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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
CL: Legend of Saint Clare
CP: Process of Saint Clare
Flor: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
LP: Legend of Perugia
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
SC: Sacrum Commercium
SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Respect Brother Body

FRANCIS REALIZED too late in life just how hard he had been on his body. His poor body, never too strong, had been short-changed all those years since his conversion so that his soul could grow strong. Only too late did Francis become aware of what he had done to his most faithful companion: his beautiful body, which God had given to him as his helpmate in order to attain heaven. Francis had given guidelines to the brothers as to how they were to treat their bodies, but he himself, as founder, felt called to go beyond his own advice. Finally, at the point in life where his body had given its all—the point where Francis could no longer retain food, could barely see the light of day, and was hardly able to put one foot in front of the other, he apologized to his body for his mistreatment of it.

I never thought too much about how independent Francis really was until I began to think about this aspect of his life. In his zealous search for the Holy, in his eager desire to be like the crucified, in his daily recognition of darkness and light within himself, he pushed his body aside as an encumbrance, almost as an unnecessary burden to be discarded ahead of time. He had gone beyond the call of the body for ordinary comfort, ordinary sustenance, and ordinary leisure. Thus, independent of his body, he became almost a living spirit while using the body solely for human recognition. An independence not too many of us can understand, much less practice.

Francis spoke to his brothers about the care of Brother Body in the following passage of the Legend of Perugia:

In taking food, sleep, and the other necessities of the body, the servant of God must act with discretion so that Brother Body has no excuse to complain: "I can neither stand up, remain a long time in prayer, nor preserve joy in my tribulations, nor perform any other good works, for you do not give me what I need." If, on the contrary, the servant of God provides for the necessities of his body

with discretion by observing the golden mean, and if Brother Body is then lazy, negligent, or sleepy during prayer time, vigils, and other good spiritual works, then it must be chastised like a bad-tempered and lazy beast of burden that wants to eat but refuses to work and carry its burden [LP 96; Omnibus, 1073].

One wonders if Francis had his life to live over again, whether he would have been more lenient toward his body. It is obvious from the above quotation that he recognized his body and the bodies of others as more than just vehicles for their convenience. He acknowledges the fact that the body has rights and that these should be respected; but he adds that there may be times when "destitution and poverty do not enable us to give Brother Body . . . what it needs or what it has uprightly and humbly asked of its brother or superior for the love of God." Then, he says "let Brother Body patiently bear its privations for the love of the Lord" (ibid.). Since the brother is not responsible for this set of circumstances, Francis frees him of all blame "if the body would have to suffer grave consequences" and says that "the Lord . . . will impute them to it as martyrdom" (ibid.).

Have you ever consciously asked your body how it feels before it tells you with a headache, back ache, sore muscles, toothache, etc?

What, then, should be the Franciscan stance today on the care of Brother Body? I think that very few of us would use the same terminology in reference to our bodies as Francis did in reference to his. Neither do I think many of us have ever really looked at the passage re: the care of the body as Francis spelled it out for his friars. Actually, what Francis says makes good common sense. The body does tell us when it is tired, hungry, aching, sick, weak, happy, strong, eager to do something, etc. It also tells us when it needs a change of pace. While it is true we are not living in the 13th century, we still have bodies which require all the things persons' bodies of that century required. But we must also remember that in those days communication was slow; main highways were very few; automobiles and airplanes were non-existent; and Howard Johnsons or Burger King was not a household name. When the friars went on a

journey, they really went on a journey! They did not hop a 747 for an overnight consultation with the Sultan only to return by plane early the next day. With all the fast, trips, fast foods, and fast work, there must be a slow-down time. If the slowing down time is only once a year at the annual five-day retreat, Brother Body is going to complain. That is hardly enough time for him to replenish himself spiritually and physically for all the year's long labor ahead.

The body deserves more respect than to be considered merely a service vehicle whereby one is able to fulfill one's desires. There must be a type of communication, as Francis has observed for us, where the person in charge of the body listens to its complaints and tries to prevent the body from having complaints. Have you ever consciously asked your body how it feels before it tells you with a headache, back ache, sore muscles, toothache, etc.? It is often only when these things are screaming out for help that we notice we have offended against some part of our body. Then it becomes an inconvenience for us. Perhaps if we were more aware of each part of our bodies when they are healthy, they might never become unhealthy.

Now, when the first friars went on their journey, they had plenty of fresh air, sunshine or rain, and exercise. Walking from place to place was the best exercise they could have, and they didn't have to be told about it. Since the brothers owned nothing, the body was not loaded down with heavy bundles; having no permanent dwelling, the friars had no worries about what would happen to their possessions while they were away. Physically and psychologically they were free. Because we do have bundles, because we do have possessions, and because we travel fast, our bodies are more in need of consideration than those of the 13th-century friars.

Just think of all the things your body has done for you today. What could you accomplish without it? Recount all the tiresome things your body has been pushed to do, then recount all the leisure time you have given it to rest, to laugh, to enjoy the day . . . for this day is a once only happening. Where, O where, do we put holy leisure in our schedules so that our bodies can get it all together again for us?

Worst of all, as Francis himself said, what happens in chapel when it is time for the Office or time for a period of meditation? If holy leisure has not been a part of our rigorous daily schedule for living the religious life, then the body will take its own leisure at a time when we need spiritual food. According to Francis, if the body cannot perform its function during prayer time or vigils but becomes sleepy and negligent, then it must be taken to task. In today's fast society, of which we are very much a part, it would seem that the

body of itself is not responsible for its negligence and its tiredness, but that part of us which directs these activities which produce this effect actually pushes the body beyond its ability to perform. I have a strong feeling that Francis would ask us, "Where are you going in such a hurry? Why do you eat so fast? Why do you eat so much?" In reality he had the key: Walk on your journey; eat what is set before you; sing and dance along the way!

If Francis were here, perhaps he would tell us to apologize to Brother Body, not because we have abused it by fasting and penance for the sake of the kingdom, but because we have abused it in forgetting that it exists in a way other than just serving us as a vehicle for work to the extent that it has become a thing, a convenience, built for the sole purpose of the success of personal drives.

How often we have read or heard of someone who has finally retired with the hope of spending many years visiting places and doing things never before possible for lack of time, only to have Sister Death interrupt that dream and permanently end worldly retirement. The dream so longed for, the money so carefully saved, the time so hoped for, for leisure, is gone.

Let us, then, respect Brother Body—our very own body lent to us for the sake of developing it and caring for it as a gift God has lent us: a gift which will be returned to the One who made it. Let us respect and recognize it now, while it is still willing and able to help us enjoy some leisure time whereby it can be renewed. Let us respect it so it will give us the pleasure of God's presence in the time of prayer. Let us respect it for what it is, a faithful companion and a sharer in the glory that God has planned for us. Ω

St. Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C.

Canticle of Morning

Dew-touched

Gold-tipped

Life-filled

Morning spreads around

Bringing joy to be

Bringing joy to be Here

God-circled.

Sister Marie Regina, O.S.F.

Good News for the Poor

The Introduction to Bonaventure's Commentary on Luke

GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

THE COMMENTARY ON Saint Luke's Gospel, undertaken by Saint Bonaventure early in his teaching career, was enhanced by later revision.¹ For the Seraphic Doctor, Luke is the record of God's pity for the outsider, the Gospel of the poor and humble and of radical renunciations. It is the book of peace (a recurring theme all through Bonaventure): peace from heaven for "men of good will" and peace borne to doorsteps by disciples announcing the Kingdom. It is the perfect setting for the vindication of several Franciscan vital options, such as communal voluntary expropriation, mendicancy, evangelical freedom; options attacked during the Paris "mendicant controversy." Bonaventure is also keen to show that the relatively new Order has papal authorization for preaching the Gospel. Moreover, a large part of the work is a veritable treatise on good preaching. The virtues Christ brought to his mission are highlighted, as are the qualities required of the poor men later called to be his preaching disciples.

An obvious priority with the author is the formation of the ideal preacher, and he finds in the Lucan Gospel the material for enunciating his principles. The one who teaches Scripture in the classroom and the one who preaches from the pulpit are workmates; they are the new evangelists who, like the first, are to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. Their style of living, rooted in the following of Christ, must harmonize with and lend

¹Cf. Gregory Shanahan, O.F.M., "Aspects of Franciscan Life in St. Bonaventure's *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*," S.T.L. dissertation (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1975). Dominic V. Monti, O.F.M., "Bonaventure's Interpretation of Scripture in his Exegetical Works," dissertation (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979). The Luke Commentary occupies the greater part (pp. 11-604) of tome VII of the Quaracchi *Opera Omnia*; Bonaventure's Prologue, pp. 3-7.

Father Gregory Shanahan, of the Irish Province of the Friars Minor, is a Consulting Editor of this Review. He has collaborated on a recent Irish language edition of the writings of Saint Francis and specializes in retreats to religious and mission preaching in Ireland and Britain.

sincerity to their proclamation of the word of God. This subject is launched into in the very prologue or *prooemium*. Bonaventure excerpts the Isaiah prophecy used by our Lord himself in Luke 4 and masterfully applies it to the prophet, to the Evangelist, and to Christ. From its Spirit-animating power, implanting itself in the Evangelists and through them in the teaching and preaching Church. The Bible as a whole is called upon to illustrate this theory.

The Seraphic Doctor's book is not only a monumental Scripture commentary, but a fine example of a Franciscan approach to human desires, agonies, and triumphs. The following is offered as a version of its prologue. It is not intended to be a critical translation; accordingly, some scholastic technical terms have been teased out into their plainer meaning.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to humbled people, to heal broken hearts, promising the release of captives, the opening of prison doors.

As we wondered what text would be an introduction to Saint Luke's Gospel, none presented itself as more suitable than this one. Luke himself says Christ used it at the beginning of his preaching; it is in Luke 4 and is originally from Isaiah 61. We may interpret this text in a *generic* sense to indicate every teacher of Scripture; in a *special* sense to indicate Luke the Evangelist; and in a *unique* sense to indicate Christ, the source of truth and grace. The generic interpretation comprises *two persons*, that is to say, those needed for the teaching task, the teacher and the pupil. The special interpretation involves *two outward sources*, namely, the composer of the Gospel and the purpose of the Gospel. The unique interpretation implies *two inward sources*, that is, the content of the Gospel and its structure.² Having noted those six elements, we can more easily move on.

What Saint Luke intended [is] that through knowledge of the truth we might come to find a remedy for our sickness.

First, let us interpret our text in the generic sense. It tells us what the

²The language of the philosophical concept of *causality* is used here and elsewhere in the prologue. A more ordinary meaning has been chosen to translate the sense of *efficient cause*, *final cause*, *material cause*, and *formal cause*.

gospel teacher should be like; it also tells us what his pupil should be like. The one who teaches the good news of Scripture must be anointed with God's grace, must be furnished with an obedience that is genuine, and must be ardently motivated by a brotherly compassion. That he should be anointed with God's grace is denoted by, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me." This is prefigured in the Old Testament anointing of the prophets. To Elijah the Lord said: "You are to anoint Elisha son of Shaphat as prophet to succeed you" (cf. 1 Kings 19:16). And of David it was said that after he had been anointed, "the spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day on" (1 Sam. 16:13). They were being anointed in order to receive the Spirit of the Lord, through whom the hidden things of God are revealed to us. If, then, the Scriptures are to be expounded in the same spirit in which they were written, and if "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21), it follows that anybody considered fit to teach what was pronounced by Christ and written by the Holy Spirit, must be one who is anointed with grace from on high.

He must also be furnished with a genuine obedience; "*sent me* to bring good news . . ." is what is said. Our example is Moses, to whom the Lord said: "Come, I send you to Pharaoh to bring the children of Israel, my people, out of Egypt. [And Moses said:] Who am I to . . . bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Ex. 3:10-11). Moses was legislator and liberator to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt; he stands for the teacher of the divine law, the one who leads the Lord's people out of the darkness of ignorance.³ No one, however, ought to undertake such a task unless he be commissioned. And if not commissioned, then not only should he not hold this office, but be all the more reluctant to do so, since no one may presume that he is fit for it. If, on the one hand, *he* has not spoken to God, he is unworthy; if, on the other hand, *God* has not spoken to his heart, he ought to regard himself as "faltering and tongue-tied" like Moses (cf. Ex. 4:10). And so, one who is unable to pronounce the divine mysteries opened up to him by the Lord, should in no way attempt to do so unless he is clearly appointed by obedience.

Furthermore, he must be ardently motivated by a brotherly compassion; for he is being sent "to heal broken hearts, promising the release of captives, the opening of prison doors." We have Paul's example in this:

You found us innocent as babes in your company; no nursing mother ever cherished her children more; in our great longing for you, we desired nothing better than to offer you our own lives, as well as God's gospel, so

³Bonaventure, always keen on the power of words, connects linguistically *eductor* (one who leads out) and *educator* (a tutor or educator).

greatly had we learned to love you [1 Thess. 2:7-8].

Just as you cannot beget natural offspring without natural love, so you cannot beget spiritual offspring without spiritual affection. As Gregory said: "He who has no charity for his fellowman must never take on the office of preaching" (*Gospel Homilies*, I, 17). To expound and teach God's gospel is to preach the divine word; and for this the teacher must have enkindled within him a sympathetic attitude towards his fellowman.

If gospel teaching is to produce its desired effect, the teacher must have as pupil one who is humble, gentle, and faithful. A pupil of Scripture will be of mild speech because he has adapted himself to listening. The good news is brought to humble people, not to those that are censorious. Indeed, only those that are submissive in their approach to the word can properly grasp God's good news. "True answer and wise answer none can give," says Ecclesiasticus, "but he who listens patiently, and learns all" (5:13); and as the Psalm puts it: "He teaches his way to the humble" (24:9). "Be patient," James writes, "and cherish that word implanted in you which can bring salvation to your souls" (Jas. 1:21). From the gospel one learns how to become a disciple of Christ: "Learn from me, for I am gentle" (Mt. 11:29).⁴ Contentiousness and dispute might be the way of the Aristotelians, but they are not the way of gospel disciples: "A servant of the Lord has no business with quarreling; he must be kindly towards all men, persuasive and tolerant" (2 Tim. 2:24). What Augustine says in his second book on *Christian Doctrine*, is in point:

What we need is a holy submissiveness in approaching sacred Scripture. We perceive its meaning when it smites some of our sinful ways—or perhaps we do not perceive. Still, there is to be no gainsaying on our part. As if we knew better, as if any notion of our own were better! No, what we must bring ourselves to think and believe is that what is written there is better and truer [c. 7, n. 9].

A listener has to achieve a humble disposition by means of a contrite spirit, for it is "broken hearts" that are to be healed—"Sorrow bows down the heart" (Prov. 12:25). A heart thus bowed down is more apt to learn, for it is written: "It was good for me to be afflicted, to learn your will" (Ps. 118:71), and "You have hidden these things from the wise and clever, and revealed them to mere children" (Mt. 11:25).

A listener, finally, must give a faithful assent by surrendering his mind—for it is to "captives" release is promised. Paul meant this when he

⁴A *disciple* is basically one who *learns* from his master (the Latin *discere* = to learn).

wrote: "We make every mind surrender to Christ's service" (2 Cor. 10:5). It is by a real faith this is done; and without a real faith it is impossible to understand the text of the good news—"Unless you believe, you will never understand" (Is. 7:9, according to the Septuagint reading). If belief be required for things we can learn about, all the more necessary is it for what is revealed by God. This "captivity" is actually a liberation from sin, for "he had removed all the uncleanness from their hearts when he gave them faith" (Acts 15:9), and "he empowered to become the children of God, all those who believe in his name" (Jn. 1:12).

In a general sense, therefore, our passage is a description of the good teacher and the good pupil.

We take our text to refer in a special manner to Saint Luke, the man who composed this Gospel and to a purpose. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me" applies to him as author; "to bring the good news to the humble" points to his aim or purpose.

Of course, the uppermost source of the gospel is "the Spirit of the Lord": "It will be for him, the truth-giving Spirit, when he comes, to guide you into all truth" (Jn. 16:13). It is he who spoke through the Evangelists, spoke through Luke: "It is not you who speak, it is the Spirit of your Father that speaks in you" (Mt. 10:20); "I will give you such eloquence and such wisdom as all your adversaries shall not be able to withstand, or to confute" (Lk. 21:15).

At the other end of the scale of gospel sources comes Saint Luke. Note those words—"upon me"—that is, upon Luke. Jerome says of him that "he died, filled with the Holy Spirit." He was surely qualified to write a Gospel. The Apostle wrote of him: "We are sending . . . that brother of ours, who has won the praise of all the churches by his proclamation of the gospel" (2 Cor. 8:18). Therefore, Ecclesiasticus' verse fits him: "She opened his mouth in the assembly and filled him with the spirit of wisdom" (15:5).

There is an intermediate gospel source, indicated by the words: "he has anointed me"—and it is *grace*, which, when conferred, prepares the soul to receive lessons of truth from the greatest Teacher of all: "The influence of his anointing lives on in you, so that you have no need of teaching" (1 Jn. 2:27). It is the Holy Spirit who through grace taught the Evangelist, and the instructed Evangelist in turn taught the Church when he wrote his Gospel. That book, then, had a threefold source: upper, lower, and intermediate—the Holy Spirit personally, the Evangelist, and the Holy Spirit's grace. All of this can be known from our original passage given above and as presented by Saint Luke.

The purpose [behind the writing of this Gospel] is something that is also hinted at rather fully in the subsequent lines. It is a triple purpose: to

manifest the truth, to cure infirmity, to make eternity accessible. The first of these belongs to "prevenient" grace, the second to sanctifying grace, the third to the fullness of glory. And so, to begin with, the first aim of this piece of teaching: viz., the manifestation of truth, is indicated by the line: "to bring good news to the humble"—and by the line of the Psalm: "They will tell what God has done. They will understand God's deeds" (63:10). This is why it is called "gospel," that is, "good news."

Something which has existed since the beginning,
that we have heard,
and we have seen with our own eyes;
that we have watched
and touched with our hands;
the Word, who is life—
this is our subject.

That life was made visible:
we saw it and we are giving our testimony,
telling you of the eternal life
which was with the Father and has been made visible to us [Jn. 1:1].

How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation! [Is. 52:7].

The holy Evangelists were the first with such a message.

The [Lucan Gospel's] purpose is, secondly, the healing of our infirmities, as indicated in the phrase: "to heal broken hearts." When the good news is proclaimed in word it bears fruit and has a curative effect. As the Book of Wisdom puts it, "Herb nor plaster it was that cured them, but your word, Lord, that all healing gives" (16:12). Well does the Gospel of Luke produce this effect. Jerome wrote: "If Luke is that physician *who has won praise by his proclamation of the gospel*, let us also observe that all the words he wrote are medicine for the feeble soul" (Letter 53, 103). And this is in line with what Saint Luke intended: that through knowledge of the truth we might come to find a remedy for our sickness.

Now, the third and last purpose [of the Lucan Gospel] is rendering eternity accessible—as indicated by the line: "promising the release of captives, the opening of prison doors." This happens when we come to possess eternal life, something the teaching of the gospel exhorts us to as to our final goal. "So much has been written down," says Saint John, "that you may learn to believe Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and so believing find life through his name" (20:31). Or, as in the last chapter of Mark: "Go out all over the world and preach the gospel to the whole of creation; he who believes and is baptized will be saved" (16:15). The



Evangelists were the ones who, more than others, fulfilled this injunction. Not only did they proclaim the gospel by word of mouth to their contemporaries, but they did so in writing, both for the benefit of the people of their day and that of all future generations.

If we are to understand [our opening text] as uniquely referring to the Lord Jesus, since what it says peculiarly concerns him, we shall see indicated two inward principles: viz., the subject matter and the layout [of the gospel]. One thing is certain, that the entire gospel story is about Christ, as mediator, preacher, restorer, and victor. We see the mediator in the mystery of the incarnation, the preacher in the authority of his instruction, the restorer in the healing passion, the victor in the triumphal resurrection. The first has reference to Christ's nature, the second to his teaching, the third to his victimhood, the fourth to his triumph. These four, as they apply to Christ, are clearly and neatly touched upon in our opening quotation from Scripture.

Christ Jesus, as the mediator, is introduced by the statement: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me." He is the mediator, of whom it was written: "God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power" (Acts 10:38). Anointed, indeed, not like other holy men, but *above* others: "God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above other kings" (Ps. 44:8). With that anointing Daniel's prophecy is brought to completion: "The visions and the prophecies come true, and he who is all holiness receives his anointing" (Dan. 9:24).

Christ the preacher is introduced in the next statement: "He has sent me to bring good news to the humble." This accords with what was promised the children of Israel by the Lord through Moses: "I will raise up for them a prophet like yourself, one of their own race, entrusting my own message to his lips, so that he may instruct them at my bidding" (Deut. 18:18). This was Christ, Lord of all the Prophets, who said: "I

have made known to you all that my Father has told me" (Jn. 15:15). And this was the purpose of his mission: "I must preach the gospel of God's kingdom to the other cities too; it is for this that I was sent" (Lk. 4:43).

Christ as restorer is introduced by the phrase: "to heal broken hearts." He is the very one of whom it is written: "He went about doing good, and curing all those who were under the devil's tyranny" (Acts 10:38). And so, it is of him the Psalm speaks: "He heals the broken-hearted, he binds up all their wounds (146:3). This he did, with the remedy his passion was:

Ours were the sufferings he bore,
ours the sorrows he carried.
Yet he was pierced through for our faults,
crushed for our sins.
On him lies a punishment that brings us peace,
and through his wounds we are healed [Is. 53:4-5].

Christ the victor is introduced in the fourth part of the statement: "promising the release of captives, the opening of prison doors." This he accomplished in the triumph which his resurrection was. Colossians 2:15 (if applied to Christ) speaks of this: "He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them. . . ." And again, as the Psalm says, "He has mounted up on high; he has captured his spoil; he has brought gifts to men" (67:19; cf. Eph. 4:8).

Since, therefore, under these four titles Christ is the object of faith and the subject of the gospel, in the text offered he is rightly designated as the gospel's "material principle" or subject-matter.

"Sciences fall into real sections" (Aristotle); form is determined by arrangement of material; the subject of our gospel is one, set up and looked at in four ways. These are reasons why one book must needs treat principally of one of the aspects only and secondarily of the other aspects. But the written good news as a whole must deal chiefly with all four. Therefore there must be four gospels, each having four parts.

Thus we gather why this book should have the four parts it has. The first part, up to chapter 4, deals with the mystery of the Incarnation; the second, up to chapter 22, with Christ's preaching authority; the third, up to chapter 24, with the medicine which the passion was; the fourth part, up to the end of the whole book, deals with the triumphal resurrection. Although he needed all of these to make a complete story, Luke shows a special interest in Christ's priesthood, and in the passion as [humanity's] cure (as we might expect from one who was a physician).

Therefore, from the passage set before you, applicable to Christ as it is, you deduce [this Gospel's] "material principle" or subject, and its "for-

mal principle" [or structure]; that is, the arrangement of sections and chapters, as well as scriptural method.

These two [subject-matter and structure] are very well prefigured in the animal vision of Ezekiel (1:5-12); he saw four animals, and while each had four faces, one of the faces was its principal face. The first of these resembled a human being, and in that we see Christ's nature; the next resembled a lion, and in that we see Christ's victory; the next resembled an ox, and in that we see Christ the victim; the next resembled an eagle, and in that we see Christ's doctrine. Now, all the holy doctors hold that these symbolize the four gospels, representing their subject-matter and structure. For each animal is *one*, yet has four forms—to show that the four gospels treat of the one Christ under a fourfold aspect. Again, since each is four-sided, each has four faces. And yet again, the first, the one resembling a human being, since he is first, is Matthew, who in the main traces the mystery of the Incarnation. The second, the one resembling a lion, the second to write, is Mark, treating of the triumphal resurrection. They share the same *side* because they agree on many things.⁵ The third, the one resembling an ox, the third to write, is Luke, who follows the priesthood, and the passion as [humanity's] cure. But the fourth, the one resembling the clear-eyed eagle, and the fourth to write, is John: he is concerned with the evangelical teaching power of Christ; his theme is beyond the others' attainments. He is described as being "above them" (cf. Ezek. 1:10).

And so it is plain how the reality of things corresponds to the shadow which preceded it. Plain also are those six questions with which we have prefaced what the doctrine is about to impart: the quality of the one teaching it, the quality of the one hearing it, who produced it, what it aims at, what its content is, and what form it takes. This gives something of a general conception of the Gospel of Luke. Ω

⁵The final paragraph 24 is more or less a standard piece based on patristic sources. The figures representing Matthew and Mark are said to be on the same side in the vision, on the right side, that of joy, because the Nativity (Matthew) and the Resurrection (Mark) are what brought most joy to the disciples.

Sounds of You in a Monastery Garden

"And Adam heard the Sound of God Walking in the Garden" (Genesis)

I hear the sound of You
in my eyelids' lifting
at midnight and at dawn
or on a flower.

Low startle of amaze
in lifting eyelids
whispers Your presence
in soft certainty.

I hear the sound of You
in my lips upcurving
at sky-span, wind-dance, kind
full-bosomed clouds.
Sweep of my lips upcurving
at Your wonders
carols Your presence
in my centering.

I hear the sound of You
in my heartbeats counting
Your steps down every
moment of my life.
My blood sings through my veins
to mark Your footfalls,
cascades content at You
in the midst of me.

I hear the sound of You
in my motored breathing.
And where You pass, my breast
keeps lifting vigil
and lowering watch for Your
returning, Lover.
Stride down my breathing,
for I love the sound!



I hear the sound of You
in the silent torrents
of tears denied permission
for their splashing
outside the banks of heart.
I hear You sweeten
their brine with Hand-cup
catching of each one.

I hear the sound of You
in the push of yearning
at spirit's arteried walls
to see your face.

I hear the sound of You
in vows pulsating
with power, tensing
stewardship in me.

I hear the sound of You
in all creatures loving.

I hear Your overspill
of ceaseless loving
the Father loving You
in Substantiated Spirit
over the acres of creation
sounding
the sound of You
if anyone will hear.

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

"Bag Pilgrims": Preachers of Poverty

SISTER LORRAINE WESOLOWSKI, O.S.F.

WALK THE STREETS of any city. Sit for a while in a bus station. You'll see them. We've coined a name for them. We may even shy away from them or pity them. Perhaps we may even be one of the few that take the risk to listen to their story. They are the "bag people," the outcasts of society that carry all they possess in bags. They are the nomads of our century. They call "nowhere" home. Home can be a bus station, hallway, rescue mission, abandoned building, or discarded cardboard box by the railroad tracks. Each of us has his/her own image and experience of these pilgrims of our modern day society—these men and women who carry all their possessions, treasures, and meaningful mementos of a shattered lifetime in a shopping bag.

I am sure that none of us could fit all our worldly possessions into a bag. We may even be ashamed of all the bags and boxes we could fill. Nor do we have the awful uncertainty of what we will eat or wear, or where we will sleep. Yet, as Franciscans, as men and women dedicated to poverty and claiming to be on a pilgrim's journey, perhaps we need to take a closer look at ourselves and see what keeps us from claiming the freedom of the children of God.

The "bag people" are certainly open to risk and ridicule, the pain of which none of us is likely to experience. They haven't professed a canonical vow of poverty; yet they preach their poverty just by their effort to exist. Without claiming to be, they are the itinerant preachers to us Franciscans. Francis was probably like those "bag people." We need only look at his life to see how he was regarded as an outcast of society and ridiculed even by his family and friends. When Francis opened the Scriptures, he was told repeatedly to sell all and take nothing for his journey. How radically and literally he lived these words of poverty!

Sister Lorraine Wesolowski is a member of the Sisters of Saint Francis of Millvale, PA, in Bethel Park, Pennsylvania.

The spirit of the gospel can often be easier to hear and to follow than a radical imitation that can expose us to rejection, misunderstanding, and ridicule. Our rationalization, justification, and need allow for this. We are not claiming or advocating literal gospel living. We are just prodding a state of comfortableness that may characterize each of us to a greater or lesser extent. Francis did this. He made others uncomfortable just as the "bag people" make us uncomfortable. We even cross to the other side of the street when they come toward us so we won't have to look into their eyes.

Perhaps we need to take the "bag test" and find out what it is that weighs us down.

The "bag people" of today experience the stark reality of the words of the gospel. The portion life has dealt them may not be of their own choosing, although for some of them it may indeed be a chosen escape. Regardless of the reason, it is their real-life situation, with a literal poverty to which our middle-class standard of life cannot reasonably be compared. Community living has made us so comfortable; our needs and even our wants are amply supplied. But in taking a look at the "bag people" as we walk past them (or for most of us, *drive* past them in our warm cars in the winter and our air-conditioned ones in the summer) on the way to our convents and monasteries, we need to feel uncomfortable in our comfortableness. At the end of our day we come home, kick off our shoes, and complain of how tired we are. Outside our doors, the "bag people" still travel the streets of our cities like pilgrims looking for a homeland.

I certainly am not claiming that we should give up all and become "bag people." Nor am I attempting to make glamorous or sanctify the life of these people. The loneliness, desperation, hopelessness, and misery of mere survival would be more than most of us could endure.

But let us consider the "bag people" as pilgrims on a journey, aware of their poverty and dependence. As Franciscans, we have in some respect joined the ranks of these wayfarers. Yet how close is our imitation of Francis? Far from being able to put all our possessions in a bag or—for that matter—in a large trunk, we keep getting weighed down with so much ownership that we have lost the sense of freedom that the vow of poverty should bring. We keep justifying our need for the things that



make our life, our ministry, and even our prayer better. The juxtaposition of poverty and the possessions of our life can perhaps make us wiggle a bit in that comfortable chair we "needed." The "bags" we carry do not permit our arms to open in loving embrace. If we let go one of our "bags," the reaching out is easier. But true freedom is ours when we can let go of everything and stretch out both arms without limitations. When we are unencumbered our feet travel lighter on our pilgrim's journey. When we travel with nothing but our poverty, we can expect to receive all kinds of riches.

Perhaps we need to take the "bag test" and find out what it is that weighs us down. What should we remove from our possessions or

ourselves that will make our journey lighter and our spirit more free? We may be among those who hold on tightly to our own personal space in the world. We've all heard the phrases: my time, my car, my ministry, my classroom, my parish. . . . Certainly all of these are precious component parts of who we are. But if we own them so tightly that nothing—no one—can be further gifted with our love and generosity, then perhaps it is time to re-focus. Before a gift can be given to us, we need to get rid of something or move something over so that there may be space for the gift. When we become so closed in with our sense of security and everything in its proper niche, we certainly do avoid the interruptions that life has to offer; but perhaps we need to take up the challenge of laying out the welcome mat and see who or what enters.

We pray the words so often: "It is in giving that we receive." It is only when we make these words a reality in our lives, though, that we notice the difference; and so do others. The unconditional guarantee of this "bag test" is known only to ourselves and to God.

The next time we see a "bag person," it may be worth our while to consider whose life is uncluttered, whose spirit is empty, and whose heart is open for the riches in a homeland at the end of life's journey. Ω

Francis of Assisi

O, tender child of light:
Your presence brings hope to dreams,
that will be realized by many—
because you loved.
Your offering was an offering of time.
A self-oblation—
the light of which pierces
the darkness and confusion of the world—
with truth and wisdom.
Your eternal fiat
resounds through the ages
and to the ends of the earth—
quickenning the spirit—
refreshing the soul.

William J. Boylan

Liminality and the Religious Experience of Saint Francis of Assisi

TIMOTHY JOHNSON, O.F.M.CONV.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI is certainly one of the most studied figures in the history of religious life. The point of departure for scholars varies as does their methodology. One of the newest and most interesting approaches is that found in the writings of Victor Turner. Turner, a social anthropologist at the University of Chicago, seeks to study Francis and the Franciscan movement in light of his own academic discipline (*Ritual Process*, 140-55). To do so he makes use of the concepts he has developed in the course of his anthropological field studies.

What follows is not simply a report on what Turner has already said in regard to Francis, but rather an attempt to utilize in a fresh manner one of Turner's key concepts: viz., that of "liminality." My hope is to show that the religious experience of Saint Francis, as it appears in the early sources, is an example of a continual liminal state. In addition, I would like to reflect on the major motivational factor, or as Turner calls it, the "root paradigm," which stands behind the liminal experience of Francis. Other Turnerian concepts will be introduced as the study proceeds. Because of the amount of space available, it will be impossible to develop fully the various ideas linked with liminality, but that could easily be the aim of further research which, it is hoped, may be stimulated by a reading of this article.

Father Timothy Johnson, O.F.M.Conv., is presently living at the Seraphicum, Rome, while he pursues a Doctorate in Spirituality at the Gregorian University. He is a member of the Summer Staff at St. Bonaventure University's Franciscan Institute.

The Meaning of Liminality

IN THE SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY of Victor Turner the concept of liminality must be understood in relationship to what is known as the "rites of passage." This term is used to describe the ritual in which a person moves from one cultural place, position, or state to another ("Passages," *passim*). Liminality is found in the experience of transition. Perhaps the clearest explanation of liminality is found in the book *Images and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, where it is described as

the state and process of mid-transition in a rite of passage. During the liminal period, the characteristics of the "liminars" [the ritual subject in this phase] are ambiguous, for they pass through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. . . . Liminals are stripped of status and authority, removed from a social structure maintained and sanctioned by power and force, and leveled to a homogeneous social state through discipline and ordeal. . . . Much of what has been bound by social structure is liberated, notably the sense of comradeship and communion, or *communitas* . . . [Images, 249].

Liminality, expressed in "stripping," involves a turning from structure toward nature.

Within the above description of liminality there is one element very useful for the present study: viz., the idea of being "stripped of status and authority." This concept, with some variation, can be applied to the Franciscan sources to show the liminal dimension of Saint Francis' religious experience.

Liminality and Dress

THE IDEA OF being "stripped of status and authority" runs like a fine thread through the early biographies of Saint Francis. His father, being a cloth merchant, enjoyed a great deal of status and authority in medieval Assisi. Money, a sign of prestige in the burgeoning capitalist culture, was the foundation of his power. Evidently it was his intention that Francis follow him in the textile trade and thereby share the social importance that accompanied it (Little, 146). As history shows, his son wanted something quite different.

The conversion of Francis shows a deep liminality. It was a time of passage characterized by a throwing away of social prestige and status in

the search for a new identity. The process can be observed from a host of vantage points. Perhaps one of the most intriguing is one of the most concrete: the clothes that he wore. The cultural importance of clothes for the medievals cannot be overemphasized; social rank was distinguished in a special way by the clothes worn (Tuchman, 19-21). The early biographers were naturally aware of the symbolic importance attached to clothing, and thus they strove to show Francis as a man who gave up his social standing, represented by the garments he wore, in search of a new life.

The first incident in Francis' life that can be examined is his meeting with the poor knight. Saint Bonaventure says that the encounter took place after Francis had suffered a prolonged illness:

After his strength was restored, when he had dressed as usual in his fine clothes, he met a certain knight who was of noble birth, but poor and badly clothed. Moved to compassion for his poverty, Francis took off his own garments and clothed the man on the spot. At one and the same time he fulfilled the twofold duty of covering over the embarrassment of a noble knight and relieving the poverty of a poor man [LM I.2; ed. Cousins, 187].

The initial inkling of his dramatic change is present here. Bonaventure is very conscious of the importance of clothes and takes pains to point out how both Francis and the knight were dressed. In his eyes, Francis was to be commended not only for his love of poverty but also for acknowledging the social rank of the knight. Francis' willingness to shed exterior symbols of status and authority is a sign of what is to come.

The next important change of attire appears in the episode before the Bishop of Assisi. The background of the story is essential. After a period of anxious searching and questioning, Francis came to a realization of what God desired of him. Leaving Assisi, he rode by horseback to Foligno, where he sold all the expensive cloth that he had brought. Then he sold the horse and wandered back to Assisi wondering what he should do with the money. Coming upon the Church of San Damiano which was on the verge of collapse, he offered all the coins to the priest. When Francis' father heard the news he was understandably enraged. Realizing that it was impossible to change his son's thinking, he brought him before the Bishop. His intention was clear: to get Francis to renounce his inheritance. Francis was more than obliging. Stripping himself completely naked, he renounced his inheritance in a dramatic way. In place of his fine garments he received clothing of a noticeably different style:

They brought him a poor, cheap cloak of a farmer who worked for the Bishop. Francis accepted it gratefully and with his own hand marked a cross on it with a piece of chalk, thus designating it as the covering of a crucified man and a half-naked beggar [LM II.4; ed. Cousins, 194].

The change from a rich merchant's son to a "half-naked beggar" points out an incredible descent down the social ladder. In throwing off his clothes, Francis threw away his social status and authority (Little, 148). There was no turning back. He had become what Turner describes as an "outsider" because by his own choice he set himself apart "from the behavior of status-occupying, role-playing members of that system" ("Passages," 394).

In time Francis began to wear what Thomas of Celano describes as "a kind of hermit's dress, with a leather girdle about his waist" (1Cel 21; *Omnibus*, 246). After the episode before the Bishop of Assisi, Francis wandered from place to place begging food. Gradually he began to concentrate his efforts on repairing several dilapidated churches in the Assisi area, such as San Damiano and Santa Maria degli Angeli, otherwise known as the Portiuncula.

One day, when listening to the Gospel proclamation (Mt. 10:9), Francis was struck by the verses which described the preaching mission of the Apostles. In particular, he noted how the clothing of the Apostles was linked with their mission. At that moment he felt that the Scriptures were speaking directly to him. Saint Bonaventure describes this pivotal moment in Francis' life as follows:

When he heard this, he grasped its meaning and committed it to memory. This lover of apostolic poverty was then filled with an indescribable joy and said: "This is what I want; this is what I long for with all my heart." He immediately took off his shoes from his feet, put aside his staff, cast away his wallet and money as if accursed, was content with one tunic and exchanged his leather belt for a piece of rope. He directed all his heart's desire to carry out what he had heard and to conform in every way to the role of right living given to the apostles [LM III.1; ed. Cousins, 199-200]

In ridding himself of the so-called "hermit's dress," Francis deepened the liminality of his experience. The "habit" which he began to wear was not much different from the common garb of the poor (cf. Esser, 99). By identifying with the poor he reached the bottom of the social scale. The craving for social status and recognition was no longer a part of his life. The action of Francis put him in direct confrontation with the social values of the day (cf. Grundmann, 140-42). Casting his lot in with the poor, he chose to proclaim the Kingdom of God in the freedom of apostolic poverty.

The apostolic dimension of Francis' spirituality can be understood as a state of continual liminality. By moving from place to place, Francis became what Turner describes as the "liminal religious man who has renounced world and home, moving from village to village—the pilgrim, or the hero of the "quest tales," who goes on a long journey to seek his

identity outside of structure" (*Images*, 248).

Because he had given up all status and authority within society, Francis was forced to seek his identity somewhere else. In his itinerant preaching he shows that his identity was rooted in a reality which could not be locked into, or subordinated to, the social reality of the day. He saw himself as "the herald of the great King" (1Cel 16; *Omnibus*, 242). The identity that he could not find selling cloth in the merchant's stall was given to him as he preached in the piazzas. His clothing, based on the gospel and not on his social standing, vividly expressed the radical change that had taken place.

Francis never arrived at the point where he felt that he did not need to be stripped further. When the time of his death drew near, a very intriguing event unfolded before the eyes of the early friars. Francis asked to be stripped of his habit, the sign of a poor man, so that he could die naked in the dust:

When you see that I am brought to my last moments, place me naked on the ground just as you saw me the day before yesterday; and let me lie there after I am dead for the length of time it takes to walk a mile unhurried [2Cel 217; *Omnibus*, 536].

Nakedness is a powerful expression of poverty. It also represents here and in other places a definitive rejection of status on the part of Francis. In the end he wanted nothing that would even hint of structure to separate him from the earth. This is another indication of the continual liminality of Francis' experience. Liminality, expressed in "stripping," involves a turning from structure toward nature. Turner points out that "an important component of the liminal situation is . . . an enhanced stress on 'nature' at the expense of culture" ("Passages," 410). Thus the death of Francis stands as the culmination of the liminal experience of "stripping" which began some twenty years prior when he gave his rich clothes to the poor knight. Naked, dying, Francis was one with the poor Christ. With him he passed over to the Father.

Liminality and the Root Paradigm

THAT FRANCIS WAS in a continual state of liminality appears certain. His constant and conscious effort to strip himself of status and standing in medieval society is proof enough. Yet by no means is this the whole story. From the point of view of Victor Turner, it is equally important to know what it was that motivated Francis' efforts to remain within the liminal experience. In a certain sense such a question demands a full study in itself. The best that can be done here is to offer a few reflections on Saint Francis' motivation.

Turner, in his social anthropology, offers another idea which is extremely useful in getting to the source of that which so forcefully animated Francis. The concept is that of the "root paradigm," which can be understood as follows:

A higher-order concept than symbols, root paradigms are consciously recognized (though not consciously grasped) cultural models for behavior that exist in the heads of the main actors in a social drama, whether in a small group or on the stage of history.

Root paradigms are shown in behavior which appears to be freely chosen but resolves at length into a total pattern. They go beyond the cognitive, and even the moral, to the existential domain. . . . They reach down to the irreducible life stances of individuals, passing beyond conscious prehension to a fiduciary hold on what the individual senses to be axiomatic values, matters literally of life and death [*Images*, 248].

Even a cursory scanning of the early Franciscan sources will quickly yield the root paradigm of Francis' spirituality. It is the poor, crucified Christ. At the root of all of Francis' actions stands the example of Jesus. The *kenosis* of Jesus which culminated on the altar of the Cross was the prism through which Francis saw all of reality. The willingness of Christ to empty himself and give up his power and glory became the model and matrix of Francis' actions. The continual process of "stripping" on Francis' part reflects the tremendous impact that the poor, crucified Christ had on him.

Throughout his life it grew stronger and took a progressively deeper hold on his being. The meaning of life on the existential level was to be found in "following the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB I.1; AB 109).

That the root paradigm of the poor, crucified Christ took hold of every domain of Francis' life can be shown in various ways. Perhaps one of the most fruitful approaches can be developed in the area of Francis' relationship with the lepers. It is the key to understanding his desire to rid himself of power and authority. Reflecting on his state before conver-



sion, Francis reveals the role that the lepers played in his decision to lead a radically different lifestyle:

When I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I had left them, that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body; and afterward I lingered a little and left the world [Test 1; AB 154].

What was it that brought about such a tremendous shift in Francis' perspective that he could join those whom previously he had intentionally avoided? According to Saint Bonaventure, it was an encounter with the crucified Christ. There is a direct link, Bonaventure maintains, between the experience of the Crucified and the love of lepers. In the early stages of his conversion, Francis often sought out lonely and deserted places where he struggled to know and accept God's designs. Once, after a particularly mysterious meeting with a leper on the plain below Assisi, Francis had an incredibly moving experience of Christ in prayer. It shook him to the core of his being:

One day while he was praying in such a secluded spot and became totally absorbed in God through his extreme fervor, Jesus Christ appeared to him fastened to the cross. Francis' "soul melted" [Cant. 5:6] at the sight, and the memory of Christ's passion was so impressed on the innermost recesses of his heart that from hour to hour, whenever Christ's crucifixion came to his mind, he could scarcely contain his tears and sighs . . . [LM I.5; Cousins, 189].

The results of the encounter were manifested without delay, as the lepers became the immediate recipients of the love which Francis bore for the Lord. The unity between contemplation and action was achieved in his relationship with the lepers. With total disregard for himself, Francis went among the lepers to serve them:

Now he rendered humble service to the lepers with human concern and devoted kindness in order that he might completely despise himself, because of Christ crucified, who according to the text of the prophet was despised "as a leper" [Is. 53:3]. He visited their homes frequently, generously distributed alms to them, and with great compassion kissed their hands and their mouths [LM I.6; AB 189-90].

In what way is the leper incident the key to understanding Francis' "stripping" of self? This question is important because it contains the essence of Francis' spirituality. Francis' setting out among the lepers was the concretization of his experience in prayer. By giving of himself, he was changed and gradually conformed to the image of the poor Christ.

Until he moved outside his own personal world, he remained isolated and cut off from God. To be in the world, as the medievals understood it, was to be under the dominion of those self-seeking passions and forces which are opposed to God. With the lepers, Francis began to understand and experience in a profound way the self-sacrificing love of Jesus which was radically different from the self-seeking concern he was used to in the past. It is no surprise that after living with the lepers he began to give his clothes away to those in need. Bonaventure writes: "To beggars he wished to give not only his possessions but his very self. At times he took off his clothes, at times unstitched them, at times ripped them in pieces, in order to give them to beggars, when he had nothing else at hand" (LM I.6; AB 190).

It was with the lepers that Francis experienced what Turner describes as "communitas" (*Images*, 250-51). His relationships were direct and unmediated. They exhibited all the liminal qualities of "lowliness, sacredness, homogeneity, and comradeship" (*Images*, 250). Lowliness was present in that Francis left his social stratum and joined those who were considered as outcasts. The lepers were sacred to Francis because he saw the wounds of Christ mirrored in their sores. Homogeneity and comradeship were evident in that Francis joined them and lived with them as a brother.

To perpetuate the love which he came to know in the liminal experience with the lepers, Francis realized that it was absolutely necessary to follow the example of the poor Christ and shed everything which was an obstacle. Status and authority, represented by his garments, were barriers. To the degree that he rejected them, he remained in union with Christ and his brothers, the lepers. In the final analysis, Francis' experience was continually liminal because he was one with the poor Christ who is the ultimate "liminal man." Ω

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Leave-Taking

O far from futile longing
 To grasp what can't be held;
 To take and leave behind you
 An unpossessing wealth
 To live with fading memories
 Of a present which is past
 And confront all the longings
 In the consecrated task.
 Then up! Be off!
 And leave behind
 That which you cannot lose.
 Be quick! Be brave!
 And know the risk
 That happens when you choose.
 So I must leave and never go
 And finally fly the grasping.
 For in this present memory
 Are no answers, only asking.

Robert Barbato, O.F.M.Cap.

Il Monte Della Verna: "Lovescape Crucified"

WILLIAM HART McNICHOLS, S.J., S.F.O.

*Joy fall to thee, father Francis,
Drawn to the Life that died;
With the gnarls of the nails in thee, niche of the lance,
his
Lovescape crucified
And seal of his seraph-arrival!"*

THERE IS A RANGE of mountains beginning in Colorado, and winding into the heart of New Mexico, which, upon seeing them, the early Spanish Franciscan missionaries named the Sangre de Cristos. The mountains have red gutters, and gashes and ravines which the missionaries, in the spirit of their founder father, saw as the open wounds of the bleeding Christ. Perhaps too they were thinking of that cleaved mountain so dominant in the imagination of everyone who comes near to Francis: La Verna.

La Verna is 90 miles north of Assisi, winding up, and up, and up, and up! It was a gift to the Little Poor Man by the wealthy Count Orlando, who was a loving admirer of Francis, and, as one friar, André Cirino, put it, "The Little Poor Man who wouldn't own or take anything, took a mountain." It is these seeming contradictions in Francis, his rapturous foolishness, his willingness to be obedient to every whisper of the Spirit, which make us want to abandon our lives and reputations and run follow him to Jesus. It is the light of freedom about him . . . that joy of being unbound and out of every prison (including the ones of the imagination), and the passionate way he suffered to attain that freedom—and it is the extravagance of his love which brings us to our knees (amazed at such goodness), like Peter before Jesus. Francis was always alert to the will of God, he *ached* to do the will of God . . . it was his food and drink, in imitation of his Lord. When the Spirit spoke, in words that only the heart can hear, the servant of the Lord would fly to carry out the request.

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., is an artist-illustrator as well as a retreat-master, serving God's people at St. Ignatius Retreat House, Manhasset, New York. This series of reflections was composed on the occasion of his visit to Assisi and La Verna last year.

And the Spirit whispered:

You who own nothing,
you who opened the naked earth
and drew from her your coarse shift
and simple, rude tether,
and stepped out soiled beautiful terra cotta . . .
you now take this mountain, this place so wounded
and disarrayed,
take it from the rich man who thinks he owns it,
and there you will find a place made ready for you,
nature will greet you, and I myself will
visit you there.



» Il Monte della Verna «

And so the wealthy custodian of La Verna gave to the little custodian of creatures, the mountain which has remained his.

Francis travelled to La Verna in August of 1224 for Saint Michael's Lent to bemoan his sins and to grieve over the loss of his Order. In a dream he had seen himself as a black mother hen with pink dove's feet. The little chicks were circling round and round the mother, and they were so numerous she could not gather them in.

And how she longed to gather them, but they would not come, and so mother Francis turned his face to his own Jerusalem, his own Gethsemane, and left the brood to Holy Mother the Church.

Francis' garden of agony seems as ancient as Gethsemane itself. La Verna seems older than anything I've ever seen or experienced. The legend, in fact, is that the rocks rent themselves in two at the time of the Crucifixion of Jesus. As the Temple veil ripped, as the sky darkened with the

eclipse of the sun, as the earth grieved . . . La Verna trembled, split and broke, cracked and moved itself—carved itself into an altar hewn and wounded in empathetic agony.

As Francis climbed La Verna that late summer, nature did greet him, a flock of birds flew to meet him, and a falcon befriended him and woke him in the mornings to pray, and faithful companion Leo stood guard lest any one see the coming union. Soon even Leo's curiosity got the better of him, and he edged his way through the brush and shrubbery to catch a glimpse of the father-on-fire and instead saw a broken man bowed low in a state of repetitive prayer: "Who are you, my dearest God? And what am I, your vilest little worm and useless servant?" Leo was caught, and said once he was never so terrified and had wished the ground would swallow him up rather than face the wrath of Francis. Francis merely reprimanded him, explained to him the prayer he had been repeating, and sent him back to his post with a warning not to spy any more.

Between September 14th and the 29th, the Seraph, something no one has ever seen—that glorious image of crucified and resurrected Lord all wrapped in wings which carried and covered—appeared at La Verna. In all the visions and apparitions known to us there has never been a figure like this. Isaiah and Ezekiel saw seraphs and many-winged beings, but no one has ever seen Jesus-all-one-with-Seraph. This unimaginable vision, this winged victory, all bright and burning, all love and love-making, came only to Francis and in the act of love turned beloved into Lover. Francis staggered more wounded than ever, through the rest of the two brief years he had on earth as a kind of crucifixion-resurrection himself. He was one already dead, bearing the marks of death and whittled down to the bare bones . . . blessing the earth out of which he was born as clay and reborn as fire. He was simply waiting, a soul in a skeleton cage stained red, until that evening in early October when the seraph wings gathered the spirit left inside the remains and lifted it Home. Ω

Book Reviews

Sex, Marriage, and Chastity. By William E. May. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981. Pp. 170. Paper, \$6.50.

Reviewed by Friar Michael J. Taylor, O.F.M. Conv., who is serving his Deacon Intern year at Our Lady of Angels Parish in downtown Albany, New York.

This is a concise work that deals with exactly what the title denotes. Its author is a fine Catholic layman who has for many years written and lectured on the subject. From the outset, he quickly distinguishes himself as one who takes an "integralist" approach to sexuality and is not afraid to divorce himself from other current schools of thought concerning sexuality, such as the "separatist" school, which he feels does not adequately represent the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The author begins his overview of the integralist system of thought on page 9 and does a fine job of interweaving this model throughout the book's other material as he addresses himself to the more concrete issues of the understanding of person, marriage, genital relationships, and the married and unmarried dimensions of chastity. It is also worthwhile noting his treatment of contraception in Chapter IV.

A hidden strength of this book lies in the author's extensive notes after each chapter, in which he provides a more than adequate backing to his line of

reasoning, frequently availing himself of the teachings of Pope John Paul II.

This book would be very helpful for those who teach adult religious education courses, campus ministers, or anyone who seriously wants to update himself on its subject matter.

Into the Needle's Eye: Becoming Poor and Hopeful under the Care of a Gracious God. By William Reiser, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 144, \$4.50.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., Campus Minister at St. Bonaventure University.

The title of this book is based upon the saying of Jesus recorded in Matthew's Gospel: "Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" (19:24). The author emphasizes the need for the Christian to be poor if he is to attain the kingdom of God. In the course of the book he develops his understanding of "becoming poor."

In his Introduction, Father Reiser acknowledges that his book contains some ideas he has already published in articles in such periodicals as *Review for Religious* and *Spirituality Today* (p. 15). He has, however, reworked those ideas for inclusion in the present volume.

Father Reiser writes an interesting

book. His travels in the Far East have made him realize that God is known and worshiped by more people following the religious traditions of the East than by people following Christ. His thought stresses the need for Christians to learn the meaning of "becoming poor" in the sense of "listening respectfully and openly to the word of God which may speak to us within another religious tradition" (p. 13). For the author, "another religious tradition" means especially Buddhism and Hinduism. He lived in India for some years and while there studied and listened carefully to expressions of the Buddhist and Hindu traditions. He presents many stories from these traditions, stories which this reviewer found fascinating.

An interesting point stressed by Father Reiser is that "No route to God bypasses a people's cultural expression" (p. 29). To appreciate and to understand religious traditions and religious practices, the author maintains, a person must be aware of the culture of the people among whom these traditions and practices are found. He relies upon his personal experience with both Western and

Eastern cultures to relate the religious traditions of both to each other.

"Turning poor," Father Reiser explains, "means letting go of self for the love of God, as Jesus let go of self for love of us" (p. 13). "Only God can fill the emptiness of the human soul; without faith, religious observances will not bring us to God" (p. 41). In his development of "becoming poor," the author brings in many related topics: truth, the poor, journeying, forgiveness, grace. All these subjects enhance the explanation the author gives of his understanding of poverty. Becoming poor, pursuing our own spiritual journey, responding to God's call—all these personal activities are tied together.

Whereas the early part of the book is filled with many of the author's personal experiences of Eastern religious tradition and culture, the latter half has few references to Eastern religions. Yet, the reader's interest is sufficiently aroused in the first few chapters to carry through into the latter half of the book. Christian readers especially can profit from reading *Into the Needle's Eye*.

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Illustrations for our February issue have been drawn by Brother John Francis Orell, F.F.S.C., who teaches at St. Joseph's School, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics
EpCust: Letter to Superiors
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
CL: Legend of Saint Clare
CP: Process of Saint Clare
Flor: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
LMIn: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
LP: Legend of Perugia
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
SC: Sacrum commercium
SP: Mirror of Perfection

Quoniam: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omphos of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Institute

The Franciscan

EDITORIAL

St. Bonaventure



Shaping the Franciscan Vision of Mission

THE MISSIONARY EFFORTS of the Church form a mosaic of varied attempts to make Christ known to peoples of diverse nations and cultures. As a newcomer to life in a "missionary country," I see the mosaic as covered with a lot of shadows. In the most secret places of my heart I even ask myself if I want to have a part in this very checkered history of missionary life and activity in South Africa.

The complexity of spreading the faith among people of another culture weighs heavily upon me these days. The effects of importing one's own culture, showing little respect for the indigenous culture, lack of suitable training in language and customs, insufficient personnel to allow for community missionary efforts in local areas, and attitudes of superiority are everywhere present; and yet God is alive and active. How amazing!

That God works despite our inadequacies is not an excuse for a lack of good pastoral planning in any country. A great deal of undoing lies ahead of us because of a lack of vision and conviction about the Franciscan approach to missionary life and about the people of other cultures.

The articles in this month's issue help us to reflect on "mission" in the mind of Saint Francis, on the place of poverty in the life of Franciscan missionaries, and on the attempts of one indigenous congregation of Franciscan sisters to be faithful to the grace of rediscovering their roots.

Although two of the articles are set in a specifically South African context, they carry within them deeper implications for all of us who call ourselves Franciscan.

Vatican II stated clearly that the whole Church is missionary by her very nature and that each of us shares a common missionary vocation to spread the faith wherever we are and according to our gifts. If these articles cause us to reflect on the quality of our life and ministry in whatever context we find ourselves, then the missionary vocation will be strengthened. If they cause us to examine our communal and individual life of poverty, then our witness may be given more clearly. If they encourage us to respond to the grace of refounding ourselves and our congregations more surely within our Franciscan charism, then the Church will be built up wherever we are forming relationships with people to make the person of Christ known.

To be missionary in our prayer, intent, witness, and ministry is not a choice, but a constituent element of what it means to be Christian, what it means to be Franciscan. Ω

Madge Karcicki, SSJ-TOSF

Peaceful Green

Mt. 24:32-33

Peaceful, green flames feed
on rain, sun, air, root, rock, soil,
veins rich with vine's mead.
Peaceful, green flames fly!
Storm-stunned! Wind-whisked! Brighted!
Burned!

Freed, they gentlv sigh
to earth. So they breathe
on field. Thorn. Garden. Hill. Stone.
Bright, cool, green fires wreathe
world's dust-dry, hot thirst
with hush. Hope, uncrushed, unquenched,
waits for life to burst
again (tear-tender, sense-known real)
from the skies:
Justice in the hand (and nail); Love's
lovely rise.

Elizabeth R. Mattax

The Development of a Franciscan Missionary Spirituality

ROBERT STEWART, O.F.M.

IN HIS ARTICLE on "Christian-Islamic Confrontation in the West," Robert Burns writes of the tactics employed by medieval missionaries.

The medieval missionary had the option of five tactics: secret conversion, via commercial chaplain or other contacts; fanatic confrontation designed to precipitate a dramatic response; infiltration via metaphysical dialogue with whatever savants came to hand; diplomatic maneuvers toward winning a potentate, in whose footsteps many subjects could drift into Christianity; or finally cracking the military carapace by conquest, to expose an Islamic region to public proselytism [p. 1395].

There is evidence that in the course of Franciscan missionary history friars behaved in each of these ways: Berard and his companions seeking fanatic confrontation, Raymond Lull and Roger Bacon advocating metaphysical disputation, William of Rubruck exercising diplomacy, John of Capistrano exhorting to conquest, and the friars acting as chaplains to the Bolognese crusaders. Yet if we are faithful to Saint Francis' mind, as revealed in his own writings and those of his earlier biographers, we are forced to admit that none of these tactics are entirely compatible with the saint's missionary spirituality. Rather, he eventually came to advocate just two tactics.

Father Robert Stewart, O.F.M., M.A. (Formative Spirituality, Duquesne University), is a member of the English Province who has worked for fifteen years in formation in South Africa, first as Novice Master and now as Director of Formation in the house of studies of the Federation of Southern Africa. He is also a lecturer in spirituality at the National Seminary in Pretoria. A good deal of the thorough documentation, as well as the extensive multi-lingual bibliography, had to be omitted for reasons of space; some readers may be interested in knowing that it contains special sections on mission and on martyrdom movements. The author may be contacted at St. Joseph's Mission, P. O. Besters, 3371 Natal South Africa.

The first way is "to avoid quarrels or disputes and be subject to every creature for God's sake (1 Pt. 2:13), thus bearing witness to the fact that they are Christians (RegNB 13). Here Francis is suggesting that the friars, as missionaries, are to engage in courteous dialogue and humble service and so become reconciling bridge-builders between conflicting parties.

The second way is

to proclaim the Word of God openly, when they see that is God's will, calling on their hearers to believe in God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, and in the Son, the Redeemer and Savior, that they may be baptized and become a Christian because "unless a man is born again of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:5) [RegNB 16].

He thus acknowledges the way of proclaiming the Gospel but only when the "hour" to do this has been discerned and it is clearly seen that this call to preach is the will of God.

The way of fanatic confrontation was replaced by Francis with a way of mystical martyrdom.

Francis, however, did not immediately come to this formulation of his mission spirituality; rather, it emerged slowly as his original inspiration was tried and tempered in the crucible of experience.

Francis' Original Ideal of Mission Spirituality

FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY draws its inspiration mainly from the person of Saint Francis of Assisi. Hence, Franciscan missionary spirituality was born from Francis' life with God, his contemplation of the mystery of God and His holywill, together with his struggle to work out God's message in his life and that of his brothers.

Francis was awed by the Father's love who *sent* (in Latin, *misit*) the Word into the world to become incarnate through the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. By the power of that same Spirit he wished his friars to receive the Word and bear it like Mary into the world. He was impressed by the Son of Mary, who performed only what he was sent to do by the Father: "I do nothing of myself; but that which the Father has shown me, that I do" (Jn. 5:19); "He became obedient unto death, even death on a cross"). So Francis sent out his friars in obedience

to the will of God made manifest through divine inspiration and the discernment of superiors (RegB 12). Because the Son *sent* his followers ("As the Father sent me into the world, I also in my turn send them into the world"—Jn. 17:18), so Francis sent his followers into the world. Since the emissaries of Christ were *sent* two by two (Mk. 6:7) without material means of support (Lk. 22:35) as sheep in the midst of wolves (Mt. 10:16) to proclaim the good news (Mk. 3:14), in this manner did Francis also send his friars (RegNB 16).

Those *sent* by Christ *sent* out others in their turn (Acts 8:14) to hand on their mission. To all these missionaries the Father *sent* the Spirit in the name of Christ, to teach them and to recall to their minds all that Christ had revealed to them (Jn. 14:26). Francis from the very beginning considered his Order as missionary, but as missionary existing within the same trinitarian framework as is worked out in the Gospels. He saw that mission is essentially a divine work, the work of the Word who is "Spirit and Life." But mission is also the work of men who become instruments and servants of the Spirit. Such men, led by the "Spirit of the Lord" (cf. RegB 10; Adm *passim*), are to image the Trinity in the world, through charity to others, "that all may be one" (Jn. 17:21).

Such was the ideal of Francis regarding mission. But such an ideal had to be worked out in life and given an expression that men would be able to follow. During his lifetime he saw this ideal given concrete expression, by those who had incarnated in themselves the Franciscan missionary spirit. He saw the Church, to which he was always obedient, reflecting on his ideals as activated by his followers. He reflected on the reality of the situation and his own experience of mission life. Gradually and under the influence of all these factors, he modified his teaching for those who "by divine inspiration desire to go among the Saracens and other nonbelievers" (RegB 12).

The Way of Confrontation Rejected

IN THE YEAR 1219, at the General Chapter the mission to Africa was entrusted to Vitalis and his companions. "Summoning them, the Saint said, My little sons, God bade me to send you to the land of the Saracens that you may preach and confess his faithfulness and attack the Moroccan law" (A. F. 17, p. 584). He himself would go with some brothers to Damietta, and Giles would go with others to Tunis. What happened to these brothers and to Francis himself is important to an understanding of Francis' mission spirituality. Francis, according to the sources, asked his friars to attack the Muslim law, and this is precisely what they did.

Even on their way to Morocco they carried on this task. In Seville in their own habits they attempted to enter the principal mosque on a

Moslem holy day in order to preach. Prevented from doing this, they went to the king. There they told him that they had been sent to him for the good of his soul and to inform him that he ought to abandon his faith in Mohammed, whom they called a most despicable prophet. When imprisoned they continued to uphold their faith and damn the precepts and practices of Islam.



In Morocco they took every occasion to preach to the Moslems, declaring the law of Mohammed base and useless. They were evicted from the city and sent to Ceuta for transportation back to Christian lands; they escaped, returned, and again used every opportunity to condemn Islam. The caliph opposed their transgression of Moslem law and their criticism of the Moslem faith. He did not immediately destroy them, but again had them sent back to Ceuta. Again they escaped, returned, were imprisoned, and finally their persistent

preaching brought them martyrdom at the hands of the caliph himself (*A. F. 3*, pp. 588ff.). At the same Chapter Francis sent Giles and his companions to Tunis. The mission of Giles to Tunis had little opportunity to get off the ground, as he was seized by the Christian merchants and forced onto a ship in the harbor. But even as the ship was sailing, he urged the Moslems to be converted to Christ. There is no doubt that Giles and his companions were inspired by the Spirit of God; inflamed by divine fire, they desired exceedingly to die for the faith (*A. F. 3*, pp. 75-155). Later, reflecting on his experience, Giles wrote: "We are able to be martyrs without steel and the shedding of blood. . . . From holy devotion, joy, and happiness, a man may deserve to gain the merit and crown of a martyr."

After the Chapter of 1219 Francis himself set off to Damietta. What happened to Francis at Damietta? The accounts given in the First and Second Life of Saint Francis by Thomas of Celano and in Saint Bonaventure's Life vary, but all agree that his motive for going was to lay down his life for his Moslem brothers. We do not know exactly when he arrived, but we do know he was there on 29 August, 1219, when the crusaders suffered an overwhelming defeat (2Cel 30; LM XI.3). Instead of an-

nihilating the remaining crusaders' forces, the Sultan Al-Kamel Mohammed (1218-1238) proposed a truce. It is possible that Francis used this period of negotiations and diplomatic exchanges to go with Brother Illuminatus to visit the Sultan so that he might convert him. Having had perhaps a rough crossing into the Sultan's camp, they came at last before the Sultan.

The Sultan asked them by whom and why and in what capacity they had been sent, and how they got there; but Francis replied intrepidly that they had been sent by God, not by man, to show him and his subjects the way of salvation and proclaim the truth of the Gospel message. He proclaimed the triune God and Jesus Christ, the Savior of all. . . . When the Sultan saw his enthusiasm and courage, he listened to him willingly and pressed him to stay [LM IX.3].

The courteous reception ended his hopes that his visit might end in martyrdom and opened a new vista for him. "Francis discovered in Muslims not the terrible enemies . . . but alienated brothers who had to be led to their Father's house through kindness and goodness" (Basetti-Sani, 16-17).

Francis' own experience, the pain and anguish of losing his brothers, and his own growing understanding of martyrdom led him to reject the way of confrontation. Yet he retains the way of martyrdom not as a tactic but as the foundation of all Franciscan missionary endeavors. It is important to understand that he rejects it as a tactic, acknowledges it as a possibility, and demands the desire for martyrdom as the true motivation for a Franciscan missionary.

Mystical Martyrdom Replaces Confrontation

THERE IS NO DOUBT that both Celano and Bonaventure in their lives of Saint Francis suggest that a desire for martyrdom is a third way of approaching the Muslim world (cf. Daniel). I do not believe, however, that they suggest it as a tactic. Again, there is also sufficient evidence that Francis accepted the risk of martyrdom as the lot of all those who go among the Saracens. All the Gospel passages which are quoted in the 16th chapter of the First Rule speak of courage before persecutors, self-denial, and fidelity to Christ until death. Yet I believe that the greatest caution has to be taken in the interpretation of this passage, lest we present Saint Francis as advocating another "martyrdom movement" as an element of his spirituality. Such an interpretation of Franciscan mission spirituality has been described in the following terms:

Outrageous, consciously ineffective, yet designed to engage the forces of heaven at some mystical level, it seized the imagination of contemporary

Christendom . . . the new protest movement proposed to preach boldly in mosques and medinas the iniquity of Islam and the triumph of the Cross. The preacher hoped for miracles but settled for probable martyrdom [Burns, 1396].

Dante exalted such a movement when he declared that "the thirst for martyrdom drove Francis . . . to preach Christ in the presence of the arrogant Sultan" (*Paradiso* II.100-01). His contemporary, David of Augsburg, claimed that Francis "opened the way for those thirsting for martyrdom, teaching them to join themselves to the infidels" (*Exp. Reg.*, I.1).

I believe that what was a mystical ideal of emptying himself and dying with Christ became reduced to a confrontation movement. The deeper meaning of Francis' action must be sought in Saint Bonaventure's interpretation:

Afire with that perfect charity which casts out fear, Francis desired to offer himself in the fire of martyrdom as a living victim to the Lord, that he might both show his gratitude to Christ who died for us and lead others back to God's love for us [LM IX.5].

The Seraphic Doctor is showing that the motivation for Francis' missionary endeavor finds its origin in the total imitation of Christ, especially of his Passion. According to the *Legenda Major* (I.9, 13), Francis was first led to seek conformity with the Passion of Christ by his initial vision of the crucifix at San Damiano. Then from his longing to participate in the agonies of the Cross, there developed the desire for martyrdom which motivated him to become a missionary to the Muslims. Celano hooks into the same elements in the life of Francis:

Glowing with love for God, the most blessed father Francis sought always to put his hand to courageous deeds; and walking the way of the commandments of God with generous heart, he longed to attain the height of perfection. In the sixth year of his conversion, burning intensely with the desire for holy martyrdom, he wanted to take ship for the regions of Syria to preach the Christian faith and penance to the Saracens and infidels [1Cel 55].

The desire for martyrdom, however, is only an external manifestation of the friars' love for their persecutor; it was never meant as a courting of death. "It is a spiritual state formed by prayer and contemplation both directed toward the Cross. It looks beyond itself to union with Christ but outside itself to the neighbor who does not yet love God or share in the faith" (Daniel, 82). Above all, it is a desire for conformity with the Passion of Christ.

Brother Giles caught this exact spirit in a conversation with a brother who once told him that Saint Francis had said that the friars ought to die and to die a martyr's death. "For myself," he replied, "I do not wish to die a better death than one of contemplation." At one time, as we have seen, Giles had gone to the Saracens, desiring martyrdom for the love of Christ, but after he returned and was found worthy to ascend to the height of contemplation, he said: "I should not have wished then for a martyr's death" (A. F. 3, 126). He had come to realize that the missionary must derive his motivation from the love which prayer has created in him. Francis is not suggesting a "third way" of martyrdom but an exercise of contemplation of the Cross. It was in this spirit that Francis himself desired his brothers to go among the Muslims. His was not the blind zeal that courts death but rather an exercise of the love of God for all men. He saw the Muslims as fellow children of God who had to be led to the Father's house through kindness and goodness.

So the way of fanatic confrontation designed to precipitate a dramatic response was replaced by Francis with a way of mystical martyrdom. ■

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- (Note: A. F. refers to the pertinent volume of the *Analecta Franciscana*.)
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Please note: This article will be concluded next month, in our March issue.

The Shining

Know your world, find your place within it.
Learn, read, communicate, but pace yourself,
And ultimately . . . grow. Grow . . . and grow!
With your search, with your growth
Some day may come a bloom
Maybe to bud, maybe to flower;
That's not for you to see.

It depends upon the gardener,
It depends upon the nurturing,
It depends upon the place of planting—
Maybe to bud, maybe to flower—
If only for the briefest time. . . .

To shine, and in the shining
Give to others . . . hope
So they may learn, so they may carry on,
So they can come to grow—
To bud, to bloom, to flower, to shine—
So it goes . . .
On and on.

*Contributed by a young member
of Alcoholics Anonymous*

The Work of Refounding: A Grace and a Challenge

SISTER MADGE KARECKI, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.

THE WORD *refounding* has often been used in religious congregations in connection with the work of writing new constitutions. It has become part of our postconciliar vocabulary. It is meant to inspire the members of religious congregations with a desire to evaluate and grapple with the serious and often difficult questions facing congregations today. Some of the most complex questions lead congregations to examine their lives in the light of their original charisms. The consequences of such honest appraisals are most often fraught with grace and pain, and because of this some congregations shrink from the very thought of such a task. But to do so is to miss the gift and the challenge refounding can be for membership and for the Church.

The Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi, the oldest and largest indigenous congregation of women religious in southern Africa, have taken up the challenge and are being given the grace. Their response, one that will give direction for their future, is still being shaped. But they have taken up the challenge, they have begun the task. Leadership within the congregation has given a direction to the work of refounding, but the grace of participating in this adventure will be given in the same measure as the pain and the challenge. Everything is dependent upon each sister's willingness to take up the task at hand, to accept the grace and the challenge.

Sister Madge Karecki, S.S.J., T.O.S.F., a graduate of the Franciscan Institute, is serving as a Franciscan consultant and teacher for the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi in South Africa. She also acts as spiritual director and retreat director.

The story of this congregation is an important one for the Franciscan family. Though greatly shaped by the Benedictine tradition, their founder clearly intended them to be a Franciscan congregation. Their struggle to discover and to live according to their charism has something to teach all of us about refounding. If they continue to move on this path, we may well see one of the most dynamic and vital Franciscan congregations emerge in southern Africa—one whose very way of life is a service to the Church.

Given the right opportunities . . . the
Daughters of St. Francis can be the
architects of the future of the Church in
southern Africa.

Before 1922 no religious congregation in South Africa—in fact, in all of southern Africa—would accept black women as members. The factors behind this are numerous and complex. On the one hand there was *Apartheid* (separation of races), which did not allow for interracial communities; and, on the other hand, there was a sort of general, though unspoken, feeling that the black person was not capable of living religious life.

One man, Bishop Adalbert Fleischer, C.M.M., dared to think differently. On September 8, 1922, he sent a letter to the clergy, religious, and faithful of the Vicariate of Mariannhill in which he revealed his daring plan: "I want to start an all African, indigenous Congregation here in South Africa."

He told his people that the congregation would be given the Third Order Rule of Saint Francis and that it would be named the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi.

Further on in the letter he called upon the faithful to pray that young black women would respond if God was calling them to religious life. He had a special word to parents about not putting any obstacles in the way of their daughters. Bishop Fleischer was very well aware of the African tradition of the prospective groom providing "the bride's price" (*lobolo* in Zulu) for his future wife. Fathers, Christian or not, would indeed have a special difficulty facing the fact that if their daughters joined this proposed community no cattle would be increasing their herds.

The Bishop then gave instructions about how young women could ap-

ply and told them that the entrance day would be December 8, 1922.

He named the aims of the congregation so that the young women would be clear about the kind of life they would be living. The primary aim was self-sanctification, as was the case in all religious congregations. The secondary aim was spreading the Faith among African people (though in South Africa there are white people who might in truth be called Africans, whites were and still are referred to as "Europeans," and when the word *Africans* is used, it means black people).

The congregation was placed under the leadership of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (C.P.S.) to govern and train the African sisters in the essential elements of religious life, so that eventually the sisters would become self-governing.

The pioneer sisters, many of whom are still living, recall with gratitude their first Directress General, Mother Aemiliana Armbruster, who lived alongside them in their huts, her very presence a sign of love and dedication.

On the occasion of the congregation's 25th jubilee Bishop Fleischer included a report of the congregation's growth and development in a pastoral letter to the people of the Diocese of Mariannhill. In that letter he looked forward to the time when conditions would be "favorable to entrust the whole community to an entirely African General Council headed by an African Mother General."

That day, that "favorable time," has been long in coming. The Holy See has now set the date by which the congregation is to be self-governing: December, 1985—63 years after its founding.

The congregation now numbers nearly 270 members, who serve in the Mariannhill and Umzimkulu Dioceses. Though some sisters work in the health care ministry and others as teachers and catechists, the majority are doing domestic work in ecclesiastical institutions.

If they are to assume their role in the work of evangelization of black people in South Africa and give expression to their charism, some hard issues need to be faced. These are all areas which are known to the sisters. They are attempting to meet each issue, but are finding that refounding is indeed a grace and a challenge, both of which can be received only at great personal cost.

In their new Constitutions the Daughters of St. Francis have articulated how they want to live their charism so that their lives are a clear witness of their commitment to the original inspiration of Saint Francis as interpreted by Bishop Fleischer.

In the process of drafting the new Constitutions, areas of growth became apparent to them. These are important areas because they get at the very core of the sisters' life as a congregation.



As an outsider I have singled out seven areas where I believe both grace and challenge can be found.

1. In the past the congregation has been shaped by a monastic spirituality and view of religious life. This is evident in their practices and customs and in the fact that their life is very much tied to the land through farms and gardens.

