, the oblique. Our strength is not simply in numbers, but in an aggregate, collective, harmonious love echoing on earth the praise and prayer of the Seraphic choir in Heaven.

I Have Called You Friends

We all have heroes, be they in sports, literature, politics, or music. With avid interest we follow their progress and familiarize ourselves with their achievements. St. Francis had his hero and that hero was Jesus Christ. He was as familiar with the record that Christ left of Himself in the Gospels as the daily box score or the latest tune is to us. To him the Good News was "too good to be true". But it had to be true because it was so good. The Greeks pinnacled their gods high up in the rarified surroundings of a mountain top. The Romans pedestaled their gods on pencil-plain pillars beyond the reach of men. They were indeed strange and alien gods. But to look down into a makeshift crib and there behold the Word made flesh, God looking up to man, was for St. Francis incredible. Incredible, because it was for him so wond-

rously and obviously the most familiar of truths. Centuries before, after his familiarities with God on Mount Sinai, Moses gratefully exclaimed, "There is no nation so great, that hath gods so nigh to them, as our God is present to our petitions" (Deut. 4:7). What would the patriarch say, now that the same God has been born of the maiden Mary, with the protection of a humble foster father, cuddled by the patient Simeon, driven abroad astride a donkey, presented as the dearest of friends to the poor, the sick, the sinner, ridiculously accused of blasphemy, and finally sacrificed in an ignominious but familiar manner of the day, by crucifixion? How strange the prophecies are in their utterance. How familiar in their evangelical fulfillment. This was the familiarity that Francis grasped in the Gospels, a personal, simplified approach to life, which, if undertaken "without gloss", dispensed with any formal rule. Every word of the Gospels dripped with divinity. The challenge had always been there. Francis was generous and daring enough to accept it. He would meet Christ "in His own backyard", on His own terms. He would repay the familiar love of creatures, loving all

with a Seraphic love, "for the love of God".

As is the way with all professionals St. Francis made sanctity appear an easy endeavor. But Francis was too simple and sincere to deceive. The professional becomes such only after a lengthy familiarity with the techniques of his chosen field. So it was with Francis. Since sanctity is friendship with God, the technique demanded is the knowledge of, the love for, and the service to God. The Poverello recognized the God of the Gospels in the birds, the fishes, lepers, theologians, all of creation. He loved Him with the parental familiarity of a child. He served Him exclusively, without compromise, with his historic vow of poverty.

At the Last Supper, with a familiarity that shocked Peter, Christ stooped to wash the feet of the Apostles. With the same familiarity Christ eagerly waits to wash and bathe our sin stained souls in the sacrament of Penance. Only once did Christ reveal Himself as the Messiah, and that during His familiarities with the women at the well, the evangelical version of "This Is Your Life". To the man and woman of faith He reveals Himself daily as the Savior at the familiar conse-

crating words of His priest. And in one of the most beautiful familiarities in the Gospels, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalen after the Resurrection. Mary knows not that it is Jesus. A single word does it. "Mary!" No sooner has Christ spoken when Mary excitedly responds, "Rabboni!". She knew. Yes she knew, as every pious soul does, that in every Holy Communion one can converse familiarly with God to his heart's content.

How bitter is the revelation when, he whom we suspected of being our confirmed enemy, was really the most loyal of friends. How tragic will be the day of judgment for those who culpably sold God short, who just did not bother to go and "see this word which has come to pass" (Luke 2:15), who did not even identify Christ as the carpenter's son, or at least discern, as did the belated centurion gazing on the expired Christ, that "indeed this was a just man" (Luke 23:47). That God was so intimately present on earth under the familiar form of bread and wine will not diminish their woes. Why, the literal familiarity of it all! "I am with you all days" (Matt. 28:20). And the literal bluntness! "He came unto His own and His own received Him not". The tabernacle can be the loneliest place in town.

The Franciscan Family

"Wheresoever the Friars are and meet other Friars, let them show that they are members of the same family, and frankly expose their needs one to the other" (*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 6). The more people have in common the more familiar they should be. To worship the same God, to be alive to the joy and grief that the same God died for all, to acknowledge the image of God implanted in each soul, these are the essentials of a lasting familiarity. Reverence for the individual as a creature of God is the basic law of all human relationships. As Franciscans our familiarity, in addition to these accepted ideals, flows from the Gospels and their most familiar expression, St. Francis of Assisi. Since it is a familiarity with all that is good, Jesus Christ, it can never be vacillating, suspicious, or scheming. Franciscan incentive will ever be derived from Christ's tender and familiar love for souls. Thus, wherever we Franciscans are and meet other Franciscans we should so conduct ourselves as to "neither dispute and contend in words, nor judge others, but show ourselves gentle, peaceful and modest, mild and humble, speaking modestly to all, as is becoming"

(*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 3). How edifying is the rallying spirit of the Franciscans on the occasion of a bereavement! How comforting this familiarity! How jubilant the gathering of Franciscans on the date of feast or anniversary! How rewarding the association! And how encouraging is that familiarity that urges a reluctant subject to approach a superior knowing that he will be received "lovingly and kindly and with such affability of manner as to lead them to speak and treat with them as would masters with their servants" (*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 10). Such a familiarity promotes peace of soul, that peace which hovered over Bethlehem on the night Christ became familiar with us. Such a familiarity within our household prompts us to invoke, on the threshold of another, the Franciscan blessing, "Peace be to this house". Such a familiarity is internally prepared to greet any stranger with the fraternal salutation, "May the Lord give thee His peace".

Caricatures

The dandelion is a beautiful flower which, so often failing to keep its place, does harm to a well dressed lawn. So too, unkempt familiarities can easily

degenerate into hypocrisy, pharisaism, or deception. In order to obtain the paternal blessing from the blind stricken Isaac, Rebecca deceived her husband by surreptitiously introducing her favored son, Jacob. Thinking Jacob to be the familiar Esau, Isaac granted his blessing. The beautiful Susanna was falsely accused by two lecherous judges of indecent familiarities with them, until the prophet Daniel rescued her. Familiarities that sprout particular friendships, cliques, and factions, can disrupt the organic tranquility of a community or society. How often does not the atmosphere of familiarity germinate the off-color story or im-

proper joke. "Letting one's hair down" is often letting God down. An over-familiarity with the merchandise of this world can smother an otherwise fresh, air-conditioned, "feeling" of God's omnipresence. Our attitude toward the state which should be the most familiar of all, the state of grace, can be regarded as indifferently and neutrally as the air we breathe. The *Angelus* so familiar in the ringing can leave us as impassive as does the droning of an aircraft overhead. Those familiar primitive prayers of our lives, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, instead of forming a spiraling, cyclical ascent

to God, can so readily become tread-mill prayers. And the Word of God so familiar in the reading and preaching at Sunday Mass, the spoken word, our choicest relic, the work of art nearest to life, carved out of the breath of life itself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, which should be listened to as sincerely and piously as it was written, can become the dull and drowsy pattern of a drizzly rain.

Great men have always been known for their sociability. Aloofness and inaccessibility are characteristics of the proud, who are great only to themselves. Between heaven and earth there is no wall, but a gate. Christ evidently revealed His greatness when He told us, His sheep, "I am the door" (John 10:9). To remain a stranger to Christ when He died pleading for friendship, to give Him the cold shoulder when He mercifully shouldered His cross even for His enemies, is a heartless posture, not unfamiliar today, and perhaps explained ultimately by misdirected familiarities.

To be familiar with God on earth is to be confident of His friendship when the time comes to leave it. Surprises in heaven there will be, for "eye hath not seen nor ear heard: neither

hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9). However, heaven will not be a total surprise. It is in heaven that we will exchange familiarities with Christ. Happily we will recall our past conversations in prayer. The recollection of our former meetings arranged by the exhortations and examples of a St. Francis will add warmth to our permanent friendship. And what of the countless receptions we held for the Holy Eucharist? And in our chats with His Holy Mother He was never left out of the discussion. No, heaven will not be a complete surprise. Heaven will not be a renewal but an enrichment of our friendship with Christ. Heaven will welcome us with the joy of a nativity, rejoicing in the new addition to the family. There we will be forever grateful for the familiarity that viewed creation through the eyes of a St. Francis, with inquisitive wonder of a child, with a familiarity that never saw the same flower twice, was inspired anew at every sunrise, and with every prayer solidified our friendship with the same loveable, benevolent God.

Pope John XXIII of grateful memory has been universally heralded as the familiar pope, the pope of the people. Imbued with a family spirit, the Holy Father revolutionized society by inspiring its citizens to reverent and respect each other with a familial love. Such spiritual warmth could only have been sparked by one who himself was enkindled with a divine familiarity. "What matters in life", he feebly said just hours before his death, "follows the sense of the Gospels, mildness, goodness, and charity", as though he were prompted by the Saint of Assisi. After his death a venerable friar reflectively remarked to me, "He had all the people in his pocket." This was so true, only true because first of all he had God in his heart. Sanctity is touching. Men everywhere have felt the passing of the pope of the people, the man of God. Because of his Holiness (with a small "h" too), and despite current racial tensions, people have become more familiar with God. May this oft sought and recently found familiarity grow brighter and warmer, as the ascending sun, even to the high noon of our lives, our familiarity with God in heaven.

Clare of Assisi: Woman of Faith

CLARE OF ASSISI

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Sr. Mary Francis, P.C.C.

If there are false connotations of words, there are also false connotations of saints. Sometimes Clare of Assisi is betrayed by both. For she was an idealist and a saint; or, more precisely, she was in a preeminent degree what every saint must be: an idealist.

they admit that dreams and ideals are tolerable and even salutary for the young, and should not be wholly abandoned by adults, practical men of affairs know that dreams and ideals will obviously require considerable adjustments for those of middle years.

What does that word too often connote in popular speech? Is it not the impractical dreamer, the poet sitting with chin propped on his fist and sighing at the harsh realities of life even while he longs to escape into a shadow-world of perfection? How often the phrase, "poets and dreamers," is tossed about with a kind of supercilious if indulgent pity for those who cannot face the rawness and roughness of actual life and so withdraw into unreality. A dreamer is presumed by some to be one who will not admit that life frequently involves nightmares of the soul and heart and mind. An idealist is supposedly a refuge from reality. And while

In the end, what such people mean by an "idealist" who persevered as such into mature years, is someone who did not make the prescribed adjustments, that is, compromises. Clare of Assisi would qualify for them as one of that species. And her cloistered life would probably be summed up something like this: caught up into the first romantic glamor of the Franciscan movement, she rushed from her castle home, shut herself up in a poor monastery where harsh realities could not reach her, and sighed her way to Heaven!

Truth to tell, Clare was not the popular false connotation of an idealist, but an idealist in the true meaning of the word: she was a woman who regarded reality as essentially spiritual. How superficial all this talk of the mutual exclusiveness of idealism and re-

alism is. Who is actually equipped to cope with hard reality except the idealist? Once the shining ideal is obscured, the pressure of the teeming realities of life becomes coercive. Reality unilluminated by the idealism that hopes against hope and believes in the humanly impossible can only lead to frustration. In the end, only the idealist can survive reality, the kind of idealist Clare was.

If the connotation of Clare for some is that of remoteness from reality, the true meaning of Clare is faith, that supreme faith which is the glory of a woman. It is faith alone which gives strength to deal with present realities. And this is where woman is endowed by nature above man, as man is endowed by nature above her in speculative reasoning.

Grace builds on nature, and it is the nature of woman to have faith: faith in man who has been set above her and whose helpmeet she was created to be, faith in God who made her so to be. This is evident in the life of any normal woman outside convent walls. The modern equivalent of the suffragist may argue for equality of the sexes in all things, and even hasten to point out her superiority and dominative powers. But she is not the nor-

mal woman who knows that a certain kind of subjection is her glory.

The greatness of a man can usually be measured by the kind of woman who loves him. Often it is the faith of the woman who loves, that discovers and then sustains the greatness of the man. A woman consecrated to God loses none of her natural womanly qualities; she only rediscovers them on a higher plane. Men conceive ideals. Women make ideals practicable. Men dream great dreams. Women clothe dreams with life and cling to them with faith through all vicissitudes. Stubbornness of faith is one of God's most magnificent gifts to the nature of womankind.

St. Francis of Assisi conceived the ideal which has come to bear his name, the Franciscan ideal. When it seemed in some degree to fail among men, it consistently and persistently succeeded among women. If it wavered elsewhere, it worked at San Damiano. And when Francis himself seemed to waver, heart-sick and weary with compromise and gloss, he went to Clare and rediscovered himself in her. For this is what she always was: the mirror of Francis' first ideal, first faith, first dream.

To commemorate the feast of Our Holy Mother St. Clare on August 12, Sr. Mary Francis, of the Poor Clare Monastery in Roswell, N. M., has composed this moving tribute.

It is all very romantic to think of wealthy young Clare dazzled by the novelty of Francis' preaching. Complete poverty and evangelical simplicity would have had the natural attraction of opposites for a high-minded girl whose life was steeped in luxuries and the complexities of a feudal society that was beginning to totter. The difference between Clare and many other young girls who might have felt the same attraction is that Clare had the faith to cling to her belief in the Franciscan ideal and make it a conviction.

Eloping, even into the cloister, has its romantic appeal, too. But it was, externally speaking, a rugged honeymoon. Clare had. It is a different matter to theorize about the cluster of possessions than really to get clear of them. The rough robe Francis threw over her shoulders did not feel like the satin robes she had worn before, even though she had sometimes had a hairshirt under them. However much she prized it, it was hot. It scratched her fine skin. It weighed on her. And her hair! — what an act of faith that was! Surely no man could completely understand this. Perhaps the shaggy-haired girls of today do not much understand it, either. But medieval Clare of the long

golden ropes of waving hair, that sunlight of hair which was the glory of the Lombard women of Italy and her own outstanding natural possession... There is no irreverence to God who made the heart of a woman to accommodate His words to such a doffing of hair; in a sense, "greater love has no woman!" And we can be reasonably sure that St. Francis cut off that beautiful silk by the great fistfuls with quick and complete inexpertness.

What did young Clare of the cropped head and mean robe have to sustain her ideal? Faith. Absolutely nothing else. She had no convent, no community, no rule. She was quite an unique kind of foundress. But she had unlimited faith in the ideal of one small friar and his great dream. Never, from the shearing of her lovely hair until her last breath, did that faith waver.

Relatives pleaded and relatives stormed. Friends reasoned and reminded. But Clare was that kind of idealist who is not embarrassed by reality but who lifts reality out of the dust and informs it with the ideal. We need such idealism, we whose reality lies in a different dust, — the dust of comfort and compromise.

When the beginning was made and the influx of sub-

jects began, Clare's faith was tested and threatened on a new front. It is obvious that the legislator who sets down in her rule that contemptuous subjects shall take bread and water on the floor in the refectory for as many days as they continue obstinate, who reminds her daughters that worrying and fretting over the sins and faults of their companions only hinder charity in themselves and others, and who sternly cautions against envy, detraction, dissension and division, had met some of humanity's more inglorious specimens. If she had set herself to live in a dream-world, she could never have so calmly legislated for the nightmares of religious life. Yet, she kept her faith in her daughters as she kept her faith in God.

In the close confines of the cloister where human nature finds no prefabricated subterfuges for its defects and where its poor miseries are all too obvious, love comes to a crossroads sooner or later. It can only be faith which will turn love down the right road of that womanly compassion which is rooted in humility and self-knowledge, and steer love away from that other road of self-righteousness which can even degenerate further into a kind of cynicism. Faith pre-

served Clare from the peril of ceasing to expect great things of people because people sometimes appeared very small indeed.

There must occur for every idealist a period of crisis in which ideal and reality confront each other. The tragedy would be to agree to a peaceful coexistence by which would be meant that the ideal becomes escapism from the reality, a kind of twilight walk down which one wanders on brief excursions from the hard truth of things. How often Clare must have experienced what we often call by the misnomer of disillusionment, but which is actually only the labor pains of the ideal bringing forth its fruit, the ideal persisting in reality and fastening on the essential spirituality of things.

Clare knew how to be so gentle as to roam about the little monastery of San Damiano on cold pre-midnights to make sure her sleeping daughters were adequately blanketed. Yet, she had the sternness that could rebuke the nun she misraculously cured of a throat ailment with the very realistic reminder that if the nun did not change her line of conduct some worse ailment was likely to befall her. Here is the love

of a woman strong in faith, loving the "black but beautiful" which we, too, must love, and which we also are.

Then there was the great trial, the very life-and-death struggle of her Rule. Clare who so completely typified the Franciscan ideal had to live by a quasi-Benedictine rule for many years. She never fought against the authority that imposed it, but neither did she supinely accept it as ultimate. Rather, she persisted in faith. "I know in Whom I have believed!" cried out St. Paul. St. Clare made that same wonderful act of faith. She knew. She believed. And so she lived on and suffered on, as women through the ages have known how to suffer and love and believe through wars and fam-

ines, through betrayals and sections, through humiliations and defeats. God evidently prized Clare's faith very highly, for He chose to reward it, which was really to end it, only two days before her death. Clare was prostrate on her deathbed when Innocent IV sent her his *Solet Annuere*, the Bull confirming her own Rule. Absolute poverty was at last reenforced by the authority of Rome. The primitive Franciscan ideal was saved for the Second Order. Faith was crowned and triumphant. And so Clare died. She had fought the good fight of faith and had kept the faith. The course she finished was the course of lifelong faith. Therefore shall her daughters rise up and call her blessed!

LUX MUNDI

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and life; penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.

Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus. Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine

What's My Line?

The Franciscan Brother

Fr. Giles P. Bello, O.F.M.

We live in an age when the serious Christian is being challenged to examine his individual contribution to the building up of the Church. The Franciscan Brother is no exception to this general examination of conscience; he too seeks a clearer definition of his role and work in the Church. What follows are a few random observations on the life and work of the non-teaching brother of the First Order.

In delineating the vocation of the Franciscan Brother it is necessary first to consider the role and mission of the Franciscan Order as a whole. I believe that it is only in such an Order-wise perspective that the brother's vocation can be seen in its proper setting.

Living and Doing

What is the particular contribution of the Order of St.

Fr. Giles is particularly well qualified to write on this subject; he is director of the Brothers' Training Program of the Province of the Most Holy Name, in Croghan, N.Y.

Francis to the Church? In undelining the distinctive features of Franciscanism it seems obvious that we must abstract for the moment from the individual works in which the Order has engaged in the past seven centuries. Even a cursory reading of early Franciscan literature suffices to establish that fact that the Order's peculiar contribution did not stem from the distinctiveness of its labors. Preaching, ministering to lepers, home and foreign missionary work, the rebuilding of churches, teaching — all fields of endeavor were tilled by the early friars. Subsequent history and the present wide range of activities indicate that our reason for existence in the Church does not hinge upon the particular type of work in which the friars are engaged.

What, then, specifies and differentiates the Franciscan contribution to the Church? What justifies our canonical existence as a distinct religious order? Are we not correct in maintaining that the Church

has granted the followers of St. Francis canonical existence because she expects of the Order a particular form of life? It is the Franciscan way of life that justifies our existence as a distinct family in the House of God. *Living the life* remains our specific Franciscan role in extending the kingdom of God.

Franciscanism is basically a *living* rather than a *doing*. When the living of the Franciscan ideal holds first place, the *doing* comes naturally and vigorously. Indeed Franciscan living is intended to color all our works, permeating them with the spirit and approach of St. Francis. Thus even the activities of Franciscans will bespeak a certain distinctiveness.

Distinction for distinction's sake is, of course, vanity and nonsense. However, to reduce all manner of working for the Church to a common denominator is to undermine the value of the various approaches to gospel living sanctioned by the Church for valid and profitable reasons. If the Franciscan manner of working for the extension of the Mystical Body differs in no way from other approaches to the same goal, then the Franciscan spirit is not sufficiently alive and influential. Franciscanism must

be the heart and soul of our apostolate.

Everyone will agree that certain basic evangelical patterns must characterize all apostolic efforts. But individual efforts will differ somewhat according to the ideals, the points of emphasis and the approach of the laborer. The living of the Franciscan form of the religious life provides the motivation and drive required for all forms of Franciscan activity. The genuine success of Franciscan works is directly proportionate to the fervor and seriousness of Franciscan living. It would seem that this point bears emphasis in our present-day efforts to live the Franciscan life and extend the kingdom of God.

The Proper Balance

The stress on Franciscan *living* rather than *doing* should not be taken as an excuse for inactivity and sluggishness in an age that demands energetic and effective grappling with present evils and problems. The Franciscan charged with the care of souls cannot bury his head in the warm, comfortable sand of indifference under the pretext of fidelity to religious observances. The living of the life was never intended to be a cloak for tena-

city to the status quo or unwillingness to keep pace with developments beneficial to both religious life and the apostolate. Franciscanism has always proved itself capable of adapting to "places and times and cold climates". This traditional mark of adaptability, the willingness to incorporate more effective means to cope with modern exigencies, the readiness to experiment in an effort to make the Good News more relevant and influential — such qualities must never be sacrificed in the name of pseudo-zeal for Franciscan living.

It would seem that greater harm to Franciscanism is inflicted under the banner of *doing* rather than that of *living*. The fast pace of modern living, the activist society in which we live, cannot fail to have its influence on religious life. The shying away from the more contemplative aspects of our life in the name of increased activity can dissipate our energy at its very source. The fascination of external works, if not moderated, can exercise a powerful attraction and produce an energetic worker. But how much is the activist really producing for the kingdom of God?

The activist draws no

strength from the Franciscan life, for he gradually comes to the point at which he regards the living of the life as a considerable handicap to his activities. The extremist who looks askance at the vestiges of "medieval practices" does not merit refutation. But more refined and better canonized versions of the same viewpoint are sometimes heard. The Heresy of Action has not yet breathed its last.

Living the life cannot fail to be relegated to the familiar back seat in such an evaluation. And once the life goes, the basic reason for the community's existence likewise goes the way of all flesh.

Franciscan *living*, animated by the "spirit of holy prayer and devotion", still remains our primary contribution to the Church and the soul of the Franciscan apostolate.*

Divine Vocations

What has all this to do with the Franciscan Brother? In my opinion, a great deal. The brother has been called to the Franciscan life. He professes the same Rule, lives the same common life, enjoys the same spiritual benefits as his brother-priest. The Franciscan Rule and life is the common possession of both friar-priest and

friar-laic. If the living of the life is the fundamental contribution of the Order to the Church, then both priest and brother are equally bound as friars to extend the kingdom of God in this distinctive Franciscan manner.

I believe that a consideration of this kind helps to put the brother's vocation in proper focus, since it points up the fact that our brothers have a definite part to play in announcing the Franciscan message to the world. By living the life our brothers share in this indispensable and principal Franciscan contribution to the Church of God. Only the activist would question just how substantial a contribution this is. St. Francis certainly would not. Let every brother understand and appreciate his role in this primary apostolate of maintaining the fervor and vigor of Franciscan religious life.

While every friar is bound to live the life, the vocational work of priest and brother will certainly differ. The priest's activities will center around the exercise of the powers of Holy Orders. St. Francis would permit no one to minimize the surpassing excellence of these sacramental works, their efficacy being divinely preserved from the dust and cobwebs

that threaten merely human actions. Moreover, the bearer of these priestly powers, though he be a vessel of clay, would always be a primary object of Franciscan reverence.

The friar-priest's sacramental activities are essentially directed toward others. Hence, his necessary contact with the souls whom he must serve. The vocational work of our brothers does not have this necessary orientation to the active apostolate. Certainly the apostolic responsibilities of Baptism and Confirmation must be shouldered by our brothers. Certainly many opportunities for good are presented to the spiritually alert brother in his contacts with the faithful. Certainly the preaching of a good sermon in the traditional Franciscan way — no words necessary — remains an important outlet for his apostolic awareness. Nevertheless, these contacts will not have the same frequency or apostolic urgency as those of the friar-priest.

Traditionally our brothers have worked at the manifold tasks required for the smooth functioning of everyday life in the friary. Manual labor has formed the major part of the brother's vocational work. While it is true that the Constitutions of the Friars Minor

afford a range of vocational opportunities in which our brothers may engage their talents, most of these occupations continue to center around the maintenance and efficient running of the friary.

You sometimes hear it said that our brothers should be trained to undertake more secular and office work, thus relieving a greater number of friar-priests for more strictly priestly work. This observation has much merit and must be judged, of course, according to the abilities of the individual brother and the actual needs of the Provinces. Needless to say, decisions of this kind must come from provincial superiors.

Likewise the comment is occasionally made that the talents of our brothers should be utilized in lending a more direct hand in the lay apostolate. In an age when repeated exhortations are heard to enlist serious Christians in the ranks of apostles, the brother justifiably asks himself, "Am I somewhat relieved of my apostolic responsibilities by reason of my religious profession?" The brother understands that the basic apostolate of prayer and good example are powerful channels for his apostolic sense. But in view of present emphasis, is there not some-

thing more he might contribute? Again, the extension of this possibility depends on several factors, the ability and willingness of the brother, provincial needs and policies.

Values

But let not such comments regarding "new frontiers" of the brother's work, worthy as they are, be prompted by a spirit of disdain for the manual occupations of the friary. The occupations in which so many brothers have engaged with great supernatural profit in the past are not to be despised. It is through the sanctification of the humble details of ordinary work that many brothers of the Order have won their place in the sun.

Is it not a flicker of worldliness that prompts one at times to underestimate the value of the simpler occupations of life? A life that ordinarily attracts little attention, a life without splash or much public acclaim, seldom to make the headlines — no thinking person would say that such a life cannot be pleasing to God and productive of holiness. On the surface there was nothing very extraordinary about a humble Jewish Maiden, a group of shepherds, a carpenter's shop, fishermen, bread and

wine. The traditional pattern of a brother's work puts him in excellent company. A humble, simple life of dedicated labor, hidden with Christ in God, is certainly a life worth living.

Perhaps one superficial reason why this life is not attracting the number of candidates it deserves is that element of splash and glamour, which is an accidental note in other forms of the religious life, is at a minimum in the brother's life. People in the world see more purpose in the life of a priest or teaching brother or sister. But to devote one's life to what seems to be a series of hidden and lowly tasks —

this is where they draw the line. Such thinking, of course, is not overly penetrated by faith and is reminiscent of another short-sighted individual, who once complained about the apparent waste of some precious ointment. A life given to God in the religious state is never wasted; nor are there any trifles in God's service. St. Teresa would say, "God walks among the pots and pans".

The writings of St. Francis abound with exhortations to humility and subjection. This was a dominant theme in the formation which the first friars received from St. Francis himself. Brothers, by reason of

their life and work, have a better opportunity to foster and preserve this traditional mark than do their brother-priests. This point is beautifully made in the liturgy of the brother Saints of the Order. Unless the eye of faith is keen, the value of a hidden life of humble labor will never be seen in its proper light, nor will its powerful contributions to the Church be properly appreciated. It is only when faith grows thin that dissatisfaction and unrest creep into a brother's thinking on this score.

Priest and Brother

In religious institutes composed of both priests and brothers a certain amount of comparison is reasonable and inevitable, I suppose. Comparisons are good when they promote mutual understanding. As the thinking brother considers his brother-priest of the Order he must have some appreciation of the burdens, tensions and pressures of priestly responsibility. The fulfillment of a priest's vocational duties is certainly more taxing and demanding than the brother's. People in the world sometimes have little understanding of the daily commitments of the average priest. But such misinformation should not be

found in the cloister. The plea is not for sympathy, just fraternal understanding.

Fraternal understanding, however, is a two-way street. The thoughtful friar-priest holds in high esteem the vocation and work of his brothers. He looks upon the brother as a collaborator in the apostolate, backing up his priestly activities and helping to make them fruitful by his prayers and supernaturalized labor. Many a priest has drawn inspiration and renewed enthusiasm for the interior life from the piety and dedication of holy brothers of the Order.

The friar-priest is grateful, too, for the many burdens which the brother assumes in order that the priest might devote his efforts to more specifically priestly work. The details which keep the average priest at his desk when he could be out visiting the sick or taking the census is becoming increasingly numerous and burdensome. I suppose we will come to the point at which we will utilize the talents of our brothers in this area more in the years ahead.

This point, however, of relieving the priest for more directly priestly work can be overemphasized. This is not the main reason why a man comes to the Franciscan Brother-

hood. A man comes not to relieve a priest, not to be a carpenter, a tailor, a general maintenance man, nor any other brand of worker — that's all secondary. A brother comes to give his life to the service of God in the wonderful Franciscan manner. The particular way in which he employs his talents is a secondary consideration. The brother is first the Franciscan religious whose primary work is *living the life*. It is the duty of every superior to make sure that the brothers of his community have the opportunity to live the life as outlined in the Rule and Constitutions. A well-regulated and full community life is the mainstay of the brother, for unlike the friar-priest, he does not draw from sacramental ministrations the motivation and support so beneficial to growth in the religious spirit.