There is a need for the sisters to be steeped in the Franciscan charism and view of living the Gospel. It is a way very different from their experience, so that there is a need for encouragement and support. They have still to learn that to be different, is not to be bad or wrong, but simply a fact of how the

Church is enriched by a variety of charisms.

Steps are being taken to provide the necessary input by means of courses and workshops, but the real task and challenge belongs to the sisters themselves. They need to let go of some very familiar, but monastic, ways of doing things and to step out of their safe and sometimes rigid patterns of life into a life-style which more clearly reflects the Franciscan charism.

2. A spirituality deeply rooted in Scripture is essential for fidelity to the Franciscan charism. Unfortunately the European missionaries, often without a biblical piety themselves, handed on to the sisters a largely devotional understanding of the Faith. This did not help them integrate the demands of the Gospel into their daily lives, nor will it support them in their work of evangelization in the future. Instruction based on the Word of God is a real need, and the sisters are taking every opportunity to obtain it.

3. The teaching of Vatican II needs to be thoroughly examined and the life of the congregation shaped by its decrees. This is imperative if the congregation is to spread the Faith among the African people. Many of the clergy and religious did not (and some still do not) accept the conciliar and postconciliar teaching of the Church. Because of their lack of acceptance they have presented the thought of the Council in a distorted way, and this has made for confusion among the sisters and has hindered the renewal process in their congregation.

4. Though some sisters had and have positions on the General Council, leadership skills were not, until recently, developed in the sisters. They have, for the most part, been overprotected and have not had to

assume responsibility for their own lives. The result has been a sense of insecurity and inadequacy, and a certain passivity.

On the local level at the various mission stations a European sister, or even a missionary priest, has been the local superior of the sisters. Fortunately this very blatant error has now been rectified. But old patterns are hard to break, and we are now reaping the fruit of what we have sown: adult, women religious often afraid to think for themselves or, in some cases, rigid in their viewpoint and seemingly unable to risk or be creative. Leadership training, encouragement, and the experience that comes from exercising leadership are beginning to change the situation.

5. Education is a very real problem. The quality of education provided for blacks in South Africa is far below that available for white people. This means that the young women joining the congregation often do not have the basic education needed to meet the demands of religious life today.

In the past, because the sisters did mainly domestic work, the need for education was not stressed. Now, though, it is clearly an important value in terms of proper formation and preparation for ministry among the people.

6. Formation is at the very foundation of the life of every congregation. The formation which the Daughters of St. Francis received previously is no longer adequate to meet the changing needs of the Church and the world. With its Benedictine emphasis, their formation prepared the sisters for a stable, land-based kind of life within a highly regimented type of community. They were taught to see their contribution to the Church as one limited to domestic work for the clergy and the upkeep of mission farms and gardens. What a far cry from the Franciscan view of religious life and the congregation's original purpose envisaged by Bishop Fleischer!

7. African culture itself has not always helped the development of the sisters. The male dominated tribal system has left women with a diminished sense of self-confidence. Strong group pressure is exerted upon individuals not to stand out or to show personal initiative. These factors, coupled with the type of religious formation provided in the past, have also had a negative effect upon many of the sisters. The result is that individuals are hampered in making choices in accord with their consciences because of the high value placed on group acceptance.

Respect, which is a strong cultural value among the Africans, is defined and practiced as a kind of deference paid to elders. Though respect for the older members among us is definitely a positive thing, in practice it has occasioned a kind of disregard for the young. There is almost an attitude present that says life needs to be made difficult for the young so

that they are tested.

This kind of thinking militates against the respect for all people demanded by the Gospel. The work of weighing cultural values in light of the teaching of Jesus still has to be done. It is a complicated task because missionaries often taught the sisters, as well as the people in general, that dancing, the use of drums, African art, ways of celebrating, and African names all belonged to their lives before they became Catholic and now must be abandoned because they are somehow unworthy of Christianity. All of this greatly complicates the task of sifting out the African values and practices which really are incompatible with the Faith. Yet this is a task which must be vigorously taken up if the inculturation of the Church is to take place.

The work of refounding has presented the Daughters of St. Francis with an awesome, but very worthwhile, task. Currently they are experiencing the ordinary growing pains that come from trying to carve out one's identity after discovering a new truth. These pains are necessary if they are to emerge with a clear sense of their charism and a direction for their future development which is in line with that charism.

The sisters cannot afford to be timid in their pursuit of the Franciscan understanding of Gospel life, nor can they be miserly in their response to it. As Franciscans they have within their charism the necessary inspiration and vision to chart their course for the future. Whether or not they take that direction is their choice, but it is a choice which will have ramifications for the development of a strong Franciscan presence in southern Africa and for the building up of the Church.

If the sisters lack courage and choose to be carbon copies of other religious families, the credibility of the Franciscan family will be called into question and the witness value of the charism will be compromised. The whole Franciscan family will lose an example of how the charism finds expression in an African milieu. For the Church it will mean a kind of impoverishment because she will not be strengthened in southern Africa through a uniquely Franciscan presence.

Though at the moment the challenges which are part of refounding are very apparent for the Daughters of St. Francis, the accompanying graces, though they often seem hidden, are also abounding. The sisters' tremendous potential and lively spirit are signs of God's presence among them. Given the right opportunities and the necessary preparation, they can be the architects of the future of the Church in the southern part of this continent.

We, their brothers and sisters of the international Franciscan family, need to give them our prayerful support and encouragement as they follow in the footsteps of Jesus upon the soil of South Africa. Ω

Magnificat

My soul cries out to my God;
My spirit is energized by Christ in Eucharist;
For He has spoken through the Scriptures,
The world we live in, and the persons we meet.
Hence, the globe reflects His love and providential care,
and resounds with His praise.
He has called me to a commitment for His kingdom,
To consecrated, single-hearted love,
To be shared with the intellectually, physically, and
Spiritually poor.
His Spirit has wrought all that is good in me.
He lifts me up in my weakness and empowers me to be holy.
He has called me to live out the charism of Francis:
To be a poor peacemaker joyfully serving the Great King.
He has missioned me to teach the young, to minister in community,
And to be an ecclesial woman in the '80's.
For I am precious in His sight,
And will rest in His loving arms when my life's work is complete.
With Mary, I gratefully sing:
PRAISE THE LORD, MY SOUL!

Sister Rosamond Jasinski, O.S.F.

Poverty for Franciscans in the South African Context

JOSEPH A. MAC MAHON, O.F.M.

THE IRISH WRITER, Sir Shane Leslie, once said that there was no more obscure word in the English language than *socialism*, for it "covered many opposites, a great many controversies, and sometimes a multitude of sins" ("Democracy"). He could easily have substituted the word *poverty* and said the same thing, for the term has been the subject of many different interpretations and certainly a great many controversies since the time of Saint Francis. Undoubtedly, the term does have many interpretations, and each age will fasten onto a particular meaning of the word which carries for it a special resonance.

In this essay, I should like to take up two meanings of poverty which have a strong biblical foundation, then look at poverty in the South African context before finally moving on to consider how Franciscans can respond to this context.

I. Poverty in Scripture

AS SOME RECENT writings have drawn our attention to the biblical meaning of poverty and of the poor (Dupont, Pilgrim), it would seem only logical that in trying to understand Franciscan poverty we should at least consider the biblical interpretation of the term, since Francis, in undertaking a life of holy poverty, claimed to be doing so in imitation of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, the call to the Church to make a preferential option for the poor is based largely on the divine option for the poor as expressed most clearly in the Incarnation and in the life, passion, and death of Jesus, so that a proper understanding of this option calls for a return to the scriptural sources. Therefore, in this first section we shall turn our attention to what the Bible has to say about two aspects of poverty: viz., God's concern for the poor and detachment.

Father Joseph Mac Mahon, a member of the Irish Province of the Friars Minor, teaches theology in Pretoria, South Africa.

A. *God's Concern for the Poor.* It is of interest to note that the Bible has less to say about the abstract notion of poverty than it does about the concrete reality of the poor. In other words, its concern is with people and their interests rather than with ideas. The biblical authors are concerned with the precarious plight of the poor and with those who are in any way disadvantaged because they perceive that no one should have to suffer in this way. Poverty should not be a normal condition for people, for it is contrary to God's plan and is a breach of the covenant (cf. Dt. 15:4). Since this is the case, there is an obligation on people to rectify this abnormal situation. This obligation applies particularly to the king, who, as God's representative, must see to it that the terms of the covenant are respected. Time and again, however, the king ignores his charge and the poor are abandoned to exploitation so that God has to step in on their behalf.

The Bible speaks, not so much of poverty, but of God's concern for the poor; have we reversed matters by speaking too much of poverty and by showing too little concern for the poor?

One of the central themes in the Old Testament is that of God's special protection of the poor and weak. In fact, according to Pilgrim, the theme "is found nowhere else to the same degree in the religious literature of the ancient world" (pp. 20-21). Those who mistreat the weaker members of society will have to reckon with the Lord: "You shall not wrong an alien, or be hard upon him; you were yourselves aliens in Egypt. You shall not ill-treat any widow or fatherless child. If you do, be sure that I will listen if they appeal to me" (Ex. 22:21-23). The prophets are particularly eloquent in voicing God's concern for the poor: "You have ravaged the vineyard, and the spoils of the poor are in your houses. Is it worth nothing to you that you crush my people and grind the faces of the poor?" (Is. 3:14:15).

In the eyes of God, then, impoverishment is an evil which must be combatted, and all are obliged to put an end to it. God loves the poor, not because of any merits they have but because God's own mercy, justice, and goodness are offended by exploitation of the weak. As Dupont points out (p. 41), the emphasis here is placed on divine *love*, not on

poverty. In addition, God's love for the poor lays on all the necessity of showing similar care and concern.

When we turn our attention to the New Testament, we see God's love for the poor manifested in an even more explicit and extraordinary manner in that God himself takes on the condition of the poor in Jesus Christ (cf. Phil. 2:6-7). This was going further than showing compassion for the poor; it was the ultimate in solidarity—a becoming one with the weak, the whole of humankind.

In dedicating himself to the proclamation of the Kingdom, Jesus becomes an itinerant preacher and, in this way, experiences the precariousness of being dependent on others for material support. His closest followers share in this experience. Again we notice that the focus of attention is not on poverty as such but on the divine love for the poor as shown in the attitudes and words of Jesus. His attitude is one of concern for them (cf. Lk. 19:10), and because this concern is so apparent they feel drawn to him. He does not adopt a judgmental stance towards them, but through his gentleness and respect he is able to restore to the poor a sense of their own dignity and value as well as a degree of hope in their future.

Jesus also has a special word for them: God has intervened on their behalf (cf. Lk. 4:16-21). As Dupont puts it: "Jesus announced the good news to people who were in distress, and this good news means for them, concretely, that their distress is at an end" (p. 37). Because they are addressed in this way, the poor are now the privileged ones, and, because God's favor rests on them, they will no longer be the most neglected sector of society. God's purpose, of course, is that the followers of Jesus should continue the divine love for the poor displayed so clearly by Jesus. He proclaimed to them that their distress was at an end; but is this the case today? The Bible speaks, not so much of poverty, but of God's concern for the poor; have we reversed matters by speaking too much of poverty and by showing too little concern for the poor?

In reflecting upon the mystery and life of Jesus, Francis was struck particularly by the self-emptying of the God-man. He was overcome by the fact that the glorious Word of God, rich beyond measure, chose poverty (cf. EpFid; *Omnibus*, 93). It was in this light that he interpreted the life of Christ and what it meant to live the Gospel. To follow in the steps of Christ, then, meant for Francis a self-emptying for the sake of giving himself completely to the Father and to others.

Francis was conscious of how Jesus had loved sinners and outcasts and had mixed with them, and of how he went in search of the lost ones; and he wished to repeat this concern for the poor in his own day. It was God himself who led him into the company of the lepers (Test; *Omnibus*, 67).

Francis lived alongside the poor, and he wished his followers to do likewise: "They should be glad to live among social outcasts, among the poor and helpless, the sick and the lepers, those who beg by the wayside" (RegNB 9; *Omnibus*, 39). He also showed a deep compassion for them, for they were his brothers and sisters in God. He had what we would call today an affirming attitude. He did not condemn people but made them feel good by removing the chains of guilt and hopelessness that imprisoned them, and by telling them of God's love he restored their sense of dignity.

Poverty was not the most important thing for Francis; rather, it was an expression of his love of God. His wish was to follow the way of Christ, and this involved living the Gospel life and showing forth very clearly God's concern for the poor ones.

B. Detachment. One of the familiar recurring phrases in the Gospel is "They left everything and followed him." Giving up all for the sake of following Jesus is of the essence of discipleship. Discipleship is impossible without a self-emptying and a total surrender to God—"yet not my will but thine be done" (Lk. 22:42).

Detachment implies a willingness to give up all forms of possession and to surrender relationships, family, prospects of marriage, even self (Lk. 14: 25-33). It involves a decisive break with the old way of life. There are degrees of renunciation, and religious are called to its most radical form of imitating the life-style of Jesus and of witnessing to the values of the Kingdom in the way he did.

One of the particular ways we witness to the Kingdom values is in the proper use we make of material possessions. The biblical viewpoint is that we are stewards of God's creation and that therefore we must use things in the way God intended. A consequence of this is that we must share with the needy, thereby bringing God's justice and concern to those who need it most.

Religious do not undertake to observe the vow of poverty for the sake of making themselves poor, but for the sake of reminding people of Jesus, of his total surrender to the Father, and of his loving service of their fellow humans. The vow is intended to help them to become free from attachment to things so as to be free for God and for neighbor.

As we know only too well, Francis placed a great deal of emphasis on detachment. For him, poverty was a basic attitude touching upon all areas of life and expressed in an external way by material poverty. Its purpose was to enable the friar to occupy himself with God and his concerns exclusively. The friars gave up all, sold what they had, and gave to the poor; they refused to have things, and they claimed no rights or

The iniquitous results of the existing system are many. Hunger among many Africans has become a normal occurrence so that deaths and severe malnutrition are reported daily. Communities have been broken up, and some have been forcibly moved from their properties.

privileges. In this way, they became little before God, recognizing in thankfulness that God, in his wonderful bounty, was giving them all of creation as a gift. The poor were thus regarded as a precious gift, brothers and sisters who needed special care, God's care.

II. Poverty in South Africa

WITHOUT ANY DOUBT whatsoever, the South African reality is indeed a most complex one on all levels: cultural, social, economic, and political. Its past demonstrates this, and government policy since the Union in 1910 has not simplified the complexity. In fact, it has only made humane solutions to problems more difficult.

In this section, I should like to present some of the negative impressions (there are also positive ones, but since we are dealing only with poverty, we limit ourselves to the negative elements) which strike the foreigner living in the country over a number of years. It should be pointed out, of course, that these features are not exclusive to South Africa but can be found also in other countries; in South Africa, however, they are more evident and take on a unique form.

A. Perhaps the most overwhelming negative impression is the *lack of respect for human dignity*. The level of disrespect for human life and rights is immediately evident. This is displayed in many ways.



1. It is expressed through political and social *structures*. These structures have been designed by the white government to keep the different racial groups apart: African, Asian, Colored (mixed race), and white—with the aim of controlling the various groups other than white. (In common African parlance, these are designated "non-whites." While they make up over 80% of the total population of the country, the very term *non-white* indicates very pointedly where the power and control lie. To avoid using this negative term, we shall employ the term *black* to designate the collectivity of Africans, Asians, and Coloreds.) The black peoples of South Africa do not enjoy the normal rights of citizens in their own country; they have to make do with inferior educational, health, and employment opportunities; and they are severely restricted in their movements. Africans may not remain in "white" towns and cities without a special permit for more than 72 hours. It has been estimated that since 1960 nearly 3.5 million black people have been removed from their own areas and relocated in designated zones by the government (the government admits to having relocated nearly half a million for "ideological reasons") with the intention

of more easily controlling them, keeping the races apart, and providing a plentiful supply of cheap labor for industry. The process of removals has not finished, and it is estimated that another 1.7 million people will be moved before the *Apartheid* strategy has been completed.

To further consolidate the system, ten African "homelands," representing the various tribal groups, have been set up so that the great majority of Africans will be assigned to one of these, although many of them have never even seen "their" homeland. The homelands comprise about 13% of the area of South Africa, whereas the rest of the country belongs to the whites who make up approximately 17% of the population. Under new constitutional arrangements, it is intended to give more participation to

Asians and Coloreds, but white supremacy will continue to be guaranteed in the Constitution.

The iniquitous results of the existing system are many. Hunger among many Africans has become a normal occurrence so that deaths and severe malnutrition are reported daily. Communities have been broken up, and some have been forcibly removed from and deprived of their properties, not to mention the loss of personal identity and worth experienced by these unfortunate people who have felt the bitterness of knowing that society has no use for them and has made no room for them. The notorious Group Areas Act prevents many workers from settling their families near their places of work. And to crown it all, they are excluded from full participation in the political and economic system so that they are mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Josh. 9:21) whose only value to society is as work units. It is an indictment of the system when we consider that a white immigrant on a temporary visa enjoys more rights and privileges than more than 80% of those born in the country.

2. The lack of respect for human dignity is not only expressed through structures but is also very evident in people's *attitudes*. The outsider, particularly one who has lived in the warmer human atmosphere of the Latin countries, notices a hardness of heart and a singular lack of compassion. Human life is cheap, and there is little reluctance on the part of many to resort easily to violence in settling mere trifling issues. In this sense, South Africa is a very violent society—violent in its attitudes to people. Few are the black people who have not been insulted in some way, and they are constantly reminded of their "inferior" status.

3. A further indication of disrespect is the distortion and *manipulation of the truth* in the official and semi-official media. Apart from the fact that the press is less free in South Africa than it is in the Western world, the South African public has been subjected to a long and extensive brain-washing process by means of suppression of the facts and by manipulation of the truth through innuendo and half-truths. To criticize the government and the system is to be branded as little better than a traitor. So extensive has been this process that the general public tends to accept without question what is communicated to it by the government and by interest groups.

4. Finally, the all-pervasive *materialism* among the whites (they have one of the highest standards of living in the world) further weakens respect for human dignity. South Africa has been considerably tainted by consumerism. Of course, the sharp contrast between the haves and the have nots only highlights the ugly and provocative materialistic life-style of many white people, and—as is bound to happen—black people are

also gradually being contaminated.

B. South Africa is a society living in *fear*. The fear is almost tangible, whether it be the whites' fear concerning their uncertain future or the blacks' fear of the police, of unemployment, or of hunger. It is not uncommon to find among people of all groups a feeling that events are leading fatally and inevitably to a violent dénouement; and, as a result of this feeling, the fear is magnified. One thing is certain: because of the accumulated heritage of suspicion and ignorance, of disrespect and of downright oppression, all groups have reason to be fearful over the future of the country. Unless there is significant change soon, their fears of the worst are likely to be realized. There is a further consideration in that fear is often used as a weapon, either as a means of intimidating those who favor more rapid change or as propaganda in support of the cautious line the government is taking in bringing about its own form of change.

C. This fear is one of the consequences of the *mutual ignorance* evident on both sides of the great divide. If the purpose of *Apartheid* has been to separate the race groups and keep them ignorant of one another's views, attitudes, aspirations, and fears, then it has succeeded admirably, but at the great cost of increasing mutual suspicion and ignorance and a consequent diminution of human respect. Many whites simply have no idea of how black people live and think, and their ignorance and fear can consequently be manipulated by those who wish to maintain the status quo. It is needless to add that blacks are also the victims of ignorance and fear, so that all groups end up with a distorted view of the position of the others.

What theologians refer to as social sin is an ever present reality in the divisive structures of South African society. Unfortunately, these conditions people into adopting false perceptions and inhuman attitudes which, tragically, are assumed unconsciously and therefore go unchallenged.

III. Franciscan Poverty in South Africa

WHAT SHOULD BE the Franciscan response to this reality? In attempting to answer this question, I shall return to the two aspects we considered above when looking at the poor in the Bible and try to relate these to the South African context.

A. *Concern for the Poor*. As we saw earlier, God's concern for the poor is clearly evident in Scripture, and Saint Francis was not slow in seeing this. Today, the Church has become more aware of the need to

make a preferential option for the poor, and the Plenary Council of the Order, held recently at Salvador-Bahia, asked the friars to make this option "so that our evangelizing will come from the poor and be done with the poor" ("The Gospel Challenges Us," *Acta O.F.M.*, 7-8/83, n. 39).

Such an option is not an exclusive one by any means but, as Pope John Paul II nevertheless describes it, "it is a call to a special solidarity with the humble and the weak, with those who are suffering and weeping, who are humiliated and left on the fringes of society, in order to help them to realize ever more fully their own dignity as human persons and sons of God" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed., 11 Aug. 1980, p. 10). This describes the majority of people in South Africa.

In speaking about the poor we have in mind any person who lacks a basic human need the absence of which dehumanizes or can lead to the dehumanization of that person. The poor, or the impoverished, as Third World theologians prefer to call them, are those in whom the image of God is being tarnished by others or by the nature of the social conditions in which they live. The basic need most lacking in South Africa today is respect for human dignity. In this sense, there are many poor in the country: black people who are victims of racial discrimination and its manifold consequences, of fear and ignorance, and white people who are likewise victims of the system in that they are being dehumanized by *Apartheid*, materialistic attitudes, fear, and ignorance.

The characteristic features of Franciscan spirituality—fraternity, respect for people, service of others (especially of the needy), and a "sparing and sharing life-style"—would seem to be ideally suited to combatting the evils of our society. The elements of a solution to the problems are available in the Franciscan program of life, but the question then arises, How are we doing as Franciscans in responding to poverty in South Africa?

It may be helpful to take the Latin American Bishops' understanding of option for the poor, as outlined in the Puebla document, and use it to question the Franciscan stance in South Africa. When dealing with the option for the poor made by religious, the document, following *Evangelica testificatio*, 18, speaks of three levels which this option implies (*Puebla*, n. 734).

1. Solidarity with the poor. This is the minimum required by the Bishops of all religious in their opting for the poor. It means that religious must at least show a sympathetic interest in the poor and their problems and should support them in their efforts to improve their lot. At the very least Franciscans should be operating on this level, especially those who work among the more affluent sections of society. Real solidarity, however, will demand more than interest and sympathy; it also requires

an understanding of the problems and their underlying causes. And this will mean more than learning of the problems from books. Are we really aware of the problems of the poor, and if not, do we want to become aware, or do we prefer to remain securely cushioned in our own comfortable world?

Addressing religious major superiors of the American continent in Santiago, Chile, in 1980, Cardinal Pironio put some pertinent questions to religious (Watters, 141):

- Do you know *who* are the poor? A survey on poverty carried out in EEC countries some years ago found that most people interviewed were unaware that there were poor living in their own communities. It would be tragic if the Franciscans were unable to point to the various categories of poor in their parishes and missions.

- *Where* are they? Some forms of poverty are obvious, but others go unnoticed; are we sensitive enough to be able to detect these? Do we seek out the poor?

- *What* can you do for them? What have we done for them, and what do we intend to do for them in the future?

2. Sharing with the poor. Sharing is not limited to money and material things; this is the easiest form of showing concern, but sharing also includes giving of our talents, personnel, resources, and facilities as well as time and energy. Some years ago, women religious in the U.S.A. expressed concern at the fact that the vast majority of them were pursuing middle-class life-styles in middle-class areas and working with middle-class people while the really needy were being neglected and forgotten. From the standpoint of the distribution of personnel alone, we have to ask ourselves whether we are making full use of our resources and answering the call where the need is most urgent. Observation alone will show that it is the economically and socially poor who are generally the most abandoned pastorally. The rich are rarely unable to call on spiritual assistance.

3. Living alongside the poor. The Puebla document implies that not all religious will feel able to make the sacrifice of living alongside the poor (n. 734). Some will rightly judge that their experience and personality do not suit them for this kind of life-style and that this option is only for those who feel called to it and are suited to it. Be that as it may, all of us can at least ask ourselves how we regard the idea of living with the poor. Does the thought of it fill us with well-disposed interest or with apprehensive dismay? Do we reject and ridicule the notion with, at the same time, a justification of our present life-style? How do we look upon those who work among the outcasts of society? Do they make us feel un-

comfortable? And what about those who work on behalf of human rights: do we regard them as cranks and just wish that they would let sleeping dogs lie? Do we accuse them of getting involved in politics and fail to see that defending human rights is, in the words of one Synod of Bishops, "a constitutive dimension of the Gospel message" (n. 6; cf. text in Gremillion)?

The Puebla document, when dealing with the issue of a preferential option for the poor, calls for a conversion on the part of all Church members to a more austere life-style so that the Church "will present an image of being authentically poor, open to God and fellow human beings, ever at their disposal, and providing a place where the poor have a real chance for participation and where their worth is recognized" (Puebla, n. 1158). This statement is particularly relevant to the South African situation, where the most pernicious form of poverty, lack of respect for human dignity, is clearly manifest. A distinctive feature of Franciscan spirituality is respect for people, and it is precisely this characteristic that is most needed today. The poor need to experience the fact that they are precious and unique because they bear the image and likeness of God. Because their dignity has been trampled upon so often, they need encouragement and hope, and the attentive presence of religious among them can help bring this about.

The document on *Religious and Human Promotion* issued by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, reminds religious that "this presence for the defense and promotion of justice ought to manifest itself most particularly in those persecuted sectors of 'voiceless injustices' to which the Synod of 1971 referred" (n. 21, 4d). And there has been no scarcity of similar exhortations contained in recent Franciscan documents.

The preferential option for the poor, let it be emphasized again, is not an exclusive one, but, as Pope John Paul II explained in Brazil, while he wishes to meet everyone in order to speak of and bear witness to the love of Jesus Christ, "the underprivileged of the earth, since they are in greater need of help and comfort, always have a special place in this concern of mine to continue faithfully the mission of Christ: 'to preach to the poor a joyful message,' the salvation of God" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed., 4 Aug., 1980). Do we Franciscans reflect the same concern?

B. Detachment. Detachment is very closely linked to the option for the poor. As *Religious and Human Promotion* reminds us, "the one who dares to speak to others about justice must above all be just in the eyes of others" (n. 4e), and it can equally be said that the one who makes an option for the poor must also be poor in the sense outlined above. A simple

and frugal life-style for a Franciscan is a matter of credibility because if we do not live what we have professed, then we are failing in truth by living a lie and failing in justice by not rendering a service to the Church of being true witnesses to the Gospel life as lived by Francis. By failing in this matter we fall into what someone has called "the original sin of religious," hypocrisy. Frequently, our life-style belies our profession and rhetoric, and no one is going to sit up and take notice of what we say unless we are willing to be what we have professed.

Church documents reveal a sharp awareness of the issue of credibility, and there have been calls to religious for "a constant review of their life-options, their use of goods, and their manner of relating" (ibid.). The cry of the poor, as *Evangelica testificatio* reminds us, enjoins on religious "a use of goods limited to what is required for the fulfillment of the functions to which you are called. It is necessary that in your daily lives you should give proof, even externally, of authentic poverty" (n. 18).

All, rich and poor, need to be shown that happiness is not to be equated with wealth and that a simple life-style can be a happy and satisfying one. The spirit of consumerism and materialism has taken such hold on people that this obvious and simple message needs to be brought home to them by the challenge of seeing a simple life-style. One of the chief services Franciscans can offer the world today is the witness of a simple and frugal life-style in the Gospel mold as a challenge to consumerism. In South Africa, Franciscans can contribute enormously by introducing people, beset by fear and hopelessness, to the simple joy of living and to hope in God's future.

Fortunately, South African Franciscans have not allowed the structures of *Apartheid* to be imposed on them, except in some unavoidable cases. One may still ask, however, whether we have resisted the attitudes that accompany *Apartheid*. Do we regard black people as inferior? Are we reluctant to hand over responsibility to them for the running of our institutions? Do we consider "white" ways as the only valid ways of doing things?

One of the most difficult forms of detachment is that of *letting go of opinions and attitudes*. Many of our attitudes and values have been formed by our social and cultural environment, and if this environment happens to be shot through with racial prejudices and with materialistic values, there is always the great danger of becoming unconsciously contaminated by them. So, in the realm of the material, we have to question ourselves on our possessions. Do we really need the things we possess, or have our desires been converted into needs under the pressure of consumerism? Detachment does not mean just making minor modifications to our life-style; it involves a new attitude to things: what I have is not

mine, but it was given to me as a gift by God to be used responsibly to meet my own needs and those of others, particularly the poorest and most neglected.

On the wider issue of social identity, we could perhaps inquire what kind of interests, values, and attitudes we have. Do they reflect God or Mammon? Do we realize that we communicate certain attitudes and values by the way we live, talk, and dress, by where we live and work, etc.? How do people, especially the poor, see us? Do they view us as socialites and supporters of the status quo? Do we attract the poor to us, as Jesus and Francis did? How do we regard the poor—as a nuisance? in a patronizing way?

Since South Africa is a kaleidoscope of very diverse cultures, it is essential, when relating to people, to be aware of cultural differences and, especially, to be aware of one's own socio-cultural background and one's vision of life. The danger is that some of us approach "Third World" problems from a "First World" point of view without being aware of this and, consequently, try to impose unsuitable solutions.

Another form of detachment is the letting go of *works and activities*. This means a willingness to let go of less urgent apostolates in favor of more urgent ones. Church documents urge us constantly to review our apostolates and to be willing to respond as fully and as faithfully as possible to new and more urgent needs discerned by the Church. There is always the danger of becoming too settled in a particular form of work or of taking on an apostolate for the sake of the satisfaction and sense of identity with which it provides us. In this respect, we could perhaps remind ourselves of the need to maintain our Franciscan identity. In his address to male religious in Sao Paolo, the Pope exhorted religious to resist the "frequent temptation to dilute as much as possible, almost to the point of extinction, that which characterizes and identifies religious life and religious," and he pointed specifically to the religious priest, who "should show clearly by his attitude that he is a religious." The apostolate should never be the cause of religious abandoning "the characteristic features of their religious family" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, Eng. ed., 21 July, 1980, p. 7). These are timely words for religious working in mission areas where the many and pressing demands of the apostolate are such that they could induce us into forgetting or ignoring our distinctive religious features. In order to maintain our balance as Franciscans we need a firm sense of our own identity and a clear idea of the direction in which we are heading.

For Francis, detachment implied rejecting all ambition to control and dominate, all desire to be secure and to possess guarantees of security and to exercise power and influence. If the Franciscan lives this kind of

detachment, then he or she will be making an option for the poor since he or she will have become poor—identified with the poor—and will no longer be looking at them from the outside but rather following the way of God himself who, in taking on human nature, became one with the needy in Jesus Christ. Ω

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Paths

There are paths to be trod—Go forward!
There are songs to be sung—Sing out!
There are things to be done—
But better by far
There is love to be had—
Open your heart,
Receive,
and be filled with the Spirit of God.

Sister Marie Regina, O.S.F.

Book Reviews

Beatitude Saints. By Daniel Morris. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 95. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Friar Michael J. Taylor, O.F.M.Conv., who is serving his deacon intern year at Our Lady of Angels Parish in downtown Albany, New York.

This is a different kind of "lives of the saints" book. The author insightfully aligns a saint with an outstanding Catholic of recent memory under one caption adapted from the Beatitudes. For example, he writes of Saint Catherine of Siena and Bishop Bernard Topel in a chapter entitled "Dying to Self to Become Self" (Ch. I). Of particular interest to Franciscans are chapters devoted to Father Solanus Casey and Saint Francis of Assisi (Ch. II), Saint Elizabeth of Hungary (Ch. III), and Saint Maximilian Kolbe (Ch. VI).

The author seems to place more emphasis upon the spiritual journeys and struggles of each individual than he does upon his or her biographical data. In some isolated instances, he might have done well to supplement his portrayals with more detailed historical facts concerning his subjects.

The strength of this book, however, lies in the author's own reaction to the lives of the saints and outstanding Catholics he features, and in his explanations of how they well reflect the spirit of the Beatitudes so desperately needed in these days and in the years to come.

Giving Good Homilies. By Jay Cormier. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 95. Paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Friar Michael J. Taylor, O.F.M.Conv., who is serving his deacon intern year at Our Lady of Angels Parish in downtown Albany, New York.

This is a handy little book that is written by a well informed layman genuinely interested in helping the clergy to improve their homilies. To this end, the author draws on his own experience as an attentive listener and as a professional in public speaking.

Cormier lays out his purpose in writing on page 29, where he states: "... this book is about speech communications." From there, he proceeds to furnish some very practical ideas about planning and constructing a homily. In addition, he draws some interesting and applicable comparisons of homilies with other forms of public speaking and rhetoric.

Cormier is able, by virtue of being an attentive listener to homilies over the years, to spell out some frequent mistakes that can and should be avoided: e.g., in the correct and incorrect use of jokes (p. 53). Furthermore, the author sets the position of the homily against the backdrop of the contemporary world and clarifies it for the reader by using examples and anecdotes.

This is an ideal book for the neophyte homilist, be he a newly ordained deacon or priest; and it certainly would be a fine addition to the library of the veteran homilist as well.

Books Received

Giese, Vincent J., *Youth for Peace: A Handbook for Young Christian Peacemakers*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 128. Paper, \$5.95.

Hughes, John Jay, *Proclaiming the Good News: Homilies for the 'B' Cycle*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 252, including Index. Cloth, \$14.95.

Myers, Rawley, *The Book of Mary: Devotions for October and May*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 207. Paper, \$6.50.

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Illustrations for our March issue have been drawn by Sister Marie Monica, S.F., who teaches at Sacred Heart Academy in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commencium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Lent Isn't Advent

ONE OF THE discoveries I made this past Advent (barely over as I write this the day after Epiphany) is the fact that there is a new liturgical color for Advent—blue. This option to the traditional purple emphasizes, the commentaries told me, that Advent is a joyful season. In the past few centuries Advent certainly had, in the Western Church at least, taken on the penitential overtones of Lent—had in fact become another Lent. I don't recall feeling schizophrenic about it myself, but I can understand being puzzled by all the *alleluias* during Advent and wondering how these and the joyful prophecies and prayerful watchings really went with the penitential theme of John the Baptist.

Now that Advent is getting its due, I wonder if there is need to recover the original Lenten themes that have become muted in the years since the Council. Has the reduction in the obligation of bodily fasting led us to believe that self-denial in atonement for sin is not an important part of Christian spirituality? Do we want to think of ourselves as a risen Easter people, and not pilgrims on the way to the glory of Easter, laden with our burden of guilt? Have we been misled by the etymology of the word Lent ("springtime") so that we see the time as one of a celebration of nature's reawakening, rather than a reflective and prayerful contemplation of the saving events of Jesus' Passion?

Lent is a time to foster that sorrow for sin, and that serious spirit of self-denial, to which our Holy Father has recently summoned us. It is a time to meditate prayerfully on the sufferings of Christ, on his selfless life and death, and to repent of our part in those sufferings and of our selfishness. Selfishness seems to seep into the most dedicated of lives, through both religious and secular influences. Our single state frees us from accountability in a personal way to another human; our ministry may offer us many opportunities for travel and friendship; our obedience, particularly in recent years, puts the duty

of organizing our lives right on ourselves. And so we think about ourselves, and plan for ourselves. Moreover, the yuppie world too has its impact on us, for we tend to see ourselves as professionals, as people with a career, as people with education and sophistication, with finely developed tastes in entertainment, food—even clothing—just like other professionals. We join health clubs, eat out as often as possible, and talk shop so seldom that a visitor to a community rec room probably wouldn't know to what ministry we have given our lives.

We can't, of course, wish away all our selfishness, or sweep it all out in an afternoon or two. What we can do for this Lent is to take seriously our responsibility for mental prayer. We can, as Francis did, let our minds be preoccupied with thoughts of Jesus and of what he endured for us. Secondly, both as communities and as individuals, we ought to try to live more poorly, and that for two reasons: (1) that we identify with the poor Christ, whom as Franciscans we have especially pledged to follow, and (2) that some (maybe most) of what we save can be devoted to the poor by circumstance. Recent popes, as well as our American Bishops, summon us to help relieve the misery of the poor. Scripture tells us, moreover, that almsgiving covers a multitude of sins. Satisfying for sins, we remember, is the principal theme of Lent, whose color is purpose for penance. Ω

Fr. Julian Davis OFM

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The Development of a Franciscan Missionary Spirituality—II

ROBERT STEWART, O.F.M.

IN THE FIRST PART of this article, published last month, we saw something of Francis's original missionary ideal and its temporary involvement with confrontation and the quest for martyrdom. In this second and final segment, we shall consider some other past interpretations of that ideal and draw some conclusions which we hope are relevant for the Order's missionary task today.

Rejection of Metaphysical Disputations

BASICALLY, IN THE thought of Francis every friar is a missionary engaged in the work of evangelization. But within the overall call to participate in the imaging of the mission of the Trinity, there are those who experience and respond to a further call "to go among the Saracens and other non-believers" (RegNB 16). It must be borne in mind, however, that those in infidel lands are bound by all the other legislation, admonitions, and counsels of Saint Francis; they are part of the overall mission as well as the particular mission. Francis has warned the friars in previous chapters of the First Rule that there is to be "no quarrelling among themselves or with others and they should be content to answer everyone humbly, saying 'We are unprofitable servants' (Lk. 17:10)." They must not be angry but rather "moderate" showing all mildness to all men (Tit. 3:3). They must not criticize or condemn or give the slightest thought to the faults of others. Rather they must love their enemies and do good to those who hate them. They must love one another and prove their love by deeds (cf. RegNB 11).

Father Robert Stewart, O.F.M., M.A. (Formative Spirituality, Duquesne University), is a member of the English Province who has worked for fifteen years in formation in South Africa, first as Novice Master and now as Director of Formation in the house of studies of the Federation of Southern Africa. He is also a lecturer in spirituality at the National Seminary in Pretoria. Part One of this article appeared last month, in our February issue.

This was the way of life that many of the friars lived. Jacques de Vitry wrote:

These friars live . . . according to the form of the primitive church about which it was written, "The multitude of believers was of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32) . . . I believe that the Lord wants to save many souls by means of these simple and poor men as a reproach to the prelates who resemble "mute watchdogs unable to bark" (Is. 56:10) [*Histoire de l'Orient*, ch. 32].

A Franciscan missionary spirituality is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity [and] employs the tactics of peaceful, courteous, hopeful dialogue. . . .

The *Life of Giles* recalls how the friar did not hesitate to take off his cowl and give it to someone who was more ragged than himself:

Thus without a cowl he walked twenty days. When he came to a town of Lombardia called Ficarollo, he was hailed by a man. Giles, being in great need and hoping for an alms, willingly approached the man. But the man placed dice in Giles's hand as if inviting him to play. Nevertheless, Brother Giles, not at all upset, responded in a gentle voice: "May the Lord have mercy on you" [A. F. III, p. 81].

Throughout his travels to Spain and to the Holy Land, though frequently mocked by many people, Giles retained a peaceful, prayerful presence. Sometimes this way of speaking courteously to all could be a very risky business. Brother Jordan of Giano humorously records the adventure that overtook the sixty or more friars sent to Germany by the Chapter of 1219:

These, when they came to Germany and, being ignorant of the language, were asked if they wished to be sheltered or to eat, or the like, answered *ja*: they were accordingly treated kindly by some of the people. And seeing that because of this word *ja* they were treated kindly, they resolved to answer *ja* to whatever question they would be asked. Whence it happened that when they were asked if they were heretics and if they had come to corrupt Germany as they had corrupted Lombardy they replied *ja*, some of them were cast into prison, others were stripped and led naked to a dance and made a ludicrous spectacle before their fellowmen [*Chronica F. Jordani*

a Iano—A. F. I; trans. in P. Hermann, *The XIII Century Chronicles* {Chicago, 1961}, 22].

The early brethren seem, however, to have given on the whole an excellent example of a peaceful presence even when they were derided, had the dogs set on, or were struck violently and robbed of everything they had. One friar, according to Jordan of Giano's *Chronicle* (n. 6, p. 23),

lost his breeches fifteen times in this way. And since, overcome by shame and modesty, he regretted losing his breeches more than his other clothing, he soiled the breeches with the dung of oxen and other filth and thus the shepherds themselves were filled with nausea and allowed him to keep his breeches.

In the midst of adversity the early brethren retained their humor. They came up with some interesting solutions to the problems of living as strangers and pilgrims among infidels and being courteous to all even when they did not know the languages and customs of the people.

Basically the friars remained faithful to Francis' wish that they give an example of *minoritas*, of a humble, serving, peaceful presence among non-Christians. By their lives they were to witness to the love of God who sent his Son into the world for the salvation of all men. Occasionally, when they discerned it to be opportune, they could preach; but even then their preaching was to be done more by their lives than by their word (RegNB 16). Each friar was to become a gospel to the poor; his whole body was to become a tongue to proclaim the gospel, not to engage in disputation.

The Explicit Proclamation of the Gospel

THERE CAN BE no doubt that to be a friar minor is to be a preacher of the gospel. From the very beginning Francis had sent his brethren out "two by two through different parts of the world, announcing to men peace and repentance for remission of sins" (1Cel 29). When he had agonized over the decision whether to remain in a hermitage or give himself to preaching, it was revealed to him through Sylvester and Clare "that the servant of Christ should go forth to preach."

Then why is the commission to preach in the sixteenth chapter of the First Rule so restrictive, stipulating that the friars are to preach only when they see it is pleasing to God or when they discern that the signs of the times are conducive to a proclamation? Once again, as regarding martyrdom, I believe that the sources indicate the answer lies in Francis' contemplative attitude to preaching and in his prayerful reflection on the preaching of the friars in the missions.

Francis above all lived what he preached, just as Jesus had done. "He wished to make a tongue of his whole body and fill the entire earth with the Gospel" (1Cel 97). He fully realized that he must "first convince by practice of what he exhorted others to do by his words" (LM 42). He taught that even "if I speak with the tongues of men and angels, but do not have charity and do not show example of virtues to my neighbor, I am of little use to them and none to myself" (LM 13, 10). To be a word, was his ideal, rather than to preach a word—to become transparent so that God's love might be seen working in him. For Francis saw himself always as a saved sinner, who had been given a share in God's holiness. It was always the Lord's work in him that he wished to proclaim. The Incarnation was alive in him, and his life showed what Christ meant for him. So he went among others as one who knew, not in an arrogant, dominating, conflicting manner, but rather as one who "showed all mildness to all men, adapting himself usefully to the behavior of all" (1Cel 97). When he first sent out the friars, he sent them on a mission of peace: "Go, dear brothers, two by two, to all parts of the world and announce to men peace and penance" (1Cel 45). He even had the courage to contradict Cardinal Hugolino, who wanted to keep the friars in Italy (SP 3, 65). The friars, he proclaimed, "will be welcomed not only in the countries of the faithful, but in those of unbelievers as well, and they will win many souls."

In 1219 Francis sent Brother Giles to Tunis.

When Giles reached Tunis, a city of the Saracens, a certain Saracen who was reputed to be the most venerable among them and had before this kept silent for a long time, began to speak out with a loud voice . . . "Infidels have come among us, who wish to condemn our prophet and the law which we obtained through him. I counsel you, therefore, to put them all to the sword and to death." This sentiment began to increase greatly as the popular voice among the Saracens. The Christians who were there and among whom Giles stayed with the other friars, feared to be put to death. Therefore they forced the friars to reembark that evening, and they did not allow them to approach the Saracens or speak with them. The next morning the Saracens ran to the harbor to launch an attack in order to capture the friars. But the friars, contrary to the will and prohibition of the Christians, preached to the Saracens from the ship and boldly exhorted them to convert to Christ [*Long Life of Giles*, p. 82].

This vignette of early mission life shows that the friars' preaching was meeting opposition not only from the infidels but also from the Christians. It is important to understand that there was great economic, social, and political interchange between the Muslims and the Christians. Christian merchants crowded Tunisian and Moroccan ports and often resided

in mercantile enclaves. It was in such an enclave, obviously, that Giles and his companions stayed. The Franciscan preaching roused opposition from the merchants because it would upset the careful balance they had established and could unleash violence in which they could easily become immersed.

Giles and his companions were trying to implement their commission to preach the gospel in fidelity to Francis' wishes and those of the Church. In the Bull *Cum dilecti* of June 11, 1219, Pope Honorius III had recommended the friars to all bishops as spreaders of the Word of God. They "have chosen a way of life justly approved by the Church of Rome. They are in the process of spreading into all regions, 'sowing the seed of the Word of God' according to the example of the apostles" (See Lucian Canonici, O.F.M., "Francis the Evangelizer," *Franciscan Herald* 1978, p. 172). Francis, knowing that the friars were now more than ever missionaries of the Church, could not bind them to any specific calling, apart from being present as lesser brothers.

Within two years of his having written the Rule the Church addressed a Bull to the Friars (*Vineae Domini custodes*, October 7, 1225), in which the aim of the friars in the mission field is clearly spelled out:

The authority of the Holy See sends you . . . with one aim: that by spreading the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ you may convert the unbelievers with the help the Lord will give you. You are to raise up the fallen, sustain the weak, console the faint of heart, and strengthen the strong.

The Holy See thus made it clear that the friars were being sent to all peoples, Christian and non-Christian, in mission territories. This work was to be extended by the Bull *Ex parte vestra* (March 17, 1226), according to which they were "to visit Christians in prison and administer penance and the sacraments of the Church" (Ibid., pp. 173, 242). The work of the friars became more and more diversified even during the lifetime of Francis.

Francis had experienced that the mission lands contained both Christians and non-Christians, both of whom had to be won to an authentic following of Christ by the preaching of the Word. This preaching, however, must start with the example of the friars, who by their lives had to express the joy of living in the Kingdom of God.

The keynote of Jesus' own ministry and hence of Franciscan life was the coming of the Kingdom. This Kingdom belongs to the poor. "Blessed are the poor, for the Kingdom of God is theirs." Hence the friars had to live as poor men; they were part of a new creation, the "age to come." In their lives and in their preaching, they had to shape a new pattern for the

human community, a pattern of love and sharing. "Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" meant, literally, that the life-style of the Triune God was to be manifested within the human community by the life of the friars. They were to seek the lost sheep, forgive as they were forgiven, wait for the return of the lost son, challenge worldly values, and face persecution and hostility because of their stand on behalf of outcasts and their proclamation of the teaching of Christ on the need for reconciliation.

Francis asked that his friars avoid quarrels and disputes and be subject to every creature for God's sake (1 Pet. 2:13), thus witnessing to the fact that they are Christians (RegNB 16). He said they should be content to answer everyone humbly, saying:

We are unprofitable servants [Lk. 17:10]. . . . They must not criticize or condemn or give the slightest thought to the faults of others. Rather they must love their enemies and do good to those who hate them. They must love one another and prove their love by deeds [RegNB 11].

This was perhaps the background to Francis' restriction on missionary preaching in the First Rule. Having experienced the tolerance of Muslims toward holy men, he stressed a peaceful, holy presence. Having seen the opportunities available in the mission lands, he now wished the friars to preach only when they deemed it opportune—when in prayer they have discerned that it is God's will. By the time he came to write the Rule of 1223, he was able to clarify, in very precise language, his ideas on preaching:

I advise, admonish, and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that, when they go about the world, they should not quarrel. They should avoid verbal disputes, neither should they judge others. But they should be meek, peaceful and modest, kind and humble, speaking courteously to everyone, as is becoming [RegB 3].

Even when they discern that they should preach, then, their words should be "well chosen and chaste, for the instruction and edification of the people, speaking to them of virtues, punishment, and glory in a discourse that is brief" (RegB 9).

Francis, then, preferred the way of courteous, peaceful presence to that of metaphysical disputation. He asked that those who went on the missions not indulge in strident condemnation or harsh judgments of others, but rather that they proclaim by their lives the joy and peace to be found in living in the kingdom. Their words were to instruct and edify rather than dispute or condemn.

Rejection of Conquest

FRANCIS GREW UP in turbulent times when the call to arms was seen as a heroic calling. The commune of Assisi called for the destruction of the Rocca Maggiore which towered over the city as a symbol of foreign, feudal oppression. Later its leaders called for a preemptive strike against Perugia for the glory of Assisi. For glory and freedom Francis, at sixteen, probably took part in the former—and in his twentieth year definitely participated in the latter—battle. Still seeking fame and fortune, he set out in 1204, full of youthful enthusiasm, to join Walter of Brienne. En route, however, at Spoleto, he became sick and after a vision returned to Assisi never again to take up arms.

Meantime Pope Innocent III was pursuing his idea of recapturing the Holy Sepulchre and crushing the might of Islam. Under his energetic and resolute leadership the Church encouraged "holy wars" or crusades. Francis swam against the tide of his time with an irresistible impulse to go against the Saracens not to defeat them and thus by "finally cracking the military carapace by conquest to expose an Islamic region to public proselytism" (Burns, p. 1395), but to make peace.

From the time when he left his arms at Spoleto until the hour of his death, Francis totally rejected armed conquest. He "sent his members all over Europe unarmed, with nothing more in their knapsacks than bread when people at that time scarcely dared travel over the mountains without the protection of a caravan" (Van Doornik, p. 131). The youth who had relied on conquest as a way to victory now saw surrender to the cross of Christ as the only way.

From his experience Francis saw confirmed his inner conversion to peace. He saw that men, women, and children killed by hunger and by pestilence, their cities devastated, were no testimony to true evangelization. He must have questioned whether the cross of Christ, flaunted as a banner of war, could ever be a sign of Christ's peace. Could the bitter fruits of war ever be the way to bring the peace and love of God to men? Francis answered an emphatic *No!* and from that time on he wholeheartedly placed himself in a life-long fight for peace.

Instruments of Peace

IN THE CHAPTER of 1217, before sending his brothers out for the first time, Francis exhorted them:

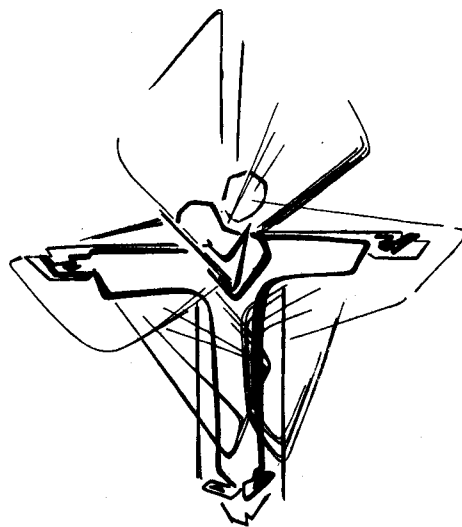
Since you speak of peace all the more so must you have it in your heart. Let none be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but rather may they be

drawn to peace and good will, to benignity and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to unite what has fallen apart, and to bring home those who have lost their way [L3S 14, 58].

This initial insight regarding the mission of the friars was to dominate Francis' thought. The Franciscan missionary way was to be a contemplative action, bringing peace, pardon, and reconciliation to all. Before setting out, however, the friar had to acquire this peace. As Francis put it, "since you speak of peace, all the more so must you have it in your hearts." This peace had to arise from that mystic martyrdom which Francis saw as the underpinning of the missionary life. The friars who were to bring peace must have freely surrendered themselves to Christ, so that they are dead to self and alive to Christ:

... they must desire above all things to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy manner of working, to pray always to him with a pure heart, to have humility and patience in persecution and weakness, and to love those who persecute us, find fault with or rebuke us, because the Lord says, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute and slander you" (Mk. 5:44). "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:10) [RegB 10].

The early Franciscan missionaries remembered that Francis had told them they could not escape exertions and humiliations, hunger and thirst, when they went as missionaries to lands outside Italy. That is why Francis opens his missionary legislation in 1221 with the scriptural quote: "Behold I am sending you forth like sheep in the midst of wolves. Be therefore as wise as serpents and guileless as doves" (Mt. 10:16; RegNB 16). He knew, however, that even though they accepted these restrictions, and were as wise as serpents, sliding round obstacles rather than confronting them, as guileless as doves—never provoking opposition—they would still meet persecution. This persecution would be psychological, for they would always be "pilgrims and strangers," "aliens in a foreign land. It might also be physical, even to the point of having to pay the supreme price of martyrdom. But "the friars must always remember that they have given themselves up completely and handed over their whole selves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy visible or invisible for love of him" (ibid.).



The preacher of peace must himself be a peaceful man if he wants his mission to succeed. He must be one who has completely handed himself over to Christ in prayer. Without prayer, Francis recognized, the missionary is just another cultural invader. Motivated by a mystical surrender to God's love for all men, made manifest on the cross, he becomes an incarnation of God's peace, able to express by his life "The Lord give you peace."

Francis saw that peace was constantly threatened by material possessions; so he legislated: "When the brothers go about through the world, they should carry nothing for the journey, neither a knapsack, nor a purse, nor bread, nor money, nor a staff. And into whatever house they enter, let them first say: 'Peace to this house' " (RegNB 14). When the friar is freed of all material possessions, he will find that "peace will walk hand in hand with poverty all along his way" (1Cel 15). So the missionary is called to emulate the example of the early friars: "Without any material possessions, no desire to have anything, and no fear to lose anything, their hearts were at peace" (LM 4.9). Without absolute poverty the missionary would never be able to bring peace. He must be free of all material possessions, free from all desires, free from all fear to lose anything but the love of Christ to which he has totally dedicated himself by dying to self that he may live in Christ.

Conversion by Acting as Chaplain or Other Contacts

ON THE 2ND November, 1192, Richard Coeur de Lion had signed a peace treaty with Salah al-Din. The treaty recognized the existing state of affairs: viz., that the Crusaders were to remain in possession of the coastal

zone, the right to pass freely from one zone to the other was granted to all as private citizens, etc. This state of affairs continued, with the Franciscans making their first foundations along the coastal strip (see Krueger, pp. 290-91).

As Francis travelled he also noted that the friars he had sent in 1217 under Elias had established themselves at St. John of Acre. Within the Islamic lands they contacted princes and served as chaplains to merchants or mercenary troops (cf. Burns, p. 1395). While he himself was in Damietta, in fact, Francis allowed the friars to act as chaplains to the Bolognese Crusaders:

On November 5, 1219, the Crusaders succeeded after alternating ups and downs, in conquering the city of Damietta. Shortly after, there followed the process of the division of quarters: the churches and oratories were likewise opened to Christian worship. The Bolognese Crusaders desired to have the Franciscans in their quarter and assigned them a church and a friary [Roncaglia, p. 34].

Again, at the chapter of 1221 Francis was told how Berard and his companions had enjoyed the hospitality and protection of a prominent Christian in Morocco. He was informed how they had found lodging with Don Pedro, the brother of King Alphonso of Portugal, who was in the service of the King—how he received the friars with great love and devotion and provided them with food and shelter, and how he urged them not to go on with their mission. Ultimately he had had two silver coffins made to ship the remains of the martyrs back to Portugal (Berthold, p. 116).

Francis, reflecting on all these facts, saw the possibilities to expand discreetly the body of native Christians among those who served the Christians along the coastal strip. He also reflected on the papal Bulls *Vineae Domini custodes* and *Ex parte vestra* which asked the friars not only to convert the unbelievers but also to raise up the fallen, sustain the weak, console the faint of heart, strengthen the strong, visit the imprisoned, and administer the sacraments. So he allowed his friars to remain as chaplains to minister to the Christian community in mission lands.

Conclusion

THE MISSION spirituality that emerges from the writings and time of Saint Francis, is that the friars are to go into mission lands humbly to serve and care for all the people there, without discriminating between Christians and non-Christians. They are never to quarrel among themselves or with others; they are to be peaceful and courteous to all. Basically, Francis asked his friars to give an example of *minoritas*, of humble, serving, peaceful, hopeful presence in mission lands. This peaceful presence was to be *safeguarded by absolute poverty* because by appropriating anything to themselves the friars would endanger the peace of Christ they have come to bring to the world.

When Francis invited people to peace it was to that peace that comes through conversion and reconciliation. He recognized that the division of humanity resulted from sin; so *when the friars discerned that it was opportune, they were to preach briefly on vice and virtue, punishment and glory*. The glory they were to proclaim was Christ as the beginning and end of the Father's plan. The Father's plan and mission is to unite all things in Christ and to dignify all men with a participation in the divine life through the power of the Spirit. To achieve this Trinitarian plan entailed the liberation of all men from those things that destroy this peace: from sin, death, and the power of evil. So the missionary by work and word is to be engaged in the task of liberating all from evil so that peace may reign.

By their lives the missionaries were to witness to the love of God who sent his Son into the world for the salvation of all men. Motivated by the gift of loving salvation which they had received through the cross of Christ, they were willing to lay down their lives, in love, for others. They had been called by Christ to bear his cross in their hearts and through their action in him and through him, to lay down their lives for others in "mystic martyrdom."

In summary, a Franciscan missionary spirituality is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. It recognizes that the initiative for all missionary endeavor stems from the Father who sent his Son to bring the fullness of peace to all men. To achieve this mission the Franciscan missionary

employs the tactics of peaceful, courteous, hopeful dialogue; of sharing the Word and Sacrament; of humble service; and above all of martyrdom, of dying to self, so that in imitation of Christ the Father's love may be revealed, through the Spirit dwelling in the friars. Ω

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Gethsemane

In the early morning darkness
 hooded monks with gentle hearts
 rise to pray for a wounded world.
 They have no answers, only faith.
 They have reserved their speech for worship.
 Their silence speaks of peace.
 Their chants are a quiet rain
 cooling the fires that blazed through the night;
 a solace for the city of God.
 Before the altar they bow low,
 like wheat beneath the blade.
 They die, so Christ may live again.
 Monks reach for the heights.
 Their strength is in surrender.
 Lord, make us worthy of their prayer.

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

Prince Charming

A Poetic Josephology

Joseph, virgin husband,
 and virgin Father.
 Spirit of the Family,
 Leader who is led.
 Conduct an orchestra
 and you will see.
 Add soloist and
 you will hear.
 Musical Trinity.
 The Son sings the Word,
 ensemble generated—O Mary!
 Joseph spiritualizes
 the performance,
 not with arms waving,
 but with hammer and saw,
 framing a mirror in
 which he disappears.
 Fatherhood—Motherhood?
 Not for Joseph in the
 simple sense.
 Marriage for him comes
 after Family.
 No, Joseph reflects the love
 of orchestra—O Mary!
 and soloist—O Christ!
 God-Father-Creator-Mother—
 Church. . . .
 Who can pull this together
 in Christ?
 Prince Charming!
 The conductor.
 Spirit of the Son.
 Spouse of the Virgin.
 He who disappears
 when he is faithful to
 his charge.

Patrick G. Leary, O.F.M.

Prologue to the First Book of Sentences

TRANSLATED BY ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M.

The depths of rivers he has searched out and hidden things he has brought to light [Job 28:11].

AFTER CAREFULLY analyzing this text from the twenty-eighth chapter of the Book of Job, the way was opened up for us to know here at the outset the four kinds of cause in the Book of the Sentences: viz., the material, formal, final, and efficient causes. The material cause is intimated by the word *rivers*; the formal cause, in the phrase searching out *the depths*; the final cause, in the revelation of *hidden things*; and the efficient cause is understood from what underlies the two verbs *he has searched out* and *he has brought to light*.

I. The Material Cause

THE MATERIAL CAUSE is signified by the word *rivers*. It is in the plural and not the singular, because it refers not simply to the subject matter of the Books of the Sentences as a whole, but to the subject matter of each book taken separately. We should note that just as a real river has four characteristics, so a "spiritual river" possesses four specific qualities. And in line with this fourfold distinction, there are four Books of the Sentences.

The publication of this Prologue to the First Book of Commentary of the Sentences of Peter Lombard that Saint Bonaventure wrote at Paris c. 1248-1253, is the first of a series of four prologues. Since they provide us with basic outlines—in the form of poetic prose—they are beautiful works of medieval literature. Because they touch on many aspects of spiritual theology, however, such as the mystery of God, anthropology, the role of the sacraments, etc., they offer us invaluable tools with which we may attempt to penetrate the depths of Bonaventure's approach to Franciscan spirituality. Father Eric Doyle, translator of this first Prologue, passed away before this, one of his last works, could be published. Readers may wish to consult the obituary notice by Father Conrad Harkins in our December, 1984, issue. Father Eric wished to express his gratitude to Father Roger Barralet, O.F.M., who read the first draft of this text and made valuable suggestions which enhanced the intelligibility of the text in a number of places.

When I consider that a river goes on flowing, lastingness comes into my mind. As Saint Isidore says, "A river is an unending current."¹ When I reflect on the width of rivers, vast expanses come into my mind. In fact that is what distinguishes a river from a little brook. When I think about their movement, I find myself reflecting on circularity. As it says in the Book of Ecclesiastes: *To the place from where the rivers come, they return to flow again* (1:7). When I consider the usefulness of rivers, I find myself thinking about processes of purification. Because of the vast amount of water they contain, rivers purify the land through which they flow without getting polluted themselves.

The unveiling of . . . hidden mysteries is
the aim . . . [so] the Master *searched out*
the depths of rivers under the guidance
of the Holy Spirit.

Every analogy is based on some similarity.² Taking these four qualities metaphorically, therefore, we find that a river has a fourfold spiritual meaning, as we can gather from Holy Scripture.

1. First, then, in terms of lastingness, the emanation of the Persons in the Trinity is described as a river. This emanation uniquely is without beginning and without end. Of this river Daniel says: *The Ancient of days was seated and a swift, fiery river issued from his face* (7:9-10). This Ancient of days is the Eternal Father, whose antiquity is his eternity. The Ancient One was seated because he is endowed not only with eternity but also with immutability. The text says: *From the face of the Ancient One issued forth a swift, fiery river*. That is to say, from the sublime nature of his Godhead there proceeded the fullness of love and the fullness of power. The fullness of power is the Son, and thus the river was swift; the fullness of love is the Holy Spirit, and thus the river was fiery.

2. Secondly, in terms of vast expanses, the created world is described as a river. In fact, because of its vastness, the Prophet in the Psalms calls this world not only a river, but also a sea: *So is this great sea which stretcheth*

¹Etymologiarum Liber XIII, c. 21, n. 1, in PL 82, 489: "Fluvius est perennis aquarum decursus."

²Aristotle, Topica VI, II, in The Loeb Classical Library, II (Cambridge, MA, 1976), 567: "For those who use metaphors always do so on account of some similarity" [πάντες γὰρ οἱ μεταφορῶτες κατὰ τινα ὁμοιοῦτα μεταφέρουσιν].

ches wide its arms (Ps. 103:25). Ezechiel says about this river: *Behold I come against you, Pharaoh, king of Egypt, great dragon who lie in the midst of your rivers and say: "The river is mine and I made myself." But I will put a bridle in your jaws* (29:3-4). This great dragon whom the Lord addresses and threatens in the figure and person of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, is the devil. He reigns over those whom he has blinded with the darkness of error, such as heretics, for instance, to whom he also says: *The river is mine and I made myself*, as if he himself made this world and had not his own origin in another. It was the devil who framed this error and put it into the minds of the wicked Manichees, who maintain that the whole structure of the visible world was made by an evil god. The Lord will put a bridle on the jaws of this dragon when, having destroyed the power of spreading falsehood, he will manifest himself as the Creator of this river. Thus it follows in the same text of Holy Scripture: *And all the inhabitants of Egypt shall know that I am Lord* (Ez. 29:6).

3. Thirdly, in terms of circularity, the Incarnation of God's Son is called a river. For just as in a circle the end is joined to the beginning, so in the Incarnation the highest is joined to the lowest, God to the dust of the earth, the first to the last, the eternal Son of God to human nature created on the sixth day. Of this river Sirach says: *I, like the River Dorix and like an aqueduct, came out of paradise* (24:41).³ Dorix means a life-giving remedy. It is used here figuratively and may be understood conversely as the source of a life-giving remedy.⁴ For the Incarnation was none other than the source of life-giving remedy for us: *Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows* (Is. 53:4). Rightly, then, is the Incarnation of the Son of God called the River Dorix. Christ says truly of himself: *I, as the River Dorix—that is, a healing river—and like an aqueduct, came out of paradise*. Now it is of the nature of water that as high as it rises so far does it come down. Such was the going forth of the

³Dorix: this reading (the Vulgate has *dioryx*) is taken from the Old Vulgate and does not appear in modern translations; see, e.g., Sir. 24:30 in the RSV. The editors of the Latin text refer the reader to commentaries on this text by Hugh of Saint-Cher, O.P. (c. 1200-1263), the first Dominican Cardinal (cf. C. Jerman, "Hugh of Saint-Cher," *Dominicana* 44 [1959], 338-47; J. P. Torrell, "Hugh de Saint Cher et Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue thomiste* 82 [1974], 5-22); and by Nicholas of Lyre, O.F.M. (c. 1270-1349; cf. H. Labrosse, "Source de la biographie et oeuvres de Nicholas de Lyre," *Etudes franciscaines* 16 [1906], 383-404; 17 [1907], 489-505, 593-608; 19 [1909], 41-52, 153-175, 368-79; 35 [1923], 171-87, 400-32).

⁴It is difficult to reproduce Saint Bonaventure's play on words here: *generatio nis medicamentum, generatio medicamenti*.

Incarnation, as the Psalm says: *His going out is from the end of heaven and his circuit even to the end thereof* (18:7). And in Saint John's Gospel we read: *I came from the Father and have come into the world; again I am leaving the world and going to the Father* (16:28), and thus he completed a circle. A text contained in a dream which Mordecai had, can be applied to this river which is Christ, taking it to refer to his coming forth from his mother: *The tiny spring that became a river and was turned into a light and into the sun* (Esth. 10:6). Who, I ask you, is this tiny spring other than the most humble Virgin Mary? She became a river when she brought forth Christ who, on account of the abundance of grace he brings, is not only called a river, but also the light of wisdom and the sun of justice, as Saint John says of him: *He was the true light* (1:9).

4. Fourthly, in terms of processes of purification, the sacramental system is called a river. The sacraments cleanse us from the stain of our sins without getting polluted themselves. Of this river, the Book of Revelation says: *He showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb* (22:1). The sacramental system is described as a river bright as crystal because of the splendor and luster the sacraments leave in the soul which has been purified in this river. It is called the river of the water of life because of the efficacy of grace which gives life to the soul. It flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. Sacramental grace flows from God as from its author and efficient cause, and from Christ as from its mediator and meriting cause. That is why all the sacraments are said to have their efficacy from the Passion of Christ. Saint Augustine witnesses to this when he says: "From the side of Christ sleeping on the cross the sacraments came forth while the blood and water flowed out."⁵

There is a text in the Book of Genesis which refers to all these rivers, both taken together and considered separately, which reads: *A river flowed out of Eden to water the garden and there it divided and became four rivers. . . . The name of the first is Pishon. . . . The name of the second river is Gihon. . . . And the name of the third river is Tigris. . . . And the fourth river is the Euphrates* (2:10-14). The river flowing out of Eden is the subject matter of the whole Book of the Sentences. The four rivers coming from it are the specific subject matter of each of the four books, as anyone can easily recognize who sets himself to explain carefully the meanings of the above mentioned names.

⁵The Works of Aurelius Augustine, ed. M. Dods, X: *Lectures or Tractates on the Gospel according to St. John*, vol. I (Edinburgh, 1873), 134: "When Christ is dead, the spear pierces his side, that the mysteries may flow forth whereby the Church is formed" (cf. PL 35, 1463).

Pishon means "movement of the mouth," and for this reason it refers to the emanation of the Persons. As word and breath go forth from a physical mouth, so the Son and the Holy Spirit proceed from the mouth of the Father, as it says in Sirach: *I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the firstborn before all creatures* (24:5). These are the words of the Son himself, who is the Word and Wisdom of the Father. And in the Psalms we read: *By the word the heavens were established and all the power of them by the spirit of his mouth* (Ps. 32:6).

Gihon means "the sands of the seashore," and it refers as such to the created universe. As the universe of creatures is likened to the sea because of its vast expanse, so it is compared to the sands of the seashore because of the multitude of beings it contains. As it is written in the Book of Sirach: *Who has numbered the sand of the sea and the drops of rain?* (1:2).

Tigris means "an arrow," and in this it refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God. For just as in an arrow iron is joined with wood, so in Christ the strength of divinity is united with the weakness of humanity. And as an arrow flies through the air from a wooden bow to smite the enemy, so Christ springing from the cross destroys the adversary. This is the arrow of which the Fourth Book of Kings speaks: *The Lord's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Syria* (4Kgs. 13:17).

Euphrates means "fruit bearing," and this refers to the sacramental system which not only cleanses the soul of sin, but makes it fruitful in grace. This is indicated in the Book of Revelation where it says that on both sides of the crystal river *was the tree of life . . . and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations* (22:2).

2. The Formal Cause

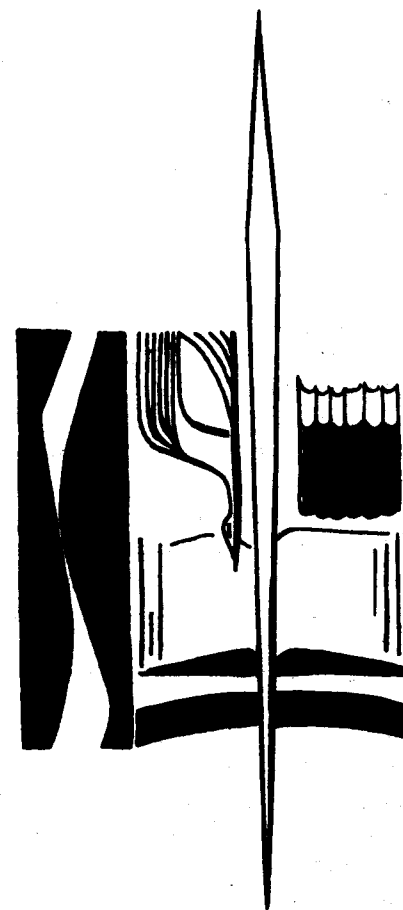
AS THERE ARE four rivers, so there are four deep mysteries⁴ corresponding to them. 1. There is the deep mystery of eternal emanation which is the sublime nature of the divine being, to which a text in Ecclesiastes may be taken as referring: *it is a great depth, who shall find it out?* (7:25). Truly God is a great depth and a deep mystery. This is what brings Paul the Apostle to exclaim in Romans: *O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways* (11:33). God's judgments are indeed unsearchable

⁴Thus I translate *profunda*. It does not keep to the depths of rivers (*profunda fluviorum*) of the text from Job 28:11; but it makes for better and more intelligible English.

because they are so deep. As the Psalm says, *Your judgments are a great deep* (35:7), and we read in Sirach: *Who has measured . . . the depth of the abyss?* (1:2). This same depth is indicated in the Book of Job: *Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know?* (11:7-8). All of which is to say, of yourself you can do nothing, you can know nothing. Thus, Paul advises us in the Letter to the Ephesians: *that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth* (3:17-18).

The Master searches out this deep mystery in the first Book of the Sentences. The sublime nature of the divine being consists in two things: the most awe-inspiring emanations, namely generation and procession; and the most noble qualities, which are the highest wisdom, omnipotence, and perfect love. All this forms the subject matter of the first Book. In the first part he treats of the most holy Unity and Trinity of God, and in the second part, in a special treatise, he examines the three qualities just mentioned.

2. The deep mystery of creation is the impermanence of created being. The more a creature wastes away, whether because of sin or because of punishment, the deeper it goes into the depths. For this reason the Prophet, speaking in the place of a man who has faded away because of sin, says in the Psalm: *I stick fast in the mire of the deep and there is no sure standing* (68:2). Again, the Prophet prays that he may not waste away through punishment: *Let not the tempest of water drown me, nor the deep swallow me up* (Ps. 68:16).



The Master searches out this deep mystery in the second Book. The impermanence of created being lies in two factors: the change from non-being to being, and the reversal once more to non-being. Now, although no creature of its nature tends to non-being, nevertheless, as Saint Augustine says, the sinner tends towards non-being because of sin.⁷ These two factors form the subject matter of the second Book. In the first part he treats of the issuing forth of all things, and in the second part he deals with the fall, the temptation by the devil, original and actual sin, and so we reach the end of the Book.

3. The deep mystery of the Incarnation is the value of Christ's humanity, which was so great that it can truly be described as deep, as having no limit, as inexhaustible. A text from Jonah may be applied to this deep mystery: *You did cast me into the deep, into the heart of the sea, and a flood encompassed me* (2:4). This can be understood of Christ, for he was so humbled that he can truly be said to have been cast into the deep and degraded. We read in Isaiah: *We have seen him, and there is no sightliness that we should be desirous of him. Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity* (53:2-3). Therefore, he describes himself accurately as cast forth. But where is he cast? Into the depths of the sea and the depths of a river. The passion of Christ may be likened to the sea because of the bitterness of his sufferings and likened to a river because of the sweetness of his love. For the heart of Jesus was so affected towards us by the tenderness of love, that it did not seem too much to him to undergo the worst and most bitter death for our sake.

The Master searches out this deep mystery in the third Book. The value of Christ consists in two things: namely, his sufferings, by which he redeemed us; and his actions, by which he formed us and which consist in the works of the virtues, the gifts and the commandments. These form the subject matter of the third book. The first part treats of the Incarnation and passion in which is found our salvation; and the second part treats of the virtues, the gifts, and the commandments, in which is contained our formation.

4. The deep mystery of the sacramental system is the power of perfect healing. So great in fact is the efficacy of sacramental healing, that it is beyond the human mind to comprehend it, and so it may rightly be

⁷The exact text does not appear literally in the works of St. Augustine. But the sense of this passage will be found in the *Confessions* VIII, 16, in *The Fathers of the Church*, XXI (Washington, 1973), 185-86; (PL 32, 744); *The City of God*, Bk. XIV, c. xiii, in *Everyman's Library* (New York, 1945), 43-44 (PL 41, 420-22); *De vera religione Liber unus*, c. xi, PL 34, 131-32.

described as a deep mystery. Of this Isaiah says: *You made the depths of the sea a way for the redeemed to pass over* (51:10). This depth in which the Egyptians were submerged and which the children of Israel, delivered from Egypt, passed over, is the efficacy of the sacraments, in which the works of darkness are destroyed and the armor of light and the gifts of grace conferred, through which we pass from the power of darkness into the kingdom of the children of God's love. The efficacy of the sacraments is compared to the depth of the sea and the depth of a river. Of the sea, because it first delivers us from sin and leads us to the bitterness of penance; of a river, because it delivers us from wretchedness and leads us to the delights of glory. This was graphically prefigured in the children of Israel, for whom, as they left Egypt, the sea dried up and they went across on dry ground in the midst of the sea, as the Book of Exodus tells us (15:19). When they entered the Promised Land, the river dried up and they passed over the Jordan, as is written in the Book of Joshua (4:22-23).

This deep mystery the Master searches out in the fourth Book. The power of perfect healing has two components: the curing of the diverse weaknesses that assail us, and liberation from all the miseries that plague us. These two components form the subject matter of the whole of the fourth Book. The first part treats of the various kinds of healing which the seven sacraments bring about. The second part deals with that perfect healing: the glory of the risen life, to which they come who truly and faithfully received the sacraments of the Church; and, on the other hand, it deals with the punishments of the wicked who despised the sacraments of the Church.

3. The Final Cause

AFTER SEARCHING OUT the four deep mysteries in the four Books, there emerges the purpose or final cause, that is, the revelation of four hidden mysteries.