Correspondingly, it behooves the brother to show by his dedication to the life and his spirit of Franciscan service that the confidence and respect of his superiors is not misplaced. By bearing witness to the finest of Franciscan living, every brother can foster respect for his vocation and do much to offset any misinformation or utilitarian thinking regarding his life and work. The humble, hard-working

brother, in whom the "spirit of holy prayer and devotion" of sparks, is one of the glories of the Franciscan Order. Who can measure the spiritual contribution which holy brothers have made to the Church and Order by living the life and

* Acknowledgement is made to the excellent work of Fr. Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., *The Order of St. Francis*, trans. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969). A note of thanks is certainly due to Fr. Ignatius Brady for his continued work in making the writings of Fr. Cajetan available in English.

Schools of Spirituality

Fr. Daniel Higgins, I.O.R.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your souls" (Mtt. 11:29). In the words "learn from me" our Divine Lord clearly invites us to a certain understanding of Himself. We are to acquaint ourselves with the Son of God through personal investigation; we are to go directly to Jesus, examine His life, His manner of acting, and especially His way of thinking. He said,

Knowledge of Jesus

In this endeavor we are helped to a certain degree by others, but the main burdens rest upon ourselves. Moved first by the grace of God, using the talents He has given to us, and employing the Christian instruction we may already possess, we should familiarize ourselves with the Holy

Scriptures, particularly the New Testament. The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists comprise our main textbook in the course of learning about our Redeemer. This is no easy task, but it is well worth the effort; "... you will find rest for your souls."

We should constantly keep in mind that a theoretical knowledge of Christ and His teaching must fructify into a practical realization of Christian principles, in order to be really beneficial. A law school presupposes the practice of law. A sincere consideration of Christ should lead to a theocentric life, one centered in God. The great difference between the school of Christian spirituality and other types of school is that it requires a lifetime matriculation. Like any good teacher, Jesus avoids leaving us with generalities. He says "learn of me", and later on tells us very definitely, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mtt. 16:24). The general knowledge we acquire from Scripture and Tradition, from the theologians and saints, together with whatever personal spiritual direction we receive — all this erudition remains sterile and dry unless we put

it into practice. Christ gives us the opportunity and the choice. He knows that many will know of Him or about Him, but will never come to Him because they neither take up the cross nor love it.

We are children of our times; knowingly on occasion, in many instances unconsciously, we behave in accordance with our environment. Even in our relationships with God and the things of God, we show certain characteristics which are accentuated by our everyday living in a materialistic atmosphere. Yet it was in a very real and actual world that Christ was born, lived, and died. It is precisely here on this earth that we are placed to work out our salvation. However, a point worth consideration in this context is the effort required in order to avoid the infectious attitude of systematization developed in us because of the extreme orderliness of modern living. From electric computers to push-button coffee machines, we are given quick answers and neat service with the least bit of work or waiting. Would it be a surprise someday to find a nice shiny push-button machine conveniently placed in the chapel or church, which would readily cough up an ef-

In this article Fr. Daniel discusses the reasons behind the existence of schools of spirituality, and outlines some of their tendencies. The author is stationed at Hollidaysburg, Pa.

fective meditation, with or without second point? Needless to say, we know that prayer,

and more especially Christian spirituality in general, comes with effort and struggle. There are schools, there are systems, but it would be gross oversimplification to even think of an easy, clear-cut, and automatic way to union with Christ. There is nothing automatic about thirty-three years spent in expectation of a cruel agony and ignoble death. Yet the joy and peace of a heart united to God make all things bearable, and even ease the rugged way leading to the summit of Christian perfection. As someone has poignantly observed, "The Christian is not asked to swoon in the shadow, but to climb in the light of the cross."

Aspects of Christianity

Spirituality is a science. A science may be defined as any department of systematized knowledge; or again, it may be said to be a certain art or skill. Christian spirituality, which deals with the things of the spirit, may be defined as the science of the saints. A specific type of spirituality is "an organized system of principles and convictions, as well as certain pious practices which convert these convictions into

action, and into habits promoting the dutiful service of God".¹

The spirituality of all Christians must be essentially and basically the same. However, the Church, acting in the name of God, allows for differences in regard to the way in which people may serve God and do His work. "God is always the same, but His light is very differently reflected in the various individual temperaments and the schools of thought that have emerged throughout the ages, forming, as it were, a rainbow of many colours."² God distributes His graces and talents according to His divine plan. The light of divine grace shining through the prism of human activity is refracted into diverse rays. After the refraction the same light exists, but it is broken into various shades and colors, and thereby disperses the darkness.

Different schools of spirituality have arisen down through the centuries because one or the other aspect of the life of Christ or His message was emphasized. All the essential elements of Christ's gospel must be found in any Christian school, because they are contained in the source itself — the revealed word of God. "The differences of these vari-

ous systems stem mostly from the doctrinal, theological and especially the philosophical system of the respective spiritual families, their conceptions of God and of Christ, of grace, nature and sin."³ The acceptance of the entire life of Christ and His complete doctrine has to be present in the life of every true Christian. But since Jesus is perfect and man is imperfect, the latter has the capacity to imitate the former only to a certain degree. It is precisely the imitation of one or more particular aspects of the life of Christ that inclines His followers to select a specific type or school of asceticism. We may conclude, therefore, that different spiritual systems give prominence to various truths of the Christian faith.

Diverse Views

There are a variety of vocations in the Church, as well as a variety of ways by which God leads individual souls. The aim of all Christian schools and systems is union with God, but the way this is brought about will vary with each school.

Evangelical life has passed in the course of history through a variety of external forms. All of them, in so far as the

Church approved them, have been practical applications adapted to successive and varying epochs, of Jesus' way of life which the Church, "always true to herself" faithfully preserves and perfects.⁴

Christ's "good tidings" were spread by both St. John and St. Paul. John was particularly intimate with Jesus, as title "the beloved disciple" and his place at the Last Supper clearly indicate. In his writings he contemplated the Logos and envisioned the apocalyptic wrath of the Lamb. He reached such spiritual heights in his Gospel that tradition has assigned to him the symbol of the eagle. Paul, the townsman, was a fiery missionary whose words are like peals of thunder. He had an untiring interest in the Christian communities of his time, which not only prompted much travel but surely was part of the reason for his delving into the mystery of the identity of Christ with His Church. Still, Paul's many activities were the result of his sublime realization that "Christ lived in him". Thus we see already present in the infant Christian family a diversity of minds and temperaments, together with the preservation of a strict adherence to the teachings of Jesus.

During the early ages of Christianity, the beginnings of a theory of the spiritual life came into existence with the writings of the Fathers. In the West, Cassian (†435) sums up in his *Conferences* the important spiritual teachings of the first four centuries. His writings about monastic life during those times became a source of material for subsequent writers on the spiritual life. St. Augustine (†430), although never drawing up a detailed rule for the monastic life, did leave in his writings a store of general ascetical principles which were later to influence Benedictine spirituality. In the East, St. John Climacus (†649) in his *Ladder to Paradise* (in Greek, *Klimax*, whence his surname) set down a summary of ascetical and mystical theology. Dionysian spirituality, which takes its name from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 500), was based on a rigid and virile asceticism. Contemporaneous with the Fathers were the hermits, the precursors of monasticism. They considered the solitary life as part of the normal life of the Church, and left the world, so to speak, in order to find God.

After the early Christian

martyrs, who stand as witnesses for all ages to the truth of Christianity, comes another class of spiritual heroes, those who bound themselves for the love of Christ to perpetual continence — the celibates and the virgins. The early writers praise this ascetical practice above all others. These virgins became the Church's first social workers; they had charge of widows and orphans, took care of the infirm, relieved the poor and distressed.

Christian monasticism comes clearly to the fore with the tendency to control and regulate the daily life of the celibates. Those who preferred to live alone became the first anchorites or hermits, among whom the most famous are St. Paul of Thebes (†341) and his disciple, St. Anthony (†365). St. Basil (†379) considered community life to be a higher form than that lived by the hermits, and from his time the latter declined in importance.

However, the life of the virgins and the celibates in primitive times, and that of the monks later on, was the privilege of the few. This minority was greatly outnumbered by the thousands of believers whom necessity or choice bound to life in the

world. These made up the Church at large, and

In them, too, ran the same supernatural life, fed from the same sources which nourished those especially consecrated, and producing in the activities of ordinary human life the same superhuman fruits. For these Christians, too, the gospel — an institution and a belief — was also a way of living, a code of conduct based on a teaching, and nourished through a cult.

Later Developments

During the Middle Ages the principal schools of spirituality were the Benedictine, the Dominican, and the Franciscan. The Benedictine school stressed affective and liturgical piety. The rule of St. Benedict had been one of the most important civilizing influences in the Western world. The Dominican school, which united contemplation and liturgical prayer with the sacred ministry, and the Franciscan school, which is noted for its evangelical simplicity, also left their profound mark on the Church, and on society at large. All three of these schools continue to develop in modern times.⁶

Between 1300 and 1380, the German school of mystics brought forth much specula-

tion on Christian mysticism. John Eckhart, O. P. (†1327) is considered the founder of this school. The Flemish school (Gerard Groot, Thomas à Kempis, and the Brethren of the Common Life), closely associated with the German, concentrated on practical mysticism. Shortly afterward, the Carthusian school produced various teachings on the ascetical and mystical life.

During the Middle Ages as always, there were individuals who were not connected with any particular school of spirituality. For example, St. Lawrence Justinian (†1456), the first Patriarch of Venice, was outstanding as an untiring reformer of religious orders and for his practical piety.

In the sixteenth century, with St. Ignatius Loyola (†1556), we have the beginnings of a new era and what we might call new schools of spirituality. The Ignatian school, following in the footsteps of its originator, gives emphasis to an active, energetic spiritual life aimed at personal sanctification and apostolic work. One can readily observe the influence of this school of thought on later institutes and societies which were fired with the same enthusiasm and fervor as were the followers of Saint Ignatius.

Numbered among the so-called new schools are the following: the Carmelite school, following along the spiritual paths of its predecessors, teaches the supremacy of God and the nothingness of man, while emphasizing the apostolate of prayer and sacrifice; the school of St. Francis de Sales, which emphasizes the extension of devotion and sanctity to every state of life; the French school of the seventeenth century, which stresses a personal assimilation into the mysteries of Jesus. Included in this last group are the Fathers of the Oratory, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Sulpicians. Many of the founders of these more recent schools, like St. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, are known for their mildness; yet they were no less virile than the early ascetics, and never took the spirit of sacrifice out of piety. One of their great contributions to the Church was their success in bringing the spiritual life out of the cloister and back into the world.

The Situation Today

Opening the present-day Code of Canon Law, we see laws and regulations laid down for the various types of life found in the Church. Included in the wide selection of vo-

cations are clerics, religious societies of common life, secular institutes, and the laity. Also treated are groups known as associations of the faithful in general, and those of the faithful in particular. Two examples of the general type of associations are the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sodality of Our Lady. Included in the associations of the faithful in particular are the Third Orders Secular and various pious unions organized for some work of religion or charity. The life pursued and the works performed by these myriad groups are all infused with a definite spirit, and all are motivated by the desire to give honor to God and to save souls. Followers of Christ must realize that Christian perfection is possible and necessary for all of them. Did not Christ tell us, "Be ye perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48)? And Saint John admonishes, "He who is just, let him be just still; and he who is holy, let him be hallowed still" (Apoc. 22:11).

Providential circumstances, differences in outlook, or a great leader have grouped souls under one banner or another. Yet,

We must never forget that the end, the way, and the

means show much less divergence. All men must unite themselves more closely to God by following the way of His Son, namely the denial of self, by prayer and the sacraments, by avoiding evil and practicing virtue. Thus coming back to identical practices, the various schools avoid being blocked off from one another by serious barriers.

The teaching of the following two articles, found in the *Rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Penance*, is essentially contained in all systems of spirituality:

The great sign and aid to the love of Christ is the frequent and indeed the daily reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, which is at the same time a sacred banquet and a memorial of His Passion. Let it therefore be the care of religious souls to visit devoutly the Lord Jesus remaining with us under this wonderful mystery; for this is the inexhaustible Fount of all good (Chap. III, art. 7).

The proof, however, of the love of God is the exercise of charity towards our neighbor; hence, in the true disciple of Christ charity towards his

neighbor must shine forth; every word should be useful and honest. In order that charity may abound in deeds, it must first abound in the heart (Chap. III, art. 8).

The practice of these counsels should not only be found in the lives of Third Order Regular Franciscans, but should be carried out by sincere Christians the world over. This has to be, for they only rephrase the teachings of Christ and His Church.

A wholesome attitude toward the diversity among the schools will show us that they do not oppose each other, and that all schools are capable of producing sanctity. Of course, accidental elements of one school should not be transferred arbitrarily to another. Trappist silence should not and could not be practiced by one who is an active missionary, the daily plan of a professional social worker is much different from that of a person in the teaching profession. Still, the gospel can and must be applied in each of these circumstances by sincere Christians; all will have the opportunity of practicing Christianity, but each must do so in the surroundings in which he finds himself. It is worthy of mention here

that the effects of the many schools and systems of spirituality are seen very clearly today among the laity. No longer are the sanctuary and the cloister considered the only places for prayer and dedication to God; the market place is throbbing once again with a similar spirit, as it did when the Savior of mankind preached to the milling throngs.

Christ came into the world, and to the world He gave salvation. In every land, among all peoples, His gospel is capa-

ble of being lived. Men of quite dissimilar personalities and psychological make-up have the opportunity of putting into effect the doctrines of Jesus, each according to the individual gifts of grace and nature given to him by his Creator. We do not become holy by destroying our personalities, but by using them in our quest for the possession of God. An ever-provident God designed it this way. An ever-grateful people will respond until the end of time to this plan of salvation.

1. Valentine Breton, O.F.M., *Franciscan Spirituality* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1957), p. 7.
2. Hilda Graef, *The Light and the Rainbow* (Westminster, Newman Press, 1959), p. vii.
3. Breton, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
4. René Carpentier, S. J., *Life in the City of God* (Trans. John Joyce, S. J.; N. Y., Benziger, 1959), p. 77.
5. Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church* (N. Y., Sheed and Ward, 1949), vol. 1, p. 145.
6. Adolphe Tanguerey, S. S., *The Spiritual Life* (Tournai, Desclee, 1930), pp. xvii ff.

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5. Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church* (N. Y., Sheed and Ward, 1963) vol. 1, p. 145.
6. Adolphe Tanqueray, S. S., *The Spiritual Life* (Tournai, Desclée, 1900), p. xvi ff.

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

A short time ago we had the pleasure of speaking with a Third Order Secular Franciscan who impressed us as measuring up admirably to two of the qualities found in our Seraphic Father's description of the ideal friar: "simple and pure as Leo, ... intelligent and eloquent by nature as Massaeo."

Our tertiary brother happened to be showing us, with a hint of justifiable pride, his modest but discriminate library. Prompted, perhaps, by our own ill-concealed curiosity — he makes his living at a "blue-collar" job — he volunteered an explanation of how he had come to collect these books.

He told us that, although his aptitude at his partial trade assured him of a comfortable living, circumstances had prevented him from pursuing more than a minimal formal education. One day, several years after he had left school, his ideas came into his mind with sudden clarity: he was impressed with the realization that the primary purpose of man's intellect is to know God, and that he had developed his own intellectual capacity to a very small extent. And so he decided to embark on a program of improving his mind. He had no intention of becoming more proficient at his job, at which he was already expert; there was no notion of equipping himself for temporal advancement of any sort; nor was it his purpose to reacquaint himself with the catechism. His principal concern was to study — literature, the natural sciences, philosophy, theology — simply in order to increase as much as possible his capacity for knowing his heavenly Father.

When, please God, we shall arrive in heaven to begin our life of intimate and everlasting knowledge and love of God, our intellect and will which we shall bring to that blessed occupation will be the same intellect and will that have served us during this present phase of our life. These faculties will operate, to be sure, in the *light of glory* which God will provide. But glory will not usurp the operations of nature in doing any more than grace does here on earth. It will be by means of our present intellect and will — themselves unchanged — that we shall know and love God forever.

The Friar

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

The Living Christ

Fr. Bruce Ignatowski, O.F.M. Cap.

What do we see when we look about us in the modern world? We see a great number of people even Catholics, who are cold and indifferent to God. We observe many men and women who have not wanted to love Jesus Christ actively. While many people do live in our midst are kind and affable and good, yet too many of them are, for all that, unaware of God and the influence which He should have in their lives.

Catholic Herald

What, we may ask, is the cause of this widespread lethargy and appalling complacency? Why is it that so many, even among those who claim to be followers of Jesus, fail to exercise His charity in their relationships? As Franciscans, we cannot remain indifferent to these things. They urged them-

Bruce, of the Province of St. Francis, has contributed articles to the GOLD and to the Franciscan and Forum.

we selves upon the consciousness of our Seraphic Father in his day, and "that man who was entirely catholic and apostolic" did not dismiss them as irrelevant to his personal life. From the day when he heard the divine summons, "Francis, go and build up my Church," the Poverello was committed as an apostle to the whole world; he became Christ's herald to mankind, a messenger sent forth to remind men that they should warm their hearts with the love of Jesus.

We his sons and daughters are no less heralds, no less committed by our Franciscan vocation to building up God's church, by being witnesses to Jesus before the world. Whether we be ordained or not, and regardless of which of the three orders we have been called to, if we are Franciscan, then we are commissioned, each in his own state and manner, to carry the message of Francis to the world. Unless we are constantly alert to this aspect of our vocation, we shall

have forgotten part of what Franciscanism means.

And what is that message? It is the old good news of the gospel, the tidings that the Son of God has become man to share His divine life with His human creatures, and the consequent admonition that men should respond to Him.

It is important for us to remember that the message of the gospel is *news* even in our own day. Jesus did not establish a form of religious practice completely extrinsic to Himself, and then depart from this earth. Christianity is a religious way of life, itself enlivened even today by the abiding presence of its divine Founder. Each of us, as an individual cell of His Mystical Body, lives and grows by means of His life.

Every person preserves in his heart the memory of some loved one who, while long departed from him, yet exerts an influence over his life. But strong as this influence may be, it lacks immediacy because it arises out of the past. While those whose memories we cherish are in a sense still with us, we realize only too poignantly that their memory is a far different thing from their actual presence.

The Forgotten Christ

One of the great and real tragedies of our own time is precisely the same one which afflicted the contemporaries of St. Francis. In the eyes of many men Christ is only a historical figure, a person described in the ancient pages of the New Testament books, whose influence in the world lives on only in memory. As a matter of fact, it seems that we have in our own days passed far beyond the limits of the thirteenth century. Our world has grown much colder than had that of St. Francis. With the passage of our days Jesus seems gradually to slip from the view of an increasing number of men, becoming ever more obscure in their minds, a teacher of the past whose doctrine grows less relevant with the passage of time. The notion of Jesus of Nazareth has lately run a course of continuing degeneration: the majority of our contemporaries have completely lost the conviction, possessed by the ages of faith, that Christ the God-Man, lives mystically in the world; as time goes on, fewer seem to be influenced even by the memory of His existence; there are even those today who would try to persuade us that His historical

existence is either completely unreal or altogether meaningless. So it is that during the last few hundred years Jesus has passed, in the minds of many, from divinity to promiscuity, from myth to nonsense.

To put it briefly, Our Blessed Lord is not real enough to the modern mind; He has grown distinct and remote. Our contemporaries have forgotten, after actually or virtually, that He is truly a living person.

They have become unmindful of His active presence within the soul of the Christian by reason of the sacrament of Baptism; they have come to regard His actual indwelling in the soul in the abiding presence of the Blessed Trinity; they fail to remember that He within and increases His life within us through our reception of Holy Communion.

This forgetfulness of the presence of Jesus in the soul of the Christian beclouds one's view both of self and neighbor. It causes a man to forget his true dignity and the consequent obligation of living up to it within himself. It also causes a detrimental effect on relations with those about him. Failing to see Christ in his neighbor, he tends to treat his neighbor in a manner

which is less than Christian. On a purely natural plane, my fellow man is capable of appearing quite unlovable at times. When I refuse or forget to see Jesus in him, it is frequently difficult to treat that man with respect and esteem.

What our present-day world needs to be reminded of is that truth which lies at the very core of the good news of the gospel: God loves men so infinitely and perfectly that He desires to share His very life with them, wherefore He sent His only-begotten Son to become man and extend the divine life to His fellow men; and since Jesus has become one with us, we must strive in our daily lives to become other Christs.

The Part We Play

This, then, is what is ailing the world today, a forgetfulness of Christ and His gospel. But while the discovery of the ailment is the first step toward curing the world of the illness which cripples and confines it, it is not, certainly, the cure itself. It is but a doorway that leads to the further discovery of remedies and their application which are necessary to stir souls to their depths and arouse them to proper action. As Christians and Franciscans,

we must take up the lantern and show the world the way it must travel in this age of darkness brought on by secularism, materialism, and atheism. No longer may this lantern be hidden under a bushel, for Jesus declared Himself to be the Light of the World.

The Supernatural Viewpoint

Since it is Christ Who is the Light of the World by reason of being the Way, the Truth, and the Life, it is He Whom we must re-present to the world. But Our Lord is living as vibrantly today as He was in the days when He traversed the Palestinian countryside. It is clear, then, that it must be the living Christ Whom we must present to a world blinded by its pride and conceit. In order to do this, we must ourselves be aware of and live intensely the supernatural life.

St. Paul tells us that our life is hidden with Christ in God. The Apostle lived this kind of life so well that he could say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). St. Paul succeeded because for him Christ was alive. For him Jesus was not merely a pleasant memory, a cold page of history, a personality wielding only indirect influence upon successive gen-

erations. St. Paul's first introduction to Jesus took place when he was on his way to Damascus. Stricken down from his horse, he heard those meaningful words, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" (Act. 9:4). His very first contact with Christ was with the reality of Christ living in His members! His very first contact with Our Savior was also the realization of the never-forgotten fact that the Head of the Mystical Body is alive and active, exerting continual influence on all who possess His grace.

In the natural order almighty God is the one absolute reality; since all creatures depend on Him for their existence, one can say that in a sense He is more real than His creatures. In the parallel case of the supernatural order, it can be said that Jesus is much more real than we ourselves are, since the life of grace which we live is fundamentally and naturally His. How, then, can we make Christ more real to the world? How do we vince our contemporaries of Christ in His members is no sense more real than the members themselves? Here are pointers — ideas that can be triggered into many other. They offer a start; the full

spirit and the natural good will of those whom we approach with these ideas will be the rest. Having first made these convictions our own, we will be prepared to bring the message of Christ into the world.

1. Prominent among all our contacts with the living Christ is the reality of His presence within our souls through a sacrament *indwelling*. Together with His Father and the Holy Spirit, Jesus abides in our souls in order to effect a spiritual revolution there. God is present wherever He acts, and is present more intensely according as His action on the object is more intense. Now, in the indwelling, God establishes a personal influence upon the soul of the man in whom He dwells. This is what Our Savior meant when at the last Supper He promised us through His Apostles that He would leave us orphans, "If any one love me," He said, "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).

2. The Blessed Sacrament is the second means that God has set at our disposal for sustaining the living Christ. In sacrament of unity, we are united to Jesus Himself

and also joined to other men who receive Him.

Our union with Him here is the union which takes place between one who eats and the nourishment which one receives. In the Eucharist Jesus has given Himself to be our supernatural food, so that we may be assimilated gradually into Himself. But it is important for us to remember here that, even though we do receive sacramentally the entire Christ because of the Real Presence, yet the *communion* which is to be effected is not only a physical one, but also and especially a mystical one. This emphasizes the necessity on our part of approaching Holy Communion not only physically, but also with psychological dispositions, that is, with acts of our intellect and will.

Because Holy Communion nourishes our mystical union with Christ our Head, it also brings about a closer union between ourselves and other members of His Body who receive Him. But here again, we have work to do. We must give Him the opportunity of reaching those with whom we come in contact in our daily lives, so that He may reveal Himself to others through us. We shall do this precisely by

using the sacramental grace of the Blessed Eucharist, by allowing ourselves to become more Christlike in the affairs and activities of our lives, thereby presenting Christ to the world in ourselves.

Modern man is frequently lonely, even in the midst of his frantic search for pleasurable activity. What he needs is someone greater than himself to care, to be interested, to love him. In our attempt to bring a realization of the living Christ to the world, might we not approach our mission from the viewpoint of the fact that Jesus, the Son of Almighty God, is just such a one? As Thomas Merton beautifully puts it in his book, *Seeds of Contemplation*,

I who am without love cannot become love, unless Love identifies me with Himself. But if God sends His own Love — Himself — to act and love in me and in all that I do, then I shall be transformed; I shall discover who I am and I shall possess my true identity by losing myself in Him. And that is what is called sanctity.

A Danger to be Avoided

If we are to fulfill our Franciscan mission of bringing Jesus Christ and a realization of

His presence to the world, we must be careful to avoid a particular danger. Perhaps the most serious stumbling block to executing such a mission is the human respect that tends to smother our efforts. Every Catholic knows full well that he has been elevated to the supernatural order by grace. Too few of us, however, walk divinely. God lowered Himself and took on the form of a slave in order to live humbly, so that through His passion and death we might live divinely, by sharing in His life.

The principal reason we fail to walk divinely is that we are sometimes more concerned about what men think of us than about what God thinks of us. We find ourselves at times afraid to face the world alone. But even if such were the case, we should not be abandoned, for as St. Bernard tersely stated, "I am never less alone than when I am all alone." Our spiritual perfection sometimes becomes so nearsighted that we fear the opinion of our fellow men, who must die and return to God more than the judgment of Almighty God. When we detect this weakness in ourselves, we must fight it vigorously. We must gradually become the sort of person

whom St. Paul describes as "one who is not a world. It is a message of hope and optimism that assures men of our times that Jesus still lives, is active today, continues to influence men, and this in a most wonderful manner. For He lives not only in Himself, but also, through the sharing of the divine life with His mystical members, in people like ourselves."

Reflections on The Short Breviary

J. F. Hillabrand, M.D., T.O.S.

A musical instrument, an organ for example, is a most remarkable product of human ingenuity and inventiveness. The intricacies of its construction and operation must command the admiration of anyone to whom it is explained or demonstrated by a builder or accomplished organist. Even more amazing is its potential; the eighty-eight keys, manipulated by an artist, represent the means by which an almost infinite number of effects may be achieved. From Boogie-woogie to Bach, from Tschai-kowsky to the Twist, from the sensuous to the supernatural, from martial music or romantic ballad to the hymns praising Almighty God in the liturgy, moods almost unlimited may be induced by those eighty-eight keys.

The layman of today finds himself engaged as never before in a life full and complex, making demands on his time, with family and work,

with spiritual and worldly matters constantly striving for priority. He would welcome an instrument to guide and counsel him through his maze of daily duties. Perhaps he will allow an artist familiar with the Breviary to explain its construction and operation. The Breviary will be the organ; the hundred and fifty Psalms the music; and he, the layman, will be the student organist. He will discover a guide which commands ever greater respect and admiration with the passing of time, and will find in it also the potential for attuning himself to the almost infinite number of intricacies of life.

This is quite understandable when we remember that the Psalms and many other integral parts of the Breviary are the inspired Word of God. Prodding here, consoling there, now raising a hymn of praise in language and sentiment unequaled by human composition, the Breviary daily continues to reveal new ideas, to modify our understanding of the old, and to startle even those who have been praying it for years.

The mechanics of the recitation of the Office supply sufficient variation to avoid the very human weakness of sinking into the boredom of mo-

notony. As in playing the organ (but to an even greater degree), appreciation and the reward of accomplishment grow with practice.

The Breviary — it is old, it is new. It is hallowed and traditional, yet it is modern. It is romantic; it is serious. It is theological and scholarly. Yet it is devotional and inspirational. It is meritorious, replete with indulgenced prayers. It supplies never-ending food for noble thoughts, meditation, mental prayer, and solutions to the problems of daily living. Praying it is contagious, and tends to become incurable. Once the practice is sampled, it seems to become habitual. One feels empty, lost, and lonesome without it.

But why should this not be the case? After all, the Breviary is the companion to the Missal, and the official prayer of God's Church. It is, as it were, the voice of God speaking in His eternity to us His children of today, be we called to the religious or to the lay vocation.

A few examples chosen from the Saturday Office will serve to illustrate some of the heart-warming and stimulating ideas that are capable of inspiring and supporting us in our modern pattern of living.

In Matins we are advised to look to the Lord in His strength; seek to serve Him constantly" (Ps. 104:4). After all, the Lord, is our God; throughout the earth His judgments prevail" (Ps. 104:7). In His lesson, St. Peter exhorts us "to abstain from carnal desires which war against the soul" (1 Pt. 2:11).

Lauds reminds us that "the Lord loves His people, and He shows the lowly with victory" (Ps. 149:4). Furthermore, they that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God" (Ps. 91:13). When we are tempted to fret about Khruushchev's arsenal of nuclear weapons, we would do well to remember our plea to God in this hour of the Office: "Raise Your hand against the heathen;... crush the heads of the hostile powers who boast, 'There is no God but ourselves'" (Ecclus. 2:9). The exhilarating tones of the last Psalm, end with the ringing words, "Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Ps. 150:6).

The Psalms recited at Prime give us a perfect orientation for living each day in a manner, the manner befitting those who are, by reason of their vocation, soldiers of God: "For your kindness towers to the heavens and your faithfulness to the skies;... give us aid against the foe, for worthless is the help of men" (Ps. 107:4, 12). In praising God at Tierce, we are awed by the song of creation, which declares, "You fixed the earth upon its foundation, not to be moved forever; with the ocean, as with a garment, you have covered it" (Ps. 103:6-7). And St. Peter tells us here how we may turn our daily conflict into an act of worship: "If you are upbraided for the Name of Christ, blessed will you be, because the honor, the glory, and the power of God and His Spirit rest upon you" (1 Pt. 4:14). The Chapter from Sext could be read with profit several times each day: "Be prudent, therefore, and watchful in prayers. But above all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves; for charity covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pt. 4:7-8). And after the inspiring continuation of "the song of creation in None, we hear St. James' reassuring words in the Chapter: "Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been tried, he will receive the crown of life which God has promised to those who love Him" (Ja. 1:12).

Vespers reminds us of God's goodness and greatness, then offers us convincing evidence that He indeed blesses those who praise Him. The climactic expression of the entire week is found in the profound exclamation of St. Paul: "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments and how unsearchable His ways!" (Rom. 11:33). A few minutes of honest meditation on these words supplies the answer to every frustration and difficulty of life.

The beautiful prayers of Compline, the official liturgical night-prayer of the Church, have never been improved upon. Saturday's Compline is embellished with Psalm 102, an unsurpassed meditation on God as our loving Father: "He pardons all your iniquities, He heals all your ills. He redeems

your life from destruction, He crowns you with kindness and compassion" (Ps. 102:3-4). The thoughts of this Psalm are a powerful antidote against the fears of unfaithful service in the day that is ending, and provide us with an ideal to strive for in the day we shall face when we awaken from the night's rest.

So moving and so poignant are the Breviary selections for Saturday that one is often tempted to dare the doubting layman to sample this magnificent collection of prayer and not become a changed person. Yet, the devoted Christian, having committed it to memory, will never fail to derive new meaning from its revelation. But this should not be surprising to us. For God's power, His graces and His words, will never cease to be miraculously new and efficacious.

A REMINDER

The first annual meeting of the Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference will be held on November 29 and 30 at Mount Saint Clare Junior College, Clinton, Iowa. The theme for the year is *Elements in Franciscan Formation*.

Teaching. A Franciscan Challenge

Sr. Mary Antonelle, C.S.S.F.

If Franciscanism be equated with seraphic love, and if the love of God be the essence of the love of God towards our neighbor, then the Franciscan teacher has an apostolate uniquely her own. Undoubtedly, every educator must possess certain qualities: essential for success regardless of the cut or color of her garb, the level of her instructor or her status in life. However, we who have been nurtured on the ideals of St. Francis are expected to radiate a pedagogy distinctively Franciscan, for as our Rule concludes, "It becomes the child of all to reproduce in itself the image and virtues of its parent."

But just what are the distinguishing marks of a Franciscan teacher? How does one bring the spirit of the Poor Fellow into the daily scholastic curriculum?

Par et Bonum

Francis could summarize his entire way of life in a single word: the gospel. Perhaps he

would epitomize his entire approach to evangelizing in the Franciscan motto, *Par et Bonum, Peace and Good*. "How beautiful", remarks St. Paul, "are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace; of those who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom. 10:15; cf. Is. 52:7).

But where is there peace in an overcrowded class of wiggly tykes with cherub curls and impish grins? What good is to be found in being confronted daily by a group of restless teens seeking every opportunity to challenge authority and prove their independence?

Francis found the way, to peace and good through a paradox: it is in giving that we receive! We must often give up the peace of our cell, the good of kneeling in chapel, to spend spare moments in coaching a backward child, directing a play, preparing an exhibit, or performing any one of the million odd jobs for which we lack the time and personnel.

We must often give up our peace of mind trying to solve the complex difficulties that beset our problem children. We

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must give up the apparent good of accomplishment when forced with the futile failure of our best efforts.

By rejoicing with those who rejoice and by sorrowing with those who sorrow, we shall receive the peace and good of our own Franciscan vocation. Thus, St. Francis outlined the first requisite for his followers when he prayed, "Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace".

The students whom we teach have been born into a world which stands poised between a cold war and nuclear disaster; it seems not unlikely that they will be witnesses of either a near triumph of atheism or an enthusiastic Christian revival. We must convince them that peace can be attained by sowing love instead of hatred, *pardon* for injury, *hope* for despair, *light* for darkness, *joy* for sadness. How? Emerson stated that what we are speaks louder than what we say. Our Holy Father Francis advocated the same method of teaching when he took Brother Masseo to preach, and never said a word. We must be a daily living example of virtues so contrary to the spirit of these times. And so, St. Francis avers, "A man has only as much knowledge as he puts into action, and a religious has only as much good as he

puts into action. For the tree is known only by its fruit."

The famous Benedictine writer Dom Marmion defined joy as "the echo of God's life in us." Since happiness in this life consists not in the absence of crosses and trials but rather in the presence of God, our mere contact with students should diffuse some of the supernatural joy that overflows from a deep Franciscan spirituality.

But remembering that teachers like St. Francis and St. Anthony, despite all the charm of their sanctity, were forced at times to teach birds and fishes because man was not interested, we should not be disheartened if we seem not to reach all of our pupils. In the midst of overwhelming success, the saints also experienced the disappointment of ungrateful and unfaithful disciples. In such cases, St. Francis would encourage us with the words, "Lord, grant that I may not seek so much to be consoled as to console. Let me be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love."

In our apostolate for Our Lord, we must speak more to Him of souls than of His souls. As Jesus explained to His teaching staff after their first encounter with the inconvertible, this kind of soul can be helped

no way except by prayer and fasting" (cf. Mk. 9:28).

But although the Lord loves a cheerful giver, and our students should be happy seeking knowledge, this does not necessitate that the Franciscan apostolate be a happy-go-lucky acceptance of soft discipline. St. Francis would certainly urge us as St. Paul urged Timothy, "reprove, entreat, rebuke with all patience and teaching" (2 Tim. 4:2). And then, to the teacher who has spent an exhausting day trying to mold the characters as well as the minds of her students, he would say, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Our Holy Founder was aware of the sacrifice involved when he pronounced his benediction, "Blessed is the religious who takes pleasure in holy words and works of God, and who thus leads men to the love of God with joy, happiness, and exultation."

If, in accordance with chapter V of our Rule, we would approach everyone (including the intolerable principal, the misguiding teacher, the defiant child, the persistent salesman, the petulant crank, and the bickering neighbor) with the greeting "Peace!" and bear this peace not only on our lips but

also in our hearts, then should we be worthy of experiencing the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, and which will guard our minds and hearts in Christ (cf. Phil. 4:7). Then should we be capable both of receiving and of giving that peace which the world cannot give.

It Pays to Advertise

A salesman who lacked the desire to sell his wares would transact little business indeed. We who must be about our Father's business have inherited a rich legacy of Franciscan devotions which must be passed down to posterity through our efforts.

St. Francis understood the value of visual aids in instruction. The Christmas creche was a means of bringing the humanity of Christ closer to the heart of man. We too should promote it vigorously among our charges in order to counteract the commercialism that today overshadows the feast of the Nativity.

In order to enable Christians to follow more closely in the footsteps of the suffering Jesus, the Franciscans originated the highly-indulgent Stations of the Cross. Just how much do we encourage our students to this practice? Must it be said

that the children of darkness are more clever in spreading their doctrine than are the children of light?

Francis and Clare cherished holy water as a precious sacramental reminiscent of the saving waters which gushed down from the broken heart of Christ crucified. They knew that its use renews the graces of the baptismal water which enables us to call God our Father. Is the holy water font just a decoration in our classroom? with a dry sponge that our fingers never touch?

In time of temptation, Francis appealed to St. Michael the Archangel. He also rivaled the seraphim in loving God, and made "Our Lady of the Angels" an honored Franciscan tribute to God's Blessed Mother. Do we bother to teach our children a practical devotion to their heavenly guardians?

What about the greatest of all Franciscan arts — that of seeking the Creator in His creation? Have we tried to establish the Third Order Secular of St. Francis among the many other activities in our high schools?

Our Lord once said that every teacher instructed in the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings forth from his storeroom things both new

and old. The routine and diocesan would have no place in the teaching methods of our Master.

Franciscans should be "noisseurs of divine love." Having tasted that the Lord is sweet, we must now make known to others the tender delicacies of Jesus' love for man. Rodgers and Hammerstein captured this idea in their lyric "Love was not put in our hearts to stay; love isn't love — till it's given away!"

Our greatest means of sharing Seraphic love is the Sacrament of Love, the Holy Eucharist. Again, we Franciscans must assume a greater responsibility for fostering a reciprocal love. Through our influence and inspiration, the Mass, Holy Communion, and Eucharistic visits must become a vital and indelible reality for the children whom we teach. Since propinquity is the greatest matchmaker, what greater means than the Eucharist can we use to nourish vocations in our Seraphic community?

A special apostolate is assigned to those who teach in the *Confraternity of Christian Doctrine*. St. Mark tells us that the irreligious King Herod stated to condemn the Baptist because "when he heard and talk, he did many things

which to hear him" Mk. 6: 6. We sometimes feel justified when, after a hectic week, approach our instruction on Saturday or Sunday as a "second-rate apostolate. Yet children need the best preparation in order to make the good news" attractive to them. There is so little time for preparation, we protest. But St. Francis gives us some food for thought in chapter VII of the Rule. Let us ponder. Those who have dedicated themselves to the service of God should avoid idleness and devote their efforts faithfully and bravely to various works of mercy and charity. "I strongly desire," he wrote "that all the brethren occupy themselves with fitting labors. Let the unallied learn."

"Love is not loved!" cried Francis in his zeal for souls. It is our apostolate to remedy this "unlethargy" today. Zeal for our ideal must be the keynote of our vocation. Upon leaving the novitiate, all of us had been imbued with the fire of Francis. But to make Christ's way of life appealing is a challenge not only to the recently professed. The enthusiasm needed for forming saints cannot dwindle with seniority. Despite

many fruitful years in the Lord's vineyard, we must often remind ourselves of our Father's exhortation, "Let us begin to serve God, for till now we have done nothing."

St. Paul taught the same theme in his Epistle to the Galatians: "Let him who is instructed in the word share all good things with his teacher... And in doing good let us not grow tired... Therefore, while we have time, let us do good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6, 6:9).

When Jesus indicated to Francis that His Church was falling into ruin, the saint mistakenly set forth three times to repair God's house of stone. Likewise, we sometimes misdirect our zeal in building new schools, expanding classrooms, taking new mission, increasing external activities.

Francis soon learned that "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." He would agree with the contemporary poet who penned,

We are all blind until we see that in the immortal plan Nothing is worth the building unless it builds the man; Why build these schoolrooms glorious, if man unbuilt goes?

In vain we build more buildings—unless the builder also grows.

There is the dichotomy! the man — the builder; the student — the teacher. All our activities will be wasted unless while perfecting the mental, spiritual, and physical faculties of others, we too grow in perfection. Intellectually, culturally, yes; but St. Francis demands a greater maturity that can say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Thus, the true Franciscan makes a dynamic teacher, and the dynamic Franciscan makes a true teacher.

Humility Versus Zeal

To fall in love with Jesus is to fall out of love with self. Hence, St. Francis says, "My Sisters, God has called me to walk in the way of simplicity and humility, and He has shown me that this is His will for those who will follow and adhere to me."

Today, when television and the press point up the controversy of federal aid to education, our Catholic school system stands open to the critical eye of its adversaries. Does Franciscan humility demand that we keep our achievements hidden from the eyes of men?

Should simplicity move us to shrink from pursuing higher degrees and scholarships?

The answer to this question is found in the Epistle to the Ephesians: "See to it that you walk with care, not as unwisely, but as wise, making the most of your time because the days are evil. Therefore, do not become foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15).

What is the will of the Lord in this regard? St. Francis quoted Our Savior in chapter V of our Rule: "You are the light of the world. . . . Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:14, 15).

We must uphold the standards of Catholic education. We are forming the Catholic leaders of tomorrow. It is not vain ambition to take an active part in civic projects, be they essay contests on safety, poster tests on cleanliness, or speech tournaments on democracy. The public prominence which comes from regional and national competitions in science fairs, art exhibits, spelling bees, and the like, is not contrary to the spirit of Christ. The Gospel tell us that His enemies were confounded because the growth

"He has done all things well" (Mt. 7:37).

We are speaking here not only of the formal teaching of our students. St. Francis exhorts his hearers to provide good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men" (Rom. 14:17). What was the scope of the first gospel teachers? "Whatever things are true, whatever honorable, whatever just, whatever holy, whatever lovable, whatever of good repute, if caught by any virtue, if anything worthy of praise, think upon these things" (Phil. 4:8).

Let not the worldlings call us blind guides of blind men. At one time Our Lord reminded us whom He had set up as his teachers, that "No disciple is above his teacher; but when selected, everyone will be like his teacher" (Lk. 6:40). We do not offend against humility when we offer our students the best that God has given us. Then drives, campaigns, or other projects are announced, there are some who judge volunteers as leaders with initiative, as obsequious "seekers of a line-light". After all, they are, didn't they? Our Lord says he who exalts himself shall be humbled, and he who humbled himself shall be exalted. Yet, it is not strange that he

who puts himself at the helm must bear the brunt of the most difficulties and the greatest opposition? Doesn't the doer expose his failings and foibles more than the talker? Thus, in reality, he who opens his hand to accept responsibilities is simultaneously opening his heart to the possible acceptance of greater humiliations.

There are others who will complacently argue that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Again, it may be asked: who actually puts himself first? The teacher who undertakes extra chores must be constantly concerned about others. Her personal needs and relaxation are relegated to last place. So the Franciscan who may seem to be first in the eyes of men may in all humility be putting herself last in the eyes of God and self.

Our Rule admonishes us that we teachers, the so-called "white-collar workers of the religious life", should not refuse to perform the humbler tasks, and even perform them more willingly than other tasks. Though this includes our share in the womanly chores of cleaning floors, washing dishes, and the like, there is another menial task which we should strive to sanctify. Correcting hundreds of tests and composition papers is

a thankless task full of ennui. Let us make a virtue of necessity, and conscientiously offer this unseen drudgery in a spirit of Franciscan humility.

Poverty in Prosperity

The modern Franciscan Sister usually teaches in a well-equipped school, and lives in a convent which, while bespeaking simplicity, is nevertheless oftentimes very attractively convenient. We ride about in high-glossed station wagons, and may even hop a jet to attend that special teachers' convention.

Essential as these commodities are to the apostolate, our pupils may wonder just what makes us "poor Franciscans". How does our plush poverty harmonize with that of the *Poverello*? Outsiders may never see the material renunciations in our private lives, but they surely are able to recognize the fundamental spirit of poverty if it be present in us.

Our Lord promised that the poor would always be with us; and so they are. Children can sense it when we give choice honors to those whose parents are our best benefactors. They can judge whether the earnestness with which we collect mission-money is founded in zeal for the missions or in the desire

to outrank a rival class.

Perhaps most prevalent among us are the intellectually poor. St. Francis would hardly complain if he were given the "poorer" class to teach for the second year in a row. We profess to glory in our infirmities, yet how easily we shun the less gifted minds. The patience and concern which we show daily to the slow learner may never repay us with fame at the time of the scholarship examination; but they will teach our pupils that we sincerely mean it when we say, "My God and my all!"

Most trying to our spirit of poverty, however, is our association with students who are deficient in moral strength. We love to devote ourselves to working with the street-thoughtful child, but are repulsed by those who lack nobility of character. As elite followers of the poor Jesus, we should strive especially to pour out our spiritual largess on these least fortunate of God's children.

Reversals are bound inevitably to confound some of our classroom plans. After a year had lost the championship by one point, and inclement weather robbed a social affair of financial success, a disappointed teen said with resignation, "Well, Sister, that's the way the

all bounces: that's the way the world crumbles". This was his way of saying, "Sister, let the pass, pass." It was really an expression of that detachment from worldly solicitude which our students expect to find in us who teach them. After all, why do they flock to Catholic schools? To see a reed shaken by the wind? or a teacher clad in soft garments? No, we are their voice calling to them, urging them to make ready the way of the Lord. By our example we must be "as unknown and yet well known, ... as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6:9).

As followers of the way of the Poor Man of Assisi, we are divinely called to be apostles of peace and good. Like Francis the Herald, we are charged by our vocation with announcing the peace and good which our Savior came to bring, to a world torn by strife and anxiety and gripped by forces of evil. Our particular apostolate of teaching — if we have been blessed by such an assignment — affords us a special opportunity to proclaim this message to men. The ambit of our influence may be small, to be sure, our direct contact is limited to the relatively tiny

number of students with whom we deal immediately. But it should be a source of great encouragement to us to realize that our task of instructing youth places in our hands one of the most noble and precious commodities in all creation — the human mind, created after the image of God Himself. And the young minds with which we work are particularly open, eager, and malleable. Through them we can influence the entire world.

We should also remember St. Paul's claim to a share in the fruits of his own work. "So also the Lord directed that those who preach the gospel have their living from the gospel" (1 Cor. 9, 14). In dispensing Christ's peace and good to the world through those whom we teach, we merit for ourselves a share in these things. Thus, we have our supernatural living from the gospel which we are privileged to preach. If we dedicate ourselves faithfully and devoutly to instilling Christian peace and good in the minds placed in our charge, we can expect that our good Father in heaven will provide for us all — by granting us — in our own lives — the peace and good which is our heritage as daughters of St. Francis.

Franciscan Sisters:

A Need And An Answer

Sr. Paul Marie, O.S.F.

If our age is characterized by any movement, it is the pentecostal spirit, a spirit of wind and fire, new breath and new life. The New Pentecost of which the Ecumenical Council is the fruit and seed of further flower has been felt in the marvelous surge of *aggiornamento* in the total Church and in all her parts. Not last among the parts, to feel that urgent stirring of change are the many congregations of religious women.

That sisterhoods should be thus affected so soon is, on the one hand, surprising. Founded in the middle or late nineteenth century and only recently emergent from a pioneer stage of survival and slow growth, the majority of these congregations are enjoying a period of stability and consolidation of gains. Now, in a changing

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world and in the context of a changing Church, sisterhoods are being challenged to re-think their apostolate in terms of the times. On the other hand, it might have been expected that congregations of religious women would have experienced the need for adaptation by the simple fact that women have "come of age" in our society. These women, whose education has prepared them for a life of independence, responsibility, intellectual initiative, and creativity, have been entering and subtly altering our congregations. At any rate, surprisingly or not, the sisterhoods are in a period of creative ferment.

The development of the Sister Formation Movement within the last fifteen years is sufficient indication of the spirit of evaluation and adaptation at work among sisterhoods. The strength derived from the union of the congregations working toward a common goal cannot be overestimated. Pooling of resources and energies in the common effort has produced magnificent results. By the

Franciscan Sisters

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are taken this very unified carries within itself a real danger—the loss of identity and sense of uniqueness on the part, not so much of the individual congregation, as of families of congregations. To observe the same rule. The hazard is as real for Franciscan congregations as any other. Perhaps it is even more so because Franciscan sisterhoods are numerous and often small. The simplicity and brevity of the Third Order Rule allows for a wide range of specific constitutional interpretations which can become "spiritually neutral" if not rooted in Franciscan thought.

For these reasons, the Fathers of the Franciscan Educational Conference, under the direction of their president, Father Ernest Latko, O.F.M., at the eleventh annual Meeting of Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods held at Marian College, Indianapolis, Indiana, on November 23 and 24, 1962, inaugurated a plan for the Franciscan Sisters' Educational Conference. The Mothers General attendance and the sisters' representatives felt that the Sisters' conference should be completely separate from the Father's, having its own executive and planning committee

so that the sisters' needs might be more effectively met. To this end seven congregations were elected to appoint representatives for an executive board, which subsequently met to forge a constitution for a new organization and to make plans for future conferences.

The new organization differs from the old in a number of ways. First, the name, Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference, which suggests teaching sisterhoods only, now does not restrict membership in the conference to teaching sisterhoods, as it did previously. The conference and its work will be made pertinent to all congregations that follow the Franciscan Third Order Rule, whatever form their apostolate assumes. Secondly, the Sisters' Conference will be distinct from the Fathers' Conference, using their annual theme only when it is applicable to the situation of the sisters. The Sisters' Conference will also have a completely new list of speakers, many of whom will be sisters rather than priests. Thirdly, wider advance publicity will be possible because of the reorganization of the Conference.

Perhaps the most significant change lies in the restatement of the aim of the Sisters' Con-

ference. The statement of purpose in the new Constitutions and By-Laws reads:

This organization purposes to bear witness to the living spirit of Saint Francis by bringing to bear his mind, which is the mind of the Vir Catholicus, upon the problems of the times and upon the particular and contemporary needs of Franciscan sisterhoods.

This will be accomplished primarily through the annual Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference, which will provide these sisterhoods with the opportunity of mutual sharing of knowledge and experience.

In other words, the emphasis will be on the aspect of Franciscanism in contemporary society, and on the solution to

problems by self-study and mutual exchange on the part of the sisters.

Although the first Pentecostal wind penetrated the closed doors of the upper room, today's breath of renewal will sweep the vast spaces of open minds and daring hearts. Franciscan sisterhoods are throwing open the doors and windows of a closed view. They are daring to bring their Franciscan principles to bear on the Church's renewal, on her great evangelical, liturgical, scriptural, and ecumenical revival. They begin the great work of *aggiornamento* with the mind of Saint Francis, sensitive to the present needs of Holy Mother Church and responsive to the challenge set before them by apostolic women.

WAYS TO UNION WITH GOD

We must realize at the outset that it is not possible to choose the path by which we ascend. The soul can take only the path opened to it by God. One cannot decide to go by the way of the mystic graces and then enter it at will. God gives the mystic graces, or does not give them, for reasons we cannot fathom. They may be given to one who is much occupied with the duties of the home, and not given to another whom God has called to a strictly cloistered life. It would seem that God has willed to illustrate, in the spiritual biographies of souls, all sides of the wonderful mountain of perfection.

— Thomas Verner Moore, *The Life of More With God*, Image, p. 9

A New Seraphic Voice

Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

Observers of the contemporary theological scene have noted, rather frequently, that one of the characteristics of today's spiritual theology is a serious attempt to point up the relevance of perennial doctrine to modern life. This effort has assumed a twofold direction: today's theologian, fired by a sense of realism and aided by fresh methodological lights, is returning to a re-evaluation of the sources of the branch of theology; and, having thus assured himself of the authenticity of the doctrine which he possesses, he directs his attention to applying it to his contemporary concrete situation.

could list the names of several theologians engaged in this task, our attention has been drawn especially of late to the outstanding literary production of a single Italian friar, Father Marciano M. Cicarelli, O.F.M.

A New Voice

During the past ten years, Father Marciano — Minister Provincial of the Friars Minor in Benevento, Italy — has been gradually earning a reputation as one of the truly outstanding modern exponents of our school of spirituality. In this short period he has published six important volumes on various aspects of Seraphic doctrine, which have been received enthusiastically, not only by his compatriots but by the entire Franciscan world. This reception is reflected by the success of his book *I Capisaldi della Spiritualità Francescana* (*Essentials of Franciscan Spirituality*), which has already run through several printings, is in its second edition (1959) of the original Italian (1954), and is presently being translated into

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French, English, German, Spanish, and Japanese.

One of the impressive things about Father Marciano's work is his ability to apply solid scholarship and fertile speculation to so many different aspects of Franciscanism. *L'Ascensione a Dio (the Ascent to God)* 1951², is a series of meditations, based broadly on Saint Bonaventure's *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, which consider the infinite perfections of God as reflected in creatures, and especially in the soul who is living in grace. *Vivere Cristo (Living Christ)*, 1952, explains the manner of developing the Christ-life in the soul so that Jesus may increase and the Christian may decrease. *Il Dono di Dio (The Gift of God)*, 1953, describes God's love for man and its expression in the vocation to the life of grace. *La Collaboratrice dell'Altissimo (Co-worker of the Most High)*, 1954, is a series of doctrinal meditations on Our Lady's relationship to the divine Persons and to the Christian. *I Misteri di Cristo nella Spiritualità Francescana (The Mysteries of Christ in Franciscan Spirituality)*, 1961, presents the reader with a quite original insight into the "mysteries" or states into which the Word entered in the Incarnation, and

shows how the followers of Saint Francis should live them in their own lives as their holy Founder did in his.

Another thing which impresses the reader of Father Marciano's work is that, even in the professedly doctrinal *I Capisaldi*, the author is obviously not enamoured of speculation for its own sake. Like the Seraphic Doctor himself, he vividly understands that the purpose of theological learning is man's supernatural union with God: "*ut boni famus*." Throughout the work, in sections entitled *Itinerario*, he reminds his readers of the effect that the Franciscan approach to Jesus should have on their lives.

A third outstanding characteristic of this friar's work is its authentic Franciscanism. All of his books bear the unmistakable stamp of the Seraphic spirit, both in their content and their style. Not all of the books mentioned above, however, are *ex professo* treatises of Franciscan spirituality. The author's synthesis of the Seraphic way is to be found in the volumes *I Capisaldi* and *I Misteri*, which deal more directly with the Franciscan approach to life and its place in general Christian spirituality. These are to be followed by two others

now in preparation, which will deal respectively with the virtues as the ramification of the life of Jesus in the soul, and the relevance of the Kingship of Christ to our modern world. We shall devote one paragraph here to a brief description of *I Capisaldi* and *I Misteri*.

I Capisaldi

The volume entitled *I Capisaldi della Spiritualità Francescana* (Benevento, 1959³, 523 pp.) provides the doctrinal background for *I Misteri* and the two other volumes now in preparation.

In the *Introduction*, Cicarelli presents the concept of Christian spirituality, a brief summary of its history up to the time of St. Francis, a consideration of the sources of the Franciscan vision, and a resume of the essential notes of that vision. "Franciscan spirituality," he writes, "is this particular manner of conceiving and living the Christian ideal: love of the soul of all reality, both created and Uncreated; Jesus Christ, the Son of God and of Mary, is the foundation and center of the created universe and of the spiritual life of every man; the purpose of this life; poverty, humility, and sorrow are

the means to the attainment of this union; interior liberty, simplicity, perfect joy, and the apostolate are its fruits; and all this is conceived and lived in devout and faithful submission to the Church" (p. 98).

As illustrious a theologian as the late Jean Francois Bonneyoy, O.F.M., asserts that the author's "synthesis of the principal points of Christian spirituality from the sacred authors of the New Testament to our own days constitutes one of the most beautiful and solid essays that I have ever read" (*Presentazione*, p. 16).

Part I of this book is a discussion of the love which animates Seraphic spirituality, showing how the action of divine charity begets a reaction in the human soul. Part II, to which the author deservedly devotes the greater section of the work, is a treatise on traditional Christocentrism and an exposition of the particularly Franciscan doctrine of the absolute primacy in creation which belongs to Jesus and His Blessed Mother. In Part III the author explains the mystical union with God and the grace-life which brings it about; Part IV treats of the humanity of Jesus as the principal means — the virtues of poverty, humility, and sorrow being the secondary

means — of attaining to this union; Part V discusses the fruits of union with God; finally, in a sort of Epilogue entitled "Our Holy Mother the Roman Church", the author extols the Franciscan characteristic of loyal adherence to the Church.

Fr. Bonnefoy, who composed the Foreword to *I Capisaldi*, sums up the author's accomplishment as follows: "There was need of a book which would rest on solid foundations without being pedantic and dry; which would explain clearly the essentials of Franciscan spirituality without becoming a massive tome whose bulk would discourage the modern reader. Father Marciano Cicarelli has fulfilled this need magnificently. It is a pleasure, even for one who is a theologian by profession, to see him explaining profound and difficult doctrine in a few pages which are clear as crystal and as subtly colored as the painting of a master" (p. 16).