1. The first is the mystery of the divine nature, of which Isaiah says: *Truly, you are a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Savior* (45:15). The majesty of the divine nature is indeed hidden for us, as it is written in the Book of Job: *How small a whisper do we hear of him! But the thunder of his power who can understand?* (26:14). For certain no one can understand this, except him with whom the wisdom of God dwells. This is the reason why that lover of wisdom, the author of the Book of Wisdom, made this prayer: *Send her forth from your holy heavens and from the throne of your glory send her* (9:10).

The Master, filled with wisdom from on high, brings this hidden mystery to light in the course of his investigations in the first Book. He

examines and unfolds the most awe-inspiring emanations and the most noble qualities of the Godhead, and so he reveals to us, as far as it is possible while we are in this world, the majesty of the divine nature.

2. The second hidden mystery is the order of divine wisdom, of which Job speaks: *But where is wisdom to be found? And where is the place of understanding? It is hid from the eyes of all living* (28:12, 20-21). Indeed wisdom is hidden, for as Job also says: *but wisdom is drawn out of secret places* (28:18). To know wisdom it is necessary to search out its depths, not in itself, but in its works in which it shines forth. So it says in the Book of Sirach: *There is one most high Creator, and he poured her out upon all his works* (1:8, 10).

The Master reveals this hidden mystery in his analyses in the second Book. He examines the order of good and evil and makes known to us how the wisdom of God *was set up from all eternity and of old before the earth was made* (Prov. 8:23).

3. The third hidden mystery is the strength of divine power, of which Habakuk says, *Horns are in his hands: there is his strength hid* (3:4). He is speaking there about Christ hanging on the cross where the strength of his power was hidden under the veil of weakness. This is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages of which Ephesians speaks: *To me, grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God* (3:8-9). This is the hidden mystery, the sacred secret, that the mighty God was clothed with the protection of our weakness in order to overcome the enemy. This is unheard of since the world began.

The investigations of the third Book make known the strength of the divine power. It shows how Christ in his weakness overcomes the opposing power. If he was victorious by weakness, what would have happened if he had entered the fight with his power? *And if the weakness of God is stronger than men* (1 Cor. 1:25), *who shall turn back* (Is. 14:27) the arm of God? It is abundantly clear that his power is indescribable whose weakness is so strong.

4. The fourth hidden mystery is the sweetness of the divine mercy, of which the Psalmist says: *How great is the abundance of your sweetness, O Lord, which you have hidden for those who fear you* (30:20). Indeed, the sweetness of mercy is hidden and stored up for those who fear God because, as the Psalmist says, *the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who fear him* (102:17), and *on those who hope in his mercy* (146:11).

This sweetness is revealed in the analyses contained in the fourth Book. He unfolds how God forgives our sins in the present, what cures

he applies to our wounds, and what gifts he will grant us in the future. In this way the Master makes known to us the sweetness of divine mercy.

4. The Efficient Cause

THE UNVEILING of these hidden mysteries is the aim of the four Books as a whole. With this intention in mind for himself and for his readers, the Master of the Sentences *searched out the depths of rivers* under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit himself is the chief searcher of secret things and of the depths, as Saint Paul tells us: *For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God* (1 Cor. 2:10). Inflamed with the love of this Spirit and enlightened by his radiance and splendor, the Master composed this work and *searched out the depths of rivers*. By the aid of this same Spirit he became a revealer of hidden mysteries. It is he of whom the Book of Daniel says: *He reveals deep and hidden things and knows what is in darkness* (2:22).

This was the Master's aim and intention, as he himself explains in the Prologue: "Wishing to place the light of truth on the candlestand, we composed this volume with God's help and much work and effort, from the witnesses to truth who are established in eternity." And a short while before that, he had outlined his purpose as follows: "To unfold the hidden truths of theological investigations."

So, from the foregoing reflections, it is evident what are the material, formal, final, and efficient causes of the Book of the Sentences. Ω

Cry, Baby, Cry

Homesick, Lord, I'm homesick for golden
streets and crystal palaces.

So homesick, Lord, so homesick, for the land
I've never seen.

O, I'm homesick, Lord, I'm homesick, for the hand
of the mother who never touched me,
the face of the father who never
blessed me.

I'm homesick, Lord, I'm homesick. It's
lonely here and strange,
Living in this shadow place, hidden
from your love beams.

It's hard, Lord—away from the homeland
—missing the homeland, where I've never been.

Celeste Heatherley Morgan

Depression and the Cross of Christ

SISTER EDMUND MARIE STETS, C.S.B.

EVERYBODY, AT ONE TIME or another, for some unexplained or sometimes obvious reason, gets depressed. Psychologists tell us even children get depressed, and most adolescents refer to depression as a "bad mood." Depression is rather universal, but the ways people deal with it are unique, and very revealing.

It is not uncommon to find bars and clubs doing a brisk business at the end of a work day or on a weekend, especially if the lounge provides a "happy hour." Come in and adjust your attitude—you need something to pick you up after a down day! Alcohol is a great relaxer, as our society knows well, but the effects on those who use it to mask reality, or on those who abuse it, are devastating.

Some people are locked into routines that breed a depressing existence. Whether through poverty, or prejudice, or meaningless and unproductive work, some lives are burdened by a heaviness which sometimes seems unendurable. Faced with such a challenge, it is a rare and precious soul that holds onto faith, to courageous hope in God, to all the promises given in the beatitudes. These people meet depression head on; they are fighters, and more often than not, they are also survivors.

How do you describe depression? Clinically, there must be hundreds of ways. But the average person usually calls it a darkness, a heavy black cloud that shrouds the spirit when we encounter difficulties or trials in life. Our instinctive impulse is to dispel the darkness, to find a way out and feel bright and good again.

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B., who has frequently contributed poetry to our pages, teaches English at Alvernia College in Reading, Pennsylvania.

In the Gospel of Saint Matthew, we read about Christ's apostles and their experience with depression:

One day, when they were together in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "the Son of Man is going to be handed over into the power of men; they will put him to death, and on the third day he will be raised to life again." And a great sadness came over them [17:22-23].

In this passage, it is almost as if a cloud descended on the apostles, as if a fog encircled their hearts. There is a deep meaning in this, because the reason for the sadness, or depression, seems to be Christ's foretelling of his passion.

I think there is a subtle link here, often overlooked. Depression is a very acute form of suffering, and it is intimately related to the cross. As self-willed creatures, we rarely see depression as a suffering or a sacrifice; we see it instead as an unnecessary evil, something to get rid of. To view depression from the spiritual side is, perhaps, to see it as a darkness of faith, a trial, permitted by God to purify the heart and strengthen our trust in his almighty power and loving care.

Christ must have lived with depression every day, enduring constant humiliations and frustrations in his mission of salvation. He was a sign of contradiction in the world, and the burden of our sin which he carried to his death was ever present to his mind. When Christ shared this knowledge with his closest friends, they also experienced his own heaviness of heart, and they began to understand in a very real way what and how he suffered. It was a trial of the spirit, and as such, its full reality was cloaked in darkness and mystery. But it was a suffering which Christ endured with great courage and with heartbreaking generosity: "My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done" (Mt. 26:42).

As followers of Christ, we have come to know that his life was lived as an example, and that the cross—though a sorrowful mystery, is also a banner of triumph. In every age, countless saints and martyrs have experienced the passion of Christ in some way. The dark night of depression is, in fact, a singular grace, a cup offered to special friends, and in the journey of life it has been known to foreshadow mystical prayer. Ω

Book Reviews

From Saint Francis to Giotto. By Vincent Moleta. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983. Pp. xii-120, including Index. Illus. Cloth, \$25.00.

Reviewed by Brother Gregory J. Zoltowski, O.F.M., M.F.A. (Catholic University of America), Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at Siena College.

The search for Saint Francis has been a long and arduous one. Francis' own Order has been wracked by struggles over interpretations of his Rule. Painters have set to the task of picturing the Saint. Scholarly analyses have filled volumes concerned with Francis' own writings and their meanings. Vincent Moleta's book can be added to the many sources available in this search, as a new and clearly written resource on Franciscan spirituality.

An expert on early Italian Literature on the faculty of the University of Western Australia, Moleta rightly describes his book as a text for non-specialists. The reader need not be versed in the history of art or of the Franciscan movement to enjoy this book. On the whole, I found it to be cleverly simple. Moleta presents his view of Franciscan spirituality in so clear and concise a manner that he has produced one of the clearest texts I can recall on the subject.

Using 13th-century art to illustrate and enhance his text, the author unfolds Francis' humanism and shows how it affected the lives and work of early Italian writers and painters, in-

cluding Dante and Giotto. He describes Francis' appealing love of nature, explaining how this love softened the rigid stylistic norms of early Christian art. He calls the resulting new affective form of art "Franciscan realism," a style in which, whether by writing in the vernacular or by painting in a three-dimensional representational style, the artist sought above all to relate Francis' life or spirit to the life of the viewer.

Giotto's famous frescoes, which climax the book, demonstrate this point effectively. The gentle, sensitive drawings of Regina Stalberg Reuss, in turn, add a contemporary balance to the 13th century art featured in the book.

The text concludes with an exploration of Francis' influence on the writings of Dante and his portrayal in some early icons.

Overall, I am pleased with the book. It inspired me without boring me with reworked history. The illustrations are enjoyable but, unfortunately, printed only in black and white. My Franciscan heart would have better enjoyed them in full color.

The Persistent Prejudice: Anti-Catholicism in America. By Michael Schwartz. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. viii-277. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and

Associate Editor of this Review.

This informative book has two parts: (1) an historical survey of anti-Catholicism in the United States, and (2) an effort to destroy a number of myths or caricatures of Catholicism. Prejudice against the Catholic Church and its teachings, the author argues, is still in this age a part of American life, although some do not see it. As a staff member of the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Mr. Schwartz has collected evidence of this bigotry over the past seven years. One of the most persistent types has been the attacks on Catholic schools and on efforts to obtain support for parents sending their children to them. Besides citing case after case, the author notes the observations of others outside the faith, such as historian Arthur Schlesinger.

Among the myths (slanders) that continue to dominate much talk about the Church on the part of the prejudiced are the Myth of the Foreign Potentate, i.e., the whore of Babylon myth, which identifies that creature in Revelation with the Catholic Church; the Deputy Myth, which places the late Pope Pius XII and the Church as conspirers in the elimination of Jews during World War II—rather than, as was the case, rescuers. Not really a "myth," but no less a target of Schwartz's writing are the "Uncle Pat's"—those Catholics who have surrendered their religion to the secular mentality of the age, particularly in the areas of abortion and sexual morality.

The first part of the book seems to be written much more dispassionately than the second, and the second part of the book suffers for this. Overall, all

Catholics and all Americans can find out the facts about a prejudice which is still "respectable." Particularly valuable are the accounts of the Supreme Court's misinterpretation of the Constitution and the reading into law of the defeated Blaine Amendment.

A Concise Guide to the Catholic Church. By Felician A. Foy, O.F.M., and Rose M. Avato. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. viii-158. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Raphael D. Bonanno, O.F.M., Guardian at the Sanctuary of Emmaus, Qubeibeh (Jerusalem).

A Concise Guide to the Catholic Church is a handy reference book for new Catholics or for those born Catholics who need a quick resume about their Church. Its source was probably the famous *Catholic Almanac* of which the two authors, Foy and Avato, are the editors. That book is indispensable in its field, but this new *Concise Guide* is very useful in its own way. Teachers of convert classes and adult religious education will welcome its appearance. The articles are short and to the point, the index is a practical aid, and the price is reasonable. What more can one ask of a "concise guide"?

Weeds among the Wheat—Discernment: Where Prayer and Action Meet. By Thomas H. Green, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 204. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Wilfrid A. Hept, O.F.M., a member of the staff and

Spiritual Guide of Young Adult Catholics of St. Anthony's Shrine, Boston.

Before Vatican II Catholics might have spoken of knowing the will of God or doing the will of God, but I doubt they would have used a term like *discernment* to name it. Not so today. Jesuit Father Thomas Green follows up on his two books on prayer, *Opening to God* and *When the Well Runs Dry* with *Weeds among the Wheat*, subtitled *Discernment: Where Prayer and Action Meet*. In fact, in the introduction he writes: "Hence, the challenge and purpose of this book: to translate into the language of the educated, committed Christian (whether priest or religious or lay) the basic meaning and principles of the art of Christian discernment."

Early in the first chapter, Father Green points out that discernment is the essential link between prayer and the active Christian life, the meeting point of prayer and apostolic action. Therefore, there can be no discernment unless one is a pray-er and has a proper concept of God. In some detail he shows that our concept of God can be neither that of watchmaker nor that of puppeteer, but must be that of the Father of adult children. The last part of the chapter is devoted to discerning true and false prophets in the Old Testament by applying six norms for authentic prophecy. At the end of this chapter, as well as at the end of the other chapters, the author has a "Practicum Question" which he used in teaching the course in discernment in the seminary in the Philippines. These could be useful for a discussion group. With a chapter titled "Jesus Discerning and Discerned" and one on "The Climate of Discernment,"

the author completes his exploration of the "what" of discernment. The "how" of discernment constitutes the other element essential to the understanding of the subject; but this knowledge alone does not suffice for discerning God's will, for discernment, like prayer, is an art and is acquired more by doing than by reading about it.

With this background of the "what" of discernment, at any rate, the author discusses the "how" in the second section of the book, *Sowing the Seed*. In this section, Father Green draws heavily on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola. He writes: "What St. Augustine has done for the problem of evil, or St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross for the phenomenology of prayer, St. Ignatius, by the grace of the same revealing God, has done for discernment." The author uses these Spiritual Exercises for the background of chapters on "Good Times for a Good Choice," "The Tactics of God and the Enemy," and "Beginners and Desolation."

In the Third Part, titled *A Mixed harvest*, the author encourages the reader who has followed him through desolation, consolation, and commitment, not to settle for comfortable mediocrity in his or her relationship with the Lord. To do that would be to "buy peace with the devil by abandoning [the] dream to love as [one is] loved" (p. 125). In the next (eighth) chapter, Father Green discusses the Lord's parable of the weeds and the wheat (whence the book's title). It seems in the kingdom of God Providence often decrees that the weeds continue to grow along with the wheat. This can be discouraging to those seeking the kingdom. To put them on their

guard, the author seeks to detect and to explore the various species of weeds (in biblical terms: the world, the flesh, and the devil). Finally, chapter 9 ("The Wheat Matures: Discerning Love") brings us full circle to mature spirituality with the aid of the insights of St. Ignatius' Exercises. In an Epilogue the author indicates how this personal discernment can be applied to a community seeking God's will together.

How well the author has achieved his purpose of elucidating the basic meaning and principles of the art of Christian discernment, I leave to the judgment of the reader. He certainly deals with a topic that is of primary importance today. Those who have liked his other books will find this equally satisfying. Those who are seeking to discern the will of God for them in their vocation or their daily life will find helpful aids and food for thought in this book.

Shorter Book Notices

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

It Begins with Friendship: A Fresh Approach to Prayer. By Gregory Friedman, O.F.M. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. v-73. Paper, \$3.95.

This short work is an excellent primer on prayer. After a chapter on faith, including remarks on faith as search and faith as outgrowing certain images of God, the author develops the notion of prayer as communication with a friend. He points out in a separate chapter that God is often a very quiet friend. Other chapters take up getting answers in prayer, prayer in tough times, and types of prayer. The book does deserve its title, for the approach of Father Gregory is fresh and contemporary. Beginners in prayer and seasoned pray-ers can find this excellent book helpful.

Karen Berry, O.S.F. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. x-62. Paper, \$3.50.

As the title suggests, this compact book is about dealing with people, with disappointment, loss, and the pain which comes when a relationship is broken. The author's technique is to describe the pain, select a reading from Scripture (particularly the New Testament), and then reflect on what the passage tells her concerning what is happening within her. Although writing from her own experience, Sister Karen does seem to articulate the experiences of everyman and every woman. Religious and laity alike can profit from her reflections and be led to find their own scriptural passages to release the power of the Father, Son, and Spirit to heal their brokenness.

Beyond Broken Dreams: A Scriptural Pathway to New Life. By Sister

Prayer Book of the Saints. Compiled and edited by Charles Dollen. Hun-

tington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 197, including Indices. Paper, \$6.95.

As the title indicates, this book is a collection of prayers composed, for the most part, by canonized saints. The prayers are of two types: prayers for saying, and prayers for reflecting. The author begins with prayers of the New Testament, including, of course, the Gospel canticles used in the Divine Office, and continues with prayers from the Fathers of the Church. Special to me were the prayers of Saint Ephrem to Our Lady and St. Patrick's Breastplate. Followers of Francis will find his Cantic of the Sun and Peace Prayer in the medieval section, and followers of Dominic can find the Eucharistic hymns of Aquinas. Notable too are the Stations of the Cross of St. Alphonsus Liguori. Short prayers by Maximilian Kolbe and Mother Cabrini are included in the survey of the modern period, and a special section of prayers includes Cardinal Newman's "Lead Kindly Light" and the Prayer of Mary Stuart. All in all there are over 100 selected prayers, and a brief biographical note precedes each. Though not in prayer book form, this is truly a prayer book that religious and laity alike can put to good use.

Praying the Daily Gospels: A Guide to Meditation. By Philip A. St. Roman. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 247. Paper, \$5.95.

This hand-sized book contains a brief description of meditation and short

reflections on each of the daily Gospels for the entire Church Year, Sundays excluded. The Gospel texts are not printed, just referred to, as are the psalm prayers of the day. Hence the book is to be used in conjunction with a Bible or a Daily Missal. Written by a layman, *Praying the Daily Gospels* seems to have a lay audience in mind, as evidenced by the practical character of the reflections, the questions posed, and the short settings of the Gospel scenes. For the layman interested in becoming serious about prayer, this Guide can be a help.

TV, Movies, and Morality: A Guide for Catholics. By John Butler. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 160, including Glossary. Paper, \$6.95.

This book in one sense is misnamed, for it is not just or even mostly for Catholics; it is, rather, for all who are concerned about the harmful effects these modern media can have on young and old alike. Much of the book is concerned with description of the media business—e.g., the role of advertising. An Appendix gives practical methods of responding to TV programming by contacting the proper agencies. A glossary of TV and movie terminology is also given. I think this is a useful book, although the analyses and discussions are not as extensive or as profound as might be expected. I was offended by the cover and theme illustration of the devil, for neither TV nor the movies can be considered the devil's medium.

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FS 506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F*	9:55-11:10	Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap.
FS 506	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	9:55-11:10	Fr. Romuald Green, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 518	Scriptural Foundations of Franciscanism	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Cassian Corcoran, O.F.M., S.T.D.
FS 520	Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., Ph.D.
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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragn: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMIn: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).



On Following and Imitating: The Franciscan Option

ALL THROUGH THE Francis corpus we come across a peculiar expression for evangelical living: viz., *sequi vestigia*—to follow the footprints of the Lord. Its overall imaginative force is that one step into the very prints Christ made in the ground with his feet (and make whatever alterations are necessary to conform to their shape!).¹ But it is a dynamic image, and the really operative word is in fact *sequi*, to follow. Merely fitting into the footprints is not enough, it is too static. And the Franciscan way always preferred "following" to "imitation." A true disciple of the gospel is not a replica of Christ, but a faithful follower of a model track laid down by Christ. A great body of Franciscan literature deals with the "conformity" of Francis to Christ.² Francis himself saw the road of simplicity as laid out for him by God: "The Lord called me to walk in the way of humility and showed me the way of simplicity" (LP 114). This entailed a simple and direct reliving, as far as humanly possible, of the life of our Lord in its details together with an obedient carrying out of his commands and counsels to his disciples as given in the Gospels. The following of Christ was never for Francis just one of many ways a person could choose, but rather an obligation. He was impelled by Scripture to see it thus:

¹E.g., EpLeo 3; EpOrd 51; RegNB I:1. The image derives from 1 Pet. 2:21: *ut sequamini vestigia eius* (Vulgate). We are to follow the exemplary track of Christ.

²One need only recall the opening chapter of the *Fioretti* and above all the *Book of Conformities* of Bartholomew of Pisa. But the notion of the prophetic likeness of Francis to Christ began with the earliest writings—e.g., the encyclical of Elias on the death of Francis—and it is strong in Celano and in the *Legenda Maior*.

Father Gregory Shanahan, of the Irish Province of the Friars Minor, is a Consulting Editor of this Review. He has collaborated on a recent Irish language edition of the writings of Saint Francis and specializes in retreats to religious and mission preaching in Ireland and Britain.

"Christ . . . left an example for you to follow the way he took" (1 Pet. 2:21). This did not make of him a biblical fundamentalist, for his simple approaches had no myopic literalism about them and he always attended to spiritual meaning (cf. Adm VII). And even if he personally ("I, little brother Francis") felt obligated to trace almost every detail of our Lord's life, he acknowledged a certain freedom in the program of his own followers (cf. EpLeo 3; 2Cel 214). So a literal reenacting of what Christ did is not necessarily a desideratum in Franciscan spirituality as such. But it does remain Christocentric, and what is called the *sequela Christi*—following of Christ—belongs to its primary aims. The word *sequi* conveys the sense of accompanying someone, and also falling to the share of someone, and to follow a person's example and opinions.

Francis

FOR FRANCIS, to "observe the holy gospel" involved two things: following our Lord's teaching and following "the way he walked"—the style of living our Lord adopted especially in self-emptying poverty. Celano, by actually quoting the Rule of 1221, neatly sums up Francis' objective:

His highest intention, principal desire and chief purpose was to observe the holy Gospel in all things and in every respect. And perfect was all his intentness, all his devotion, total his soul's yearning, total his heart's fervor "to follow the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "to copy his footsteps" [1Cel 84].

Here Celano does use *imitari*, but it is his own, not Francis', word. Not that the Poverello was any kind of dictionary man (although we know how words held a fascination for him as mysterious and quasi-sacramental things); it was rather that in his sanctity and simplicity and knowing the secret scripture of the poor, he had insights into meanings denied to the wise of this world. He knew he was spiritually right in sooner speaking of the following of Christ than of the imitation of Christ. The reason for this was that while he would never deem himself worthy or capable, should it be desirable, of becoming a replica of the Lord Jesus (though all the ages after would wonder at his practically accomplishing this), he saw that to follow after the Master was the obedient response of a disciple. It meant *Evangelium observare*—to observe the gospel.

Luke

THE GOSPEL was not so much a text as a life. Is it not discernible in the Evangelists themselves that this was so? We are meant to "do these things" and have life. In Saint Luke, for example, the notion of following Christ is highlighted; and the long central section of that Gospel, from

9:51 to 19:27, contains the great instructions for would-be followers en route to Jerusalem. This maps the crucial journey to Calvary. Clearly in the Evangelist's mind is also the inward journey, that itinerary of the self into God through following Jesus Christ, the very invitation to which makes inroads into a person's heart and soul. Here it is the interior Master, the Holy Spirit of the Father and of Jesus, who must be operative, who must guide the journey. Luke emphasizes "the Spirit of the Lord and his holy operation" to an extent unparalleled except in his other book, Acts, and in Saint Paul. Luke is also the Gospel of absolute renunciations, drastic measures. With its enunciation of poverty as a prime requisite in the disciple it is a great sample from the entire gospel understood as a life led in practice. It is what Francis saw. Even if he took the Gospels as a whole and also latched onto certain texts from the other sacred authors, still the Lucan vision of the journey through poverty and radical renunciation must have been foremost in his mind. The Lucan Gospel it was that made impact upon the lower classes of those outsiders evangelized by Paul. Into their misery and poverty had come a hope enshrined in the preaching of a poor Christ who had no place to lay his head and who had chosen to live among outcasts, experiencing human pain and want in the condition of a slave (cf. Brown, 337). It was precisely these conditions that would enable them literally to "make a go" of following Christ; their poverty was blessed and salvific in the power of the Spirit. Yet the good and merciful news was shot through with a terrific challenge. Luke, for all his portrayal of the kind Savior, pulls no punches and gives the gospel message with no coating: the man who reinvests his capital to build bigger barns is not a sensible man at all but a fool (12:15–21); Dives may not have been a crook, but he enjoyed his wealth and never bothered about the misery of Lazarus, and ended up in Hades (16:19–31). And Luke's Beatitudes and Sermon on the Plain are more radical and demanding in their form than even Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (cf. Brown, 338–39).

Bonaventure

WITHOUT QUESTION this unconditional disposition required of the Lord's follower influenced every authentic Franciscan from Francis through Clare right on to Bonaventure. It is interesting that the first major biblical work undertaken by Bonaventure while teaching at Paris was his Commentary on Luke's Gospel. The most "Franciscan" of his scriptural writings, many of its ideas dovetail in a telling manner with the arguments of the *Disputed Questions on Evangelical Perfection*, especially touching on the total renunciation of ownership (*Opera Omnia*, VII). Inseparable from voluntary dispossession is the *sequela Christi*, which is

the element in perfection making the disciple resemble his Master: "To follow Christ means to be utterly 'configured' to him" (*Opera Omnia*, VIII, 463:41; cf. V, 132:6).

This configuration is not imitation in a static, much less a mimic, sense. For it is achieved by following the Lord as supreme exemplar and carrying out what he enjoins. Above all it means bearing the cross, as one walks along in the company of Christ. In the cross reappear the features of the evangelical journey: utter humility, based on our Lord's self-humiliation; utter poverty, like Christ's nakedness on the Cross; utter austerity, sharing the pain and desolation of Jesus—in other words, the condition of homeless itinerants.

Jesus prescribes a threefold step to his would-be disciple: to deny himself, to take up his cross, to follow him. Bonaventure sees this invitation answered in the three vows of religious profession (which appear at the head of the Franciscan Rule). Obedience and chastity respond to the first two elements of the invitation respectively. But it is by means of poverty that Christ is followed. Further, since Franciscan life is that of the gospel, its poverty entails complete renunciation of ownership, even in common. The widow of Luke 21:1-4 is a figure of the poor Franciscan. She herself through giving away *all* she possessed becomes a *mulier evangelica*, a gospel woman, making a wholehearted offer. In a sense she acts recklessly by throwing away her livelihood; but the Lord often asks this of one in an evangelical vocation. Such an action may be criticized as imprudent; yet it is justified by sublime motivation (*Opera Omnia*, VII, 521:5-523:8). Thus, the reckless abandon of the gospel (sampled in Luke) is reflected vividly in Bonaventure's interpretation of Franciscan life as a following of Christ.

The Rule

THE RULE, MOREOVER, was conceived by Francis as quite literally a rule "for the road," and transcendently for the inward journey. It has all the precariousness of pilgrim movement and provisional status, homelessness, crisis decision, and so forth. But an important feature of the Rule is its freedom for personal responsibility, once the basic course is mapped out. Francis did not want to restrict one's following of Christ by



too many precepts, and quite a number of things can be done if the Lord so inspires one. In Francis' day the inherited idea of religious perfection was that one ought to be surrounded and protected by all manner of precepts and restrictions and regulations. But he could see that once you got walking behind Christ you did not need so much of all that; there was a Person who was more valuable than a law. In any case, not even the Rule was the last word; the gospel was that! It was meant to liberate people for walking after Christ, not wrap them up for static existence. The Rule is the marrow of the gospel, but not the whole of it; it is the *life* that is the gospel. The Rule is more like an athlete's starting-board than a *cul-de-sac*. But if it is the mirror of a life, it may never become an archaic document we trumpet in pious moments. It is, after all, a book, a text for living, and one we ought to learn "by heart" so that it permeates our activities and affects our attitude to each dawning day. The Rule is the shaping of the journey in the *vestigia Christi*. Basically, it is but a statement that the gospel is our life and in a sense is but an outline of how to go about this. But it encapsulates in its ideas the "doctrine and footprints" of the Lord and unerringly points to the rest of the Good News. And it is surely because of this larger evangelical character of the Rule that it merits the superlative metaphors of Francis."³ Yet even the Rule, especially in its final draft, must have appeared to Francis like an eagle with clipped wings, while he dreamed of hosts of followers recklessly ready to embark with him on crazy flight (Casaroli). Ω

Gregory Stranahan,
D.M.

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- Brown, Raymond E., *New Testament Essays* (1968).
Casaroli (Cardinal), Homily at Assisi, 4 Oct., 1981; see *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed.), 12 Oct., 1981.

³"For he called the rule the book of life, the hope of salvation, the marrow of the Gospel, the way of perfection, the key to paradise, the treaty of an eternal covenant" (2Cel 208).

"He Followed Him on the Way":

Mark's Portrait of the Disciple

DERMOT COX, O.F.M.

TO LIVE THE *vita apostolica* of Christ and the disciples has been an implicit ideal for successive generations since the Tenth Century at least. Perhaps no movement evokes this "nostalgia for that ancient gospel of Christ which precedes all rules" (Squire, 147) more than the Franciscan movement does. Yet in all that has been written about "Franciscanism" two elements, perhaps, can be singled out as particularly characteristic of Francis himself: his model was the human life of Christ on earth; his inspiration the words and teaching spoken to the first disciples. So, where are these to be found nowadays? In the Gospels, obviously. But a "short summary" of it all, a vital pattern of both life and teaching, can be found in one carefully planned and constructed narrative: that presented in chapters 8 through 10 of the Markan "good news." In reading these three chapters one relives what was perhaps the most intense learning experience of the novice disciples, and one learns how Jesus expected his first disciples to "follow him."

Setting the Scene "on the Way"

WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK of a single journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, taking perhaps two weeks in all, Mark presents the personal teaching of Jesus on discipleship. They are all, Master and pupils alike, "on the way." The formula (*ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ*) is artistically used by the synoptist: it both marks this last journey and stands in itself as a paradigm of discipleship. Jesus is literally leading a small group of followers towards the city of David, but in a more significant way he is leading them on an interior journey of discovery. Both end at Calvary.

Father Dermot Cox, O.F.M., S.S.D. (Biblicum, Rome, 1977), has been a member of the Irish Province since 1957 and is currently Professor of Old Testament Exegesis at the Gregorian University in Rome.

So, for the second synoptist at least, the disciple is, like Jesus himself, "on the way" to the Passion. At the human level the journey is marked by a haunting degree of intimacy as they eat, sleep, and talk together. The "crowd" of outsiders (marked by the word *οχλος*), which for most of the Gospel serves as an uncomprehending foil to Christ's teaching, here fades into relative insignificance as Jesus addresses himself more exclusively and urgently to that small group which he had "called to himself" so long before (3:13). His aim is to lead them to an understanding of his own person and mission in the few short weeks left to them so that, at journey's close, his career can end and theirs begin. This journey is itself framed by a section on Jesus, his mission and vocation (1:9-8:26) and a last section on the achievement on that mission and thus the beginning of the mission of those he leaves behind (11:1-16:8). The theme of the "way" of discipleship is thus a dynamic of human progress, a striving towards a goal and a pedagogy of ways and means.

Perhaps the weakness of Franciscanism is the weakness of Christianity: the "life" presented by Christ was too single-minded, too radical, too "all or nothing," to be easily codified in a Rule.

Within this journey two "lived parables" add an edge of urgency to the teaching: the "rich young man" who did not follow (10:17-31) and "blind" Bartimaeus, who did (10:46-52). Both are parables of blindness for the disciple (and the reader) to think about and apply to himself. "Seeing," the gift of recognition, is crucial to Mark, and it determines the way he arranged his material. He clearly shares with Matthew the insight that to walk the journey to its close requires an act of recognition as to who and what Jesus is, though for his part Matthew stresses the fact that even this is a grace from God (Mt. 16). Both, however, are agreed that the consequence of this recognition is a shared journey to Calvary, and both list the essential qualities of discipleship within that context. What Mark presents is a sequence that runs from an initial act of recognition of Jesus as the Christ (8:27) through a growth in awareness of the implications this has for both Jesus himself and the individual follower. What Christ said and did (rather than his formal teaching) is the model Mark places before his readers (Best, 15), so that they, second-generation

disciples, might understand their vocation. It is equally true that their understanding of all of this, and therefore our understanding of it, rises out of the perception that Calvary is the "end of the road." Particularly for the disciple who "takes to the road" in the post-Ascension Church, an understanding of the role suffering played for Christ is crucial. Indeed, this is forced on the attention by the fact that all three synoptists agree in preserving this dimension, and even John understands the second-generation Christian in this light. The disciple is always one whose ultimate terminus is the same as Christ's, and who is therefore always asking a series of questions: *who* was this person Jesus?; *what* did he come to achieve?; *how* did he achieve it? Indeed, the way each one answers these questions determines how one understands one's own vocation to follow after the Master. And this is why the framework of two miracles of "sight" is so important. The first section of the Gospel, from chapter 1 to chapter 8, that deals with the early ministry of Jesus (his "works of power" and miracles), has already led the reader to 8:22 and the gift of sight to a blind man.

Taking the blind man by the hand, he led him out of the town. Then he spat on his eyes and laid his hands upon him, and asked him, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see men, but they look like walking trees." Again he laid his hands on his eyes, and the man looked intently and was healed; *and he saw everything clearly.*

This is immediately recognizable as a miracle with a symbolic discipleship content. It is part of a sequence that depicts three "types of blindness": that of the Pharisees (vv. 11-13; that of the disciples themselves which culminates in the challenge, "Do even *you* not yet understand, even after seeing the multiplication of the loaves and fishes?" (vv. 14-21); and of the blind man who did gain his sight, albeit progressively. Thus, when one arrives at journey's end (10:46) and the healing of Bartimaeus, this immediate gift of sight links the role of the cross in discipleship (v. 45) to the real cross that from now on will loom closer to them all as they move into Jerusalem and the ultimate crisis (Mk. 11-end). The last verse of the "road" section thus serves to tie the imagery together: "He received his sight and [immediately] *followed him on the way*"—the way that leads to Calvary.

Over the whole journey lies the shadow of Calvary, which was the historical goal and which, now, supplies the perspective within which all subsequent disciples can understand Christ's vocation—and their own. All along, it had been the Cross that had supplied the inner meaning of the instruction given by Jesus to his followers as they walked together "on the way." Almost every incident is a presage of the Passion. In fact, the teaching as a whole centers around three "predictions" of the Passion,

each one being followed by an elaboration or an instruction: 8:27ff, 9:30ff, and 10:32ff. These mark the stages of the journey and the development of the teaching on discipleship.

One thing to be noted—something characteristic of Saint Francis' attitude toward his own "followers," as will be noted in the conclusion—is a preliminary to understanding the Markan account, is the fact that the narrator insists on the following of *Jesus*—the disciples are never held up as models or leaders. Mark shows what discipleship is all about by showing how Jesus "did it" and by showing a group of ordinary people groping along behind. They were less than obviously successful, and even the best of them is *not* the model. Only Christ is the one to be followed, and he is the only success. Achievement is measured, not by strength of faith or tenacity in loyalty, but simply by a willingness to remain open to God's initiative already begun in the disciple as he sets out on the way after Jesus (Martini, 19ff).

The First Stage of the Journey: Mk. 8:27-38

And Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?"

THE JOURNEY does not begin quite as abruptly as all that. Its starting point is a confession of faith, an intellectual gesture of commitment that the reader has been working out on his own account since the public speculation about Jesus began in 6:14. This is the pivotal point of the Gospel and from now on one's mind is bent to answering the question for oneself: *who is he?* This means that the reader's attention is focused, step by step, on the journey's end—as yet unseen but sufficiently guessed at to keep the followers thinking (10:32). This implicit guessing-game indulged in by the Twelve is the reason why Jesus gives his first clear description of where they are all headed (v. 31): "And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed . . . and he said this plainly." What now follows, that is the implications of being found in Jesus' company, must be seen in terms of each traveller working out, at this stage of the journey, how much it means to *him* to be with the Master. Peter's confession in v. 29: "You are the Christ"—is probably a catechetical formula that identifies Jesus for subsequent generations of disciples, and it is the fruit of some very clear thinking about the fact of Christ's last journey. As Mark presents it, it follows on the three-stage healing of vv. 22-26 where there is a development from *blindness* (v. 22) to *half-sight* (v. 24) to *full sight* (v. 25), and where the meaning of the last verse is, "He was restored, so that he could see clearly what it was all

about." One would need to be very clear-sighted before making as radical a commitment as the Petrine "confession" suggests. It is relatively easy to say: "You are the Christ," and to form a cerebral allegiance to the truth of it. It is far from easy to involve oneself in it *as Christ saw it*—as a personal commitment that led ineluctably to the Passion.

It is interesting to note how Matthew deals with the same idea of commitment to an unseen end from a different point of view. The small episode he records in 8:18ff is paradigmatic of the open-ended nature of discipleship:

A scribe came up and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." But Jesus said to him, "Foxes have dens and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." Another of the disciples said to him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

This is a composite picture: two types of traveller being set up for the reader's assessment: vv. 19–20 depicts one who wishes to *become* a disciple, and vv. 21–22 one who, *already a disciple*, wishes to qualify his response. The answer to each is a warning: don't set out on this particular "way" unless you are sure. Taken together, the passage suggests that Jesus is anxious to clarify just how total are the implications of discipleship by showing that it can involve nothing less than a total gift of self. And the way the scribe responds suggests that he at least has a fair idea of what it means. After all, "wherever you go" (οπου εαν) bespeaks quite a degree of uncertainty. Who, as yet, among them knew where the road Jesus took would lead? And what a way to set out! No middle-class security, no reserve of the goods one needs to live respectably—and no reward offered except the dubious promise of sharing the fate of the Master. For the implications are all too clear: if one follows him *wherever* he goes as does the scribal volunteer in Matthew, then for the Markan disciple Calvary is the natural and inevitable terminus.

From this point on one notices how the idea of "fear" creeps in and begins to stain the disciples' attitude: 9:6, 9:32, and 10:32. Even the hopeful "lords" of the new Kingdom are beginning to suspect that there may be a severely literal edge to Christ's demands. And the description of the life-style that now follows in 8:34–39 does no more than confirm this dawning realization of the total exigence of discipleship. Whatever else may be interpreted with regard to "following," the one thing that cannot be qualified or rationalized is its "all or nothing" nature.

Mark 8:34–9:1 is clearly a coherent unit, composed perhaps of separate sayings that were brought together in the tradition even before Mark edited the material (Best, 28). It is therefore quite primitive, traceable to Jesus himself. This is the way *he* saw his disciples, and so it is

the way the very first disciples saw themselves.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the sake of the good news will save it. For what good does it do a man to gain the whole world and lose his life?

There is a clear contrast drawn between the small group of disciples and the larger crowd, and this act of setting the "crowd" up as a foil to the disciples in 8:34 is typical of Mark, who likes to show the distinction between the "committed" follower and the crowd who hear the same message but are not open to its implications. This teaching represents, in Jesus' eyes, the basic essentials of the life, and he is deliberately putting the hard reality first, without dressing it up. This is certainly not the best of catechetical methods—so he is probably trying to put before the disciples a reality of challenge, so as to draw from them, the ones who have heard his call most clearly, an awareness that belongs to one's first response, before familiarity lays its familiar gloss over the radical nature of one's calling. Certain norms of existence are demanded of those who understand the reality of Jesus' mission. That is the only blueprint for their way of life. For every new generation that "comes after Jesus," as much as for that first generation, "calling" is both hard and easy: take one unambiguous step across the line of commitment, and the life of cross-carrying then follows.

But what is the life-style of the disciple, accepting the passage of time since those words were first spoken? In Mk. 8:34 three constituent elements are presented: "following after" Jesus, "denying oneself," and "taking up one's cross." The first is relatively simple, and tells us very little, as Mark uses it for the normal state of discipleship, which in his world was the normal act of following after a leader or master in the local, physical sense—just as one sees students following after their rabbi through the streets of Jerusalem. So perhaps the other two elements are meant to supply the key by showing how Jesus' disciples differ from those of a rabbi in the modality of following. The first thing that strikes the reader is the grammatical structure of the sentence as it comes from Mark's pen: a series of four verbal forms. The first is "come after me," an *aorist* infinitive; and this is followed by two *aorist* imperatives: "deny yourself" and "take up your cross." All of this goes to make up "follow me," which is the *present* imperative. What seems to be envisaged by the Markan Christ is an initial act—acceptance of the gift of vocation to following after the Master, and then a continuous action, a way of life that is self-denial and the carrying of a cross. *And one must keep at it.* The process only begins with the human decision to follow after Christ in a literal sense, to be in his company, watching what he does and learning

from experience. This then continues through life—and lays certain restrictions on life. In the light of the Passion the Markan disciple knew that this involved self-denial of a certain kind for the Master who had walked that way first. The acceptance of the cross and a life of self-denial are clearly not covered by the *aorist*, which marks a definite, completed act. It is here that one recalls how Luke, in his redaction, adds the word *daily*, clarifying the matter for *his* readers. And the same idea is found in the Pauline corpus (e.g., Rom. 13:14 and Eph. 4:22; cf. Best, 35). It is to be remembered that even in the time of Jesus a cross was not an inevitable concomitant of life. It was something one brought on oneself by reason of what one was and did. One “asked for it.” A person living an ordinary life does something radical that changes his status in the eyes of society, and suddenly the gallows becomes a very real consequence. And not all of the first disciples earned a cross in the way Jesus had. Yet their share in the Calvary-event had to be something else—analogue, perhaps, but nonetheless real. So here in Mk. 8 cross-carrying stands as a theological idea rather than the evocation of a historical Calvary. It represents the whole of Christ’s work and words as these are viewed by the Gospels: in the light of the “Suffering Servant” of Second Isaiah who sacrifices himself for the redemption of others. This may become applicable in differing ways to the actual circumstances of each disciple’s life. He is not called to a *type* of work—social, spiritual, etc.—but to live a real assimilation to the Christ-pattern, so that this pattern becomes a perceptible reality in the world. Whatever be the actual form this takes—and that may vary with each individual who “comes after” Jesus—one thing is immutable: the phrase underlines a willingness to give *absolutely*; to hold nothing back for self; to make any sacrifice, even the ultimate one, for the Master.

The second mandate, to “deny oneself,” adds depth to the whole picture. The first thing to note is that it is not found either in Mt. 10:38 or in Lk. 14:27. Yet it has all the appearance of being older than Mark, who must have taken it from Jesus himself and added it to the tradition as a way of developing the community’s understanding of what going after Jesus really meant. Traditionally, it has been taken as a synonym for ascetical practice, for denying to oneself the things one wants or needs. But the reflexive form in which it occurs in the Greek of Mark—denying *oneself* (ἀπαρνησάσθω εαυτόν) makes this an impossible interpretation. *Oneself* is the direct object of the verb *deny* (Best, 50). We are dealing with the opposite of self-affirmation, or self-esteem. The text suggests a clear refusal to arrogate to oneself any “rights” or privileges, even those that are natural to one’s state in life—even the denial to oneself of what are usually considered “human rights,” such as freedom, justice, etc.

Clearly, then, it must involve a willingness not to affirm any right, even that to life. But given the context of the last journey in Mark it is broader than that since death *as such* is not necessarily called for. Searching for further clarification one’s eye falls on one other episode in Mark (14:30) where the same verb is used of Peter “denying” his Lord, and one can conclude that “denying oneself” means recognizing that one is no longer one’s own master. It is a renunciation of one’s self-determination.

The combination of the two verbs adds depth to the overall picture, giving a more rounded idea of the human response involved. Self-denial is the interior attitude, cross-bearing the commensurate external attitude, perhaps. The composite picture would then imply a definite, and visible, way of life and thought on the part of the individual; a decision to adopt a certain way of life that is dominated by the Master’s Calvary experience. This is made clear by the addition of v. 35b: “for my sake and the gospel’s.” This represents the motivation for the complex “life of following”: an adhesion to the way Jesus viewed it, an acceptance of his way of bringing redemption to an alienated world. It is a clear-sighted acceptance of the role of “servant.” And the parallel of v. 35a and 35b—paradoxical as it may seem—shows that this life of service and of denial of selfhood actually results in the attaining of *real* selfhood, real personality.

While this exhortation is central to the teaching of Christ on discipleship, it cannot, I think, be taken by itself, in isolation from the tradition of Jesus’ sayings and personal teaching. It is probably to be understood as a highly charged “capsule” of his general teaching, and takes its coloring from that. It suggests, very strongly, a particularly *interior* dimension to “deny yourself and take up your cross.” Some external form is necessary, and such must really be analogous to a cross, but what dominates it is the interior “virtue” that causes the external manifestation. Why did *Jesus* choose this way? Why the way of a *servant*, and a *failed* servant (if human values are applied)?

What Are the Qualities of a Follower?

AS ONE SITS BACK at the end of this first leg of the journey and tries to assess, with some measure of tranquillity, the mind-boggling instruction of the Master, one notes first that this “mandate of discipleship,” this explosion of new ideas, occurs *at a particular point* in the development of Mark’s Gospel. Matthew places it at the beginning of the ministry (chapters 5–7), but in the second Gospel it is left to the end, occurring *after* the teaching of Christ’s own way of the Passion. Therefore the Markan concept of the disciple’s life-response (his vocation) takes its meaning from the Passion. To live as a disciple, as Jesus here outlines

such a life, is a moral "way" that refers directly back to his death, which it makes present to the world. The "cross" is not, therefore, an asceticism voluntarily assumed, but rather the necessary and only Christlike way of bringing redemption. As a start, it involves each one who aspires to "following" in the task of discovering what Jesus thought of his last journey to Jerusalem, and realizing this in one's own concrete situation. The idea that it represents *imitatio Christi* in the medieval sense does not stand up to textual analysis. "Imitation" of Jesus played little part in the disciples' actual following of the historical Christ (Schulz, 15ff). Rather, those first followers "along the way" saw themselves as involved in a movement geared to the fact that the "Reign of God" had been inaugurated and was now active on the earth. So for them it was not simply a case of "imitating" their Master, though this was included in the genuinely itinerant, dispossessed style they adopted, but the total relationship that existed between them and the Lord was so complex that it called for all the elements of following: imitation, denial of selfhood, insecurity, service of the Kingdom. Through it all the question of *knowledge* looms large: knowledge of the Master they followed, of his nature, and of his task.

As yet, however, the bemused—and let it be admitted, frightened—disciples that we meet "on the way" at the end of Mk. 8 do not fully "know" either Christ or the modality of his service. For this reason it is necessary that Jesus now present, after a six-day interval (9:2), a parable of knowledge and recognition.

Interlude: A Question of Identity (9:1-29)

BEFORE THE JOURNEY recommences (at 9:30), two episodes are placed before the disciple, each one geared to eliciting a new level of faith based on recognition: the "Transfiguration" and the "Healing of an Epileptic Child" together serve to deepen first impressions about Jesus and vocation. Only in this way will the Twelve become sufficiently perceptive as they face into the second part of the journey.

It is essential that the disciples know about Christ if they are to follow him. So the "Transfiguration," occurring as it does after the short "rest period"—that is, after they have had six days (9:2) to think about his first instruction (8:31ff)—throws light on the future Calvary-event, and deepens their awareness of what is involved in following such a Master. Both other synoptists—Matthew and Luke—have abbreviated this from Mark; so it would seem that Mark's longer elaboration of the tradition is with a view to his own particular theological purpose, which is to present Jesus as a *teacher* who now answers, graphically if not by word, the question of identity that has lain dormant so long. Who is he? Let them

experience his "glory" and see his power in action—and answer for themselves. As always, Mark's preoccupation is the intellectual as well as the moral preparation of the disciple for the service that lies ahead when Christ has finished his journey.

The Second Stage of the Journey (9:30-50)

THIS TAKES UP the theme of instruction, but from the change in tempo it is obvious that the implications are beginning to come home to the Twelve:

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have anyone know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise." But they did not understand the saying, and they were afraid to ask him [9:30-32].

This short section is dominated by the opening word of v. 31, *for*. This is important, because it shows the reason behind Christ's desire to escape attention (v. 30b; cf. Best, 73). He has given them a hard teaching; now they all need some time, exclusive of any outside distraction, to clarify what he has shown about himself, and what he has taught them about their own vocation. And the important part of this instruction is to make it clear where the "way of discipleship"

ends—that is, where *he* ends up. From the text it appears that he succeeded, at least to the extent that they understood enough to make them afraid to ask for further clarification (v. 32b): "and they were afraid to ask him [any more about it]." They already knew from the first stage of the journey that discipleship demands *all* a person can give; now that "all" is becoming frighteningly concrete. The verb *delivered* into the hands of men, used here (and in Lk. 9:44), has overtones of ritual sacrifice. What follows now, in the episode that takes place "in the house" (that is, in a situation of privacy and intimacy) reverts to the theme of "service," first seen in chapter 8. The text reflects a very early and fundamental enunciation of the nature of being a follower (Stanley,



127), and (typical of the original teaching of Jesus) the first requirement of discipleship is a real *μετανοια*, a reversal of human standards of value: "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all."

This is the beginning of a formal teaching, and the reader expects that it will, in some way, be elaborated. One can say "formal," because the text observes that he delivered it "sitting down" (35a)—the posture of the teacher-rabbi. The "greatness" of the disciple, which they have been discussing on the way (vv. 33a–34), can in fact be a real issue *only in the context of a journey to Calvary*. Indeed, one cannot but notice how for all three synoptists it is always on this journey to the Passion that the disciples are inspired to ask about "greatness" (Best, 76). Here in Mark the answer to their problem takes the form of a "parable" of discipleship (Stanley, 128): "He took a child, and put him in the midst of them"—so what do you think it's all about?

It has nothing to do with "innocence." A modern reader must look with the eyes of a first-century Palestinian Jew at the graphic lesson presented by Mk. 9:35ff, and understand it as did the bemused Twelve.

The whole point about the "child" is not that it is "humble" or "innocent"—what child is, except to the doting eye of a mother? It is rather that, in the contemporary context, a child was quite simply "nobody": no importance, no rights, no place in society. So here in Mark a "child" is made the exemplar of total abdication of "rights" and "privileges," and consequently of "service." The reader must think again, reassess his norms of comparison, and understand what is demanded of the "follower" of Jesus. The idea is not that one becomes little *so as to rise* higher in the Kingdom, but that *the essence of true Christian greatness is service in the sense Jesus and the evangelist knew it*. The disciple is judged, not by how *like* a child he becomes (a child is not to be imitated), but rather by his attitude to the paradigmatic "child"—the valueless, the unimportant, the peripheral, the outcast. How do *you* now think such a person should be received *in Christ's name*? The respect due to God is offered to *all* his creatures. Perhaps "courtesy," in the sense in which Francis used it, might be illustrative. In a way, this parable serves to give actuality to the earlier teaching proposed back up the road in 8:34. How do you consider, and serve, the peripheral people?

Mark is clearly forging a link between the "greatness" of the disciple and the "service" of the Cross. Since the Gospel of Mark was written for a post-Ascension community, what he says here must have relevance for that community. It must be a *present* situation; it must place before the believer a personal challenge to his scale of values. What happens, then, to each reader is fourfold:

- The concept *greatness* is redefined, the only norm now being

Christ's historical activity;

- the addition of the phrase *servant of all* in v. 35b links discipleship to *service*;
- and a small service becomes immeasurably great when it is "done for me" (v. 36);
- for the disciple who "serves" *in this way* a relationship is forged with Christ himself and so with the Father.

It is clear that the value of such service cannot be gauged by normal standards, since the only blueprint for the disciple's activity is Jesus and *his* activity. The Gospel of Matthew confirms this in 9:33ff, where the disciple is seen as one who gives up all desire to be great, becoming like a "child" without status, privileges, or dignity in his own eyes or in the eyes of others. That this became, at a very early stage, the understanding of the community is seen from Gal. 4:1 and Mt. 5:3.

Here in Mark, however, the penultimate stage of the journey ends, and once again Jesus offers a breathing space in which his followers can put their ideas together before being led out on the last, irrevocable step.

Interlude: A Parable of Following (10:17–31)

BEGINNING ONCE AGAIN with Mark's formula, "as he was setting out *on his way*," we have a short section that effectively serves as a "parable of discipleship." Two reactions to Jesus' call are presented: the "rich [young] man" who thinks better of his initial gesture of enthusiasm, and the small group of those who have already set their feet on the path of "following" without, perhaps, fully knowing the implications. These are now forced to take stock of what it will mean for them personally. The refusal of the rich man, who "goes away sorrowfully" (v. 22) is clear; the whole thing is too much to ask. What is more important for the reader is the special discussion that Jesus now holds with the Twelve (who remain), in which the *inner* meaning of discipleship is proposed—for it is precisely this that they have to work out on the last stage of the journey. One could say that this last stretch of road represents a single teaching unit framed by two episodes: the "blindness" of the disciples—first James and John in vv. 35–40 and then the other ten in vv. 41–45; and the blindness of Bartimaeus, who at least *knows* he is blind and joyfully follows Christ the moment he sees "the light" (v. 52).

To what extent did the Twelve learn about themselves and about Jesus from this whole incident? In dealing with the story of the "rich young man," the reader is immediately alerted by the disciples' stunned reaction to the Master's statement that it was difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom: they were "amazed" (v. 24). The word used in Mark (εθαμ|| βουτο) is forceful. What Jesus has said to them about poverty, the leav-

ing of home and family, and persecution at the end of it all is not what they had come to expect—in spite of the clear indications they had been given in the first two stages of the journey. The truth of the matter is that until Jesus himself reaches the end of that journey *they* will be unable to understand it, for it transcends human logic and reason. Christ is proposing something totally new—the requirements needed if they are to be of his company, serving the Kingdom alongside him. Perhaps it draws one's mind back to the first introduction to discipleship in Mk. 1 and 4. Those who have been called, and who accept, must, before going a step further, "be converted." But in Mark *μετανοια* means more than a decision taken to "change one's way of life." It means changing one's whole way of thinking; judging by *other* norms than the human; accepting other values than those proposed by reason or humanity; opting for a different way of looking at life—and death.

Even at this stage of the game it is clear that Jesus is dealing with ordinary, good people who have to *unlearn* and then learn all over again. Their evident slowness would seem to be rather pathetic, but from Peter's sudden start of self-awareness in v. 28, introduced as it is with dramatic highlighting ("began," "lo!"), it dawns on the reader that in fact they have already begun the impossible journey through the needle's eye without being aware of it—from the moment they left home and began to follow after:

Peter began to say to him, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you." Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

God has been at work in them while yet they were unconscious of it. He had taken the initiative; he gave the grace. They thought they were making a human gesture in their own small gift of self, and "lo!" it was already being transformed into a divine gesture (Martini, 71ff). And to their growing surprise the recompense is already here: "we who have left family and friends" have gained family and friends—Jesus' new family of close associates. This is a very Markan insight, and one remembers a previous episode when Jesus made a particularly strong statement regarding his newly called disciples in Mk. 3:32: "Who is my mother, and my family?" One notes, however, that Mark sees "persecution" as being counted among the gifts of the Kingdom, and this saves one from being too emotionally superficial, or euphoric, about the "rewards" of the life of discipleship.

It is precisely this cool awareness that becomes more and more necessary as they all of them now set out on the last stage of the journey.

The Third Stage of the Journey (10:32–45)

THIS LAST SECTION is marked by an increase of tension brought about by the dramatic overtones of the first verse and the hardening of the concept *service* in the last verse. One feels very strongly that the storm is about to break: "And they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them; and they were amazed, and those who followed were afraid." They are on the road, going up to what is now a certain death, and the Master is forging ahead as if driven by a vision they cannot share. And they are afraid to ask him about it. All of this marks the last stage of the journey as the moment of crisis, the high point in the education of a disciple (Best, 126ff), a fact that is underlined by the common reaction of the Twelve; their very "amazement" and "fear" shows that even in their blindness they see there is no going back. Jesus' own actions emphasize the same thing: he "takes them *again*" (the emphasis in the Greek text is noteworthy), and now he includes them specifically in what is going to happen: "We are going up," he warns them. This had not been stressed in the two previous predictions of the Passion (8:31 and 9:31). But now the reality must be known, and no ambiguity may remain. The persistent "blindness" of the Twelve, the fact that they can still indulge in futile ambitions of greatness (James and John) or in equally sterile recriminations (the other ten) shows that they have forgotten (if indeed they had ever realized) what had been stressed in the previous instructions: the discipleship is a call to *service*; and that service explicitly the sacramental redemptive "service" of the Passion (cf. 9:33ff). The disciples must recognize what Jesus is doing, and where he is going. They must not view him as others in the crowd do—as a prophet, a teacher, or a source of solely human healing. He is the Son of Man on the way to achieving the Father's will by dying on the Cross. If the disciple "recognizes" the real Christ, he must recognize his own part in all of this movement to Jerusalem. Like his Master he must take this "good news" to a deprived and "blind" world. And he must do it the way his Master did it: by involving himself in the lonely "service" of the Cross; by "denying himself"; by stripping himself of the trappings of human respect and human "rights." It is noteworthy that the phrase used in v. 44 has hardened the simpler statement of 9:31, where the call was one to "service." Here, with no time left for woolly thinking, the word changes: "Whoever would be first among you must be *slave of all*. For the Son of Man came also not to be served but to serve, [that is,] to give his life as a ransom for many." We have arrived at the full significance of the "service" that was Christ's on this earth and that must consequently be the disciple's. "Slave of all" cannot be interpreted as easily as "servant"; it leaves less room for hedging. But to make things even clearer, Jesus

describes the service in historical terms: it is his own service of "giving his life as a ransom" for many (v. 45).

Those who follow the Master walk with him on a clearly determined road. A clear perception of end and means is essential. There can be no ambiguity about the disciples' "recognition" of Jesus. Those who receive the call receive also the gift of "sight," but they must be willing to personalize it; to make it real for themselves. And to involve the reader in this act of "recognition," Mark closes the journey with a final "acted parable" of discipleship:

Jesus said to blind Bartimaeus, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Master, let me receive my sight." And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed him on the way.

Jericho is the last staging post before Jerusalem. Anyone who now "sees" and follows knows where the road ends.

Conclusion

THEY ARE "following after the historical Jesus." But it is clear that a return to gospel roots cannot be simply to reinstate the actual life of a first-century Palestinian Jew or a thirteenth-century Italian Christian. As has been said, "imitation" of Jesus played relatively little part in the way early disciples followed the Jesus of history. Rather, they had learned a "way" by personal experience, and they had assimilated its distinctive vision of life and its value system in personal, and varying, ways. Christ himself had given his teaching to the world in very open-ended terms, offering a life rather than a code.

Franciscanism at its source would seem also to have been experiential rather than speculative. Francis had come to *know* Christ as he had lived, rather than through theology. He followed the life of the early disciples in its fullness, interpreting the teaching as literally as possible, not as an ideal but as the only way of life. And in a manner of speaking he did not really give his followers a "Rule"; he led them to Christ and set their feet on the path he had walked, following along in his company. This is Christianity at its best, and its practical failing is obvious.

Perhaps the weakness of Franciscanism is the weakness of Christianity: the "life" presented by Christ was too single-minded, too radical, too "all or nothing," to be easily codified in a Rule. Unless it is lived at a white heat of enthusiasm and generosity, there is little left of the vision but a mediocre "professionalism," little that is recognizable as "the way" walked by Jesus and the first disciples—or as the "Franciscanism" of Francis of Assisi. Ω

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Easter Interlude

Walking together, it was almost dawn,
and they felt the morning mist as it fogged up the lake,
the gentle water lapping,
like a small animal slaking its thirst.

The early light broke in cold waves upon their hearts.
They spoke in muted, gray tones
of unanswered questions,
promises unfulfilled.

Camped in shadows they shared bread;
it seemed to satisfy a private hunger.
And in the silence,
while the light grew bright on the beach,
they were warmed by a fire
that burned within.

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

Ave, Cave

Ave, Cave.
Flowing water
vadose and phreatic
dissolving pathways—
convoluted inroads
through narcissism,
through cholesterol clutter
the hartsprings to new life
when drinking from
the present water table
carbonated quenching
a passage that goes forever
and after drought
formation/flowers/fruit
a garden (of oulopholites) enclosed,
nard streaming solid
into draperies
travertine translucence
helictites' sweet wandering
while the wind brings—
calcium magic chemistry—
dead bones to life,
a land of moon-milk and honey

Sister M. Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

St. Bonaventure:

Prologue to the Second Book of Sentences

TRANSLATED BY GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

Only this have I found: that God made man upright, and he has entangled himself in an infinity of questions [Eccl. 7:30].

IF ANYONE is eager to know what are the main scope and the entire interest of this *Second Book of the Sentences*, it happens that the words we have just quoted from the Wise Man in Ecclesiastes provide the answer to his inquiry. For when a man has brought good sense to bear on all his probings, and failed more often than succeeded, in the end he has to admit that what he discovered was this: that God made man upright¹ and that man has involved himself in interminable questionings. The statement comprises two things: upright formation, or rectitude, comes from God (*God made man upright*); and man's wretched crookedness comes from himself (*he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions*). These contain the boundary-mark of all human understanding: to recognize the origin of good, to seek it out, reach it, and find rest in it; to know also the source and origin of evil, so as to keep clear of it and be on one's guard against it. Herein also is included the whole thrust of what this book treats of: two things, namely, man's original state and man's lapse from that state.

Of the four prologues introducing the Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard, the second is perhaps the most significant. It is a marvelous synthesis of Bonaventure's anthropology, in which the human person is placed in a central position with regard to the entire created world. Always the contemplative, the Seraphic Doctor simply but profoundly states that "he who carefully reflects upon the principal purpose and entire content of this second book" will be reminded of the conclusion of the biblical wise man of Ecclesiastes. After all his attempts to investigate the things and events of this world, he declares: "Only this have I found: that God made man upright, and he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions" (Eccl. 7:30). This classical piece of Bonaventurian literature is a reflection on that statement.

God made man upright: this tells us of man's original state. The manner in which God made man upright is explained by Ecclesiasticus 17:1-2: *God created man of the earth*—as regards his body—and *made him after his own image*—as regards the nature of his soul—and *he turned him into it again*—as regards super-added grace. This grace turns the soul towards God by means of habits, called virtues—and *clothed him with strength according to himself*.² According to these words God not only made rectitude possible for man, by impressing on him his image, but actually made him upright by turning man towards him. Man, then, is upright, when understanding is attuned to the highest truth in the act of knowing, when the will is conformed with the highest good in the act of loving, and when energy is connected to the highest power in operating. This is the result of man's total conversion away from himself and towards God.

Man . . . is upright, when understanding is attuned to the highest truth in the act of knowing, when the will is conformed with the highest good in the the act of loving, and when energy is connected to the highest power in operating.

In the first instance, therefore, man is upright when his understanding is attuned to the highest truth. In saying "attuned," however, I am not implying an absolute completeness; I mean, rather, a form of imitation. If truth, as Anselm says, is "rectitude perceivable by the mind alone"; and if nothing quite matches uprightness like that which is upright, then when our intellect is attuned to the truth, it is, of necessity, rectified (*De Veritate*, 11). Its attuning takes place when it actually turns towards the truth. Actual truth is defined as "the attuning of reality with its perception."³ Now our understanding, if it be turned toward truth, is made true, and thereby attuned to truth; just as when it is attuned to rectitude it is made upright. Here a line from the book, *The True Religion*, is in point: "Without truth, nobody judges correctly" (St. Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, 31, 57ff). But one who has an eye for the truth makes a correct decision, as the Lord said to Simon: *You have judged correctly* (Lk. 7:43)—that is, "your conclusion is correct."

Likewise, man is "rectified" as his will is conformed to the highest good. The highest good is the highest equity or justice; for as one becomes more just, one becomes better. Anselm, however, says, "Justice is rectitude of will" (*De Veritate*, 12). And since nothing quite conforms to uprightness as that which is upright, as long as the will is shaped in harmony with the highest good and equity, of necessity it is rectified. It is when it turns toward the good in the act of loving that it is thus shaped. As Hugh [of St. Victor] says: "This I know, soul of mine, that when you love something, you are transformed into its likeness" (*Soliloquium de arrha animae*). He who loves goodness is upright. The Cantic of Canticles refers to this: *The upright love you* (1:3); it means, "the upright turn towards your goodness while your goodness leans down to them." The soul that has experienced this cries out: *How good God is to Israel, to those who are of an upright heart!*" (Ps. 72:1). And since it is only the upright who have this experience, it is said: *praise is fitting for the upright* (Ps. 32:1).

In no less a fashion is man rectified when his power is connected to the highest power. "That thing is upright whose middle point does not stray from the extremities."⁴ The extremities are *first and last, alpha and omega, beginning and end* (Rev. 22:13). In the middle of these lies the action by which an achiever reaches his final goal. There is, therefore, a power that is "upright," when it operates from the first beginning to the last end. Now, it is because divine power has all things for its sphere of operation, and works on God's account, that it is the most upright of all operations. Yet nothing quite connects with what is upright like that which is upright; and so, when our power connects with the highest power, without a shadow of a doubt, it becomes upright. It follows that man is not only made upright, but is also made ruler and reigning king,⁵ to recall Deuteronomy: *He shall be king with the most upright: the princes of the people being assembled with the tribes of Israel* (33:5). This will take place in the life of glory, when this power of ours will be fastened to the divine power. It is then that we shall have complete power over our will, as God has over his. This is why all shall reign as kings; this is why the realm of heaven is promised to all.

God, therefore, has made man upright when he turned him toward himself. In his turning towards God, man became upright not only in regard to things above him, but also in regard to things beneath him. For man stands in the middle: he himself is turned in the direction of God and subject to him; everything else is his subject. This is so because God placed every created truth in subjection to his intellect for discernment, every good to his desiring for use, every energy to his power for direction



It follows, of course, that human understanding, once it faces divine truth, lays claim to wisdom, by means of which all things are discerned. For according to the Book of Wisdom: *She gave me the knowledge of all things that are: to know the disposition of the whole world, and the virtues of the elements; the beginning, and ending, and midst of the times, the alterations of their courses, and the changes of the seasons; the revolutions of the year, and the disposition of the stars; the natures of living creatures, and the rage of wild beasts, the force of winds, and reasonings of men, the diversity of plants, and the virtues of roots. And all such things as are hidden and not foreseen (7:17:21)*.* And so it was that Adam gave names to all things.

Equally God subjected all things to man's will for his use, so that he might turn them all to his advantage. *He has put all things*

under his feet, says the Psalm (8:8); and the Apostle—who was speaking to people converted to God—said, *Everything is for you* (1 Cor. 3:22).

To man's power he also subjected everything he was to govern. *Subdue it*, says Genesis (1:28), *and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air.*

This initial upright human condition in its relationship with things above and below is epitomized in the words: *Let us make man to our image and likeness; and let him have dominion*, etc. (Gen. 1:26). Therefore, God made man upright when he converted him and made him like himself, and then placed him over everything. And so, human nature, clearly, was created upright.

What follows in the text concerns man's pitiable aberration: *he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions.* Observe there *the way* he fell, as well as *the state into which* he fell. Three things about sin and three elements in our text give us the way he fell. There is in sin *a turning from, a turning towards, and a loss of goods or despoiling.* That "entangling" is *the turning towards*; that "endlessness" is *the turning from*; and those "questions" are *the despoiling.*⁷ You see, the turning towards makes a man depraved, the turning from makes him weak, and the despoiling makes a beggar of him. All of that is indicated by: *he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions.*

We can also observe the state into which man fell. He fell, to be sure, from uprightness to the extent of losing uprightness itself, though not the aptitude for it; losing the habit of it, not the inclination to it. If it was a real resemblance he lost, well, at least he *passes like a shadow* (Ps. 38:7). But because there remained the inclination, and no habit, man ends up as an anxious searcher. Nothing created could compensate for the good lost, since it was infinite, and so his yearning and searching go on, without a moment's peace. Thus by straying from uprightness *he has entangled himself with an infinity of questions.*

The understanding, by turning away from the highest truth, becomes ignorant; through curiosity it involves itself in interminable questionings. *There are some*, says Ecclesiastes (8:16-17), *who day and night take no sleep with their eyes. And I understand that man can find no reason of all those words of God which—you can add—might satisfy his longings and inquiries.* In fact, one question begets another, and causes a fresh debate, and then the questioner gets swamped in insoluble doubts. That is why Proverbs says, *It is an honor for a man to separate himself from quarrels; but all fools are meddling with reproaches* (20:3). Sad men are these, giving heed, as they do, *to fables and endless genealogies that furnish questions* (1 Tim 1:4). They are the types that wrap themselves in reproaches, for they are *ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth* (2 Tim. 3:7).

The will, at variance now with the highest good, finds itself in dire need. It entangles itself with an infinity of questions through concupiscence and greed. As Proverbs says (30:16): *the fire never says, It is enough*; and Ecclesiastes (5:9): *A covetous man will not be satisfied with money.* So he goes on, forever asking and begging. Covetousness, likewise, is never satisfied; rather does it get enveloped in endless questions concerning pleasures. *All things are mingled together*, we read in Wisdom (14:25-26), *blood, murder, theft and dissimulation, corruption and unfaithfulness, tumults and perjury, disquieting of the good, forgetfulness of God, defiling of souls, changing of nature, disorder in marriage, and the irregularity of adultery and uncleanness.* These are the endless questions, all mingled together, in which man involves himself, once his will no longer takes shape from the highest good.

As for human power, it became weak on disconnecting itself from the highest power. It, in its turn, entangled itself in an infinity of questions through its instability, forever seeking rest and not finding it. *The Lord mingled in the midst of Egypt the spirit of giddiness* (Is. 19:14). The spirit of instability is what this is; there is no keeping anything steady in it. So, a sinful man is *like dust, which the wind drives from the face of the earth* (Ps. 1:4). We read in the Psalm: *If you turn away your face, they shall be*

troubled; you shall take away their breath (Ps. 103:29); so shall the sinner be: like the dust which the wind drives from the face of the earth. Just as dust, therefore, cannot settle while there is a turning wind, so neither can our power remain steadfast. And that is why it goes about looking for and shifting from any number of places, and begging support for itself.

Man, then, entangled himself with an infinity of questions through curiosity, falling from truth into ignorance. He did it through covetousness, falling from goodness into evil. He did it through instability, falling from power into impotence. And that is how man's original state and his lapse from that state are drawn to our attention in the words quoted at the outset. And "this only have I found" covered by this second book of the *Sentences*. Ω

¹There is a marvelous play on the word *rectus* in the Latin text as Bonaventure tries to underscore the position of man before the fall and after it. It is difficult to express this in English, for the word could easily be translated *right*, *upright*, or *correct*. The same may be said of the Latin word *rectitudo* that continues the play on words. It can be translated *rightness*, *righteousness*, or *uprightness*. To keep the spatial imagery that Bonaventure seems to be intending here, we have kept to the translation of *upright* and, hence, *uprightness*.

²The word *virtue* today commonly means moral goodness in, perhaps, too mild a sense. The Latin *virtus*, although used in the context of the Christian virtues, conveyed primarily the sense of manly worth, valor, courage, and strength. Only here is *virtutum* translated as *virtues* (apart from the quotation from Wisdom on the "virtues" of the plants, etc., where it also means inherent efficacy. For the rest, the word *power* is used and, once or twice, *energy* and *strength*.

³*Adequatio rei et intellectus* was a common definition of truth in the medieval schools; cf. *Opera Omnia* I, 707.

⁴The definition is derived from Plato. Bonaventure, ever skillful with words, gives here one of the variants of *rectum*.

⁵Once more we are confronted with one of Bonaventure's plays on words. In this instance: *rector*, *rex*, *regnum*, that we have rendered *ruler*, *reigning king*, and *realm*.

⁶An adaptation of the Vulgate which reads *he*, referring to God.

⁷Bonaventure is analyzing his opening scriptural text. *Finis privationem*, which is here translated as *endlessness* is a clever variant of the *infinity* of the scriptural quotation.

A Changed Man

He was really changed
when the Lord called his name;
Down at San Damiano,
and he's never been the same.

Worldly, reckless;
the Lord said, "Cease."
And his restlessness has been replaced
by His Peace.

He fasted and prayed,
and loved all creation;
And he preached Jesus Christ
as the Way to Salvation.

Tirelessly, he sought
to be more like his Lord;
And finally, at last,
the Stigmata he bore.

Weakened, near death,
He lacked but one thing;
And he left Brother Body,
and went to his King.

Walt Hund, T.O.R.

Book Reviews

The People of the Way: The Story behind the New Testament. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. viii-142, including Index. Paper, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Joseph Juracek, O.F.M., M.A. (Scripture, Washington Theological Union), Lecturer in Religious Studies at Siena College.

Anthony Gilles has set out to show the reader that "we cannot understand the New Testament unless we approach it, on the one hand, as a book about Jesus and, on the other, as a book about the early Christians' developing relationship with Jesus." He accomplishes this task by examining each book of the New Testament in light of the growing faith of the early Christian community. Gilles divides the New Testament into three stages of development, paralleling the stages of the early believers' relationship to and understanding of Jesus.

The first stage is infatuation. The Acts of the Apostles is clearly written in this first stage, for it is a love story which recounts how the early Church first began to experience its infatuation with the risen Lord. This infatuation was the impetus which compelled the early Church to proclaim its love of Jesus to all who would listen. It should be observed here that Gilles' developmental view does not wish to question the rather late date usually assigned the composition of Acts.

As in any love affair, infatuation leads to a stage where the lover desires to know everything possible about the

beloved. Gilles gives the name *intimacy* to this second stage in New Testament development. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke provide a bridge between a natural curiosity to know more about Jesus and an experience of Jesus which called for commitment from the hearer. The Synoptic Gospels, therefore, emphasize the implementation of Jesus' teaching in one's everyday life, calling each believer into deeper commitment and intimacy with Jesus. (Most of the other New Testament books, of course, also taught Christians to surrender their own needs and to accept the values of the beloved.)

Identification is the third stage of New Testament development. Here the early Christian community became so closely united with Jesus that they began to take on his very identity. Traces of this stage can be found in two separate sets of New Testament texts: (1) Ephesians, Colossians, and Hebrews; and (2) the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles.

So often I hear people complain that they do not read the Bible because it is so difficult to understand. Thanks to Gilles this particular excuse is no longer valid. *The People of the Way* not only provides the reader with a very broad outline of each book of the New Testament, but also involves him or her in a first-hand experience of the Scriptures. Gilles has developed a unique and powerful tool which will unlock for the beginner the understanding of the New Testament.

Behind Closed Doors: A Handbook on How to Pray. By Joseph Champlin. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. Pp. vi-227. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Associate Editor of this Review.

The subtitle of this book, *A Handbook on How to Pray*, is an apt description of its contents. The author, a well known writer in the area of Liturgy, begins by stating and commenting upon seven basic principles about prayer: (1) some time must be set aside for prayer and solitude each day; (2) prayer is being present with God, speaking and listening to the Lord in a variety of ways best suited for each individual; (3) different people prefer different ways of prayer, and the same person may pray several different ways in a day; (4) prayer is based on and builds up faith; (5) prayer may overflow into feelings, but doesn't necessarily do so; (6) any praying person can expect moments of purifying dryness and darkness; (7) prayer must be cross-stamped; that is, include a vertical dimension to God as well as a horizontal dimension open to humans.

After thoroughly discussing these principles, Father Champlin goes on to explain seven different ways of praying: (1) the Rosary, (2) the Liturgy of the Hours, (3) reflective Bible reading, (4) meditation, (5) charismatic and healing prayer, (6) centering prayer, and (7) journal keeping. Particularly significant in the chapter on Mary were the fresh insights into ways of saying the Rosary and the "comeback" or resurgence of Marian devotion in the Catholic community today. Also especially valuable is the treatment of charismatic and

healing prayer. Each of these chapters on ways of praying is followed by a list of helpful books on that area.

The last part of the book reprints chapters one to three of the General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, which is in itself a treatise both on prayer and on the importance and significance of the prayer which can be the vehicle of praise for laymen as well as clerics and religious.