I Misteri

As we have pointed out, *I Misteri di Cristo nella Spiritualità Franciscana* (Benevento, 1961, 941 pp.) is a consideration from the Franciscan viewpoint of what have been called

the "mysteries" or "states" of Jesus — i. e., the permanent interior dispositions possessed by the Word Incarnate.

The first of the twelve parts into which the author has divided this book forms a sort of general basis and introduction for the entire work. It presents a summary of the diverse forms of imitation of Christ in the history of the Church, in the position of the place of St. Francis, the *alter Christus*, in Catholic spirituality, a theological elucidation of the "mysteries" of Christ, and — again, the practical application of doctrine to life — an explanation of how the soul is to achieve and develop conformity with Jesus.

One of the truly outstanding contributions of this first part of the book is the inclusion of the sources of Seraphic spirituality. Writing in *L'Osservatore Romano* (Nov. 16, 1961), Father Diomede Scaramuzzi, O.F.M. — himself an acknowledged expert in the field of Franciscan spirituality — observed, "We select for special mention in this part the excellently executed presentation of the primitive Franciscan works beginning with the writings of Saint Francis himself, considered as sources of spirituality. While the author does not enter into a discussion of the problems, for which there is really no room. In such a book, nevertheless, he has taken them into consideration; he reveals the copious notes to pertinent questions an exact and up-to-date learning which lends an uncommon solidity to his work."

Each of the remaining eleven parts of the book is devoted to one of the following "mysteries" of Christ: the Incarnation, the Infancy, the Hidden Life, the Public Life, the Passion, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the relation to the Holy Ghost, the Eucharist, the Sacred Heart, and activity in the life of the Most Blessed Trinity.

Each of these parts includes an exposition of the particular "mystery", and of the manner in which grace enables the Christian to unite himself to Jesus by acquiring His attitude, thereby in a sense living the life of Christ as a member of the Mystical Body. The author then demonstrates how Saint Francis understood and lived the mystery how his immediate followers imitated their Franciscan father, how the learned and elucidated it, and finally how the mystery is to be understood and lived by the modern Franciscan.

We think that in the presentation of this synthesis Father Cicarelli has made an important and quite unique contribution to the general science of spiritual theology. Scholars have noted in the past the existence of two trends in the following of Christ: one of them, represented best perhaps by the Ignatian and Franciscan schools, recommends a literal imitation of the daily exterior acts and words of Jesus as recounted in the Gospels; the other, led by the Berullian, or so-called "French School", stresses an acquisition by the Christian of those abiding interior dispositions or "mysteries" of Christ which now perdure in Him forever. Now, it is true that there is actually no conflict between these two tendencies: adherents of both schools of thought agree that on the one hand a merely external observance of the gospel would be sterile, and on the other a cultivation of Jesus' attitudes must certainly result in some external manifestation. But it seems to us that Father Cicarelli has succeeded admirably in showing positively and elaborating in detail how external imitation of Jesus and internal alignment with His states of mind can be intimately and profitably wedded.

Particular Points

In closing this brief discussion of Father Marciano's accomplishment, we should like to draw the reader's attention to two particular points in his work which seem to us to be especially noteworthy.

Those who are conversant with the science of spirituality inform us that the three essential elements of any school of spirituality are the following: the experience and vision of the founder, which sets the entire tone of this particular approach to Christian life; the embracing of his approach by disciples, which demonstrates the practicability of this form as lived by Christians other than himself; and the formulation of his vision into a scientific system by learned followers of the founder. While Father Cicarelli does not advert explicitly to these elements, he is obviously aware of their importance. Throughout his work one can trace the ideal of the Poverello, the observance of the first disciples, and the scientific synthesis of the theologians of the Order. This is in itself, we think, indicative of the solid scholarship in which these books are rooted. More than this; the author does not leave his reader in the world of purely scientific synthesis.

A NEW SERAPHIC VOICE

He leads him back to the world of everyday living (where a matter of fact, the elements of that synthesis were first actually experienced), and points out to him the way in which he is to be authentically Franciscan in his own daily life.

The author's second outstanding service is his solution of a particular, but quite important problem, scilicet, that of the precise determination of the respective places held by St. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus in the development of the Franciscan doctrinal structure. It was the Seraphic Doctor, avers the author, who translated St. Francis' religious experience into a true spiritual doctrine, especially in this teaching on Christocentrism, the life of grace, and the operation of the Mystical Body. To Scotus the Subtle belongs the glory of having constructed the edification of the universal devotion based on the absolute primacy of Jesus, which forms the backbone of the Franciscan Seraphic way. Thus, explains Father Marciano, the two Franciscan Doctors complement rather than oppose, one another. "Even though there is some difference of opinion between Saint Bonaventure and Scotus in the speculative order, this does not prevent one from

SAINT BONAVENTURE DESCRIBES

imagining both of them as authentic sons of Saint Francis. And this fact strengthens the possibility of constructing a single organic and ordered doctrine of spirituality in which there is a meeting of the more ideal and 'seraphic' elements of each. And this is a wonderful proof of the richness and the mentality for development which is inherent in the spirit of their Seraphic Father" (*Il Mistero di Cristo*, p. 29). From the foregoing brief de-

scription our readers can understand the importance of Father Cicarelli's contribution to the understanding of Franciscanism. His perceptive studies should greatly aid all followers of the Poverello in renewing the authentic Franciscan spirit and accommodating it to the present-day situation. We therefore salute this new Seraphic voice, and pray that God will bless his future efforts in bringing to the modern world the true spirit of Saint Francis.

Saint Bonaventure Describes the Sigma

Two years before relinquishing his soul to heaven, Christ's truly faithful servant Francis had undertaken the observance of a fast of forty days in honor of the Archangel Michael on the height known as Mount Alverna.

Immersed to an unusual degree in the delight of contemplating the things of heaven, and afire with the hot flame of celestial longings, he began to experience with growing perception the gifts of heavenly inspirations. Accordingly, while the seraphic ardor of his burning was raising him toward union with God, he was

being transformed at the same time by his tender compassion into Him who out of unbounded love had been pleased to be crucified.

As he prayed there on the mountainside one morning around the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, he beheld descending from the heavens the figure, as it were, of a seraph, whose six wings shone as though they were on fire. When its swift flight had brought it to a place in the air quite close to the man of God, this seraph proved to be not only winged, but also crucified! Its extended hands and feet

were affixed to a cross, and its wings were so arranged that one pair was raised above its head, a second pair sustained it in flight, and the remaining pair was wrapped around the entire body so as to conceal it.

The sight of this thing completely amazed Francis. His mind was filled with a mixture of joy and sorrow. For the kindly gaze of Christ, who was appearing to him so wondrously and intimately, aroused in him a boundless joy; yet the dreadful sight of His being fastened to a cross plunged a sword of sorrowful compassion into his very heart.

The vision which he beheld with his senses now instructed his interior faculties. He came to understand that, even though the capability of suffering is not at all in keeping with the immortal nature of a seraphic spirit, nevertheless this sort of vision had been granted to him in order that this friend of Christ might know that his complete transformation into the exact likeness of the cru-

fixed Jesus Christ would be effected not by means of the martyrdom of his flesh, but rather by a burning of his spirit.

After this mysterious and intimate converse, the vanishing apparition did indeed reveal his inner spirit with a seraphic ardor. But exteriorly it imprinted his flesh with a representation of the crucifix, as if the liquifying force of the fire had left its mark behind. For immediately in his hands and feet nails appeared, their heads visible on the inner side of his hands and the upper side of his feet, their points protruding on the reverse sides. And his right side, as though pierced by a lance, had been scarred with a ruddy wound whence his holy blood flowed, frequently staining his tunic and drawers.

—St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Minor*; Lessons of November II, Feast of the Stigmata. Tr.: Thomas Donald Ly

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

A short while ago, while reading an essay on the history of Europe, we felt the thrill of filial pride on seeing the author's accurate and sympathetic description of the socio-religious influence which our own Saint Francis exerted on the course of medieval affairs. Our pleasure turned to disquiet, however, when we came to the last sentence in the paragraph. The historian observed — presumably to indicate the intensity of the Franciscan impact on the world — that "some vestiges of the Franciscan ideal are still observable in the Roman Church of our times."

Is this unintended indictment true? Is it possible that an apparently perceptive and unbiased observer finds only "some vestiges" of Franciscanism in the world today? We who exult at being the sons and daughters of Saint Francis should do well to ponder seriously the question of what we have done with the heritage which our spiritual father has bequeathed to us. Are we members of all three Orders authentically Franciscan? Or have we so diluted the heady Umbrian wine with the water of compromising mediocrity and complacent softness that the genuine Franciscan spirit has become merely the subject matter of books on medieval history?

We should do well, perhaps, to reflect on the fact that, although the Seraphic vision was conceived in the ardent soul of Saint Francis himself, it would surely have died aborning had it not been for the heroic men and women who took it to their hearts and nurtured it to robust and vigorous maturity.

Men and women even as we are, they were giants in the spirit, those early Franciscans. Following the little man from Assisi required at least as much courage in those days as it does in our own, which generally clothe any religious activity with the white collar of respectability. It was with a terrifying and inexorable logic that they answered God's invitation to live the divine Son's gospel daily: fortified with a rugged courage of their convictions, they dared to go all the way.

Have we misplaced our Franciscan heritage? Or do we simply lack the heroism required to acknowledge it as our own?

The Editor

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Franciscan Simplicity

Fr. Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M.

Unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven. — Mt. 18:3.

When the late, beloved Pope John XXIII died, he was universally mourned and praised. Among the many tributes paid to him by editorial writers, one seemed to be quite unusual. A writer in a national Catholic weekly presented his views of, and his tribute to, the late Holy Father in an article whose title was set down in the form of the question, "Another Saint Francis?" The principal point of this encomium of Pope John pressed the characteristic of the Holy Father's personality that can best be described by the term "simplicity". In at least one writer's opinion, then, simplicity so marked the life of our late Pontiff that he manifested a resemblance to, or at least merited to be compared with, Saint Francis of Assisi.

With the thought of simplicity in mind, we can understand the late Holy Father's realistic attitude toward his approaching death. When informed of the seriousness of his last illness and of the imminence of death, he said, "I have rejoiced in the news I have been told; I shall go to the house of the Lord" (cf. Ps. 121:1). These simple words remind us of the closing stanza of Saint Francis' *Canticle of the Sun*:

*Be praised, my Lord, through
Brother Death of body,
From whom no man among
the living can escape.
Woe to those who in mortal
sins will die;
Blessed those whom he will
find in your most holy
graces,
For the second death will do
no harm to them.*

Conversion

The story of the conversion of Saint Francis is undoubtedly well known to all members of his three Orders. The most dramatic moment of this conversion took place in the court of the Bishop of Assisi when

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the merchant Peter Bernardone brought suit against his son Francis for stealing cloth from his shop. As a matter of fact, the father was ashamed of his son, who was embarrassing him before the respectable folk of the town. That the son of a prominent merchant should associate with the poor and the sick, that he should go about the streets in the company of the scum of the town, that he should be followed about and jeered at by the rabble of the community — these things in themselves were more than a man of honor could stand. When this very son of his resorted to stealing from his father's shop and then to selling the ill-gotten goods to help the poor, Peter Bernardone decided to take the matter to the courts. Since, as Joergensen asserts, Francis had received the tonsure and the minor Orders, the proper court for him was that of the cleric: the ecclesiastical tribunal, presided over by the bishop. Legally the father had a strong case against his son, and the bishop told Francis to return to his father the money which had been obtained through the sale of the cloth he had taken. The elder Bernardone's denunciations, his greedy demand for all that was coming to him, his cries of pro-

test when Francis disclosed that he had given some of the money to the priest at Saint Damian's for the upkeep of the church — all these factors strengthened Francis' conviction that material goods could hold a great danger for the soul who was seeking God above all things. Having handed over all the money which remained, Francis then took off the very clothes he was wearing and gave them also to his father, saying, "Until now I have called Peter Bernardone my father, but from now on I am going to say 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"

The Fruit of Simplicity

So convinced was Saint Francis that God alone mattered that he became the Little Poor Man of Assisi, the Portico Preacher, the Brother Seraphino. In his *Legenda Minorum*, Saint Bonaventure's biography of our holy Founder, the Seraphic Doctor describes the converted youth:

Meanwhile, the man of God through the love of the highest poverty increased in such fruitful riches of holy simplicity that, although he had nothing whatever of his own among worldly goods, nevertheless in the very Author of the world Himself, he seemed to be the possessor of all goods. For when, with the sharp vision

of his eyes, namely, the simple intuition of the mind, and the vision of the mind, and the look of speculation, he perceived all things to the highest, he recognized the Creator and Maker Himself, and loved and praised Him in all things, and happened by a heavenly justice of mercy that he possessed all things in God and God in all things. (*Legenda Minor*, 3, Lect. 6).

In his utter simplicity Francis would do without all material goods but the necessities of life, in order that nothing might hinder him from loving God above all things. In his poverty, Francis would rely upon Divine Providence, the care of his heavenly Father. Giving up all material things that he might have nothing he could call his own, he was able to find in God every worthwhile good. Taking God for his portion, he possessed all things in Him. Loving God as his Father he loved all things that God had made.

In the consideration of the first origin of all things, he called creatures, however mean they might be, by the names of brother and sister, as if they had come forth from the same womb as himself, as though he could embrace them more completely and more lovingly, which attitude exhibited the

pious gentleness of Christ by a natural similitude and fashioned by the significance of the Scriptures. For this reason, it happened by a supernatural outpouring of virtues that the nature of the brutes was changed in a certain way toward him and things lacking sense acted as he pleased, just as if this same holy man, simple and just, were transformed into the state of innocence. (*Ibid.*).

All creatures, like himself, had come from God; like himself, they had God for their Father. For this reason, all creatures were worthy to be called by the name of Brother and Sister. In his holy simplicity Saint Francis cast aside all barriers and divisions between himself and his fellow creatures. God, his Father in heaven, had made him and cared for him; so also God had made all other creatures and cared for them. As Francis reasoned, all men have God for their Father; so Francis never hesitated to approach any man as his brother, and to speak to him about "our Father in heaven". That man could be lord or serf, merchant or beggar, sultan or slave, pope or priest — God is his Father, Francis is his brother. It is this direct approach, this disarming frankness, this holy simplicity, this childlike

trust in all men, in all creatures, in his heavenly Father, that gained for him a hearing in all places and at all times.

What is Simplicity?

Thomas of Celano, the first biographer of Saint Francis, explained the simplicity of the Poverello in the following manner:

With what attentive zeal did the Saint show in himself and love in others holy simplicity, the daughter of grace, and sister of wisdom, the mother of justice. Not all simplicity was approved as good by him, however, but only that which, satisfied with its God, counted all else as nothing. Simplicity is that which glories in the fear of God, that which does not know how to do or to speak evil. Simplicity is that which, examining itself, condemns no one in its judgment; that which, rendering authority to its bet-

ter, seeks no authority. Simplicity is that which, not esteeming Grecian glories for the best, chooses rather to do than to learn and to teach. Simplicity is that which, in all divine matters leaving to the experts verbose digressions, embellishments and ornaments, boastings and curiosities, seeks not the bark but the pith, not the shell but the kernel, not many

goods but wholeheartedly the highest and sovereign Good. The most holy father demanded simplicity in his brothers, learned and the laics, believing it to be not contrary to wisdom but truly the sister of wisdom even though knowledge is for the poor of easier habit and prompter use. For this reason he says in the Praises which he made of the virtues: "Hail Queen Wisdom! the Lord save you, with your holy sister pure Simplicity." (Second Life, ch. 142).

The holy founder wanted to find this same simplicity in all his sons and daughters; and when he found it, he rejoiced. This simplicity which Saint Francis looked for in his followers can be seen exemplified in the life of Brother Juniper, one of the first of his friars. One incident involved Brother Juniper's catching a pig so that one of the sick friars could have a boiled pig's foot. When one of the brothers who was ill expressed a desire for a boiled pig's foot, Juniper ran out, caught a pig, and cut off one of its feet; then he brought the foot back to where the friars were, and boiled it up for the sick brother. In the meantime of course, the swineherd made quite a commotion, and when Saint Francis asked for an ex-

planation, Brother Juniper in his simplicity replied that if his pig had known of the sick brother's great desire for a boiled pig's foot, he would gladly have given him all four legs. This holy simplicity of Brother Juniper moved the swineherd to give the entire pig to the friars so that all the brothers could have a good meal.

Perhaps the simple and straightforward behavior characteristic of Brother Juniper, Saint Francis, and the other early friars seems out of place in this twentieth century with its veneer of sophistication and so-called refinement. On the other hand, it might be a good thing if we could appreciate the great good that a renewal of that spirit of simplicity could do for our times. We do not need much convincing to make us realize that we are living in a materialistic society. In the time of Saint Francis the primary concern of all members of society, rich and poor alike, was the salvation of their souls. Nowadays, it seems quite evident that money with the things it can buy, has become the measure of success. The value of everything seems to be measured in material things. For the Christian there is the

personal predicament of reconciling two sets of principles. The fault of the age is that men are led to hold a double set of values, a double standard of action. They follow one standard in those actions of the religious and spiritual order, and another standard in the social and economic order. In the one set of actions, right and wrong are measured in man's relation to God and the things of God; in the other set of actions, material success dictates the value of the action. Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ described this predicament when He said that "no man can serve two masters. . . . You cannot serve God and mammon" (Mtt. 6:24).

In Saint Francis' time, men were faced with the same problem that now confronts us. His contemporaries were aware of their most important goal in life, namely, eternal salvation. Sometimes the attraction of other goals, such as worldly honors and material possessions, made the most important goal take a back seat, so to speak, in their daily lives. They knew that their ultimate goal, the highest good, was God, but the attractiveness of these other goods became a stumbling block to some of them. Saint Francis wanted to make sure that the things of this world would

not prevent him from attaining the highest good, God, in the next world. There was no twofold set of values for Francis, but rather a hierarchy of values; God comes first, and everything else takes second place. It was this true sense of values, this simple, direct path to the one necessary goal, that kept God always before his mind. Compared to God, all else was as nothing.

The Answer Today

In April of 1959, our late Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, held the first canonization ceremony of his pontificate. One of the two saints canonized that day was the Franciscan lay-brother, Charles of Sezze. Pope John said of the new Saint Charles that "in his humility, retirement and self-effacement he saw nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Like his Seraphic Father, Saint Charles gave evidence of that characteristic virtue of our Order, holy simplicity.

How can we find this simple life in the kind of world in which we live? First, we must learn to place God first in our daily lives. We must learn little by little to begin to look at everything from God's viewpoint. Would God be pleased with my actions; would he ap-

prove of what I am going to do? Then, in our prayers we must strive to bring everything to God, trying to forget ourselves. Even in our prayers, are we not — let us be perfectly honest with ourselves — are we not sometimes more concerned with God's gifts than we are with God Himself? Mindful of God at all times, we will learn how to entrust ourselves to divine Providence. Being convinced of God's loving concern for our welfare, we can increase that child-like trust in His fatherly care. We must come to realize that God is all important. He is our first love. He is our heavenly Father; we are His children; we are loved by God who has made us.

Our littleness in the presence of God's all-embracing love fills our soul with love, gratitude, and humility. The Poorarello, the Little Poor Man of Assisi, our holy Father Saint Francis, truly understood his relationship to God, his Father in heaven. He poured out his heart to his heavenly Father in a manner that reflects the simplicity of spirit that is most characteristic of him, and ought to be characteristic of all his followers: "My God and my all! Who are you, O God most dear, and who am I, your little worm of a servant!"

Prayer of a Franciscan Sister to Mary

Dear Mother Mary, spouse of the Holy Spirit and bearer of Christ to men, be a mother of this lovely spouse who also bears Christ to men. Through my Franciscan vocation I am like you, Mary; but through my faults I am only a sinner. As a Sister of the Poorcello of Assisi, every day I wear my Franciscan habit girded with a knotted cord — reminding me of my vows of poverty, chastity and obedience — not in fear or shame, but with a holy hope and joy.

Virgin Mary, Holy Temple of God, who gave birth to the Holy of Holies, light the glowing candle of virginal piety in the sanctuary of my soul so that I may pray with a vibrant faith. Illuminate it with the candelabra of eternal light; make it fragrant by the incense of the altar; satiate it with the daily bread of Propitiation. Frequently remind me that the Mass is not just a small part of my day but the whole heart of my day. Inflame my mind and heart; preserve me incorrupt, body and soul.

In my daily Franciscan work, mirrored in the Gospels and sanctified by my Rule and Constitutions, give me an ardor that so routine can dim, a humility that no fame can confound, quiet determination in face of insults and disappointments, the simplicity of a Brother Juniper, a smile as bright as you are, the Morning Star, who heralded the dawn of a new day, and specially the grace to be myself. Comfort me in a Sister's own problems in Bethlehem's poverty, in Nazareth's labors, in Egypt's silence in Calvary's pain. Direct me always to be kind to the ambitious, the leprous, the retarded, because in God's eyes I am all these things myself.

Mary, my mother, you are the Lady of Consolation; help me to be a friend and consoler to all the afflicted. You are the Olive of Mercy; lift up my arms and help me pour upon the wounds of sinners the oils of thy Son's mercy which I too have given and needed. You are the Ivory Throne of Solomon; allow me to place my innocence and purity on the dais of thy immaculate fortress. You are Our Lady of the Angels; Saint Francis rebuilt the Portiuncula chapel in your honor; may I assist

in the reconstruction of thy Son's Church with the same ineffable solicitude.

O Holy Poverty, espoused by Saint Francis and exalted by Saint Clare, the advocate of the Poor, reach out some special gift of grace this day to each Sister: the young, the templed, the missionaries, the discouraged, the teachers, the dying, the hospitalers, the living martyrs behind the Iron Curtain, the straying spouses who have deserted their San Damiano enclosures. Help them and help me, O Mary, Queen and Patroness of the Franciscan Order, to esteem evangelical perfection and to embrace Christ, poor and crucified; and I in turn pledge you my Franciscan devotion and love in imitation of Saints Francis and Clare.

Through you — my special Rose and Fragrance of Lebanon, as the saintly Antonian Doctor sometimes greeted you — I offer my very-being to your divine Son. May you, Mary, always help me, poor little creature that I am, throughout the course of my entire life. When Sister Death welcomes me, hold high your lamp; help me through the portals of earth to eternity. Take me if I am worthy into the joyful court of heaven, so that I can be forever in the joyful company of Jesus my Savior and you, my sweet Mother Mary, and all my blessed Franciscan Sisters and Brothers. Amen.

Note: This beautiful prayer was composed by The Very Reverend Jude M. Rochford, O.F.M. Conv. We are advised that copies of the prayer, printed on a small card, are available at St. Francis Friary, 2425 Cherry Street, Toledo, Ohio (43605).

Word, Image, and Son

Sr. Mary Maristell, O.S.F.

Everyone whom God's grace has called to follow Saint Francis must at one time or another consider the way in which Franciscanism is distinguished from other forms of the Christian life. To become a Franciscan is to profess publicly that one will observe the gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This life of the gospel was not preached only for Franciscans. It is a Revelation of the life God would have every man live — the simple life of the God-Man, which we should live again. It is not the distinct mark of the Franciscan to be poor; many others have less goods of the world. It is not distinctive for the Franciscan to be severely penitential: Carthusians, Trappists, and others aim at a much stricter bodily discipline. It is not distinctive to be humble, simple, joyful, obedient, filled with delight in the beauty of nature, with happiness in the companionship of

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the family of God, with reverent love for our Father in heaven. None of these is distinctively Franciscan; they are effectual — concomitant expressions of the interior spirit that pervades the soul of the Franciscan as they pervade the soul of everyone who strives to live the heart of the gospel message. The distinctive mark is the open profession to a single purpose: to live the Christ-life again; to become, as did Saint Francis, another Christ given to the world for the salvation of souls; to become, as was the Seraphic Saint, identified with Him who alone is Life and came that we also might possess that Life. To be a Franciscan is to be another Christ. By becoming a Franciscan one resolves to imitate the Poor Man of Assisi in striving to attain to the perfection of conformity with Jesus. The goal is the actualization of the tremendous grace accorded Saint Paul, who could say, "It is now no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

Who is this Jesus in whose life the Franciscan must participate? What will it mean to be another Christ? Sublime, im-

penetrable mystery hidden from all eternity, it has at last been revealed to us. On heights of mystical contemplation it was given to Saint John to see Him — the Word of God without whom nothing is; the Image of glory and splendour of the Father, full of grace and truth; the Son of the Most High, who for us and for our salvation came forth that He might lead us back into the bosom of the all-holy One. The vocation of the Franciscan is precisely to be another word, another image, another son of God.

The Word

Within the utter simplicity of the immutable being who is pure act, God, knowing Himself, eternally utters His Word, a unique Word that is the adequate expression of everything that is understood, because this Word is identical with the one divine nature. And as the knowledge of God is only cognitive as regards God, but is both cognitive and operative in regard to creatures, which God understands in understanding Himself, so the Word is only expressive of God in Himself, but is both expressive and operative of creatures. So it is that the history of man is the story of the Word, a story beginning with

creation, for the created universe is the first communication of God to man. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork. Day pours out the word to day, and night to night imparts knowledge" (Ps. 18:2). This Word uttered by God not only revealed; it also produced an effect. For the Hebrews, thinking always of the expression of God's sovereign will and of the vehicle of His irresistible power, the creative aspect and the revelatory aspect of the Word could never be separated. Again and again God sent His word to man, each time becoming more articulate: the Law, the prophets, Wisdom, and finally the Word Himself, made very flesh to recreate and fashion all things anew. "In the beginning was the Word. . . . All things were made through him and without him was made nothing. What was made, in him was life and the life was the light of men" (Jn. 1: 1, 3). And this self-same Word was made flesh — the Christ. So then, to be another Christ one must fulfill the double function of the Word; one must show forth light that manifests the Father, and be filled with divine life in order to bring that life to others.

The Word as Light

Such a word was our holy father Francis. He called himself "The herald of the great King." It was his wish that the friars never be done with announcing and preaching and practicing the goodness of God, and it was in prayer that he came to know this divine goodness. To Friar Leo, who had witnessed his prayer, he said: "Know thou, friar, . . . that when I was saying those words thou didst hear, two lights were shown to me within my soul, one the knowledge and understanding of myself; the other, the knowledge and understanding of the Creator. (Fretti, II, 3).

The prayers of the Povarello also reflected this illumination:

Almighty, most holy, most high, and supreme God, highest good, all good, wholly good, who alone art good. To Thee we render all praise, all glory, all thanks, all honor, all blessing, and we shall always render all good to Thee. Amen. (Robinson, p. 142).

The same illumination was the source of the directive given in the First Rule of the Friars Minor:

Let us hold in our hearts, with love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and

exalt, magnify and give thanks to the most High and Supreme, Eternal God, in Trinity and Unity, to the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, to the Creator of all, to the Savior of all who believe and hope in Him, and love Him, who, without beginning or end, is immutable, invisible, unerring, ineffable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, blessed, praiseworthy, glorious, exalted, sublime, most high, sweet, amiable, lovable, and always wholly desirable above all forever and ever. (Robinson, p. 63).

Over and over, through such burning words to the friars and to all the faithful, there bursts the vision of divine goodness. It was no wonder that Saint Bonaventure wrote in his *Life of Saint Francis* that God had sent the saint

... as a light unto believers, that by bearing witness to the light, he might prepare for the Lord the way of light and peace in the hearts of the faithful. For Francis, even as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, shining with the bright beams of his life and teaching, by his dazzling radiance led in to light those who sat in darkness.

Nor was it any wonder that at Francis' death Elias, in his encyclical letter, wrote:

... our brother and our father was a light not only to us who were near to him, but also to those who were removed from us in calling and in life. He was a light sent forth from the true Light to enlighten them who were in darkness and who sat in the shadow of death, that he might guide their steps in the way of peace. He did this, even as the true Daystar from on high enlightened his heart and enflamed his will with the fire of His love. (Early Franciscan Classics, p. 209).

In Thomas of Celano there is likewise a reference to light. He wrote:

It certainly seemed in those days that through the presence of Saint Francis, and even through his name, a new light from heaven was reflected upon the earth... The blessed Francis shone like a bright star in the black of night, and glowed as the brilliance of dawn breaking over the darkness.

Very fitting was it, then, that when Pope Gregory IX spoke in the canonization ceremony he began with the words: "He shone in his days as the morning star in the midst of a cloud, and as the moon at full. And as the sun when it shineth, so did he shine in the temple of God". This was testi-

mony that the saint himself achieved the ideal as he saw it, for he had once said to a friar when explaining a text from Ezekiel:

If the text is to be understood generally, I take it that, that the servant of God should so burn and shine forth by life and holiness in himself, that by the light of his example and by the speech of his holy conversation he should reprove all the impious.

Would Saint Francis want the same for those who follow him even now, seven centuries later? If we look into the Mirror of Perfection, we find that he had confided to Brother Leo, his confessor, that one day while at prayer in Saint Mary of the Angels, he had been instructed about the future by Jesus Himself, who said, "And when the world loses faith, there will not remain any other light except that of thine Order, because I have placed them for a light to the world." The Word who is Light Uncreated has entrusted to all Franciscans the diffusion of this light shining forth in speech and example and holiness of life.

The Word as Life

There is, however, another function of the word. It must

be not just a revelation of all that God is, but it also must be creative; it must give life. From the very beginning it was through the Word that God gave being. In Genesis we read, and God said: Be light made. And light was made" (Gen. 1: 3). In close imitation of Genesis, Saint John's prologue says of the Word, "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him and without Him was made nothing" (Jn. 1:2). The Greek language here uses the same preposition as in the parable of the vine and the branches. There is no life, no action, in the branch which is separated from the Vine. There is no life in anything except it participate in Life Itself. This is a favorite among the Johannine themes: only he who possesses something in the highest degree can give it to others. Saint John goes on: "What was made, in Him has life (Jn. 1: 3), and in his First Epistle he says, "... God has sent His only-begotten Son into the world that we may live through him" (1 Jn. 4:9). Further on in the same Epistle, when he speaks of the three who give testimony in heaven and the three who give testimony on earth, he says: "And this is the testimony, that God has given eternal life; and this life is

in his Son. He who has the Son has the life" (1 Jn. 5:11-12).

This is the Christ with whom Saint Francis yearned to be one. the Christ whose ideal and prayer was "that all may be one, even as thou, Father, in me and I in thee" (Jn. 17: 21).

In his book entitled *In the Spirit of Saint Francis*, Foley speaks of the Poverello's eagerness to imitate Jesus in this function:

This oneness of Christ and the human soul, two distinct persons sharing the same human nature and living the same supernatural life as sons of the Most High Father in Heaven — Christ by nature, we by grace — is the Lord Christ's idea of Christian holiness. Francis made this idea his own; he strove to possess Christ and His life more and more. He wished to have fulfilled in himself personally the mission on which the heavenly Father had sent His Son into the world: the mission which Jesus had announced thus: "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Foley, p. 51).

Saint Francis knew he had been called to this vocation of giving life. In a state of doubt concerning God's will, he had both prayed and asked Friar Silvester and Sister Clare to

pray for enlightenment in regard to his state of life. To Friar Silvester was the answer given: "Go to Friar Francis and say unto him that God hath not called him to this state for himself alone, but that he may bring forth fruit of souls and that many through him may be saved" (Fioretti, I, 16).

Essentially this aspect of the Franciscan vocation can be fulfilled only by the personal holiness of each one. This life, a sharing in the divine life of Christ which we have received from Him and which He continually augments with our cooperation, is wholly of the spirit. It comes from within and works outward. The fecundity is interior. In secret, by the union of the love-inflamed soul with its Spouse Who is, eternal life is begotten in another soul. Accordingly, Saint Francis deplored the

many friars who place all their study and care in acquiring knowledge, leaving their holy vocation, and wandering with mind and body out of the way of humility and holy prayer. Who, when they shall have preached to the people, and shall have learnt that some are thence edified or turned to penitence, will be puffed up or extol themselves for their work and another's profit, as for their own; ... For those whom

they believe to be edified and converted to penitence by their knowledge and preaching, the Lord has taught and converted by the prayers and tears of holy, poor, and humble and simple friars, though those holy friars, for the most part, know not of it" (Mirror of Perfection, IV, 72).

Celano tells us in his First Life that the events of Saint Francis' own period in history bore witness to the fruitfulness of his holy life:

In a short time the face of the whole province was changed and she appeared of a more cheerful countenance, the former dryness was done away and in the field the crops sprang up quickly; the untended vine began to put forth shoots of divine fragrance, and, after bearing blossoms of sweetness, yielded fruits of honor and virtue together. In these most recent days this new evangelist, as one of the rivers of paradise, poured out in a holy flood the waters of the holy gospel over the whole earth. (Celano I, 15).

Even beyond the confines of the earth did the power of the saint's holy life extend. In the Fioretti we read that at the imprinting of the Stigmata the Lord made promise to Francis ... and even as I, on the way

of my death, descended into limbo and delivered all the souls I found there by virtue of these my stigmata, so do I grant to thee that every year, on the day of thy death, thou mayest go to purgatory and deliver all the souls thou shalt find there of thy three orders — minores, penitents, and others; and others likewise that shall have had great devotion to thee. And thou shalt lead them up to the glory of paradise, in order that thou be conformed to me in thy death, even as thou art in thy life. (Considerations on the Holy Stigmata Consid. III).

In the same Fioretti it is also pointed out that this function of giving life was also possessed by one of the sons of Francis, the holy Friar Giles. A certain Dominican friar, having been granted the grace of returning to this life after his death, spoke thus of his lot beyond the grave:

'Tis well with me, for I died on a day whereon a holy friar minor passed from this life, whose name was Friar Giles, and to him for his great holiness Christ granted that he should lead all souls that were in purgatory to holy paradise, among which souls was I, in the great torments; and through the merits of the holy friar Giles I am delivered therefrom. (Fioretti IV, 18).

Like Friar Giles, all Franciscans have received the commission of apostles. In his Letter to All the Friars our holy Founder wrote:

(God) has sent you through all the world that by word and deed you may bear witness to His voice, and you may make known to all that there is no other Almighty besides Him. (Robinson, p. 116).

If we are to heed this directive, if we are to conform our lives to Christ, we must be this word given and sent to give to others the light that manifests the Father and the life that flows from the Source of life eternal.

The Image

When Saint John finally wrote for us about this Word, years already had gone by since the days of his intimate earthly association with the Master. His First Epistle begins with the words: "I wrote 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" (I Jn. 1:1).

Probably John's use of the term "word of life" in the Epistle, though it means more than simply the news or message about the divine life, is yet less

than the Incarnate Word who possesses and gives life as written about in the fourth Gospel. Nevertheless this "word of life" is Jesus, the God-Man whom John, along with Peter and James, had seen in all the glory and radiant splendor of His divinity on the memorable occasion of the transfiguration. There he had *seen* unveiled this Holy One, who is the image of the invisible God. Of it he wrote simply: "And we saw his glory — glory as of the only-begotten of the Father — full of grace and truth" (Jn. 1:14).

In order that anything be an image, two properties are required: likeness, either in specific nature or in an accidental quality which would be a sign proper of the species; and derivation from the prototype which is the exemplar of the image. Since in God the procession by intellection originates a Word which is identical by one with the nature producing it, and since this Word is the perfect and adequate expression of all that God is, It is, therefore, the perfect, adequate, and subsistent image of the Father. Because Jesus is the Image of the Father, all that belongs to the Father is in Him, and He shows the Father in himself.

To be conformed to this image is the destiny of man. Saint Paul leaves us no doubt in this matter. In the Epistle to the Romans he tells us: "For those whom he has foreknown he has also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son." And those whom he has predestined, then he has also called; and those whom he has called, then he has also justified, and those whom he has justified, then he has also glorified" (Rom. 8:29-30).

Even by reason of creation we bear the image of the triune God, but through Baptism, given a participation in God's very own life of knowing and loving infinite Goodness, we can in faith contemplate the brilliance of the glory of Christ, receiving, as Saint John tells us, grace for grace because we receive of His fullness. Thus, we are transformed into the image of that which we contemplate — into the image of Jesus, who said, "He who sees me, sees the Father" (Jn. 14:9).

What is it that one beholds who beholds the Father in His image? The perfect image, one with the Father, is the glory, the splendor, "the brightness of everlasting light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty" — the image of His goodness.

Wis. 7:26). "Full of grace and the loving mercy and fidelity which He communicates to us, He shows forth the source and principle of divine goodness, communicating Himself. He who beholds the Image beholds God communicating sonship, beholds divine Goodness giving grace, virtues, the gifts — pouring forth into souls that supreme gift of charity, whereby we are enabled to love the infinite Good because He is good, and with the very same act we are empowered to love all men because of His goodness in them. He who beholds the Image beholds Love!

"An image, it will be remembered," says Sherrard, "does not take the place of what is absent, but actually participates in, and makes visible, the invisible and truly present reality of which it is the image." Truly present reality! We too must be love! It is this divine love which is life that is the ultimatum of our Rule. Gazing upon our divine Lord, Saint Francis realized that love was the impulse motivating His relations with the world; and the love as adopted, this Christ-like love as the force of his own life.

This love must give all to God, but what could man give? A creature can give only for-

mal glory, and Francis' reverence for God made his life a prolonged desire to glorify God by complete transformation into Christ, in whom the Father rejoices for seeing Himself in His own image. Only a total self-stripping could in any way assuage the burning thirst to give all. It meant absolute poverty — utter detachment from all creatures and from all self-will. Because love flamed so intensely, he knew the need to lay bare his soul in naked renunciation of all goods, of all natural love, of all self-determination. His poverty, chastity, and obedience were the first fruits of that wisdom which perfects charity. He chose to have only whatever necessities divine Providence would present, and the whole created universe became his; he chose to have no love but the divine act of charity, and the whole world fell in love with this tremendous lover of God's world; he chose to follow only the divine will, and even the beasts became subject to him.

Love ruled his life. And the primary and ultimate object of his thought and love was the triune God. From Jesus he had learned to know and love God as the ultimate end of mankind and of all creation, and especially as our Father. The fact of Saint Francis'

fervent love for God is brought out sharply by Ramstetter, who writes:

There have been those who said that the love which characterized Francis was his zealous and romantic love for Christ. One cannot overdo the zeal and enthusiasm of his love for Christ; but his writings tell another story. They tell us that he learned to love God from Christ; they tell us also that it was love for God, the Blessed Trinity, that really climaxed and characterized his religious life... Love for God is to occupy the entire Franciscan life. (Introduction to a Franciscan Spirituality, p. 360).

It was when he had descended from Alverno, marked as a most perfect replica of Love crucified, that Francis wrote his magnificent "Praises of God" without even a mention of the passion of Jesus. There was only the total outpouring of his soul to the triune God.

Seeing this supreme, infinitely good God in every creature, the heart of Francis poured forth its boundless love on all things God has made. Love was the basic directive of his life; it must be the basic directive of the life of each one who follows him. "Let them love one another.... And let them show their love by the works they do

for each other", we read in the Rule. And in another chapter of the same Rule he wrote:

And let everyone love and nourish his brother as a mother loves and nourishes her son, so far as God gives them grace... speak evil of no man, be gentle, showing all mildness... Let them not judge and not condemn... Let them not pay attention to the least sin of others.

Remembering the loathing that the refined sensitivity of Francis experienced at even the sight of a leper, we can see the heights to which his charity rose. The *Fioretti* (I, 25) describes the saint's gentle and mild love toward a man so afflicted with both leprosy and the evil spirit that he had become completely impatient and irritable.

The same heights of charity were reached by other friars, as early literature attests. One such story is that of youth who, having felt a furious temptation to return to the world, had been delivered from this evil by the care of Friar Simon. The young man thereby fell so in love with God and his fellow man that on hearing of a criminal condemned to have his eyes put out, he courageously approached the governor and offered to have one of his own

The Son

Thomas of Celano describes the great mutual love that existed among the first friars: *With what fire of love were these new disciples of Christ burning! What affection for the holy companionship of their fellows flourished among them! Whenever they came together any place, or, meeting along the way, exchanged the customary greeting, there rebounded between them a dart of spiritual affection... scattering over all their mutual devotion the seed of true love. And how they showed it! Innocent embraces, gentle tenderness, "a holy kiss", delightful converse, modest laughter, a joyous countenance, a clear eye a humble heart, a peaceable tongue, a "mild answer", a unity of purpose, a devotedness, an unwearying hand to help. (Celano, I 15).*

This was the overflow of love that had been freed by the heart's total subjection to pure love. This is the love that must flood the soul of each spouse of divine Love, the love that must radiate, must warm the cold and lifeless world, the love that images divine Goodness communicating Itself, begetting, through fruitful union with the consecrated soul, new life in the souls of other men.

Human language falters before the immensity of this mystery, the mystery of the Word and Image of God. One in nature and glory with the Father and Holy Ghost, He is named the Word to express His eternal procession and His perfect expression of the Father. Incarnate, He reveals to us the Father, whom no one has ever seen and whom no one can see in this world except in His Image. But it would be a grave error to think that outside of His function as Mediator and Revealer, the Word is nothing else. He is the Son. And He would be Son even though He had not been given the mission to lead us into the bosom of the Father. The relation of filiation has reference only to that procession by which He is generated eternally in the identity of nature. The Word is by nature God. However, being the Son, He has the power of making us to be what He is — sons also — if we but believe in His name.

The divine Father-Son relationship, as we see it existing between the human Jesus and His Father, is above all one of love, but it is also weighted with other notions that are consequent upon sonship. The Son, whose dignity is the dignity of

the Father, is possessor of the goods of the Father, and rightful heir to the inheritance. With utmost confidence He trusts the Father in all things, and in humility and gratitude He praises and honors the Father's excellence. In loving obedience He submits to the will of the Father, who knows all that is best, and with joyful freedom He accepts and uses the manifold gifts scattered profusely by a Father most bountiful. Throughout the Gospels are countless citations of Christ's sonship in these terms. Since "the Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God" (Rom. 8:17) then these notes also must characterize the life of every one to whom there is given the grace of being an adopted son of God.

To an outstanding degree these were the peculiar notes that characterized in a special way the life of Saint Francis from that moment when he appeared before the bishop of Assisi and, standing nearly naked in the presence of all, spoke to Peter Bernardone:

Hitherto I have called thee my father on earth, but henceforth I can confidently say 'Our Father, which art in heaven,' with whom I have laid up my whole treasure, and on whom

I have set my whole trust and hope. (St. Bonaventure, Life, Ch. 2).

To his brethren the Poverello held out the same privilege, reminding them in his Letter to All the Friars that "The Lord God offers Himself to you as to His sons."

As sons of the Most High God, a special dignity was theirs. Thus, Francis admonished them in the First Rule of the Friars Minor, "And wherever the brothers are and in whatsoever place they may find themselves, let them spiritually and diligently show reverence and honor toward one another" (Ch. 7). And again he wrote, "Consider your dignity .. and be holy because He Himself is holy" (Letter to All the Friars; Robinson, p. 114, cf. Mal. 2:2).

Because they were sons, all creation belonged to them. Celano tells us that Francis wished to have no claim to anything, so that he might more perfectly possess all things in the Lord. In the *Sacrum Communion* which extols our holy Father's love for poverty, Lady Poverty's remarks:

"I see no signs of wealth, except your happiness and contentment, your overflowing joy, your deep consolation, as if you are confident that the whole

world belongs to you." Then he arose quickly, asking to see the poor brothers in their cloister. The poor brothers led her to the top of a nearby hill, and, indicating the whole world with a sweeping gesture, said to her: "All this is our dear Lady." (Early Franciscan Classics, p. 195-6).

From this cloister they would be led to the kingdom of promise. In his Second Rule of the Friars Minor, Saint Francis reminded his sons that

"This, my dearest brothers, is the height of the most sublime poverty which has made you heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven; poor in goods, but exalted in virtues. Let that be your portion, for it leads to the land of the living.. (Ch. 6).

Knowing that he was the son of a mighty Lord who could do all things, Saint Francis lived in complete abandonment to Providence. Whenever he sent the friars out under obedience, he sought to instill in them the same trustful confidence. Embracing them with tenderness and fervor, he used to say to each of them, "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee" (Ps. 54:23).

It was because he knew himself to be a son of a most loving Father — a son who with all the power of his will loved that Father in return —

that he gave himself up to complete submission to the divine will in all things. That submission was foremost a submission to the Church, and is found expressed in every Rule. The form was always essentially the same as he first set it down: "Brother Francis, and whoever may be at the head of this religion, promises obedience and reverence to our Lord Pope Innocent and to his successors." (First Rule of the Friars Minor, Ch. 1). His love for the Church was due to his personal conviction of the sacramental character of the Church. To him she was really the mother of Christian souls, and he loved her with the love of a son.

That he was one of God's most favored children was a fact that Francis well realized; nor did his humility stifle his joy at knowing himself to be so loved. Rather, his humility and gratitude found expression in praise and adoration, and were transfigured into joy. By this joy, which he desired to see in all his friars, he meant a happy disposition of obtaining every good which presents itself to be done, a supernatural delight of the spirit that is the effect of the virtues, the beatitudes, and the gifts. It is rooted in the fatherhood of God, in the Providence of God, and in that

charity which impels the soul to a poverty of spirit so complete that, perfectly detached from all things created, the soul is disposed for the still greater gift of charity, the transforming union in which God and the soul in the profound freedom of love share intimately the joys of the kingdom even as it exists here on earth.

The Prerequisite

A study of the Sacred Scriptures reveals that not until men were steeped in lowly dependence and total surrender to God, to whom they clung with the love of a child, humbled in their sense of powerlessness, strong in their trust of Him, eager with a readiness to serve — not until this spirit of the *anawim*, the poor and lowly ones, pervaded the remnant to

whom the Word came, did God send His Son born of a woman. And it was to her, the faintest of the *anawim*, Mary, that He came; to her whose whole life had deepened her dependence and her surrender. Of all the poor in spirit, she was most singularly blessed. Of all to whom it is given to receive of Jesus' fulness, she has attained to the most perfect conformity. Mother that she is, she will gently turn our gaze to infinite Truth, infinite Goodness, perfect Beauty, before whom we too conscious that He has graced us to be among the *anawim* — surrender totally, freely consenting with the consuming hunger of love to the activity of the Holy Spirit in us, that we may be formed as was Saint Francis into another word, image, and son of God.

The Holy Spirit, being a living Person, dwells and acts in the innermost being of all who are really Christians; and so the effect proper to him is to bring together to unity and to the realization of God's plan men and things widely apart and unconnected. This is abundantly illustrated both in past history and in present experience. ... Whenever we look into the life of a saint, or indeed the spiritual history of anyone, it is amazing to see how seemingly chance occurrences turn out in the end to have been, as it were, prepared long before for some purpose, and that by a variety of circumstances often at first bewildering.

— Yves Congar, *The Mystery of the Church*

Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference

The first annual meeting of the Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference will be held on November 29 and 30 at Mount Saint Clare Junior College, Clinton, Iowa.

The new Conference is not an attempt to supplant the work being done by the Sister Formation Conference. It intends rather to supplement it by applying the general principles set down by that group specifically to Franciscanism.

How much specifically Franciscan formation is possible, or even desirable? In the ecumenical age, when inter-Christian differences are being minimized, should differences in spirituality within the Church be emphasized? Are there real differences among the Schools of Spirituality on the level of the actual daily apostolate? How is the Seraphic spirit to be communicated to the young members of the Congregation? How is the local superior to augment the initial formation of her subjects? These and similar questions will be discussed in the meetings of this year's Conference.

On Friday there will be a General Assembly and three sectional Meetings, under the

chairmanship of the following: Sister Mary Petronia, C.S.S.C., President-elect F.S.E.C., Madonna College, Livonia, Michigan; Sister Paul Marie, O.S.F., Secretary F.S.E.C., Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Sister Mary Alberta, O.S.F.K., Board Member F.S.E.C., Madonna High School, Chicago, Illinois; Sister Mary Carol, O.S.F., Board Member, F.S.E.C., Marian College, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The first day's theme will be set by Father Pacific Hug, O.F.M., in a paper entitled: "Forming the Franciscan Religious in Her Entirety." The means of achieving this, both in general and on various levels of formation, will be discussed by: Father Leonard Paskert, O.F.M., Franciscan Novitiate, Teutopolis, Illinois; Sister Mary Michaea, O.S.F., College of Saint Teresa, Winona, Minnesota; Sister Mary Paulita, O.S.F., Saint Joseph High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Sister Mary Ruth Agnes, O.S.F., Mount Saint Francis Convent, Dubuque, Iowa; Sister Mary Aurelia, S.S.J., Lourdes Convent, Chicago, Illinois; Sister Mary Rosanne, O.S.F., Saint Francis College, Fort Wayne, Indiana; Sister Mary Emilene, O.S.F., Mount Al-

verno College, Redwood City, California; Sister Mary Charitina, F.S.P.A., Saint Rose Convent, LaCrosse, Wisconsin.

On Saturday there will be two General Assemblies under the respective chairmanship of Sister Catherine Frederic, O.S.F., Treasurer F.S.E.C., Ladclyffe College, Highland Falls, New York, and Sister Mary Zygmunt, C.S.B., Board Member F.S.E.C., Alvernia College, Reading, Pennsylvania.

The theme of the second General Assembly and its accompanying Section Meetings will be "The Franciscan Sister in the Church's Mandate", and "Developing Apostolic Awareness," the latter subject will be treated of by experts in the various apostolates. Speakers will be the following: Father Leo Clifford, O.F.M., Saint Bonaventure Friary, Paterson, N. Jersey; Sister Mary Dolores, C.S.B., Mother of Perpetual Help School, Ephrata, Pennsyl-

vania; Sister Mary Emmanuel, S.S.J., Saint John's College, Cleveland, Ohio; Sister Mary Cortona, O.S.F., Mount Saint Clare College, Clinton, Iowa; Sister Mary Ione, O.S.F., Saint Teresa College, Winona, Minnesota; Sister Mary Amabilia, O.S.F.K., Saint John's Hospital, Huron, South Dakota; Sister Mary Euthelia, O.S.F., College of Saint Francis, Joliet, Illinois.

The third General Assembly will feature the reading and discussion of a paper by Father Xavier Harris, O.F.M., Notre Dame University, on "Formation: Franciscan Sisters as Leaders."

The staff of THE CORD takes this opportunity to congratulate again those who have made the Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference a reality. It is our fervent prayer that God will bless this first annual meeting and those that will follow with abundant success.

The Immediacy of Holiness

Thomas Donnelly

What would you do, do you suppose, if God were to interrupt your reading at this moment with the revelation that at midnight tonight you were to die?

Most of us would, I suppose, consider such an intelligence a very valuable grace, affording us the time to make an honest though hasty effort to tie up the strings of our life, to tidy up our affairs with God and our fellow men as best we could. But if, in the midst of a thousand final details, we found time for some reflection, we might very well be dis-

quieted by the awful awareness that we had pretty much let things go until the last minute. We might well be appalled at the realization that our time had run out, and somehow we never had got around to finishing our life's work.

As the twilight of life rapidly approached, it would undoubtedly dawn on us that our life's work had actually been, in the last analysis, to become a saint. The divine revelation mercifully granted to us would serve to throw a glaring light at last on a vague realization which had lain hidden for the most part in the shadows of our

unconscious: it is a sad thing to die leaving unfulfilled the capacity which God has given one for sanctity.

Who knows whether any of us shall have fully exploited our supernatural potentialities when the day of our dying dawns? Most of us, at any rate, must confess in all honesty that up to this present moment our resources in this area have remained pretty thoroughly unused.

Miniver Cheevy

With just a little reflection we can assign a variety of causes to our failure thus far to have advanced in holiness: too little genuine prayer, attachment to creaturely interests, imperfect motivation; their name is legion. But surely, one of the most common and pervasive hindrances to the pursuit of perfection is that attitude toward sanctity which we may describe as a fundamental lack of realism. It is our basic inability to see and accept ourselves as we are, and to start working from precisely this point, that frequently stunts supernatural growth. Positively speaking, this attitude is an il-

lusion, a fantasy in which we imagine that if we were somehow different, or were placed in other circumstances, or had been created at another time, why then we should be capable of scaling the very heights of sanctity; but, as it is, the odds are so much against us, that — well, why bother at all? We become very much like that child of scorn, Miniver Cheevy, who "sighed for what was not, and dreamed, and rested from his labors."

More than day-dreaming, this attitude is akin to the vice of envy, which impels us to begrudge our neighbor some good that he has. But, founded as it is on a lack of realism, it is a far stranger attitude indeed. For, as Dom Hubert van Zeller remarks, it is the envying of the good of another self, which self does not really exist.

The truth of which I must convince myself, in order to break out of this world of fantasy and get back into reality, is that I, here and now, can become a saint: *I, here, and now.*

I Am What I Am

It is imperative that the man or woman (or, for that matter, the child) who desires holiness begin with an acceptance of self. This is not to intimate, of

course, that one may carelessly down the avenue of life injuring others and excusing oneself with a blithe "that's just the way I am." What we mean to say is that at the beginning — before actually undertaking the labor of transforming oneself according to the specifications found in Jesus — one must take a long hard look in the mirror of conscience, and face the fact that what one sees reflected there is the raw material of sanctity, the block of crude granite from which an image of Jesus is to be hewn.

We are all so prone to excuse ourselves from striving at better perfection, comforting ourselves with the alibi that what we are is not the stuff of which saints are made. If only I were more intelligent, or had inherited better looks, or were not so prone to this particular sin; if I had that man's talents; had I been born into money as *shewas*; if only... ah, then could I become a saint; then I should have something to begin with. And so the litany goes. Like Don Quixote, we are waited away in our minds into some dream world, where we really would accomplish great deeds of supernatural derring-do — if only we were not what we are. And so we neglect the work at hand.

As a matter of fact, the omniscient God knows eternally what I am at this moment. I am neither better nor worse than what He eternally sees. Whether my present condition be the result of His absolute will, or of His permissive will as conditioned by my own activity and that of others, matters not at all. What does matter is that He desires eternally that I become a saint, and since I am at this moment what I am, it is from this point that He wants me to begin. How I came to be what I am is of no concern now; this is the material I must use.

God calls me to holiness knowing full well what my talents and faults are. Where I acquired either of these makes no difference here. The fact is that I do possess them now; they are part of what I am at the present time. And it is out of this present condition of mine that God wills that I rise to sanctity.

Starting Point

"Start Here": the terse command is printed in bold, vivid color on the game board. And he who would play the game obeys docilely, because to be from this particular point is at the very nature of the game. In the broader context of our

lives, we must submit to the same directive if we are to make any progress at all. It would be pleasant, perhaps, to be able to schedule my flight to sanctity from some place other than where I am at present. But the nature of my life as I am in fact living it demands that I take off from here.

"If only," thinks the father of a family, "I were a religious; why, then I should be a regular Saint Francis." "I think," muses the friar, "that if they sent me to the missions instead of keeping me here in this parish, I could really make a success of my spiritual life." And Sister is quite convinced that things between herself and God would be a whole lot different if only she were not stationed with this particular superior.

Now, it is certainly true that the placing of a person of a particular temperament in a certain set of circumstances will produce a situation that is something less than ideally congenial. It is equally true that, while I have had, and may even still have, some freedom of choice in selecting some aspects of my surroundings, yet some people, places, and things, are forced upon me from without. But here again a consideration of *why* I find myself in

this particular situation is not really relevant. Life is not lived in a vacuum; after all, one must be located in *some* situation. If the choice of remaining there or not is still available, well and good; but then I must begin from there. There are those who go through life changing their situation incessantly, shopping around, as it were, for new places, new forms of work, new companions, which they may try on for size. Things never seem to work out for them, and they are accurately described as drifters. Such people differ from those who would merely dream of another possible situation. Not only haunted by the illusion of what might have been, they waste their time foolishly in trying to make it come true; they spend their entire lives pursuing a will-o'-the-wisp which doesn't really exist.

What I must do is come to grips with the naked reality that I find myself at present in this place, with these people, doing this job. How I came to be here doesn't really matter. The thing is, I am here. And it is from here, in the entire context of my present condition, that I must set out on my journey to God.

If divine Providence means anything at all, then I can be

certain that my Father in heaven will not allow me to become involved in any situation whence it will be impossible to come to Him. I may find myself either through my own fault or because of the pressure of extrinsic forces, in a position which renders the attainment of holiness difficult. But then, is it not a truism that sanctity is never easy?

Now is the Hour

How many times have I found myself beguiled in reverie by the prospect of actually meeting the divine Galilean along some dusty Palestinian road? What an experience! — to have read the expressions on His face, been captivated by His flashing eyes, been inspired by His teaching as it fell warm from the lips of God Himself! Ah, what a loyal and devoted disciple I should have been.

How often have I, a sort of religious Walter Mitty, entertained the vision of myself living in the robust days of primitive Franciscanism, rowing the Umbrian and Reatine hills at the side of Francis "as pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility"! How wonderful to have shared the camaraderie of *meh* like Leo, Gino and Sylvester. Caught up in the

fellowship of such friars, one could hardly escape becoming a saint. Had I lived in those days, what a fine Franciscan I should have made!