Father Champlin writes interestingly and competently. His book on prayer can help anyone who is serious about his or her life with God. Those who direct people on the way to God ought to know this book. Veteran pray-ers can find it helpful too.

Addendum

We neglected, in Father William Hart McNichols's article on La Ver-
na in our January issue, to indicate that the opening poetic citation on page 28 is from Gerard Manley Hopkins's "The Wreck of the Deutschland." We regret this unfortunate omission.

Relics. By Joan Carroll Cruz. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. viii-308, including Bibliography. Paper, \$10.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Associate Editor of this Review.

This well written book on a topic of genuine human interest begins with a rationale and history of the veneration of relics, including the testimony of

Vatican II. Subsequently relics of Jesus, of his Passion, of Mary, and of the saints are described and their history related in full, with reference to sources. Among the relics of the Lord, we find accounts of Eucharistic miracles, such as those at Lanciano and Siena in Italy, and the Holy Grail. The Passion relics are the best known: the Crown of Thorns, the True Cross, the nails, and the Shroud of Turin, to name some.

With regard to Mary, there are accounts of miraculous pictures and statues, such as *Cristochowa*, two at Guadalupe, one dating from 1326 in Spain (one this person was ignorant of), Prompt Succor important to

American History during the War of 1812), and Perpetual Help, to name a few.

Biographies of the saints are really more discussed than their relics, and this is as it should be. Buildings as relics—in particular the House of Loreto, are treated, as is the "Manna of the Saints"—oil which exudes from their bodies and has had healing effects.

Several color plates enhance the book's appearance, and a helpful bibliography is included. Well written as it is, and with the attention it gives to a topic in which the faithful are interested, *Relics* should be in the library of every priest, every convent, and every parish.

Books Received

- Champlin, James M., *Behind Closed Doors: A Handbook on How to Pray*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. Pp. vi-227. Paper, \$7.95.
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Franciscan Studies M.A. Program Summer 1985 Offerings

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Course	Title	Credits	Days	Time	Instructor
FS 502	Sources for the Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	8:30-9:45	Fr. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M., D.Th.
FS 504	The Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	8:30-9:45	Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F*	9:55-11:10	Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap.
FS 506	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	9:55-11:10	Fr. Romuald Green, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 518	Scriptural Foundations of Franciscanism	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Cassian Corcoran, O.F.M., S.T.D.
FS 520	Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., Ph.D.
FS 532	The Secular Franciscan Movement	2	M-Th	1:00-2:02	Sr. Jeanne Glisky, S.F.P., M.A.
FS 561	The Development of the Franciscan Person	2	M-Th	1:00-2:02	Br. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 500	Methodology and Bibliography	2	M-Th*	2:10-3:12	Mr. Paul Spaeth, M.L.S.
FS 517	Introduction to Paleography	2	M-Th*	2:10-3:12	Rega Wood, Ph.D.
FS 539	Spiritual Direction and the Franciscan Tradition	2	MWF*	2:10-3:33	Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M., D.Min.
FS 650	Seminar: "The Spirituality of St. Francis and Contemporary Trends"	2	M-Th*	7:00-8:02	Fr. Theodore Zweerman, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 599	Independent Research	1-2	By arr.		Staff
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CALENDAR

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Classes Begin	Tuesday, June 25
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Final Exams	Friday, August 2

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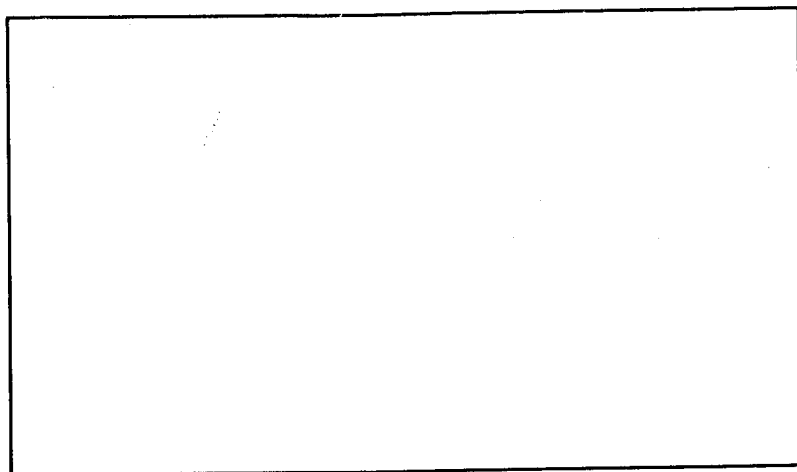
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MAY, 1985

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A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The illustrations for our May issue have been drawn by Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C., who teaches at St. Joseph's School in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commencium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL

A New Marian Springtime

THE TITLE OF THIS EDITORIAL is taken from the publisher's introduction to the *Dictionary of Mary*, a new and excellent source book for Marian doctrine and Marian practice of devotion (see our review elsewhere in this issue). What is being referred to is the growing interest in Mary evident in the Catholic world, both in publishing and in prayer to God with Mary and through Mary. Father Joseph Champlin, in his recent book on prayer reviewed in these pages last month, gives a whole chapter to the Rosary and testifies both from his reading in conservative as well as liberal publications and from his experience with the laity at prayer, that the significance of Mary in the Church and the value of Marian devotion are being rediscovered. In the light of Chapter VIII of *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II's Decree on the Church in which our Lady is (for the first time) given the title "Mother of the Church," one wonders how the "winter" in Marian devotion could have happened, but it is good to rejoice that it is past.

Is it our experience in our Franciscan apostolates, our communities, our own Franciscan lives, that a new Marian spring is arriving? Will the public Rosary, the Litany of Our Lady, a Bible Service on Marian themes be part of our lives this month? Have we read Pope Paul VI's Encyclical on Mary, or any book on Mary recently? Has Pope John Paul's constant encouragement of devotion to Mary fallen on deaf ears, or been viewed as "Old World" spirituality?

If we look to the Liturgy, we find that we honor Mary twenty times a year. In fact, there is a Marian Feast every month except April. The Church keeps Mary before our mind to keep us before our mind, and to acknowledge God's free choice to shower great things on her, as well as her loving and generous response.

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If we look to the charism of our holy Father Francis, we find that his prayer life emphasized Mary's role. He composed several prayers in her honor, and his first chapel was that dedicated to Our Lady of the Angels. The friary there was most dear to him because of its location near the tiny church. The Franciscan Order's theologians have a tradition of honoring Mary (recall it was Duns Scotus who opened up the way for the Church to reaffirm the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception). The Rosary in the form of the "Crown" became part of the habit, almost as much of a trademark as the white cord.

What will be the precise spiritual effects of the Marian springtime that Divine Providence has in store may not be clear, but it is sure that the impact of a recognition of Mary that is truly Franciscan and truly Catholic is meant to be an inner matter, a growth in each of us in total and joyful giving of ourselves to God. Ω

Dr. Julian Davies OFM

Day of Sun and Clouds

Sun and rain and melodies
Mix within the sky.
They make us wonder
 Bid us pause:
Call to us to say:
Believe! Believe!
 Within the storm
The sun can never die.
Joy and sin and harmonies
Mix within the breast.
They make us wonder
 Bid us pause;
Whispering, they say:
Believe! Believe!
 From chaos came
At last the day of rest.

Robert Barbato, O.F.M.Cap.

Saint Bonaventure:

Prologue to the Third Book of Sentences

TRANSLATED BY REGIS J. ARMSTRONG, O.F.M.CAP.

Bonaventure wrote the third book of his *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* after the first, second, and fourth volumes had been completed. Thus this Christological work is presented with a backdrop of Bonaventure's early writings on God as Trinity, the theology of the Word, Image, and Son, the theology of creation, anthropology, and sin. His theological-philosophical currents of emanation, exemplarism, and expressionism were already visible in his thought as he further developed his approach to the mystery of Christ that is present in this third volume of commentary. Therefore, we are able to see the beginnings of his profound Christological thought taking shape and embracing the other issues of his theology.

It is essential to build a Christian spiritual theology upon a firm Christological foundation. This is certainly most important in the Franciscan school of spirituality, which is so caught up in the gospel life and which focuses so clearly on the Incarnate Word. Bonaventure certainly appreciates this, as all of his writings indicate. This Prologue to the third book of the *Sentences Commentary* underscores this. It provides a useful key in a short, concise essay which can easily open the door to the depth of the third volume. We not only discover an outline of the Seraphic Doctor's theologizing on the thought of Peter Lombard; we also perceive the Christological underpinnings of his entire spiritual theology.

But God, who is rich in mercy, by reason of his very great love, with which he has loved us, even when we were dead by reason of our sins, brought us to life together with Christ, by whose grace you have been saved.

Father Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., is Vice-Rector of the Athenaeum Antonianum in Rome and a member of the staff of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. All Biblical quotations have been taken from the translation of the Latin Vulgate, Douay-Rheims Version, in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine Edition (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1947). This practice reflects the use of the Latin Vulgate at the time of Saint Bonaventure.

THIS PASSAGE is written in the second chapter to the Ephesians (2:4-5). [Here] the mystery of our redemption is made known to us. [Here too] the subject matter of the book of the Sentences is clearly shown to us, especially that of its third part in which the sacrament of our redemption achieved through Christ is explained. There are four points pertinent to the restoration of the human race that can be noted in this passage: the first of which is *the author of the restoration*; the second, *the restorable fall*; the third, *the person of the Restorer*; the fourth and last, *the salvation of the restored person*.

The author of the restoration is indicated when it is said: "But God, who is rich in mercy . . . etc." For in his overflowing mercy and not by some other moving force, he arranged to restore the human race, as it is written in the third chapter of John: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish" (Jn. 3:16).

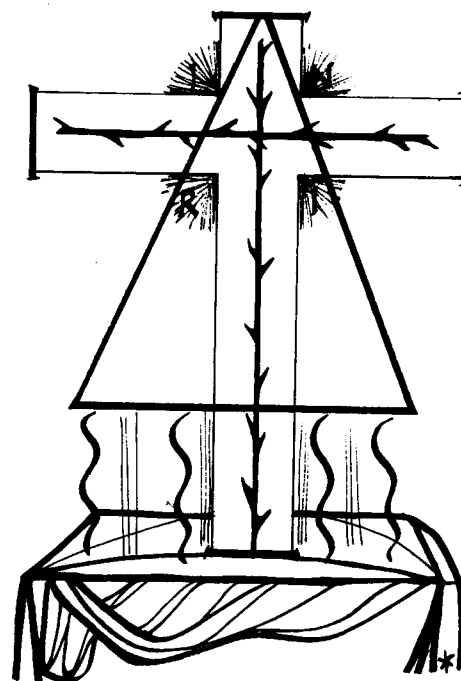
God has brought us to life *according to*
Christ because he guides his imitators to
life.

The restorable fall, because it is said: "Even when we were dead by reason of our sins. . . ." For the sin of our first parents was the cause of our death, through which the entire human race fell from the state of innocence, according to what has been written to the Romans, chapter five: "As through one man sin entered into the world and through sin death, and thus death has passed to all men because all have sinned . . ." (Rom. 5:12). Because they sinned in another and through another, that fall was therefore restorable.

The person of the Restorer is indicated through the following passage: "He has brought us to life together with Christ." For it was Christ in whom that restoration has been achieved, as has been written in the first chapter to the Colossians: "It has pleased God the Father that in him all his fullness should dwell, and that through him he should reconcile to himself all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20).

The salvation of the restored person is touched on by what is said: "By whose grace you have been saved . . . etc." For efficacy was given to the

sacraments through the merit of the passion of Christ, so that healing grace is given to the sick through it, according to that [passage] to Titus, chapter three: "But according to his mercy, he saved us through the bath of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit; whom he has abundantly poured out upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Tit. 3:5-6).



These four points are considered together in the fifth chapter to the Romans in a passage where it says: "But God commends his charity towards us"—behold the author of the restoration—"because when as yet we were sinners"—behold the restorable fall—"Christ died for us"—in which the person of the Restorer is indicated—"Much more now that we are justified by his blood, shall we be saved through him from the wrath"—behold the salvation of the restored person (Rom. 5:8-9).

According to these four points, provided by the aforementioned passage, there are four books of Sentences. In the first book, the author of the restoration is treated, that is, the Blessed Trinity. In the second, the restorable one, that is, man falling from the state of integrity and innocence. In the third, the person of the Restorer is considered, that is Christ, God and man. And in the fourth, the salvation of the restored person, which certainly consists in the expiation of the fault and the removal of all misery.

Thus, it is evident how this entire book treats the explanation of the mystery of our restoration. Nevertheless in a more special manner it looks to the third book in which it is shown how we have been brought to life through Christ. The Apostle makes this known in that aforementioned passage when he says: "He has brought us to life together with Christ." Therefore, the Apostle says this because God brings us to life *in* Christ, *with* Christ, *through* Christ, and *according to* Christ.

In the first place, God has brought us to life *in* Christ because he has shared our mortality of life in his person, according to that passage in the fifth chapter of John: "As the Father has life in himself, even so he has given to the Son to have life in himself" (Jn. 5:26). Therefore, if the Son has life in himself, while he has taken to himself our mortality, he has joined us to the true and immortal life, and through this he has brought us to life *in* himself.

He has brought us to life *with* Christ, while Christ himself, who was life, lived among mortal men, according to that passage in the beginning of the first Canonical Epistle of John:

What was from the beginning, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have handled: of the Word of Life; and the Life was made known and we have seen, and now testify and announce to you life eternal [1 Jn. 1:1-2].

And so, "while he was seen on earth and lived among men" (Bar. 3:38), God brought us to life *with* Christ, when he made us live with him.

He also brought us to life *through* Christ, when he snatched us from death through his death, according to that passage of the first Epistle of Peter, chapter three: "Christ also died once for sins, the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Put to death indeed in the flesh, he was brought to life in the spirit" (1 Pt. 3:18). Therefore, when Christ laid down his life for us, God brought the dead human race to life through him.

Finally, he brought us to life *according to* Christ, when he guided us through the path of life according to his example, according to that passage of the Psalmist: "You have made known to me the paths of life" (Ps. 15:10). He made known to us the paths of life, when he gave us faith, hope, charity, and the gifts of grace. [To these] he added the commands according to which Christ himself walked and in which the path of life consists. [It is according to these that] Christ has taught us to walk. Therefore, God has brought us to life *according to* Christ because he guides his imitators to life.

The four of these [points] are found together in the second [chapter of the Letter] to the Philippians: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave"—behold the first, namely, that he united our mortality to his life—"was made in the likeness of men"—behold the second, namely, that he lived with men as a man—"he humbled himself even to death"—behold the third, namely, that he freed us from death through his death—"because of this God exalted him"—behold the fourth, namely, that after death he had many followers and imitators who believed in him (Phil. 2:7). Ω

The Practical Saint Francis

SISTER FRANCES ANN THOM, O.S.C.

ANYONE READING this title will surely say that this cannot be an article about Saint Francis of Assisi. Poor Francis, he has surely been regarded as one of the most *impractical* and disorganized saints because of many of his so-called eccentric ways of doing things. After examining some of his impracticalities, however, I have found them to be the most practical and simple for his time and, perhaps, even for ours.

Let's get right into the concept of sin, which was a big thing for Francis and is, indeed, a big thing for most of us who are on the path of perfection. Once he was converted to the Lord, Francis knew what he must do, but like Saint Paul he found that the thorn in his flesh had not been converted. The story goes that Francis was severely tempted and, to frustrate the temptation, went outside and made for himself a snow family, all the while asking himself all kinds of practical questions. By the time he was finished he had used up so much of his psychic energy and had so lowered his body temperature, that he must have had a good night's rest. He was able to recognize the problem and to work with it in its own mode of existence, instead of repressing it and thus giving it greater impetus for its next attack. His body appreciated this kind of recognition and reacted accordingly.

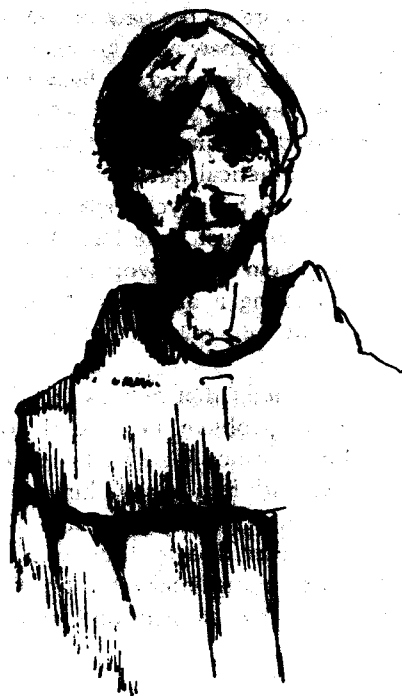
What of the brother who cried out in the night that he was literally starving? Although it was really the brother's problem, because he had forced himself beyond his own fasting ability, Francis identified with his need, got something for him to eat, and ate with him to save him from embarrassment. After being a tender mother, Francis corrected the brother and the others for going beyond Brother Body's strength. Had Francis ignored this or corrected the brother immediately, the brother would have suffered greatly from guilt and embarrassment and would, most likely, have considered himself a failure.

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C., of the Monastery of St. Clare in Lowell, Massachusetts, is a Consulting Editor of this Review.

Then there is the episode of trying to determine what direction the Lord wished the brothers to take when they came to a fork in the road. Since Francis had no itinerary to follow, no guide except for the Lord's will, he had to use a primitive method of divination to find his way. By telling a brother to spin around and around until he was so dizzy that he would fall to the ground, Francis divined that the direction in which the brother faced would be the one to take. Either direction would probably have held possibilities for Francis and his followers in their work for the Lord, but, like us, Francis too needed some sign, some direction in order to proceed. How many of us, when confronted with the need to make a decision, have written the alternatives down on slips of paper, placed them on the altar, and then, after a prayer to the Holy Spirit, picked up the one in which we would place our trust! Or, what about the little child's "eenie, meenie, miney, mo" type of thing in choosing one among several possibilities? How, then, is Francis more impractical than we?

When the brothers went on a journey, Francis did not encumber them with rules and regulations other than those set down by Christ. They

were to travel as lightly as possible, to enter a house where they were accepted, and to eat what was set before them. In that place they were to teach and preach and do enough work to merit a meal. If they were not accepted, they were to leave. If they happened not to get anything to eat, then they were to beg something for the love of God. If that didn't work either, they were to consider themselves no better than Christ, who was not well received by everyone either. This, then, would be perfect joy! Thus Francis emphasized the living out of the gospel in its practical aspects. Christ had set this simple example of life, and he wanted to follow it as completely as possible. In saying that Francis is impractical, one is saying that



Christ's way is impractical. Perhaps what is really being said is, it is not comfortable. . . .

This raises a few questions about Jesus. Was it practical to have nowhere to lay his head? Was he being practical in allowing Lazarus to remain four days in the tomb? How practical was he in allowing Judas, the one to betray him, to hold the purse for the group? Or even to receive him into his company? How practical was his forty day fast? Was it practical to walk on the water or to still the wind and the waves?

One of the most practical things Francis did was to pray in the manner in which he prayed. He learned early in life that all men are fallible and that he must make friends of those who really could help him and who were interested in helping him. Next to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, of course, was Mary. But Francis did not stop here; he wanted all the help he could get, so to speak, and so he called upon all the angels and saints. He did not need a formula; he did not need to carry little prayer cards with him, nor did he need a chapel to pray in. Wherever he was, he knew he was in communion with all of these wonderful people, and they were very real to him.

There is in all this an application for us today—for us who have the problem of having to lock our churches for fear of vandalism and desecration. Not being able to go into a church whenever and wherever we might want to do so should prove no obstacle to prayer. Francis shows us the way through his own spontaneity; but this comes only through constant use and familiarity with the saints. It is a most practical orientation to prayer, coming to us as it does from the very practical Francis of Assisi.



The Inner Confrontation: A Victory

The cleft lips tried to move—but all he heard was a groan.

Thru the bloodshot eyes there came a tear.

Had the leper a nose, he would've smelled pre-sanctity. . . .

And Francis? Francis just stared at the mess.

The Italian heart never beat so fast

He was filled with The Fear—lodged in the Heart of his heart.

A distant voice from within yelled: "Fool!"

But his will willed him to caress the leprous Face.

Deep—way deep—in his bowels he trembled.

This experience of eternity for an instant boggled his being,

Harnessing his action of passion within him—

Intuitively he knew his Choice had come.

Deep within he yelled that savage "Yes!"

And then—and only then—on the mouth—he kissed Jesus

Fr. Gabe Costa

The Franciscan Experience of the Eremitical Life

ANTHONY M. CARROZZO, O.F.M.

TO LIVE IN A HERMITAGE can be one of the most peaceful experiences that we have as John Howard Griffin so eloquently reminds us when he writes:

There are hours of the rarest happiness when the silence, the dripping of the rain, the popping of the fire, and the blackness of the night become prayer, and you are just there involved in all of that, your whole being saying the wordless amens. Fragrance of the fire; charity of the logs that consume themselves for your warmth; charity, too, of the night and rain and chill and silence out there in the woods beyond these walls [*The Hermitage Journals*, p. 92].

Yet we also know that it can be the most fierce experience we can have as well. We need simply to page through Athanasius' *Life of Antony* to discover wars and battles with devils and demons. Those of us who have lived in a hermitage for any length of time recognize Griffin and Athanasius as witnesses to our own experience of ecstasy and insanity, to moments of the most profound awareness of God's loving presence as well as moments of the disturbing realization of God's absence.

1. Personal Experience of the Eremitical Life

A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO I was fortunate enough to spend an extended period of time with the Camaldolese hermits in Big Sur, California. The early days there, while occasionally filled with a sense of terrifying isolation, were tranquil. I felt a new energy and zest for life that I had not experienced in a number of years.

Father Anthony M. Carrozzo, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province, has been active in Formation and Retreat work. Recently, he served as General Visitor to the Province of St. John the Baptist (Cincinnati).

But one day I awoke to a deep sense of frustration and dread deep within myself. I could not determine where it was coming from, nor could I decide what to do about it. While strolling the hills that afternoon, I bent over to pick up a small, seemingly insignificant stone. I played with the stone, turning it over and over in my hand until it suddenly became an instrument of God's revelation. As I looked at it, I realized that my heart was much like this little stone, for it was heart-shaped and quite obviously divided with a large black streak down the middle. As I continued to roam the hills, I was reminded of a homily that the Prior had preached a few days earlier, in which he challenged each

We must be willing to accept the human situation, and not seek to escape from it. We must also be willing, through our integrated life-style, to challenge all that is inhuman in our society.

one of us—in which he challenged me—to find that place in our hearts where the Lord has given us the Kiss of Peace. At that moment it was an extremely difficult and undesirable journey, filled with the darkness of the realization that my heart was not filled with the light of Christ, for I had caused a great division within it. Returning to my hermitage, I settled down to distract myself from this latest, hostile revelation by praying the Office of Readings. Instead of a distraction I encountered a continuance of the revealing love of the Spirit, for I read Saint Clement's Letter to the Corinthians, in which he proclaims: "The Spirit of the Lord is a lantern, searching the hidden places of our inmost being" (Breviary, IV, p. 444). What a revelation! There was little need for discouragement, for the Holy Spirit would lead the way and illuminate my very dark path to that place where the Lord had given me the Kiss of Peace. Just a few days later, while still meditating upon this experience, we celebrated the Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran by reading from a sermon of Caesarius of Arles, who wrote: "Just as you enter this church building, so God wishes to enter into your soul, for he promised: 'I shall live in them, and I shall walk the corridors of their hearts'" (Breviary, IV, p. 1548). Once again, I was confronted with the need to continue this journey into my own heart, for it is the Lord who walks its corridors. Hours turned into days, and days turned into weeks, all filled with

silence but also filled with the magnificent discovery of Saint Augustine which became my own personal experience: "In my wounded heart I saw your splendor and it dazzled me" (*Confessions*, X, 41). From this experience of darkness came a brilliant light; from this experience of distress came a deep inner peace.

Such an experience made my time among the Camaldolese worthwhile; so I hesitate to be critical of it. I also hesitate to be critical because I was treated as a brother, welcomed into their community and into their solitude. Yet, without being judgmental, I must describe an important discovery that dawned on me only slowly, as a result of another "hermitage experience." My hermitage experience among the Camaldolese was planned far in advance, though what happened there could not have been planned except by the Holy Spirit. A year later I experienced the eremitical life in a way that was neither planned nor desired: I became ill and the sickness lasted several months. During that time I remained in the friary with my own brothers, who added more work to their already hectic schedules to cover my jobs, who brought me meals filled with joyful conversation, and who changed the times and places for prayer so that I could be among them. Most of my time was spent alone, not only without companionship but also without any desire to pray or to read; yet I had much time to reflect. During those reflections I discovered that this period of helplessness was indeed a profound experience of being a hermit. But this was different from my other hermitage experience not only because I did not choose this one, but also because there was a new dimension to this solitude: the concern of loving and caring brothers who were with me not to break the silence but to enhance it.

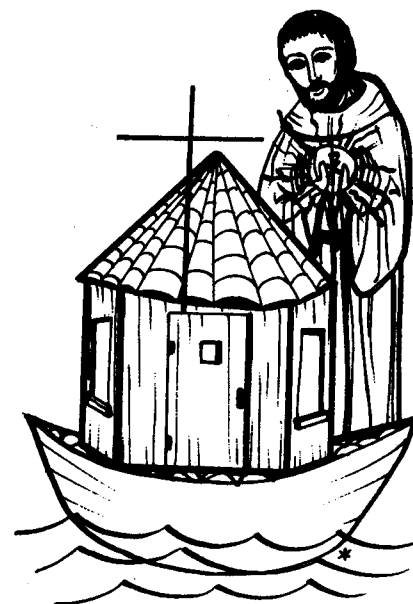
As I reflected upon these experiences, I went rummaging through several old Franciscan classics in search of an article that I vaguely remembered reading several years ago. I finally found what I was looking for in Father Agostino Gemelli's little classic, *The Message of Saint Francis*. In an article entitled "La Verna as I Saw It," in which he speaks of two retreats, one made at La Verna and the other at Camaldoli, he muses: "Last year I made my retreat in a Camaldolese hermitage. For the ten days of the retreat, I had a little house and garden to myself, both enclosed by a small wall. My only contact with the religious was in choir. They were delightful days. The only thing missing was a little Franciscan atmosphere" (pp. 11-12). That was precisely my experience.

2. In Search of a Franciscan Atmosphere

SO THE QUESTION ARISES: What is "a little Franciscan atmosphere" for the hermitage experience? The answer can be given in a fairly straightforward manner by a prayerful analysis of Saint Francis' Rule for Her-

mitages. But before we analyze his Rule, I believe that it is essential first to look at some of the Rules for hermits that were in existence at the time of Francis. We know Aelred of Rievaulx primarily for his work, *Spiritual Friendship*, which many of us pored over early in our religious lives in the hope of resolving the many difficulties that seemed to emerge from newly formed friendships. But Aelred wrote another work that is definitely relevant to our present reflection. Entitled simply *A Rule of Life for a Recluse*, it was written around 1160–1162 at the request of his own sister for some guidance in her spiritual quest. There are some similarities between this Rule and that of Francis; but there are also some stunning dissimilarities. The first should be obvious from the very title: it is a rule for *one* recluse, not for a community of recluses. A fairly long work (at least in comparison to Saint Francis' Rule), it consists of three parts: The Outer Person, The Inner Person, and A Threefold Meditation.

While Aelred seems to be a warm and loving person in this work as in his other works, he approaches the life of the recluse from a quite different standpoint: the perspective of the dangers involved in this life and the practices that will militate against submitting to these dangers. A consideration of how he addresses five of these dangers may help us to understand how Francis approached his concern for friar hermits so differently. The first danger that Aelred is concerned about is that the recluse, since she is not tied down by a ministry, may begin "aimless wandering" (p. 45). To avoid this, Aelred suggests that the recluse follow a custom of this day: viz., be "enclosed in a cell with the entrance walled up" (ibid.). The recluse is literally entombed in a small cell which has only two windows: one that looks out to the world, where she receives visitors and the necessities of life, and one that opens to the sanctuary of the church so that she may participate in Mass on a regular basis. We can hardly imagine Francis making a similar suggestion! (Not that the Franciscan hermits were beyond this "aimless wandering" which has continued until our own day. We need only recall Father Constantine Koser's warning when he was Minister General of the Friars Minor: "Our mobility makes us 'pilgrims and strangers in this world' and not gypsies or tourists" [*Madrid*, 1973, p. 26].) But Francis would not allow his brothers and sisters to be entombed in order to avoid this danger. He himself enjoyed wandering through the world, moving from hermitage to hermitage, discovering the Kingdom of God in diverse ways in different places.



sion, fosters the urge to roam, and nourishes vice; it nurtures spiritual weariness and encourages melancholy. It is idleness that sows evil thoughts in the mind, that kindles and inflames illicit desires, that breeds distaste for quiet and disgust for the cell. Never, then, let the evil spirit find you idle [pp. 54–55].

Later in the Rule, though, Aelred warns Mary that she should not become Martha: "Dead and buried to the world," Mary "should not be distracted but absorbed, not emptied out but filled up. Let Martha carry out her part . . . Mary's is declared better" (pp. 75–76). How differently Francis sees Martha and Mary, as he suggests an exchange of roles in a truly collegial atmosphere, where idleness is dealt with through the exchange. It is conceivable, however, that Francis got this idea from an earlier section of Aelred's Rule, where he writes: "Choose for yourself some elderly woman . . . a good woman with a well established reputation for virtue. She is to keep the door of your cell, and, as she thinks right, to admit or refuse visitors; and to receive and look after whatever provisions are needed" (p. 49).

We could continue listing other differences, but one more should suffice to show the drastic difference between this approach to the hermitage and an approach "with a little Franciscan atmosphere." Aelred warns the recluse to "avoid imposing on yourself the recitation of a fixed number of psalms as an obligation; when the psalms attract you use them, but when they become a burden change to reading; when reading palls rouse

Aelred recognized another danger that might arise from a confined body: the inability to confine one's mind and one's tongue. In reading this section of his Rule, we cannot help smiling at the thought: considering a prisoner of the Lord who spends her life as a gossip and chatterbox at her small window on the world. So Aelred pleads with the recluse to avoid idleness:

Idleness is indeed the enemy of the soul, the enemy against which more than all others the recluse must be on her guard. It is the mother of all evils. It engenders pas-

yourself to prayer; when wearied of them all take to manual labor" (pp. 55-56). Interestingly enough, one of the few obligations that Francis imposes upon his hermits is that their entire day should be structured according to the recitation of the psalms!

Francis may well have been acquainted with Aelred's *Rule for a Recluse*, as a few Franciscan scholars insist; but we can be sure he was not overly influenced by it in the development of his own Rule. The Rule of Francis is far more concerned with trust than it is with dangers.

Far less famous than Aelred's Rule but far more important for our reflections upon Francis' Rule, is the early thirteenth century English *Ancrene Wisse*. The Rule is too lengthy for us to investigate it thoroughly, but we must reflect upon it at least briefly because it bears some striking similarities to the spirit of Saint Francis and his followers. The unknown author distinguishes between the inner rule of charity which can never change and the outward rule "of man's contrivance," which

is instituted . . . to serve the internal law . . . wherefore this rule may be changed and varied according to everyone's state and circumstances. For some are strong, some are weak, and may very well be excused, and please God with less; some are learned, and some are not, and must work with more. . . . Every anchoress must observe the outward rule according to the advice of her confessor, and do obediently whatever he enjoins and commands her, who knows her state and her strength. He may modify the outward rule . . . [p. 7].

Francis would certainly agree with the author, for in his own Rule and even in his Testament he allows for diversity of personality, strength, and grace; and so he developed a religious life based upon the Gospel of Freedom. Nowhere is this better expressed than in Francis' simple yet profound words to Leo: "In whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footsteps and His poverty, do this with the blessing of God and my obedience" (EpLeo; AB 48).

While we Franciscans love to claim some prayers as uniquely Franciscan, we cannot escape the truth that the *Adoramus Te* which Francis places in his Testament as a sign of his faith in churches is found in the *Ancrene Wisse* and recommended as a frequent prayer before the crucifix (cf. pp. 18-19).

More important than these examples, however, is the overall spirit of the *Ancrene Wisse* which emphasizes what were to become several threads of Franciscan eremitical spirituality:

1. The life of the solitary is a socialized life.
2. The life of the solitary is a worldly life, for it respects "a warm passion for Christ as a man in the world" (Georgianna, 48).

3. The life of the senses is not denied but baptized so that "the material world is the mirror of God's love" (Georgianna, 66). This foreshadows Bonaventure's emphasis on the role of the senses on the journey into God.

4. The emphasis on living in a cloud of remembering rather than a cloud of forgetting shows the importance of the *memoria Dei* as studied by Augustine and Bonaventure.

5. One's own history is seen to be important in the development of spirituality; this reflects Augustine's *Confessions* and paves the way for Franciscan folklore.

Once again, we cannot be sure that Francis was familiar with this work, but we can be fairly certain that he was acquainted with some of its tenets and that he accepted them, though with a modality colored by his own particular personality and outlook. We also know that Francis did not write rules to be observed without first living the life. This is true of all of his rules, even the Rule for Hermitages, which was first experienced by the friars and only then written down.

3. Models of Franciscan Eremitical Life

SAINT FRANCIS ALONG WITH his early followers lived not simply one style of life but varied life-styles. This fact confounded Saint Bonaventure when he was commissioned to write the Life of Francis. Which life-style could be called the authentic Franciscan life-style? Bonaventure fully realized that all these various life-styles could be called essentially Franciscan: teachers and preachers, missionaries and hermits. While the incidentals differed among the communities, they were all committed to the life and Rule of the Friars Minor: to live the Holy Gospel. Bonaventure presents two styles of Franciscan life in the *Legenda Maior*.

The first model of Franciscan life that Bonaventure presents to us seems almost to depict Rivo Torto as the first Franciscan hermitage, where "with his companions the man of God took shelter in an abandoned hut near the town of Assisi. . . . They spent their time there praying incessantly. . . . They had the book of Christ's cross which they studied continually day and night" (LM IV.3). Living together in harmony (we know from other sources that it wasn't always so harmonious!), they led lives of contemplative prayer. Later Bonaventure presents us with another style of friar living, when he tells us that twelve friars moved from Rivo Torto to the Portiuncula, where "he became a herald of the Gospel," going about "the towns and villages proclaiming the Kingdom of God not in words taught by human wisdom, but in the power of the Spirit" (LM IV.5). Yet even the Portiuncula is presented by the early friars as a type of hermitage, where silence and fraternity reigned. So, in the

Legend of Perugia, Francis insists: "I wish to make arrangements regarding the friary of the Portiuncula and leave them as a testament to my brothers" (LP 9). In his Testament he insists that this favorite church of his always be "a holy place" in which the friars should live as the early brothers lived:

They preserved its holiness by praying there continually night and day and by observing silence there constantly. And if they sometimes spoke after the time determined for the beginning of silence it was always to converse about the glory of God . . . [ibid.].

Afflicting their bodies and helping the poor in the fields, "they sanctified themselves and sanctified this place" (ibid.). And so Francis expressed his wishes for the future of the Portiuncula:

Let the clerics chosen be among the holiest and most upright, and also from among those who . . . know best how to sing the divine office. . . . And let holy, discreet, and virtuous brothers and lay people be chosen to serve them. . . . Let the brothers of the friary speak to no one, except to those who serve them and the minister general when he visits them [LP 10].

Francis has a specific reason why he insists upon these things for the Portiuncula: "I wish that at least this community be a beautiful mirror of the Order, a candelabra before the throne of God and the Blessed Virgin" (ibid.). There are obvious similarities, not only between Francis' Testament for the Portiuncula and the Rule for Hermitages, but also between that Testament and the Saint's designs for another of his favorite sacred places: La Verna. In the magnificent and moving "Farewell to La Verna" (Cf. Gemelli, 40-42), Brother Masseo tells us that Francis "bade us live together in charity, devote ourselves to prayer, care diligently for the place, and sanctify it with our prayers day and night." Francis further commanded him: "Know it is my intention that in this place shall live religious, God-fearing and of the flower of my Order; that the superiors shall strive to assemble here the best of the Brothers." These high-pitched words of Francis remind us of the deep love that he had for sacred places that revealed the Kingdom of God to him. They remind us, too, that neither the Rule nor the life of the friar hermits was lived in a vacuum. Rather, both were essential to the development of Franciscan places and life-styles.

4. The Rule for Hermitages

SO WE COME to the Rule for Hermitages, written in 1217. At first glance, the Rule is deceptively simple, but after some reflection and study it shows itself to be filled with the wisdom and insight of Saint Francis. Still, it is only a skeleton that must be enfolded through human ex-

perience and spirited through fraternal dialogues.

The Rule begins immediately with that uniquely Franciscan emphasis on the freedom of the individual: "Illi, qui volunt . . ."—that is, those who wish to live in hermitages. This is an important first point, for we cannot state that this is the way that Franciscans should live, nor is it a way that an individual Franciscan should live; rather, it is the way that some Franciscans *want* to live. Not only does Francis respect that desire, but he also encourages it by presenting these Franciscans with a Rule of Life. This is a principle that is certainly in line with some contemporary writings in psychology: our lives ought to be based upon our wants rather than upon others' *shoulds*. While this is a valid principle up to a point, we should not forget that Western civilization has grown and developed on *shoulds*, and that some *shoulds* are not only desirable but essential in our lives. Nevertheless, to live in a hermitage is not a Franciscan obligation; rather, it is a Franciscan desire. This, too, must be emphasized, for there are some Franciscans who would have us believe that it is unfranciscan to desire to live in a hermitage, apart from the world. Such a criticism is quickly dismissed by Francis, who grants those who desire the eremitical way of life the right and privilege to live it within the context of the Rule of 1223.

Francis immediately provides us with a *should* for the Franciscan eremitical style of life: "Those who wish to live religiously in hermitages should be three brothers or four at most." There seem to be two essential points here, one Trinitarian in inspiration, and the other Eucharistic.

First, Francis makes a stipulation which I have never heard made elsewhere, but which I believe is imperative for Franciscan eremitical life: viz., that the hermit is not to live alone nor even to eat alone. It seems to me, on the basis of other writings and attitudes of Francis, that we can safely surmise that the reason for this is basically Trinitarian. Our God is not a loner but rather a Community of Being in perfect harmony. We are called to model our lives after the Trinitarian life: "That they may be one as we are one" (Jn. 17:22). The solitude that the Franciscan seeks is a solitude within fraternity; for Franciscan fraternity, rather than destroying solitude, protects and enhances it.

The second point is far more obvious. Francis limits the numbers, not only because the number is symbolically Trinitarian, but also so that the life of poverty may be protected: "He did not wish the friars to live together in large numbers in their houses, because he thought it difficult to observe poverty in a large community" (SP 10). While it is quite obvious that the means of the friars were to be simple and poor, it is equally obvious that they possessed a Eucharistic tone: i.e., all alms were a gift from the Lord and were to be eaten with hearts filled with the spirit of

thanksgiving. Thus the friar hermits were not permitted to eat alone in their cells—"nor should they take their meals there"—but rather were to eat with their brother hermits.

The motherhood of God is a particularly appealing theme today, to the extent that it has been sought out in some earlier writings, such as those of Julian of Norwich, who very beautifully reflects upon God as mother. In the Rule for Hermitages, as elsewhere, Francis, implicitly recognizing God's maternity, insists that the Franciscan hermit integrate the masculine and the feminine: "Two of these should be mothers, and they should have two sons or at least one." Time and again we discover from the early sources that Francis was comfortable with his *anima* as well as his *animus*. He refers to himself as mother: "I speak to you, my son, as a mother . . ." (EpLeo; AB 118), and he permits others to refer to him in the same way: "Brother Pacificus said to Saint Francis: 'Bless us, dearest Mother, and give me your hand to kiss'" (2Cel 137). Francis insists upon this integration for all of his followers as well, telling us in the Letter to the Faithful that we are called to be "spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ" and in the Rule of 1223 encouraging us to treat one another with a maternal instinct: "And let each one confidently make known his need to the other, for, if a mother has such care and love for her son born according to the flesh, should not someone love and care for his brother according to the Spirit even more diligently?" (RegB 6:8; AB 141). All of this, along with Francis' emphasis on these roles in the Rule for Hermitages, lead us to the conclusion that no Franciscan should be permitted to live the eremitical life unless he is comfortable with the mother and son within himself and is willing to share that motherhood and sonship within fraternity. This sharing includes also our ability to be both Martha and Mary; for Francis, unlike so many spiritual leaders before him, does not oppose these roles but rather integrates them, allowing for the hermit to be Martha at times and to be Mary at other times. Such a position leads Francis to insist upon a collegial rather than a hierarchical structure within the hermitage. In an age when we argue about the advantages and disadvantages of superiors and local coordinators, it is amazing to note that in his Rule for Hermitages Francis opts for a truly collegial structure in which roles are exchanged on a fairly regular basis, perhaps even weekly, as is reported to Francis concerning the friar hermits in Spain:

Your brothers live in our country in a certain poor hermitage and they have so established their way of living that half of them take care of domestic needs and the other half spend their time in contemplation. In this way each week those who lead the active life exchange with those who lead the contemplative life and the quiet of those giving themselves to contempla-

tion is changed for the business of work [2Cel 178].

I doubt that there has ever been a more integrated life than the one described here: an integration that comes from living the Rule for Hermitages.

This integration is aided by two disciplines that Francis now places in the Rule: the enclosure and the Liturgy of the Hours. The purpose of the enclosure is not to keep the world out, as it had been for monastic and eremitical orders prior to Francis, but rather a place where the friar hermit can be alone with God so that, unseen, he can practice a prayer that integrates both body and soul: "He always sought a hidden place where he could adapt not only his soul but also all his members to God" (2Cel 94). Thus Francis insists in the Rule that each person "has his own place." What would ordinarily seem to Francis to be a violation against poverty becomes a necessity in a hermitage so that the solitary can be himself before the Lord. Frequently during the day, however, the brothers left the privacy of their cells to gather together and praise the Lord. Life in the hermitage was structured around the Liturgy of the Hours so that, even while alone with the Lord, the brothers would not forget the larger fraternity nor the Church, but would be deeply united with them through the common prayer of the Church. This unity is also emphasized by the visits of the Ministers and Guardians to the hermitages and the freedom of both mothers and sons to have recourse to them.

Perhaps the most important question that arises for any Franciscan who seeks to enter upon the eremitical life, is that of motivation: Why do I want to live this way, especially in twentieth-century America? We must bluntly admit that there are some people who are attracted to the Franciscan way of life, particularly in its eremitical form, because they either cannot or do not want to cope with the complexities of life in today's pluralistic society. This is not a sufficient reason for entering into a hermitage, primarily because such an individual attempts to escape from reality rather than to enter more deeply into it. For Francis, the reason for living the life of a solitary in fraternity is quite different: it is "to seek the Kingdom of God and His justice." This Kingdom is found, not by escaping from the world, ourselves, or others, but by a contemplative discovery of God in the world, ourselves, and others.

No one has written more profoundly about this process than Saint Bonaventure, who spent much time in solitude at La Verna, seeking the peace that only God can give. In *The Soul's Journey into God*, he presents Jacob's Ladder as the means by which we move more and more deeply into the mystery of God by accepting this world, ourselves, and others as signs of the Kingdom. When Bonaventure attains peace, it is

not because he has resolved all the problems that confronted him when he went to La Verna, but because he is now able to accept the human situation in all of its imperfection, while at the same time accepting the challenge to change what is inhuman in the situation in which he finds himself. We must expect nothing less from those who desire to live the eremitical life in the Franciscan tradition. We must be willing to accept the human situation, and not seek to escape from it. We must also be willing, through our integrated life-style, to challenge all that is inhuman in our society.

5. A Return to Personal Observations

THIS MYSTICAL INSIGHT into all that is inhuman within us and around us can lead to a certain sense of dread. Yet we must delve even more deeply into our world and ourselves to discover the joy-filled center where Christ reigns.

I remember one particularly painful night of Holy Terror among the Camaldolese. I rose at 4:00 A.M. for the Vigil where over and over again, in the darkness of the night, the psalms of anger and suffering, of revenge and punishment, were prayed. I left the Chapter Room feeling not only that I did not pray but even that I did not want to pray. Instead of returning to my hermitage, I went for a long walk, reflecting on all that I was missing here, especially a carefree heart bursting with joyful music. Slowly, I began to notice the coming of the dawn with its sky colored with reds and golds and oranges. Even better, if possible, I heard the music I so longed to hear: the music of God's creation waking the dawn. I was reminded so clearly of the fifth chapter of Saint Bonaventure's *Legenda Maior*, where there is that wonderful coincidence of opposites: the austerity of Francis' life leads him to many God-given creaturely comforts. So here too, where I longed for the joy of a bit of Franciscan atmosphere, Mother Earth with her brothers and sisters provided it in the midst of a very austere moment. It seems to me that Saint Francis' Rule for Hermitages is nothing more nor less than a guidebook for making the Canticle of the Sun our own contemplative prayer. Ω

Franciscan Sunrise

Sister Dawn,
with unprecedented candor you disarm the night,
put darkness to flight
with your rainbow entrance.

Evergreen hills
watch in silent wonder as larks take flight.
Feathery impatience fills the sky.

Ribbons of gold unravel over mountains,
and the mellow hum of daybreak
surfaces, yellow drenched.

Soon, a pale orange
moon-shaped rising over trees and
suddenly it is tomorrow.
Brother Sun has come.

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

The Gateway of Life

BRIAN LOWDEN, O.F.M.

IN RECENT TIMES Saint Francis has often been associated with the discovery of the simple life-style, and been hailed as the patron of anti-consumerism. Many people see him as canonized for his insights into what today is known as ecology. Others again see the joyfulness of his life as his most salient and endearing characteristic. No doubt all these sides of Saint Francis flow from his sanctity; yet the real test of his relevance, for people of every age, is to be found in the way in which he comes to terms with death. For it is in the awful finality of that mystery that a person is thrown onto his deepest resources, so enabling us to use the confrontation with death as a touchstone for the authenticity of a person's life.

Death for Francis was not a single inevitable event, but a process, a process which he became consciously engaged in from the time of his conversion. Any deepening of our awareness of God must also, whether we like it or not, change our appreciation of death. No longer is it the great and unavoidable tragedy of mankind, which must be sidestepped for as long as possible. For the mystic, the saint, and indeed every Christian, death is transformed into the doorway to that life which is experienced now only in the merest shadow, and which we long so much to increase and develop. Francis' conversion, in itself, exhibits certain characteristics associated with a death-resurrection motif. His youthful exuberance was curtailed by a prolonged illness, a result of his imprisonment in Perugia (LM I.2).

Father Brian J. Lowden is a member of the English Province working with the Afria Project in the Bukoba Diocese, Tanzania. His study of Francis as Model for Christian Ecology appeared in our September, 1982, issue.

Celano tells us that this physical and mental suffering caused a change to come over Francis, a change which gradually led him to seek God and to discover through that search the true meaning of his own life (1Cel 3). Coming face to face for the first time with his own mortality, Francis suddenly saw very clearly that he could not but give his love and his life to God. Everything else would eventually be destroyed by death, over which God's love alone could triumph. Francis' conversion was the first step in his conscious embrace of Sister Death, a conversion which highlights, not the melancholy aspects of the grave, but the overriding necessity of living well in order to die well. It would not be an exaggeration to say that Francis, through this experience, was able for the first time to discover the joy of being fully alive.

It is only in love that the individual can gain release from the instinctive concern for personal survival, and, paradoxically, it is only because of that love that survival can be guaranteed.

Just as Francis entered into a new life through his conversion, so that life came to a fitting culmination on La Verna. Once again Francis was weakened by a long illness, an illness scarcely relieved by his arduous life-style, nor by the disappointments he suffered as he saw his dream strangely altered by many who claimed to be following the same road as he. Broken in body, if not in spirit, Francis hungered to be ever more perfectly conformed to his Master. At the beginning of his stay in the hermitage of La Verna, he felt impelled to seek anew God's will for himself; with an inner certainty he knew that something extraordinary was going to be asked of him. As was his custom, he opened the book of the Gospels three times and each time was confronted with a text which referred to the passion of Christ. Despite his sufferings, Francis was overjoyed to be able to rekindle the hope that he might still suffer the martyrdom for which he had longed throughout his life (LM XIII.2). That martyrdom was destined to take a very different form from that which he had first imagined, while at the same time flowing directly from his initial life-decision to follow in the footsteps of Christ. The stigmata, the physical sharing, in a most literal way, in the sufferings of Christ, was a martyrdom with the release of death delayed—it could be pictured as a

form of living death. Bonaventure describes Francis' condition after receiving the stigmata: "Francis now hung, body and soul, upon the cross with Christ" (LM XIV.1). The meeting with the Seraph was not only a premonition of death for Francis, but, like the stigmata which accompanied it, a mysterious foretaste of death itself.

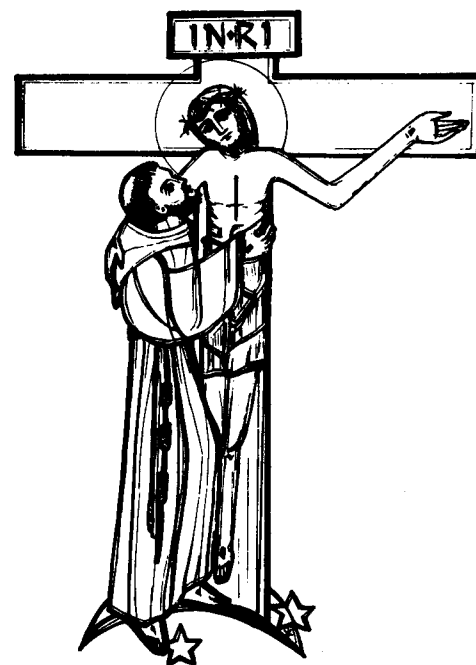
Yet Francis was not to die immediately. Half-dead, as Bonaventure describes him—incapacitated by the effects of the stigmata and progressively weakened by his illness—he entered into a new stage of living out the gospel message. Poverty, which had always been one of the central features of his life, now took on a new and extremely personal dimension. Francis was forced now to surrender his independence, to rely completely on others for everything; this was a final surrender that enabled him to leave this life stripped of everything. At the same time Francis discovered that pain could be a terrible and soul-destroying companion. No longer did he experience the short stab of intense pain which could be stoically endured; now he lived with another kind of pain which did not disappear, a pain which seemed to eat into his very bones. Yet even such pain could be seen as a sister, as it made him constantly aware, with every labored breath, of his dependence on God. Celano recounts a conversation with one of the brothers when Francis admitted that the intensity of his suffering was harder to bear even for three days than any martyrdom (1Cel 107). The eye disease he had suffered from since his return from the Middle East became more and more severe, and this was accompanied by other illnesses causing every part of his body to suffer. "The prolonged agony he endured eventually reduced him to a state where he had no flesh left and his skin clung to his bones. He was hemmed in with agonizing pain, but he called his trials his sisters, not his pains" (LM XIV.2). This complete acceptance of God's will, which in many ways characterized Francis' life, did not always manage to overcome the normal human reactions to terminal suffering. Celano describes one scene in which a depressed Francis, exhausted by his pains, "began to pity himself in the depths of his heart" (2Cel 213). It was then that Christ appeared to him and promised him eternal life, which, He explained, was a treasure infinitely more precious than the promise of a whole universe of gold. It was through suffering that Francis was made worthy of such a treasure and so now with a lightened heart he once again accepted his suffering with joy. Francis had reached the stage of complete acceptance of what was to happen to him, to such an extent that Celano could write that he was already dead to the world, he no longer lived but Christ lived in him (2Cel 211).

Francis' reaction to death was not the typical attitude of the Middle Ages. Death, although familiar, was seen as the greatest enemy of an increasingly self-conscious humanity. Art and literature—those two barometers of a culture's awareness—depicted death as the ultimate and inescapable destroyer, a macabre future which terminates all human happiness. In this view of death, the fear of hell dominated all thought of the afterlife. Yet in such a world view Francis imparted his final shock to mankind, far greater than his marriage to the despised

Lady Poverty, or his preaching to the birds, or even his visit to the enemy of Christendom Melek-al-Kamil: he quite simply, with his characteristic naiveté, called death his sister and praised God for her existence.

For Francis death was simply the gateway through which he could enter completely into the mystery of God's love; it was the focal point of his whole life, towards which he had been journeying since his conversion. It is significant that Francis was to meet Sister Death at the Portiuncula, where he first began his gospel life (LM XIV.3). For him life ended where it had begun, or rather, in the tradition of the friars, it was here that a new stage was entered into. The death or "Transitus" of Saint Francis was an integral part of the pilgrimage of his life, the passing over to the full flowering of that life.

One cannot reflect on the death of Saint Francis without also considering his praise of Sister Death in the Canticle of the Creatures; for it is here that one meets most starkly Francis' own attitude towards death. This Canticle can be interpreted as a song of reconciliation, first with material creation, then with mankind, and finally with death—an event which underscores most clearly man's position as a creature. As the Legend of



Perugia recounts, Francis, on his deathbed, added a final verse to the Canticle, in which he refers to death as his sister (LP 100). In place of the fierce avenger of mankind, Francis sings of the feminine character of death, the soft, tender, and loving aspect which, although inescapable, need not be feared by those who live in God's will. They need have no fear of judgment—no part of that fear which had become almost the paranoia of the Middle Ages. Death for Francis was truly a sister who was to take him to the Father, the transitus for which he had worked throughout his life.

Francis, a dramatist to the end, wanted his death to conform to Christ's, just as he had always tried to follow in the footsteps of his Lord. So he reenacted the Last Supper, sharing his own farewell meal with his brothers. Then, listening to a reading of the passion, Francis, lying naked on the ground, waited to welcome his sister. Remaining true until the end, to the way of life which he had discovered in that same place, Francis eventually accepted the loan of a habit so that he could go to meet God unencumbered with the ownership of anything. All the accounts of his death show how he tried to recapitulate his life option, so that he could honestly say: "I have done what is mine to do" (2Cel 214); and so, in the words of Celano, "he winged his way happily to God" (2Cel 217).

Celano, in his first Life, makes no attempt to disguise the very natural reactions of both the friars and Saint Clare. They were, as he graphically shows, heartbroken (1Cel 117). This grief was not a hopeless and soul-tormenting pain over the annihilation of a loved one, but a healthy expression of loss by people who knew that they were going to miss their spiritual father. If we learn nothing else from Saint Francis' death, this expression of grief would be a most valuable lesson on how we should react in a healthy way to the phenomenon of death.

The death of Saint Francis shows us very clearly the essential connection between death and the rest of life. It is not an isolated element which terminates life, but an integral part of the process of life, a process which itself might be more accurately described as the process of dying. The type of death we experience, in the sense of the way we react to it, is dependent on the life we have lived; for, as we have seen, death is a rounding off of life. Francis shows us that death is something which we must come to terms with, must accept, and in that acceptance discover the joy of living. Such an acceptance is not something which takes place suddenly, but is part of our spiritual growth, itself a life-long process.

Death, however, will always remain ambiguous, as at the biological level it necessitates a rupture with the past. Yet human dying is never experienced as purely biological; it is always intensely religious, and so an intensely human experience. The religious and biological experiences,

however, cannot be separated, as both intrinsically involve the shattering phenomenon of self-transcendence. As we see in the life of Saint Francis, this is not achieved in a negative way through self-loathing, but positively through the all-consuming love of Christ. It is only in love that the individual can gain release from the instinctive concern for personal survival, and, paradoxically, it is only because of that love that survival can be guaranteed.

Death, for Saint Francis as for all Christians, is not an escape from the body, but the beginning of a greater participation in all things at the very center of their existence. And so in death we do not take on a completely alien life but become more of what we have been, or should have been. Death, then, doesn't make us less "worldly," but in a very real way more worldly in the sense of transcending our human limitations. It is in realizing this and incorporating the realization into our lives that we, like Francis, will be able to welcome with joy our Sister Bodily Death. Ω

Morning Prayer

Eternal Father, I thank You
For the gift of another day
Wherein to love and to serve You;
to follow always in your Way!

Jesus, Today, lend me
Your eyes, those knowing eyes,
when I speak to others. . . .

Give me
Your words, Loving words,
kindly, healing words.

Today, lend me
Your compassionate heart, that I
may understand, forgive, be forgiven.
Thus, walking through life in Your
footsteps, I may sow seeds of faith,
of love, Your Love, Your Peace! Amen.

Sister M. Colette Logue, O.S.F.

Book Reviews

Dictionary of Mary. Translated by John Otto. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1985. Pp. 416. Paper, \$6.00.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Associate Editor of this Review.

It sounds like an impossible task to review a Dictionary, but I am happy to make the attempt. The publishers of this normal sized paperback have assembled a valuable source book for all Catholics and for all who are interested in knowing what role Mary plays in Catholic life.

The title is, in one respect, a misnomer, for the volume is not a series of short definitions. It does explain terms, of course, like *Assumption*, *Visitation*, and *Immaculate Conception*, but these are explained doctrinally, historically, and practically (the last of these being a contemporary application).

Since the Dictionary is arranged alphabetically and amply cross-referenced, the editors' suggested "order of readings" is eminently useful. Among the general headings are "Mary in Sacred Scripture" and "Mary Speaks from Her Shrines." Under the title of "Mother of God," we find treatment of Mariology and of the mysteries of Mary. And under the title "Behold Your Children," we find explained the

various prayers to Mary, from the "Sub tuum praesidium" of the third century to the latest Litany. It is in this section that the important articles on Devotion and Liturgy occur, articles that I think would make an excellent starting point for any "order of readings."

Those wanting to prepare Marian homilies or to plan Biblical services highlighting Mary can profitably use the Appendices, and all will surely be interested in the Select Chronology of Major Marian Events. This Dictionary is complete, clearly written yet succinct, and doctrinally solid. It is a book that every priest should have and should read, and it is a book that can inform as well as nourish solid Marian devotion.

The Capuchin Reform: Essays in Commemoration of its 450th Anniversary. Translated by Ignatius McCormick, O.F.M.Cap. Youngstown, OH: North American Capuchin Conference, 1983. Pp. 200, including Indices. Paper, no price given.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

The overall aim of this collection is to inspire, and it succeeds. It also gives to

one unfamiliar with the Capuchin reform an idea of its historical origin and its charism: greater stress on the contemplative dimension of Franciscan life.

Historically, of course, the Capuchins arose as an all around reform, seeking greater fidelity to the Rule and Testament of Saint Francis, including the area of poverty. Yet the Capuchins would not have survived by being just a "tighter ship," nor by the contemplative dimension alone. In the very century of their founding they became people's friars and won themselves the admiration of all by their generous service of the plague stricken peoples of Italy in particular.

Early in the course of the development of the Capuchins the move to apostolate and studies succeeded in winning acceptance over the narrower view of one of the founders, Louis of Fossombrone, who wished for stress on manual labor. Also, some of the heroism and idealism of early Capuchin legislation (e.g., that obliging the care of plague stricken people and that obliging the mere use of goods so that they had to be returned annually to their owners to be borrowed again) was modified as the Order grew and experience dictated change. A minimum of two hours of mental prayer for "tepid friars" remained in force, however, up to 1974.

I found the essays on the Franciscan significance of the Capuchin reform, on prayer and contemplation, and on Bernardine of Asti (the Saint Bonaventure, as it were, of the Capuchins, whose prayers are redolent of both Francis and Bonaventure), to be not only the longest but also the best of the pieces. The essay on ministry is, I believe, regrettably brief, and I did come away

with the impression that in the long run the contemplative dimension has far outweighed the ministerial or apostolic dimension of Capuchin life. Maybe some statistics and charts are needed. The essay on Felix of Cantalice is also, I believe, too brief; it contains, moreover, what is probably the only chauvinistic Capuchin remark I noted in the book.

Franciscan readers of all jurisdictions can profit from a sampling of these essays, and from answering some of the questions on prayer put by Father Octavian Schmucki, O.F.M.Cap., in his discussion of prayer.

The People of the Way: The Story behind the New Testament. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. viii-142. Paper, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Joseph Juracek, O.F.M., M.A. (Scripture, Washington Theological Union), Lecturer in Religious Studies at Siena College.

Anthony Gilles has attempted to "introduce the ordinary Catholic—someone who has neither the time nor the training to read a lengthy, academic treatise—to a deeper knowledge of the Bible." He accomplishes this task by examining the historical context that gave birth to each book of the Bible.

We thus begin the history of God's People at the Exodus and follow them through the desert and into the promised land. We watch as they become tribal units and finally a nation. We share with the Hebrews the basic message of each of the prophets and begin to understand the Wisdom literature of the Old Testament. We end our journey through the Old Testament

with the prayers of the people we have just studied: the Psalms.

After reading *The People of the Book*, one can expect to understand that unless the Old Testament is viewed through the eyes of the Hebrew People and the historical reality which they endured, then the richness and depth it has to offer us will be lost or misinterpreted. Gilles leads the reader to view the Old Testament as a collection of varied and multifaceted books which reflect the life experience of a people, Israel.

The People of the Book is attractively written, using very simple and understandable English. Gilles is concise and straight to the point in his short commentary on the Old Testament, providing the reader with a very broad and general understanding of the Old Testament. He skillfully captures the essence of the Old Testament, a nation's faith in a God who is constantly inviting his People into a loving relationship despite their unfaithfulness, using an exciting combination of biblical scholarship and modern story-telling technique.

Books Received

Bernardin, Joseph Cardinal, *"Christ Lives in Me": A Pastoral Reflection on Jesus and His Meaning for Christian Life*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. vi-69. Paper, \$3.95.

Cowie, Frederick, *Pioneers of Catholic Europe*. Foreword by James Hitchcock. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 174. Paper, \$6.95.

Gainer, Lucia Alexis, *The Hidden Garden*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 127, illus. Paper, \$4.95.

Gilles, Anthony E., *Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Needs to Know*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. vi-62. Paper, \$3.75.

Luebering, Carol, *To Comfort All Who Mourn: A Parish Handbook for Ministry to the Grieving*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. vi-96. Paper, \$4.95.

Mott, Michael, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1985. Pp. xxvi-690, including Bibliography and Index. Cloth, \$24.95.

Rahner, S.J., Karl, *Prayers for a Lifetime*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1984. Pp. xiii-175. Cloth, \$12.50.

Rupp, O.S.M., Joyce, *Fresh Bread, and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 159. Paper, \$4.95.

Sheridan, Msgr. John V., *A Lay Psalter: Selections from the Psalms with Meditations*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 216. Paper, \$7.50.

Talbot, John Michael, *Changes: A Spiritual Journal*. New York: Crossroad Books, Inc., 1984. Pp. vi-138. Paper, \$7.95.

Franciscan Studies M.A. Program Summer 1985 Offerings

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES PROGRAM offers a full schedule of courses in Franciscan theology, history, and spirituality, fully adaptable according to varied goals of students.

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FS 502	Sources for the Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	8:30-9:45	Fr. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M., D.Th.
FS 504	The Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	8:30-9:45	Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F*	9:55-11:10	Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap.
FS 506	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	9:55-11:10	Fr. Romuald Green, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 518	Scriptural Foundations of Franciscanism	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Cassian Corcoran, O.F.M., S.T.D.
FS 520	Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	2	M-Th	11:20-12:22	Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., Ph.
FS 532	The Secular Franciscan Movement	2	M-Th	1:00-2:02	Sr. Jeanne Glisky, S.F.P., M.A.
FS 561	The Development of the Franciscan Person	2	M-Th	1:00-2:02	Br. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 500	Methodology and Bibliography	2	M-Th*	2:10-3:12	Mr. Paul Spaeth, M.L.S.
FS 517	Introduction to Paleography	2	M-Th*	2:10-3:12	Rega Wood, Ph.D.
FS 539	Spiritual Direction and the Franciscan Tradition	2	MWF*	2:10-3:33	Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M., D.Min.
FS 650	Seminar: "The Spirituality of St. Francis and Contemporary Trends"	2	M-Th*	7:00-8:02	Fr. Theodore Zweerman, O.F.M., Ph.D.
FS 599	Independent Research	1-2	By arr.		Staff
FS 699	Master's Thesis	6	By arr.		Staff

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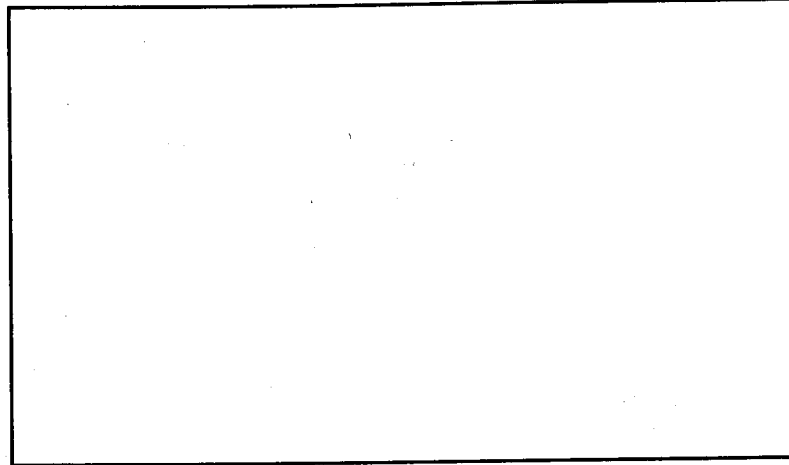
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The Knight-Errant of Assisi. By Hilarin Felder, Capuchin. Reprint. \$7.00 plus postage.

Translated by the late Berchmans Bittle, Capuchin, this popular biography long has been out of print.

Many more are forthcoming!

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JUNE, 1985

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Volume 35, No. 6

The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Bonaventure's commentary on Lombard has been illustrated by Sister Marie Monica, O.S.F., of the Sacred Heart Academy in Klamath Falls, Oregon. The other two drawings are by Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A., of the Monastery of Sancta Clara, Canton, Ohio.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Shouldn't Habits Be Habit Forming?

WOULD YOU WEAR a bathing suit to a formal dinner, or a tuxedo to a beach party? Or, how about wearing a housecoat to a job interview? One needn't accept that "clothes make the man," it seems, to realize the impropriety of wearing the wrong clothes at a given time or to a given function.

There are probably few readers of this periodical who have not at one time or another since Vatican II engaged in some discussion about the (ir)relevance of wearing the habit, either at all or in various specific contexts. There are probably few of us who didn't go through some idealistic, "liberated" phase, however brief, in which we flirted with the idea that the habit, originally just a piece of old cloth Francis donned in deference to Lady Poverty, is today best replaced by tattered jeans and a T-shirt. Old clothes, poor garments—that, we felt, is the true symbolism of the Franciscan habit.

Then there is the more recent phenomenon of "professionalism" (see our editorial for this past March), which for many of us meant at one time the use of secular dress appropriate to the professional work in which we are engaged—hence, suit and tie for teachers and "executives." (Presumably this also implied chef's whites for brothers who cooked, until the new professional ideal ruled out such base occupations for religious.)

There may or may not be serious justification for the wearing of clothing other than the habit in many different circumstances in which religious find themselves; this is not the point we want to address in this severely limited space. What we do want to raise for our readers' consideration is the question of garb at a communal liturgical celebration. We single out the liturgical context as particularly important precisely because it is the one occasion on which religious, officially deputed to pray in the name of the Church, discharge that solemn function. We feel on that account that appropriate, official and solemn garb is an essential feature of the celebration.

What do we find in actual practice? A variety of dress that is truly fascinating. We have, for instance, the jeans and sportshirt outfit, which (intentionally or otherwise) conveys the message that "this is [nothing but?] our casual and intimate family meal." Then there is the elegant business suit (sometimes smartly tailored and, in the male version, complete with tie), which, whether intentionally or not, tells the rest of the group that the wearer "just made it back from the real world." It is not clear just what to make of the occasional clerical black suit one sees at the celebration: does it say something like, "I thought I'd stop in, but the occasion isn't worth preparing for"?

Whether or not there is conscious, deliberate intent on the part of various individuals to send one or another "message" by the way they dress, is not the issue. Rather, in our day when religious seem so taken up with "on-going formation" (the value and success of which are apparently measured in terms of the distance participation enables one to travel and the cost it involves), one may perhaps ask whether a simple but eloquent observance like wearing the habit when performing the official, formal act of worship for which the Church deposes us, wouldn't be a vastly more sincere and effective sign of serious renewal. Should the habit not, indeed, be habit-forming? Ω

Fr. Michael D. Michael, Jm

Sine Proprio

Serious business, those
nothing-of-my-own words
I vowed. Not even the words
are mine (nor no one mine);
they are yours, seared and searing.

Snow-family builder,
you knew and know; I too
(serious business) may yet
have children. Shall I pray
to cherish the snow? Then
let it snow tonight:
tomorrow my thirtieth birthday
morning.

Bill Barrett, O.F.M.

Hmong Woman

Ancient mask of exile,
of braceros, polish jews, of Ruth—
feet that have crossed the burning sand—
Her face is too long and narrow to be chinese,
eyes too large and open to have ever known cities,
or anything but the dust of want.
But the child on her back
in its hoodlike brown sling
is her celebration—
Fat cheeks and a blue and red beaded cap
with four red pompoms and dangling herbsacks.
This city of Saint Francis carries
so many crows full of these on its back,
fretting at ravelled and hidden seams,
and I am afraid for this exotic seedling,
for the two worlds joining in the child
whose eyes could hold
the wholeness we lost on Market Street,
the reverence we sold for wit.

Sister Deborah Corbett

So Where Are We?

SISTER MARIE BEHA, O.S.C.

IN A FAST-MOVING world where vacation almost presumes travel, where speed means getting there and success is imaged as upward mobility, the enclosed nun stands as something of an anachronism; at best static and underdeveloped, at worst imprisoned and shrunken. Perhaps. Specialization is always risk along with opportunity. Since our culture seems predisposed to underline the dangers of stability turned static and enclosure narrowed down to minutiae, let me attempt to spell out the opportunity, not so much as a defense for a dangerous undertaking but rather as an indication of the possibility—of any place and of every place.

The Phenomenon of Place

PRIOR TO OUR reflection on enclosure, let us share something on the basic human experience of being in place. From the beginnings of our growth into consciousness, we are met by the boundaries of our being bodied. With delight we explore the possibilities of this space that is most our own, first identifying ourselves with it and then using it to distinguish ourselves from the world of the not-I.

Quickly enough we begin to lay claim on our place in this world of the not-I. At first, our exuberance leads us to say "mine" of all that is. Only gradually do we narrow down our enthusiasm and begin to take our rightful place in the scheme of things.

Sister Marie Beha, O.S.C., is presently novice directress and vicaress of the Poor Clare community in Greenville, South Carolina. She holds a Ph.D. from the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, New York. Before transferring to the Poor Clares, she was a member of the Sisters of St. Francis, Joliet, Illinois.

Rooted in this initial realization of our bodies and somewhat secure in our place in the world of the not-I, we then can begin to move out. Already here we encounter the fundamental human paradox of spatial phenomena. On the one hand we need a place, we need to find our place. But on the other hand we must move beyond the confines of any one place. So babies soon learn to crawl beyond the reach of less agile "sitters," and children seek the open door, leaving behind the more confining aspects of home.

For those who are called to such a life,
the place of enclosure is never too small.
On the contrary, the standing still, the
staying in one place, is simply a way of
being more fully "there."

As life goes on the rhythm of finding our place and moving beyond any one place continues, but nuanced now in slightly more sophisticated ways. Early on, we discover the possibilities inherent in choosing where we will be. Unlike inanimate objects, we never have to be "stuck" where we are; we can do something about the quality of our presence. Like plants, we can grow in different directions, seeking to follow our own choice of suns. Like animals, we can tend toward—or away from—our attractions. And still more wonderfully, as humans we can learn to leave, even though forced to stay; or stay, while leaving. By changing ourselves, we transcend and transform space.

A child in school soon discovers the possibilities of answering a dutiful "present," acknowledging the physical limitations of a classroom, while escaping into the attractions of another world. It is a powerful lesson, lacking in academic credit: we exist most fully in the place where we choose to be. Our choices range from geographic relocation, moving as far and as fast as we can, to escape reading and TV mirage. We are also able to give ourselves in the place where we are, transforming empty spaces into possibilities and making houses into homes.

Finding our place, then, is a physical and psychic necessity. But moving beyond the confines of any one place is equally necessary if we are to grow. We are spatially "present" on the one level, but we are also empowered to realize our presence either by desiring to be where we are or by escaping beyond such physical limitedness. In either case we invoke

transcend them only through prior acceptance.



No one escapes such definition of our humanness. A profession of enclosure is simply a promise to stay and discover rather than ignore or escape. It is a living faith that sickness or health, impoverishment or wealth, this culture or that, all such boundary situations offer unlimited opportunity to grow. Each is privileged meeting place, if we are there to accept what our very being-bodied offers us of incarnate truth.

So where are we? At a particular spot in our own salvation history, since our bodies not only root us in a past that we can inherit

only through acceptance, but also mediate the uniqueness of this present gift. In a sense, this time of our life is always a place of new beginning. It is a crisis time of significant choices. Where will we go from here? One certainty: we can't stand still. We must choose: between life and death, between God's life lived in us and our own lived in isolation. The grace-full struggle is so daily that its meaning can be lost in the sweep of other needs. But the monastic freely chooses to stand in this particular place, to savor the challenge, to live out the meaning, to discover the possibilities of really being present where we are. And then to go beyond.

For enclosure is not meant to narrow us down to the smallness of our own lives but to open us out to still fuller interpersonal presence. The truth is that out of every situation's decisions—yours and mine—and yours—and yours—this world's history moves inexorably toward salvation's climactic accomplishment. This will be. Amen.

And our individual lives will either impel or impede this progress of salvation's history. Pick your place. We are either with or against; we either gather or we scatter. Our living here makes an eternally significant difference. What matters most is not the "where," but the "how." From any place the battle can be won. Stand still and fight. This space of our living is big enough to make a lasting difference in world history.

And in the coming of the kingdom, the building of his body which is the Church. To be a messenger sent with good news requires no itinerary

of carefully mapped journeying. All the needed announcing can be done from any place. Why? Because in one sense it has already been done before us and for us. In dwelling among us Jesus has made every place an inheritance.

If we choose to abide with him, then he will live in us. And the kingdom will have come when we find our place in him and when we allow him to live out all that takes place in us. Such is the radiant energy of every situation that enfleshes continuing Incarnation. What took place once, takes place again and still again. The time is now and the place is here. This is every Christian's message of good news. The monastic simply says it in the action story of freely chosen enclosure. To say it this one way is certainly not to deny the validity of other phrasings of the message; on the contrary, the fullness of the kingdom requires the counterpoint of more active going out. The exuberance of housetop preaching is the necessary other side of the secret, slow coming to be that is enclosed as seed-time in the kingdom. In either case, the place of planting or proclaiming is always the same—the center of the human heart where we are in Jesus and Jesus is in us.

So where are we? Ultimately, the answer comes down to this one place: we are, we exist, in God. This is our home, our dwelling place, the center where we know that we "belong." Here we can "abide," our need to transcend stilled in the infinite boundaries of his loving presence.

When we search for him, what we discover is that we already possess what we seek. No need to move on. In finding, we know that first we have been found. The invitation is to stay and explore where we already are.