The stark reality is, of course, that God does not will that I should ever experience in this life a face to face encounter with Christ or Saint Francis. There were people, certainly, who did receive this favor. But I must remember that they possessed their graces, and I possess my own. (It may be — come to think of it — rather fortunate for me that I was not presented with a choice in Palestine or Umbria; saying yes in those days demanded so much courage!) God wills eternally that I encounter Jesus now, in His Church, in the sacraments, in His mystical members, in prayer. He desires eternally that I be a keeper of the Franciscan flame for the world in which I actually live. God simply does not will that all men and women should live in the same place and at the same time. But I can be absolutely certain that, as God is just and loving, He provides me here and now, to no less extent than He has furnished others, with the things I need to attain to the holiness which He wants me to have. There is another way in

which I can fail to perceive the temporal immediacy of holiness. Have I not frequently caught myself procrastinating, even consciously at times, in the business of my supernatural life? Has not the career woman said to herself, "After I retire there will be plenty of time to devote to religion?" How frequently has it entered the mind of the Sister that on the occasion of her next retreat she will settle down to really loving God? What about the religious brother who resolves to overhaul his prayer life just as soon as he gets on top of the particular job that now occupies his attention? or the cleric friar who dreams of the holy life he will lead after he has been ordained to the priesthood?

This deferment of the work of sanctification may be reduced, perhaps, to a fundamental unwillingness on our part to change. What we must call to mind, therefore, is the truth that Christianity is, at its very core, nothing else but a living. And life bears with it the constant change of growth. God wants me to be growing in His grace right now, and He makes sure that the means to that growth are always at hand; I have only to reach out for them and put them to work. Not

knowing how much time is left to me, I may not wait until tomorrow; I may not put this work off until I shall have finished other tasks. What I must learn to do, then, is to *sanctify the present moment*. I must develop the will and acquire the skill of sanctifying what I am doing right now. When I have mastered this, the very progress of my life will carry with it the constant change of growth in holiness.

Consummation

On reading a description of the welcome which our holy Father Francis accorded Sister Death, one is rather startled at the elaborate preparations he made for the meeting. His actions were, for all their deliberateness, almost casual; there was plenty of time to see that each thoughtful detail celebrating the event would be arranged. One gets the distinct impression that here was a man who, having wound up his earthly affairs in good time, had thereby purchased the leisure in which to enter eternity in a manner befitting the Christian.

In his dying, as in his living, Saint Francis therefore imitated Jesus. On the night before Our Lord died, He assured His Father, "I have accomplished the work that thou hast given

THE IMMEDIACY OF HOLINESS

me to do" (Jn. 17:4). And at the very end He was able to utter those words whose brevity belies their broad and profound meaning: "It is consummated" (Jn. 19:30).

It should be the fervent prayer of every Christian that in the moment when his life here on earth shall come to an end, he shall have finished, in so far as he was able, the work of sanctification that God has given him to do. Death will be God's sign to me that the time for working is finished; what a horrible thing it would be to realize at that moment that I never really had begun!

Deliver us, Lord, from a sudden and unprovided death. May it please You to see to it that we depart this life fortified with the sacraments of Your holy Church. But, Lord, more than this we ask. Bless us now with the good sense to journey toward You while we still have light, so that darkness may not overtake us. When Sister Death spreads her dim mantle over our eyes, may we have finished the work that You have given us to do. May our faces be turned eagerly toward You, rather than regretfully backward to unfinished tasks; and thus may we enjoy the blessing of dying as Christians should.

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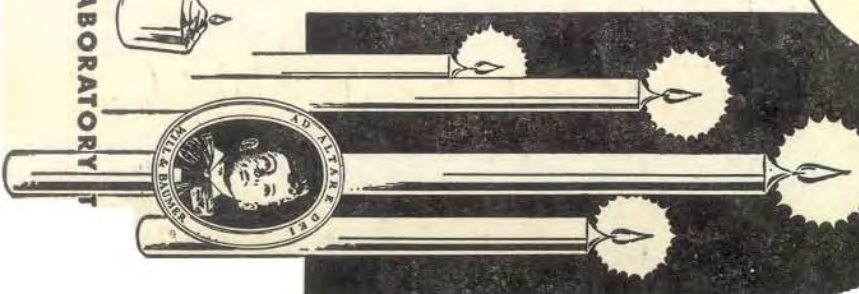
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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

Last July THE CORD carried an article entitled *Wanted: More Critical Catholics*, whose author described several dangers attendant upon the current accelerated dialogue between the professional theologian and the ordinary Catholic. One of the sophisms about which the writer warned was "the pendulum effect, wherein one reacts so strongly to any given position as to swing all the way to the opposite extreme."

An example of this effect — one which graphically demonstrates, incidentally, the swiftness with which it can take place — seems to us to be observable in the problem which concerns the place of particular schools of spirituality in Christian living.

Describing some of the "mistaken notions in present-day spirituality", Father Louis Bouyer rightfully decried only two years ago "the tendency to favor, nay, even to create out of whole cloth, exaggeratedly specialized spiritualities" (*Introduction to Spirituality*, Desclee, 1961, p. 20).

The operative words here are "*exaggeratedly specialized*." Well-balanced theologians have always taken pains to point out that the essential and more important elements of Catholic living are necessarily common to each and every spiritual school which is authentically Catholic. The Reverend author's observation, therefore, is well taken.

On the other hand, it seems to us that in only two years or so, the pendulum has swung, in some minds, to the opposite extreme. There are those today who, tending to minimize the value of schools of spirituality, take a very dim view of even the accidental characteristics of the diverse schools.

In fairness to the proponents of this position, let it be stated that their attitude is not simply reactionary. It is very true that the Church has recently been re-emphasizing the basic societal unity inherent in the Mystical Body of Christ. Concomitantly, spiritual writers have been performing a valuable service to souls by explaining the practical implications of this

unity in Catholic living. The Church's awareness that she is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (1 Pt. 2:9) finds current expression in the development of a view of the supernatural life which, transcending accidental differences of spiritual schools, is intent upon the life common to all Catholics. Because this approach to the life of grace is intimately connected in many ways with the Church's worship, it has been designated by many as Liturgical Spirituality.

Certainly, no one who understands the nature of the Church to any degree could think of disputing the existence and importance of Liturgical Spirituality. What we strongly take exception to is the tendency on the part of some of our contemporaries to suggest that the classical schools of spirituality are rendered obsolescent by this broader view.

We hope in future numbers of THE CORD to explore this problem of the coexistence of a common spirituality with those proper to the schools. At present we should like to offer a single consideration which seems to us to lie at the very heart of the matter. In his *Encyclical Mediator Dei*, Pope Pius XII took care to point out the necessity of personal piety in the members of the Mystical Body (NCWC Text, para. 31), and to urge as a means to it the imitation of the Saints, in whose virtues "there shines forth under different aspects the splendor of Jesus Christ" (para. 167).

It seems to us that the various schools of spirituality, each with its distinctive approach to Jesus Himself, can render a very valuable service to the common, universal Liturgical Spirituality by specifying it for, and accommodating it to, the ever-present individuality which arises from the differences of personality, temperament, and character found in Christ's mystical members.

The Editors

The Religious Vows: Some Metaphysical Implications

Bro. Berilde Montgomery, O. S. F

Common to all pain is the fear of ultimate physical annihilation. The reaction of the nervous system to pain is automatic, and affliction, be it mental or physical, is a reminder to the nerves of the ultimate disunity and destruction of the entire organism. It should be obvious, then, that the greatest fear is the fear of death. Certainly this fear is common to both animals and men. A dog wounded by crawling through a fence will suffer pain and react to the situation in a manner not unlike a man injured in the same circumstances. Both will perhaps whimper and automatically withdraw the injured member from the source of injury. Both the human and animal nervous systems are made aware that

even a slight injury, a slight lack of physical integrity, is an omen of the eventual complete disunity of the organism.

The reaction to pain, and ultimately to death, differs in man and in animal, however, just as rational man differs from irrational animal. Because of his nature, an animal can respond to nothing by choice, and consequently cannot respond freely to any agency outside his own organism. A dog's response to a kindly master is more an instinctual act rooted in a need for providing for the organism than a choice on the part of the animal to return his master's affection. A dog can choose nothing but the satisfaction of his own organism. Consequently, when death comes imminent, that is, when the animal is reminded of death by pain, its organic reaction can only be extreme fear.

We are very happy to welcome to the pages of THE CORD Brother Berilde, of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn. Brother is stationed at the house of studies, The Brother Columba Reilly Scholasticate, Brooklyn.

Man, however, endowed with reason and free will, is able to respond freely to agencies

outside himself. The affection between two people deeply in love certainly involves the satisfaction of an organic need, but it also involves a non-physical affinity of which mere animals are incapable. We can easily conceive of a wife deliberately choosing to undergo some suffering, not in order to satisfy herself, but to satisfy a need of her husband. We are reminded here of the wife unnaturally repelled by the marriage act, who willingly responds to it for the satisfaction of her husband.

It should be clear, then, that man is able to choose suffering, and by implication, death, while suffering and death remain the object of consummate fear in animals. This does not mean, however, that men are in the habit of willing death and suffering. Quite the contrary! We merely wish to state that man has the ability to will death. Man is still very much controlled by the same nervous system which instills fear into animals, and the dread of suffering and annihilation are common to both.

Religious Reaction

Man's ability to react to agencies outside himself has the most profound effects on human existence. The implications

of this reaction, however, have specific significance for the Christian, and most especially for the religious, who by his profession formula has publicly dedicated himself to an attachment to agencies outside himself, namely God and humanity. It is only by an understanding of the metaphysical implications of his profession that a religious can more fully understand the utility of his vows.

To see the implication of the reaction to an outside agency in the religious life, we must first understand the basic conflict which underlies the choice in religious profession. In choosing to relate to God rather than to ourselves, that is, to our own organism, we choose, in terms of that organism, death rather than life. The animalistic and material organism, as we have already stated, acts automatically, and knows nothing of religious dogmas and beliefs. Ideally, in choosing God, we choose union with Him — a union which is possible only when the organism has died. Our whole lives, then should be centered around the moment of death and the subsequent moment of complete union with God. To prepare for this moment, we live a life of mortification and suffering which

react adversely on the organism. The animalistic organism, knowing nothing of the motivation for these sufferings, sees them only as omens of imminent death, which, like the wounded dog, it very deliberately shuns and fears. Thus, the distastefulness of mortification, and thus, the paucity of saints. We are reminded here of the *Imitation*: "And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures."

Religious Vows

Viewing the vows of religion as the greatest mortifications and sufferings inflicted on the organism, we see that the organic reaction to them will likewise be great. The organic need for comfort and security is checked by the vow of poverty; the organic need for self-satisfaction and reproduction is checked by chastity; and the organic focus on self is checked by obedience. The early Benedictine practice of taking only the vow of obedience is interesting in the light of this discussion, for certainly above all the other vows, it is obedience which is most directly based on a reaction with an outside agency — the submission to

God, through the religious superior, of the self-seeking drives of the organism. By obedience alone the whole organism comes directly under the control of an outside agency.

It is unnecessary to add that the religious life, lived according to the ideal, is a constant conflict between the organism fighting for its existence and the spiritual desires for union with God. Like the injured dog, the organism will react violently to the reminders of its own imminent death. These reminders the religious has freely and deliberately chosen to accept, and has in fact surrounded himself with constant reminders of his own death. Each mortification inflicted on the organism is another omen of death, and each omen is reacted against by the organism, so that a cycle is soon set in motion. As mortification increases, the automatic reactions of the organism become more violent until, in moments of near despair, we begin to think that the wounded dog has triumphed over the desire of God.

The Saints

It is not strange, then, to read in the lives of the saints that temptation, which is the name we give to the adverse reaction of the organism, in-

creases with sanctity until the stage of mystical union is finally reached. Certainly, Saint John of the Cross' "night of the senses" is related to this conflict, and Saint Francis of Assisi's rolling naked in the snow was, no doubt, rather a jolt to his frightened organism. The triumph over the organism is perhaps most clearly seen in the lives of the martyrs. Their lives were so influenced by the outside agency of God that they chose death rather than life without God. In protecting the organism, that is, in choosing to live, they would have killed the spirit. But the spirit had so conquered the organism that for them, life without God would have been no life at all. Rather than choose spiritual death, they chose physical death.

At the moment of death itself, in an attempt to retain its being, the organism will react most violently. It is for this moment that the religious must properly prepare himself by a life of strict fidelity to his vows. Even in a life of strict mortification, such as that led by Saint Therese of Lisieux, we find that temptation grows strongest at the moment of death. While she lingered for many months in the infirmary at Carmel, Therese suffered the greatest physical and spiritual

agonies. These she offered to God, and yet she was able to say, "Last night I was seized by a terrible feeling of anguish. I was lost in darkness, from out of which came an accursed voice: 'Are you certain that God loves you? Has He come to tell you so Himself? The opinion of a few creatures will not justify you in His sight.'" Because she had lived a faithful religious life, however, surrounded with constant reminders of this very moment, she was able to triumph. Her victory came when, as she died, her love for God, her attachment to the agency outside herself, expressed itself: "Oh, I love love Him. ... Dear God, I love You!"

It is at moments such as this that the dignity of man and his distinction from the animals is most clearly manifest. Of all God's creatures, only man can face death with an act of love. Only man can prefer death to life. And only man can choose to die rather than to live in evil.

Our Lord

Christ Himself was not free from the combat, and as in all of life, He is our model of virtue and endurance. Praying in the Garden, Our Lord fore-

saw His own suffering and the almost invincible organism death. His warning to the disciples, "Rise up and pray that you may not enter into temptation," is prompted, perhaps, by the temptations to which He

cried out for its own being. At the moment of death, however, the spirit triumphed when Christ willed Himself into His Father's hands.

Just as Jesus, in a manner of speaking, chose death when He chose to become man, so too does every religious choose death on the day of profession. To conquer our material nature its climax came with the cry, and to die in an act of love, to "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The Son of Man Himself was tempted to live as religious and as human beings.

Let this be clearly understood, especially in these days: fathers and mothers of families, those who are godparents through Baptism, and in particular those members of the laity who collaborate with the ecclesiastical hierarchy in spreading the Kingdom of the Divine Redeemer occupy an honorable, if often a lowly, place in the Christian community, and even they under the impulse of God and with His help, can reach the heights of supreme holiness, which, Jesus Christ has promised, will never be wanting to the Church.

— Pope Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*

The care of the corpse, the provision for burial, the funeral ceremonies — all these are rather a comfort to the living than benefits for the dead. Despite this, however, the bodies of the deceased — especially the bodies of holy and faithful persons — are not to be disdained and carelessly disposed of, for their spirits used them in a holy way as organs and vessels for all manner of good works.

If a garment, a ring, or the like be more dear to the heirs according as it was cherished by their forebears, then the very bodies of these forebears are certainly not to be scorned.

Our bodies clothe us much more intimately and closely than any garment; for the body, far from being a sort of ornament or help for external use, pertains to man's very nature.

Hence, the dead bodies of the just men of old were cared for with respectful piety, exequies

were celebrated, and their burial provided for; moreover, while they were yet alive these just men themselves directed their sons as to how their bodies were to be buried, or even transferred.

When the desire to remember and pray for the deceased is expressed by the faithful who were dearest to them, it undoubtedly benefits those who merited, while yet living in the body, to profit by such things after this life. But even though something might impede the burial of bodies at all, or their burial in sacred places, prayers for the spirits of the dead are never to be omitted.

For all those who have died in Christian and Catholic fellowship, the Church has assumed the responsibility of saying these prayers, even without mentioning their names, in a general remembrance. She does so that those who have no parents, children, relatives or friends to pray for them may receive these prayers from the hand of the one, holy, Mother of all. If it were not for these supplications — which are born of a correct faith and a rev-

This selection, taken from the saint's De Cura Pro Mortuis Gerenda, is used in the second nocturn of Matins in the Office of All Souls' Day. Tr.: T. D.

erence for the dead — I think that nothing would help the spirits of the deceased, no matter in what holy places their lifeless bodies might be buried. Consequently, let us not entertain the notion that anything aids our beloved dead except what we customarily request for them by our sacrifices — whether those of the altar, of prayers, or of alms. Now, these things may not benefit all those for whom they are performed, but only those who, while yet alive, make provision so that they will be beneficial. But since we have no way of knowing who these latter are, we should perform these things for all who have been regenerated, so that no one who can and should benefit by these things may be passed over. For it is better that there be a superfluity of these benefits for those whom they neither harm nor help, than that they be lacking to those whom they do help.

Now, everyone performs these things more diligently when he does them on behalf of his own dear ones, so that they may be done just as diligently by those in turn who hold him dear. But whatever care be expended on the burying of the body, it is of no avail for salvation; it is rather a function of being human, according to that drive by which "no one ever hates his own flesh" (cf. Eph. 5:29).

It behooves each one, then, to be as concerned as he can be for the flesh of his neighbor, when the neighbor who bore that flesh has departed. And if people who do not believe in the resurrection of the body do this, how much more ought they who do believe in it so that this sort of care, expended upon a body which is indeed dead — but which is alive so to arise and live eternally! — may also appear as evidence of that faith.

Since that flesh which rose again, and having been restored to life, ascended into heaven, received resurrection and eternal life, this too is promised to us. . . . So far, indeed, the whole body has not received this, since the Head is in heaven, but the members are still on earth. It is not the Head alone that is to receive the inheritance, and the body to be left to itself. The Whole Christ is to receive the inheritance, the Whole Christ according to man — that is, the Head and the body.

— St. Augustine, *Sermo XXII*, 10

Real Life and Love Franciscan Style

Fr. Juniper Cummings, O. F. M. Conv.

For a Franciscan, there is only one real life and love. For a Franciscan, life and love are equivalent. The realness of that love-life is discovered by considering the scheme of things not from the bottom up, but from the top down. If we follow the viewpoint — of — Saint Francis and his theologian Scotus, we find that the supernatural order is more real than the natural. The truth of the oft-repeated slogan that grace builds on nature becomes evident to us when we understand that nature exists for grace.

Hypotheses

When Duns Scotus uses hypothetical conditions in his theological speculation, he does so not in order to describe some never-never land, but rather to throw light on the correct essential here-and-now condition of things. Our knowledge of life as gained from both re-

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velation and experience, assures us that there would never be a natural order if there were no divine, no natural love if there were no supernatural. The old question, "If Adam had not sinned, would there have been an Incarnation?" was not a merely hypothetical question to the Franciscan theologians; they were concerned, rather, with explaining the priority of intention actually existing in God's mind eternally regarding the Word's assumption of creaturely human nature. The hypothetical question of Adam's fall, viewing the problem as it does from another angle, serves only to clarify the answer to the question of divine intention. So it is with grace. All that God does is certainly done in a reasonable manner. Now, when any intelligent being wills reasonably, he wills first and foremost that thing which best accomplishes the purpose he has in mind. Everything that is, exists because God wills it to be. God necessarily wills the good which He Himself is; on the contrary, it is by a completely free decision, as Vatican I tells us, that God has created

beings other than Himself, in order that He might manifest His perfection through the good things that He bestows on creatures. Now, God's perfection is more manifest, and consequently His glory is more excellent, in the order of grace than in the order of nature. Therefore, God's willing of the order of grace enjoys priority of intention over His willing of the natural. Since God's is an ordered will, then the lesser is willed for the greater. Wherefore, nature exists for supernatural.

Nature and Grace

In God, to will to be is, in effect, to cause to be. God wills, and therefore causes to exist, the good that is supernatural and natural life.

The reality that we are considering here is God's love and acceptance of us, a love and acceptance which is over and above anything that is due to our nature considered in itself. But that nature simply would not exist at all in the present order of things, unless God willed to accept it and make it pleasing to Him in a way that is more than natural to it.

A Franciscan realizes the great difference between the natural and supernatural orders, but he also realizes that

anything which is merely natural is less than what it is to be. In acknowledging this difference, he simply reflects the constant teaching of the Church. For the fact that grace is something not due to man has always been emphasized in Catholic theology; the gratuitous character of the supernatural has been stressed explicitly since the time of Saint Augustine.

But Saint Francis, Saint Bonaventure, and Duns Scotus realized the truth — even as they lived by it — that love always does more than is necessary. Love establishes a community, sets up housekeeping, increases and multiplies. The lover adds to the beloved, and the beloved joyfully accepts from the lover. This, then, is the theology of the real purpose of our existence. This is the life; this is love.

Life and Love

It is God's love for us that renders us loveable and loving. What a gift it is to be able, not only to be loved, but also to love, supernaturally — and consequently naturally. This emphasis on love — neither law, nor duty, nor justice, but love — follows the spirit of the Seraphic Doctor. The Franciscan doctrine of the absolute

primacy of Christ and the primary motive of the Incarnation is proof indeed that Catholic theology is Christocentric, love-centered. Jesus exists because God wills to love and be loved by a creaturely nature, by one who exists outside the Blessed Trinity. And He so wills because He is infinite, divine Love. So real and so intimate is the union of divine and human nature in the Person of Jesus, that the Word Incarnate fulfills this divine willing, and fulfills it in a most perfect manner. We, therefore, exist because Christ is.

One may mention another specifically Scotistic doctrine which points up God's perfect love for His creatures. The Subtle Doctor teaches that, although in the present order of things justification after sin means a return to the state of grace, yet it would be possible for God to forgive the sinner and admit him to a state only of restored nature without elevating him to a supernatural life. While other theologians grant the possibility of God creating a human being in a purely natural state, Scotus' assertion that God could have forgiven man his offenses without necessarily elevating him to supernatural, emphasizes the divine generosity in our redemption.

The fact that in the actual order of things God, in forgiving us, not only removes us from a state of enmity, but also renders us His friends and children, shows the superabundance of His love.

Man's Merits

Scotus' notion of merit reflects this same preoccupation with God's love. His insistence that man's meriting finds its root primarily in God's preordination to accept human work and not in the value which may be intrinsic to such works, again shows God's tender love in giving us the wherewithal for meriting a reward that exceeds the natural power of any created being. This same emphasis, by the way, also serves to refute the objection of many sincere Protestant scholars, who claim that the popular Catholic teaching on grace is Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian, in as much as it overstates man's natural powers and underplays the role of Christ and His grace in the drama of man's supernatural life.

Since God does not have to create, all of creation is therefore an effect of His love. Grace, moreover, is something over and above creation. Superadded to what belongs to, or is needed by, created nature, it is

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things which He imparts to creatures" (Vatican I, *Dei Filius*, Ch. 1). Now, the greatest thing God can impart to a creature is eternal beatitude, everlasting happiness in union with God. This means that as far as man's good is concerned, the ultimate reason for creation is eternal beatitude. This reason, however, is secondary because it concerns creatural man; it is subordinate to the reason which concerns God Himself. Since man's everlasting happiness manifests God's perfection, it follows that the ultimate reason for God creating is this manifestation; and the manifestation is properly called glory. Therefore, in the eternal act of creating, the ultimate purpose or intention in God's mind is His own glory. Secondly — and ordered to this ultimate purpose — is the happiness of creatures. And since the humanity of Jesus is both preeminent among creatures and assumed by the eternal Word as His very own, so in the creatural realm it is Christ's glory that is primarily willed.

Now, when we speak of God, there can be no question of any sort of cause; Himself completely uncaused, God creates with absolute freedom. We speak, therefore, of God's activity as having reason and intention,

but not causality. When, however, we are dealing with creatures, we can speak of them having causality, for they are themselves effects. From what we have said above, then, we can delineate the causality of creatures as follows: the final cause, i. e., the end or purpose of the supernatural order, whose supernatural order, as we have pointed out in the first part of this article; and the final cause of the supernatural order, whose life is called grace, is the glory of God and of Christ, through the blessedness of the graced creatures who comprise the whole Christ.

God is altogether sufficient in and for Himself. Everything which exists outside of Him is created for His external glory. So God wills His glory in all of His works. In outlining the causality of grace, Duns Scotus borrows a sound philosophical principle enunciated by Saint Thomas and other Scholastics, and verified by human experience: "Whoever wills in an orderly manner the end and those things which lead to the end, wills first and foremost the end itself, and then other things which are willed for that end."

Applying this principle to the economy of grace, the Subtle Doctor states that God first wills the eternal blessedness, or

glory, or a soul, since it is through this eternal beatitude of loving God forever in heaven that God's own glory is best achieved. Then God wills grace for that soul, since it is through grace that a creature comes to beatitude. And then God wills that soul's free will, intellect, and the other things it will use in the attainment of blessedness.

The first reason, therefore, for anyone glorifying God in heaven forever is not the will of the creature, nor grace — not even the grace of perseverance — but simply God's eternal decree — on which these things depend, that such a soul would be given everlasting blessedness.

Predestination

This brings us to the problem of predestination, and the question of why some souls are saved, while others are damned. Without destroying their nature, God could have rendered all men incapable of sinning: Jesus, who is truly man, is impeccable; Mary, was de facto impeccable. Saint Thomas says that "God wills to show forth His goodness in those whom He has predestined by way of mercy's pardon, and in those whom He reprobates by way of justice's punishment. And this is

the reason why He elects one to glory, and reprobates others.... But why He chooses these for glory and those for reprobation lies only in His divine will."

Scotus qualifies this notion somewhat. He does not assert that acceptance or rejection depend upon the good or bad use of grace by individuals as foreseen by God. His position is, rather, that this good use of grace by the free will of man is foreseen precisely because God wills and preordains this good use. In this, he follows Saints Thomas and Augustine in holding that the supernatural use of free will depends on the divine will. The Subtle Doctor does not, however, accept Saint Thomas' explanation that the goodness of God is shown forth through mercy and justice. For God could manifest His goodness by glorifying men even if there were no merit either in themselves or in anyone else; and He did not do this. Moreover, according to the Thomistic view it would seem to follow that God permits evil in order to punish it.

The reasoning proposed by Saint Thomas is not, however, without value or beauty, even as analyzed by Scotus. For as a matter of fact there are a variety of degrees in predes-

tination, e. g., that of the humanity of Christ, the singular decreeing of the Blessed Virgin, the determination of the unbaptized who die before reaching the use of reason, and the like. In all these instances, we see the goodness of God in His merciful love. He is merciful and loving to all creatures because He wills the salvation of all and gives to all sufficient grace.

What Scotus contributes here is an elucidation of the notion of reprobation. He states that predestination to glory finds no reason for its existence in the predestined creature prior to the predestination. Reprobation, however, is different; in it the demerits of the one reprobated are foreseen. Since to reprobate is to damn, it would not seem to be consonant with God's goodness and justice for Him to reprobate without taking into consideration something in the creature which demands it. Therefore, reprobation is willed by God because of a reason existing in the creature himself, namely the final sin as foreseen by God. Thus, Scotus teaches a negative reprobation. That is to say, the reprobated creature is not willed as predestined, but the will to damn is, as it were, only subsequent to the final sin as foreseen.

The Franciscan doctor adds that it is not surprising that the process of predestination and reprobation should be different, because all good must be attributed principally to God, while evil, on the contrary, is ours. Thus, for God to predestine creatures to glory without any reason inherent in them illustrates His goodness; His damning them results only from their own final mortal sin, an evil for which they alone are responsible. Here again, then, Scotus emphasizes the great love of God for His creatures.

Predestination of Christ

It is in his delineation of God's eternal decrees by reason of the order of their intention (not, of course, by reason of chronology, since God wills in a single, eternal act) that Scotus emphasizes the point that we made in the beginning of this article, scil., that nature finds the reason for its existence in the supernatural. Although in the order of execution grace builds on nature, yet in the order of divine intentions nature is ordered to grace. In regard to creation of things other than Himself, God primarily wills predestination, and the whole order that leads to it, the end of which is perfect beatitude. Afterwards, as it were, He or-

dains in an ordered manner those other things that lead to this end, some proximately, others more remotely: grace, faith, merit, and the good use of free will. This delineation gives us a truly supernatural, and hence realistic, view of the scheme of created things. First things are considered first; it is because of the clarity of his perception of this that Scotus has been called by many the *Doctor Ordinis*.

The employment of this same logic has led Franciscan theologians to find in Revelation what is surely their most characteristic and basic doctrine, scil., the absolute predestination of Jesus Christ. Arguing that in the ordered will the last thing to be executed must be the first thing to be intended by him who wills, they state that God, who creates for His own glory, must primarily will that creature Who most perfectly glorifies Him, scil., Jesus, the Word Incarnate. The decrees whereby all other things are created are intentionally subordinate in God's will to the effective willing of Christ.

This doctrine seems to be coming more and more into the Church's consciousness, and has attracted even those outside the Church.

The Protestant theologian

Karl Barth, claiming to depend on the Scriptures alone, can say:

By the Word the world exists. A marvelous reversal of our whole thinking! Don't let ourselves be led astray by the difficulty of the time-concept, which might well result from this. The world came into being, it was created and sustained by the little child that was born in Bethlehem, by the Man who dies on the cross of Golgotha, and the third day rose again. That is the word of creation, by which all things were brought into being.

In another place the same writer states

Before the world was, before heaven and earth were, the resolve or decree of God exists in view of this event in which God willed to hold communion with man, as it became inconceivable by true and real in Jesus Christ. Saint Francis de Sales, who embraces the opinion of the Franciscan school, writes:

Man is the perfection of the universe, the soul is the perfection of man, love the perfection of the soul, and charity the perfection of love.

And a contemporary Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, asserts in the Scotistic vein:

God wishes to communicate Himself, to pour forth the love

which He Himself is. That is the first and the last of His real plans, and hence of His real world too. Everything else exists so that this one thing might be: the eternal miracle of infinite love. And so God makes a creature whom He can love: He creates man.

Conclusion

In the present article we have pointed out some of the highlights of the Franciscan approach to the theology of grace.

We have attempted to show that the general tendency of the seraphic doctrine is to emphasize the reality and preeminence of the supernatural order, and the mysterious depth of God's love which brings it into existence. Grace is, indeed, the real life and love. The person who considers God's grace thoughtfully and prayerfully cannot help but hear, arising from the depths of his own being, a hymn of praise to God's glory, a song of thanksgiving for His wonderful gifts to man.

God comes out to meet us, and his desire is to set up in us a new universe of life, light and love, so that we may be able to make our way towards the depth of his being and intimacy with him, to speak to him as our friend. That is the mystery of the elevation of our nature by grace, and that is why we call this new life supernatural. It transforms, imbues our whole being to make it proportionate to an end hitherto unknown to it, one which goes beyond our nature. God raises us up, rather as the artist uses an instrument to make it produce what by itself it would be incapable of — joy, sadness, prayer. Something beyond its own power acts through the instrument: it is a human heart that touches the instrument and the effect produced, being on the plane of its cause is a human effect. If divine grace comes down into me, I shall no longer be in community only with the things of earth and with men, but with the divine Persons, with all that is deepest and most hidden in the heart of God.

— Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Grace*

Do You Think Yourself Somebody?

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

One of our great Franciscan spiritual writers begins a book he wrote with these thought-provoking words: "In paradise there are many saints who never gave alms on earth; their poverty justified them. There are many saints who never mortified their bodies by fasting, or wearing hair shirts; their bodily infirmities excused them. There are many saints, too, who were not virgins; their vocation was otherwise. But in paradise there is no saint who was not humble" (Cajetan of Bergamo, O.F.M. Cap., *Humility*).

If men at any stage in history had need of this important Christian virtue, it is we who live in this twentieth century, the century of some of mankind's greatest achievements. For man, using the intellectual endowments given him by his Creator, has mastered many of the elements — has even ventured into space — with a marked degree of success and

still greater hope for the future. Wonderful though these achievements are, they should evoke in all men sentiments of the most profound humility.

This must certainly have been the thought which entered the minds of our astronauts as they soared through space. They must have been impressed by an awareness of their own insignificance as compared to the vastness through which they were travelling at such a rapid pace. Moreover, this consideration must have engendered within them that spirit of humility necessary for one engaged in such a formidable task.

But not only do astronauts need this spirit of humility. We can all stand a good dash of it in our lives. For the whole scale of values has somehow been perverted in our world, and even we who have followed Christ have often succumbed to its allurements. How dissimilar is our scale of values to that of Our Lord!

Our Attitudes

We pride ourselves on our birth and status. Yet Christ,

Besides being Assistant Editor of this review, Fr. John, of the Holy Name Province, preaches retreats throughout the Eastern United States.

even though He is God, emptied Himself of all save His undying love. Born in a stable, He spent His life in poverty and dependence upon others, without feeling that it was unbecoming to His status as the God-Man.

We pride ourselves on our family, its position in the community, and the like. Yet Jesus grew up in the poor home of a peasant.

Some of us are proud of our profession, or our social position. "Since I have a Ph. D.," we declare, "I couldn't think of doing this menial task." We make a fetish of degrees, and feel that anyone who has none is not worth the ground he stands on. Yet Christ had no degree; nor did He mind the

rash thoughts others had of Him because of His lack of them. Look at the Temple; see Him among the doctors and learned men of His time. They were amazed at His wisdom. In His public life, were there not those who asked, "Where did he get all this?"; and "What is this wisdom that is given to him?"; and "... Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon?" (Mk. 6:2-3)

How many of us pride ourselves on our distinguished and

influential friends? We single them out, not so much for themselves, but because of what association with them will do for us.

In our association with others, we choose to move in high social circles. We fail to realize that we are followers of Him who found His delight in the homes of publicans and sinners.

We are swelled with pride at our abilities and personal achievements, as though we ourselves were responsible for them. We fail to think of our humble associates whose sacrifices made these achievements possible. But most of all, how seldom do we even give a thought to Him who said, "Of myself I can do nothing" (Jn. 5:30).

Many of us are so subtle in getting our own way in things. Although we would be the first to deny it, deep in our hearts we know this is so. Yet Christ said, "I seek not my own will" (ibid.).

We are filled with ambition, ever trying to climb higher and higher. Only by assuming positions of responsibility do we feel that we will fulfill ourselves. How different we are from Christ, who said, "I am in your midst as he who serves" (Lk. 22:27).

Christ's Example

Let us look in on our Redeemer on the last night He was to spend with us before His death. In the Cenacle He had gathered the Apostles, His chosen ones, His loved ones, to observe the feast of the Passover with Him. It was a weary group that made its way to the upper room that night. All was in readiness: not only the meal, but the water jugs, basins, and towels, which in the East served the same purpose as our lavatory. One must wash before a meal. The Mosaic Law required it, but so did a sense of comfort and a concern for hygiene. Not only were the face and hands to be washed, but the feet as well. Tramping about on the dirty, hot, and dusty roads in sandals left one in real need of a foot-bath.

Normally it was the task of a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Perhaps Christ and the Apostles could not afford to hire a servant for the night, or it may be that the Master wanted to spend this night in the intimacy of his chosen ones. Anyway, that didn't matter so much. Any one of the Apostles would be only too happy to do this service for the others.

But the Twelve were of a different mind. They were not so eager —not one of them.

Nobody went for the basin. They looked at one another with that "Who do you think I am?" attitude. Peter undoubtedly felt, "I can't lower myself to this task. After all, I'm Number One in this group, next to the Lord. The others wouldn't look up to me if I did." So he just stayed there and waited. James and John were just as convinced that it wasn't their job either. They considered themselves to be in the "inner circle". Hadn't they witnessed the Transfiguration, and received numerous other favors which the others had not received? "We'll wait this one out," they thought. Philip and Simon the Zealot felt just as tired as the rest, and they didn't budge. Nor did it enter the mind of even the self-effacing Andrew to cover up for the pride of the others and undertake the task.

As they sat there, Jesus arose, took off his outer robe, picked up the towel and basin, knelt down, and washed His Apostles' dirty feet. He went from one to the other, even to Judas.

Call this an acted parable, or a sermon in deed; call it whatever you will. But don't say that Christ was merely acting here. He wasn't! Never was He more serious than at this moment. His purpose is evident

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priests; it was to their directives that he conformed both himself and his enormous apostolic activity. "In everything, and above everything," relates Celano, "he considered it his duty to observe, venerate, and follow the faith of the holy Roman Church, in which alone is salvation to be found."

Francis' primary goal and constant objective was to live the gospel to the letter — *without gloss*, without interpolation, without compromise. Nor

would he allow himself to be deterred from the realization of this bold ideal by the superficial notions of innovators, who were influenced more by their own personal and arbitrary interpretations than by the weight of authority and tradition.

Once he had committed himself to being "always subject and submissive at the feet of the holy Church," Francis entrusted himself without reservation to the tender and gentle authority of this spiritual mother of his. He also acknowledged her as the indisputable and authentic teacher to whom Christ had confided the deposit of truth and the purity of faith. It is this submission that clearly distinguishes him from the promoters of heretical movements, who operated without

the Church, outside the Church, and against the Church.

His love for the Church included, as in a single embrace, all her members: her visible head the Pope, successor to Saint Peter in the Roman See; the bishops, successors to the Apostles and rulers of the dioceses; priests and the lay faithful; it extended even to those who, because of either apostasy or adherence to error, are actually separated from the Church.

"He venerated priests," attests Celano, "and nourished the deepest love for the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy." At the very beginning of the Rule of the Friars Minor he pledged that "Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the lord Pope Honorius and to his successors canonically elected, and to the Roman Church." And in that spiritual farewell which is his Testament, he renews the promise, thereby warily attesting to what his doctrinal conviction and his practical life had been. "Afterwards," he wrote, "the Lord gave me, and gives me still, on account of their order, such faith in priests who live according to the rule of the Holy Church, that even though they should persecute me, yet would I have recourse to them."

Francis' obedience and submission to the Pope, bishops, and the clergy are evident and indisputable traits of his spirit. Both his writings and his manifold activities set him apart as a man who was indeed catholic and completely apostolic. It was with the Church, through the Church, and in the Church, that he developed his life of faith, holiness, and action.

Saint Francis' apostolic zeal is evident in the Order's daring missionary endeavors, whose works have withstood the passage of centuries and the repeated onslaughts of non-Christian and anti-Christian ideologies. And even here the Assisian struck a note of originality by preserving freedom of movement from place to place, and by refusing to limit the Order's commitments to any particular type of work.

Envisioning the apostolate not as an ordinary sharing in the care of souls, but as a dynamic mission of vast proportions, Francis shared the viewpoint of the Apostles. The Franciscan endeavor, unbounded by territory, was to be as

wide as the world itself; its purpose was the intensive betterment and sanctification of the faithful, and the diffusion of Christ's message to the infidel. The internal element of the Apostolic ideal had become typical of monasticism; to this, Francis joined the external element: an open approach to all men, without distinction of class or race. And he realized this vision of his with the verve of a knight of Christ and the enthusiasm of a herald of the Great King.

During the days of the present Ecumenical Council, Saint Francis reminds us through his writings, and especially through his life and works, of the importance of fidelity to the Church, the Pope, the bishops, and priests. We feel certain that the spirit of the Poor Fellow, the Herald of the Great King, is present at Vatican II. His message of brotherliness, throbbing with Peace and Good, is a prolonged and undying echo, giving witness before the world of the indefectibility of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Roman Church — the Church of Jesus Christ.

Help me, most loving Father, help me with Thy mighty grace. For unless Thou wilt of Thine infinite goodness relieve me, I am but as a lost creature. Thy strict commandment is that I should love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, with all my power. And this I know I do not, but am full far short and wide therefrom. Which thing I perceive by the other loves that I have had of Thy creatures heretofore. For such as I sincerely loved, I loved them so that I seldom did forget them. They were ever in my remembrance, and almost continually my heart was occupied with them, and my thought ran upon them as well absent as present. Specially when they were absent, I much desired to have their presence, and to be there where they were, or else my heart was never in any rightful quiet.

But alas! my dear Father, I am not in this condition towards Thee. For I keep Thee not in my remembrance, nor bear Thee in my thought, nor occupy my heart with Thee so often as I should. But for every trifle that cometh to my mind, I let Thee slip and fall out thereof. And, for every fantasy that stirreth in my heart, I set Thee aside, shortly forget Thee.

I know, most gracious Father, that Thou art here present with me, albeit I see Thee not; but Thou both seest me and hearest me, and no secrecy of my heart is hid from Thee. Thou hearest that I now ask Thine Holy Spirit, and Thou knowest that I now pray for and am very desirous to have the same.

Lo! dear Father, with all the enforcement of my heart I beseech Thee to give Thine Holy Spirit unto me. Wherefore, unless Thou wilt disappoint the promise of Thy son Jesu, Thou canst not but give me this Holy Spirit. So, by this means I shall be fully relieved of that my misery, whereof I complained unto Thy goodness at the beginning.

Thy most Holy Spirit, He shall make me to love Thee with all my power, for He is the author of all good love, He is the very furnace of charity, and He is the fountain of all gracious affections and godly desires.

Wherefore, dear Father, I beseech Thee to shed upon my heart Thy most Holy Spirit, by whose gracious presence I may be warmed, heated, and kindled with the spiritual fire of charity and with the sweetly burning love of all godly affections, that I may fastly set my heart, soul, and mind upon Thee; and that I may love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and all my power. Amen.

NOTE: The above prayer was composed by Fisher, Bishop, Cardinal, and Martyr, while in the Tower of London in 1534. In the next year the scholarly prelate was beheaded because he refused Henry VIII to be head of the Church.

Saint Clare, Active Contemplative

Sr. Mary Thérèse, O.S.C.

Man's recent plunge into space is, to date, the crowning accomplishment of a century of phenomenal achievement. One wonders what future historians, with their fondness for apt titles, will call this era of the atom and the astronaut. It might well be termed "The Century of Activity". Our modern world has raised human efficiency to such an exalted position that man's method of evaluation is often unduly influenced by such materialistic questions as, "What can it do? How well and how fast can it do it?" It is not uncommon to find ourselves applying such standards even to our fellow-men, as, consciously or unconsciously, we measure their worth in terms of I. Q.'s and manual skills.

Truly, activity has become almost synonymous with progress, and there are those who would link it similarly with

With truly Franciscan simplicity, but determined conviction, Sr. Mary Thérèse explains the relevance of contemplation to our own times. Sister is stationed at the Monastery of Saint Clare, Greenville, S.C.

sanctity. They are the modern thinkers who fail to perceive the wisdom of those ancient words of Scripture, "All the glory of the King's daughter is within..." (Psalm 44:14). This is not to deny the genuine value of the labors of those heroic persons, both lay and religious, who spend themselves unceasingly in our schools, hospitals, and charitable institutions. Their activity is indeed sanctifying, for it is the manifest expression of the love of God that burns in the depths of their hearts. Even our neo-pagan world, although it does not recognize the Divine Force which animates their lives, is quick to appreciate the selfless devotion which they exemplify.

What, then, is the place of the contemplative order in the Church of the twentieth century? Just what are cloistered religious contributing to the progress of mankind? Perhaps a present day devotee of Saint Clare of Assisi was not as poorly informed as her spiritual daughters would like to suppose him, when he wrote that she was the victim of her

times. He would have us believe that Our Holy Mother Saint Clare, inflamed with missionary desires, was compelled to limit her activities to the narrow confines of the cloister because in the thirteenth century a more active form of religious life for women was unthinkable. This leads the reader to reflect how very different the life of Saint Clare might have been had Divine Providence placed her among the saints of our "Century of Activity". With no medieval restrictions to hamper her zeal, what motherly advice would she give her devoted children? Would it be to tear down the enclosure walls, to leave the silence of the cloister, and take up the missionary cross in every nation the world over?

We, who strive to live according to the spirit of Our Holy Mother Clare, answer with a resounding, "No"! Indeed the saint was aflame with missionary zeal, and this is the precious legacy which has enlightened the heart of every Poor Clare for the past seven hundred and fifty years. Saint Clare was an ardent disciple of the great Saint Francis, and no one knew better than the Poorerello the tremendous power of a life of prayer and penance. It was only after much delib-

eration that Our Holy Father Francis determined to forego his own desire for the purely contemplative life. He realized that the will of God compelled him to go among his brethren as their father and model. But he realized, too, that his friars would never be sanctified in their activities and reap a rich harvest of souls for Christ without the aid of constant prayer and sacrifice. This was the sublime commission Francis gave to his first spiritual daughter, Saint Clare, and to all those who should come after her, desiring to share in this hidden apostolate of love. They were to be the ladder joining earth with heaven, imploring from the bountiful heart of Jesus grace for the just and mercy for sinners. Today the Poor Clare is as acutely aware of her mission in the Church as were the first barefoot nuns of San Damiano.

True love admits of no limits; thus the love of Our Holy Mother reached out to the whole world. No suffering of soul or body escaped the all-embracing scope of her prayers. Clare was no stranger to activity, yet hers was an intense activity of soul which vitalized her every word and deed, setting the stamp of the infinite on even the most hum-

ble actions of her life. How well she brought to fulfillment that promise of Ecclesiasticus, "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds" (Eccles. 35:21), for many and wonderful were the miracles of grace God wrought at her intercession. Only heaven will reveal to us the innumerable souls saved by Our Holy Mother's ministry of love and reparation. There, where she is eternally immersed in the ceaseless activity of love, Saint Clare watches over her spiritual daughters with maternal care. Her dauntless spirit walks among us still, as we harken to the words which she so often addressed to her Sisters, "Oh, my beloved Sisters; oh, children blessed for all eternity, listen to me, listen to the voice of your Mother". The eager young postulant, behind whom the enclosure door has just been shut against the pleasures of the world, can take to herself the gentle reminder,

"Many are called, but few are chosen, and in the end everyone shall receive according to his works." The radiant, white-veiled novice clasping her reception crucifix to her heart, knows well that "Sufferings are light; glory is infinite." The newly-professed nun, with the vows of religion fresh upon her soul, can proclaim with Our Holy Mother the joyful words, "We have promised great things, but greater still are promised to us." And all of us, who day by day live out our lives of labor and of love, can find our inspiration in her sweet command, "My Sisters, while we have time, let us do good." For seven hundred and fifty years, unseen and unheralded, the daughters of the virgin Clare have sought to keep alive the spirit of their mother. This is our vocation in the twentieth century, and in every century, that the actions of all men may be governed by the loving hand of God.

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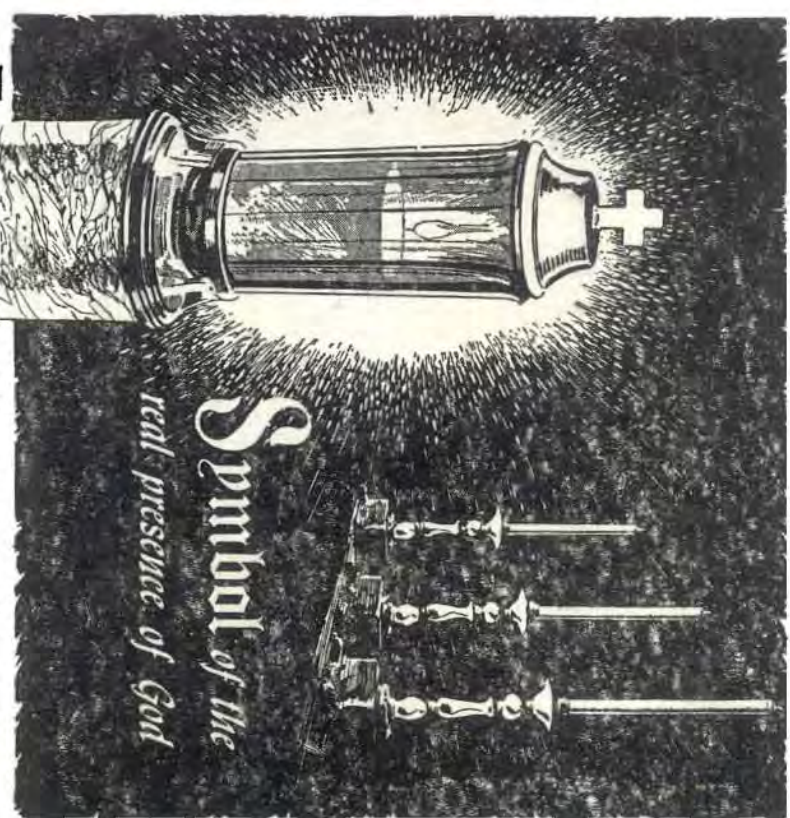
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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW
OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

DECEMBER 1963

YOUR KING WILL COME

Fra. Nicholas Figliola, O.F.M.

REFLECTIONS ON MY PROFESSION

Fra. Nicholas Lohkamp, O.F.M.

DUNS SCOTUS AND

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Fra. Frederick Doherty, O.F.M.

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Your King Will Come

Fra. Nicholas Figliola, O.F.M. Cap

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King will come to thee, the just and savior: he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass (Zach. 9:9).

Let us consider these words intently. They certainly are filled with happiness and hope. Well, they were meant to be glad tidings, and they were fulfilled as such. In fact, when Saint Matthew was writing that part of his Gospel which describes the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem, he referred to this passage:

And when they drew near to Jerusalem, and came to Bethpage, on the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them and bring them to me. And if anyone say anything to

you, you shall say that the Lord has need of them, and immediately he will send them." Now this was done that thereby might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet, saying, "Tell the daughter of Sion: Behold, thy King comes to thee, meek and seated upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of a beast of burden" (Mtt. 21:1-5).

Saint Lawrence of Brindisi, the most recently declared Doctor of the Church, comments on both the prophecy of Zacharias and the passage of Saint Matthew in several of his writings. The eminent scripture scholar indicates clearly that this prophecy refers in its literal sense to Christ and His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. "Behold", says Saint Lawrence, "Christ, God and Man, entered Jerusalem this day as a king, for this entrance of Christ is that which is commemorated on Palm Sunday. This fact, moreover, is fulfilled in the prophecy of Zacharias. That king is Christ."

In his Palm Sunday sermons, Lawrence informs us:

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YOUR KING WILL COME

The Lord as king wished to enter Jerusalem today with such triumph and glory, first of all to fulfill the Scriptures, as the Evangelist says: In order that what was said by the prophet might be fulfilled. The prophet specified the person: thy king...; he specified his virtues: just and a savior of men by His death, for because of this He was received into Jerusalem; he specified the nature of His coming: He will come poor; he specified the animal: sitting on an ass.

Throughout his writing Lawrence insists that Jesus entered the Holy City as a true king, and he substantiates his claim by referring in each instance to this prophecy. In one place the Capuchin tells us that Jesus entered the Holy City in glory as a king of the royal Davidic line. When Zacharias exclaimed, "Behold your king," he prophesied in fact that Jesus would enter Jerusalem "as a king, with the acclaim of the people, and in triumph; that his glory and ovation would inspire the Hebrew children to sing: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel. Hosanna to the Son of David."

Moreover, Jesus entered Jerusalem not only as king, but also in magnificent triumph.

The Apostolic Doctor says that in the words, "Rejoice, daughter of Sion, thy king will come to thee," we find a literal reference to the triumph of Christ, King and Redeemer. Commenting on this section of the prophecy, Lawrence explains that kings are said to triumph only when they have overcome the enemy or have gained a great victory in battle. We know of such triumphs in the life of King Saul, after he had defeated the Amalecites, and of King David, after he had slain the monstrous Goliath in hand to hand combat.

But — says the holy Doctor — even when a new king is received into the metropolitan city of the kingdom, who does not know of, nor hear of, the great joy with which he is received, and how greatly his triumphal entry is celebrated? Today, Christ as a new king is received into the royal city of Jerusalem. Wherefore, the prophet cries, "Your king will come to you."

It is precisely because Sion's king will come to her that the prophet Zacharias shouts, "Rejoice, daughter of Sion." In his Palm Sunday sermons the scholarly Capuchin investigates the reasons for the prophet's command to rejoice and exult. He reasons that joy arises from at-

taining a desired good, and that the greater the desire and longing, the greater the happiness in possessing that good. This king is truly the long-awaited Son of David, that "desired one" whom the Chosen People of God had awaited for thousands of years. Relying on the eternal promise of the Redeemer, the Jews throughout the ages prayerfully waited for their messiah. With ever-increasing longing, each generation looked to the future and prayed that "the desired of all the nations" would soon come and make himself known. For ages Sion looked yearningly to heaven and cried, "When, O Lord, when?" And, out of the darkness of the eternal silence, Zacharias trumpeted, "Rejoice, daughter of Sion — your king is coming!" Yes, O Jerusalem, your Savior, your Liberator, your Divine King will visit you; therefore, be joyful. Cry out for joy: "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna to the King of Israel!"

Here, —Lawrence's seraphic heart seems unable to constrain itself any longer, and he exuberantly praises his Lord, Savior, and King, Jesus Christ.

What is this? What is the reason for such great joy? I am the rich and glorious king who will come to glorify and to en-

rich; then will your joy be seen. Behold, he is now present in order to be seen as the Messiah promised by the Patriarchs and the Prophets, the one desired by all the nations. Behold, he is here as omnipotent king, the king of heaven and earth, the king of glory, emperor, king, monarch of the universe. True God has been made yours; He gives Himself totally to you. He comes from heaven to earth, from paradise to the world, and He comes to you not for his own sake, but for yours.

Through the lips of Saint Lawrence, the prophet Zacharias echoes those vibrantly hopeful and joyous tidings of the great King's triumphant entry into the Holy City. But the holy Capuchin is not satisfied with merely identifying Zacharias' promised king; his great love for Jesus and the Sacred Word prompts him to describe Sion's king in greater detail.

Zacharias calls the king a Messiah, a Savior, and according to St. Lawrence, the prophet actually foresaw His entrance into the Holy City, whereby Christ would show Himself to be the long-awaited Messiah. Through this Messianic prophecy —Christ has shown, not by His words but in His actions, that He is the true Messiah promised and sent by

God. Lawrence increases our faith and strengthens our hope by telling us that Christ has come as the true Messiah, the author of salvation, the author of every desirable happiness, precisely because Zacharias calls the king a savior. And, as king and savior, Jesus has regained His kingdom by crushing the enemy and its powers. He has re-opened the eternal gates to each of His exiled citizens. Our king and God has enriched each of His loyal subjects with unlimited treasures of grace so that, like Him, we too may become rich.

Moreover, Christ the King is called just. And, indeed, He is just, since He merited for us and is, therefore, the cause of our justification. "But," declares Lawrence, "the charity of Christ could not merit for Himself, because the grace in Christ could not be increased; He therefore merited for us. Thereupon, he is called Jesus, that is, Savior. Since He will save the people from their sins, He is called just." Yes our King is just; and through His justice He has so justified us that we have become co-heirs of the kingdom of the heavenly Jerusalem.

Although Christ is our king, He is also poor: "He is poor, and riding upon an ass." So,

then, do we have a contradiction? How can royalty and poverty be reconciled? Is not a king always rich? Saint Lawrence solves the dilemma by saying that Christ is a true king because He is rich in heavenly goods. Yet, Jesus is also poor. He chose poverty in regard to earthly things. First of all, Sion's king is poor in spirit, since He is free of all the trifling vanities and merely earthly goods of this life. No earthly monarch was ever as rich as Sion's King, yet He came to Sion poor to prove that His kingdom is not of this world.

That the people of God might be poor, that is, detached from worldly gains and pursuits, detached from luxuries and temptations which turn His people from Him, our King came to Jerusalem poor. Our king came into the Holy City devoid of all those things which the world holds sacred: power, riches, honor. And, yet, at the same time the King of Sion entered Jerusalem in regal honor, rich in divine possessions, and empowered with the strength of God. To those who would be His subjects He would give a sharing in the divine nature, which was in His power to bestow: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

But Zacharias' king is not only poor; He is humble and peace-loving as well. Lawrence tells us that Christ is meek and a bearer of peace because He came into Jerusalem not charging on a proud steed, but humbly and peacefully seated on a gentle and lowly beast of burden. Despite His simple and lowly manner of entrance, our King was recognized as true king and savior: "Hosanna to the King of Israel." And just as one of the noble characteristics of the promised king would be His meekness, so too must the citizens of the Eternal Kingdom be meek and humble. For, only the meek and humble, only the peace-loving and gentle of spirit, in a word, only the true imitators of Sion's King will inherit His kingdom.

rejoiced in Zacharias' inspiring message. Therefore, we must gratefully acknowledge the learning and eminent wisdom of this Doctor of the Church, and sincerely thank him for the light shed on this passage. In a scholarly, but evidently simple manner, Lawrence has explained the personality and characteristics of the King foretold in Zacharias 9:9. Let us again read this passage, bearing in mind Lawrence's elucidations. Let us meditate on its meaning. Let us derive such benefit that it may ever prompt us to learn of Christ in the Sacred Scriptures. May we always seek Christ's figure in the Old Testament, and discover Him identified in the New. For, it is in seeking Christ that we shall learn more of Him; it is in knowing more of Him that we shall love Him more; and in loving Him, we shall rejoice in, and completely serve Christ, Who is indeed our Savior and our King.

Reflections on My Profession

Fr. Nicholas Lohkamp, O.F.M.

Through Baptism we are reborn, regenerated. Quickened with God's kind of life through incorporation in Christ, we experience the love of the Father who "chose us in (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish in his sight and without love" (Eph. 1:4). In Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). Risen, then, in Christ to newness of life, we must with wholehearted endeavor seek the things that are above (cf. Col. 3:1).