In this place at the center, we discover our heart's secret: the more we are in God, the more we are in ourselves, the self that his faithful love is enabling us to be. This is the uniqueness he calls into being by name: our personal place of embodied meeting with him. Our sacred space, then, is first of all within.

Here, where we really are most ourselves, we are also most his. In this sense our place in him becomes a center of unity. Everything is here: all we really need, everyone and each one, we are called to love. The "still point" at our center becomes, then, a holy place infinitely productive of possible union. As this happens, and to the extent it happens, in anyone's life, every place and any place opens out to all this world—and beyond. In faith that this is so the monastic elects enclosure, professing that staying in one place and discovering this center is travel and adventure enough for a lifetime.

For those who are called to such a life, the place of enclosure is never too small. On the contrary, the standing still, the staying in one place, is

the uniquely human capacity for being in place.

What is true of us as bio-psycho-social beings is also true of our spiritual reality. Man's pilgrimage toward the absolute seems to begin with finding some fixed place for worship. Security is first spelled out in having certain spots set aside for worship, erecting altars, and building temples. Here man meets God—or better: God meets man—and this becomes holy ground. It is a place to begin and to return to in all our journeying on.

At first our holy places are "earthy," named in the geography of our space and time. They are fixed places, set apart and so kept sacred. But once again the paradoxical tension: we need to have a place, but we also need to move beyond any one place. If we are to worship "in spirit and in truth," we need to discover God in his everywhere. For that is where he is, and, as creatures made in his image and likeness we are meant to express something of his own transcendence.

So as we grow into true worshipers we not only set aside some places as sacred, but we also discover the holy everywhere. As Teilhard phrased it, "Nothing is profane for those who know how to see."

In all of this, the rhythm of the Incarnation is repeated. God became man, pitched his tent, and dwelt with us. But only to live as one who had no lasting place here, whose whole earthly existing was movement toward the Father and whose life climaxed in his being lifted up, suspended, between earth and heaven. No tomb of earth would ultimately enclose him. The Father would raise him up and give him a place at his right hand.

That same Incarnational/Paschal rhythm is reflected in the being here and the going beyond that is the life of every Christian. It is also the bedrock of human spirituality on which our reflections on enclosure must rest.

The contemplative who chooses enclosed monastic life attempts to say with all life's giving:

- (1) The God of everywhere is here!
- (2) In this one place, then, there is enough for me.
- (3) "Here" opens out to "everywhere."
- (4) My place is in him, for he chooses to make his home in me.

Living Within

WHEN GOD CAME calling in the garden, he asked Adam and Eve, "Where are you?" It was the first of his questions and one that they had already answered by hiding; the garden was now no place for them, and so their wanderings began. And mankind is still on pilgrimage, trying to find a way back home. Small wonder, then, that patristic literature describes

monastic life as a return to the garden, a finding of our true place in creation, a living out the truth of the centrality of God in our lives.

So where are we? Where do we belong? Part of the answer that enclosure spells out is that God can be found wherever we are, in all the particulars of our lives. No space is empty of his presence; every place is open to a possible meeting. It is less a matter of seeking him—somewhere—more a matter of finding him anywhere. Enclosure takes the abstractedness of this theology and makes concrete its particulars. In this small square of ground we will live, confident that he already awaits us here. The everyday of street address and zip code is holy ground, a meeting place of God-with-us.

This one place is enough because he is enough. No need to wander restlessly, seeking distractions, looking for more. All we really need and want is already given to us here. So monastics sell all they have to buy this field with its buried treasure. Here they will build and plant; it will be the work of a lifetime.

So where are we? Just where God wants us to be. Granted, those words may be interpreted too simplistically and so mean that God predetermines our every move. Still they do contain a basic truth: God wants to be with us—here. In the simplest of realities he is present: beauty breaking through the greening of the grass, sweetness to the taste in the basics of fresh bread. There is truth enough for us in any gospel passage and tenderness sufficient to break open the human heart in all his creatures, great and small. So the monastic stays where he is and opens up his heart. And the Word that is heard says, "I am here, always with you. Here!"

And where is here? For his word to us does take on the geography of our time and place. He is present in this special place, the where of our present situation, the geography that locates us in all the universe that is his. So the particulars of our place do make a saving difference. We find him here—today—or not at all. His everywhere-ness is broken down to size for us as we discover how our response is vectored by the possibilities of neighborhood and city, state and country. For all of these situate our salvation history, offering certain opportunities while precluding others. In faith that this is so the monastic elects to stay in the place where he is and explore its meaning.

Beginning with the journey inward, the first enclosure that space offers us is our own being-bodied. Here is where we must dwell: the past that is our specific inheritance, the culture that gives shape to so many of our responses, the strengths and weaknesses that are built into this reality that is our humanness, this is our place of meeting with him. These are our boundaries; we must learn them and live with them, for we will

simply a way of being more fully "there." Such narrowing of focus simply intensifies reality's light and sharpens one's vision. In fact, one of the criteria for such a call is just the capacity to live out this truth: restriction of physical space and of freedom of movement opens the self to God and to others. When, if, this is not the case, then any place shrinks the world to one's personal myopia and every place becomes a prison. Narrowed vision limits the view, no matter where one chooses to stand.

So where are we? The contemplative answers in the accents of all humankind: we are here in our bodies with all the circumstances of past and present, here, at a particular place in time and in history, here, in the challenges of today and tomorrow. Most especially, the contemplative says, we are here, desirous of living at the center, where we find ourselves and everyone else in God. Here is the heart of all reality, the place of Christ's coming again into our history. In faith that this is so the contemplative answers the divine question, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9) by saying in life's language, "Here I am. Here I am" (Ps. 40:7). Ω

For Saint Anthony of Padua

Each decade plunders favor from your fame;
saints etch their honor in your bold design.
Under the brown rainbow of your name
innocence nourishes its verdant vine.
You who held Heaven against your heart,
hold my reflection in your golden gaze.
Be my soul's navigator, my salvation's chart
down perilous estuaries of the days.

Fé McGrail

Saint Bonaventure:

Prologue to the Fourth Book of Sentences

TRANSLATED BY GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

This last of the four prologues to the Commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard written by Bonaventure in his early years at the University of Paris treats of the Sacraments. Once more, the Seraphic Doctor takes a biblical passage as his opening statement and proceeds to unravel its hidden depths so that through it the reader may come to see the uniqueness of his approach.

The druggist shall make sweet confections and shall make up ointments of health.

THOSE WORDS ARE written in Ecclesiasticus (38:7) and, if thought over carefully, explain and set off the subject-matter of the fourth book of the *Sentences*, in furtherance of our education and training. The explanation comes through a twofold metaphor or figure of speech: namely, *sweet confections* and *ointments of health*. By these we are given to understand that the medicine, which the Sacraments are, is pleasant as well as wholesome. Here we have a first-rate estimation of both the physician and his remedy. All a patient looks for in a medicine is that it be pleasant to take and effective as a cure. The ideal physician's medicine has both of these traits; as the poet said, "That man took every score there was/ Who mixed the useful with the sweet" (Horace, *De Arte Poetica*, 243). The Sacraments as medicine, therefore, are sweet confections and ointments of health. As ointments of health they relate to the cure of the patient; as sweet confections they are concerned with pleasing God. As such they are opposed to the two aspects of wrongdoing: namely, offending God and damaging nature. It is by offending God that man is stripped of grace, and by damaging nature that wounds are inflicted on his humanity. The Sacraments are, therefore, ideal remedies. They have that

Father Gregory Shanahan, of the Irish Province of the Friars Minor, is a Consulting Editor of this Review. He has collaborated on a recent Irish language edition of the writings of Saint Francis and specializes in retreats to religious and mission preaching in Ireland and Britain.

sweet quality that finds acceptance with God, thereby making reparation and petitioning for grace. They also clothe a man in his nakedness, possess the power to look after him in his sickness, and thus restore his humanity.

It is like the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and being stripped and left wounded, but dressed again and healed by the Samaritan (Lk. 10:30ff.). That Samaritan is Christ the Lord. And in his Person is this statement made: *The druggist shall make sweet confections*: that is to say, he will institute fragrant Sacraments which would be agreeable to the divine majesty. *He shall make*, it says, in the future tense, since this was spoken at the time of the Mosaic Law in reference to the age of the law of grace. Even if you say confections and sacrifices fragrant to God were offered in time past, still it was not due to their inherent worth that they were acceptable to God. The Lord commanded Moses, in the Book of Exodus, to make incense compounded by the work of the perfumer: *You shall make incense*, etc. (30:35). He commanded Aaron to offer incense: *You shall set the altar over against the veil* (30:6); and after that, he said: *And Aaron shall burn incense upon it in the morning . . . in the evening he shall burn an everlasting incense* (30:7, 8). In *Leviticus*, the phrase for a most sweet savor to the Lord recurs in regard to almost all oblations (cf. Lev. 1:13; 2:2; 6:21; 23:18). That was a perfume, however, which did not find acceptance with the Lord because of the insufficiencies in the sacrifices of the Law, that had, as the Apostle points out, merely a shadow of the good things to come (Heb. 10:1). Neither were they pleasing, because of the uncleanness of the offerers, as Isaiah says: *Offer sacrifice no more in vain: incense is an abomination to me* (1:13). And the reason he gives is: *Your hands are full of blood* (1:15).

The Sacraments are instituted with
"word" and "element" together; so we
speak of them as being not only "made,"
but "made up" for healing.

So that, if anybody is going to make sweet-smelling confections, he had better be free from all uncleanness and be filled with a scent that has true fragrance in it. Such was not to be had by, nor could it be produced by, man, because man would be an unclean producer. So the Lord by his own power had to fit him with a body, as we read in Psalm 39 which the

Apostle applies to Christ: *As he comes into the world, he says, No sacrifice, no offering was your demand; you have fitted me, instead, with a body. You have not found any pleasure in burnt sacrifices, in sacrifices for sin. See then, I said, I am coming* (Heb. 10:5-7). *Fitted* is well said; for that all-clean Lord, as he made the Virgin clean "with a purity greater than which, under God, is unthinkable," fitted him with a body (cf. Anselm, *De Conceptu Virginis et originali peccato*, c. 18). He was to be a vessel of cleanliness containing every fragrance. The patriarch Jacob, in *Genesis*, with a presentiment of this, pronounced: *The smell of my son is as the smell of a plentiful field which the Lord has blessed* (27:27). Now, Christ was the perfect dealer in unguents; he did not go begging his scent elsewhere, but was himself redolent of the Father. And, filled as he was with that scent, to pass it on to others, he offered himself for us all to God the Father, according to Ephesians: *He loved us and gave himself up on our behalf, a sacrifice breathing out fragrance as he offered it to God* (5:2). It was then that *the alabaster box was broken and the whole house was scented with the ointment* (cf. Mk. 14:3; Jn. 12:3). It was then that we all received something out of this abundance (cf. Jn. 116), since God is propitiated, not only by the Passion itself, but even by what constitute "memorials" of the Passion. It is not alone the Passion that is a "sweet confection," but so are also those things that call it to mind: namely, the Sacraments. This is in line with what we read in *Ecclesiasticus*: *The memory of Josias is like the composition of a sweet smell made by the art of a perfumer* (49:1)—Josias here standing for the suffering Christ, for the name Josias means "where the Lord's incense is," or "to whom belongs the Lord's sacrifice" (cf. St. Isidore, *Etymologium*; St. Jerome, *De Nominibus Hebraicis*). The Sacraments are memorial signs of the Passion that was accomplished in the past. The house of the Church Militant is filled to overflowing with these memorials. And so, it is filled with the odor of the ointment, in accordance with what the Holy Spirit says in the *Canticle of Canticles*: *The sweet smell of your ointments [is] above all aromatical spices* (4:40). The druggist, therefore, shall make sweet confections—ones, that is, that are pleasing to God.

In no less a fashion shall he make up ointments of health: namely, Sacraments which cure disease. In the Law, you did certainly have anointings which were symbolic, though they were not curative; the anointing was superficial, while the disease was lethal. On this point, the Apostle tells the Hebrews that the legal remedies have no power *where conscience is concerned, to bring the worshipper to his full growth; they are but outward observances, connected with food and drink and ceremonial washings on this occasion or that* (Heb. 9:9). It was because their anoin-

tings were on the flesh, whereas the lethal wound was in the soul, that they were powerless as remedies. *That sins should be taken away by the blood of bulls and goats is impossible* (Heb. 10:4). You have Isaiah, too, crying out in his first chapter: *Wounds and bruises and swelling sores are not bound up, nor dressed nor fomented with oil* (1:6). He is referring to the three kinds of sin constituting man's illness: *wounds* are original sin, *bruises* are venial sin, and *swelling sores* are mortal sin. This is why just before that, he said: *The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is sad* (1:5).

With regard to this, then, if anybody is going to make health-giving ointments, he had better produce an anointing that is spiritual and one that has vital efficacy in it. Christ the Lord was the one to do it; he was the true "Christus," the anointed one, as in Isaiah: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach to the meek*, etc. (61:1). And that this is to be interpreted as referring to Christ, he himself is the witness in Luke 4, where, after reading out that text, he said: "This scripture which I have read in your hearing is today fulfilled (21). He is the one who had power to make up a healing ointment, according to what Saint Peter says of him in Acts: *God anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power, so that he went about doing good, and curing all those who were under the devil's tyranny, for God was in him* (10:38; the Vulgate reads "with him"). He anointed him *with the Holy Spirit*, so he produced that spiritual ointment; he anointed him *with power*, hence its vital efficacy. For through his anointing, *God was in him*, he himself being God and thus having life in himself: *As the Father has within him the gift of life, so he has granted to the Son that he too should have within him the gift of life* (Jn. 5:26).

It was because he had life within himself that he had power to revive those who were dead. So he made ointments which were cures for lethal disease. It was when he united with life our mortal nature, that he, who was life, died. Then was that confection made, in which and by means of which, he who was dead finds life again. And it is from his death that the Sacraments derive their life-giving efficacy. In connection with the text in Ephesians, *This is a great Sacrament, and I am applying it here to Christ and his Church* (5:32), Augustine's words are these: "Adam sleeps that Eve may appear; Christ dies, that the Church may appear. Eve was made out of the side of the sleeping Adam; the Church was formed by the



mysteries that flowed from the lance-pierced side of the dead Christ."¹ It is more fitting to speak of the Sacraments as emanating from the "side" than from the feet or hands—blood flowed from these—because a more suitable sign is implied, in that blood and water came forth together [from it]. Moreover, they flowed out of one who was already dead. This offers a rather fitting description of the constitution and institution of the Sacraments. The vital blood flowed forth with water: this means the Sacraments acquire their efficacy when death is joined to life. The Sacraments are instituted with "word" and "element" together; so we speak of them as being not only "made," but "made up" for healing.

Perfect cures, therefore, these sacraments are. Our druggist made them—these *sweet confections*—to be agreeable to God. He made them—these *ointments of health*—to cure man in his sickness. They are healing anointings, because they both confer health and make us ready for health. They confer the basic health we need, the health that comes with grace, of which the Psalm speaks: *He heals the broken-hearted, and binds up all their wounds* (146:3). They make us ready to receive perfect health, the health that comes with glory, of which another Psalm speaks: *It is he who forgives all your guilt, who heals every one of your ills* (102:3). This he does in the life of glory. Ω

¹The quotation from Saint Augustine is, in fact (and with a slight verbal change) from his *Treatise on St. John's Gospel*, IX.10.

Vision

Time oozes onward
toward the eternal gulf
over which man has never leaned . . .
save those, like Francis,
whose gaze extended beyond the brink
and glimpsed the abode to come . . .
a double horizon.

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C.

Reflections from Assisi

"Ciao Francesco"

Ciao Francesco of Assisi
whose bloody footprints in winter
(like carnelians cast upon snow!)
can still disrupt Assisi. . . .

Ciao Francesco of the Porziuncola
that blessed door too narrow
for me to enter, but led by you
I asked three things. . . .

Ciao Francesco of San Damiano
who led me along that same
road of renunciation
(while the silver olive trees wept)
and showed me that we
leave all our fathers. . . .

Ciao Francesco of the Carceri
whose food was to do the
will of God, and when I
saw this—too true—I ran
all the way down Mt. Subasio. . . .

Ciao Francesco of the Chiesa Nuova
your lively friar-son showed me
the prison where your father
tried to keep you, and then
sensing my sin he let down
his cape for me to walk on
—this still hurts. . . .

Ciao Francesco who fought the devils
and guarded my own room with
Leo's cherished blessing—while the
shutters rattled from the nightmare
howls, and the dark dreams
threatened to turn me back. . . .

Ciao Francesco of La Verna
(my dearest home)
you climbed those rocks
to bemoan your sins and
left that mountain so transfigured
so holy that in that place
I could scarcely breathe. . . .

Ciao Francesco of the Basilica
your body is the Feast
of Fools,
Parades endless masses, cameras, dances
songs, candles and those weeping
because they have put you up so high
we can't even touch you
for healing anymore. . . .

Ciao Francesco wounded-winter light
you are stricken with love
by God's smallest creatures. . . .

Ciao Francesco of the Via Crucis
winter in Assisi is more harsh, silent
and bitter than I ever imagined,
and as I complained and nagged you
for comfort you walked with me
(like Jesus at Emmaus, wounds aglow)
and taught me the grace of
compassion. . . .

Ciao Francesco of Assisi,
guide books, tapestries, and paintings
say you are dead,
but you still lead
the angels in song
at the Bronx Little Portion.

"Ciao Chiara"

Ciao Chiara of San Damiano
you led me up stone stairs
to the upper room and unbolted
the door to ancient visions
and showed me how love
and the Holy Eucharist
put invaders to flight. . . .

Ciao Chiara, Lady Poverty,
you are on display as some
venerable mummy;
your skeleton still observing
stark humility and holy poverty. . . .

Ciao Chiara who cried the Passion
every day (hope against hope)
and who bathed our father's
wounds and kissed them when
he went Home. . . .

Ciao Chiara di Favarone
the Spirit hovers in the mist
outside your basilica and
sits like manna on the olive trees
and the Spirit and the Bride say:
"God is enough."

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

The Servant of God Merry Del Val

ELSA HURSCHLER, S.F.O.

BORN IN LONDON in 1865, the second son of the Marquis Merry del Val, a distinguished Spanish diplomat, and the Countess Josephine de Zulueta, young Rafael was educated in England; with the Jesuits in Namur and Brussels; and on returning to Britain attended St. Cuthbert's, Ushaw, where he received minor orders. He completed his training for the priesthood in Rome.

His advancement in the Church was rapid, and he was eventually to become President of the Academy of Noble Ecclesiastics, Archbishop of Nicea, Secretary to the Conclave which elected Giuseppe Melchior Sarto (Saint Pius X) as Bishop of Rome, to whom he was appointed Secretary of State at the age of 38; and in 1914 Archpriest of St. Peter's Basilica. Rafael Merry del Val was many times Papal Legate, linguist, diplomat, musician, poet, sportsman; it is difficult indeed to describe his many attributes. Yet never did he know ambition, nor did he seek the honors that poured upon him. On the contrary, he was a man of piety and humility with great interior resources, efficient and painstaking in all he undertook, at his happiest in an old black soutane (as Saint Francis was happiest in his torn habit which now reposes in the museum of San Francesco in Assisi). Cardinal Merry del Val died in his home at the Vatican on February 26, 1930.

Mrs. Elsa Hurschler, a Secular Franciscan active for the Cause of Cardinal Merry del Val, writes from Solothurn, Switzerland.

Rafael Merry del Val was Cardinal Protector of the Franciscan Conventuals and as Papal Legate went to Assisi to represent Pope Benedict XV for the centenary of the finding of the body of Saint Francis in 1920, and again at the request of Pope Pius XI in 1926 for the 700th anniversary of the Poverello's death. (It was for this latter occasion that Pope Pius XI wrote his wonderful Encyclical on Francis, published in full by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University in *Saint Francis of Assisi: Essays in Commemoration*, 1982.)

Private disappointments and hurts were covered over and never discussed. There was no complaint, as he tackled all he did with courage. . . .

The Cardinal was a Servite Tertiary with a profound devotion to Our Lady of Sorrows. His devotion of the Blessed Eucharist, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Immaculate Heart of Mary was also intense, and he was said to have had the soul of a Franciscan. He loved the poor and humble, and his strongest inclination was toward pastoral work. As a newly ordained priest he founded the Sacred Heart Association for boys in the poor district of Trastevere, Rome, which gave him an outlet for his missionary ambition and eventually became a life work. He was forced to give up acting as the boys' confessor, however, because of his many other duties. Still, never a day went by—unless he was out of Rome—that he omitted to visit "his boys." In fact, he was heard to remark that his day was incomplete without such a visit. From youngsters roaming the streets of Trastevere, he formed fine young Catholic men, and they revered and respected him for those untiring efforts.

A warm friendship existed between him and the Rector of the American College, the future Cardinal O'Connell. To this day there hangs a fine portrait of Merry del Val in the dining room of the Archbishop of Boston's residence, placed there by Cardinal O'Connell.

Rafael Merry del Val, though he came from a noble family, cared little for possessions and used the money he received to help the needy and the sick, many of his good deeds being discovered only after his death. He was always the human, compassionate, loving priest, available to anyone who needed his advice or assistance. Like Saint Francis, Merry del Val saw his duty to God and the Church as coming first, and give his

complete loyalty and obedience to the reigning Pontiff. Francis longed to convert his world and be a missionary; the Cardinal with his missionary spirit desired nothing but souls. Francis was extrovert, Rafael Merry del Val was controlled, quieter; but both had great personal discipline and charisma, and both understood their calling as an imitation of Christ, that they might bring others to him.



Working under tremendous pressure, often misunderstood, as Secretary of State the buffer between the Holy Father and the world, the Cardinal lived his spiritual life and experienced his deepest feelings in profound solitude. Private disappointments and hurts were covered over and never discussed. There was no complaint, as he tackled all he did with courage. Yet he could be light-hearted and humorous when the occasion permitted. The Prince of the Church emulating the Poverello?

It is given to few to spend eleven years in close proximity to a Saint—in this instance Saint Pius X with his beautiful and gentle

personality and aim of "restoring all things in Christ," which of course his Cardinal Secretary fully endorsed. In addition the relationship of a Secretary of State to the Holy Father must necessarily be a close one, and there can be no doubt that Pope Saint Pius X and Rafael Merry del Val entertained immense trust and respect each for the other: a very special friendship between two holy men.

The Cardinal's desire to work for souls never abated, and the words *Da mihi animas, coetera tolle* ("Give me souls; take away the rest") were the only ones, apart from his name, that he wished to appear on his tomb. His spiritual direction (he served members of several Orders, including Sisters of the Sacred Heart, as well as lay people, in this capacity) was simple and direct. He had learned the hard way that his life, which to outsiders might appear a brilliant and glamorous ecclesiastical career, consisted of a series of crosses to be born with the utmost self-discipline.

He was forced into interior spiritual living urgently and sooner than most of us, and his very way of life became a prayer. Every action was

offered to God; he did not consider himself worthy of the honors he received. He saw the need to be always humble; the "Litany of Humility" which he recited daily after Mass, would have greatly appealed to Francis, who so well understood human frailty. The Litany's final line must give all who pray and ponder it food for thought: "*Jesus grant me the grace to desire that others may become holier than I, provided that I become as holy as I should.*" (A complete copy of the Litany of Humility can be obtained from the Postulator, Father Giovanni Sanchez, Via della Cava Aurelia, 145, 00165 Rome, Italy.) Merry del Val longed to bring people to the true faith, and many were converted and received into the Church through his understanding of their problems, because of his personal example, or simply by observing his Mass.

If Merry del Val had an apparent failing (which could be and perhaps was sometimes misunderstood), it was a tendency to withdraw into his inner being when confronted with a serious problem. While ever courteous and considerate, he seemed at such times to be abstracted or inattentive. He was aware of this, for in a letter from a sister who had been hurt by his silence on her last visit, he replied, ". . . sometimes I am miles away in thought from what is going on about me, and I am conscious this must give the impression that I am unapproachable and distant. You must not mind this weakness or fault." In times of mental stress he was completely silent. Unlike Francis, he could not at will withdraw to pray on Mount La Verna or in the beautiful Italian countryside which he too loved so much.

The first two verses of a poem he wrote illustrate Merry del Val's faith with utter simplicity. Entitled "My Lesson," the poem begins thus:

Only to rest where He puts me,
Only to do His will,
Only to be what He made me,
Though I be nothing still.

Never a look beyond me,
Out of my little sphere,
If I could fill another,
God would not keep me here.

In his spiritual direction Cardinal Merry del Val suggested not only the need to pray well but also the necessity to put "prayer before works, the contemplative before the active life," and above all to abandon ourselves to God's will for us and follow the example of the saints. We who are Franciscan should continue our walk in the steps of Saint Francis and by our example endeavor to win souls. *Da mihi animas—coetera tolle.* Ω

Majestic Whisper

Niagara. . . .

Endless rush of powerful waters
that fall into the depths,
Depths concealed by clouds of misty
spray
I stand and gaze in silent, awesome
wonder.

Niagara. . . .

Would that this view of you for
me might be
A strengthening vision of the power
of God's grace in me.
Yes, may the gentle wetness of your
spray upon my face
Remind me ever of the tender touch
of holy grace.

Sister Marcia Klawon, O.S.F.

Minority in the Book of the Apocalypse

JUDE WINKLER, O.F.M. CONV.

WHEN WE TRY to treat the book of the Apocalypse as a Franciscan theme, we most often speak about the work of Joachim of Fiore and his influence or lack of influence on the Franciscan Order. If not that, our thoughts gravitate to the identification of Francis with the angel of the sixth seal (Apoc. 7:12; cf. LM I.1 [*Omnibus*, 652]). These are not, however, the only ways that the two can be associated. Many of the ideals espoused by Francis of Assisi can be found in the message of the book of the Apocalypse. For example, the call made by Francis for his followers to live in a spirit of minority is one that is central to the message of the Apocalypse. It might be useful for us to examine some passages from that book in order to understand better Francis' call to powerlessness and witness in weakness. This is not to say that Francis would necessarily have had a full understanding of the spirituality of the book of the Apocalypse. Rather, it is a question of the author of the Apocalypse having captured in his drama the kernel of the message of Christ's emptying of himself (*kenosis*)—an ideal which is central to Franciscan spirituality.

The Lion and the Lamb

THE MESSAGE OF THE BOOK of the Apocalypse is integrally bound to the symbols employed by its author, John.¹ John developed a rich matrix of symbolism to communicate with his readers. He drew these symbols and images from various sources, among which were the Old Testament, pagan mythology, and the political world of the First Century. Almost every word that he uses has some type of symbolic meaning. Thus it is essential to decipher his symbolic language to arrive at his core message.

¹This is not to say that the author of this book is John the Apostle or John the Elder, for I believe that John was a pure pseudonym. But for simplicity I shall refer to him as John in this article.

Father Jude Winkler, O.F.M. Conv., S.S.L. (Biblicum, 1984), is an instructor of Sacred Scripture at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary, Granby, MA, and at St. Anthony-on-Hudson Seminary, Rensselaer, NY.

One example of his rich symbolic vocabulary is his use of the images of the lion and the lamb. The lamb, who is a central character in the book, is first presented in chapter 5. Chapter 5 is the second part of a presentation of God to John, the visionary. Chapter 4, which is the first part of that presentation, deals with God the Father—the Creator. Chapter 5 then presents Jesus, the Son of the Father and Redeemer of humanity. John draws his portrait in the following verses:

And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders, I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth; and he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne [5:6-7].

Wealth, power, and fame are illusions; it is in powerlessness, in tossing down one's crown before the throne of God and the Lamb, that one is truly victorious.

Let us examine this description, for it is incredibly rich. First of all, the lamb had been slain. The fact that the lamb was slain points out that this is the paschal lamb. It recalls Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt. This particular lamb, though, is not the Old Testament passover lamb, but rather it is Jesus, the lamb of the New Testament, who died for us on the cross with the meekness of a lamb being led to slaughter (the suffering servant of Isaiah). Like the lamb of the Old Testament, Jesus bought the freedom of his people with the price of his blood. Like the Old Covenant which was ratified when Moses sprinkled the blood of a lamb on the people of Israel, the New Covenant is ratified for each person when he allows himself to be sprinkled with (washed in) the blood of the lamb (baptism).

One would expect that a lamb which had been slain would be lying down. Slain animals are not normally depicted as standing. Yet this lamb can stand because he is no longer bound by the powers of death. He is standing, for the Father has raised him from the dead.

The number *seven*, which is used in the description of the lamb, is a symbolic number that signifies fullness. Thus the fact that the lamb has seven horns means that it has a fullness of the quality which the horns signify: power. Likewise, the seven eyes of the lamb signify its fullness of

the spirit of the Lord. (A lamb with seven horns and seven eyes seems grotesque to us, but the images of the Apocalypse are not intended to be visualized. John uses these words to create an impression rather than a picture—the imagery is verbal and not visual.)

It is this lamb which will be allowed to open the scroll that is sealed. It seems as if the scroll is John's symbol for God's plan of salvation for humanity. The lamb can open the seals of that plan and thus actualize it because he has already caused that plan to bear fruit in his death and resurrection.

Already we can see that the symbolism is rich, but we have reached only the half-way point in our consideration of this lamb. John has written in this chapter that he saw this lamb, but we have yet to find out the full meaning of this vision. Seeing and hearing are closely connected in the book of the Apocalypse. One sees that which is superficial, that which is material—one hears that which is the inner or spiritual significance of what he has seen. We have seen the lamb, but what is its spiritual significance?

The answer to that question lies in an image which preceded this one in verse 5. John was weeping because he feared that no one would be found worthy of opening the scroll. If the scroll were not opened, God's plan of salvation could not be actualized in the world. An elder tried to console John by telling him that there is no need to weep, for the lion of Judah, the root of David, had conquered and he would open the seals.

These two images are thus juxtaposed: the lion and the lamb. The lion of Judah is a symbol of the Messiah, who would come and conquer the enemies of God. The origin of this symbol can be traced to Genesis 49:9:

Judah is a lion's whelp;
from the prey, my son, you have gone up.
He stooped down, he crouched as a lion
and as a lioness; who dares rouse him up?

This lion of Judah became the perfect representation of the Messiah, for the Old Testament expected a hero to come and annihilate the sons of darkness. But instead of coming as a ruthless warrior (as foreseen in the lion image), the lion came as a lamb who allowed himself to be slain. The irony of the message is astounding, for instead of winning his victory by killing like a lion, the Messiah won it by dying. It was in powerlessness that the Messiah conquered the forces of evil.

In presenting this dual image of the lion and the lamb, John manages to reinterpret the whole of the Old Testament expectation for a conquering messiah whose arrival would usher in the Day of Yahweh. Jesus, who, as we have already seen, possessed the fullness of power and of the spirit of

the Lord, let himself be conquered. His being conquered, though, was a defeat only to the eyes of those who saw it without faith. To those with faith, to those with spiritual insight, the death of Jesus was seen for what it really was, the victory of the lion.

To Him Who Conquers

THE IDEA OF conquering is another of the recurring images of the book. Each of the letters to the seven churches of Asia has a promise to those who would conquer. They are promised that they will eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God, that they will not be hurt by the second death, that they will be given the white manna and a white stone with a new name written on it, that they will be given power over the nations, that they will be clad in white garments and not have their names blotted out of the book of the living, that they will be made pillars in the temple of God, and finally that they will sit with Christ and the Father on their throne. All of these promises are rewards for the people who persevere in their witness to the name of the Lord. One may ask, though, What does it mean to conquer? A hint can be found in the last of the promises: "He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne" (3:21). One will receive the reward Christ did because he will have done what Christ did: conquer. It is implied, although not stated openly, that he will have conquered in the same manner in which Christ did: by dying.

This is confirmed when one reads the letters to the seven churches. Those who consider themselves rich and self-sufficient are castigated and warned that they are in peril of being defeated. Those who are poor and defenseless are praised and encouraged to hold out until the end (e.g., Smyrna and Philadelphia). The greatest praise is given to Antipas, a faithful witness who died for the faith, while the sternest rebuke is given to those who have been clever and have thus avoided persecution (Laodicea). The letters leave no doubt—one conquers by the same means by which the Lord conquered: by being powerless and by trusting totally in the love of God.

The Elders: An Exercise in Powerlessness

CHAPTERS 4 AND 5 also see the introduction of a number of other characters, among whom there are the 24 elders. Like all other numbers in the Apocalypse, the number 24 is a symbolic cipher. Exegetes who have studied this image are not sure of its exact meaning, but the two most probable suggestions are that it stands for the 24 courses of Levites who served in the Temple or for the 12 patriarchs and the 12 apostles, who form the firstfruits, respectively, in the old and the new covenant.

In either case, the function of the 24 elders in this section is still the same. They are seated on thrones and crowned with golden crowns. The description is of people who exercise dominion. They exercise that dominion because they have already proven faithful to the Lord, and they are thus entitled to share in his glory and power. Yet,

... whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives for ever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever, they cast their crowns before the throne. . . .

These 24 elders surrender their power and dominion and lay it down before the King. In doing that they most fully exercise the priestly and kingly function. The gospel irony being portrayed is that in grasping power one loses it, but in surrendering power one exercises it most fully.

Tale of Two Women

THE LATER CHAPTERS of the Apocalypse speak of two women: the great prostitute, Babylon, and the New Jerusalem. The former is the representation of a society which tries to be so self-sufficient that it leaves no room for the transcendent. It is said of Babylon:

As she glorified herself and played the wanton,
so give her a like measure of torment and mourning.
Since in her heart she says,
"A queen I sit,
I am no widow,
mourning I shall never see" [18:7].

She has dressed herself in rich vestments, but she will be scripped of all the riches in which she trusts.

The New Jerusalem is the exact opposite of Babylon. She is the society that depends totally upon the Lord. God has cleansed her and bought her for himself. She is the society that suffered in order to give witness to God (like the two witnesses of chapter 11). Because she was faithful, God promises her,

Behold, the dwelling of God is with me. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away [21:3b-4].

The Ideals of Francis

IT MIGHT BE USEFUL at this point to see how Francis expresses many of the same ideas that we have seen in the book of the Apocalypse. He recognizes, for example, the *kenosis* of the Lord (which he most often ex-

presses in terms of the poverty to which the Lord subjected himself):

The friars should be delighted to follow the lowliness and poverty of our Lord Jesus Christ, remembering that of the whole world we must own nothing; but having food and sufficient clothing, with these let us be content, as Saint Paul says. They should be glad to live among social outcasts, among the poor and helpless, the sick and the lepers, and those who beg by the wayside. If they are in want, they should not be ashamed to beg alms, remembering that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the living, all-powerful God, set his face like a very hard rock and was not ashamed. He was poor and he had no home of his own and he lived on alms, he and the Blessed Virgin and his disciples . . . [RegNB 9].



As the author of the Apocalypse spoke in terms of the symbols of the lion and the lamb and the need to conquer as the Lord had conquered, Francis speaks thus of defeating evil:

Our Lord says in the Gospel, Love your enemies. A man really loves his enemy when he is not offended by the injury done to himself, but for love of God feels burning sorrow for the sin his enemy has brought on his own soul, and proves his love in a practical way [Adm. 9].

Since Francis possesses this vision, he is not afraid to exhort his friars to love as Christ had loved, even at the price of persecution and possibly even of their lives:

Look at the Good Shepherd, my brothers. To save his sheep he endured the agony of the cross. They followed him in trials and persecutions, in ignominy, hunger and thirst, in humiliations and temptations, and so on . . . [Adm. 6].

This idea is repeated in Chapter 16 of the First Rule:

No matter where they are, the friars must always remember that they have given themselves up completely and handed over their whole selves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible or invisible, for love of him. He himself tells us, He who loses his life for my sake will save it, for eternal life.

Despite the dignity of the call, Francis disdained the idea that either he or his friars would be called to possess honors. He saw honor for his friars in serving and not in ruling. Consider, e.g., the time Francis begged

Cardinal Hugolino not to name his friars bishops (2Cel 148):

Lord, my brothers are called minors so that they will not presume to become greater. Their vocation teaches them to remain in a lowly station and to follow the footsteps of the humble Christ, so that in the end they may be exalted above the rest in the sight of the saints. If . . . you want them to bear fruit for the church of God, hold them and preserve them in the station to which they have been called, and bring them back to a lowly station, even if they are unwilling. I pray you, therefore, Father, that you by no means permit them to rise to any prelacy, lest they become prouder rather than poorer and grow arrogant toward the rest.

This passage shows that Francis wanted his friars to be truly humble before all. He was afraid that they would become powerful and arrogant (not unlike the Great Prostitute Babylon of the Apocalypse). He wanted them to toss their crowns down before the throne of God and the lamb, and to recognize them as the source of all their power:

We must refer every good to the most high supreme God, acknowledging that all good belongs to him; and we must thank him for it all, because all good comes from him. May the most supreme and high, and only true God receive and have and be paid all honor and reverence, all praise and blessing, all thanks and all glory, for to him belong all good and no one is good but only God . . . [RegNB 17].

This chant of praise is not unlike that of the 24 elders who honor their Lord above all things and who surrender all of their dominion before him. This is what Francis asks his friars to do, to trust totally in the Lord and to praise him above all things.

Conclusions

THESE ARE NOT the only passages that could be studied in the Apocalypse and the writings of Francis. Even from these few examples, though, the message is clear. Both Francis and the Apocalypse speak of surrender to the will of God. God offers us the possibility of giving of ourselves, even to the point of death. It is only by answering that call that we can conquer. Wealth, fame, and power are illusions; it is in powerlessness, in tossing down one's crown before the throne of God and the lamb, that one is truly victorious. Only then can one be worthy of the promises made to him who conquers, for only then will one truly have conquered. Ω

Shorter Book Notices

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

Fundamentalism: What Every Catholic Needs to Know. By Anthony E. Gilles. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. vi-62. Paper, \$3.75.

In a day and age when Catholics are experiencing the loss of loved ones to fundamentalist religions and also coming into contact with their evangelizing efforts, a succinct book on Fundamentalism is handy to have. The author begins by distinguishing fundamentals and fundamentalism, points to the positive features of fundamentalists, and then contrasts Catholic teaching on the Bible with fundamentalist teaching. He then offers short responses to fundamentalist challenges to such Catholic beliefs as the perpetual virginity of Mary, the Mass as sacrifice, and salvation by faith working through charity (as opposed to faith alone). A clear distinction between justification, reception of grace by baptism, the other sacraments, and salvation—final happiness with the Lord—is a valuable part of the book, as is the extended discussion of "rapture." The discussions of the papacy and the Trinity, I found to be too brief (the Trinity has abundant evidence in Scripture). Overall, this is an excellent book for Catholics who feel ill informed about a large number of people they meet and about a widespread religious outlook: Fundamentalism.

To Comfort All Who Mourn: A Parish Handbook for Ministry to the

Grieving. By Carol Luebering. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. vi-96. Paper, \$4.95.

Ministry to the grieving is an idea whose time has come, and *To Comfort All Who Mourn* is an informative and formative source book with which to begin. The author describes her parish structure of ministry to the grieving and its operation. She offers detailed suggestions on the planning of the funeral liturgy with the family and such simple but real ministries as babysitting and providing transportation and food. A third of the book is devoted to the grieving process and ways that people can support one another during it. Also included in this section is a chapter on the limits inherent in ministry to the grieving and a brief description of some support groups. A helpful bibliography on grief and grieving, human resources, and liturgical planning completes the book. *To Comfort All Who Mourn* is highly recommended to all in the parochial ministry and to all adult Christians who sooner or later will grieve or be summoned to practice the corporal work of mercy—bringing comfort to the sorrowful.

Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment. By Joyce Rupp. O.S.M. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 159. Paper, \$4.95.

Fresh Bread is a welcome addition to the growing body of literature on prayer aimed at people who are serious-

ly searching for closeness to God. It is a new-style meditation book with themes for each month of the year, scripture quotes for each day, and questions for journal keeping. Poetic reflections and prayers (in prose) expressing the themes of each chapter complement the material. Among the themes—there are a dozen in all—are "freshness," courage, growth, overcoming worry, generosity, and surrender to the Spirit. Each of these themes is developed in a readable manner on the basis of life experience—more precisely, inner-life experiences, the realm of feelings. The spirit of faith permeates all the reflections, whose purpose is to enable the reader to experience the touch of God in all of life. [Fresh Bread is a book which can help laity and religious alike. Spiritual directors, in particular, should be aware of this valuable introduction to the life of prayer.]

Lazarus Interlude: A Story of God's Healing Love in a Moment of Ministry. By Dennis O'Neill. Introduction by Henri Nouwen. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1983. Pp. 80. Paper, \$2.95

The subtitle of this work expresses quite aptly what it is about: God's healing love in a *moment* of ministry. The "moment" is two weeks of intense concern and involvement on the author's part with a young man dying as a result of his attempts to take his own life. The narrative is a story of faith that works through and awakens love. Father O'Neill's inspiring story is another testimony to the truth that those who minister for the Lord find themselves ministered to, or, as Saint Francis put it, "it is in giving that we receive."

Shorter Book Notices

MICHAEL J. TAYLOR, O.F.M.CONV.

The Sunday Readings. By Albert J. Nevins, M.M. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 143. Paper, \$5.95.

homilists, liturgical planning teams, and lectors to obtain a sound yet concise overview of the Scriptures for any of the Sundays or important feasts.

This book, written in a concise form, treats the theme, responsorial psalm, and scripture readings of each cycle of every Sunday of the liturgical year. Included in the collection are the Holy Days (Assumption, All Saints, etc.) and the major feasts—the Presentation, Birth of St. John the Baptist, Sts. Peter and Paul, Triumph of the Cross, and Dedication of St. John Lateran. The book can be used as a valuable tool for

How Blest You Are: A Living-Room Retreat Based on the Beatitudes. By Sister Helen Cecilia Swift, S.N.D. de N. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. 85. Paper, \$3.50.

The aim of this book is exactly what the title implies: namely, to aid the in-

dividual in making a self-directed private retreat. The plan of the retreat follows a consistent format of five proposed scriptural meditations each week ranging over a period of eight weeks. The author has included in her introduction a suggested style of making the retreat. While the book is valuable for the nursing home/hospital patient or house-bound person, it may also prove to be an aid for the lay person or religious who commutes to work daily.

Your Child's First Communion: Reflections for Parents on the Meaning of Eucharist. By Carol Luebering. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. 32. Paper, \$1.35.

Printed in pamphlet form, this book is evidently offered to parents with a deep understanding on the author's part of their anxieties and hopes in regard to the preparation of their children for reception of the Sacraments. It deals, not so much with the strictly theological explanation of the Eucharist, as with acquainting one's son or daughter with the importance of, and personal experience with, our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Especially helpful are the discussion starters at the

end of each chapter. These can be of great value for the pastor or religious education coordinator involved in preparing parents and children for a meaningful encounter with our Eucharistic Lord.

Alone with God: A Guide for a Personal Retreat. By Ron DeBene with Herb Montgomery. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1984. Pp. iv-128. Paper, \$4.95.

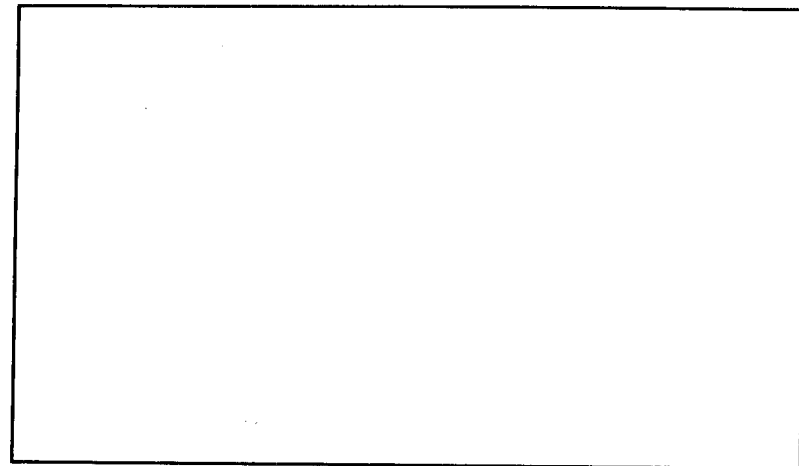
This book synthesizes a number of prayer styles into a unified, disciplined approach for someone who seriously wants to deepen his or her prayer life. The author lays out a schema (pp. 1-31) and from there divides the retreat into nine sessions. Although the author suggests time limits for various activities of this self-directed retreat, the recommended activities (scripture reading, journal-writing, personal prayer, etc.) lend themselves to an unpressured and reflective experience. The Prayers in the last part of the book (pp. 109ff), if prayed attentively over a period of time, provide the reader/retreatant with a fine opportunity for "prayer in the market-place."

Books Received

- Breault S.J., William, *A Voice over the Water: An Invitation to Pray*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 111. Paper, \$4.95.
- Craghan, John F., *The Psalms: Prayers for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens of Life (A Literary-Experiential Approach)*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 200, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.
- Frend, W.H.C., *Saints and Sinners in the Early Church: Differing and Conflicting Traditions in the First Six Centuries*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 183, including Index. Paper, \$8.95.
- O'Neill, Dennis, *Lazarus Interlude: A Story of God's Healing Love in a Moment of Ministry*. Introduction by Henri Nouwen. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1983. Pp. 80. Paper, \$2.95.
- Riley, William, *The Bible Study Group: An Owner's Manual*. Drawings by Theo Payne. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 152. Paper, \$7.95.

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Francis' Compassion at San Damiano

DID YOU EVER THINK that Saint Francis considered the life at San Damiano rather harsh and possibly a bit too austere for the Poor Ladies? Both the Legend of Perugia and the Mirror of Perfection would lead us to believe that it was such compassion for them that caused him to write a fourth private letter to them to encourage them in their way of life. According to the Legends,

When he thought of them [the Poor Ladies], his spirit was always moved to pity because he knew that from the beginning of their conversion they had led and were still leading an austere and poor life by free choice and out of necessity [LP 45; *Omnibus*, 1025].

and "... knowing from the beginning of their conversion they had led a life of great confinement and poverty, he always felt the greatest pity and compassion for them ..." (SP 90; *Omnibus*, 1223).

Indirectly, Francis appears to be blaming himself for their condition since it was through his inspiration and by his example that they had given up all things and enclosed themselves at San Damiano. He knew that according to the Church women religious must remain enclosed, mainly for their own protection; but he further knew that neither his sympathy nor any suggestion to ease their way of life would change the hearts and minds of Clare and her sisters. So, wisely, he encouraged them in the way of life they had so zealously embraced. His fourth private letter to the Poor Ladies is, in a sense, more directive about how they should live their life than even the Formula Vitae he had written for them (*Omnibus*, 76). In the latter document he simply confirms them in their inspiration to live according to the perfection of the Holy Gospel and promises to care for them personally and through his brothers. But in his fourth letter to the Sisters (*Omnibus*, rev. ed., 1944), he gives them a more practical way of living out the spirit of their vocation. It is as though Francis himself had done a great deal of negotiating on the place of the Poor Ladies in the Church and had finally realized fully the value of the enclosed life and the manner in which it could be lived out for the salvation of souls. Instead of allowing his compassion and pity to be

manifested to them, then, he encourages them in the way in which they have begun under obedience to the Spirit; he admonishes them to use wisely the alms given to them; and he goes a step further by mentioning how the ill and the well should act in light of their condition in the monastery.

Francis' own interior insight tells him to instruct the ill to accept their illness as a great labor for the good of the universal Church and to urge that those who are well and serve the ill should care for them in that same spirit. Thus he is able to give the Sisters a universal, catholic understanding of their way of life. He and his brothers had no problem seeing their labors as universal—as important to the Church; and often they even saw the fruits of their labors. But realizing how little fruit would be apparent to the Poor Ladies in their hidden lives of prayer within the enclosure, he draws this explicit connection for them, between their hidden lives and the life of the universal Church. Ω

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C.

Go Forth, My Soul

Over Umbrian hills your laughter rang—
 dear Clare, the silent one;
 Your footsteps swift and soundless
 praising Brother Sun.
 Hands held out to you were filled,
 and broken hearts were healed.
 The desperate, the leprous one
 all hurts to you revealed.
 Your constant gaze at the Eucharist
 effected many a cure,
 But it was your life of holiness
 that did God allure.
 "Go forth, my soul," you could surely say
 with faith and certitude,
 For Christ awaited His poor bride
 amidst heaven's multitude.

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C.

Clare of Assisi: The Mirror Mystic

REGIS J. ARMSTRONG, O.F.M.CAP.

THE JAPAN TIMES of 14 May, 1982, contained a cultural note by columnist Lewis Bush describing for curious Westerners the three *Sanshu no Jingi* or Imperial Treasures of Japan: the sacred sword, the jewel, and the mirror. In discussing these symbols of sovereignty, the author singled out the mirror and wrote: "The mirror is to be found in the place of the deity in all Japanese shrines, for it is symbolic of the human heart and is said to reflect the image of a god."

Is it all that surprising that the Japanese count the mirror as one of their ancient imperial treasures? People have been fascinated with these shining reflective objects for centuries, as archeological excavations and ancient literature have so frequently proven. How many stories or images of our traditions capture or portray people staring at themselves or sneaking glances in a mirror! There seems to be something expressed by a mirror concerning our sense of vanity; perhaps this alone is a key to understanding its place as an important fixture in the homes of so many. At the same time, the mirror also reflects our sense of propriety—the haunting questions of everyday life: "Do I look all right?" or "Are my clothes in place or properly matched?" The Japanese have been honest enough, then, to realize these two concerns of human nature—vanity and propriety—and have rightly enshrined something close to the human heart, a mirror, as something that reflects to us the image of the god that we might see in ourselves.

Father Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., is Vice-Rector of the Athenaeum Antonianum in Rome, a Consulting Editor of this Review, and a member of the staff of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University. All citations of the writings of Saint Clare are from the translation Father Regis published in collaboration with Father Ignatius C. Brady, O.F.M. (see the inside front cover of this issue).

It is a curious point that within the Platonic tradition the mirror is also enshrined. Plato himself wrote of the mirror of the world and of created things that reflect the divine Ideas (*Republic*, VI [509c-510a]). One of his most prolific disciples, Philo, in commenting on the Exodus of the Chosen People, used the mirror as a metaphor to describe the soul's passage from knowledge of self to moral purification and from knowledge of the sensible world to knowledge of the intellect. Philo, furthermore, linked the reflection of a mirror with the illusions and fallacies that can be discovered in the world in which we live (*De migratione*, 17; *Vita Moysis*, II, 15). The biblical Book of Wisdom obviously reflects this Platonic approach as we see Wisdom referred to as "that spotless mirror of God" (7:26). The theme easily passes into the New Testament literature, as Paul writes: "Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12a); and again, "... we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect" (2 Cor. 3:18). Paul is clearly referring to us, his readers, as mirrors reflecting the love of God to one another in the first instance, while in the second he writes of the effects of contemplation of the Lord. James, meanwhile, uses both of these senses in his Letter (1:23-24), as he considers the person who listens to the word of God and pays no attention to it. "To listen to the word and not obey," he writes, "is like looking at your features in a mirror and then, after a quick look, going off and immediately forgetting what you looked like."

It is this life of
contemplation—contemplation of "the
mirror of eternity"—that leads to
transformation into the image of God.

Thus we discover in ancient literature, both secular and religious, a fascination with this reflective, frequently highly polished piece of metal and find it becoming an apt image for the search for self-knowledge, moral or inner purification, or the assimilation of a moral ideal. As William Johnston, S.J., notes in his book, *The Mirror Mind*, it is one of the most prominent theological symbols of the spiritual tradition, not only in the Judeo-Christian world, but also in Hindu and Buddhist literature.

It is difficult to know how Clare of Assisi (†1253) learned of this image; yet among the great medieval mystics she uses the mirror theme in a most beautiful way. When we consider the poverty of sources concerning Clare, especially the small number of her writings that have been left to us—we have only five works: her Rule and four letters to Agnes of Prague, which have been definitely authenticated—the theme of the mirror becomes a central theme in her spiritual theology. No doubt Clare, a somewhat well-to-do young woman of Assisi, used a mirror during those carefree days prior to her embrace of religious life. This may have prompted her sensitivity to and appreciation of the mirror as a valuable instrument of spiritual growth as she heard of it through the friars, monks, and clergy who visited her in the little monastery of San Damiano. Herbert Grabes, a German medieval scholar, discovered 250 works written in the Middle Ages that contained the Latin word *speculum* (mirror) or its equivalent in the title. Thus we can see not only Clare's feminine attraction to the image, but also a "mirror literature" that was well established at the time she entered religious life.

For the medieval author the mirror signified a tableau, a portrait or a description upon which a bystander could gaze and receive information or norms for everyday life. Two styles of mirror emerge in the literature of the Middle Ages: the instructive, and the exemplary. Among the mirrors of "instructive" spiritual literature—that which assists us to know an ideal and to confront ourselves in light of it—we discover the *Speculum Ecclesiae* of Hugh of Saint Victor (†1141) and the *Speculum Universale* of Raoul Ardent (†1200). Some titles of works in the "exemplary" spiritual literature—which presents a normative knowledge or a vision of self leading to moral or spiritual purification—are the *Speculum Fidei* of William of Saint Thierry (†1148), the *Speculum Caritatis* of Aelred of Rievaulx (†1166), and the *Speculum Virginum* by an unknown author of the twelfth century that teaches the virgin "how to please the eternal Spouse through the beauty of a holy conscience." All of these works contain moral directives for dispelling sin, purifying the conscience, and disclosing illusions; and all use the simple act of looking into a mirror as a technique of spiritual growth. It is not likely that Clare read these works—there is no evidence of a library at San Damiano and no information on her literary background. Therefore, we must suppose that she heard this mirror imagery used in the sermons or conferences delivered by those who ministered to or visited the Poor Ladies at San Damiano. These would have been not only friars, but also Cistercians, curial officials, cardinals, and even the popes.

Clare's use of the mirror, however, enriches the literature by applying the mirror approach to spiritual development as a woman. Clare is far

more graphic or practical in suggesting the use of the mirror than the male authors had been. "Inasmuch as this vision is . . . the mirror without blemish," she writes, "look upon that mirror each day and study your face within it, so that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes and cover yourself with the flowers and garments of all the virtues" (Letter IV to Agnes of Prague, 14-17). This is a truly feminine piece of advice: practical, concrete, down-to-earth. We do not discover in other medieval literature the same directives of looking upon the mirror each day, studying our faces within it, or adorning or covering ourselves with the virtues perceived. Moreover, as a woman, Clare deftly uses the medieval mirror, which as a convex surface has many dimensions, to reflect different aspects of the same mysteries found in the Incarnate Word. "Look at the parameters of this mirror," she exhorts us, "at [its] surface, [and] in [its] depths" (Letter IV, 19-23). At every turn, Clare perceives new aspects of the "marvelous humility, astonishing poverty, and ineffable charity" of Christ her Spouse (cf. Letter IV, 18-23).



Above all, though, Clare's use of the mirror image reflects a profound Christocentric focus in her spiritual life and greatly contributes to the development of the Christ-Mirror theology based on Wisdom 7:26 and developed in the Pauline writings and the Letter of James. The mystery of the Incarnate Word permeates the writings of Clare from the earliest Letter to Agnes of Prague (1234/35) to her last written work, her Rule, which was approved in 1253, a few days before her death. In many ways Clare brings attention to "the King of the angels, the Lord of heaven and earth" (Letter IV, 21) and repeatedly advises Agnes of Prague and her own sisters at San Damiano to keep him always before their eyes. "As a poor virgin, embrace the poor Christ," she urges Agnes; and in her Testament she reminds her sisters that "the Son of God became for us the Way (cf. Jn. 14:6) which our Blessed Father Francis, his true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example" (Test 2). Above all, Christ is the Mirror "suspend-

ed on the wood of the cross" who prompts within us a more and more

fervent expression of love (cf. Letter IV, 24, 27), and from this perspective we see Clare, the Mirror Mystic, shine brilliantly and clearly in her writings.

It is in the Third Letter to Agnes of Prague that we find Clare introduce the image of the mirror for the first time. After encouraging Agnes to persevere in the demanding life of poverty and enclosure which she had recently embraced, Clare writes:

Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!

Place your soul in *the brilliance of glory!*

Place your heart in *the figure of the divine substance* [cf. Heb. 1:3]!

And transform your whole being into the image of the Godhead through contemplation [Letter III, 12-13].

This could only be the advice of a contemplative person: place your mind, soul, and heart before and in the presence of the transcendent God! It is a call to put aside all cares, preoccupations, and worries and to be changed into the image of God through a life of contemplative prayer. A century before, the Cistercian mystical theologian William of Saint Thierry had written:

Since the human person still sees in a mirror and in an enigma passes like an image, it is in a mirror that we are taught by metaphor, and it is by a yet more obscure enigma that we are trained, in the simple and evident image that we are more sweetly affected [*Mirror of Faith*, 23; p. 55].

This would be too abstract or philosophical for Clare. She sees the struggle in much simpler terms which can be stated thus: "Gaze into the mirror that is Christ, and let yourself be like him." It is this life of contemplation—contemplation of "the mirror of eternity"—that leads to transformation into the image of God.

One curious aspect of this passage is the rather obscure manner in which Clare encourages Agnes to this contemplation of Christ. The two passages taken from Hebrews 1:3 are clearly Christological; yet, taken out of context and used as they are in this Third Letter, their Christological dimension can easily be overlooked. Perhaps Clare is simply exhorting Agnes to embrace a life of contemplation in the "light of God's countenance"—as William of Saint Thierry describes it—"that is, in the mirror that is the vision of God" (*Golden Epistle*, II, xvii, 271). Perhaps her use of an image of the glorious Christ was meant to provide Agnes with a more consoling means of perseverance in the contrasting life of poverty and hiddenness that she more seriously embraced at the time she composed this letter. (Gregory IX's Bull, *Pia credulitate tenentes*, acknowledges Agnes' renunciation of a somewhat active ministry in a hospice for the poor, to live an enclosed life of poverty and

contemplative prayer.) Whatever the case may be, Clare encourages a position of prayer before the mirror of eternity, Christ; for that mirror reflects the glory of the Father and gives us knowledge of his being. Such an attitude of contemplative prayer encourages acceptance of the difficulties and tensions assumed in our daily following of Jesus.

Fifteen years later, however, we find Clare taking a different approach in her use of the mirror theme. The Fourth Letter presents us with excerpts from the same passage in Hebrews, as well as that key phrase of the Book of Wisdom which, as we have seen, calls Wisdom "the brilliance of eternal light and the mirror without blemish" (Letter IV, 14). But we are confronted with those virtues of poverty, humility, and charity that Clare sees in the reflection of the mirror. Throughout the next section there is a beautiful blending of images: the spatial—the parameters, surface, and depth of the medieval convex mirror; and the temporal—the infancy, hidden years, and crucifixion. From every angle, in other words, the scenes and events of Christ's life reflect the same characteristics or virtues, although the image is brought to clear focus in the crucified Lord whom Clare pointedly identifies as the Mirror. "That Mirror," she writes, "suspended on the wood of the Cross, urged those who passed by to consider, saying, 'All you who pass by the way, look and see if there is any suffering like my suffering'" (Letter IV, 24–25). Thus her metaphor now brings into focus the reflection of the Incarnate Word and encourages us to concentrate on its clearest expression, the Crucifixion. Clare beautifully returns to a Christ-Mirror typology missing in the earlier medieval spiritual writers but contained in such apocryphal literatures as the *Ode of Solomon* and the *Acts of John*. "Christ himself is a Mirror in whom each person can know himself," we find in these works—a sentiment that is echoed in the thought of this thirteenth-century contemplative woman. Yet Clare presents this thought in a far more concrete, fleshed-out Christology which was becoming more and more typical of the Franciscan school, and in doing so she contributes to the mirror literature of Christian spiritual theology.

At about this time the famous Dominican theologian Thomas Aquinas wrote in his *De Veritate* (XII, 6): "You will never find the saints saying that God is a mirror of things, but that created things are themselves the mirror of God." This is the marvelous understanding in Clare's use of the mirror image that we find as we blend the images of the Third and Fourth Letters to Agnes of Prague. Christ, the Son of God, became like us creatures and as such mirrored or reflected "the splendor of eternal glory," "the brilliance of eternal light," and "the figure of the divine substance." More wondrously, however, Jesus, the God-man, is the mirror giving us reflections of the qualities or characteristics of God: his

"blessed poverty, holy humility, and ineffable charity." This Mirror, Christ, not only reflected for Clare the indescribable attributes of glory, wonder, and brilliance; he also revealed those qualities that are so endearing, appealing, and irresistible to the human spirit and that prompt deeper and more thorough expressions of love.

This consideration of "creatureliness" may possibly have led Clare to move from her focus on Christ the Mirror to the challenge of her own life and those of her sisters to become mirrors themselves.

It is difficult to know when Clare wrote her Testament. There is so little written about this document in her early biographical material and the manuscript tradition is so weak that some critics have suggested that she never wrote it at all. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to consider the Testament as a work of the last years of Clare's life. Certainly many of the issues or themes found in this document can be found in the Rule as well as in her final letter to Agnes of Prague which, as we have seen, dates from the last year of Clare's life. When we examine these three documents—the Testament, the Rule, and the Fourth Letter—in close proximity, we appreciate Clare's vision of the role she and her sisters have in the plan of God.

The sixth section of this document uses the mirror metaphor in three instances as Clare encourages the Ladies of San Damiano to consider their vocation:

For the Lord himself has not only set us as an example and mirror for others, but also for our [own] sisters whom the Lord has called to our way of life, so that they in turn will be a mirror and example to those living in the world. Since, therefore, the Lord has called us to such great things that those who are to be models and mirrors for others may behold themselves in us, we are truly bound to bless and praise the Lord and to be strengthened constantly in him to do good [Test 6].

We can easily see Clare revealing her understanding of life in San Damiano as a reflection of that "Mirror suspended on the wood of the Cross." In this sentiment, is she not echoing that thought of Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (see above) which encourages contemplation of "the brightness of the Lord . . . as we are turned into the images that we reflect"?

As we have seen, Clare encourages Agnes of Prague to look upon the Mirror, Christ, every day and to study her face within it. She gives her this piece of feminine advice in the hope that Agnes will change her outward appearance by adorning herself within and without with those virtues revealed in Christ. It is a simple call to become a reflection of that upon which she is gazing. Clare gives essentially the same advice to her sisters at San Damiano in her declaration that the Lord has set them as an

example and mirror for one another, for sisters of other monasteries, and for those living in the world. It is as if Clare discovered this means of perseverance—reflecting daily on the mirror that is Christ Jesus—and then realized that this summarized or captured succinctly an essential element of the life of San Damiano, of her enclosed sisters throughout the world and throughout history. Thus the followers of Clare have lived their calling in history, contemplating the mystery of the poor, humble Christ and becoming a reflection of him to one another and to those of us who are called to live a Christ-like life in the world.

The mirror: that simple, reflective, polished piece of metal that has fascinated us in so many lands and in so many times, can be seen as a prominent theme of spiritual literature. It is certainly one key opening the treasures of that great contemplative woman, Clare of Assisi. She would have it become a tool or instrument of spiritual growth especially for her followers, who are called to live one of the most demanding and challenging vocations of all enclosed women religious.

The author notes, in the article from the *Japan Times* we cited at the outset:

Mythology records that Izanagi, the male creative deity, gave his children a polished silver disc before which he bade them kneel each morning and examine their reflection, counseling themselves to think of heavenly matters, subdue passions and all evil thoughts, in order that the mirror reveal a pure and lovely soul.

Clare, like many other Christian authors, realized that Christ himself is that silver disc, that Mirror. It is he who calls us to reveal God in our poor, humble, pure, and lovely souls. Ω

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"In the Name of the Lord. Amen":

Clare's Testament, and the Spirit of Prayer

SISTER DIANA VAN BAER, O.S.C.

THE "PRAISES OF THE TESTAMENT," traditionally read with Clare's Testament, speaks of an incorruptible testament of love, a desirable treasure of poverty, of the legacy left by Clare to her sisters. What was Clare's legacy? During her life, the praise of God was always on her lips; she would tell the sisters that they should praise God for every beautiful, green and flowering tree that they saw, for every human being that they met, for every creature. For all of these—always and in all things—God should be praised. When she came to write her Testament, the same message is present: the thing she really wanted to leave her sisters, when the time came for her death—the most important gift she had for them, as for us today—was just this quality that she herself possessed so fully, and that led her always, and in all things, to praise God for all she saw. She was able to recognize his gifts, to be aware of them, to dwell on them, to rejoice in them, to remember them, and to confess them. If we can do the same, we too will praise him and bless him, we will thank him, and give him the glory.

Clare begins her Testament: "In the name of the Lord. Amen. Among the many graces we have received. . . ." And then she stops. She seems almost to interrupt herself, as though this is too cold, too bare a statement. It is not a past gift she wants to talk about, but an ever-present giving, which establishes and maintains a living link between the Father and herself—between the Father and us. So she adds: "and continue daily to receive"—which we are receiving every day. It is increasingly given, for though it is a gift, whole and entire at the beginning, it is given afresh every day, and with each passing day the gift grows, its content becomes richer and deeper, and this depth and richness is still gift. In the same

Sister Diana van Baer writes from the Bethlehem Monastery of Poor Clares, Campbelltown, New South Wales.

way life itself is a daily gift, and one which we fully discover and appreciate only when it has grown to maturity. Only as we grow older and wiser do we come to know more fully what the life God gave us at birth is about—just as a plant, a tree, or a shrub that we are given as a slip, and which grows over the years, is every bit as much a gift at the end as the original slip from which it grew; by our tender care we have helped it grow, but it is still gift.

"Among the many graces which we have received, and continue daily to receive, from the liberality of the Father of mercies"—Clare's actual words are "from our giver, the Father of mercies," and it was important to Clare that he is *our* benefactor, *our* Father—"and for which we must give deepest thanks to our glorious God, our vocation holds first place. Indeed because it is the more perfect and the greater among these graces so much the more does it claim our gratitude. Therefore the apostle says, 'Know your vocation.' " We see here both a mounting sense of praise to the Father ("to him most glorious") and an insistence that we should not, through false humility, hesitate to acknowledge the greatness of God's call, for the word Clare uses, *agnosce*, implies knowing the full worth of something, recognizing it for what it is in fact.

Do I know what Christ has done to me?
All prayer is concerned with answering
this question, with trying to fathom
God's action in my life.

She then tells us what that vocation is, for "the Son of God became for us the WAY, and that way our blessed father Francis, his true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example." So this vocation is not only to be accepted from God; it comes to us through Francis, and from him, for not only are we to consider the immense gifts which God has showered upon us, but we should especially consider those he has worked in us through Francis. And Clare does consider them. Rollo May interprets "to consider something" as to take a starry eyed view of it, to look at it from the vantage point of the stars, to see it in God's light. And this is what Clare does: she dwells on the gifts God has showered upon her, she describes them in detail. Referring to her life before she knew Francis, she tells of the incident when Francis, before he had either brethren or companions, immediately after his own conversion, while he

was building the Church of San Damiano, had prophesied "concerning us what the Lord later fulfilled." She does not hesitate to say that the Lord *had* fulfilled Francis' prophecy, and that the Father had been glorified by her life and the lives of her sisters.

Clare was not afraid to recognize what God was doing for her, and through her, as through the little group gathered around her. Why should she be? It reflected on him, not on herself. This was the Lord's doing; so why should she not rejoice? This is an important element in her understanding of God: she can acknowledge his work in her, for as Paul pointed out to the Corinthians, the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving will well up to the glory of God. "Made richer in every way you will be able to do all the generous things which, through us, are the cause of thanksgiving to God . . . thus increasing the amount of thanksgiving that God receives . . . , for that makes them give glory to God" (2 Cor. 9:12). Paul even makes this the reason he asks for their prayers: "The more people there are asking for help for us, the more will be giving thanks when it is granted to us." So Clare rejoiced in what God had done for her, just as Mary glorified God for the great things he had done.

Perhaps this was one way in which Clare allowed her devotion to the Eucharist to shape her very life and being, in shaping her attitude to prayer. Francis wrote about the Eucharist, and he spoke of reverence for it and for all connected with it; and though Clare in her writings has little to say on this, there is a strong tradition among the Clares of devotion to Christ present in the Eucharist—a devotion which is rooted in Clare's relation to Christ so present. We know that this relation was very real, and that it exercised a profound influence on Clare—it was to Christ present in the Eucharist that she turned, confident in his will and power to help, on the occasion of the Saracen invasion and when the monastery was threatened; and much of her time was spent sewing for the churches around Assisi so that they would be fitting places for Christ's presence.

The Greek term *Eucharist* includes both blessing and giving thanks, as does the Hebrew *Barak*. While our Eucharist is a sacrifice, then, it is more: it is also a prayer of blessing and a prayer of thanksgiving. For the Jew, to bless and to give thanks for something or somebody are not two activities, but one. Not only are blessing and giving thanks related—thanksgiving and remembering are also interconnected. Thanksgiving is calling to mind the things we have to be grateful for, thinking of them, remembering that for which we wish to give thanks, recognizing and acknowledging that they have happened. This remembering, thanking, blessing type of prayer, so deeply rooted in Old Testament piety, was very alive to people of the Middle Ages. They were

at home with it, and Clare was shaped by it. In the face of God's goodness to her, of the greatness of his mercy, this thanksgiving became a necessity for her, the foundation of her prayer, as it is the basis of all Christian prayer. Essentially it is a type of prayer which is itself a response to the word of God which is recognized as a living reality that has intervened personally in life, a response to the goodness of God towards oneself. Clare was so conscious of this action of God in her life, that she could not but give him praise and glory. Somehow the presence of God is reason enough for this blessing of him, as when the shepherds at Bethlehem (having found Jesus with Mary, as they had been told) went away blessing and glorifying God.

Not only is it important to recognize God's gifts and to rejoice in them, for Clare it was also important that she recognize how, and through whom, they came to her. She would not have us ignore the human channels, the real people who have loved us and led us to God; we are not to climb up to him with their help, and then knock them out of the way or try to do without them. They remain an important part of life and of prayer. That we can take comfort, strength, and consolation from their influence on us and the help they have given us in our life with God—this is an added reason for giving glory to God:

In this therefore we can behold the great kindness of God towards us, who of the abundance of his mercy and love deigned to speak thus through his saint of our vocation and election. And it was not of us alone that our most blessed Father prophesied these things, but of all others likewise who were to enter the holy calling to which God has called us.

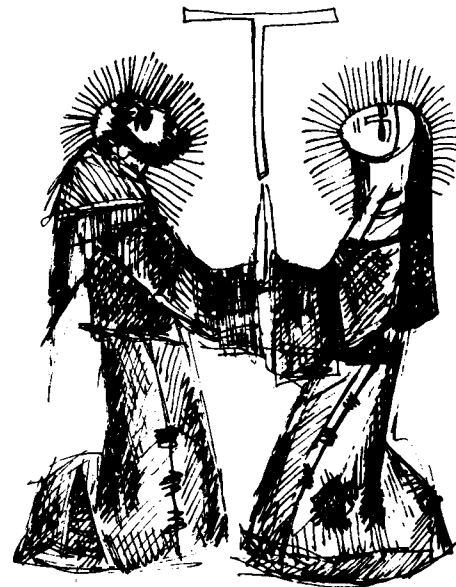
So Clare is comforted, and she includes us in that comfort. But she is also realistic. It is not only comfort and strength that this thought brings, it places upon us the responsibility of making some return: "With what solicitude, therefore, and fervor of mind and body must we not observe the commandments of God and of our Father, that with the help of God we may return to him with increase the talent he has given us." And it is in this that we are to be an example and a mirror for those living in the world, so that this in turn is reason for praising God—for being strengthened in the Lord more and more to do good.

In this first section of the Testament several words occur which are important for prayer. We are to *give deepest thanks* to our God, to *consider* the immense benefits he has showered upon us, to *glorify* our heavenly Father, to *behold* the great kindness of God towards us, to *observe* the commandments of God, to *return* to him with increase our talent, to *bless* the Lord, to *praise* him, to be *strengthened in him* to do good. What is this but prayer—a deep awareness of God's action in our life, and a response in love to all that he is doing there? Alan Ecclestone, in *Yes to*

God, speaks of prayer as making the most of our moments of perception—our praying is what we have managed to make of life so far, and our desires for the continuance of the journey; it notices and interprets what we have come to know of the God who acts upon us and of faith, hope, piety, and love. He laments that so often we fail to hold our current experience within the field of the spirit long enough to understand what it is about, and what it is that God is doing in our lives. When Christ had washed his disciples' feet, he asked them: "Do you know what I have done to you?" He asks this same question of us all, and he asks it in all sorts of situations. Do I know what Christ has done to me? All prayer is concerned with answering this question, with trying to fathom God's action in my life.

So when Clare thinks of her conversion and her promise of obedience to Francis, she is not afraid to dwell on what God had done for her through Francis, and to draw comfort from it; she recalls that Francis himself rejoiced greatly in the Lord upon seeing her closeness to God and her response to God and that of the first sisters, ready and eager as they were to embrace a life of penance. Moved to love for them, "he bound himself always to have, in his own person or through his order, the same diligent care and special solicitude for us as for his own friars." She insists that he was to her a pillar of strength, and after God her one consolation and support. He was founder, planter, helper in the service of Christ: ever solicitous in word and work to foster Clare and her sisters, "his little plants." She speaks of a very real, human, loving care on the part of Francis; she expresses how important it was in her life; she remembers it with gratitude and rejoices in it—and it forms a significant element of her prayer of blessing and thanksgiving.

The Rule for a New Brother speaks of prayer as an "echo of our life"; if it is an echo, then everything in life, all that is real in it, must find a place in our prayer. We are perhaps more used to taking the difficult situations



of life to prayer, as we struggle to bring our lives into tune with what God is doing, but the good parts of life belong there too, and maybe they are the more important part of prayer. As for Clare herself, she can no longer separate out Francis' action in her life from God's, just as she could not talk of her promise to Francis apart from her promise to God:

For love of that Lord who was poor in the crib, who lived a poor life, and who hung naked on the gibbet of the Cross, may the Lord Cardinal always cause his little flock to observe the holy poverty which we have promised God and our most blessed father Francis, and may he always strengthen and preserve them in this poverty. For this is the little flock which the Lord and Father has begotten in his holy Church by the word and example of the blessed father Francis, who followed the poverty and humility of his beloved Son, and of the glorious Virgin, his Mother.

But there is another aspect of Clare's life and prayer, which is also reflected in her Testament. Prayer is not only blessing and thanksgiving for all that God has done in our lives; there is another element, as we struggle with the difficulties of life, the things we find hard to accept in ourselves or in others, the things we don't like and don't want, the calls from God to go beyond—sometimes far beyond—that for which we feel able, the call to cope with the one situation we had hoped we would never have to face, the acceptance of failure or limitation of any kind.

Clare faced these too. She recalls that after her decision to do penance she promised obedience to Francis; only when he saw her readiness for a life of penance did he finally give her a rule of life. Her obedience to Francis presupposed this readiness for a life of penance, but it was penance lived within the context of a vowed life, a life of obedience.

How do we see Clare's approach to penance? Her conversion, her life of penance, was a life of going continually deeper into the mystery of God. The Son of God *was* her WAY, and when we travel this way many things in our life will seem out of place; as we discover God, or are discovered by him, we must leave behind anything we see in our lives that is incompatible with what we discover, that he shows us to be out of place, that cannot stand before his gaze. Speaking to Agnes of Prague about penances, Clare insists that "by thy life thou praise God." It is this that is important, not what we do, but our very life. Is this a life of penance? Or is it a life of prayer?

In her Second Letter to Agnes, Clare writes: "Behold him, consider him, contemplate him, imitate him"—desire to be like him. This is a description of a life given over to prayer, but also of a life of penance. The phrase so familiar to us from Vatican II, "constant prayer and ready penance," is no cliché; the two go hand in hand and must of their very nature do so. We cannot support a life of penance unless we are living a

deeply prayerful life; it can be sustained only by a life of prayer. This is borne out in the Rule (ch. X) where Clare urges us to "strive above all things to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy operation, to *pray* always to him with a pure heart, and to have humility, patience in tribulation and infirmity, and to love those who persecute, reprehend, and blame us"—prayer and penance.

That Clare herself had to face up to this leaving behind of anything that God shows us is out of place in our lives, anything contrary to his will and call for us, and that she had a real struggle in accepting the one situation she had hoped she would never have to face, is indicated in the Testament, when she speaks of the role of Abbess.

We know that Clare had a deep reluctance to take on this office and refused to do so in the first years at San Damiano. It was only at Francis' insistence that she finally accepted it. This was one of the very few instances where Francis intervened explicitly, and she was called on to obey in an area where she found great difficulty. Strangely enough, she never resigned the office, though Francis' example in resigning as Minister General might have urged her to do so, to lay aside the burden and leave the governance of the community to another. She did not do this, and it seems worthwhile to ponder why she did not. After all, forty years is a long time; there must have been others who could have taken her place.

In wondering why, I think we find the clue where Clare speaks of the role of Abbess and that of the sisters. It is significant that in the Testament she uses the very words Francis used in *his* Testament to describe what took place when he overcame his reluctance and repugnance to kiss the leper. He says,

When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me.

The Latin has *Quod videbatur mihi amarum conversum fuit mihi in dulcedinem animi et corporis*—what seemed to me bitter, was changed into sweetness of soul and body.

For Francis this was a formative experience, which led him far beyond what he felt drawn to or could have done naturally—a real going beyond himself to find God's will in place of what he himself wanted. Clare took up these words to describe her own experience of going beyond what she felt she could cope with; towards the end of her Testament she urges ready obedience upon the sisters in accord with their promise to the Lord, and then she continues: "Thus the mother, seeing their charity and humility and the unity that exists among them, will carry more lightly

the burdens of her office, and what is painful and bitter will, by their holy living, be turned to sweetness for her." In Latin: *Quod molestum est et amarum, propter sanctam earum conversationem, ei in dulcedinem convertatur*. What is troublesome and bitter will, on account of their holy living, be turned to sweetness for her.

Not what *seems* bitter, as with Francis, but what *is* bitter—and burdensome. Where Francis found peace as he took pity on the lepers among whom the Lord led him, and in a way it was the lepers who helped Francis experience this peace as it was through them that his life and God's will coincided, so Clare found peace with her sisters, in whose midst the Lord placed her as mother and Abbess—and it was through their holy living that she came to experience this peace. Why was it such a bitter thing for her—*molestum et amarum*—to be Abbess? And why did she so long resist it? Her choice of words, modeled on those of Francis, indicates that it was indeed, like his, an experience that was to be decisive in her following of the Lord, and one in which she was to find peace and sweetness as she left behind her own will and preference to follow where the Lord led.

The reason may be connected with Clare's background: her family belonged to the upper classes of Assisi, and the traditional role of Abbess was very like the role she would have played had she made a good marriage. Was this why Clare feared the position of Abbess; was she afraid that she would be unable to rise above it—that she would become a great lady with authority over a large household and many servants under her care and direction? Perhaps she was afraid of this, terribly afraid of being sucked back into the very type of life she thought she had left behind in her search for simplicity of life after the example of Francis. The very thing she was perhaps running away from, certainly shunning, was suddenly very much with her, and how was she to cope with it? Probably too, it was the very role for which she was, by nature, fitted, and she may have sensed this.

It is often easier when we find this type of difficulty in our lives to say: "I won't touch it. I would only make a mess of it. The only safe thing is to leave it severely alone." Clare had to face the fact that she could not do that, she had to take it up and find a way of being Abbess that wasn't like being a great lady. God was calling her to cope with it, to make something more of it than that. And she had to take the risk that she would fail. Did she have it within her to be Abbess in this way? She was put in a situation which, in a sense, forced her to discover and develop the ability to do so, which called it forth in her, as she struggled to hold onto her first call in this new situation. It involved a struggle for her, tempted as she seems to have been to push it aside. And the struggle

would have brought a deeper understanding of herself and of the life to which she was called.

Clare did find great peace and contentment. The fact that she did not resign this office probably indicates that she had found a way to integrate it into the simple way of life she had undertaken. The love and respect in which she was held by her first sisters—some of whom lived with her for forty years—also points to the same conclusion. And when we think of those first sisters, we find them always in the background. They lived the life as fully as Clare herself; yet she never tried to draw them out of their hidden life; for the Clares' vocation *is* to a hidden life, and Clare protected her sisters from a misinterpretation of that vocation. She understood so fully the simplicity and hiddenness that Francis was striving for, and she would not force others into the limelight by stepping back. Any insistence that others become Abbess in her place would probably have put a false emphasis on the role and its importance. What is really important is to follow Christ.

The fact that she did not resign the office indicates that she had found a way of being Abbess that *was* simple and hidden—that did not make her sisters feel that it was more important to be Abbess than to be a sister. She was one of them, she had found a way of being a mother to her sisters while remaining sister to them, one of them. There was no hassle about the position, no need to resign, no one felt she needed a chance to do the job. Because she had accepted it against her own inclination, she was led to plumb more deeply her following of Francis in the footsteps of Christ and so win through to peace and contentment in God's will.

This element of struggle in Clare's life and prayer is important if we are to see the whole picture; it provides a balance to what might seem an overemphasis on blessing, praising, glorifying God, thanking him for all his goodness—or if not an overemphasis, a failure to give full weight to this real aspect of life. Perhaps too it was precisely for this experience, for all that it taught her of God and the ways of God, for all that it taught her about herself, that she praised, blessed, and glorified him most of all—that he was a God who could lead her beyond all that she had envisaged when she set out, beyond all that she had thought she could respond to, all that she could achieve on her own. As she says in the Testament, the greater and more perfect this grace of our vocation is, so much the more should we give thanks for it—and we can be sure she did.

Her example in this is important for us; this is a path along which we can all follow her, for at some time in life, maybe often, we will be faced with failure, with the one situation, the one difficulty we dread above all others, the one demand we feel we simply cannot cope with. What are we going to do with it? Clare's struggle as she took on the task of being

mother and Abbess to her sisters can guide us on our way. And her last words, spoken softly to herself as she lay dying, are words we can take with us in and through our lives as we too struggle. They comforted her at the end of her journey; they can comfort us during ours: "Go forth; go tranquilly and in peace, for thou wilt be well escorted. For he who created thee has provided for thy sanctification—and after he had created thee, he infused into thee his Holy Spirit. He has ever watched over thee as a mother does her little child." Clare spoke to her own soul, and we can do the same: "Blessed be thou, my Lord, who hast created me." Ω

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for Mary Thomas

my god
 cord binds this worm
 and my all
 dawn breaks
 dwelling light
 shadows
 thistle
 and bread feeds
 sparrow song
 sunflowers
 keep
 the light
 gray nun
 and candle smoke
 presence

Bernard Kennedy, O.F.M.

The What and Why of J. D. Scotus

The love of God
 is the what
 and the why.
 All else is still
 the love of God—
 filtered in a sieve.
 Murder, for example,
 is the murder of God,
 in the long run.
 O soldier,
 if you must kill,
 don't kill God.
 Love is central,
 and Christ is our Lover.
 But Christ is
 a little to the side—
 from the eastern Mediterranean
 region, in the reign
 of Caesar Augustus.
 Nothing is really
 central, you know,
 but the love of God.
 Christ works this out,
 in time and history.
 He is a Lover—not
 abstract love.
 Christ "on the side"
 provides the strangeness
 of Calvary.
 Hanging between two thieves,
 hides the fact that

He
 should have been alone,
 on a cross of glory.
 What were they doing there—
 those other two?
 They were not framing Christ,
 but fulfilling
 the love of God,
 in the pain and pathos
 and tenderness that is
 Calvary.
 O God, your mystical
 sense of humour puts
 Christ in the center of
 a mix-up.
 He should have died
 alone,
 but this little joke
 keeps Him from becoming
 self-centered.
 A man can never be
 centered in a picture-frame.
 That was the trouble
 with Caesar,
 Napoleon, and Hitler.
 Christ is paramount
 and central,
 but life is not like
 a picture-perfect album.
 God and men are
 a little mysterious.

Patrick G. Leary, O.F.M.

Following the Footsteps of Christ

SISTER CHARLENE TOUPS, O.S.C.

ONE COULD SAY that this time of sharing is a consideration of the "spirituality of a Christian leader"—specifically, a Franciscan leader. We do not look back to Francis and Clare merely to give glory to God for their exemplary example of Christian leadership. No. They always point us to Christ. In examining our roots, each of us faces in Francis and Clare the call, the challenge, to *know Christ* as they did, to walk in his footsteps, to follow his model of leadership.

"The form of life of the Order of the Poor Sisters which the Blessed Francis founded, is this: to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (Rule, I, 1). To observe the Gospel—with these words our Sister Clare begins and ends her Rule. They form the framework not merely of her written words, but of her whole life. Jesus is the source of her life; he is the goal of her life; he is the Way whereon she walks through life into Life. And like Francis, who shows and teaches her this Way, Clare, too, comes to *know Christ*.

Jesus as Servant

CLARE ALWAYS POINTS us to the Gospel. Rooted in those timeless words is an ancient yet ever new image of the Christian leader: the Person of Jesus. Looking at Jesus, the apostles and other early disciples, one sees emerge a strong image of the New Testament leader as one who serves. This is true whether one is called to serve in a leadership position of much power and authority or whether one exercises the participative leadership of responsible obedience with the Christian community.

Sister Charlene Touns, a member of the Poor Clare community of New Orleans, LA, originally presented this paper at the Federation Assembly in St. Louis, October, 1980. She is currently serving as vocation director for her monastery.

"I am in your midst as one who serves," says Jesus. Others may "lord it over" those subject to their authority, but with you "it cannot be that way: the greater among you must be as the junior, the leader as the servant" (Lk. 22:24-27). Clare echoes this teaching in her Rule (X, 3): "for thus it ought to be, that the Abbess be the servant of all the sisters."

"Do you understand what I have done?" Jesus asks after he has girded himself as a servant and washed the disciples' feet. "As I have done, so you must do. I have given you example" (Jn. 13:12-15). By her life Clare shows that she understood her Lord's action well, even to the point of literally washing the feet of the sisters who served outside the monastery (CL 12).

Jesus is our Servant/Leader, and it is
precisely as Suffering Servant that he
leads us to life.

Before going further, I invite you to look carefully at Jesus' teachings on servanthood. In John's gospel account, the washing of the feet takes place at the Last Supper just prior to Jesus' Passion (Jn. 13:1-16). Luke's account of the dispute over "who is the greatest?" likewise takes place in the Last Supper setting (Lk. 22:24-27). In Matthew and Mark Jesus' teaching about leadership with service is closely linked with prophecies of the Passion (Mt. 20:24-28; Mk. 10:41-45) and a question for those who would seek a place of honor in the kingdom: "Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?" (Mt. 20:22). Each incident is in some way connected with the Passion of Christ, and this is no accident. Do we not recall each year the prophecies of Jesus as the Suffering Servant? Jesus is our Servant/Leader, and it is precisely as Suffering Servant that he leads us to life.

Jesus is not only a Suffering Servant, but also an Obedient Servant. Time and again the gospel accounts present him as coming to do the will of the Father. In obedience Jesus listens intently to the call of the Father and faithfully responds to it. In obedience also he listens intently to the cry of the brothers and sisters who make up his Body on earth and responds in love to their plea for mercy, healing, forgiveness. Clare recognizes this call of a servant/leader to obedience. With zeal she attends obediently to the call of the Father in the depths of her being. She is docile to the Spirit at work within the community. She obediently responds in service to the needs of her sisters. Attentive to the cries of the

whole of Christ's Body, she responds in prayer for the sick (CL 32-35), for those afflicted by demons (CL 27), and for the plight of Assisi itself in time of war (CL 21-23). Always she remains an obedient "co-worker of God himself," supporting the "frail and failing members of his glorious Body" (Ltr. III, 3).

Servant Women of the New Testament

AS ECCLESIAL WOMEN called to be leaders, we look as Clare did to Jesus, the supreme model of leadership through service. In our desire to follow faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus, we may also look at the women of the New Testament to perceive some of the forms our servanthood takes. Continually we get glimpses of these first female disciples, and these brief glances reveal them as ministers, as servants of the Lord.

Let us look first to Mary, the servant, the handmaid of the Lord par excellence. We see her in the Gospels listening attentively to the Word and conceiving it in her heart. She brings Jesus to birth and nurtures him. Just as "the Virgin of virgins carried him in her body," writes Clare, so can the sisters "carry him in a spiritual way" (Ltr. III, 3). Clare recognizes that her contemplative mission is to carry within herself the "seeds of growth of the Christian people" (*Perfectae Caritatis*, 9). This seed which is the word of God "grows out of good soil watered by the divine dew; it absorbs moisture, transforms it, and makes it part of itself, so that eventually it bears much fruit" for the Kingdom (*Ad Gentes Divinitus*, 40). Throughout her writings Clare exalts Mary as a mirror and model of gospel servanthood. It is only by listening to and conceiving the Word in one's heart and by bringing Jesus to birth in one's life that a Christian leader is able to bring Jesus to birth in one's sisters and to nurture the Christ-life within community.

Next, let us consider the small band of women who follow Jesus around the countryside attending to his needs. Scripture tells us little about these women save that they ministered to Jesus and his disciples, caring for them out of their own resources (Lk. 8:3). Although the Gospels are not specific, I think it is a safe guess that this ministry meant tending to some of the behind-the-scenes daily elements of life: food, laundry, etc. Clare knows that part of her call as servant leader entails dealing with the tedious yet essential nitty-gritty affairs of the monastery. I am sure she must have occasionally had some of the administrative or business headaches a leader in community faces today. Clare brings to the humdrum affairs of life (to the duties that might be regarded as "uninspiring" or "boring" in quality) an attitude of service, an attitude of ministry to the Body of Christ in and through these duties. Being called to leadership renders Clare "the more ready to serve." She never shrinks

from a menial job, wishing to serve rather than be served. She chooses to perform the lowliest tasks herself rather than bid others to do it (CL 12). Clare and the women who minister to Jesus are vibrant models of true *diakonia*.

Turning now to that climactic moment when Jesus hangs dying upon the cross, we again see a group of women. They are standing beneath the cross, not doing anything, just simply *being there*. Truly, those also serve who stand and wait. Leaders in community will often find themselves standing there beneath the cross: when *being there*, sharing the pain or the need of a sister, when agonizing through painful decisions that must be made for the good of the community or an individual sister, when sharing in the powerlessness of the women beneath the cross—in all such situations, what these leaders will find themselves doing is undergoing the pain of being unable to *do* anything. But in such moments they are not *called on* to *do* anything, except *be there*, waiting in trust and in hope for the revelation of God's time and God's plan. Clare stands there at the foot of the cross with her sisters, being there when they need her most, for

when temptation troubled a sister, or, as sometimes happens, sadness took hold of anyone, she would call her secretly and console her amid tears. Sometimes she would throw herself at the feet of the sorrowing, that by motherly consolation she might allay their grief [CL 38].

It must have been difficult, too, for Clare to stand by powerless through the years of strife and turmoil that divided her brother friars after Francis' death. Yet she stands there, a beacon of strength and fidelity to the early friars who come to her for spiritual comfort and encouragement.

Even beyond death we see women ministering to the Lord as they bring spices to his tomb. There is in this action a personal and intimate aspect of servanthood. This is the act of one who is more than a friend. It is an act of love—an act of caring that goes even beyond the point when the loved one can respond (or so they thought), a reaching out above and beyond the call of duty. This kind of reaching out, perhaps even in just little things, adds to the quality of life in community. It says, "I am your sister. I care." This personal extra touch is characteristic of Clare. Her biographer states that she "did not love the souls alone of her daughters; she was also most thoughtful for their bodily welfare. Thus frequently in the cold of the night she herself would cover the sleeping sisters" (CL 38).

Clare as Servant Leader

CLARE ALWAYS REGARDS herself as servant and handmaid of Christ and of the Poor Sisters of San Damiano. She remains always a faithful servant

of her Lord Jesus. As a truly faithful servant of her sisters, Clare as leader calls the community to thanksgiving for the vocation they have received (Clare, Test, 1), and she calls them to fidelity in responding to this gift of vocation:

YOU
ALONE
SUFFICE
FOR US

St. Francis of Assisi

What thou holdest now, hold fast; what thou now dost, do henceforth and never abandon, but hasten with swift pace and light step and feet unstumbling so that even thy steps stir up no dust, securely, joyously, promptly, and prudently on the path of happiness [Ltr. III, 3].

With sisterly encouragement Clare always builds up her sisters in the Lord. To Agnes of Prague she writes: "I have heard the most worthy report of your holy conversation and life . . . and have therefore rejoiced exceedingly in the Lord and am glad of heart" (Ltr. I, 2). When necessary, she also gently admonishes:

I beg thee to refrain from any indiscreet and impossible austerity in the fasting which I know thou hast undertaken . . . render thy reasonable service to Him, and let thy sacrifice be ever seasoned with wisdom. . . . Our flesh is not of brass, nor is our strength that of stone [Ltr. III, 4].

By her example throughout her life and constantly in her written words, Clare is most firm as she calls the sisters to "embrace as a poor virgin the poor Christ" (Ltr. II, 3). Just as the section on poverty is at the heart of her Rule, so too, it forms the centerpiece of the legacy of her Testament. Her letters, too, are permeated with spiritual advice and sisterly encouragement to live faithfully the gospel life of poverty and humility. In fact, many of her words addressed to the abbesses who were to follow her are specifically concerned with fidelity to Lady Poverty: "The other abbesses who shall follow me in my office are bound always to observe holy poverty unto the end and to cause it to be observed by their sisters" (Test 12).

Clare's vision of a Christian leader is an echo of Christ's teaching. A leader in community is to profess gospel poverty (Rule IV, 3) and observe the common life in all things (Rule IV, 10). She is to rule by her virtue and example (Rule IV, 7), to show no favoritism (Rule IV, 8), and to be the consoler and refuge of all (Rule IV, 9). As servant of all the sisters, a leader is to provide for the needs of all, especially the sick (Rule VIII, 5-7), and she must charitably correct them when necessary (Rule X, 1). Through consultations and communal decisions, a leader shares her

burden and calls forth a responsible obedience on the part of community members (Rule IV, 13-14). In her Testament, Clare succinctly advises those called to leadership on their role:

I beseech that sister who shall be entrusted with the care of the sisters to govern others more by her virtues and holy life than by her office, so that, encouraged by her example, they may obey her not only out of duty but rather out of love. Let her be prudent and watchful toward her sisters as a good Mother toward her daughters; and from the alms which the Lord shall give let her take care to provide for them according to the needs of each one. Let her also be so kind and approachable that they may reveal their necessities without fear and have recourse to her at any hour with all confidence as may seem good to them for themselves or for their sisters [Test 19].

Clare's vision of the Christian leader closely parallels that of Francis, for they are both deeply rooted in the Gospel image of Christ as servant/leader. Though she did not seek it, Clare discovered herself being called to servanthood in the ministry of leadership. She received this call as a gift, a gift no less precious than the call of her vocation, and she used this gift wisely for the good of the Church as a good steward. Many who read these pages have also received a share in this gift, a commission from the Lord through community for the service of God's people . . . a very precious part of his people, your sisters. Saint Paul reminds us always to "stir into flame the gift of God bestowed on you," for "the Spirit God has given . . . makes us strong, loving, and wise" (2 Tim. 1:6-7).

If the Lord calls us to a ministry, he forms and shapes us for that ministry, as Clare discovered. He calls us to listen and respond to his word—as Jesus did, as Mary did, as Clare did. With a total *fiat* "love him in complete surrender who has given himself up entirely for thy love" (Ltr. III, 3). In our "yes," he will shape us like clay in the hand of a potter, molding and fashioning us into the image of Jesus his Son—who came among us as Servant/Leader. Ω

An Ancient Little Church

An ancient little Church
 (Chapel rather)
 Along a hillside road
 Out of Assisi;
 A young man working,
 Praying there
 On its façade
 Calls out to people passing,
 Simple people
 Like himself,
 "Come help me build
 —rebuild God's Church;
 For in it will some ladies
 Come to live
 Alive with love;
 By whose living
 All who come to know of it
 Will bless God
 And love Him
 For the example of such lovely living
 In their midst."
 And the simple people did help,
 And they sang
 At their work
 Because the young man sang
 And his song was catching,
 Alive with love of God
 And fellow man,
 And joy spilled all over
 All around him.
 And the Church was rebuilt
 And the adjoining house
 Made habitable—

Poor, very poor,
 But habitable.
 And one day a lady did come.
 Her name was Clare
 And she was alight
 With love of God
 And fellowman.
 They say she was beautiful;
 I believe she was;
 Her beautiful soul shone through
 Her beautiful body:
 There was nothing in her
 In the way
 To stop it.
 She lived there forty years
 With a few Sisters
 And God.
 She didn't go anywhere else;
 She didn't do
 Anything much
 That you or I don't do.
 It was how she did what she did
 and why. . . .
 A woman sweeping up
 As women do,
 And putting flowers
 In the Church,
 In the dining room;
 Making—mending clothes,
 Making bread
 And altar bread;

Tending the sick and the garden,
 And listening
 When others needed one to hear them
 Sob or sing
 Or let off steam.
 In all this finding God,
 Meeting Him,
 Reflecting Him,
 Alight with love of Him
 And her fellowman.
 It was her unerring, inner sense
 That God is all
 In all,
 And all that matters,
 That let go everything else
 But love
 But God.
 But since living day to day
 Went on—
 That was God.

And since to live one must work—
 That was God,
 And God is love,
 And love is service
 And song and prayer.
 And she sang at her living
 Because the young man
 Taught her to,
 And his song was catching,
 Alive with love of God
 And fellowman,
 And all he ever said to her
 Seemed right for her,
 And joy spilled all over,
 All around them;
 And all the world came to know
 More of God,
 More of love,
 More of joy,
 Because she dared to live
 Alight with God
 And nothing else.

Sister Clare Ellen, O.S.C.

Book Reviews

Clare: Her Light and Her Song. By Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984. Pp. 401. Cloth, \$18.00.

Reviewed by Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C., A Consulting Editor of this Review and co-author of Two Prayers for Two Stones, an anthology of poetry published by the Franciscan Herald Press in 1976.

There is something strangely enticing about reading a new life of Saint Clare interwoven with the influence of Saint Francis. It reminds me of reading the Scriptures; each reading brings a freshness and a new life to the person who reads it. This is certainly true of this new life of Saint Clare! Sister Seraphim has artistically woven these two lives together, forming a masterpiece of language, poetic style, deliberate simplicity, and a vast amount of research, to create an historical setting for sanctity among heresy and orthodoxy, kings and peasants, popes and magistrates, crusades and civil strife. Through this interweaving of elements Francis and Clare emerge clothed in robes of prayer, holiness, simplicity, and loyalty to the Pope and the Roman Church.

Unlike the usual "saint story," the author has employed the technique of allowing other persons to tell the tale through their reflections or reminiscences of Clare as she lives and breathes, forming deep relationships in their lives and the lives of others. Particularly touching is the reflection of Sister Ortolana, Clare's own mother

turned Poor Lady under her daughter's guidance. One can truly feel with this woman as she meditates on past events in which she and Clare have shared. Here is her Clare, her once little girl, now a grown woman establishing an order which would revolutionize the past concepts of monastic living.

Another artful technique is that of geographic distance. The author places Francis and Clare at a distance physically while allowing each of them to express the same sentiments at the same moments to emphasize the unity of soul which they experienced. Their chronological age difference does not interfere with the life of the spirit as they wend their ways to the Lord.

The counter movement which Francis has established by living the literalness of the Gospel in poverty of place, goods, and life-style is manifested strongly in Clare's adherence to the privilege of poverty whereby the Poor Ladies may refuse to accept gifts bestowed upon them by their generous benefactors. Their lives of prayer and solitude will not be confused by the dictum that work is prayer, but they will clearly understand their role in the Church as working to sustain themselves while praying to sustain the entire world! That this concept was effective is obvious:

The sick and suffering come daily now to the door of the monastery, for they trust in the compassion with which they will be received. As far as their own poverty permits, the sisters share what they have. While Clare tends to their bodily ills, the poor and distressed pour out the sorrows of their hearts into her

sympathetic ear. She can do little more than promise them the prayers of the Sisters, but this is all they are seeking. Already people are noticing that God seems to be especially gracious in response to the prayers of the Poor Ladies [p. 115].

Thus both streams of the Gospel life, action and contemplation, flow together with varying degrees of emphasis.

Many readers who have the idea that women were considered ornamental and second class in the 13th Century will be surprised to read: "In the University of Bologna, there were even some women professors on the faculty. One of them, Marie de Novella, became professor of mathematics at the age of twenty-five" (p. 106). I do not feel I have done or can do justice to the elegance of style, the freshness of approach, or the depth of research which the author has lavished on this wonderful contribution to the Poor Clare heritage. Sister Seraphim, thank you for your insights and scholarship about our holy Foundress.

Gospel Radicalism: The Hard Sayings of Jesus. By Thaddée Matura, O.F.M. Translated by Maggi Despot and Paul Lachance, O.F.M. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984. Pp. x-198. Paper, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Father Raphael D. Bonanno, O.F.M., who directs the House of Prayer in Emmaus-Qubeibeh, near Jerusalem, and edits the Holy Land magazine.

This book makes for challenging reading. One reads enough about Christ's coming, his life and Resurrection, and his Church; but this book is

one of the few that takes up the problem of Jesus' personal demands on his believers.

Matura, after a brief history of the word, defines *radicalism* early on in his book as "the ethical teachings of Jesus that bear radical traits—that is, unusual, paradoxical, decisive or absolute characteristics." In chapter two he presents the radical texts taken mostly from the Synoptic Gospels. They treat mainly of discipleship, renunciation, material possessions, family ties, and love of neighbor. In chapters three, four, and five there is textual analysis of these passages from Matthew/Luke, the double tradition, and Mark. Chapter six delves into the radicalism of the Beatitudes in an interesting comparison of the two versions in Matthew and Luke. Chapter seven presents seven independent *logia* of Jesus: e.g., "The kingdom of God has suffered violence and the violent take it by force" (Mt. 11:12).

Chapter eight is very interesting because Matura compares the radicalism of the Synoptics with other NT writings. Here he shows the continuity and discontinuity between the Master and his disciples, what the early Christians put into practice and what they left aside. For example, Jesus insisted radically on monogamy in marriage (no divorce) over the past customs and laws of Moses and the Jewish people. The ninth chapter sums up the content of the Synoptic radicalism in four poles of radical thought: viz., following Jesus, love, unpretentiousness, and sharing. Matura asks whether this radicalism is literal or merely figurative. While Jesus uses strong images like cutting off one's hand if it sins, still his intention is stronger than the image. He demands a correct behavior

of the whole person—soul and body, mind and hand. He does not tolerate those who preach but do not live what they preach.

Chapter ten dwells interestingly enough on the motives for Gospel radicalism:

The vocation narratives do not explicitly say why the disciples immediately answered Jesus' call, but the implied reason is that they wanted to be with Jesus and to follow in his footsteps. The texts on renunciation directly affirm that it is because of Jesus [Mk. 8:35; 10:29], on account of his name [Mt. 19:29], the gospel [only Mk. 8:35], the kingdom [Mt. 19:12], and in order to be a disciple and to be worthy of him that one accepts his demands and acts on them [p. 172].

Whatever the motivations of the disciples, they are always connected to the person of Jesus.

Chapter eleven treats of the recipients of the message of radicalism. This chapter is as important as the previous one on motives because of the practical consequences involved. If, e.g., the recipients are only the Twelve, then the rest of the Church goes free. If on the other hand Christ's demands are truly universal, then all his believers, clergy and laity alike, are bound to observe them.

In the twelfth and last chapter Matura discusses the relevance of radicalism. In one section he pointedly asks whether Christ's demands are utopia or reality, for the many or for the few. Matura believes that "no texts authorize us to envisage a special elite for whom certain demands would be reserved" (p. 182).

The entire scope of Jesus' radical demands, the author feels, "can be summed up in a few essential points: the primacy of Jesus, unconditional love of

neighbor, freedom vis-à-vis possessions, and sharing with the poor. The fact remains that these are exorbitant demands before which one feels small and poor, if not powerless" (p. 185).

This was my own reaction too, upon closing the book. If Christ demands these things of me, how can I humanly fulfill them? I doubt that humanly it is possible. God never demands of us what we cannot do, however; if he challenges us to stretch and to grow, he also gives us the grace and means to do exactly that. People who water down Christ's demands of them in their personal lives seem to distrust fundamentally what Christ has promised each of us: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Or Saint Paul's cry: "I can do all things in him who strengthens me."

This Gospel radicalism is a healthy tension without which our Christian life would stagnate. I can understand people's underlying fear of fanaticism when we treat of Gospel radicalism. One of the safeguards, though, is the Church. The Church interprets the Gospel to us today. It avoids, or should avoid, the luxury of complacency and the disequilibrium of religious exaggeration. But the reasonable middle road is still a far cry from the world's norms and spirit. The Church calls us to be different, by the mere fact that we follow Jesus. Church history is full of examples of heretics who went off the deep end and thought they could interpret the Gospel better than the Church. They are no longer, but the Church lives on.

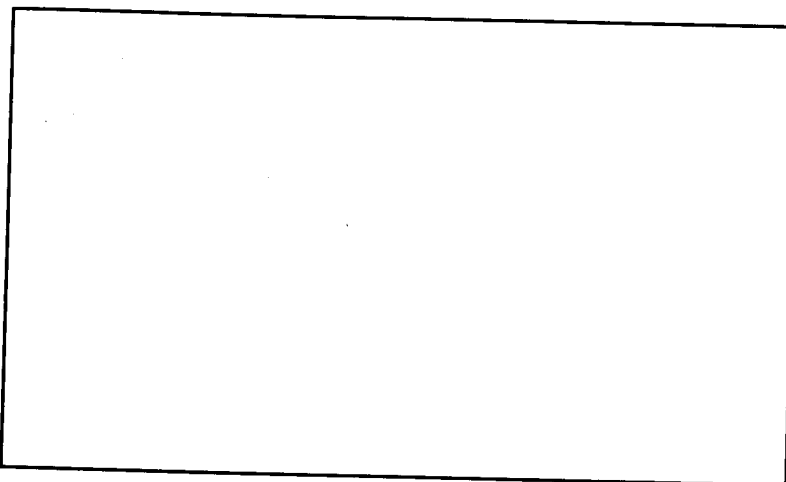
I suppose our problem today is more on the side of complacency than of exaggeration. This book takes direct aim at the softness of us Christians. I recommend it.

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SEPTEMBER, 1985

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., has illustrated his own article on the Stigmata; the other drawing in this current, September, issue, is by Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C., who teaches in St. Joseph's School, Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
CL: Legend of Saint Clare
CP: Process of Saint Clare
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
LP: Legend of Perugia
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
SC: Sacrum commercium
SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Awareness and Acceptance of Personal Poverty

WE NEVER BECOME aware of how poor we are until we learn how rich God is in everything and how determined he is to share his richness with us. "How can we be poor," asked Georges Bernanos, "when our Lord is so rich?" But that question concerns a Providence that ultimately will not allow us to be poor in spiritual endowments, provided we meanwhile acknowledge our need. It is basically a Gospel inquiry, an evangelical question; and precisely because it is evangelical, it is a Franciscan inquiry. One of the works closest to our contemplative tradition is *The Considerations on the Holy Stigmata*, and in the Third Consideration (Omnibus, 1444-47) we are brought by means of question and answer to the knowledge of divine generosity and of our own emptiness. Leo, as silently as he could, walked among the trees of La Verna, saw Saint Francis in the moonlight, and heard him say repeatedly this prayer in the form of a double question:

Who are you, my dearest God? And what am I,
Your vilest little worm and useless little servant?

It was the Saint's mantra of contemplative inquiry. There follow in the incident several personal queries:

Who are you? (Francis' challenge to the twig-breaking intruder)
I am Brother Leo.
Why did you come here, little brother lamb?
Did you see or hear anything?

The Franciscan

St. Bonaventure
University

Friar Gregory, of the Irish Province, is engaged in itinerant preaching, retreats, and Franciscan encounter in Southern Africa. His present base: P. O. Box 111, Groenkloof, Pretoria 0027, Republic of South Africa.

It is a perfect dialogue, native not alien, to prayer. An intrusion—the *felix culpa* of Leo—becomes occasion for a consideration and exposition of contemplative insights. The holy father tells Leo that two lights, corresponding to the two parts of his prayer, were shown him: knowledge of the Creator and knowledge of himself. “The grievous depths of my vileness”—that is how Francis depicts, unflinchingly, what was revealed to him on praying the question, “What am I?” And God had spoken to him in a flame. For him it was the flame of discernment, the fire that sears the veils hindering pure realization and vision.

The import of all this is remarkably clear. It is essential that we become aware of our own poverty and then accept the condition with a positive attitude. Nor are these two—awareness and acceptance—to be presumed. Most of us can without timidity talk of poverty and brokenness; but a deep and abiding consciousness of how poor we are in ourselves comes only with prayerful reflection, self-examination, and the willingness to profit spiritually from multiple human experience. This experience includes the passing of the years, the failure of our efforts, the transience of enthusiasm, and human debility in general—“the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to.” Such acceptance, however, is not to be identified with neurotic morbidity or prostrating diffidence. If passage through this awareness is properly negotiated, there will emerge the only experience of poverty that ultimately matters in spiritual life. For in the end, if other forms have more or less failed us, or failed, at least, to be lasting or significant—like maintaining low standards of living, drastically reducing material requirements, breaking with securities—this vivid awareness-acceptance of personal interior poorness stands us in good stead. For after all, it is the one form of poverty that circumstances need not alter; it does not need to be adapted, updated, it remains valid for all places and times. Moreover, we know it from source material to be authentically Franciscan. We deviate from no spiritual track when we experience it and cultivate it.

Many Franciscan persons experience this poverty: those whose “dark night” shows no bright horizon, those broken in health, those who have unexpectedly become handicapped, those drained of the energy they once had, those unrecognized, those whose ideals and projects are frustrated, those overexposed and exhausted. It can be said this experience is not specially Franciscan. No, but it is certainly as Franciscans that Franciscans experience it; it is part of the life they took on; moreover, it has its own color, and is a composition written in a “seraphic key.”

The Gospels point up this fruitful emptiness. Jesus, for instance, tells the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:10) that if she “knew the gift of God” she would be asking for life-giving water instead of thinking it a big thing to

have an earthly drink to offer. And the emptying of the seed’s vitality, its impoverishment, becomes the condition of its fruitfulness (Jn. 12:24).

In the *Considerations* Francis tells Leo that after his contemplative inquiry, focused on “What am I?” he was bidden by God to make him three offerings. He humbly complained he had nothing except what he had received. And then three mysterious “gold coins” turn up on his person and he presents them. These are seen to represent obedience, poverty, and chastity, but in their gift aspect: gifts with which God provides us that we may have something to offer him.

Solidarity with the poor in their poverty is not a normal priority with secular power-politics. Despite great scientific achievements, the rich states have shown an astonishing impotence when it comes to aiding the chronically poor, or even victims of occasional disasters, e.g., the African famines. Complacent members of the Church can also be blind to what the poor really need. It is hard to evade the conviction that, admitting the need to hand out bread and medical supplies, say, in the short run, the only remedy that brings lasting wholeness to brokenness in the long run is a solidarity with people in need that springs from a keen awareness of our own interior poverty. All of this attitude is a vital ingredient of evangelical discipleship, and quite naturally, therefore, of every expression of Franciscanism. Ω

—Brian Patrick Shenahan.

Contemplation

Christ's love warms docile hearts at break of dawn
As humble people plod their way to church.
His love bids me to pray, then carry on;
His love is morning strength and brave desire;
Christ's love fills docile hearts with joy and fire.
His love can fuel my fainting soul to fly
On wings seraphic where the eagles soar;
Christ's love is surcease in my sorrow;
His love is what I seek for, for tomorrow.

Joyce Finnigan, O.F.M.

Brother Francis Sends Greetings

BERARD DOERGER, O.F.M.

AMONG THE WRITINGS OF Saint Francis that we are fortunate to possess, there are ten Letters that Francis wrote or dictated to various groups or individuals. This article is an attempt to study these ten Letters as a unit, examining the following points: (A) what the author of these Letters tells us about himself in his Letters, (B) who are the recipients of the Letters; (C) what are the reasons or motives that impelled Francis to write these Letters; and (D) what are the central themes in the Letters.

Although we shall study the ten Letters together and cite portions from some of them, it is suggested that the reader peruse the ten Letters individually (they are easily available in several editions of the Poverello's writings; our own citations are from the Armstrong-Brady edition—see inside front cover of this issue).

A. What Francis Tells us about Himself in His Letters

IN SEVEN OF THE TEN Letters of Francis that we possess, Francis introduces himself in the opening lines of greeting. I believe he reveals a lot about himself in these greetings; so let us begin by listening to some of them:

... Brother Francis, your servant and little one in the Lord God, sends a greeting ... [EpCust I; AB 52].

... Brother Francis, the least of the servants of God, sends greetings and holy peace in the Lord [EpCust II; AB 54].

... Brother Francis, their servant and subject, offers homage and reverence, true peace from heaven and sincere love in the Lord [EpFid II; AB 67].

Brother Francis, your little and despicable servant in the Lord God, sends wishes of health and peace to all of you [EpReg; AB 77].

Brother Francis sends his wishes of health [EpAnt; AB 79].

... your Brother Francis, health and peace! [EpLeo; AB 47].

Father Berard Doerger, O.F.M., is Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Cuba, New Mexico. Of related interest to our readers is a study of the first version of the Letter to the Faithful (also known as the Volterra Letter) by Father Thaddeus Horgan, S.A., in *The Cord* 29:6, 166-75; another study of that Letter is scheduled for publication in the near future.

1. The Author is "Brother" Francis. The author of the Letters is indeed Francis of Assisi, and he is in all the Letters mentioned above "Brother Francis." Francis of Assisi has been given many names and titles over the centuries: "The Little Poor Man," "The Troubadour of God," and "The Knight Errant of Assisi" are but a few. Yet the designation that Francis himself uses in these Letters and in other writings seems to be the most fitting: "I, Brother Francis."

Let those who keep this writing with
them and observe it know that they will
be blessed by the Lord God.

Francis of Assisi was "Brother" Francis because he had in common with all other creatures one Father in heaven who had created them all out of his goodness and love. All creatures, then, especially other human beings, had not only the same Father as he, but also the same Brother: Jesus, who "redeemed us and washed us in his most precious Blood."

Francis not only referred to himself as "Brother Francis," but he also wanted his followers to be called the "Order of Lesser Brothers." He also, as we know, addressed all creatures as "brothers" or, less often, as "sisters." There were "Brother Sun," "Sister Moon," "Brother Wind," "Sister Water," "Brother Birds," "Brother Rabbits," "Brother Flowers," and on and on. There were the "Christian Brothers," the lepers, the "Brother Robbers"; his "Brother Body" (also called "Brother Ass"); and there was even his "Brother Lady Jacoba." When we consider all this, it is not surprising to find it stated in an early chronicle of the Order that "the other brothers called Francis with particular affection *the Brother*" (*Chron. of Jordan of Giordano*, 17).

2. The Author Is a "Lesser" Brother. So, it is "Brother Francis" who is writing these letters as a brother to his other brothers and sisters in the family of Jesus and his Father in heaven. And how does this Brother who is sending his "greetings" and his "peace" and "wishes of health" and "sincere love in the Lord" further characterize himself? He is the "servant and subject" and the "little one in the Lord"; he is, indeed, "the least of the servants of God," "a little and despicable servant," "a worthless and weak man."

Francis is not writing as a superior to subjects, then, or as a teacher to his pupils or as a master to his followers; or even as a father to his children. He writes as a servant and subject of others. He is a worthless

and weak man, a little one in the Lord God. It is Francis, the "Lesser" Brother, who is writing.

B. The Recipients of the Letters

WHERE ARE THE recipients of these letters of Francis? To whom is he sending his greetings and wishes of peace and health and sincere love in the Lord? The titles of the Letters as they are presented in the various collections pretty well answer this question. But let us note a few of the details that Francis gives in the letters themselves and some facts that we know from other sources. 1. *Brother Leo*. Francis is writing to his "son," Brother Leo, who was his close companion during his last years, the only one who saw the wound in Francis' side while he was alive (2Cel 138), and to whom Francis willed his tunic at his death (2Cel 50). Leo was a priest and the confessor of Saint Francis and acted also as his secretary and scribe on occasion and as his nurse in times of illness (EpLeo; AB 47). 2. *Brother Anthony*. Francis is writing to "Brother Anthony," the great miracle worker of Padua and the first teacher of theology in the Order. Francis addresses Anthony not only as his "Brother," but as "my bishop," because of the great respect he had for this former Augustinian (EpAnt; AB 79).

3. *The Clergy*. Francis is writing to the "clerics" of the Church, among whom he lists himself, for Francis was of course a deacon (EpCler; AB 49).

4. *The Superiors of the Order*. Francis is also addressing himself to all the "custodians of the Friars Minor," i.e., the superiors or ministers to whom he had entrusted the governance of the Order (EpCust I [AB 52]; EpCust II [AB 54]; EpMin [AB 74]).

5. *All His Lesser Brothers*. Brother Francis is writing also to "all the reverend and much beloved brothers of his entire Order," from the Minister General to "all the simple and obedient brothers, from first to last" (EpOrd; AB 55). Every one of his children and brothers is important to Francis.

6. *All Civil Officials*. Francis is writing to "all mayors and consuls, magistrates and rulers throughout the world, and to everyone who may receive these letters" (EpReg; AB 77).

All in the World. Finally, this Brother Francis is writing to all men and women, clergy and laity, "to all who live in the whole world," to "all those who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with their whole strength and love their neighbors as themselves" (EpFid I [AB 63]; EpFid II [AB 67]). There is no one who is outside the scope of Francis' interest and concern, no one he does not desire to reach through his apostolate of letter writing.

C. The Motives or Reasons for the Letters

NEXT WE WANT to consider some of the motives or reasons that prompted Francis to send his greetings and to write his letters.

1. *Francis' Inability to Visit His Friars and Others in Person*. The main reason why Francis decided to write most of the letters that we have seems to be that during the years when he wrote them (1219-1226), he was sick and unable to visit his friars and other groups and hence unable to speak and preach to them in person. So he wrote them instead.

Francis himself brings out this reason in the second version of the Letter to All the Faithful (AB 67), where he says:

Since I am the servant of all, I am obliged to serve all and to administer to them the fragrant words of my Lord. Therefore, on reflecting that, since I cannot visit each one of you in person because of the infirmity and weakness of my body, I have proposed to set before you in this present letter and message the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Word of the Father, and the words of the Holy Spirit, which are spirit and life.

2. *Francis' Desire to Spread the Gospel Message to as Many as Possible*. We see in the words just cited from the *Letter to the Faithful* another motive in the mind and heart of Francis for writing his letters: he considered himself a servant to all, and as a servant Francis felt obliged to serve and administer to others the words of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Holy Spirit. This letter writing was part of his apostolate of spreading the word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Francis did not, however, consider that he was writing *his* message or words to others, as much as simply passing on in written form the words and message of Christ and the Holy Spirit which had been made known to him. His letters were an instrument through which the Gospel could be spread to others.

3. *Francis' Desire to Participate in the Church's Eucharistic Crusade*. A third and more specific reason that lay behind many of the letters of Francis seems to be his desire to participate in the Eucharistic Crusade which had been initiated in the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) and which had later been given further impetus by an encyclical and decree of Pope Honorius III (1219), which encyclical accentuated reverence and respect for the Blessed Sacrament.

Since the Fourth Lateran Council and this encyclical of Honorius seem to have had a great influence on much of the material in the Letters of Francis, we might add a few more words about that influence.

The Fourth Lateran Council (the twelfth Ecumenical Council of the Church) opened in 1215. Francis himself, as a major superior of an

Order, is thought to have attended at least some of its sessions. It is considered one of the greater Ecumenical Councils of the Church and the most important before Trent. Since it dealt with many areas of the Church's life, it is described as a renewal council. It announced a new Crusade to recover the Holy Land; it investigated some heresies, and it was very much concerned with the renewal and moral well being of the Church at large. At the end of its sessions, the Fathers (more than 400 bishops and archbishops and more than 800 abbots, priors, and superiors of religious Orders) drew up seventy canons to express their concerns about the various areas mentioned above. Of those seventy canons, the following seem particularly relevant to some of the themes found in Francis' Letters:

- Canon 17 contains a severe denunciation of abuses in the celebration of the Mass and other divine services.
- Canon 19 deals with the proper use of churches.
- Canon 20 treats of the custody of the Eucharist and decrees that the Eucharist must be kept in a tabernacle under lock and key.
- Canon 21 speaks of the requirements of annual confession and the obligation of receiving Communion at least once during the Easter season.

There are other interesting Canons among the seventy enacted by the Council, such as the prohibition of the blessing of hot water and hot iron for judicial ordeals (canon 18) and the prohibition against having commerce with usurious Jews (canon 67); but most of these other canons do not show any particular influence on Francis' Letters.

The Fourth Lateran Council had been summoned by Pope Innocent III, who had approved orally Francis' first simple rule for his Order in the year 1209 or 1210. But Innocent died at the end of 1216 and did not have much time to put into effect the decrees of the Lateran Council. Honorius III, his successor, had to implement them, and one of his efforts in doing so was the encyclical letter he wrote in 1219-1220. This papal letter urged the bishops to put into effect in their dioceses the decisions of the Council, one of which was, as we have seen, that greater care and reverence be shown towards the Holy Eucharist, concerning which there were apparently many abuses in those days.

Francis was in the Holy Land when this encyclical was promulgated, inspired to go there by the Lateran Council's announcement of the new Crusade mentioned above. When he returned, he undoubtedly heard immediately about the Pope's encyclical and Eucharistic crusade, and decided also to participate in *this* crusade by his Letters to the friars and other groups. Although Francis never mentions explicitly in his Letters the encyclical or the Pope's "crusade," an examination of the Latin style

of the encyclical and that of Francis' Letters indicates that he is sometimes quoting from the encyclical of Honorius III.

4. *Francis' Concern for Individuals.* A final motive of Francis in writing some of his Letters was his concern for some individual friars and their problems. We see this motive apparent especially in the short letter to Brother Leo (AB 47), in his Letter to a Minister (AB 74), and in the Letter to Anthony (AB 79).

D. The Principal Themes of the Letters

WE COME NOW to the real point of this article: viz., the principal themes or topics found in Francis' Letters.

1. *The Holy Eucharist.* The most oft-repeated and most extensively treated of these topics is that of the Eucharist. We have already spoken of the historical background that had so important an influence on his concern and treatment of the subject. Here let us divide our own reflections on the subject along these lines: (a) the theology of the Eucharist, (b) the reception of the Eucharist, (c) the care and respect for the Holy Eucharist, and (d) respect for priests.

For Francis' theology of the Eucharist, one must give especial attention to two passages from his Letters: EpFid II.4-15 (AB 67) and EpOrd 26-29 (AB 58), to which one must add a passage from his first Admonition, which some consider as possibly part of a Letter of Francis (8-22; AB 26-27). Although these passages cannot be cited in full here because of space limitations, we can at least summarize the main points involved.

- The Eucharist, first of all, continues the self-emptying of the Word of God. This emptying or *kenosis* began in the Word's taking flesh in the womb of Mary; it was continued by his choice of a poor life, together with his Mother; and it reached its culmination in Christ's offering of himself as a sacrifice and oblation on the altar of the Cross, which oblation the Eucharist recalls and makes present. Through the Eucharist, Jesus continues to do the Father's will; he continues to empty himself for us.

- In the Eucharist, too, Christ the Lord of the universe is present among us on the altar and in the hands of the priest.

- This presence of Christ in the Eucharist is a great sign and gesture of the humility of the Lord of the universe and of the total giving of himself to us.

- Our response to the mystery of the Eucharist should be to humble ourselves as well, and to hold nothing back in giving ourselves totally to Christ, who gives himself totally to us.

- The Incarnation of the Word is repeated daily in the Holy Eucharist when Jesus comes down from the bosom of the Father upon the altar

(note in Francis' words the beautiful parallel between the coming of the Word from the royal throne into the womb of Mary and his coming from the Father's bosom into the hands of the priest).

- Just as the Apostles needed eyes of faith to believe that the Jesus they saw with their bodily eyes was God, so do we need eyes of faith to believe that the bread and wine we see with bodily eyes is the most holy Body and Blood of the living Christ.

- Through his presence in the Eucharist, the Lord remains with us always as he promised he would do.

On the need and manner of receiving the Holy Eucharist, we find only two citations in the Letters. The first is in the Letter to All the Faithful, where Francis writes:

We must also confess all our sins to a priest and receive from him the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who does not eat his Flesh and does not drink his Blood cannot enter the Kingdom of God. Yet let him eat and drink worthily, since he who receives unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself, not recognizing—that is, not discerning—the Body of the Lord. Moreover, let us perform worthy fruits of penance. And let us love our neighbors as ourselves. And if there is anyone who does not wish to love them as himself, at least let him do no harm to them, but rather do good [EpFid II.22-27 {AB 68-69}].

The other citation is in the Letter to the Rulers, where Francis encourages them to "put aside all care and preoccupation and receive with joy the most Holy Body and the most Holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in holy remembrance of Him" (1-6; AB 78). Note the phrases "receive with joy" and "in remembrance of Him": the Eucharist is a living memorial of Christ's humility and self-giving, and this remembrance of Christ's total love should bring us great joy. It should also lead us, as the previous citation brought out, "to love our neighbors as ourselves."

Regarding care and respect for the Holy Eucharist, Francis suggests quite a few concrete measures. Practically his entire Letter to the Clergy is devoted to this concern. In the first paragraph he mentions some of the abuses of the day regarding the care of the Eucharist: the sad state of chalices, corporals, and altar linens; leaving the Eucharist in dirty places; carrying It about in a miserable manner; receiving It unworthily, and administering It to others without discretion.

Then in the second paragraph, Francis gives the positive recommendation that "wherever the most holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ has been unlawfully housed and neglected, let it be removed from that place and deposited and locked in a precious location." This was one of the prescriptions of the Fourth Lateran Council.

In the Letter to the Entire Order we find the general recommendation

to all the brothers "to show all possible reverence and honor to the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" (AB 56). Further on in that same Letter, Francis urges his brothers "to guard the sacred vessels and other liturgical appointments so that we may impress upon ourselves the loftiness of our Creator and our subjection to him" (AB 59).

It is the First Letter to the Custodians, however, that contains the largest number of specific proposals regarding respect and care for the Holy Eucharist:

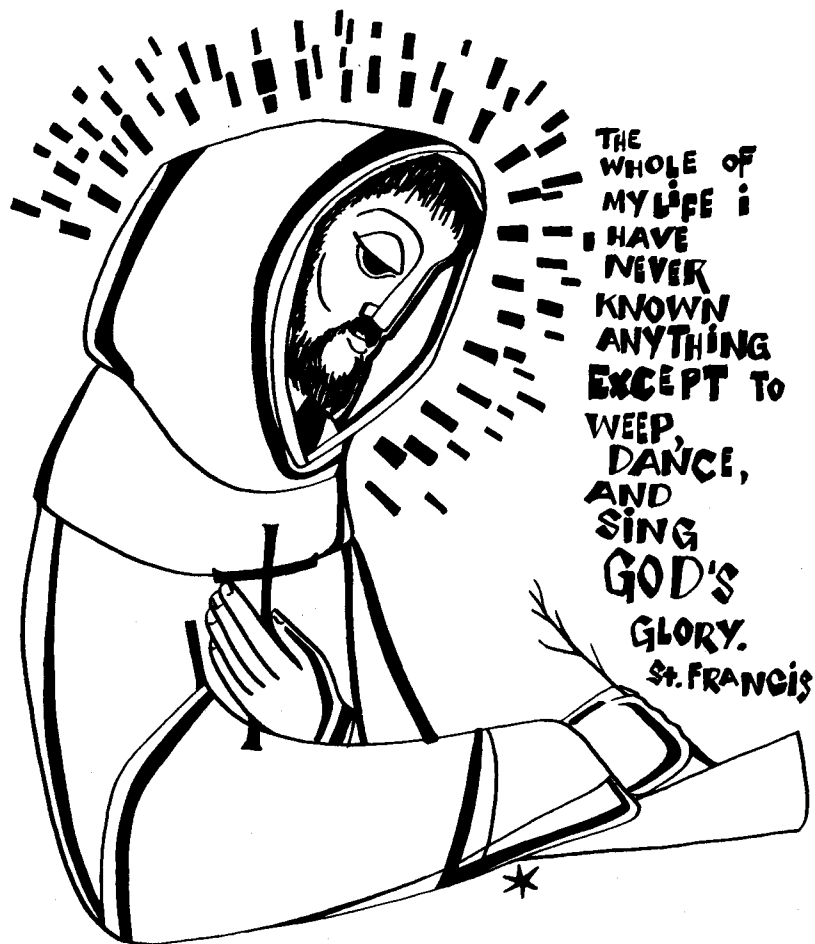
I beg you, with all that is in me and more, that, when it is appropriate and you judge it profitable, you humbly beg the clergy to revere above everything else the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy written words which consecrate his Body. The chalices, corporals, appointments of the altar, and everything which pertains to the sacrifice must be of precious material. And if the most holy Body of the Lord is very poorly reserved in any place, it should be placed in a precious location under lock and kept according to the mandate of the Church with discretion. In a similar way the written words of the Lord, whenever they are found in an improper place, should be gathered together and kept in a becoming place.

And in every sermon which you give, admonish the people concerning the need of penance, and tell them that no one can be saved unless he receive the Body and Blood of the Lord. And when It is sacrificed upon the altar by the priest and carried to any place, let all the people, on bended knee, praise, glorify, and honor the Lord God living and true [2-7; AB 53].

Why does Francis urge so strongly this great respect and care for the Eucharist? In the Letter to the Clergy he points out that "in this world we have and see nothing corporally of the Most High except his Body and Blood"—and, he adds,—"the words through which we have been made and have been redeemed from death to life" (AB 50). And in the Letter to the Entire Order there is a somewhat lengthy passage warning the brothers who are priests about their punishment if they show disrespect for the Eucharist. Francis then continues, pointing out the great honor and dignity of a priest, which he compares to the role of Mary and of John the Baptist, and of the tomb of Christ:

Listen, my brothers: If the blessed Virgin is so honored, as it is right, since she carried him in her most holy womb; if the blessed Baptist trembled and did not dare to touch the holy head of God; if the tomb in which he lay for some time is so venerated, how holy, just, and worthy must be the person who touches him with his hands, receives him in his heart and mouth, and offers him to others to be received [AB 57].

We conclude our treatment of the Eucharistic theme in the Letters of Francis with a passage urging respect for priests, not because of their per-



sonal holiness or lack of it, but because of their office and their administration of the most holy Body and Blood of Christ and of his holy words:

We must also visit churches frequently and venerate and show respect for the clergy, not so much for them personally if they are sinners, but by reason of their office and their administration of the most holy Body and Blood of Christ which they sacrifice upon the altar and receive and administer to others. And let all of us firmly realize that no one can be saved except through the holy words and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which the clergy pronounce, proclaim and minister. And they alone must administer them, and not others [EpFid II.33-35; AB 69].

A similar admonition regarding respect for the clergy is found in Francis' 16th Admonition.

2. *The Written Words of Our Lord.* We move on now to another theme which we find mentioned several times in the Letters: the Sacred Scriptures or "written words of our Lord," as Francis usually calls the Scriptures. Let us cite briefly some of the Saint's references to this theme and then draw some conclusions:

All of us who are clerics should be aware of the great sin and ignorance which some people have toward the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his most holy written words which consecrate his Body. We know that it cannot become his Body without first being consecrated by his Word. For in this world we have and see nothing corporally of the Most High except his Body and Blood, and the words through which we have been made and have been redeemed from death to life. . . . Even his sacred written words are sometimes left to be trampled underfoot; for the person who does not have the spirit does not perceive the things of God. . . . Likewise wherever the written words of the Lord may be found in unbecoming places, they are to be collected and kept in a place that is becoming [EpCler; AB 49-50].

I beg you, with all that is in me and more, that, when it is appropriate and you judge it profitable, you humbly beg the clergy to revere above everything else the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and his holy written words which consecrate his Body. . . . In a similar way the written words of the Lord, whenever they are found in an improper place, should be gathered together and kept in a becoming place [EpCust I; AB 53].

Therefore, I admonish all my brothers and encourage them in Christ that wherever they come upon the written words of God they venerate them so far as they are able. And if they are not well kept or if they lie about carelessly in some place, let them, inasmuch as it concerns them, collect them and preserve them, thus honoring the Lord in the word which he spoke. For many things are made holy by the words of God and in the power of the words of Christ the Sacrament of the altar is celebrated [EpOrd 35-37; AB 59].

And let all of us firmly realize that no one can be saved except through the holy words and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which the clergy pronounce, proclaim, and minister [EpFid II; AB 69].

What conclusions can we draw from these passages on the written word of God?

First, we note the close connection that Francis usually makes between the Holy Eucharist and the Word of God. He comes close to putting the holy word of God in the Scriptures on an even footing with the Holy Eucharist (which Vatican II also does in the Constitution on Divine

Secondly, Francis several times refers to the *power* of the words of God in the Scriptures. In the second version of the Letter to all the Faithful, he says that "no one can be saved except through the holy words and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which the clergy pronounce." In the Letter to the Clergy he proclaims that through these words of God "we have been made and have been redeemed from death to life." And several times he states that it is "in the power of the words of Christ that the Sacrament of the Altar is celebrated," or, more succinctly: "His holy written words consecrate his Body."

Thirdly, Francis recommends *concern and respect for the written words* of God: "Wherever the written words of the Lord may be found in unbecoming places, they are to be collected and kept in a place that is becoming," thus "honoring the Lord in the words which he spoke," as Francis adds in the Letter to the Entire Order.

3. *The Divine Office*. A third topic we would like to note is Francis' advice on how to recite the Divine Office or, as we call it today, the Liturgy of the Hours. The Minister General, Francis says in his Letter to the Entire Order,

should insist that the clerics say the Office with devotion before God, not concentrating on the melody of the voice but on the harmony of the mind, so that the voice may blend with the mind, and the mind be in harmony with God. Let them do this in such a way that they may please God through purity of heart and not charm the ears of the people with sweetness of voice. For I promise to observe these things strictly as God may give me grace, and I shall pass these things on to the brothers who are with me so they may be observed in the Office and in all other things established in the Rule [EpOrd 41-43; AB 59-60].

4. *Brotherly Concern and Compassion*. The theme of fraternal concern and compassion is especially evident throughout the Letter to a Minister, which poignantly shows Francis' concern and compassion both towards those who sin and towards those called to minister to the sinners. Space limitations restrict our citation from this Letter to just a few sentences:

To Brother N., minister: May the Lord bless you. I speak to you, as I can, concerning the state of your soul. You should accept as a grace all those things which deter you from loving the Lord God and whoever has become an impediment to you, whether they are brothers or others, even if they lay hands on you [1-2; AB 74].

And by this I wish to know if you love the Lord God and me, his servant and yours—if you have acted in this manner: that is, there should not be any brother in the world who has sinned, however much he may have possibly sinned, who, after he has looked into your eyes, would go away

without having received your mercy, if he is looking for mercy. And if he were not to seek mercy, you should ask him if he wants mercy. And if he should sin thereafter a thousand times before your very eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him back to the Lord. Always be merciful to brothers such as these [9-11; AB 75].

Also the short letter Francis wrote to Brother Leo shows this brotherly concern for each individual—here his close friend, Leo:

Brother Leo, your Brother Francis health and peace! I speak to you, my son, as a mother. I place all the words which we spoke on the road in this phrase, briefly and as advice. And afterwards, if it is necessary for you to come to me for counsel, I say this to you: In whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow his footprints and his poverty, do this with the blessing of God and my obedience. And if you believe it necessary for the well being of your soul, or to find comfort, and you wish to come to me, Leo, come! [AB 47-48].

5. *Approval for Study in the Order*. We should also mention the theme of approval for study in the Order, a theme found in the short letter of Francis to Saint Anthony of Padua. Anthony had previously been an Augustinian monk and had received quite a bit of theological training prior to his entrance into the Franciscan Order. Some of the other brothers wanted Anthony to teach them theology, but he refused unless Francis gave specific permission for this. Such permission was presumably requested by Anthony in a letter to Francis, and we have Francis' reply:

Brother Francis sends his wishes of health to Brother Anthony, my bishop. It pleases me that you teach sacred theology to the brothers, as long as—in the words of the Rule—you "do not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion" with study of this kind [AB 79].

In this short letter Francis calls Anthony his "bishop" out of respect for Anthony's learning. He also gives Anthony permission to teach the other brothers sacred theology, but he makes one important requirement: viz., that the general admonition in the Rule of 1223 regarding the work of the friars also be applied to study: this study must not extinguish the Spirit of prayer and devotion.

6. *Praise of God*. Francis' own lyrical praise of the Lord, as well as his constant exhortation to others to join him in that praise, pervades his writings. Let us look at some representative passages:

And you must announce and preach his praise to all peoples in such a manner that at every hour and whenever the bells are rung, praise, glory, and honor are given to the all-powerful God throughout the earth [EpCust I.8; AB 53].

Give praise to him since he is good and exalt him by your deeds, for he has sent you into the entire world for this reason: that in word and deed you may give witness to his voice and bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except him [EpOrd 8; AB 56].

Let us love God, therefore, and adore him with a pure heart and a pure mind because he who seeks this above all else has said: "The true worshipers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth." And let us praise him and pray to him day and night, saying: Our Father who art in heaven, since we should pray always and never lose heart [EpFid II.19-21; AB 68].

And you should manifest such honor to the Lord among the people entrusted to you that every evening an announcement be made by a town crier or some other signal that praise and thanks may be given by all people to the all-powerful Lord God. And if you do not do this, know that you must render an account before the Lord your God, Jesus Christ, in the day of judgment [EpReg 7-8; AB 78].

7. *Preservation and Duplication of Francis' Letters.* A final theme that we can find in almost all the Letters of Francis is his exhortation to the recipients of the Letters to preserve them and to make copies of them and spread them around. This concern of Francis about his Letters is not, I believe, evidence that he considered them so great and significant in themselves; rather it seems to me to reveal his zeal to have as many as possible become holy and love and praise God, have great reverence for and devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the Word of God, etc. Francis also gives a special blessing to all those who preserve and disseminate his Letters:

Those who make copies of this writing so that it may be better observed should know that they will be blessed by the Lord God [EpCler 15; AB 51].

And my brothers who are custodians to whom this writing shall come and who have copies made to keep for themselves and to give to the brothers . . . should know that they have the blessing of the Lord God as well as my own [EpCust I.9; AB 53].

Make many copies of the other letter containing an invitation to proclaim the praises of God among the peoples and in the piazzas which I am sending to you to give to mayors, consuls, and rulers. And propagate them with great diligence among those to whom they should be given [EpCust II.6-7; AB 54].

. . . they should have this writing with them, put it into practice, and carefully preserve it [EpOrd 47; AB 60].

Keep this writing with you until Pentecost, that it may be better observed, when you will be there with your brothers [EpMin 21; AB 76].

Let those who keep this writing with them and observe it know that they will be blessed by the Lord God [EpReg 9; AB 78].

Summary and Conclusion

THIS CONCLUDES OUR STUDY of the ten Letters that we find among the authentic writings of Saint Francis of Assisi. We do know of other letters that Francis wrote from references in Celano's *Lives* and other sources; but we do not have the manuscripts of these other letters.

In these ten letters of Francis that we have investigated, we have seen how the Saint revealed himself as "Brother Francis," the servant of God and of those to whom he is writing. He is a "little one," a "worthless and weak man," truly a "Lesser Brother"!

The motives that prompted Francis to write his Letters also make evident to us other aspects of the character of this little servant of God and lesser brother. First, he is one who is extremely loyal to the Catholic Church and to the Bishop of Rome—one who wishes to promote to the best of his ability the desires and interests of the Pope and of the Church. And even more importantly, as this "servant in the Lord God," he wants through his Letters to be an instrument by which the Word of God and the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be proclaimed to others.

The contents of the Letters also reveal to us some of the great concerns and theological insights of Francis concerning the Holy Eucharist, the written and spoken Word of God, the Divine Office, the praise of God by all the people, etc. Francis is greatly concerned that all people love and praise God and that all realize and respect the great gifts of the Eucharist and the Bible in which God and Christ remain present with us. And he is most desirous that all lead lives of penance, confess their sins and lead good lives, so that one day they may, with "Brother Francis," receive eternal happiness in heaven (cf. especially EpFid II [AB 68-73] for the development of this theme). Francis closes his longest Letter, the Letter to the Entire Order, with a prayer. We shall use that prayer to close our study:

Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, grant us in our misery the grace to do for you alone what we know you want us to do, and always to desire what pleases you. Thus, inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And, by your grace alone, may we make our way to you, Most High, who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God all-powerful forever and ever. Amen. [EpOrd 50-52; AB 61]. Ω

Sun's Shard!

I placed a flower in a vase
well hidden, in veneration
of where a life was remade
in a time suspended moment
where a voice spoke a word
of pleading
with open hands bleeding
from love's double edged sword.

The meaning of it all
still a fragment, shard
of crystal clear glass.

Damiano is quiet and still
as I leave it undisturbed
my contented will
unbreached and unperturbed

As I turn in the frame
of the door, the flickering red
light echoes a name
and I sight somewhere the same
prismed crystal sharded door
answering my silent prayer.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Francis and the Stigmata:

"I Hold out My Hand and My Heart Will Be in It"

WILLIAM HART McNICHOLS, S.J., S.F.O.

YOU COULD SAY THAT Francis' wounding began long before La Verna, and that the stigmata were the final flowering of the seeds planted as far back into his youth at Spoleto. The voice at Spoleto, it seems to me, was the first wound we know of in Francis' life. The voice of God wounds as it inhabits us, and once one has the experience of this voice, there is no escape, or comfort, or hiding in that place called doubt where the very existence of God is vague—which allows the soul to believe far more in this world.

The voice at Spoleto had that commanding yet fostering quality of the book of Hosea where the Lord says, "When Israel was a child I loved him and out of Egypt I called my son." How can this liberation from bondage not be seen as a wounding? We so long to be attached to and one with the things and values of the world, and are led kicking and screaming from the very things that would ultimately destroy us, as we try to appropriate or consume the gift of Creation. And so at Spoleto the Lord poses a most simple question which is so full, so mythic and haunting in its expansive, reverberating quality, that it calls up the question posed to the zealous Paul who collapsed under its weight enroute to Damascus: "Saul, why do you persecute me?" And Francis, "Why do you serve the servant and not the king?" Just as Paul was left blind and stumbling thereafter, so also we see Francis reeling as this question echoed over and over again inside him, giving him no comfort, no peace, and gradually burning away Francesco di Pietro Bernardone.

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., maintains an art studio at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset, New York.

It is in this haunted and dazed state that we see Francesco bereft of the solace of created beauty and mechanically going through the motions as the "king of the revels," or the king of the feasts. Fortini paints a medieval miniature worthy of the *Très Riches Heures du Duke de Berry*, or more recently Zeffirelli's sumptuous feast in *Romeo and Juliet*, where the lovers first meet and they speak to one another through the genius of Shakespeare in lush soliloquies which join what we have always at bottom believed to be totally contradictory elements: the language of the spiritual (the pilgrim at the shrine) and that of erotic love (the sudden overpowering attraction of one person for another). It is in such an atmosphere that we find Francesco weakened in his pursuit of the erotic, and even the visible, while the pilgrim in him seems to be taking over. Paradoxically he is crowned in roses and the second searing takes place as he envisions the Lady Poverty and the wound grows larger; something is dying, something is growing, and the pilgrim stumbles toward the tomb of Saint Peter for an answer.

Our Father Francis asks that we show our own passion, our vulnerability, and thus make visible the continuing Passion of Jesus Christ for ourselves and the world to see.

As a pilgrim Francesco finds his wound beginning to fester, to become sore, as John of the Cross tells us in the commentary to his own poem on the Cantic of Canticles. The wounding causes such pain that only action toward God can give hope of healing. The actions for Francesco include the kissing of a leper and the exchange of clothes with a beggar. And with that exchange the Franciscan habit could have been born, resembling nothing more than the rags of a street person or a tramp—a mystical habit for fools.

Francesco's wound was a call in itself, as we hear in the Song of Songs, a kind of hypnotic invitation which leaves one desperate and drunk with pain and searching. The bride in the song is wounded and left to wander, asking everyone from the circle of bridesmaids to the night watchmen: "Where is the one who wounds and leaves?" The wound is violent too, in that while the stricken soul wanders, the wound is burning away the "old

person," and this is a time of eclipse of all light. In this darkness Francesco wanders into San Damiano, and the voice of Spoleto now speaks through an ancient work of art, made with human hands: the image of the crucified One. For the first time the voice gives what appears to be something concrete which announces a rest from the agonizingly dark pilgrimage. Is it any wonder that Francesco rushes out to rebuild the church?

I could trace the wound throughout Francesco's early life as he is pelted by rocks and rejected—the subject of violence and ridicule—but these seem like nothing compared to the wound rapidly consuming the inner man.

We know what form the pilgrim's life eventually took as he left father and mother and again uncovered "the voice" in the Gospel of Matthew in the church of Saint Nicholas. It is in this book of the Gospels that the pilgrim finds his only home; Francesco di Pietro Bernardone falls forever from Francis of Assisi like the shedding of an outer skin. This is the soul that finally mounts La Verna, naked in a suspended state of the tenth station of the cross, and somewhere between the feast of the Triumph of the Cross and Michaelmas Day, the Seraph which has been continually carving out an invisible design shows us all the outside of the inside: Francis' wounds become visible. And although Francis made a point of covering this blest individuality on his deathbed, and telling us to trust in God to find our own way, our Father has bequeathed to us the exhortation to show our own wounds. Our Father Francis asks that we show our own passion, our vulnerability, and thus make visible the continuing Passion of Jesus Christ for ourselves and the world to see. Ω



Joy, Remember Me

Joy,

in perfect peace
dances on the blade
which impales
immaculate hearts.

This done
where the One
creates, enfleshes, breathes
within the very walls
we call our selves.

It happens,
and the gift is only
a Giver's shadow,
a corpse beatified.

Remember me:

We are chosen,
we do not choose
whom we are to love
and die for.

Carol Carstens, S.F.O.

The Finding of the Body of Saint Clare

September 23, 1850

SISTER MARY CLARE, P.C.C.

BEFORE THE FINAL unification of Italy on July 2, 1871, there had been a long period of civil and spiritual upheaval. Even the most remote provinces had become restive under the conflicting forces of French, Austrian, and Spanish dominion, compounded by the vested interests of the papal states. In the mid-nineteenth century the revolution toward a free, independent, and united kingdom was in danger of being turned into a tool of destruction by the fanatic forces for freedom. In 1848, the so-called Republic had set up its government in Assisi and was threatening to suppress all religious houses. During the first week of Lent an inventory was taken of all the goods of the Monastery of Saint Clare, and the nuns were about to be dispersed when the French troops arrived and the short-lived regime of the Republic collapsed. On October 30 of that same year, Sister Clare Columba Angeli, at thirty years of age, was elected abbess of Saint Clare's Monastery. Deeply moved by these events, the young abbess resolved to take definite measures to rediscover the blessed body of Saint Clare so that a true symbol of peace and unity might be given to her suffering country.

On August 11, 1253, at dawn, the gentle heart of Saint Clare had stopped. The next day, on August 12, her body was carried to San Giorgio in the city where the body of her Father Saint Francis had rested from 1226 until its solemn transferral to the new church built in his honor in 1230. On October 3, 1260, a similar honor was accorded to Saint Clare when her body was exhumed from its temporary place of burial and transferred to the new church of Saint Clare, built on the same site. On account of the vicissitudes of the times the body was buried deep beneath the high altar, a simple inscription marking the exact spot: *Hic jacet corpus S. Clarae Virginis*. A small lamp was lit and placed there. The abbess, Mother Benedicta, and the nuns who had, in 1260, made the definitive move from San Damiano to their new Monastery of Saint Clare, and the nuns of each succeeding generation kept all of these things in their hearts.

Sister Mary Clare writes from the Poor Clare Monastery of Mary, Mother of the Church, in Alexandria, VA.

By 1849, Mother Clare Columba was not the only interested person intent upon the finding of the precious body of Saint Clare. Formal requests from around the world had been addressed to the Congregation of Rites. The nuns' confessor, Father Giuseppe Morichelli, was an especially ardent supporter of the project. The felicitous moment arrived when Cardinal Pietro Marini, Prefect of the Congregation, visited Assisi for the feast of the Stigmata of Saint Francis. After the celebrations he visited the nuns and was innocently sipping coffee in their garden, discussing with them and Father Morichelli the event of the finding of the body of Saint Francis in 1818, beneath the high altar of the Basilica. Father Morichelli, probably cued by a glance from the abbess, recognized the opportunity and countercharged: "Your Eminence, as the sun has been manifested, is it not necessary that now the moon may also be revealed?"

The "candle of Umbria" [was] at last placed on its candlestick to give light to the whole household of the Church.

Cardinal Marini was convinced of the timeliness of such an event, but permission to begin the excavation was not given until August 6 of the following year. The work was begun on August 23, 1850, and on account of the disturbed times or for other reasons, was done in the secrecy of night. In the presence of the Bishop's Chancellor, Luigi Alexandri, the excited Father Morichelli and a few other witnesses, the master mason, Mark Rondini, removed the massive base of the altar under which it was hoped that a passage would be found. It was not found. And so Master Rondini began to dig.

Eight days and two excavations later, the tomb in which the body of Saint Clare had been placed six centuries earlier was discovered. The tomb was a conical vault constructed of stones and a persevering thirteenth century cement, with its highest point reaching up six feet. There were four evenly spaced pillars supporting the arches, about six feet apart. Within the vault and to one side a stone coffin had been placed.

According to one source, the body of Saint Clare was buried nine feet below the high altar; to another, fifteen feet. We know that there were two excavations, the first beneath the altar and the second about six feet in front of it. It can be conjectured that Rondini began to strike the top of the vault at nine feet. Having surmised the approximate width of the

vault, he decided to make a second excavation to reach the opening. This, finally completed on the night of August 30, brought him to the depth of fifteen feet, which would allow for the height of six feet quoted above. The full span of the opening appeared. At this point Rondini and his assistants stopped chipping and began to clear the debris in preparation for the official opening of the tomb by the Bishop of Assisi, Monsignor Luigi Landi Vittori.