Thus do we, in Christ, become committed to a goal as lofty as God Himself, for we "are to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect." Apart from Christ we could not possibly achieve such a goal. But, in Him, it is not only possible, it is the call to which every

Christian must respond if he is not to betray his very oneness with Christ. What is more, Christ Himself has clearly indicated that no one can respond to the Father's love or achieve to any degree the Father's holiness, except in Him (Christ), who is our only Way, Truth, and Life. In this context the words of Christ reveal the fundamental response of the Christian: "If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me." This is our life: an all-out endeavor to say "NO" to self (Gospel renunciation), and an all-out endeavor to say "YES" to Christ (Imitation); thus do we respond to our Father's love, please Him, by becoming more and more one with Jesus, His well-beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

As Christians, then, we must "put on Christ." We must, in short, be "imitators of God, as very dear children and walk in love, as Christ also loved us and delivered himself up for us" (Eph. 5:1-2). Just so, we — in Christ — are to love one another and lay down our lives

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and now, no matter what it may cost me in the way of blood, sweat, and tears. Such is the object of my sincere efforts: to please Him more and now, in whatever I may be doing, whether it is something I like to do or something I dislike doing. Indeed, my likes and dislikes are no longer the ruler and criterion of myself, my life, or my actions. For, in the light of my profession, all my likes and dislikes are centered in Him. What He likes, that I want! What displeases Him, that I reject. He is my All; I want and desire only to please Him, to do His will.

Thus does the act of profession simply and stabilize my whole life. All my thoughts and ideas and knowledge, all my affections and wishes and desires and decisions, all my memory and imagination and heart and emotions and passions, all that I am, I endeavor to center and root and fix in Him, My God, King, Redeemer, Friend, Spouse — indeed, “My All.” All my yearning is toward Him. All my thoughts and ideas find clarity and perspective in Him. All my affections and desires and decisions find stability and effectiveness in Him. All the warmth and tenderness and gentleness and sympathy and compassion, all my emotions

find their only sure anchor and true fulfillment in Him. He is “MY ALL”!

And just think! I belong to Him! He has accepted me. He loves me. He cares for me. He died for me. He lives for me. Indeed, He really has given Himself to me so that He may belong to me. Surely, there can be no other alternative, there can be no other course really pleasing to Him, there can be no other adequate response to such love, except to yield myself with full trust and confidence to Him, a trust that remains firm in spite of my glaring deficiencies and weaknesses, a trust that does not even pretend to rely on my strength, but only on His, a trust that knows full well that my very weakness constitutes, in a way, my attractiveness to Him, for He wants to be the fullness of my emptiness, the strength of my weakness.

Perhaps a nagging thought persists in my mind: If Christ loves me so much, why does He permit me to suffer so? Why does He allow others to hurt and injure me? God, of course, cannot in any way positively will the least sin. But God has created a world, and placed in it men and women who, because of their very finiteness and weakness, can and do abuse

their freedom and power to love, can and do sin. But — and this is most important — God, in His great Mercy, can and does draw good out of evil. As Father Most says: “The apparent triumph of evil in the world, so darkly exemplified in the Crucifixion, and so tragically before our eyes today, is in fact not the Devil’s hour but God’s hour in which He can exercise and glorify His Mercy in supreme lavishness. And this same truth gives meaning to our personal burden of misery. We are (we think) an object worthy of His love, at least worthy of His mercy, and all the while it is precisely because we are so unworthy that He is intent upon pouring out the torrent of His love upon us.”

Perhaps the difficulty that nags me takes a different form. I keep insisting that I am not worthy of such union with Christ. As I look back on my past life and see how little and how ingardly I have been in giving myself to Christ, how much and how often I have really failed to please Him, how frequently I have sought not His will but my own will; as I look back, and as I look at myself now: my emptiness, my coldness, my indifference, my sluggishness, my ingratitude, my weakness, my imperfections,

my bitterness, my naturalistic viewpoint and attitudes; as I behold myself and the reluctance with which I commit myself to Christ, I may very well indeed be tempted to discouragement. I may very well be tempted to think: “what’s the use?; how can Christ be interested in me; how can I possibly get back something of the fervor I had in the past; how can I possibly find in my heart the generosity to begin anew to give myself to Christ, to live my profession?”

These are real thoughts! But it comes home to me that it is all “I”; everything is in terms of “myself.” No wonder it all seems so hopeless. If I depend on my own strength, I am indeed doomed to failure. The fact is I am no longer my own; I am in Christ; I belong to Him. And He does not desire to wait until I am worthy of union with Him. He wills to give Himself to me *now*, just as I am. He is ready and waiting for me; His mercy reaches out to save me from myself now, if only I can bring myself to love and trust Him enough to accept His mercy. Nothing perhaps pains the Sacred Heart so much as to see me turning away from Him, holding back from Him, failing to accept His saving mercy on the unwarranted

the token offering: there was no question of giving some little article or donation that represented me. No, the only thought that entered my mind and heart was to give Him myself. I wanted Him to have all that I am: mind, will, heart, memory, imagination, body, soul, senses, emotions — *all of me*. And, I wanted Him to have not only all that I am, but also I desired to put into His service all that I do: all my words, thoughts, and actions. I simply wanted to give Him my all, so that He might henceforth be my All.

Here, then, I must seek to realize as deeply as I can the fact that my gift of self to Christ was a *permanent* gift. I did not give Him myself for a day, a month, a year, or a few years. No, simply and without any restrictions whatsoever (including time!) I gave self to Him. All this is clearly recognized by the Church in permitting (and indeed, in most communities, insisting on) *perpetual* vows.

These vows are exactly what their name implies: perpetual, permanent, forever. This means without question, that when I profess these final vows, I am in reality "burning my bridges behind me." I am leaving myself no other alternative but to

give myself to Christ for the duration of my life. I am cutting off all exits, and putting myself in a position where I have only one way to go: forward to Christ. And, of course, by that very act whereby I burn my bridges, cut off all chance of withdrawal, I am stabilizing my gift of self to Christ, making it permanent. I am equivalently telling Him: "I am weak, vacillating, inconsistent. But, I love You so much that I want to give myself to You for life. Therefore, to make sure that I don't turn and run, to make sure that I remain true and faithful to You, to make sure that I keep my eyes on You and seek only You, I am *vowing* to give myself to you *forever*."

If I were placed in a haunted house on a dark, windy, black night, and if the doors were left open, I would beat a hasty retreat and run at the first noise or sign of danger. But, if I were placed in that haunted house, the exits were all locked, and I knew I could not get out, then at the first little noise I would most certainly look to my defenses, find all the weapons that might help me, and make use of all the means available to protect myself. Perpetual vows are something like that.

Once, with His help and grace and light and inspiration I decide to give myself to Him forever, I seal and lock that decision by perpetual vows. So, there is now only one way to go — to him; there is only one thing to do — to give myself to Him, and keep on giving myself to Him. Knowing that there is no turning back, I really begin to look to my defenses. I really begin to make use of the spiritual weapons to ward off the devil and the dangerous tendencies in myself. I really begin to pick up and use all the spiritual resources at hand to fortify my union with Christ: prayer, the Mass, Communion, Confession, Community Life. It is only when I accept this fact that I belong to Christ; I am His; I am His forever — it is only then that I stop looking over my shoulder whenever danger or trials or temptations or problems come my way. It is only then that I stop giving in to self and seeking an easy way out. It is only then that I accept myself as His, and go on from there to solve all problems in terms of what I really am: a religious belonging to Him.

Profession — My Gift of Self

Much has been said about this already. Yet it is most important, indeed essential, that I

never forget that my profession — and the daily, moment by moment, carrying out and living of that profession — involves a *personal* relationship with Christ. This cannot be overstressed. Everything else about me and my daily life makes sense, has meaning, and is significant only insofar as it fosters and deepens this personal union with Christ. The sacraments, prayer, the vows, community life, my work, the apostolate, the Rule, Constitutions, customs: everything is but a *means* of giving myself to Christ, *doing His* will, pleasing Him. Everything is but a means of coming closer to Him, of growing in Him, sharing more intimately and deeply in His life, of becoming more and more like Him, more and more one with Him. He is my All! My constant endeavor is to "put on Christ." So, the deeper, the more solid, the warmer, the more tender, the more unselfish, the more personal my union with Christ, the more fervently and generously I will give myself to Him. And, in the ever fruitful redundancy of the supernatural life, the more fervently and generously I give myself to Him, the deeper and more intimate will be my union with Him. I know *this* to be true, yet

to a great extent this truth has not pervaded my life, my outlook and attitude, my desires and decisions, my words and actions. Why do I have so little trust and confidence in Christ when it really counts? Why am I afraid of Christ, and of what I think He might ask of me? Surely, if there is one thing about Christ that gets through to me, it must be the fact that He loves me. He created me because He loves me; He became man because He loves me; He redeemed me because He loves me; He sanctifies me because He loves me; He calls me in a special way because He loves me. Why do I doubt it? How must He feel when I don't trust Him. Do I fail to really trust Him implicitly because I think He is unaware of my weakness and misery? That cannot be true. So He must love me with all my misery! If I realize this, then I must also realize that by accepting my weakness and misery and littleness, and by turning confidently to Him as my only strength, as my Savior, I give Him glory and pleasure.

a rich, supernatural way in the sacraments. It must be Jesus the person with Whom I converse in personal, intimate prayer. It must be Jesus the person Whom I visit in the Blessed Sacrament. So too, in my work, my recreation, my study, my teaching — in all of these aspects of my life — it is in union with Jesus the person that I sincerely and generously strive to live. Thus is the full significance and meaning of my profession gradually realized. Thus do I come, more and more, actually to give myself to Jesus. Thus does Jesus slowly, gradually, almost imperceptibly, become my All! That is what I professed.

Profession — My Gift in Mary

I must, then, seek always to approach Jesus as a person. I must ever strive to make the person of Jesus a living reality in my life. It must be Jesus the person Whom I contact in

What I professed, what I want, then, is simply this: to be in Christ as completely and permanently and personally as possible. To live my profession, then, is simply this: to belong to Christ, to do His will, to seek to please Him alone. Only in personal, intimate, effective union with Jesus can this be achieved.

This is precisely why Mary is so tremendously important in the Church and in my life. To appreciate the very special role that God has given to Mary in the history of salvation

is to appreciate the place of Mary in my life, in living my profession. She does not stand in the way of, or lessen, my union with Christ. That is the last thing she would want! Rather, Mary's one consuming and powerful desire for me is that I be the religious I professed to be, that I achieve the closest, most personal, most intimate union with her Son. Just as she existed, lived, acted only in and for Jesus, so her will for me is the same — that I live only in and for Jesus; and this is what I professed.

Mary tells me in no uncertain words: "Whatever He tells you, do it." The very same command we have from the Father: "This is my well-beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased; hear Him." To submit myself to Mary in prayer and imitation, to place myself deliberately and completely under her powerful maternal intercession,

guidance, and protection is a sure, quick, and effective way to give myself to Christ. For, if I submit wholeheartedly and generously to Mary, she will teach me the one thing necessary to live my profession; she will teach and help me to say "NO" to self, to open my heart to the influence and grace of Christ. She will teach me, as no one else can, to really say my fiat to Jesus, to really let His will be done to me, in all the various aspects of my life. Mary can, desires to, and will — if my devotion to and imitation of her is sincere and generous — exert all her maternal intercession and power to deepen my personal and intimate union with Jesus. Mary will support and assist me in the day by day living of my profession. Thus will my profession become more and more a living reality, the permanent gift of myself to Jesus in Mary.

Scotus and the

Immaculate Conception

Fra. Frederick Doherty, O.F.M.

the Doctor's contribution in expounding the doctrine of this Marian privilege.

The Early Faith

September 8 the universal Church celebrates the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. It is fitting that we French in particular should remember this singular title of hers, for it is the glorious title of the Immaculate Conception that is the patroness of the French family.

have been many Frenchmen who cultivated an out-devotion to God's honor. Yet, when one speaks of the Immaculate Conception, there is conspicuous. It is conspicuous. In this arms Scotus. In this arms shall describe the Sub-

matic that our devotion to Mother of God must be solid doctrine; the more *Our Lady*, the more capable be of loving her. While *Alderick's* article is quite clear exposition of *Duns* *ritine* on the Immaculate It is our hope that it our readers to share the *Subtle Doctor* had for

The Early Faith

From the very beginning of the human race we find prophetic reference to the sinlessness of the Blessed Mother of God. Indeed, the first prophecy was uttered by God Himself after the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. To the devil, who had assumed the form of a serpent, God decreed, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed¹ and her seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel" (Gen. 3:15). While the literal sense of this passage probably refers to the general struggle between the devil and mankind as a whole, and to the ultimate victory of the latter through the redemption wrought by Christ, yet in the light of the historical Incarnation many theologians have seen a reference here to the sinlessness of the mother of Jesus. Saint Augustine, for

DUNS SCOTUS

instance, comments on this text in these words: "The head of the devil is original sin; Mary has crushed the head because no sin has entered the soul of the Virgin, and therefore she has been exempt from every stain" (*Commenti, in loco*).

A second reference to this prerogative of Mary is found in the words of the Archangel Gabriel in his utterly unique salutation, "Hail, full of grace" (Lk. 1:28). Of this text Pope Pius IX writes in the Bull of definition *Ineffabilis Deus* that "the Fathers and Writers of the Church . . . taught that this singular and solemn salutation which had never been heard elsewhere shows that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces and is adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit" (ed. Dominic J. Unger, O.F.M. Cap., St. Anthony Guild Press, 1946, p. 13).

To these and other texts of Sacred Scripture which assert the complete purity of Mary, the traditional teaching of the Church alligns itself. The writings of Catholic theologians from the most ancient times are studded with gems which, taken together, form a splendid crown offered to her sinlessness. It is important to notice, however, that this teaching deals explicitly only with Mary's

preeminent holiness; while a sinless conception may be implied by them, it is not found expressed in so many words. Although many averred, and no one denied, Our Lady's sinlessness, her complete sanctity at the first moment of her existence is not expressly discussed. It is as though these learned and holy men were aware that Our Blessed Mother is ever immaculate, but were somewhat perplexed as to how this might be explained.

The Paradox

In order to illustrate the problem that confronted theologians until the time of Duns Scotus, we may cite the following excerpts from the writings of three saintly scholars. Saint Augustine states in one place, "Most firmly hold and do not doubt at all that every man who is conceived by the copulation of man and woman is born with original sin" (*De Fide ad Petrum*, ch. 26); in another place, however, he declares that "concerning the Holy Virgin Mary I wish to entertain no question when sin is the subject of discussion. . . ." (*De Natura et Gratia*, ch. 23).

Saint Bernard writes that Mary could not have been purified either at the time of conception or before conception.

(*Litt.* 174); but in another passage he addresses to Our Lady the words, "Thou, Mary, hast been innocent of all sins, actual and original" (*Sermo IV in Salve Regina*).

Saint Thomas Aquinas says that "the sanctification of the Blessed Virgin Mary cannot be understood (as having taken place) before her animation; . . . the sanctification of which we speak is nothing but a cleansing from original sin" (*S. T.*, III, q. 27, a. 2); but again he says, "The Blessed Virgin was most pure with respect to every fault, since she has not incurred any sin, either original nor actual" (*IV Opusc. de Salutatione Angelica*).

The texts which we have just cited point up the state of mind of theologians up to the time of Scotus. Saint Bonaventure sums up the situation accurately when he writes, "It must be noted that some have desired to say that in the soul of the glorious Virgin the grace of sanctification prevented the stain of original sin" (*In IV. Sent.* III, dist. 3. a. 1 q. 2). These same passages serve also to highlight the value of the testimony of the Subtle Doctor: whereas from the writings of the other Fathers and Doctors the teaching of the Immaculate Conception may or may not be

inferred, John Duns Scotus is the first to declare explicitly and unequivocally that Mary was indeed conceived without the stain of original sin.

The Problems

The difficulties which confronted theologians and hindered them from asserting that Our Lady was conceived immaculate, were two, each of them arising out of a principle which had been accepted traditionally in the Church.

The first of these principles may be stated as follows: every human person who is naturally conceived is a child of Adam, and therefore incurs the stain of his sin; now, since Mary was naturally conceived, she also must have been conceived in sin.

The second principle states that Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the merits of His passion and death, redeemed all mankind; and since Mary is human, she also must have been redeemed, and that from original sin.

The attribution of an immaculate conception to the Mother of God would clearly involve a reconciliation of that privilege with these two time-honored doctrines. It fell to the young Franciscan doctor at the University of Paris to become Mary's champion by explaining

her extraordinary grace against the background of orthodox Catholic faith.

The Question

In common with his fellow Scholastics who cast their doctrine into the format of a *Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences* of Peter Lombard, Duns Scotus treats of the question of Mary's Immaculate Conception in his commentary on Book III, distinction 3, question 1. In the classical manner, he begins by asking the question "Whether the Blessed Virgin was conceived in original sin?". It is in the discussion of this question that the Subtle Doctor manages to reconcile what had been held to be irreconcilable for thirteen hundred years.

Two comments on Scotus' treatment of the problem will not, perhaps, be out of place here. The first concerns his manner of argumentation. The Subtle Doctor nowhere uses the now-famous "*Deus potuit; de-cuit; ergo fecit*" formula ("God was able to create her immaculate; and it was fitting that He do so; therefore, He so created her"). Father Ephrem Longpre, O.F.M., a Scotistic expert, observes that this was the battle-cry of the Scotistic School rather than the syllogism of the master himself.

It must be admitted, however, that if this argument is not found formally in his writings, still its general tone is evident in his arguments taken as a whole.

The second comment on Scotus' treatment of the problem concerns his apparent diffidence in asserting the Immaculate Conception to be a fact. His final solution is rather cautiously couched in the words, "If it be not contrary to the authority of the Church, or to the authority of Scripture, it seems probable that we should attribute to Mary that which is more excellent." The wording of this statement has prompted some scholars to think that our Doctor was not completely convinced of the truth of the doctrine. One must remember, however, that he is here assuming a position which up to this time had never been taken explicitly by any of the great minds of the Church. His cautiousness, therefore — which, by the way, is characteristic in his treatment of other questions as well — seems to be engendered by reverence rather than by doubt.

Argumentation

Scotus' treatment of the question follows the classical form of Scholastic disputation. We

outline the disposition of material by dividing it into following five points.

1) The sets down citations of the earlier theologians which imply a denial of the doctrine, together with a point out here that he Saint Augustine and his own assertions which both the pro and contra

states the opinion that commonly by his conclusion, viz., that Mary was in original sin. Scotus

us that the reasons for this position are the authority of earlier theologians; b) the excellence of the Redeemer: if Our Lord had not contracted original sin, would have needed no grace; c) Mary's own conception as a human person: having conceived naturally, she shares the original sin with all humans; d) Massion of the sufferings to human nature: since the penalty of sin, she have had the sin if

us then advances his arguments against this position. It is in this presentation of his arguments that the nucleus of his brilliant use of the Immaculate

Conception. We shall discuss this in more detail below.

4) Having thus presented an explanation of why the Immaculate Conception is not impossible, our Doctor states his own position positively. He gives three possibilities, as follows: "God was able to bring it about that she was never in original sin; He was also able to bring it about that she was in sin only for a single instant; and He was finally able to bring it about that she was in sin for some time, but was cleansed in the last moment of this time."

In this part of his presentation he discusses philosophically these three possibilities. He proves the first possibility, stating that "God was able to infuse into Mary's soul at the first instant (of its existence) as much grace as He can infuse into another soul in circumcision or Baptism." He also proves the possibility of, and solves two objections to, the second of these hypotheses. And he asserts that the third possibility is obvious (this, of course, being equivalent to what happens to the ordinary soul in Baptism).

It is at this point that Scotus, having set down these hypotheses, states precisely his own doctrine on the Immaculate Conception: "Now, which of

these three, which have been shown to be possible, actually took place, God knows. But if it be not contrary to the authority of the Church, or to the authority of Scripture, it seems probable that the one which is more excellent is to be attributed to Mary."

5) Finally, our Doctor sets down a rather lengthy discussion of the problem caused by Our Lady's natural generation as a child of Adam. He formulates the problem in this manner: according to the nature of things, Mary was a child of Adam before she possessed grace (since one must be a person before one has grace); and because she was a child of Adam, she lacked original justice; therefore, lacking original justice, she was at some time in original sin.

The above five-point summary sets down the framework of Scotus' explanation of the Immaculate Conception. As we have pointed out, it is in the fourth of these points that he actually states his position — modestly, indeed, but unequivocally. But the theological reason why he attributes the most excellent of the three proffered hypotheses to Mary is to be found in the third point, and the philosophical resolution of the problem arising from Mary's

natural generation is to be found in the fifth. In order, therefore, to appreciate Scotus' contribution in expounding Mary's privilege, we shall now discuss, in inverse order, each of these two points.

Mary, Child of Adam

We have described briefly, under the fifth point the nature of the philosophical problem involved in Mary's being a descendant of Adam: it would seem, in a word, that she must have existed as a person before she was sanctified (for grace is a quality inhering in a person), and therefore she was not immaculate from the first moment of her conception.

In order to solve the problem, the Subtle Doctor resorts to a distinction between priority of nature and priority of time. There is, indeed, a priority involved in Mary's conception: if grace is to exist in her, then she, the subject of grace, must be presupposed. But, explains Scotus, the problem of her conception involves the question of priority not of nature, but of time. Although the nature of things demands that a subject exist prior to the qualities that inhere in it, God could most certainly have ordered that, in point of time alone, the creation of Mary's soul and its sanctifi-

can outline the disposition of his material by dividing it into the following five points.

1) He sets down citations from some of the earlier theologians which imply a denial of the doctrine, together with a few which support the doctrine. We may point out here that he finds in Saint Augustine and Saint Anselm assertions which reflect both the pro and contra positions.

2) He states the opinion that was held commonly by his contemporaries, viz., that Mary was conceived in original sin. Scotus then tells us that the reasons for holding this position are four: a) the authority of earlier theologians; b) the excellence of Jesus as Redeemer: if Our Lady had not contracted original sin, she would have needed no redemption; c) Mary's own condition as a human person: having been conceived naturally, she must share the original sin common to all humans; d) Mary's possession of the sufferings common to human nature: since these are the penalty of sin, she must have had the sin itself.

3) Scotus then advances his own reasons *against* this common opinion. It is in this presentation of his arguments that we find the nucleus of his brilliant defense of the Immaculate

Conception. We shall discuss this in more detail below.

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cation be effected in a single instant. There is, therefore, no philosophical impossibility of Our Lady having been immaculate in the first moment of her conception.

But our Doctor is not content merely to demonstrate the non-impossibility of Mary's sanctification at the first moment of her conception. Shifting from philosophy to theology by applying what he has said to revealed truths, he introduces at this point the notion of Christ's pre-redemption of His mother.

"It is evident," he writes, "that the door (to glory, and hence to grace) was opened to her through the merit of the passion of Christ, in so far as it was foreseen and accepted in a special way as applying to this person (Mary), so that on account of that passion sin would never exist in this person; and that thus there would not exist in her anything to close the door, even though, by reason of her origin (from Adam) she would have had in her that thing which would close the door to her, as it does to others."

There is no denying, then, that since Our Lady is completely human she *would* have needed a part of mankind's redemption, had God not accepted on her behalf the re-

demption effected by Christ, and thus eternally decreed her in the light of this acceptance to a pre-redeemed and pre-served existence. Had it not been for this decree, based on God's acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice in her case, she would indeed have been in need of redemption as all men are.

As a matter of fact, continues Scotus with characteristic acumen, because of this decree she needed a redeemer even *more* than others do, since her complete lack of sin constituted a more thorough redemption than the consequent remission of sin that we experience. "... Mary needed Christ as redeemer in the greatest way; for by reason of her common propagation she would have contracted original sin, unless this had been prevented through the grace of a mediator. And just as others needed Christ in order that, through His merit, the sin which had *already* been contracted might be remitted to them, so she needed a *preventing* mediator even *more*, lest sin be contracted by her at any time."

Mary Herself

In our foregoing division of Scotus' treatment, we stated that it is in the third point that he presents his own reasons for

attributing the prerogative of Immaculate Conception to Our Blessed Mother. Besides the authority of older theologians, there are, he tells us, three reasons why his contemporaries commonly held that Mary was conceived in sin: a) as universal Redeemer, Jesus must have freed everyone, including her, from sin; b) generated in the common manner as she was, Our Lady must have contracted that infection of soul which is transmitted to all humans in conception by an infected human seed; c) since the Blessed Virgin experienced the penalties of original sin, she must also have contracted that sin itself.

As one can see, the latter two of these points deal with Mary herself, while the first concerns Christ's preeminent office as Mediator. We shall say a word first about the two former reasons, which Scotus dismisses rather summarily.

The argument concerning Mary's infection of soul because of infected seed was based on an erroneous notion of the manner in which original sin is transmitted from generation to generation. Since the time of Saint Augustine it had been supposed commonly that original sin is physically transmitted as an infection of the body,

which then infects the soul. By the time of Scotus, however, this theory was being abandoned by many. Indeed, our Doctor dismisses the objection based on it simply by pointing out that Saint Anselm had corrected the misunderstanding. Scotus also reminds us here that even if original sin *were* transmitted in this manner, the grace of Baptism remits it; and God could have done for Mary at the moment of her conception what He does for others at Baptism.

The argument concerning Mary's sufferings does not militate against her Immaculate Conception, says Scotus, for her retention of the effects of sin is easily explainable. While there is no merit in being in original sin, there can be great merit in suffering its effects: "Original sin was not useful to Mary, but temporal penalties were useful to her because in them she merited." Therefore, it was possible (and even fitting) for Mary to have the effects of sin, but not the sin itself.

The Perfect Redeemer

This brings us now to a consideration of the first reason why the contemporaries of Dun Scotus held that Our Lady must have been conceived in original sin. At first glance it seems a

very cogent reason indeed, and the friar's discussion of it is completely masterful. More than anything else he ever wrote, it is this passage, perhaps, that presents the Champion of Mary at his very best.

The reasoning advanced most strongly against Our Lady's Immaculate Conception was that if, as Saint Paul states in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, Jesus is the universal Redeemer, then Mary too must have been redeemed.

We might say that the objection played right into Scotus' Franciscan hands: so thoroughly was he imbued with Saint Francis' personal love for Jesus that the Incarnate Word lay at the very center of his entire theology. His seraphic heritage enabled him to see quite clearly that Mary's Immaculate Conception is perfectly ordered to the glory of Christ. Since the God-Man is a most perfect Redeemer, it follows — almost as a necessity — that His redemption of one creature be complete, thorough, perfect. Now, such a redemption would not be a remission of sin already contracted, but a complete preservation from sin. And, asks Scotus, for what creature should Jesus do this, if not for His Blessed Mother?

"A most perfect mediator ex-

ercises a most perfect act of mediation in respect to *some* person for whom he mediates. Now, Christ is most perfect mediator. Therefore, Christ exercises the most perfect possible degree of mediation in respect to some creature or person. And in respect to no person did He exercise a more excellent degree of mediation than in respect to Mary."

Jesus, who is God Himself, must therefore be perfect Redeemer. "But," continues Scotus, "He would not have done this (viz., redeemed perfectly) unless He merited that she would be preserved from original sin. And this I prove in three ways." He then sets down three basic reasons why Christ's redemption would not have been really perfect unless Mary were conceived immaculate. These reasons are consideration of a) God, to Whom Jesus pre-reconciled Mary; b) the evil from which He preserved her; and c) Mary's indebtedness to her Divine Son for this preservation.

a) Our Doctor borrows a story from Saint Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* (2, 16) to illustrate the first of these points. If a certain king had been so offended by a subject that his displeasure extended also to that subject's progeny, a man

who could persuade the king to *forgive* the heirs this offense would be a good mediator. But he would be a *perfect* mediator only if he could do something to prevent one of the heirs from being in the least way offensive to the king. "From this I argue," says Scotus, "that no one completely or perfectly placates anyone for the offense contracted by another unless he *prevents* that one from being offended; if he placates the offended one so that he (merely) remits the offense, then he has not placated him perfectly. . . . Therefore, Christ does not placate the Trinity perfectly... unless He prevents the Trinity from being offended by someone, and consequently unless He prevents the soul of some child of Adam from having that fault."

b) Regarding the evil from which Mary was preserved, our Doctor presents two arguments. In the first place, a perfect mediator would not only restore the thing lost by sin (as Christ restores grace to our souls), but would prevent the

sin itself by which grace is lost; returning to the story of the king, Scotus points out that the mediator would reconcile the subjects completely not if he restored their inheritance, but only if he removed all enmity on the part of the king. Furthermore, he argues, everyone holds that Mary was free from actual sin; but if Jesus mediated perfectly in her case, then she must be free from original sin as well.

c) Finally, the perfect degree of Christ's Redemption is seen from Mary's perfect indebtedness to Him. "The person reconciled is not obliged to the mediator in the highest degree unless that person has received from him the greatest good that could be had from a mediator... Now, it is a more excellent benefit to preserve from evil than to permit (someone) to fall into evil and then afterward to free him from it." Therefore, in order that Mary might be perfectly indebted to Her Son as Redeemer, He must have preserved her from original sin.

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