On September 15, 16, and 17, a triduum was preached to the jubilant populace of Assisi by Don Dominic Zanelli, secretary to Cardinal Marini. He praised the virtues of Saint Clare and prepared the people for the formal recovery of her body which would be celebrated on September 23, the day on which the recovery continues to be commemorated according to the Roman Seraphic calendar. On September 22, Bishop Landi Vittori with his Chancellor visited the tomb and ordered that the opening be broken and removed. Master Rondini, with the assistance of an architect, Lorenzo Carpinelli, and his assistants, worked throughout that day clearing away the last of the debris and stones. Six bishops had arrived in Assisi to honor the faithful daughter of the Church, Saint Clare; and they, with the Bishop of Assisi, on the evening of September 22, visited the excavation and descended by a wooden ladder to view the opening into the chamber where her stone coffin lay. Among the prelates was the Archbishop of Perugia, Monsignor Gioacchino Pecci, the future Pope Leo XIII.

On the morning of September 23, the Pontifical Commissary for Umbria, Girolamo Andreo, arrived; and a solemn Mass was sung in the Chapel of our Lady at the Bishop's residence. A procession then formed, reminiscent of the one that wound itself through the same narrow streets on October 3, 1260, at the time of the solemn transferral of the body of Saint Clare. Meanwhile, assembling at the Monastery of Saint Clare were the Municipal Commission of Assisi, the Cathedral Chapter, and the superiors of religious Orders, as well as a chemist, Professor Purgotti, an archeologist, Professor Antonini, several medical doctors, and the city's archivist, Paolo Cesini.

In the small passageway there was room for only a very few witnesses. A visiting Canon from England became an eye-witness by the simple expedient of offering to hold the Archbishop of Perugia's candle so as to leave him free for the solemn opening of the tomb. According to Canon Chadwick's account, Monsignor Pecci handed the candle to him with a knowing smile. In his letter to the Poor Clares of Yorkshire, England, the Canon's account of the opening of the tomb is very similar to the one preserved in the archives of the Proto-monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi.

The tomb was first examined by the archeologist for some kind of in-

scription, but none was found. The iron bands were sawn through and the parts soldered with lead removed. A futile attempt was made to raise the heavy stone lid. Then a pulley attachment to the ceiling of the cubicle was devised, through which cords were passed and in some manner attached to the lid of the coffin. It worked. There the body of Saint Clare lay. The fine face was not deformed but merely reduced to bones beneath the darkened skin. A wreath of laurel which the nuns had woven for their mother in the thirteenth century was found to be flexible, the leaves still clinging to their stems. Branches of thyme which had been placed about the precious body were found to be in a state of remarkable preservation. Although the rest of the body was reduced to a skeleton, the bones retained their alignment. The head was reclining to the right shoulder, the left arm was leaning on the breast, and the right extended down the side of the body. A film of white powder covered the skeleton. The medical doctors attested that, yes, a partially preserved body of an adult woman was before them.

After the first examination by the scientists, the body was placed in a casket in the upper church. The nuns of Saint Clare, by special permission of the Holy Father, Pope Pius IX, entered the public church to venerate the blessed body of their Foundress. The abbess, Mother Clare Columba, the first to see the face of our Mother, fell on her knees, weeping, and kissed her. "It was a most affecting sight," wrote Canon Chadwick; "I bit my lips, and looked savage, and pulled my mouth, and made my eyes look very round; but it was no use. I could hear the devotional sighs and sobs of the nuns as they passed and see their handkerchiefs stealing up under their veils; and that was the end of our composure and our dignity—we cried as heartily as they did!"

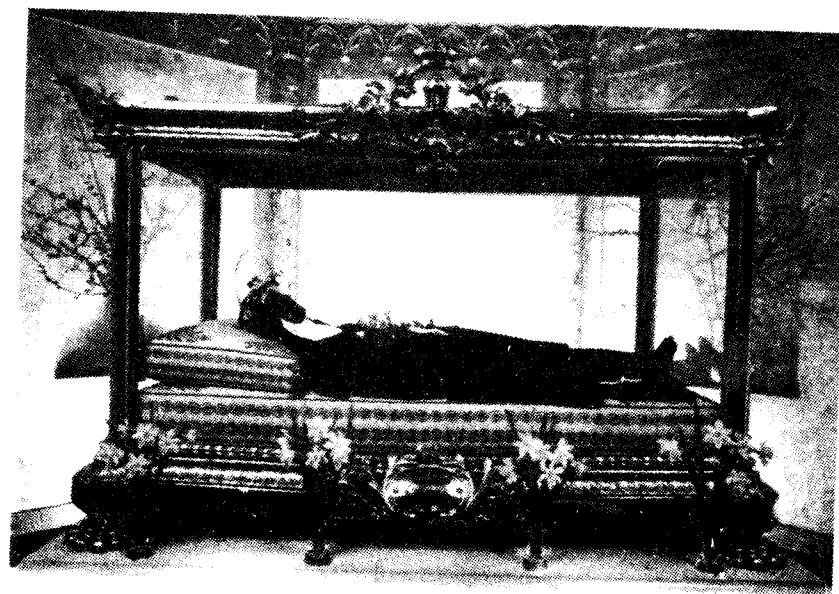
After a large relic of the body of Saint Clare had been removed by the Bishop of Assisi to be given to Pope Pius IX, the casket was sealed and placed on the high altar for the veneration of the faithful. A second triduum of thanksgiving was celebrated September 26, 27, and 28, after which the casket was reopened to proceed with the clothing of the body. The bones were wrapped with a layer of wadding, after which the body was clothed with a grey-colored tunic, white wimple, and black veil. A crown of flowers was placed upon the sacred head. The casket was then resealed and prepared for the solemn procession that took place on the afternoon of September 29. In a poignant reversal of destiny the body of Saint Clare was carried by four priests to visit the tomb of Saint Francis. The procession also stopped at San Rufino Cathedral next to the ancestral home of Saint Clare. At twilight the nuns received the body of their Mother into the cloister and placed her beneath the crucifix of San Damiano. The body was placed in a casket and carried to San Damiano, the grille through

which the blessed Clare had received Holy Communion, was close by. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament ended the memorable day. The official civic commemoration of the event reads as follows:

September 23, 1850

In the century made great by the Seraphic Francis, Dominic Guzman, Bonaventure, and Thomas of Aquinas, the inhabitants of Assisi, respecting the desire of the excellent and great Pontiff Alexander IV, saw to their intense grief the precious relics of the Virgin Clare, their illustrious and holy townswoman, shut up in a rough marble tomb with the inscription seeming to indicate that they shall rest concealed until the end of time. Today, under the auspices of their beloved pastor, Luigi Landi Vittori, they see her again, and are exulting with joy, and pointing her out to believers as a perennial monument of local grandeur. Amid the festive sounds of sacred bells, the hosannas of priests carrying her in triumph through the streets, they show those present and those to come that faith and piety are to be found in the children as well as in the ancestors [F. Casolini, *Il Protomonastero di Santa Chiara in Assisi* {1950}, p. 211].

Soon a plan for a subterranean chapel to be built around the tomb of Saint Clare began to evolve. Ground was broken by Bishop Landi Vittori on June 22, 1852, a day chosen on account of the "Feast of the Vow," and the cornerstone laid on August 12 of the same year. However, some misunderstandings and a lack of funds slowed the progress of the work. And Father Morichelli, who had been put in charge as a liaison officer be-



tween the nuns and the workmen, died in 1856. A new impetus was given to the project when on May 8, 1857, Pope Pius IX paid a visit to the Monastery of Saint Clare and remained for some time in prayer before the temporary tomb. Those were critical times for the Church; and again, as in the thirteenth century, a pontiff was strengthened and consoled by the presence of Clare. All the nuns of Assisi were asked to assemble in Saint Clare's Monastery for the papal visit; about two hundred nuns shared a meal in the refectory after the Holy Father had left. It was noted that Pope Pius was served "an orange drink and little cakes," and that he shared some of the latter with the children who were a part of the procession and who were waiting for him outside the cloister.

In 1860, the work came to an abrupt halt with a renewal of the revolutionary movement in Italy when the nuns were threatened with another suppression. The official who came to the monastery demanding that the enclosure door be opened was an acquaintance of the abbess. Mother Clare Columba opened the door, but told him firmly that it was only because she was compelled to do so by force. The other nuns and novices, as on that eventful day in September, 1240, when the Saracen soldiers had scaled the wall, fled to Clare. The officer, Comrade Francis Bindangoli, suddenly remembered another engagement, signed the account books, and hastily departed. He later admitted that the thought of Saint Clare had made him afraid.

Other officials were not as sensitive to the presence of the body of Saint Clare, and entered the enclosure from time to time. The church of the monastery was used for a time as a storehouse for hay, and the sisters were fortunate in being allowed to remain in their cloister. Other nuns of the city were less privileged, and soon began to ask hospitality of the sisters at Saint Clare's. An entire Benedictine community of forty-one nuns occupied the second floor of the monastery for fifteen years.

In 1864, the sisters became apprehensive about the preservation of the body of Saint Clare and consulted a Roman expert, Modesto Scevola. On May 10, Monsignor Pecci broke the seals of the casket in the presence of the Bishop of Assisi, removed a second rib as a relic, and delivered the bones for consolidation to Scevola. The large bones were enclosed in a metallic netting; the partially preserved head of the Saint was covered with a mask of finer netting through which the darkened skin was visible. The body, reclined in a tunic of ashen colored wool, was placed in a somewhat larger casket to await the solemn transferral to the new chapel.

By 1871, more peaceful years had come to Assisi, and Mother Clare Columba determined to proceed to the completion of the subterranean chapel. The convocation of Vatican Council I in Rome had occasioned

many pilgrimages to Assisi, and generous financial assistance had been given to the nuns. A charming story circulated in 1872 was the perfect incentive for the people of Assisi; it warned that the holy Mother might be growing impatient for the full honors due to a saint of theirs.

The story went like this. On July 30, "during the first hour of darkness," one of the sisters was in the same room as the casket when she heard a blow given to the glass. Turning, she saw the right arm of the Foundress raised and pressed against the glass. She was quite breathless when she reported this to Mother Clare Columba, who came with the other nuns, including the Benedictines from the second floor. The arm was resting against the glass. On the next page of the *Chronicles*, it is mentioned that to move the body to its new and last casket, it was necessary to cut wires attached to the mattress. One of these had probably slipped, but the point was made. Plans for the solemn transfer to the new chapel were soon finalized.

On September 29, 1872, exactly twenty-two years after the first solemn exposition, Saint Clare was carried once more in procession to San Rufino and the Basilica of Saint Francis. A triduum was then celebrated, and the procession repeated on October 3, the anniversary of the first deposition in 1260. The solemn Mass was celebrated by Monsignor Pecci, who as a future pope seemed to have the same attraction for Saint Clare as his predecessors. Monsignor Landi Vittori had died on August 27, 1867, but his successor, Monsignor Paolo Fabiani, and four other bishops assisted Monsignor Pecci. After the Mass the *Te Deum* was intoned. The body of Saint Clare was then carried to its final resting place close to the tomb where she had lain hidden in her own little cloister for six hundred years. This time she was laid in a beautiful crystal casket, clothed in a habit made by her Poor Clare daughters of Marseilles. The chapel was so arranged that pilgrims could view Saint Clare through an iron grille. The "candle of Umbria" had at last been placed on its candlestick to give light to the whole household of the Church. At the end of that memorable vigil of the feast of Saint Francis, surely Mother Clare Columba stayed to pray alone beside her holy Mother, happy to kneel in her shadow, representing all the daughters of Saint Clare through whom her light has indeed illumined the whole world. Ω

Book Reviews

Franciscan History: The Three Orders of Saint Francis of Assisi. By Lazaro Iriarte de Aspurz, O.F.M.Cap. Translated by Patricia Ross. Appendix on "The Historical Context of the Franciscan Movement" by Lawrence C. Landini, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. xl-603, including Index. Cloth, \$25.00.

Reviewed by Father Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., who worked for fourteen years in Chicago's inner city, teaching at the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure University) during the summers, before going this past year to South Africa.

This is a book that I was impatiently waiting for: an historical account of the Franciscan story up to the present time. Father Lazaro is the first one in our times to have attempted such an impossible task.

What pleased me most was that the book stresses the prophetic side of Saint Francis: his fidelity to his original inspiration, to which he gave legal expression in the Rule of 1223 against formidable opposition from some ministers of the Order. The book highlights the moral suffering Saint Francis endured when influential friars attempted to repudiate the original inspiration and to steer the Order in a different direction with the hope of making it an efficient and respected institution. Even on his deathbed Saint Francis reaffirmed the original way of life as the ideal goal for present and future followers.

After Francis' death, however, the

ideal was obscured with the issuance of "Quo elongati," which Father Lazaro calls "the end of the heroic stage." As he puts it, "the interests of the institution prevailed over the call of the pure ideal" (pp. 32f.). The drama of this story is missing, however, because Father Lazaro was forced to condense events and biographies of persons into a few paragraphs. Saint Bonaventure, e.g., gets two pages! He was also forced to devote innumerable pages to lists of places, dates, and names, so that the book reads more often like a tour guide than a history book.

Furthermore, if one is interested in pursuing the story further, the bibliographies are not of much help, since they are sparse (the book was originally published in 1954 and then revised for publication in 1979). Although the author claims extensive revision, the inadequate bibliographies seem to disprove that claim.

The book has three deficiencies. First, the Franciscan story is told in a way more topical than chronological. Since the arrangement in the book tries to combine both (the topical and the chronological), the effect can be bewildering. For instance, after relating the history of the First Order of the first hundred years, Father Lazaro then speaks of the Missions and starts at the beginning in 1219. This going back and forth in time gives one the sense, after a while, of being lost.

Secondly, the historical arrangement of events is at times odd and inexplicable. To give an example: Pope John XXII is considered, not in the chapter on "The Spiritual Quarrel," but in the section entitled "Conventualism and

Observance," as if the tension with Pope John involved the Observants.

Thirdly, there is hardly any historical background for the Franciscan story except for the time before Saint Francis. The publishers tried to remedy this omission by including Father Landini's excellent historical overview of western history. But since it is located at the end of the book as "Appendix 2," it does not provide the reader with the needed links between the West's story and Franciscan history.

I have to add a personal disappointment. On page 412 Father Lazaro rightly observes that after Vatican II the Order took a significant step in the way it prepared the new Constitutions. It tried to "put every clause on sound evangelical and Franciscan foundations" "with full consultation at ground level." That certainly gave new hope to Franciscan families. But I feel it should also have been recorded as a historical fact that "small communities" sprang up in European countries and the Americas—several hundred in the 60s and 70s—which attempted to rediscover the early pilgrimage character of the Order and the option for the poor by friars "living among social outcasts." This was a revolutionary development deserving of historical record.

Despite these lacks, this handbook of Franciscan history is a valuable tool, if only because it is the only book we have for the history of the Franciscan families up to the present time.

Changes: A Spiritual Journal. By John Michael Talbot. New York: Crossroad, 1984. Pp. 138. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Brother Bill Barrett, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province who has been active for some time in work for Peace and Justice.

The music of John Michael Talbot has been quietly playing in many peaceful and recollected moments of my life in the last few years: at community prayers, away on retreat, even in the dining room of the *Catholic Worker* on a recent visit to New York. His albums are uniquely prayerful and calming. When I learned that he'd recently published a "spiritual journal," I was interested. This is a time of change in my own life, and since the movement of lives is common to us all, I hoped to find that common thread of recognition in this journal. I hoped the author's *Changes* might give perspective on my own. I was disappointed.

Publishing a journal is a risky business today more than ever, since journal-keeping has become trendy, at least in religious circles. A private "spiritual" journal made public declares willingness to explore how bones shattered are knit whole, how hearts broken are healed, how wounds inflicted and received are forgiven and repaired. There's not much of that in *Changes*, though one suspects the broken hearts and bones are in there somewhere, not all that far from the surface.

In his preface to the book, Talbot mentions that much of the journal was written from an Indianapolis retreat house where he went after a divorce. He never goes into the experience, and I can't blame him for not wanting to drag his broken marriage into a public plaza. Still, it seems odd that he would write a book of this sort and never examine something so human; for me, it made

his vocabulary of relating to Jesus (as if they were married) less than helpful.

Talbot speaks in sexual terms often enough to warrant comment; I cannot say that I am comfortable with what appears to be his point of view. His use of exclusive language (e.g., *mankind* for humanity and *man* for person) from the very first page of the journal disappointed me. Our English language is changing, and most of us realize it; but many seem too lazy or careless to consider what their usage says as well as what it means. But more than this, Talbot's frequent talk of marrying Jesus ("Jesus and I have died together on the cross as lovers. Jesus and I have been resurrected from the tomb as lovers. In this new life, Jesus and I have been forever married" [pp. 29-30], *et al.*) and his use of feminine-submissive imagery ("I desire to be alone with my Lover in solitude at all times so that he may hold me and kiss me when I am lonely. I seek to be conformed to his mind so that we may never come to argument, separation, and divorce" [p. 32], *et al.*) made a significant portion of his thought inaccessible to me. I don't accept those role stereotypes in my own relationships with real women, and they tell me nothing helpful about relating to God. I have no doubt that sexuality is charged with the divine—some rabbinic teaching held that since the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed, God's presence is most clearly known in two places, when Scripture is studied in common and when a married couple lie together—but spiritualizing sex seems to me to miss the

theological point.

For the rest, there are just too many gaps in the story; Talbot's views of marriage and sex aren't all that one wonders about. The book is written in the first person singular, but by its end the reader infers that some sort of community is part of the author's life. Midway through the book, Cheri White is mentioned as a non-Catholic friend who comes to see Talbot; the book's brief epilogue is signed "Sister Cheri White," but we're in the dark as to when she even joined the Catholic Church. This is very much to the point, since Talbot seems to have begun a Regular community within the Franciscan Third Order Secular. I wish he had taken the time to explain what that is and why! Unfortunately, I seem to infer that he was led to the Franciscan path in no small part because many Franciscans today wear a brown habit, and he had a dream in which a brown habit figured prominently. I'm sure there's much more to it than that, but I can't find that "more" in this book.

Many of the "changes" disclosed here appear, sadly, somewhat superficial, or the literal results of a vaguely fundamentalist reading of Franciscan and Gospel writings. It is painful to write what I realize is a harsh review, but I know no more of John Michael Talbot and the direction his life (and community?) has taken than I did before I read this book. I think there's a lot more to him than *Changes* allows to be seen. Maybe it's best if he lets his music speak, and allows silence to say the rest.

Books Received

- Champlin, Joseph, *Healing in the Catholic Church: Mending Wounded Hearts and Bodies*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 176. Paper, \$5.50.
- Cunningham S.S.C.M., Agnes, *The Bishop in the Church: Patristic Texts on the Role of the Episkopos*. Theology and Life Series, n. 13. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 63, including Bibliography. Paper, \$4.95.
- Cunningham, S.S.C.M., Agnes, *Prayer: Personal and Liturgical*. Message of the Fathers of the Church Series, n. 16. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 147, including Bibliography and Index. Cloth, \$10.95; paper, \$7.95.
- Faley, T.O.R., Roland J., *To Come and See: Thoughts on Contemporary Religious Life*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1985. Pp. xii-158. Cloth, \$12.50.
- Gilles, Anthony E., *The People of the Book: The Story behind the Old Testament*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. xiv-178, including Index. Paper, \$5.95.
- Halton, Thomas, *The Church*. Message of the Fathers of the Church Series, n. 4. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 239, including Bibliography and Index. Cloth, \$15.00; paper, \$9.95.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M., *Bring Prayer into Your Life: With Open Hands*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1985. Pp. viii-87. Paper, \$1.95.
- Stravinskis, Peter M. J., *The Catholic Response*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 119. Paper, \$5.95.
- Tilley, Terrence W., *Story Theology*. Theology and Life Series, n. 12. Preface by Robert McAfee Brown. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. xix-242, including Bibliography and Index. Paper, \$9.95.
- Walsh, S.J., James, and P. G. Walsh, *Divine Providence and Human Suffering*. Message of the Fathers of the Church Series, n. 17. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 272 including Bibliography and Index. Cloth, \$15.00; paper, 9.95.

CORRECTION

Please note that the book review entry on page 159 of our May issue is both incomplete and incorrect. Anthony E. Gilles should have been listed as the book's author, and the book, instead of *People of the Way*, should have been the above: *People of the Book*. We regret any inconvenience these errors may have caused.

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpReg: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
Exhort: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
Exposit: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
For.nV: For the Life of St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of St. Clare	SC: Sacrum commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

EDITORIAL



Opting for the Poor

THERE IS NO DOUBT that Saint Francis wanted his followers to be poor and to be with the poor (RegNB IX.2). This is the reason why the Church's call for religious to make a preferential option for the poor speaks strongly to Franciscans. Sometimes, though, it seems that some twist the meaning of "preferential option for the poor" to justify where and how they live and for whom they minister. Anyone who has lived among the materially poor, especially in the Third World, almost feels compelled to speak out against this, particularly in gatherings where religious renewal is being assessed and discussed.

This option explicitly does refer to the materially poor. It does not mean the spiritually poor, or morally poor, or the psychologically poor. To minister among those who suffer in these ways needs no justification. Nevertheless, because we are Franciscan and because of the Church's call we are called to opt, to eliminate the material, moral, and social deprivations of the actual poor. As Franciscans it is our vocation also to be actually poor, as Pope John Paul recently reminded us. Evangelical poverty, which is voluntarily assumed, means we reject the worldly quest for status and wealth, and the misuse of power (Mt. 4:1-10), and we walk in this world as pilgrims and strangers (Mt. 10:27-29), having only what we need (RegNB VIII.11, IX.1; 1 Tim. 6:8). Our attitude is not to appropriate anything as our own, but to attribute all to God. This Gospel poverty should never be equated with that material poverty which is an evil and roared against by the prophets. Such poverty results from humanity's inhumanity to others, from greed, from injustice, from the lack of sharing, and from the deprivation of development and creativity. Let us never justify such poverty. But let us always talk of evangelical poverty when we mean the religious value that the Lord counsels. And let us clearly manifest that by a basic simplicity in total life-style as a witness to Gospel poverty. Finally, let us cease editorializing about the people to whom we legitimately minister, calling them the "spiritually

poor." At best that is only an apparent self justification deceptively telling us that we are fulfilling the call to opt preferentially for the poor!

To do so is to miss two points in the Church's social teaching. The first is that the Church wants us to change the situation where material poverty deprives people of basic, human rights and needs: food, shelter, clothing, education, opportunity, self determination, and a fair share in this world's resources. All of us, no matter where or how we live or with whom we serve, can do something to promote human development, particularly in the Third World and among the actual poor at home.

The second point is that the preferential option for the poor is not exclusive, but inclusive. Let's be honest, then. All of us are not called, or able, to be in the Third World or in material poverty pockets. In fact, those not called to overseas ministry or to specific service with the materially poor at home should not go. They probably would do harm and hurt the actual poor. I am reminded of a crying Hanson's disease person who told me she wept because "that [lady] could not look at me." The preferential option for the poor means we all can and should do something about the development of peoples, especially the deprived materially poor. All of us can sensitize others to the plight of the poor and teach people to be involved in development programs, according to each one's ability and capacity. We can all point out the unjust causes that sustain material poverty. We Franciscans, especially by our life-style, should witness to Gospel projected attitudes towards material things, our world, and even human relationships, no matter where we serve—even if that is among this world's wealthiest.

No one needs to justify valid ministries. Time spent on that is wasted time. Let us get on with God's work of upbuilding his people with human and graced dignity according to our calling. Oftentimes our calling will change. That surprises some. It should not. We ought to be ready for a change in our life, perhaps one based on the Church's option for the poor. Remember: Francis embraced a leper, and lived with the unwanted and the outcast. He overcame his own self-perception and found a giftedness from God that led him to do something that previously he felt he could not. Ω

Thaddeus Vorgan, S.A.

Instruments of Peace

MATTHEW T. CONLIN, O.F.M.

AS YOU READ THESE WORDS, YOU HAVE probably within the past few days celebrated the "passing" of Saint Francis. Traditionally, this has meant the passing of Francis' soul from here to heaven. This has been the "Transitus."

I suggest that this year, after celebrating that Transitus, we celebrate something different. Let us celebrate the passing of the spirit of Saint Francis into our spirits as we allow some of his values so to penetrate our very beings that we will be forever touched by him—forever.

Francis died in 1226; we live somewhat later in 1985. Between those two dates there have been very few spots of time so ripe, so ready, so right as our times for the passing on and for the receiving of Saint Francis' spirit. It absolutely boggles the mind to think how ready we are for his spirit and his values, whether we know it or not.

In what follows, I would like to reflect with you about some of Saint Francis' values, values which we will prize only if we, like Saint Francis, have already encountered God so that God says to us, as Saint Augustine put it, "You would not seek me if you had not already found me." I suggest that if we accept these values and live them, we shall find three roles to play in life: (1) the role of being a person of compassion, compassion for a large percentage of the people on this planet, i.e., compassion for the poor and the hungry; (2) the role of being a mediator, a bringer of peace to any warring factions in our world; and (3) the role of being a model of serenity and cheerful acceptance of God's plan for us. These are the three: compassion, peace, and serenity.

Father Matthew T. Conlin, O.F.M., former President of Siena College, Loudonville, NY, is Vicar Provincial of Holy Name Province.

Historians like to recall the day of Saint Francis' conversion when he kissed the leper and came to love the poor. Francis was not a social worker. He built no hospitals, opened no soup kitchens. Although he lived and moved among the lepers, he never started a leper colony. He came to the poor as a man of love, to liberate, to set free their deepest humanity which was then, as now, being brutalized. Francis sought and found solidarity with the poor; he consoled them, he embraced them, and he kissed them. He shared their pains, he reached out to those who were starved for affection and restored their human dignity. "Courtesy," he used to say, "courtesy is the sister of charity; it is one of God's qualities" (L. Boff, *A Model for Human Liberation*). But that social sin finds its real source in the human heart.

We must let our Franciscan values move us to fulfill these two roles of bringing peace and compassion to others. . . .

Francis met head on the challenges of his time, and they haven't changed much. Of all the challenges we face today, one of the greatest is the challenge from the poor and the dehumanizing poverty to which millions upon millions of our human race are subjected. There are those who have and those who have not. On the one hand, over a billion struggle for survival in misery, hunger, and illiteracy; the others enjoy the benefits of prosperity, taking advantage of all the goods and services available. The Latin American bishops meeting at Puebla said: "It is not fate; it is not the will of God that there be rich and poor. The cause lies in definite economic, social, and political situations and structures which make it possible for the rich to get richer and the poor to get poorer" (n. 30). And they firmly rebuked any people who tend to reduce the sphere of their Catholic faith to their personal life and to their family relationships, saying that it is "only here in my personal life" or "here in my family relationships" that compassion, sin, love, and forgiveness are important." Compassion, love, sin, and forgiveness are just as important in relationships that are professional, economic, social, and political. It has been said that "It is often there in the social and political world that the most important human decisions are made; it is there in the social and political world that God is openly served or God is publicly offended" (Boff, *St. Francis: A Model for Human Liberation*).

This is the reality of the world on which Francis urges us to leave our mark. He found in the broken bodies and the broken spirits of the poor the very broken, crucified body of Christ. He found him exactly where Jesus said he would find him, waiting among people in need. Let our option for the poor bring us to be either like them, with them, or for them. Any one will do. And our motive? Compassion, mere compassion—almost the essence of our Franciscan tradition.



The values of Saint Francis urge us to play another role in life, that of being a mediator, a bringer of peace. Francis knew that within the worst of us there are hidden healing powers which may be brought to life with gentle care, compassion, and understanding. Francis had his own Theology of Liberation; it was, in Father Boff's words, "liberation through kindness," a kindness born of a deep respect for every individual. Francis was always a man of peace. Countless times he went out of his way to seek the role of mediator to bring peace. A few examples will suffice.

The Bishop and the mayor of Assisi were having a first class medieval feud. The Bishop excommunicated the mayor, and the mayor forbade anyone in Assisi to buy anything from or to sell anything to the Bishop. In its own way it was a beautiful Italian vendetta! It was also a scandal. And Francis said this: "It is a great shame for us that the Bishop and the mayor hate each other in this way, without anyone bothering to pacify them, *without anyone bothering to pacify them.*" This eager man of peace soon pacified them in a most interesting way. How often do we try deliberately to bring peace to warring factions in our own little worlds?

One day when Francis was at Siena, a city to the west of Assisi, a group of citizens were warring and killing each other. On entering Siena Francis went immediately to the trouble spot and quickly restored peace. It happened again in Bologna, to the north of Assisi, on the Feast of the Assumption, 1222.

Horried by the violence of the Crusades, Francis sought out the Sultan Melek-al-Kamil. He started at Egypt, and then, without any defense, he faced the whole Muslim army. The story has become part of a legend, but to this day Franciscans are in charge of all the Christian

shrines in the Holy Land and we come and go as we please. We are seen as men of peace, so great was the impact which Francis made as a mediator, a man of peace, over 700 years ago.

If we are to live out this role of mediator to bring peace, then we are never to condemn; we are to seek to understand, to create peace and a new relationship where there were only antagonism, hatred, and fear. We can do that and still be as hard as nails—as Francis, the mediator, often was.

The values of Saint Francis urge us to play yet another role in life: being a person of serenity and cheerful acceptance. This is the value which we hear in this disturbing conversation between Saint Francis and Brother Leo:

One day near the Church of St. Mary of the Angels Francis called to Brother Leo and said to him: "Brother Leo, write this down." Leo answered: "I am ready." Francis said: "Write down what perfect joy is."

"A messenger from Paris arrives and says that all of the teachers at the university [where many friars were teaching] want to enter the Order. Write: that is not perfect joy."

"And though all of the prelates beyond the Alps, archbishops and bishops, and even the very kings of England and France were to enter the Order, write: that is not perfect joy. And if you were to get news that our brothers converted all the infidels to the faith, or that I received so much grace from God that I could cure the sick and do many miracles: I assure you that that is not perfect joy."

"Well, then," asked Brother Leo, "what then is perfect joy?"

"Imagine," said Francis, imagine that I return to Perugia on the darkest of nights, a night so cold that everything is covered with snow, and icicles form in the folds of my habit, hitting my legs and making them bleed. Shrouded in snow and shivering from the cold, I arrive at the door of the friary and after I call out for a long time, the porter gets up and asks: 'Who is it?' and I respond: 'It is I, Brother Francis.' The brother porter says: 'Be on your way, Now is not the time to arrive at a friary. I won't open the door for you.' I insist, and he answers: 'Be on your way now. You are stupid and an idiot. We are already many here and we do not need you.' I insist once more: 'For the love of God, let me in, just for tonight.' And he answers: 'Not even to talk. Go to the leper colony nearby.'

"Well, Brother Leo, if, after all this, I do not lose patience and I remain calm, believe me, that is perfect joy, true virtue, and the salvation of my soul."

I have no comment on this conversation because this serenity, the feeling of perfect joy, is a prize. It is the natural result of fulfilling our role of being a person of compassion in that dark, brutal, dehumanizing world where one quarter of the human race live—the world of the poor—and

of being a mediator. We must let our Franciscan values move us to fulfill these two roles of bringing peace and compassion to others; and then we shall enjoy a most fulfilling reward and become models of serenity and cheerful acceptance, so that when the very roof of our little world seems ready to collapse, we can say with patience: "Brother Leo, write it down; *this* is perfect joy."

No one ever lived who was so perfect a model of Jesus as was Saint Francis of Assisi. Mahatma Gandhi said that. It is so interesting to think about him and so rewarding to model our lives on his. It is now 1985. We have progressed so far. We have prolonged life and developed an impressive pharmacy of drugs to kill pain or to relieve it. But millions of children in our world are so poor that they will never, never see a doctor or a nurse, and twenty-four die every minute without ever growing up. A UN official told me last week that the number had been twenty-eight. Now it is twenty-four, thanks to people who care. But for these poor there is too little compassion.

Hatred and violence stalk our world at large, and in the hearts of many there is little peace. Across our nation, at an incredible rate, families are breaking up. When was there ever a greater need for mediators, for peacemakers in family life? And how can there be serenity and cheerful acceptance of life, when drugs and alcohol have blurred so many minds?

The great novelist Albert Camus proposed this as the most important question we face: "Does life deserve to be lived or not?" We answer, Yes! We encounter God, and then we begin the process of liberation, of liberating ourselves and liberating others. Saint Francis' values become our guides, leading us finally to recognize that if, in the process, we reject any other human being, then we reject God as well. Ω

Francis

Still singing, dancing;
Telling stories, giving alms . . .
For a new Master.

Walt Hund, T.O.R.

A Commentary on the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis

Spirit and Life

SISTER MADGE KARECKI, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.

Prologue

THE PROLOGUE OF THE Third Order Regular Rule and Life is taken from the earlier version of the Letter to the Faithful, often called the Volterra Letter after the name of the place in which it was found. The Letter was written probably between 1213 and 1221. The part that makes up the Prologue is the first part of the Letter, in which Francis is instructing his followers in the essentials of the Christian faith and how one may grow closer to the Lord. Francis calls us to break with sin, to repent, and to love the Lord with our "whole heart, whole soul and mind and with our strength and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves."

This is a challenging call to us, but Francis teaches that if we do these things we will bring forth "fruits worthy of true penance." When he calls us to do this—to penance—he is talking, not only about doing some penitential practices or acts of penance, but about a way of life in which we bear the burdens of the poor people among whom we are living. For Francis doing penance meant breaking with the attitudes he had learned from his father, attitudes which had no place in the heart and mind of the person of faith.

The call to do penance is a call issued to every Christian. What characterizes the *Franciscan* call to penance is the setting and conditions in which we voluntarily live. In the rest of the Rule, then, a way of life is outlined which will facilitate continual conversion.

Sister Madge Karecki, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F., a graduate of the Franciscan Institute and a Consulting Editor of this Review, is serving as a Franciscan consultant and teacher for the Daughters of St. Francis of Assisi in South Africa. She also acts as spiritual director and retreat director.

Further on in the Prologue Francis talks about growing closer to the Lord in terms of relationships. He calls us spouses, brothers, mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ. These relationships are then depicted as the source of our happiness: "How happy and blessed are these men and women when they do these things, and persevere in doing them, because . . . the Spirit of the Lord God will make his home and dwelling place with them."

The Rule ends as it began, with a call to a way of life that calls us to single-minded devotion to the Lord, union with the Church, and fidelity to the Gospel.

In the last part of the Prologue Francis quotes extensively from John 17, the Last Discourse. He uses the words of Jesus to express his own concern for his followers and makes Jesus' prayer his prayer for them.

Chapter One: Our Identity

THIS FIRST CHAPTER immediately focuses our attention on the fact that we are called, not to some organization, work group, or ministry, but rather to join other men and women as they endeavor to live the Gospel. We are called to a certain style of life, a way to live by following in the footprints of Jesus. This is what it means for us to live the Gospel.

Next the vows are mentioned because they help us to focus and clarify our way to live the Gospel. Again the emphasis is on a way of life: "living in obedience, in poverty, and in chastity." Unlike the older monastic communities, we Franciscans live the vows, not in a certain place like a monastery, but in the spirit of the Gospel. We are called to be obedient and poor and celibate for the good of the Kingdom.

The chapter clearly indicates that our call is to follow Jesus Christ, not Saint Francis or any other saint. Jesus is our model and guide as we journey to the Kingdom, but we are called to the Franciscan family to follow Jesus after the example of Saint Francis. How we live the Gospel is conditioned by our share in the Franciscan charism. We are willing to learn from Francis' example because it has been authenticated by the Church and in God's providence we have been led to share in his charism.

As Franciscans we live this Gospel way in the context of the larger Church. We do so to contribute to her up-building as well as to obtain strength to persevere in this way of life which is founded on faith in the person of Jesus. Further, we find strength and guidance in the Church's teaching so that we are gradually led to deeper levels of conversion. The helps for this which we find directly in our spirituality are prayer (which keeps our lives rooted in the Gospel and open to the gifts of the Spirit), poverty (which gives credibility to our proclamation of the Kingdom and our rejection of anything which might be an obstacle to its fulfillment), and humility (which keeps us ever attentive to God's providential care and aware of the truth of who we are in relationship to Him and to all our sisters and brothers).

There is a clear call to us within this chapter to give ourselves to worship: "to acknowledge, adore, and serve him in sincere repentance." This will help us to be sharers in the life of God's Kingdom.

This chapter ends with a call to obedience to those in authority within the Church and our Order or congregation. Article three is true to the Franciscan concept of obedience, which would have us also obey one another because we are sisters and brothers and like Jesus want to be of service to all. There is a special word about cooperation among all the members of the Franciscan family so that there is mutual sharing and working together wherever possible to support, encourage, and challenge one another to fidelity to what we have promised to live as members of the same family.

Through obedience and cooperation we acknowledge that we are a pilgrim people, that we are dependent on one another, and that we are willing to use those gifts for the good of others and to submit our inspirations for testing.

Chapter Two: Acceptance into This Life

AS IN THE FIRST CHAPTER emphasis is placed on the fact that those persons who come to join us are called by the Lord himself to live a way of life, not a specific apostolate. This serves to point out the dynamic quality of Franciscan life: that there is room for everyone's gifts, as long as they are willing to share a common life-style.

This chapter highlights the fact that the ministers of the fraternity are the ones responsible for admitting the candidates into the life of the community. The ministers have the serious responsibility of testing their beliefs to see if they are in keeping with the Catholic faith and in line with the Church's sacramental life. This is necessary because we are not a community which lives for itself; rather we belong to the larger Church, and if we are to play a part in promoting her life, then those who come to

us must be deeply rooted in the Church and have a clear understanding of her teaching.

This chapter then focuses on the formation process of the individual, how he or she comes to be integrated into the life of the Franciscan family. It centers the process around the first passages of the Bible which Francis opened up to when he was seeking direction for his life: Lk. 18:22, Mt. 19:21, and Mt. 16:24. These passages point out very clearly that poverty is the framework for our life of penance. This poverty is not something forced on us, but is freely chosen, for the Lord says, "If you wish. . . ." The choice is ours.

Integrity is called for through an emphasis on continual conversion. Though we must choose once and make a commitment to follow in the footprints of Jesus, we choose daily to remain faithful to that commitment.

That commitment, by reason of its sign value, calls for some concrete and visible witness. It needs to find expression in where and how we live, what we wear, our dedication to prayer, and our concern for the needs of others. All of this is aimed at transforming us into fit dwelling places for the Trinity and to keep us honest in our commitment to a Franciscan style of life.

Chapter Three: The Spirit of Prayer

THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS of our Rule dealt with a statement of our identity and the formation of new members into our community. The rest of the Rule describes the way of life we have chosen to live.

In this chapter we find a description of prayer in terms of our response as a follower of Jesus to the gracious love of the Father. It calls us to be persons of prayer wherever we are and at all times.

This again suggests one of the big differences between the Franciscan family and the older monastic communities. We are to be a people who are mobile, moving among the people, wherever our gifts can best be put at the service of our brothers and sisters. Ours is not a way of life marked by stability in terms of a place to live and work. We find our stability and security in Jesus and in our relationships with one another.

Prayer, then, is the foundation of our lives. Cultivating a deep and rich inner life deserves our attention. The Liturgy of the Hours is singled out as the common prayer of the community so that we celebrate this prayer in union with the whole Church. The Rule advocates this prayer as *the* prayer of the community, but also encourages us to have a strong personal prayer life.

It further encourages that those among us who have been called to live the contemplative life may be supported in this call. Besides those who

are called to the contemplative life, all of us are charged with the responsibility to do whatever is necessary to open ourselves to the Lord's gift of contemplation. We are called to take seriously the rich contemplative tradition of the Franciscan family. We need, therefore, to see how we can enhance the contemplative dimension of our lives and the life of the community. We need to nourish ourselves and grow in our capacity for silent waiting in the Lord's presence.

The Word of God and the Eucharist are singled out as the center of our life. Like Francis we find direction in God's Word and strength for living it out in the Eucharist. It is in the celebration of the Eucharist, then, that we give assent to our common faith as a community whose life goal is to live the Gospel after the manner of Saint Francis.

Clear recognition is given to the fact that there is need for reconciliation in each of our lives and that like the early Franciscans we make use of sacramental and non-sacramental confession. In this way we face the truth of who we are as redeemed and yet sinful people. We come to realize that we need one another's support and forgiveness in order for the community to be strong.

As we ask forgiveness of others and give it to others we find the bonds among us strengthened by mutual faith in the healing and redeeming love of Jesus. We are not called to stand in judgment upon one another, but rather to show the mercy of Jesus to each of our sisters and brothers. Mutual trust and respect, rather than fear and envy, characterize our life together.

Chapter Four: The Life of Chastity for the Sake of the Kingdom

CHASTITY IS TREATED in light of our relationship with the Lord. We remain unmarried, not for negative reasons or because we have had bad experiences with persons of the opposite sex, but because we have been called by God to give him single-hearted devotion. "Let the brothers and the sisters keep in mind how great a dignity the Lord God has given them. . . ."

As in the case of all the vows, Jesus is the norm for our living out of our vow of chastity. As seen in his own life, remaining chaste for the sake of the Kingdom does not exclude healthy and Christ-centered relationships with both men and women. Jesus clearly regarded Peter, James, John, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus as friends. Saint Francis had special relationships with Clare, Bernard, Giles, Leo, and Lady Jacopa.

The vow of chastity does not exclude relationships, but it does require that we make our relationship with the Lord our primary relationship. The purpose of the vow of chastity is to have a heart free for worship.

The Rule in fact calls upon us to realize that we are to give witness through our union with Christ to his union with the Church.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is singled out in this chapter, and devotion to her is encouraged because of Francis' devotion to her and also because she is Patroness of the whole Franciscan family. We are asked to imitate her veneration for the Word of God and, like her, to give Him birth in our lives. We are called upon to become handmaids of the Lord and servants of the Word.

Chapter Five: The Way to Serve and Work

TRUE TO FRANCIS' INTENTION this chapter states clearly that our ordinary way to support ourselves is the work we do. "The grace of serving or working" is viewed as the right use of the talents the Lord has given us. We are encouraged to work "faithfully and conscientiously"—that is, to perform our duties and responsibilities with care and in the best way we can.

Article 15 then deals with two dangers that we need to be aware of when doing any work: idleness and "workaholism." Idleness, whether due to laziness or lack of initiative or creativity, has negative effects on the personality. It is harmful because it prevents our developing our talents given us for the good of others, and our lives lose meaning. We fail to become the person we were meant to be. "Workaholism" means that we just keep busy as an escape or because of our insecurity about ourselves. It often arises because we do not feel accepted for who we are as a person.

Both these dangers need to be checked because they "extinguish the spirit of holy prayer and devotion." Once prayer and devotion are gone from our lives, it is difficult to remain firm in our commitment and we run the risk of becoming rigid and inflexible because we are not open to the Spirit of God in our lives if we are not prayerful persons.

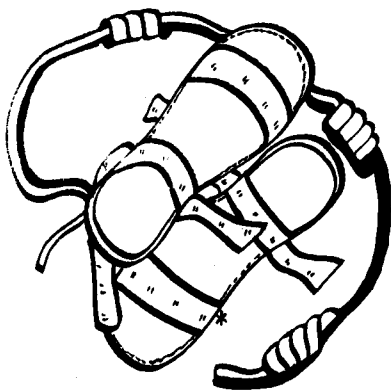
We are told that we may accept in payment "anything necessary for our own temporal needs and those of our sisters or brothers." The important words are "anything necessary." This means that we have to distinguish between what we *need* and what we *want*. We are urged to be "seekers of most holy poverty." This means that we are, as individuals and as a community, looking for ways in which we can simplify our lives and be satisfied with only what we need.

Perhaps one of the strongest statements in the Rule is in Article 16, which reads: "Whatever they may have over and above their needs they are to give to the poor." Saint Francis taught that whatever we have in excess belongs to the poor. This does not mean we are to live in destitution, only that we are to be satisfied with having our basic needs taken

care of and do not want to accumulate more than that.

Minority—that is, being little in our own eyes and in the eyes of others—describes our manner of serving and relating to other people. It is the expression of our true condition before God, and therefore the stance from which we respond to our brothers and sisters. In this way we interiorize the spirit of the Beatitudes, and our lives are marked by the gifts of gentleness, peace, joy, and the happiness we know when we are doing God's will. Then we do more than greet people with the words: "The Lord give you peace." We are living witnesses of the gift of his peace.

Chapter Six: The Life of Poverty



THE NORM FOR OUR POVERTY and the example of a truly poor person that we need to have before our eyes is Jesus himself. We are not victims of poverty; rather we choose poverty freely because "Jesus became poor for our sake" (2 Cor. 8:9). Francis reasoned that Jesus and Mary both chose poverty, and if it was good enough for them, then it was the way we need to take in order to "follow in the footprints of Jesus."

Once again we are called to a standard of living based on our real needs and not on our wants. Franciscans often reason away this call to be poor in fact by saying: "Our benefactors gave it to us," or, "It was free." Just because we are given something, it does not automatically become in keeping with what we have promised to live as a Franciscan through the vow of poverty. We must learn to refuse things if they can compromise the integrity of our call to live poorly.

To help us in this task Francis calls us to situate ourselves among poor and oppressed peoples. The environment or surroundings in which his community lived were always important for Francis. He knew instinctively that poor people would help to keep his followers honest and persevering in their life of poverty. History proved him correct. Once his followers moved away from the poor they started becoming rich; they began to live a more monastic life in big houses, and they became very legalistic about their practice of poverty. This happened because they moved out of a situation of real poverty and were no longer close to the

people who would keep them honest.

This is not poverty for the sake of poverty, but a poverty which is rooted in the Gospel and leads to the Kingdom. Like "pilgrims and strangers" with nothing to clutter our minds and hearts, we can move about spreading the Good News. We then have no need to worry about our own security because we have confidence that if we depend on the Lord he will care for us.

The Rule is very clear in pointing out that poverty is the way to the Kingdom. "So excellent is this most high poverty that it makes us heirs and rulers of the Kingdom of heaven." If we do not take this way how shall we get to the Kingdom?

Chapter Seven: Fraternal Love

IN BEING CALLED TO THE Franciscan family we have been called to a community which demands a very high level of trust. It does so because we are asked to share our very selves with one another and to find our security in the bonds we have in community.

This level of trust is also manifested in the words "Let them make known their needs to one another." It is only when we trust another person that we are willing to let people know what we really need to live, to let them see us when we are weak and need the strength of others, to share our hurts and our joys, our dreams and our visions for the future. We are called to have the heart of God toward one another, always ready to show the greatest respect for the person. Within the Franciscan tradition there is a profound sense of the value of the person apart from his/her usefulness. Each individual is seen as precious because of his or her inherent dignity in Christ.

Realistically we know that we hurt each other, and so we are encouraged within this chapter to do whatever is necessary to mend any broken relationships we have. This was always important to Francis because he knew that once negative feelings and hurts take root in the heart they have a way of taking over and blinding the individual to God's goodness and the goodness of others. The heart then becomes closed or filled with bitterness. Only when there is reconciliation can the heart be free for the concerns of the Kingdom of the Lord.

Finally, we are warned against self-righteousness and anger. Francis viewed both as acts of appropriation. He viewed them in this way because only God is righteous and only he can judge the heart of another. When we are angry with another person we take a stance of judgment in regard to him or her, a stance that the Rule says "hinders living lovingly."



Chapter Eight: The Obedience of Love

THIS CHAPTER BUILDS on the preceding one. It takes for granted that the community is rooted in and built on love and that all decisions and concerns are made in light of the Kingdom of God. It instructs us to have as a priority in all our gatherings and Chapters "the Kingdom of God and its justice." To be taken up with anything less is to compromise our commitment to the Gospel.

We are urged to support one another in taking steps in faith, to live more eagerly what we have promised in the Rule and the Franciscan vision for following in the footprints of Jesus. To follow in someone's footprints means that we continually adjust the stride of our steps, the distribution of weight from foot to foot, and the pace and direction of our steps. This is what we are asked to do in following Jesus.

Minority is again highlighted as the manner in which we relate to others. Ours is not the way of control, exploitation, or manipulation. We do not wish to use other people for our own ends; rather, we put ourselves at the service of others—a service that is measured by Jesus' own service.

We are reminded that elected leadership is a role of service, and we cannot take the word of our ministers lightly. Within the Franciscan tradition the ministers have always played a greater role than simply being the administrator who assigns us work, gives permissions, or regulates the daily timetable. The ministers among us are charged with the task of calling us to continual conversion as individuals and as a community. They are to remind us of what we have promised to live. And though all of us have a responsibility to live with vision, the ministers in particular are creatively to seek ways which call all of us to a deeper understanding of that vision and more radical ways of living it out.

By accepting the role of leadership, the ministers make a commitment to be available for service to the community. Like all other roles within the community, the role of leadership is rooted in the example of service given us by Jesus.

Chapter Nine: Apostolic Life

IN THE FIRST ARTICLE of this chapter we are given our reason for being on mission among the people: "For [God] has sent them into the world so that they might give witness by word and work to his voice and to make known to all that the Lord alone is God."

First, it is God himself who sends us among the people. Faith is spread, enriched, and nourished by sharing it with others. This is done primarily by witness and then by the use of our talents and skills for the good of

God's people. This builds up the Christian community. Secondly, our primary way to spread the faith is by giving witness that community is possible among people of differing backgrounds, ages, and personalities because we are one in Christ. Thirdly, our reason for going among the people is not to impress others, or build kingdoms for ourselves that we never want to leave or give up control of, but rather that we make Jesus and his message known. This is our way of repairing the Church and building it up in love.

We are to be people who proclaim peace, but we are cautioned to have it deep within ourselves so that there is a relationship between what we say and how we live. This peace is not something we seek after for itself; rather it is a result of living out our commitment to the Gospel.

We are asked to prepare ourselves to do whatever is necessary to promote the Kingdom. This means that we are willing to take risks and to ready ourselves even for martyrdom. This type of action is not something which belongs only to past ages in the Church. We can expect to come into conflict with persons and systems whenever we take a stand in favor of the Gospel and the way of Jesus.

Finally, this chapter closes with a call for integrity in our lives. This simply means that we are to be humble in all circumstances. It does not mean false humility or the fostering of a bad self-image. What it means is that we simply acknowledge the truth of who we are: God's children who are dependent on him for "every good and perfect gift."

Because we have been given everything as gift there is no reason to hoard our gifts or the material things we have, and there is every reason to be filled with thankfulness and the freedom to share.

For Francis God was the Great Almsgiver who gives his children everything they need. He is all rich and therefore gives us alms. But we have these only on loan, and they must be returned to him through the sharing of them with our brothers and sisters. In this way we not only give thanks with our lips, we thank him with our lives.

Exhortation and Blessing

THE RULE ENDS as it began, with a call to a way of life that calls us to single-minded devotion to the Lord, union with the Church, and fidelity to the Gospel. This enables us to have the Spirit of God ever at work within us and opens us to the blessings he brings.

Francis knew this through his own experience; that is why he could boldly promise us life with the Trinity if we walk faithfully, even if at times haltingly, in the footprints of Jesus. Ω

Francis and the Caves of Assisi

Brother Francis,
Little Poor Man of Assisi,
What did you learn
in the caves?
What was it that held you
so long there,
Just you alone with your God?
Did you feel Jesus
already beside you?
Or did you first have to
grope in the dark?
Did you weep too
as you lovingly sought him?
Tell me, what was in your heart?
Will you come back
to the Cave with me,
And teach me that
closeness to find?
Help me open my heart
to receive Him,
Though the way be not
always kind.
I have a longing
to know Jesus better,
The barriers and walls
have to go.
So please share with me
your great secret,
And teach me all that you know.
Take me back
to the caves very often,
the crucified Lord to meet.
In the silence I know
I will find Him there,
As my heart waits
for Him to speak.

T

I'll let Him gradually
teach me His secrets
As His love heals all of my hurts.
He'll prune me
and form me as He wants,
Then He'll send me
once more to His work.
They call you Francis,
the Poor Man of Assisi,
But you owned riches
the world never knew,
For the marks of your Beloved
Christ Crucified,
Were imprinted by Him
on to you.
His sufferings you bore
in your body,
But His peace was there
in your soul,
For in the lonely caves
of Assisi,
He became your God and your All.
Please, Francis,
always stay with us.
The world needs your measure of love.
Guide the hearts
of your followers who love you
From the Caves
to God's glory above.
Lead us to the feet
of Christ Crucified,
By the way you
yourself once trod,
For through the lonely
caves of Assisi
You marked out the
pathway to God.

Gladys Michaud, S.F.O.

A Short Biography of Saint Agnes of Assisi:

"The Most Prudent Virgin, Our Sister"

SISTER CHIARA AUGUSTA LAINATI

TRANSLATED BY SISTER JANE FRANCES

AGNES FAVARONE, the sister of Clare "by birth and in her purity" (CL 24) is not a figure easy to describe without yielding to the impulse to embellish the few stories we have, tales which are sketchy and meager in their facts, with conjectures which are only probable and very likely suggested chiefly because of her position in Clare's background. She is a figure whose outline is nebulous, and she is probably intuited more and better the less one seeks to circumscribe her within precisely defined lines.

The second daughter of Favarone and Ortolana was born to the noble Assisi family about 1197. Her "Life," included in the fourteenth century *Chronicle of the Twenty-four Generals*, affirms that at the time of her death, shortly after the demise of Clare in 1253, she was about fifty-six years old.

She was not given the name of Agnes at the baptismal font: it was given later, after her conversion, and it was imposed on her by Saint Francis after "the innocent Lamb (Jesus Christ) immolated for our salvation, for whom she strongly resisted and manfully struggled" (*Chronicle*), resisting the attack of her relatives who had decided to tear her from the cloister of San Angelo di Panzo, in which she had taken refuge with Clare.

In all likelihood her baptismal name was Catherine. According to the sixteenth century *Life of Saint Clare* by Ugolino Verino, and really first pointed out by Fausta Casolini, her Uncle Monaldo, turning to Agnes in his attempt to take her back to her home, addressed her by the name of "Catherine . . . thus was Agnes called at that time (cf. AFH 13 [1920], 175). It is the name of the fearless virgin of Alexandria, whose bones in the church erected on Sinai were the object of the devotion of those pilgrims who, in journeying to the Holy Land, intentionally disembarked at the Egyptian port of Damietta in order to pass through Sinai and Gaza on their way to Jerusalem. Ortolana, the mother of Clare and Agnes,

made a pilgrimage to the places sanctified by the presence of the Messiah. Possibly her devotion to the martyr of Alexandria, intensified during the pilgrimage, later on suggested the name of her second daughter. The same lively devotion was surely practiced in the home of Ortolana's daughters, and this would explain why many of the little monasteries of the Poor Sisters were dedicated to Saint Catherine of Mount Sinai.

The childhood and youth of Agnes ran parallel to those of her sister Clare, who was three or four years older. They were united by the same emotions and deep affection for one another. Their initial attraction to the religious life, however, was different. If Clare followed the interior voice which called her to a life completely dedicated to God, not wishing even to hear marriage spoken of, for the younger Agnes, the serene family life which her mother led with her husband and three daughters may have made this path of life, shining with the intimate joy of a marriage and motherhood blessed by God, appear brighter.

In fact, the author of the Legend of Saint Clare, in referring to Agnes' call to the religious life, describes it as one of the first fruits of Clare's powerful prayer in the silence of the cloister:

Among the first of the prayers which she offered to God with all the ardor of her soul was the very intense petition that the harmony and close spiritual relationship which she enjoyed with her sister in the world might henceforth become a union of wills between them in the service of God. Therefore she prayed insistently to the Father of Mercy, that to the eyes of her sister Agnes, still at home, the world would lose all of its attraction, and that God would become so sweet to her that she would turn to his love rather than any consideration of marriage, so that together with her, Agnes would wed the Spouse of Glory in perpetual virginity. The unaccustomed separation, because of their mutual affection despite different sensibilities, was painful to both of them [CL 24].

It is easy to imagine how interminable the days must have seemed to Agnes after Clare's flight. She was only fourteen or fifteen years old and certainly did not find in her younger sister Beatrice that sustaining affection which Clare's presence provided. Passion Week opened into an Easter more than ever beclouded with homesickness for the absent one. Neither the pressure of the family's love nor their violence had succeeded in bringing her home. Easter Week also passed; and as Agnes recalled each day with nostalgia the sweet memories connected with Clare, her mind and heart were fixed ever more frequently on the road her sister had chosen. On discovering its profound hidden riches, the young Catherine, set aflame by the Holy Spirit, began to burn with the same exuberant fire as burned in Clare, in a longing to give herself completely to the Lord Jesus and to his Reign, as Clare had done.

Sixteen days after Clare's flight from the paternal home, therefore the 14th or 15th of April 1211, Agnes at last joined her sister in the Benedictine monastery of San Angelo di Panzo. She demonstrated firmness in her intention of dedicating all to the service of God like her sister. Clare's joyful embracing of her sister on seeing that her prayer had been granted, was at the same time the reception of the first novice.

Agnes' remaining with her sister produced new and more violent reactions from the family, who were not disposed to tolerate from a child a second time an action which appeared as an affront to the wealth and power of the noble family. A squad of twelve cavaliers pounced on the two sisters in the serenity of the quiet Monastery of San Angelo where Clare, "who understood the Lord better, was teaching her sister" (CL 25).

"They were filled with rage; yet they concealed their cunning purpose under a calm and peaceful exterior and then entered the place. Turning to Agnes—for they had now given up all hope concerning Clare—they said: 'Why did you come to this place? Get ready at once to return home with us.' When she answered that she was resolved never to leave Clare, one of the knights, unable to contain his fury any longer, rushed upon her and brutally assailed her with blows and kicks, and then seizing her by the hair, began to drag her away. The others had, meanwhile, run forward to assist their companion, lifting her up in their arms to carry her away. Agnes, finding herself seized, as it were, by savage beasts, and snatched away from the embrace of her divine Lord, loudly called upon Clare, saying: 'Help me, my dearest sister, and do not permit me to be separated from my Lord!' Her captors were still dragging her down the slope of the hill, Agnes resisting with all her might. Her garments had been torn to pieces, and her hair was scattered about in handfuls. Clare had meanwhile fallen on her knees, beseeching her divine Lord with tears in her eyes, to endow her sister's soul with fortitude and to bring to naught the attempts of men by his almighty power.

Suddenly the body of Agnes became so firmly rooted to the ground and so heavy, that all of them with their united efforts could not carry her over a little brook they had to cross. They asked a number of men who were engaged in the vineyards and in the fields close by to help them. But even then they could not raise the body in the least. Seeing themselves baffled in their attempt, some of them treated the evident miracle in a scoffing fashion, saying: 'She must have been eating lead all night; no wonder she is so heavy.' But when one of her uncles, Count Monaldo, in his rage, drew his poignard to stab her, the hand which held the weapon was seized with a most acute pain which troubled him for a good while after. At this juncture, Clare appeared upon the scene of conflict and begged her kinfolk to desist from all further attempts and to leave Agnes, who lay there half

dead, to her care [Tr. by Fr. Marianus Fiege, O.F.M.Cap., from the *Legend*].

When it was over, Clare was anxious about her sister who had endured so many blows while the armed men were dragging her up the mountain slope. She questioned Agnes, who replied that, by the grace of God and Clare's prayers, she had suffered little. After this episode of violence "the Blessed Francis, with his own hands cut her hair and gave her the name Agnes, now that, for the Innocent Lamb, she had strongly resisted and manfully struggled" (*Chronicle*).

"From then on, guided by Saint Francis together with Clare" (CL 26), Agnes progressed so rapidly in the way of holiness that to her companions her life assumed a tenor both extraordinary and supernatural. Her penances and mortifications which were the same as those of Clare herself, caused amazement because she was so young. The rough horsehair cilice, unknown to anyone, she girdled at her sides from the beginning of her religious life until her death,¹ and her fastings were so severe that most of the time she lived only on bread and water.

Agnes was charitable and most tender, turning maternally to anyone suffering and full of merciful solicitude toward all. Writing to Blessed Agnes of Prague about her sister, Saint Clare described her as "a most prudent virgin," and this is the judgment of a Saint who knows how to measure persons and things by the standards of God himself.

We do not know the time of the following episode—whether it preceded or followed Agnes' departure for Monticelli—but the event certainly corroborated for Clare her conviction of the sanctity of her younger sister. We cite from the *Life* as contained in the *Chronicle of the Twenty-four Generals*:

One time Agnes, alone in the silence of the night, was praying with great devotion. The blessed Clare remained to pray nearby and saw her sister raised from the ground and, while suspended in the air, crowned three separate times by an angel. The following day when Blessed Clare questioned Agnes about the vision she had had, Agnes parried the question. Finally, bound to Clare by the precept of obedience, she related as follows: 'At the first crown I reflected devotedly on the goodness and patience of God and in what manner and how much he lets himself be offended by sinners, and I meditated with deep sorrow and suffering. In the second crown-

¹Since she imitated Clare in this penitential practice, it is very likely the following, described in the *Legend* regarding Clare's mortification of the flesh: "She was accustomed at times to wear a rough shirt made of horse's hair twisted in a knot, which was fastened to her body on either side by little raw cords.



ing I pondered the ineffable love which he brings to sinners and how, for their salvation, he underwent death and his most bitter passion. At the third, I meditated on the souls in purgatory and their suffering and how, by themselves, there is no way they can obtain relief (ibid.).

The crucified God-man in Agnes' meditation concurs with all seraphic spirituality, spreading out its vast shade of salvation over the drama of sinners and of the saved who are still engaged in their final purification.

A Nostalgic Addio

"LATER ON, Blessed Francis sent her, as abbess, to Florence, where she brought many souls to God as much by her example of holiness of life as by her sweet and persuasive words filled with the love of God. Fervent in her disdain of the world, she implanted in the monastery, as Saint Clare eagerly desired, the observance of evangelical poverty" (ibid.).

It is not easy to clarify the events which are buried in a paucity of information; only the general outline of facts is clear, and it is this. Saint Francis' passing through Florence aroused enthusiasm among the Florentine men, several of whom immediately embraced his own evangelical

life; but it also kindled fervor among young people and matrons of noble families who, in imitation of all that Clare had recently done, desired to leave all to dedicate themselves exclusively to the service of God. They did not wait long to accomplish their desire; and, not having as yet a monastery, they withdrew into the home of one of their number while waiting for Providence to provide a more suitable place. The date of the beginnings of this community of Florentine women, who took San Damiano as their model, is not known. It is easier to identify the place where the community started. We know that Lady Avegnente di Albizzo, who apparently was abbess of the monastery in 1219, owned an estate in the region of Santa Maria del Sepolcro at Monticelli. The estate had been given to the Roman Church for the building of a monastery, and the property was accepted by Cardinal Ugolino in the name of the Church in 1218. With that act, the noble Florentines, gathered at Avegnente, made themselves a dependency of the Holy See. Lady Avegnente, as has been said, seems to have been the abbess in 1219 of this constituted community, which from its first years was in contact with San Damiano. Together with the Rule of Cardinal Ugolino of 1218-1219, they observed the same *Observantiae regulares*, that is a sort of "constitutions" based on the writings and words of Saint Francis which was then in force at San Damiano.

The gift of a contiguous piece of ground by Forese Bellicuzzi made the erection of a monastery possible. The building they had previously occupied was probably a simple house which could not accommodate the growing number of nuns.

This is the community to which Agnes was sent with the responsibility of bringing to Florence the genuine spirit of Clare. To her was entrusted the government of the new group of Poor Sisters.

A precious document, a letter which Saint Agnes sent to her sister after her arrival, sheds light on the profound pain caused by her separation from San Damiano, as well as on the conditions in the new community, blossoming in an atmosphere of peace and unity. The same letter, which is undated, also gives us indications which can be valid chronological references.

"Know, my Mother," writes Agnes among other things,

that my spirit is in the greatest tribulation and immense sadness, and I am extremely depressed and saddened, and am almost unable to speak, because I am physically parted from you and from my other sisters with whom I believed I would live and die in this world. . . . O most sweet mother and my lady, what shall I do, what shall I say, now that I can no longer hope to see my sisters again?

On the other hand, I am much consoled and you can rejoice with me,

because I have found here great harmony and no divisions; more I cannot say. And all have received me with the greatest gaiety and joy, and with most devoted reverence they have promised me obedience. I beg you to have the most solicitous care for them and for me as for true sisters and daughters, knowing that I and they desire at all times your admonitions and commandments. Know further that his Holiness the Pope has granted everything that I wished for and you desired regarding that matter about which you know. I beg you to ask Brother Elias to visit me more often and to console me in the Lord [ibid.].

The "Privilege of Poverty," hinted at in the letter, was granted to the nuns of Monticelli by Pope Gregory IX on May 1, 1230. Moreover, in wishing to determine a date for this letter, we note that Brother Elias is not referred to either as Vicar or as Minister General in this letter, and this would imply that it could not have been written between 1217 and 1221, in which period he was in the Orient as Minister Provincial, nor between 1221 and 1227, during which time he was Vicar, nor the years following 1232, because in the chapter of that year he was elected Minister General.

It is probable, therefore, that Agnes' departure from Assisi for Monticelli, the departure desired by Saint Francis and the cause of profound pain for the obedient sister of Clare, would not have occurred in 1221, as traditionally claimed. If one concedes that the letter still reflects the wounds suffered by a recent separation rather than those described after many years of separation from San Damiano, the letter would probably have been written somewhere around the years 1228-1230.

At the Bedside of the Dying Clare

A MIST ENVELOPS Agnes' stay in Florence as well as the itinerary which brought her back to Assisi. Many monasteries vaunt that they were founded by Agnes on her return trip to Assisi, and it could be that the traditional date, which is not established by documents, does have some correspondence with reality. Historically, however, we know that after a decade, Agnes is again found in San Damiano assisting Clare in her long agony.

According to Mariano of Florence, who writes in the 1500s, Agnes' departure from Monticelli was concomitant with the worsening health of the Saint. Having received news of it, Agnes would have hastened to begin the journey with several extern sisters of Monticelli, whose purpose in going would have been to take in and preserve the last words of the Mother of the Order, and to bring back their memories to the Florentine foundation. According to this sixteenth-century narrator, Saint Clare's veil, which is still preserved as a relic at the Poor Clare

Monastery of Firenze-Castello, would have been given by the Saint herself to the sisters who accompanied Agnes at this time.

Whatever the exact time of Agnes' return to San Damiano, her presence at the bedside of the dying Clare is undeniable. Clare has words of infinite tenderness for her who was so oppressed by sorrow that she could not restrain her copious and bitter tears or the plea that her sister not leave her abandoned—words which made a great hope flower in Agnes' heart. "It is the will of God, dearest sister," Clare comforted her, "that I go; but stop weeping because you will come to the Lord very soon after me, and he will give you a very great consolation before I part from you" (CL 43).

The evening of August 11, 1253, in her anguish of separation, Agnes thought of her sister, forever blessed in the embrace of her Spouse, and she remembered, too, the promise of a few days earlier. The next day, when, with universal rejoicing, the body of Clare was blessed by the Pope and was already being revered as that of a Saint as it was carried up the slope of Assisi to be placed in the same sepulchre that once held the mortal remains of Francis, Agnes would certainly have recognized in that solemn prelude of canonization the great consolation which Clare had predicted.

And the promise was very soon fulfilled, because

a few days later, Agnes, called to the wedding of the Lamb, followed her sister Clare to the eternal delights, where both these daughters of Sion, sisters by nature, by grace, and in the Kingdom, praise God without end. Truly, she received that consolation which Clare had promised before departing. In fact, as she was preceded by her sister in passing from 'the world' to the Cross, so, while Clare began to shine with signs and prodigies, Agnes, following her, left the passing light of the world and awoke in God [CL 48].

The news of Agnes' death, spreading through Assisi, drew throngs of people who had a great devotion to her. Hoping to see her mortal remains and to be spiritually consoled, extraordinary numbers mounted the wooden steps which led to the Monastery of San Damiano. But the iron chain by which the steps could be drawn up or let down suddenly broke under the excessive weight. With a great crash the steps crumpled, falling upon the crowd standing beneath and dragging in its ruins all who had been crowded there.

The unexpected catastrophe should have had disastrous consequences, considering the throng which remained crushed under the weight of the overloaded steps. The name of Agnes and her merits were invoked. Immediately the wounded and the bruised got up, laughing as though

nothing had happened.

This was the first of numerous interventions by Agnes, who by this time was joined with Clare in glory. Like her sister, she will be forever prodigious in her intercessions on behalf of all who, in her name, ask to be freed from incurable diseases, from blindness, and from diabolical possession. Her interventions continued all through the fourteenth century and finally became a cult ratified by the Church. Her name appears in the Roman Martyrology among the Saints on November 16, and her remains lie in the Basilica in Assisi which encloses the body of her "Mother and Lady," Clare. Ω

Sin's as Hot as Rage

Sin's as hot as rage;
sin is rage.

Burns to dust
requests for reprieves.
Spits white lead till must
goes stale, and man believes
a cold cup clanging bars
twists and melts and chars.

Love is water-bright;
love is bright,
and cool as peace.
Fills the soul's empty
room with release.
Silver-smooth as a key,
undoes dams of bar, fetter.
Take. Drink. Love's far better.

Elizabeth R. Mattax

Book Reviews

Finding Peace of Heart. By Joseph Folliet. Translated by Paul Burns. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. vi-133. Cloth, \$10.00.

Reviewed by Father Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., who worked in Chicago's inner city and taught at the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure University) during the summers, before going this past year to South Africa.

We live in a world that offers little peace within or without. In the outside world more than forty wars are being waged. And in human hearts peace is as rare as a rose in winter.

The search for peace is intense and widespread in our times—a fact attested to by the high incidence of alcoholism and drug addiction.

Folliet, in this book, addresses himself to peace within. He rightly argues that there can be no peace without unless there is first peace of heart.

This peace, however, does not come easily. Achieving it takes work; a price has to be paid for inner serenity. Prayer, repentance, ridding oneself of vices, closeness to nature, and health care are some of the "works" which bring peace but obviously require personal discipline and close attention to moral values.

Folliet explains all this, not in a series of heavy chapters with philosophical or psychological analyses, but in short, entertaining essays and poems that clearly and progressively convey the message. The book is enjoyable even as it unfolds serious and significant points about peace.

Saint Augustine's definition of peace stands out. And then gradually one finds oneself at the feet of Christ, who gives hope and love, the fruit of which is peace.

This is a book for anybody searching for peace or for anybody whose mission it is to spread it.

Coping with a Gentle God. By John Powers, C.P. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 140. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Luke M. Ciampi, O.F.M., author of Rebuild My Church and Watering the Seed, and Founding editor of Padre. Father Luke, who has taught at several of the Immaculate Conception Province's institutions over the years, currently serves as Director of the Christian Formation Center in Andover, Massachusetts.

Director of the radio program *Crossroads* and the television program

The Chalice of Salvation, Father Powers has given us a handbook to guide the Christian in learning how he lives, loves, copes, and walks with God. It is meant, he says, to be more an exercise in questioning and wondering than in finding answers, for growth does not come without asking questions. As such, the book is a handy tool especially for private retreats. It provides as much insight into God's love for us in a disordered, troubled world as it does into the fears, angers, and pains that often prompt us to ask why we were created in the first place. Throughout, the reminder is hammered home that the God who loves and who creates out of love is a *gentle* Being.

The book reads easily and smoothly. It can be covered in a few sittings, but deserves a second and more thoughtful reading. Father Powers punctuates his reflections with frequent asides of imagination, story, and biblical passage. He begins at the beginning of things, the Creation, and concludes with that same beginning, to show the continuous outpouring of creativity on the part of God into the hearts of his beloved children.

God's creativity, or gift-giving, is both personal and relational. He creates in the first place as an expression of himself, and he interrelates with what he has created, remaining always intimately involved. He is purposeful in the sense that he has given every living being a reason for being, and that reason is unity with himself. Thus God's creativity did not end on the seventh day, but continues to flow on forever in reposeful union with all his creation.

Each person's vocation, therefore, is to walk with God as his companion.

Created free, we may choose to accept that companionship, living and coping with God's love, or we may choose to live instead as children of whatever else we value more, such as money, fear, anger, lust, power. God did not create us as finished, mature adults, but as creative children with the potential to be self-creators. The questions we ask ourselves in this maturing process are the following: Where do I come from? Where am I going? How do I get there? The answer should of course be always the great Gift-Giver, the gentle God, Creativity itself.

The human family initially rebelled against being children of God. Now each of us must seek to grow up as a child of God, maturing into what we were created to be. Having once rejected God's Garden, we must travel now in search of a new Garden, his Kingdom. We are to do so, not alone, but with the gentle, loving God at our side. And the only way of coping with God's love is by loving in return. This is the task of the maturing Christian.

Meanwhile, the Kingdom path God and man walk together as companions is not a place in the far-off future, but it is the Kingdom gift of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. So the major question we face is whether or not we accept the gift and walk with our God in the process of growing into the mature Christian. On the back of this fundamental question rides the rest of Father Powers' theme. Walking with God affords us a positive, realistic image of the world in which all reality cries out with the presence of God. Greater even than the wonders of creation must be our awareness of these wonders, an awareness by a human being that he or she holds a royal position in the crea-

tion that is God's image and likeness.

The essence of sin is forgetfulness of this truth; it is a walking without God, and not missing him. Fear is an enemy that makes us dwell on our unworthiness and tempts us to regard ourselves as sinful beyond redemption. Self-hate, in other words, is a devil that seeks to convince us God is first of all a punisher, not a gentle lover. Our gently loving God, however, teaches us to love ourselves despite our "brokenness." Children of God are those who have a growing acceptance of themselves as they are, not as they would wish to be. Authentic self-love, then, is relational; it can be found in the dynamic, honest relationship we establish with God, with others, with ourselves.

When a maturing child of God walks with his or her God and bravely accepts his love, he/she becomes a blessing in the lives of others. For there is a great deal of company on the road one walks with God; God walks with our every neighbor and thus teaches all of us how to love and bless one another.

Finally, the question: What is love? What is not love? Father Powers refers us to Christ, showing how Jesus, our Model in all things, exemplified in his earthly life the description Saint Paul gives in 1 Cor. 13. As we exemplify this love in our own lives, like Jesus, we touch the lives of others; we grow in self-knowledge; we dispel our fears. And walking thus with God, we become decision-makers and indulge in creative choice-making. We learn to live the present Kingdom as mature Christians, in peace amid the stresses, pressures, and conflicts of everyday life. And then, sharing always the companionship of our gentle God, we are

able to rest with him on a seventh day that lasts forever.

Between introduction and conclusion, Father Powers uses ten chapter headings that serve as both an outline and a road map for travelling the road of coping with a gentle God. We recommend this book to the laity as well as to clergy and religious.

Healing in the Catholic Church: Mending Wounded Hearts and Bodies. By Joseph M. Champlin. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 176. Paper, \$5.50.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D. (Philosophy, Fordham University), Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

Three main areas are discussed in this valuable book: healing, preparing the sick for death, and comforting the grieving. After an introductory chapter detailing the healings of Brother André of Montreal, Father Champlin goes on to describe the work of the well known healing priests Ralph Diorio, Edward McDonough, and Matthew Swizdor. (There are of course others whom he does not mention—e.g., Father John Lazanski.)

Father Champlin then goes on to consider ordinary healing, speaking first of its biblical basis and then of the possibilities for all Christians to be healers—possibilities he illustrates from his experience. He devotes a chapter to obstacles to belief in healing: that it was only for apostolic times, that God doesn't intervene in nature, that it shouldn't be necessary. The whole book

is an answer to the first two objections, and a special concluding chapter on "Why bad things happen to good people" outlines the Christian perspectives which respond to that difficulty. He has an extended treatment of the Sacrament of the Sick, in the course of which he explains the development from Extreme Unction as the sacrament preparing for the journey to eternity, to Viaticum as the Sacrament for that purpose. Healing of the spirit through the sacrament of reconciliation, and healing of the emotions through counseling and prayer are discussed. Some practical advice on how to visit the sick is given.

The third area discussed is comforting the grieving, and again practical advice is abundant: advice for pastors and the pastoral team, and advice for friends and relatives. Father Champlin documents his narration abundantly. He has put in one place much that has been written recently, and he has enriched his presentation by narration of personal experiences. An unstated premise is that healing includes much more than physical restoration to health; it also means relieving emotional pain and helping others to work through their painful losses, too. That brings healing right into the lives of all of us. Father Champlin deserves our thanks for this fine book.

The Awakening Call: Fostering Intimacy with God. By James Finley. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 157. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Joseph Scerbo, S.A., Ph.D. (Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley—with special concentration on psychology and spiritual

direction and their interaction), Program Director at the Christian Unity Center, Graymoor, New York.

For those who seek intimacy with God in the silence of contemplative prayer, James Finley's second book, *The Awakening Call*, is just that. This book is a prayer journal. It is both a prayer and the record of an inner journey which Finley wrote to enhance his efforts to clarify for himself his own journey towards God in prayer.

It is suitable for beginners in that it emphasizes the fundamentals of contemplative spirituality. It is also a practical book in that the author makes excellent use of examples, many drawn from married life and the relationships of parents with their children. As the reader progresses through Finley's glimpses of the spiritual life, he/she must be ready to have his/her contemplative heart strings tuned. There are six chapters, each devoted to a specific theme which Finley feels to be of significance in developing a contemplative way of life. He maintains throughout the book a sense of God's incomprehensible, lavish, and ineffable love. He continues to use Merton and other formative influences to express his own intuitive convictions about what it means to be faithful to God in prayer. Nearly every chapter contains a section devoted to reflecting on passages taken from *The Cloud of Unknowing* and/or the writings of Saint John of the Cross. Yet Finley intends, not to analyze the two masters and explain them in conceptual terms, but rather to use them as a way of getting in touch with the formative influences on his own life and thus share with the reader what he gained in his

experience of the masters' wisdom concerning the "one thing necessary."

Influenced by Trappist Daniel Walsh's philosophical meditations on the mystery of our creation in God's image and likeness, together with Merton's notion of the true self, Finley presents a renewed dynamic and creative emphasis on the primacy of love in God's personal creation and on the self fashioned in that love. I welcome his developing spirituality of the Self-in-God.

As in listening to Barber's musical *Adagio for Strings*, the reader's heart will definitely be stilled with awe and gratitude for the touch of God leading to transforming breakthroughs into what Finley describes as "an obscure realization of one's perfect union with God in Christ." Throughout the pages of this book, one is called to see what being poor enough means in the light of allowing God to fill the "place" that he alone *can* fill.

Finley wants most of all to have the reader see the paradox of "the beyond

in our midst." This reality can be identified and described as the transfiguring love of God and Christ through the Holy Spirit, here and now, in the ordinary spilled coffee and burnt toast, "doing their best" people who, like you and me, possess a subtle burning fire, a desire without name that we intuit to be the presence of God calling us to transfiguring union with himself. Finley's work is an encouragement and provides guidance for those who are spiritually thirsty and seek to surrender more fully to the touch of God's love awakening us to who we are in his Love.

I have tucked this book under my arm on many a hiking trip or walk or bus ride. It has occasioned for me the emergence of a new rhythm through an old one that is dead—as in listening to a stirring piece of music—so that one is caught up in the *awareness* that it is God who will bring to fulfillment the desire for him that he has placed within us.

Pick up the book. It's a good one.

Books Received

- Dollen, Charles, *Prayers for the Third Age: A Devotion for Mature Catholics*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 191, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.
- Doyle, O.F.M., Stephen C., *The Pilgrim's New Guide to the Holy Land*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 216, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.
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- Scheidler, Joseph M., *Closed: 99 Ways to Stop Abortion*. Foreword by Franky Schaeffer. Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1985. Pp. 350, including Index. Paper, \$9.95.

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NOVEMBER, 1985

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A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., has illustrated his own article on St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection
Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., <i>St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies</i> . English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).	
AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., <i>Francis and Clare: The Complete Works</i> (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).	

EDITORIAL

Strangers to Silence

WE LIVE IN AN AGE that is characterized by constant movement, haste, and noise. People today seem to exist in an atmosphere generated by a sense of urgency to do things, to meet deadlines, to be always occupied with one thing or another, to be strangers to silence. Noise pollution has become a national problem that has invaded our cities, homes, and monasteries as well. The air is constantly being assaulted by sounds of every kind coming from the babble of voices, radios, stereos, tape decks, and the classic intruder upon the peace and quiet of any community, television. These represent only a few of the occasions in which silence is driven from our homes. Our modern society, with all of its constant sound and movement, certainly not all of it bad or useless, is simply no longer accustomed to silence and in general is not very comfortable with it.

And yet silence should be an indispensable element in all of our lives. Why should the absence of activity and noise be so important for us? Because silence represents much more than a mere absence of something. More than anything else it represents an attitude of mind, a spirit of sensitive receptivity which must be cultivated and used properly in order to effect a full and meaningful experience with those among whom we live and work, and more importantly with God in prayer.

First of all, we need to be silent with people in order to hear what they are saying. We must learn how to give the other person the room to think, feel, and express himself or herself without interrupting with questions, interjections, and judgments. Through our silence we create the atmosphere for much to happen in the area of better human understanding, development, and communication. To listen in silence is to open oneself to the other in love, respect, and understanding.

Essential as it is for true human development, silence is even more essential for our life of union with God. The principal means of effecting that union is prayer, and since prayer is often described as conversation or dialogue with God, it means that we must be prepared not only to talk to God but to listen to him as well, and to just be quiet in his presence. In this attitude of receptive silence we can open ourselves more readily to God with the certitude that he will communicate with us. In fact, our listening in silence is more important than our talking, since our talking is usually controlled by self-centeredness while our prayerful listening is controlled by God-centeredness. God will reveal himself to us in ways that could happen only in the life of a person who prepares himself or herself to listen prayerfully in silence. These precious moments of silence enhance our ability to hear God when he does speak to us. It is only in these moments that we cannot avoid meeting God face to face in honesty and humility—that we therefore experience true conversion. This cannot occur when our lives are filled with non-stop distractions and noise.

How well Saint Francis understood the value of this reality as he constantly sought solitude and silence in order to more faithfully hear and carry out the will of God in his life:

He made himself insensible to all external noise, and, bridling his external senses with all his strength and repressing the movements of his nature, he occupied himself with God alone [1Cel 71].

Whenever it was possible to free himself from his very busy apostolic life, Francis “always sought a hidden place where he could adapt not only his soul but also his members to God” (2Cel 94). It was through this life of prayer rooted in solitude and silence that he was able to direct all his attention and affection “with his whole being to the one thing which he was asking of the Lord, not so much praying as becoming himself a prayer” (2Cel 95). Francis was never trying to escape from people; he was simply trying to live in the presence of God.

As Christians, as followers of Francis, we must learn to do the same. Our personal lives, our homes, monasteries, and convents must insure an atmosphere of prayerful silence where our lives in union with God can truly grow. We must learn to understand God’s word in our lives so that we in turn can be messengers of his word to the world in which we live. This is often a very difficult task for us because we are poor listeners, because we are strangers to silence and solitude. There is a great need for us to find our moments of quiet and solitude in order to hear God whispering his word to us. We must listen for that word, or we will miss it. The Sacred Liturgy tells us that:

The purpose of silence is to allow the voice of the Holy Spirit to be heard more fully in our hearts, and to reunite our personal prayer more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the Church [General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, art. 202].

It takes humility and wisdom to listen for and to understand God’s word in our lives. This can happen only in silence. And it is out of that silence that we will be able to speak God’s word with authority and knowledge to a world desperately in need of that word. Ω

Fr. Dominic F. Scott, T.O.P.

Patience

At La Verna
I got stuck in the door
of the chapel of
Bonaventura
hitting my head
as I struggled to lift
my bulk clear.
A smile played
across my lips
as freedom came near
And through it all
the tuneful call
of the birds outside
made my headache subside
as the smile broke
to laughter
and the holy walls
of the chapel of
Bonaventura
with quiet acceptance
caught my prayer
with Job’s patience.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Triple Dante Breakthrough:

The Divine Comedy Born Again in Soaring
New Translations, Mini-Paraphrase,
and Spirituality Survey

RAPHAEL BROWN, S.F.O.

YES, HERE I GO AGAIN: another "rave review," after the Jacopone and Fortini lauds.¹ Please bear with me as I share with you my overflowing enthusiasm for these recent Dante publications which form a momentous milestone in our appreciation of *The Divine Comedy* as a living, personally relevant masterpiece of Christian spirituality.

To rescue that monumental poem from its museum status as a crumbling cathedral of medieval culture, we have needed three essential tools, two of which have been completely lacking. They are (1) first-rate, readable modern English versions; (2) a handy streamlined digest; and (3) a popular commentary stressing and explicating the heart of the poet's message, our climb toward union with God.

True, we already have five excellent contemporary English translations of *The Divine Comedy*: those by Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (Penguin), by John Ciardi (Mentor), by Charles Singleton (Princeton), by Charles Sisson (Gateway), and by Mark Musa (Indiana U.), with so far only the *Inferno* paperbound from Viking-Penguin. Only Singleton's is in prose and includes the Italian text. I find Sayers rather "British" and "literary," but her notes on the all-important allegorical meanings are most helpful. Ciardi reads very smoothly, but occasionally adds a few lines for the sake of rhyming (a total of 39 in *Purgatorio*!). Singleton's prose is the most literally faithful. Sisson and Musa are both eminently readable; the latter's language really sings, becoming "as it should, a religious experience . . . a lofty Dante, a lifting Dante" (Karl Keller). Sisson's all-in-one volume is a best-buy bargain.

¹In *The CORD*, June 1983 and May, 1981, respectively.

Secular Franciscan Raphael Brown, LL.D., is the author of The Roots of St. Francis and True Joy from Assisi, which includes an appendix on Dante and Franciscan spirituality.

And now we have a sixth modern English translation in the California Dante, by Allen Mandelbaum, published in three bilingual, hardbound volumes by the University of California Press and paperbound by Bantam Books (its *Paradiso* is not due until February, 1986). Both editions have (rather ugly) drawings by Barry Moser; but only the Bantam has notes. Eventually the California Dante will also comprise three volumes of commentaries on each canto by an international group of scholars. Mandelbaum's version has been termed "tough and supple, tender and violent . . . a Dante with clarity, eloquence, terror, and profoundly moving depths."

"Dante demands to be read
theologically," and spiritually and
mystically, I would add. . . .

So we now have a rich choice of flowing, readable modern English *Divine Comedys* through which Dante the fervent and forceful Christian humanist-poet and mystic conveys his pressing ethical and religious message to us. Dante was truly one of history's "master communicators." And just as he deliberately chose to write in the then scorned vernacular, so today he must share his message with non-Italians in their own current language. In these six contemporary English versions, across nearly seven centuries, he truly communicates and speaks directly, superbly, to us.

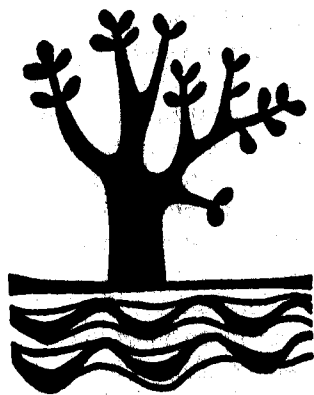
However, being by nature and genius a proto-Renaissance man with a passion for knowledge and a dream of reforming society by means of an epic philosophical poem, Dante stubbornly built into his *Comedy* two major obstacles to our communication: a number of baffling conundrums designed to challenge scholars, and a massive encyclopedia packed with data on science, history, and mythology designed to provide a kind of personal computer education for the general public. Consequently modern readers have a serious problem in trying to distill the core or essence of his message, which is basically theological.

Now at last we have in Father James Collins' *Meditations with Dante Alighieri* (Bear and Company, P. O. Drawer 2860, Santa Fe, NM 87504; 1984, 130 pp., \$6.95) a remarkably beautiful and simple paraphrased digest-summary, not of every one of the poem's 100 cantos, but of the inner experience and journey of Dante the spiritual pilgrim. In 120 brief pages of only four to twenty cadenced lines per page, in the poet's own

words or insightful rewriting, the author condenses Dante's autobiographical *Vita Nuova* and *The Divine Comedy* in four "Paths" with these apt titles: "Beginning the Journey: Gazing with Love on God's Creation," "The Detour: Becoming Lost in the Dark Forest," "The Breakthrough: Recreating the Divine Image within Us," and "The Ecstasy: Basking in Divine Love." This lyrically soaring little prose-poem provides a perfect introduction to and digest of Dante's theology and ever relevant spirituality. a real gem!

Father Collins is a gifted young American who earned a licentiate in theology at the Pontifical Lateran University and a doctorate at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. In Rome he imbibed a passion for Dante and an appreciation of the mystical vision of the *Comedy* from Monsignor Giovanni Fallani, a distinguished teacher and author of five dense studies of Dante's theology. Father Collins is chairman of the Religious Studies Department at Holy Family College in Torresdale near Philadelphia.

He is also the author of the finest commentary for the general reader and student on the spirituality of Dante and his *Comedy* which I have found in an extensive search: *Pilgrim in Love. An Introduction to Dante and His Spirituality* (Loyola University Press, 3441 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago IL 60657; 1984, 312 pp., cloth, \$12.95). In studying and relishing this meaty masterpiece I had to mark in red ink not occasional sentences but entire paragraphs or pages. Very few books have spoken so convincingly to me and have so amply enriched and expanded my appreciation of a subject.



This smoothly readable, semi-popular work is an ideal introduction to Dante, which I would urge be brought to the widest possible public, I hope in a mass-market paperback edition. Certainly it belongs and should serve as a valued textbook in all Catholic and many secular colleges.

It provides a succinct biographical sketch and a rapid overview of Dante's major works, then a brief introduction to *The Divine Comedy* and a running commentary on most of the cantos. A short bibliography of useful works in English is included, but alas, amazingly and deplorably, no index.

Two striking features come out in my working index: about fifty quotable passages, and over thirty references to twentieth-century problems, figures, or movements. The principal theme is the feature which I

find most impressive and enlightening. Briefly, Father Collins brilliantly demonstrates that the essence and heart of *The Divine Comedy* is the drama of the inner psychological experience of Dante the man, his conversion and growth as a Christian, and that the great poem thus becomes a profoundly insightful autobiography not just of the medieval Italian poet but of Dante as "Everyman," every Christian engaged in the lifelong daily ego-reducing climb up "the seven storey mountain" toward mystical union with God here and hereafter.

This striking theme of the *Comedy's* powerful personal relevance for all of us here and now resounds throughout *Pilgrim in Love* as its basic keynote and message, making it an in-depth study of applied, practical Christian ethics and spirituality. That is the almost unique greatness of Father Collins' contribution.²

"Dante demands to be read . . . theologically," as Professor Robert Hollander has rightly stressed. And spiritually and mystically, I would add. No one, to my knowledge, has done so more magnificently, more sensitively, and more radiantly than Father James Collins. May God richly bless and reward him for that pure heavenly light and love and joy which he has experienced in *The Divine Comedy* and which he marvelously shares with his grateful readers:

Light intellectual, filled with Love,
Love of True Good, filled with Joy,
Joy that transcends every sweetness.

Par. 30.40-42

²Note: My heartfelt endorsement of Father Collins' *Meditations* . . . does not extend to the bright yet flawed "creation spirituality" of its publisher, Father Matthew Fox, O.P. We must never downplay the Redemption, especially today!

Canticle of Praise and Gratitude

The Canticle of Creatures is Francis' great shout of praise lifted toward the Almighty, the most high, good Lord. It is an enthusiastic celebration of all life and an expression of becoming a new person, a new creation. This glorious hymn to life speaks of gratitude to the Creator for the beauty, the gifts of all creatures and creation. Today we "jubilee," and jubilee means "shout"—so we shout out our joy and gratitude for being called by God into his Fraternity to live in simplicity, servanthood, and joy:

Most High, good Lord, we reach out to you in gratitude and joy.

To you we give our total being.

Thank you, my Lord, for creating us in your image.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for our parents, whose love and example sparked within us a desire to follow you in poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all those persons who illuminate our lives by their holiness and wholeness of being.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for giving us happy and generous hearts with which to carry your love to all.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all the gifts and talents you have given us to be used for your glory and in your service.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all our sisters in this Franciscan community who have encouraged and cared for us during these past 50 and 25 years.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of laughter as well as for the gift of tears.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of prayer through which you touch us.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for your WORD in Scripture, which calls us to be women of the Gospel.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the Eucharist, through which we are nourished and sustained.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of our feminine spirituality and for all the gifted women in the Church today.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all those who are celebrating with us today.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all that you have graced us with these past 50 and 25 years.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all that has been and for all that will be.

Amen. Amen!

Sister Maureen Boyle, F.S.S.J.

Elizabeth of Hungary:

For Everything There Is a Season

WILLIAM HART MCNICHOLS, S.J.

DID YOU KNOW that when her husband Louis left the castle for some journey or necessary business, Elizabeth of Hungary would wear black, in mourning, until his return? And when he returned she ordered trumpets to be sounded and she herself would sail down the castle stairs and was said to have "covered him with a hundred kisses."

Elizabeth, daughter of King Andrew of Hungary, was born in the year 1207 and betrothed to the son of Hermann of Thuringia, whose name was Louis. The children grew up together and were practically married as children—she was thirteen, and he was twenty. All accounts say that he worshipped the ground she walked on, as we say, and she loved him intensely and worshipped God alone.

Like Clare or Thérèse of Lisieux, or Aloysius Gonzaga, and a handful of others, Elizabeth was one of those people smitten with the love of God from earliest childhood. She was often taken to ceremonies of great opulence and instructed on how to behave, how to dress, and the rest of court etiquette. On one memorable feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother, Elizabeth was taken to the great church of Mary in Eisenach and was to parade into the church in her regal costume and crown of jewels. The event was a display of the Church Militant in the form of a Mass for the Teutonic Knights. As the child entered the church her eyes immediately located the Cross, and she stepped forward, removed the crown, and laid it before the image of the crucified King, saying she would wear no crown as long as Jesus wore only thorns. Her relatives were furious and humiliated; the others thought she was simply showing off—ostentatious piety. This was the beginning of a long and devastating misunderstanding between Elizabeth and the world that would increase and finally explode into violence later in her life.

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., maintains an art studio at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset, New York.

J. Janda, that master of a kind of "Christian-Haiku Poetry," begins his poem on Elizabeth with these words: "She was known for mismanagement. . . ." Now, this could mean simply a lack of the managerial or administrative skills expected of her as the wife of the Landgrave of Thuringia, but in this case she was giving away her own jewels, clothes, and anything else that wasn't nailed down, in the extravagant manner of blessed Brother Juniper. This created extreme anger and resentment in her own castle, and put Louis in the awkward position of always having to defend her (because he let her do anything she wanted to do) and of trying to protect her from the rising anger of the court; either she was passing out baskets of bread or baskets of blankets. Elizabeth was a victim of that infectious joy Jan Ruysbroeck describes in his *Spiritual Espousals*. It seems that on the way to union of the soul with God, one experiences a kind of euphoria that appears crazy to those around, and in this state one abandons concern for what people think. Imagine the Apostles after Pentecost, or Francis shedding his father's clothes. This was Elizabeth of Hungary, deliriously happy in her charity.

This is a simple way of defining the
Secular Franciscan Order: we come to
God wrapped in Francis' presence. . . .

Franz Liszt, in his musical oratorio about Elizabeth, includes one of the legends of this period of her life. Apparently Elizabeth once put a man infected with leprosy into hers and Louis' bed. A chamber maid found the man and flew into an hysterical fit. Finding Louis, she dragged the beleaguered husband up the stairs and flung open the door of the master bedroom, only to find the naked and bleeding crucified Christ in the bed.

There is another story about the marriage of Louis and Elizabeth which is of particular significance for this sad age of ours which has learned to separate human sexuality and the love of God. Instead of experiencing a synthesis we have been put in the dangerous position of choosing one or the other, and this false dichotomy is a scandal or a stumbling block to those people whose vocation it is to find God via the way of human love. Lift this story, then, from the whole and place it before your imagination as a profound icon of human sexual love in harmony with love of God. We see Elizabeth quietly trying to leave her husband's arms and bed in the middle of the night to go off to pray alone.

Louis, knowing his wife's soul as well as his own, takes her hand and holds it tightly for a sustained moment, fearing to have her leave him even for a brief time. At other times it is said he would let her go, pretending to be asleep, and the two souls would pray together in a trinity of love with the Lord.

The most famous sign from God concerning Elizabeth's ministry to the poor is, of course, the legend of the roses. It seems that once Louis did get overworn by the nagging and complaints of his court about his "impractical and fanatical wife," and he succumbed to pressure. So he forbade Elizabeth to give out any baskets of food for a short time. Within days of the order a vagrant woman and her children came to the castle looking for the "mad princess of charity." The woman told Elizabeth that if she and her children were not fed she was going to commit suicide. The girl dashed off to the kitchen for some bread and was carrying it through the door to the woman outside just as Louis was coming up the pathway. He was exasperated and sad as he looked at his wife and then at the covered basket. He asked her, hoping against hope, what was in the basket. Elizabeth's only answer was, "Louis, see for yourself," and in mid-winter out tumbled plump summer roses. He broke into tears, promising never to doubt her vocation again; and he never did.

Louis died young, and it is difficult to describe Elizabeth's grief. This was no case of stoic acceptance or ascetic serenity. She literally went through the halls and rooms of the castle sobbing in disbelief. She refused to accept the death, and it was absolutely the most difficult trial of faith in her life. She loved the man so much that there seemed to be no hope for comfort. Her cries remind us of those of the grieving and abandoned Poor Clares at the death of Francis. They were entirely sure that no one could replace him in their lives, and it was true. It was true, too, for Elizabeth with Louis.

In some ways this death of her husband freed her, after a lengthy trial of grief, to discover an expansion of her vocation through the Secular Franciscan Order. She had been well aware of a new spiritual revival, far away in Italy, which centered around a man who had a reputation like her own for madness and mismanagement. In 1221, the same year Francis gave a rule to his "Third" Order, Elizabeth opened a convent for the Franciscans in Eisenach. Everything she heard about Francis thrilled her; she felt an immediate kinship and could not get enough news about him from the Franciscan missionaries. Francis, for his part, had heard about the Hungarian princess from Cardinal Hugolino, who encouraged him to send Elizabeth some gift of love which would foster her vocation because he knew that at times she was quite alone. He suggested that Francis send



his own poor mantle, and Francis spontaneously agreed. One could say Elizabeth received it, cherished it, and was comforted by the presence of Francis in a way one could imagine, but which doesn't need description. Whenever she had something very important to ask of God, she wrapped herself in the poor man's mantle and received whatever she asked for. In this way Elizabeth becomes all of us who love Francis from afar. And in a way, too, this is a simple way of defining the Secular Franciscan Order: we come to God wrapped in Francis' presence, amazed at what God can do in one person. Yet, like Elizabeth, we remain ourselves, knowing Francis always leads to Jesus.

After Louis' death, the home situation deteriorated. Without the protection of her husband, all the resentment and jealousy of years were free to boil high and explode. Louis' own brother, Henry, evicted her and her three children from the castle on a moment's notice. An order followed her that no one else in the kingdom was to take them in, either. The little group went homeless, begging from the very people Elizabeth had fed and clothed, until finally a man put them in his tool shed and pig sty for the night. The next day Elizabeth and the children stumbled into the convent at Eisenach, and she told the Franciscans there to sing the "Te Deum," for she had experienced "perfect joy."

The final part of Elizabeth's short twenty-three years is probably the most difficult to understand today. It is impossible to grasp with reason or the mind unless you keep envisaging the "narrow door" Jesus told us about. Elizabeth put herself at the mercy and whim of a rather demanding and highly ascetical spiritual director named Master Conrad of Marburg. It is doubtless true, as one old sage put it, that "anyone who attempts to direct himself in the spiritual life has a fool for a director." But why did Elizabeth pick so severe a director? Stories abound about the strange and repugnant penances and inane tasks to which she submitted during this time. Some sense can be made of it, perhaps, if you travel just a bit to another religious tradition of ancient asceticism: that of the Zen Master and pupil. The pupil purposely submits to a master whose purpose is to break the student's self-will through seemingly absurd tasks in order for the student to be enlightened—a goal which is reached only when one is, so to speak, "not looking," whereas the *self* is always looking!

Toward the end of her life one of the most poignant and beautiful of the Elizabeth stories occurs. She found a little waif of a boy who had scurvy. This skin disease brought on swollen spots and sores and had also caused the boy's hair to fall out, leaving only patches of it here and there. Elizabeth swaddled the boy in her arms and nursed him back to health in her own room. This child alone was allowed to sit by her side as

she lay dying. Elizabeth died on the night of November 17, 1231, not yet twenty-four years of age. Elizabeth, the Hungarian princess, is patron along with a king, St. Louis of France, of the Secular Order of the Little Poor Man. Canonized in 1235, she is also the patroness of widows. Ω



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The Volterra Letter:

The First Letter to All The Faithful

THADDEUS HORGAN, S.A.

Francis' highest intention, his chief desire, his uppermost purpose was to observe the holy Gospel in all things, and through all things and with perfect vigilance, with all zeal, with the longing of his mind and all the fervor of his heart, in order to follow the teaching and the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. He would recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration [1Cel 84; *Omnibus*, 299].

THIS CITATION FROM Thomas of Celano is, I believe, significant to our purpose. Seeking to deepen our appreciation of the Volterra Letter¹ is for each of us the beginning of a persistent and ongoing reflection on the life-filled words of the new Rules of the Franciscan Third Order Regular and of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Volterra Letter centers the Gospel in Franciscan life. It makes us conscious of the efficacious *word* of God. Through it Francis shows us the way to incarnate the Gospel's basic reality into daily living. Further, it points out the sources Francis used to keep lively within himself, humanly speaking, the Good News who is Jesus Christ. These were reflection, memory, and ongoing meditation. Even a quick look at his other writings reveals Francis' clear perspective on the Gospel. It is always Jesus Christ. He is our way to the Father.

¹The Volterra Letter in English can be found in **The CORD** 29:6 (1979), 166-68; in Cajetan Esser, *The Rule and Testament of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 221-26; in AB 62-65; and of course in the new Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Rules.

Father Thaddeus Horgan, an Atonement Friar, is Pastor of St. Francis Communities, Portmore, Jamaica, West Indies, and a member of The CORD's editorial board. From 1979 to 1982 he served on the Work Group that composed the new Third Order Regular Rule. This paper was read at the 1984 Portiuncula Celebration at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio.

Again, as Celano puts it, Jesus "occupied" Francis. Francis carried the Lord in his heart, his mouth, his ears, his eyes, his hands, and all his members (1Cel 115; *Omnibus*, 329). He did so because God's unerring words of Spirit and Life state that no one comes to the Father except through Christ (Jn. 14:16). Jesus' life is the way God's love literally entered our world and touched the hearts of men and women. Such love must be responded to. This is the uncomplicated substance of Franciscan spirituality. This is why Francis preached penance, or conversion of heart, and directed that it was to be proclaimed and lived by his followers (RegNB 23:1). The matter was simple: whoever has received the gift of salvation must live as a new creation, alive in Christ (Rom. 6:11). This is the response God wants.

To be a penitent . . . means to be a living vessel of God's transforming presence and power in the world.

While there is a simple directness to Francis' awareness of salvation, let us not think that it was simplistic. On the contrary Francis' awareness was not only persistent but penetrating. We see this—as with all things concerning Francis—in his deeds. His followers had to proclaim repentance because Francis knew that all people *need* God. All people are intrinsically poor, or gospel poor, without Christ. All people also are the object of God's selfless love. All, then, should respond to God. Again, cumulatively looked at, Francis' writings show that he understood *metanoia* as a continuous process of abandoning the effects of sinfulness throughout life, especially that of being separated from God, and of embracing the life of union with God in Christ by the power of the Spirit. To use Francis' words, all men and women need to replace the "spirit of the flesh" (EpFidII 65; cf. AB 72) with the "Spirit of the Lord" (ibid., 48; AB 70).

The "spirit of the flesh" is a Pauline expression meaning that the person to whom it is applied is in the full range of his/her personality separated from God. As such, that person is the subject of sin and death. But God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying will has destined all people for

²Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary* (London: Herder and Herder, 1965), 60.

transformation to glory.² It is in this sense that Francis uses the term in his writings. This demonstrates theological insight, we might say, but it more likely means that Francis was inspired to understand the process of redemption as it is presented in the whole of Scripture (especially the New Testament). He apparently reflected on it, kept it in the forefront of his memory, and made it the subject of his ongoing meditation. It seems to me that if we want to know well the Prologue to the new Rules of the Franciscan Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Order, all of this should be borne in mind because these truths are what underlie the words of the text.

Implicit Content: Covenant and Cross

REDEMPTION UNFOLDS in Salvation History as a series of covenants between God and his People. The covenants were unique relationships between the Lord and his chosen—relationships based on God's choices. The fact that God chose us utterly fascinated Francis. The Lord made certain people his partners so that in and through them he would restore to humankind its original destiny of eternal life with him. God is always the initiator of covenant. Because he is God, his covenants are irrevocable. This fact awed Francis of Assisi especially in view of the fact that, as Genesis points out, humanity chose the way of "the flesh." Yet God pursued his people, establishing partnerships with Noah (Gen. 9:8–17), with Abraham (Gen. 15:9–12), with all of Israel (Ex. 20:34), and with the Davidic Dynasty (2 Sam. 7). It was God who established these partnerships, pushing his people (if you will) toward that moment when the Person of the Word established not only a partnership, but a relationship between God and humanity. In Christ we become the children of God. What Jesus is to the Father we now become: viz., children of God. Moreover, we receive God's life or the living relationship within the Godhead, the Spirit of the Lord. This relationship both draws us into the very inner life of God and bonds us together into the relationship of fraternity with the Lord. Jesus now is brother to all men and women who share his life. Behind the Volterra Letter's words is Francis' living consciousness of this most gracious choice and gift of God. These must be responded to and received. This is what Franciscan life is all about.

The call to turn from the spirit of the flesh to the spirit of the Lord meant for Francis to submit oneself totally to God's salvation *and* to become part of God's salvific activity in the world. This is why deeds are so essential, in Francis' view, for anyone committed to the life of evangelical conversion. Deeds are concrete responses to the goodness of God. God's love and goodness are expressed above all in the deed of his

only Son come into the world. He is near. He is concrete. In the Incarnate Son we know the way to the Father. To do the Gospel literally, Francis' charismatic insight into Scripture, became for him (and his followers) the path to eternal life because in Christ God becomes brother to us (EpFidII, 56; AB 70) and among us. This is the core of Gospel life.

The Redeemer on the Cross was Francis' perception of the Christ. This was so not only because salvation was effected there (Adm VI and EpFidII 11-14; AB 29, 68), but because there the Son totally gave himself to the Father out of love for us. One of the reasons Francis emphasized the Eucharist is that it makes present again to us our Redemption. It is a source of redeemed life constantly being renewed in us. Celano and Bonaventure, particularly, point out Francis' devotion to the Crucified Christ (2Cel 211; LM IX.2, XIV.4; *Omnibus*, 533, 699, 739), a devotion that led him to want totally to return in kind the selfless love of God for us expressed by Christ. Just as the Redeemer emptied himself for our sake, Francis wanted his followers to empty themselves of all selfishness and worldliness as their concrete response to God's Goodness. Nothing less than Jesus's poverty and humility is projected as the way to respond. Such a deed manifests both one's awareness of and one's reception of God's new and eternal covenant relationship into one's own life. Not to accept it is mere foolishness, as the story at the end of the Volterra Letter points out.

Explicit Content

THIS STORY and its style make one wonder if the Volterra Letter truly is a letter. There is much internal evidence to support the claim that it is actually a sermon. Bernard Tickerhoof states the case:

What we have . . . is a didactic tool. The letter is the means Francis has chosen to reach a wider audience. . . . The letter form has been imposed upon the material which seems to have a more primitive oral form behind it. . . . In short, there is present in the Volterra Letter sufficient evidence that the basic content of the piece existed first in oral form, and seems to have many of the characteristics of homiletic material. The bulk of the letter may well be an early example of Francis' preaching, and perhaps the purest example of it that we possess.³

Celano implies that in his preaching Francis gave norms to those who heeded his call to *metanoia* (1Cel 37). Could this be where he did so? It is very possible. The simple teaching style conveys a strong message:

³Bernard Tickerhoof, T.O.R., "A Gospel Spirituality," *The CORD* 29:6 (1979), 170.

"Choose God or perdition." It is straightforward both in its positive and in its negative parts, and to the point. These are marks of Francis' style. But this is in a decidedly oral style. Like most of Francis' writings, it also is heavily biblical. Fr. Tickerhoof documents in his study (pp. 172-73) Francis' extensive use of Scripture, especially the Johannine texts. He sees a pattern, moreover, in their use by Francis:

In the letter's first chapter the core of the John material is positive and is drawn from the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel. John here records a prayer of Jesus addressed to the Father summarizing Christ's mission and praying on behalf of his disciples, the true believers, and for those who will come to believe through their preaching. Francis has chosen material from this chapter specifically bringing out the nature of discipleship in the lives of the penitents. For Francis the penitent has been given by the Father to Christ, and has been instructed through the words of the Son. The penitent has received this teaching and has come to believe. The life of penance is tied to belief. But not only that, for by their example and perhaps by their preaching they will also lead others to believe, and thereby to do penance.

In the second chapter we see the flip side of the coin. The material is drawn extensively from the eighth and ninth chapters of John's Gospel, and is decidedly negative. The references are now no longer to the disciples of Jesus but to the Jews, representing for John those who are not true believers. The thrust of the Gospel is that while claiming to be begotten of God these non-believers are really children of the devil. Moreover, they have gone beyond the point where they can truly see their own origin. They are spiritually blind, so that while claiming to have the light they show themselves to be unaffected by it. Francis has drawn from this image of the unbeliever and has applied it to those who refuse to take up the penitential life. While they claim to be Christians, their very actions show that they are self-deceived. They have lost true wisdom, and so they have created a black future for themselves.

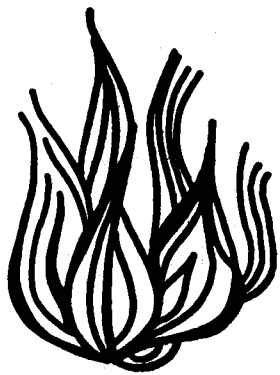
In the Letter there are two key lines, it seems to me, that spell out its explicit teaching. These are Chapter I, line 1, and Chapter II, line 8. They summarize the pattern that Fr. Tickerhoof sees. Both call for faith. For Francis *true* faith is necessary for genuine conversion of heart. *That is the Letter's explicit message.*

Comparing this text with Chapter 23 of the 1221 Rule, we see the same basic idea expressed. But there it is expanded. The orthodox faith-content, so dear to Francis, is stated (RegNB 23:1-11). His consistency regarding this is evidenced by the text of the Second Letter to all the Faithful. In that Letter Francis presents the content of faith and the deeds that manifest the efficaciousness of faith in a true penitent. Historically Francis' concern was to distinguish his followers from the Waldensians,

Humiliati, and other penitential groups at odds with the Church. Francis wanted those who followed his direction to be "truly Catholic" because for him only in the Catholic Church is salvation assured. The emphasis he gives to this is so strong that, when it came to updating the religious tertiaries' Rule, the writers declared in Ch. I, article 2, that the charism of this Order is not *metanoia* alone but "true faith and *metanoia*." So fundamental is this to Gospel living after the example of Francis, that the writers of both the new Religious and the new Secular Franciscan Tertiary Rules chose this letter as the prologue to their respective texts. The historical reason is important; the obviously explicit relationship it gives to the two branches of the Third Order is important too; but both of these are secondary compared to the paramount place of faith in the life of all penitents.

The Spirit of the Lord

"TRUE FAITH and penance" are the constitutive elements in the Franciscan process of attaining holiness. Reflecting Scripture (Mt. 13:23), Francis would say that his true followers are those who hear God's word and understand it (RegNB 22:9-25). Understanding for Francis means the assimilation of the word into one's inner self. It then issues forth in deeds befitting repentance. One without the other is not authentic. In Chapter 22 of the *Regula non Bullata* Francis details the process pursued by the opening lines of the first chapter of the Volterra Letter. It is well to read the two texts together.



The first four lines of the Letter deal directly with the outward conduct of a true penitent. As always Francis has Jesus' words in mind when asked to give guidelines to the penitents. He chooses the Lord's response to the Pharisees, those self-deceived blind leaders of the blind. This is by design. In the second chapter of these guidelines Francis will once again allude to them. What is the word of the Lord that sets right their false example—and the false example of misguided, unorthodox penitents of his day? It is the *shema* (Deut. 6:4-9), the people's remembrance

creed and prayer of God's loving covenant relationship with them. Nothing less than the total turning of self to God, because God has turned to us, will suffice or ever could suffice for an authentic penitential life. This response too must be concrete. The Lord points out how (Mt. 22:39-40), and Francis repeats his words, directing us to love our

neighbor as we love ourselves.

There is a certain rhythm to the first four lines of the Volterra Letter. Within yourself, Francis directs, love God, then manifest this by love of neighbor. Within yourself, be aware of the weakness of humanity, then fortify yourself with the strength of the Eucharist, the very presence of Christ alive among and within us. Thus fortified, go forth and do the deeds that originate from your converted heart. A converted heart for Francis is one that continually turns from the "spirit of the flesh" and opens itself to the "Spirit of the Lord." Certainly the tendency to sin and selfishness remains. But what becomes the conscious quest of one filled with the Spirit is to be concerned only with what pleases the Lord. A converted person, then, is one on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests, one in whom the Spirit of the Lord dwells. Francis is not content with the biblical citation from John (14:23) which speaks of God coming to us; rather he focuses on the graced individual in his or her relationship to God and neighbor. I believe he does so to stress that one who hears the word with an open and converted heart truly "understands" that word and is inwardly transformed. What comes forth, therefore, reflects this transformation (Mt. 15:15-19; 23:25-26; Mk. 7:18-23; Lk. 11:39-42). For Francis, this must always be concrete.

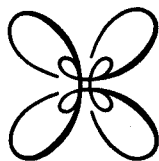
What could be more self-consciously concrete than to describe oneself as a spouse because of one's union with Christ? What could be more actual, biblically speaking, than to know oneself as a brother or sister to the Lord who, Jesus says (Mt. 12:50) does the Father's will? What is more graphic than to be a mother, one who carries life—in this case God's life—and who gives birth—in this case to Christlikeness—thanks to the workings of the Holy Spirit within the individual? This mystical language of Francis is far more down to earth than may first appear. Sister Kathleen Moffatt points out that the four fundamental values contained in the new Third Order Regular Rule are herein contained.⁴

Francis wants us always to be concrete because, as line 10 concludes, this God-giftedness must shine as an example for others. Once again we see how the life of penance is tied to belief and to its lived manifestation so that others might believe and be converted. The rest of the Chapter reinforces this notion. Lines 11 to 13 repeat, almost in rhapsody form, our faith in the indwelling of the Trinity, while lines 14 through 18 repeat Christ's High Priestly prayer (Jn. 17) for the sanctification of his disciples and for those who through them will come to believe.

⁴Kathleen Moffatt, O.S.F., "Of Penance and the Townspeople: The Language of Francis," *The CORD* 33:9 (1983), 288-89.

Chapter 2 not only speaks of the self-deception of persons who fail to do penance because of Satan's wiles, but also addresses the matter of those dominated by the spirit of the flesh (self-centeredness, selfishness, pride). These are totally opposite to those filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Self-centeredness causes spiritual blindness (line 7), which for Francis is thorough. In lines 11 through 18, given his turn of phrase, one can almost hear him say that the ultimate stupidity is spiritual blindness. It makes one feel that he or she has or should have everything! Therefore Francis mocks the tendency in our humanity to sin only to drive home his concluding point, which was his starting point: all should hear God's word and "understand" it because it is spirit and life (lines 19-21).

To be a penitent, then, means to be *happy in the Lord* and blessed by God. It means to be a living vessel of God's transforming presence and power in the world. It means this for all people and throughout life. That prophetic message needs to be heard today just as much as it did in Francis' day. Let us then bring forth worthy fruits of our conversion by proclaiming and living that message so that all may be one and that the world may believe. Ω



Franciscan Vocation

To Fr. Irenaeus Herscher, O.F.M. (1902-1981)

Green grass
morning dew
gliding through
with Jesus and Francis

All the air to greet me as I ride
Blood and water flow from
wounded side.

Sacred Heart of Jesus
Sweet Heart of Francis

I'm a troubadour at last
singing my praises
in the blessed woundedness
of Jesus and Francis.

Lost in the infinity of a grand embrace,
safe in the crossing of arms,
Corded in the Franciscan knot,
forever now I know I'm caught,
roped in with Jesus and Francis,
for all eternity.

Alleluia.

Rebecca Page Harper

St. Bonaventure:

Letters III and IV

TRANSLATED BY CANISIUS CONNORS, O.F.M.

With these two letters of Saint Bonaventure, we continue our series of translations of the Seraphic Doctor's writings that have been thus far unavailable in English (cf. *The CORD* 33, 179-83; 215-16; 342-46). These two pieces must be read in light of the serious question of the spiritual ministry that the friars were bound to show to the followers of Saint Clare. "I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers," Saint Francis had written in *The Form of Life Given to Saint Clare and Her Sisters*, "always to have that same loving care and special solicitude for you as [I have] for them." A papal bull of 1277 insured that spiritual care of the Poor Ladies, but because of the heavy burden that developed with the rapid increase in their numbers, Crescentius of Iesi asked Innocent IV to relieve the friars of this responsibility. In 1263, at the Chapter of Pisa, Bonaventure appealed to the dedication and charity of his brothers in rededicating themselves to this special ministry. These two letters of 1272 and 1264 provide us with examples of his continual desire to place before the friars their responsibilities.

Letter III

Brother Bonaventure, Minister General and servant of the Order of Friars Minor sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to his most dear Brothers in Christ, the Custodian and Guardian of Pisa.

I WISH TO DO a special favor for the Sisters of the Monastery of St. Clare at Pisa for the salvation of their souls. Therefore, I grant that the following be maintained through you by Brothers suitable for this purpose. On the Feast of All Saints and of Saint Clare, and when one of the Sisters of the Monastery departs this life, send six suitable Brothers there, including the Sisters' confessor and his companion, to preach and celebrate the Office. But only the Sisters' confessor and his companion should enter the Monastery for the funeral rites of these deceased Sisters. When it happens that domestics or lay-sisters of these Sisters are sick or have died, the confessor and his companion should go there for the purpose of administering the necessary Sacraments or of conducting the funeral rites.

I also grant that from Advent to the Nativity of the Lord the confessor of the Sisters and his companion should stay for that time at the location of the Monastery for the celebration of the divine services. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, however, and during the whole of Holy Week, you should add two suitable Brothers to the confessor and his companion, who should remain there for these times. The same should be done on the solemnities of the Nativity of the Lord, of the Resurrection, and of Pentecost and their Octaves for the purpose of celebrating the divine services.

I also grant that when grave danger threatens the Monastery, you send Brothers there who are prudent and discreet, in order to give the Sisters necessary words of counsel. The Brothers can also stay there for the purpose of giving aid and assistance to the Sisters in time of danger. Moreover, Brothers who are master woodworkers and stonemasons can enter the Monastery to designate and do suitable work. You, the Custodian, if you are present, and you, the Guardian, when the Custodian is absent, should see to it that the above is carried out for the Sisters in the prescribed form by Brothers who are suitable for this purpose.

Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

Given at Paris on the 16th of May, 1272

Letter IV

Brother Bonaventure, Minister General and servant of the Order of Friars Minor, sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to Lawrence, his most dear brother in Christ and Visitor for the Poor Ladies in the jurisdiction of Tuscany.

IT IS PROPER AND IT STANDS TO REASON that an Order of spiritual men should show itself ready to do whatever pertains to the honor of God, and whatever procures the salvation of souls or is in accord with natural piety. Since the Order of the Sisters of Saint Clare was committed by the Supreme Pontiff to our venerable Father, John, the Cardinal-deacon of S. Nicolo in Carcere, and because this same Lord has taken this Order under his care with the hope of assistance from our Order and for the preservation of our peace and independence, it is fitting and appropriate that we assist him with a ready spirit. Therefore, assured of your concern and your worth according to the advice of the Discreet Brothers, I command you under salutary obedience to execute the office of Visitor for those Monasteries of the Order of Saint Clare which are within the jurisdiction of Tuscany and which have given or will give open letters or public documents relative to our independence of them. These letters or public documents should be given according to the form indicated below.

Since this work pertains to the salvation of souls for whom Jesus Christ has shed his Blood, you should perform the work of this office so prudently, so modestly, so justly, so mercifully, and so perseveringly, that it may result in the praise of Christ, the rooting out of vices, the building up of virtues, and consolation for these devout souls.

In order that you may carry out this office, your Minister is held by the authority of this letter to provide a suitable companion for you. If it happens that your companion is impeded, then the Custodian in whose Custody you are making the visitation is held to do the same thing. When you go to visit a Monastery where the Brothers are not located, the Guardian of the neighboring place, or his Vicar, is held to provide you with another companion. Each of these companions, assigned to you especially, should enter the Monastery with you when the time is opportune for the duty of visitation.

You should diligently observe the pattern for the duty of visitation, which was transmitted to you by the Lord Cardinal both as regards the profession of the Rule and of other things contained in it, and you should efficaciously take care to follow this pattern according to the grace given to you by the Lord. You should be on guard against Brothers entering these Monasteries, except for the two associated with you in the execution of your office. You should beware of accepting any gifts and all other things which can in any manner present the appearance of evil. Do not come to me to be released from this office, but as quickly as you can, you should diligently strive to carry it out. You should so pursue what has just been solicitously and solemnly set forth, that your office may be acceptable in the sight of the divine Majesty, and that it may be fruitful and a source of consolation for these Monasteries, for the Lord Cardinal, and for our Order. The Lord Cardinal wished that assistance be offered to him on the part of the Order in bearing the burden he placed on his own shoulders, and he bears the firm conviction that you will solicitously perform your duties. Therefore, let there be nothing that could possibly be imputed to you by God or man due to your negligence. May both the conscience of the Lord Cardinal and your conscience be henceforth totally at rest, and also the consciences of the Brothers of our Order which by a special grace humbly submitted itself to do this.

The form which the public document, or the letter concerning our independence, should take, is as follows:

We [so and so], the Abbess and Sisters of [such and such] Monastery, declare, acknowledge, and also recognize that the Order of Friars Minor, or the Brothers of that Order, are in no respect under obligation to us or to the Monastery or to persons living there, to perform services for the

Monastery. Therefore, wishing to provide for the Brothers of the Order lest a precedent be engendered over a period of time for services or ministerial functions which the Brothers actually render us in their liberality or through mere courtesy, we promise you, Brother N., who are making this stipulation and accepting it in the name of the Order and of the Brothers, that we will not at any time whatever ask that ministerial services and functions be rendered by them out of obligation, when such services are actually procured. Nor will we institute any judgment against the Order of Friars Minor because of this. In testimony of this we wish that this document be made public and be confirmed with the authority of the Convent's seal.

Given at Assisi on the 5th of October, 1264, and in the 3rd
(?) year of the Pontificate of Pope Urban IV.

Looking at a Photo of St. Francis' Robe

What is this ragged ghost?
It haunts my luxury,
my comfortable peace.
Habit of a jester, perhaps—
holey, yea, and holy, no jest—
The King would have him wear
nothing save this royal rainbow
of grey . . .
heaven's buffoon.
One final touch to the grandiose
garment, a rope entwining,
like an umbilical cord fused fast
to Mother Poverty!

Don Costello

Book Reviews

Activities of the Holy Spirit. By Edmund J. Fortman, S.J. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984. Pp. viii-191. Cloth, \$12.00.

Reviewed by Father Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., who worked in Chicago's inner city and taught at the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure University) during the summers, before going this past year to South Africa.

There was a time when the Holy Spirit was the "forgotten Paraclete," but in the last two decades he has come into his own. The charismatic movement as well as the biblical and liturgical revivals has raised our consciousness about the activities of the Holy Spirit. These stirrings within the Church have brought the Holy Spirit to the fore.

Fortman's book is one of a growing number of books attempting to familiarize believers with the Paraclete's place in Church life and in the individual's spirit-life. It gives an overall picture of the Church; it deals with the indwelling, the hierarchy, the Mystical Body, the sacraments, and the charismatic gifts; and it shows how the Holy Spirit operates in all these dimensions of the Church.

Each chapter gives a "composite profile from biblical, patristic, and theological and conciliar writings." There is a marshalling of texts, a monotonous series of quotations. This makes for clarity and leaves a distinct impression, but it does not make for easy, interesting reading.

Among the several neologisms in the book, the key word is *christification*, which the author prefers to the Eastern *divinization*. *Christification* is simply the goal the Holy Spirit has: viz., that of making us like Christ. The Holy Spirit's aim is, to use the author's coined phrase, "the sanctific Christification of Christians" (p. 23). In this connection the author deals with the theological problem, Are the Spirit and the Risen Christ identical since they have so many interrelated activities? Fortman replies that the identity is neither ontological nor personal; the identity of the Spirit and the Risen Christ is rather "dynamic," in the sense that Christ acts through the Spirit to make us like himself, which is "christification." Fortman takes seriously the patristic tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. Only in one instance did I find a questionable doctrinal position. It had to do with the question, Is the Mystical Body of Christ equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church? The author concedes that *Lumen Gentium* answers "Yes." But he prefers another answer: he would include in the Mystical Body those who are being christified by the Spirit, whatever their ecclesial affiliation.

I also found strange the new name he gives to the Holy Spirit. The last chapter treats of the name, "the befriending Spirit." He bases himself on the constant, traditional reference to the Holy Spirit as love, as the love between the Father and the Son. So he calls the Holy Spirit "Friend of the Father and Friend of the Son." Per-

sonally, I find that name difficult to fit in with the familial "Father and Son." It seems to me to be a case of mixed metaphors.

Those involved in the charismatic movement will appreciate Part V on the charismatic Spirit, in which the author handles deftly the ambiguous "baptism of the Spirit" and the gift of tongues.

I consider this book useful, if one doesn't mind lots of quotations.

To Come and See: Thoughts on Contemporary Religious Life. By Roland J. Faley, T.O.R. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1985. Pp. xii-158. Cloth, \$12.50.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Associate Editor of this Review.

The author brings a dual set of credentials to this work: a training in Scripture and a dozen years in the leadership (generalate) of a Franciscan religious Order. It is mostly the former that he draws on in his first seven chapters, which treat of the religious vocation as countercultural, conversion, community prayer, and the vows. His approach is not bookish, however, but rather almost colloquial as he illustrates out of his own life experiences the points that he is making.

Almost all of these chapters had for me some memorable thought: e.g., that a call to observe high ideals offends no one, so that to be truly evangelical, demands must be concrete; that all religious have the basic right to be accepted by members of their own community as having a value of their own apart from productivity, personality, or what not; that poverty is rooted in the

imitation of the self-emptying of Jesus; and that religious need to "de-escalate" the momentum of consumerism that is affecting them and society, Eastern as well as Western.

The last three chapters of the book deal with justice issues, the local church, and ongoing formation. In each of these there emerges a balanced presentation which has flowed out of considerable experience. Although one might question the author's inference that today's society is more unjust than any in the past, he makes it clear that rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's does not mean that the Church's mission is exclusively catechetical and sacramental. I hearkened to his observation that all kinds of people, unlettered and lettered, ought to be able to come to religious life. His stress on ongoing formation as involving much more than acquiring more education is good. Also pertinent are his remarks about the need for religious to cooperate with and be part of the local church, while at the same time not sacrificing their own identity and need to grow as a community.

Come and See is an educational and inspiring book. It isn't a book of "answers," but it isn't a book of just questions, either. All religious can profit from it.

Faith Is Friendship. By Josef Heinzmann. Translated by David Heinzmann. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1983. Pp. xxx-146. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Luke M. Ciampi, O.F.M., a member of the Immaculate Conception Province, currently serving God's People at the Christian Forma-

tion Center, Andover, Massachusetts.

A book for daily or periodic meditation in the quiet of the soul, this is a welcome and helpful adjunct especially for retreats. It cannot be read fast or skimmed through, but should be taken in small dollops over the course of days or even weeks. There is much food for reflection and for adaptation to a living, constant faith in a changing, unstable world.

Nothing is lost by its being a translation from the German. The only real difficulty is the typeface used and the textbook-like layout of the material. Yet the latter feature and the decimal numbering of passages make it convenient to refer to specific and pertinent sections.

Using the holistic approach, the author has drawn on his extensive experience as a Redemptorist—in pastoral, counseling, and psychiatric work—to develop his theme: through friendship with God and one another we help our Church to become holier and our world more human. While the book is intended for the laity as well as clergy and religious, and while both its content and the general concept underlying the book are fascinating, it does seem a little deep for the average reader.

The human person, who desires happiness, is created for friendship. Without friendship, he or she is "a tattered bit of unhappiness." The ideal set before us as inspiration is the Beloved Disciple leaning on the Lord's bosom at the Last Supper. Step by step, we are bidden to ask ourselves these questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? And why? The answers place us squarely on the trail of the Infinite, as pilgrims.

Our Christian Faith is therefore a faith in a Person, God—whom we are to know, whose works we are to understand, whose word(s) we are to encounter, and whom we are to recognize. This approach takes us across a broad spectrum of mystical, dogmatic, and sacramental theology. Inevitably, it leads us to a faith that is oriented towards community, is open to the world, promotes the kiss of justice and peace, and places history in its proper perspective. It is thus that we arrive at our goal of Faith, Friendship and Freedom with God. In this pilgrimage Mary, as always, is our model of faith.

Faith, we are told, is a matter, not primarily of the mind or of understanding, but of the inmost being, an affair of the heart. The Latin verb *credere*, it is pointed out, derives from the phrase *cor dare*, i.e., to give one's heart. We are thus reminded of Saint Augustine's restless heart which finds repose only in God. A human being believes with his/her heart and thus finds true friendship in loving self-surrender to and bond with Christ. In other words, faith is as simple as loving each other is for two people in love. Faith in God is faith in a Person; as a result, God and a man or woman become partners, friends.

In the last analysis, then, we can grasp God only in faith and with the heart, for when we love we can never get enough of whom or what we love, even if it is incomprehensible. Friendship knows how to grasp, penetrate, or cope with what is incomprehensible. Faith refines Friendship with God into a loving relationship that transcends all problems of living in community and in the world. It becomes simply a matter of YOU, God, and ME. Faith is Friendship.

The Psalms: Prayers for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens of Life (A Literary-Experiential Approach). By John F. Craghan. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 200, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association and Campus Minister at the University.

John F. Craghan is a Scripture scholar and teacher and the author of the second book in the series called Background Books published by Michael Glazier, Inc. In the present volume he has "arranged the Psalms according to their literary types . . . [and has shown how these] different types correspond to various cycles in our life of faith" (p. 9).

In his first chapter, the author does three things: he explains his understanding of the nature of prayer; he shows how the Psalms are a form of prayer; and he explains what he means by the rhythm of life. "Prayer," he writes, "forces us to interiorize and reflect" (p. 14). Prayer "allows us to think thoughts of God, not of humans . . . [and] to brush up against God" (p. 15). The Psalms are "Israel's typical experience of prayer . . . [they] are also our prayers. . . . As prayers, the Psalms deal . . . with basic human problems and situations . . . at prayer we are truly ourselves; weeping and rejoicing, praising and cursing, hearing and being heard" (pp. 1-17).

According to Dr. Craghan, the basis of Israel's prayer is covenant, that is "a triangular relationship: Yahweh, the community, and the individual Israelite" (p. 18). Such an understanding of

the nature of prayer "presumes that the individual can truly interact with God only by including the community. Even the most personal and intimate prayer of the individual is bound up with the good of the community" (p. 18).

The author explains the rhythm of human life as made up basically of three stages: orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. In the light of these three periods of human life's rhythm, Craghan treats the Psalms under six categories. In the area of orientation are four kinds of Psalms: Psalms of descriptive praise, Psalms of confidence and trust, wisdom Psalms, and royal Psalms. For disorientation, there are the laments, both individual and communal. With reference to reorientation, the author presents the thanksgivings or Psalms of declarative praise, both individual and communal.

Dr. Craghan devotes a chapter of his book to each of these six categories. In each chapter, the author selects five Psalms (ten in the chapter on Laments, five individual and five communal) that express the particular attitude of the pray-er. He shows how the words are appropriate, not only for the Psalmist and the time the Psalm was written, but also for people and situations of our own day. All in all, the author presents an exegesis of thirty-five Psalms and lists other Psalm numbers appropriate to each of the six areas. He also presents eight New Testament readings that relate to the orientation, disorientation, or reorientation that a particular chapter deals with.

For individual prayer and for communal prayer, the Psalms have long been a part of the Jewish and the Christian traditions. Since they are so widely used today in liturgical and community prayer, this reviewer suggests that Dr.

Craghan's book will be most beneficial to all believers who make use of the Psalms when they turn their hearts and minds to God in prayer. Dr. Craghan's clear analysis of the Psalms will give the individual at prayer an appreciation of the Psalmist's intent to express his relationship with God and with the community. Praying the Psalms today can help each pray-er unite himself/herself with God and the community of the world.

A possible criticism of the book's plan is the omission of a concluding chapter that could draw the author's reflections together as a kind of summary of his work. The summary at the end of each chapter is beneficial to the reader, but a final summary chapter might help him or her to appreciate more deeply or more fully the beauty of the Psalms and the clarity of the author's work.

Getting It All Together: The Heritage of Thomas Merton. Edited by Timothy Mulhearn. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 109. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Vianney M. Devlin, O.F.M., Ph.D. (English, University of London), a member of the Retreat Team at St. Francis Retreat Center, Rye Beach, New Hampshire, and Assisi Experience, which conducts Study Pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi each summer.

[T]he hagiographers and image-artificers have . . . set about sculpting a towering figure of the twentieth century's most famous monk. And . . . that is expected, even necessary, for a figure of reliable yet creative transition in a world of turmoil. . . . There remains a staggering

interdisciplinary task ahead in systematizing and integrating the multifaceted personality of Thomas Merton.

So writes George Kilcourse in his essay, "Pieces of the Mosaic, Earth: Thomas Merton and the Christ" (p. 82).

This book is a collection of four essays which attempt to explore how Merton, "dedicated to being 'poor with the poor Christ' and [yet] so socially conscious, put it all together" (p. 14). Far from being another collection of personal reminiscences (although such are interwoven), this book attempts to suggest avenues of approach to that task.

Here are collected essays by Amiya Chakravarty, who knew Merton for many years and "was with him on his eastward journey both intellectually and, in the last days, physically" (p. 14); David Steindl-Rast, who interprets some of the most significant passages of the posthumous *Asian Journal*; Richard Cashen, who reflectively analyzes some of Merton's early writings in terms of Merton's search for solitude; and George Kilcourse, who explores Merton's poetic insights and experience of integration in Christ. As Merton himself wrote,

Whatever I may have written, I think it can all be reduced in the end to this one root truth: that God calls human persons to union with Himself and with one another in Christ, in the Church which is His Mystical Body [quoted, p. 81].

Taken together with Michael Mott's wise and wonderful biography, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* [a review is in preparation—ed.], this book of essays ought to be serviceable for those readers who are undertaking the task of "integrating the multifaceted personality of Thomas Merton."

Cassette of the Sacred Music Composed by Cardinal Merry del Val

LITTLE KNOWN among Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val's manifold activities is his personal contribution to the revival of sacred music, given great impetus by Pius X, the Pope whom he served as Secretary of State with absolute fidelity throughout his pontificate from 1903 until 1914.

The eight motets to Latin text for choir and organ, which the Cardinal himself composed, remained for the most part unpublished and were not performed in public until 1970, the 40th anniversary of his death.

On this occasion, all the motets were performed together for the first time by Italy's top choir, the St. Cecilia, directed by Giorgio Kirschner, in Rome's Holy Apostles' Basilica.

These motets, with their warm and graceful, flowing melodies imbued with a noble dignity and feeling, showing perfect fusion of words and musical form, the American critic Richard Schuler has called "gems . . . of great expressive power and subdued dynamics," in particular the *O Salutaris* and *Panis Angelicus*, praising the choral sound and recorded presence of the 80 voices (*Sacred Music*, 1970).

Jacques Chailley (writing in *Diapason*—Paris, 1971) thought some of the motets "better than the professional, specialized compositions of the times in this genre, even of Gounod, César Franck, and Fauré. . . ."

The phonograph record of this unique concert has for some time been unobtainable, but now an excellent cassette has been made. This is a *non-commercial enterprise*. Anyone who wishes a copy of the cassette may write to the former concert organizer:

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* * *

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Let God Act

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Correspondence of Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val*

This booklet with introduction by Bishop Peter Canisius Van Lierde, Vicar General of His Holiness for Vatican City, is available from:

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The Knight-Errant of Assisi. By Hilarin Felder, Capuchin. Reprint. \$7.00 plus postage.

Translated by the late Berchmans Bittle, Capuchin, this popular biography long has been out of print.

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DECEMBER, 1985

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., has illustrated his own article on Greece, and Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C., has provided the illustration for "Saint Francis and the Notion of Reverence."

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
CL: Legend of Saint Clare
CP: Process of Saint Clare
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
LP: Legend of Perugia
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
SC: Sacrum commercium
SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).



On Local Community

THERE IS A trend among religious today which raises a lot of questions, at least in my mind, about our understanding of community life. This trend is the fact that more and more religious are choosing to live alone. Most often they choose to live alone because of the work they are doing. Though having a choice about our work is a good thing, it is not the only consideration to keep in mind.

Since the renewal years we have placed greater emphasis on "being" rather than "doing," and yet we make our choices in terms of work. This seems to be a contradiction. I am not in any way trying to deny the importance of the apostolate. Zeal for building the kingdom of God must be a priority in our lives, but if we expect new members to join us we must ask ourselves what we are offering them. They could just as well remain at home and go to work.

The usual argument for living alone is to create community with others in the parish or neighborhood; but if we give no example that community is possible, what good are our words? Or many religious say that they belong to the congregation or province, and that is their community. This argument strikes me as lame because if we are honest we must admit that life happens at the local level. This is where we interact, have our own rough edges sanded down, and encourage and build up one another in faith and love. The psychologists tell us that we can relate deeply with only, perhaps, six or seven in terms of community, which means that membership in a province or congregation does not automatically mean that I live within community, that I even know what community is all about.

I do not mean to suggest that staying under the same roof is enough, either. What I am talking about is people growing together to be of one mind and heart in Christ. This means that I take seriously the need for self-revelation, attentive listening to others, common situations in light of our charism.

In chapter 16 of the Rule of 1221 Francis gave us some wise advice. Originally directed to those who were to go among the Saracens, this chapter has something to teach us today about local community. Francis told his brothers that when they go among people their first task is to be a Christian community. He wrote this because he knew that the most persuasive means for drawing people to Jesus is a clear witness that we are one in Christ.

Placing importance on local community does not exclude intercommunity living, especially among various Franciscan groups; it simply means that community is created and lived on the local level in a very real and dynamic way, or it is not lived, no matter how we want to rationalize it. Ω

Madge Karecki, SSJ-TOSF

Incarnation

The eternal Word was spoken,
transcending time and space.

The Infinite:
reserved within a humble, earthen vessel.

The Incomprehensible:
expressed in terms that finite minds could ponder.

The Unapproachable:
now dwells, unveiled, within your midst, O Israel.

The eternal Word was spoken,
transcending time and space,

Accomplishing His desire:
bearing fruit in the midst of desolation.

William J. Boylan

Francis the Cradle of Greccio

WILLIAM HART MCNICHOLS, S.J., S.F.O.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD every church had its crib or crèche which was set up in the sanctuary sometime during Advent. Now, every church in my hometown of Denver had its own Nativity display, but as far as my mother was concerned there was only one *real* crib to be seen, and that was the one in St. Elizabeth's, the Franciscan church. This is not to say the most elaborate or the largest crib, because other churches boasted hand carved, imported German and Italian cribs, but the Franciscan crib had an aura about it that you could feel from way back in the vestibule as you entered the church.

The crib drew you near with a natural silence and an almost tip-toe reverence, and I remember my mother dipping her fingers in the water font and then taking my hand with her moist and blest hand, and we walked down the aisle together toward the "little town of Bethlehem." The crib was on the right side, or the side of the Blessed Mother, and it was built upon a hidden platform which rose gradually upward from the communion rail, all the way up and over Mary's niche. There at the top was a mythic midnight blue sky with the great guiding star and scattered painted stars that somehow glowed. Below the sky was the tiny city of Bethlehem set on rolling hills with palm trees and odd little white adobe and stucco houses. Winding from the top of the horizon, all through the poor little town, was a road which led to a cave at the base of the structure, and so the viewer was led without any words or direction by the stars and lights through the ancient city of Micah's prophecy, right into the cave of the Nativity.

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., maintains an art studio at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset, Long Island.

There you noticed others were there with you, or well on their way. There were shepherds and poor women and children side by side with great ornamented kings of three distinct races, and they all had retinues of slaves, camels, and horses as well as gilded gifts for the baby. And there were lots of sheep and lambs—the faithful ox and ass—and all, whether they were human or animal, were bending slightly forward and gazing at the baby in the straw as if they'd just fallen in love. My own mother was pregnant at this time, and so we were on a double mission: to see the crib and also to ask God for a little girl; if he answered us the girl would be named Mary Elizabeth for the saint of the Franciscan church. "Did this father, St. Joseph, take his wife Mary to the hospital for the baby?" I asked. Then it was that my mother whispered the story we all learn, that this Child was actually born in such a poor cave just like things looked in the Franciscan tableau.

Who in our topsy-turvy world could better understand [than Francis] God's deliberate choice of Bethlehem for his only Son, and the stark, impoverished cave?

The story of Francis' crib at Greccio is so typically Francis that even though his was not the first crib, tradition has forgotten the others and with blind affection attributed the whole custom to the Little Poor Man. Actually the medieval celebration of Christmas was quite elaborate before the time of Francis. It originated simply with clerics acting as shepherds and midwives, and each would read a part or they would answer back and forth in antiphonal chorus. Gradually this developed into a regular cycle of scenes with three full acts which began with the Old Testament Prophets, continued through the events of the infancy narratives of the Gospels, the Flight into Egypt, the massacre of the Holy Innocents, and finally ended with a fully grown Jesus in a battle with the Devil. In 1207 Innocent III had to outlaw these pageants—they had gotten so out of hand—this is why Francis had to get permission from Pope Innocent, in 1223, to celebrate Christmas at Greccio in a special way. Hear now the loving description of Christmas Eve at Greccio by Francis' first biographer, Thomas of Celano:

The day of joy drew near, the time of great rejoicing came. The brothers were called from their various places. Men and women of that neighborhood prepared with glad hearts, according to their means, candles and torches to light up that night that has lighted up all the days and years with its gleaming star. At length the saint of God came, and found all things prepared: the hay had been brought, the ox and ass led in. There simplicity was honored, poverty was exalted, humility was commended, and Greccio was made, as it were, a new Bethlehem. The night was lighted up like the day, and it delighted the people and beasts. The people came and were filled with new joy over the new mystery. The woods rang with the voices of the crowd and the rocks made answer to their jubilation. The brothers sang, paying their debt of praise to the Lord, and the whole night resounded with their rejoicing. The saint of God stood before the manger, uttering sighs, overcome with love, and filled with a wonderful happiness. The solemnities of the Mass were celebrated over the manger and the priest experienced a new consolation.

The saint of God was clothed with the vestments of the deacon, for he was a deacon, and he sang the holy Gospel in a majestic voice. And his voice was a strong voice, a sweet voice, a clear voice, inviting all to the highest rewards. Then he preached to the people standing about, and he spoke charming words concerning the Nativity of the poor king and the little town of Bethlehem. Frequently too, when he wished to call Christ Jesus, he would call him simply the "Child of Bethlehem," aglow with overflowing love for him; and speaking the word *Bethlehem*, his voice was more like the bleating of a sheep. His mouth was filled more with sweet affection than with words. Besides, when he spoke the name *Child of Bethlehem* or *Jesus*, his tongue licked his lips, as it were relishing and savoring with pleased palate the sweetness of the words. The gifts of the Almighty were multiplied there, and a wonderful vision was seen by a certain virtuous man. For he saw a little child lying in the manger lifeless, and he saw the holy man of God go up to it and rouse the child as from a deep sleep. This vision was not unfitting, for the Child Jesus had been asleep in the hearts of many; but by the working of grace, he was awakened again through his servant Saint Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory. At length the solemn night celebration was brought to a close and everyone returned to their home with holy joy.

Daniel Marshall of *The Catholic Worker* said once that Francis turns the topsy-turvy world right-side up. In our blindness we think he's upsetting things; yet in fact it is the opposite. This is what Francis did at Greccio: he turned the upside-down world's values right side up. And in this way God uses Francis as a sort of "Cupid" or "Eros." The part of Cupid in the Greco-Roman mythology is to wound unsuspecting people with the arrow of passion or love at the bidding of his mother Aphrodite

(Venus, or Love). At God's bidding the Little Poor Man wounds us with his prophetic acts, puzzling koans, street drama, or sometimes just an image of Francis in his utter simplicity can wound a soul incurably.



The wound is God's wound, and one powerful instrument of God for centuries has been Francis, who is also the greatest reformer of the Church as he shows us total dependence on God. He wounds us, and the wound becomes a search for healing which is the search for God. Augustine knew this wound hundreds of years before Francis and said: "Our hearts are restless until they rest in God."

Who in our topsy turvy world could better understand God's deliberate

choice of Bethlehem for his only Son, and the stark, impoverished cave? Who better than the one who had chosen voluntary poverty and who felt himself to be so poor a dwelling for the most Holy Spirit? Francis lived and held all these mysteries in his heart and body, and when they are shown to us in his simple way, the way of the Gospels, the impact is immediate, transforming and searing as the two-edged sword. Francis' words and actions that Christmas Eve came from such naked love and truth that the people present were pierced with them. They split right through the coverings of fear, guilt, pride, or doubt and opened and wounded many hearts. As the Stigmata revealed Francis as bearing Christ's passion, the Child Jesus come-to-life in the arms of Francis revealed him as a poor enough Cradle for the Word made flesh. Ω

Christ-mas

Clamor of salesmen
Seek Summer vacationers:
"Buy your Christmas now,
One Fourth price for Christmas Rose!"
Keep 'til December?

Under Freedom's guise,
Civil Libertarians
Jam every court room.
Plot: Evict Christ from Christmas;
Judges heed them naught!

"Mas" has no meaning,
Christ- core to Celebration;
Christmas, gift giving.
To share your secret feelings—
God's Son from above!

The price for Christmas
Soars beyond the farthest Star—
Touch our Father's heart.
He sends LOVE, His only Son—
Savior of our Race!

Envelop your heart(h)
With wholehearted Thanksgiving!
Jesus adorns you
Who ope your doors to Poor ones.
Christmas dawns tonight!

Sister Barbara Mary Lanham, O.S.F.

Saint Francis and the Notion of Reverence

SEÁN COLLINS, O.F.M.

THIS IS NOT an attempt to force Saint Francis into one of those Procrustean beds of which he has long been a victim. There is a radical impossibility about capturing a personality totally by heaping up quotations from his writings and actions. Nonetheless it is possible to give the beginnings of an intuition, something that can be developed and integrated into the living appreciation of a man. The salient virtues of a renowned personality are open to contemplation by us all. It is an adventure to investigate the contemplating of others, as it is rewarding to compare one's insights with the views of the keenest observers, especially "the first eye-witnesses."

It was in Jørgensen's excellent book on Franciscan Italy that I first found the idea of reverence put forward as a special characteristic of Saint Francis. Jørgensen describes how once, in the friary at Greccio, he noticed a friar kiss a piece of bread which he had inadvertently dropped on the floor. And he goes on to say, almost in passing, that "the Franciscan spirit is essentially and before all else a spirit of reverence."¹ What struck me was the fact that in spite of the directness and categorical nature of the assertion, he did not develop it any further. But somehow it stuck in my mind; and subsequent reading and reflection have convinced me that it contains a whole world of meaning that I had not at first dreamed of.

¹*Pélerinages franciscains* (Paris, 1910), p. 48. There is also an English edition, long out of print.

Father Seán Collins, a Friar Minor of the Irish Province, holds a Doctorate in Liturgy from the Pontifical Liturgical Institute, Sant'Anselmo, Rome. He is Assistant Director of the Irish Institute of Pastoral Liturgy in Carlow, Ireland.

The Nature of Reverence

THE THEME of reverence is treated at length by the German philosopher Peter Wust. Though his language can be at times rather grandiloquent, in the style of the early nineteenth-century idealists, his thought can be very enlightening for our present study.² The starting-point of philosophy, writes Wust, should be the absolutely primitive emotion called Astonishment. Since the time of Descartes philosophy has put the methodical doubt in the place of wonder, but this is a phenomenon of reaction, a *second a priori* of philosophical thought.

To have existed, to have known God,
even for one moment, is enough for an
Eternity's thanks.

The thinker must choose between these two fundamental orientations: mistrust and trust of being. Wust asks whether in fact this initial indifference to assent or negation is genuine or even possible, and is of the opinion that an analysis which went deeper than that of Descartes would show us that astonishment at ourselves is in fact the very basis of doubt. He sees in a persistence in doubting a certain pride. Our knowledge is not transparent to itself. It is not just a mystery, but a gift, he claims.

What we find lacking in the Stoic sage, and the sage as Spinoza, and even Schopenhauer conceives him . . . is the supreme and innocent delight in existence (*Daseinsfreude*), of the idealism and optimism so opposed to the tragic outlook . . . they lack that final security in existence, that armour of proof which guards the simple child, his serene trust and innocence. The sages renowned in history are still not innocent children in the strange and deep sense of the Gospel: "Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mk. 10:15) [*Ibid.*, p. 236].

And what prevents these wise men from recapturing the soul of the child, is that they have broken away from the filial relationship with the Supreme Spirit, from a loving reverence towards the ultimate secret of things. He speaks of the soul's overwhelming sense of reverence before the harmony of the universe, and correlates surprise and reverence on the one hand with simplicity and piety on the other.

²Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having* (London: Fontana, 1965), pp. 232ff.: "Peter Wust on the Nature of Piety."

the one hand with simplicity and piety on the other.

The conclusion, then, is the "learned ignorance," the *docta ignorantia* of Augustine and of Nicholas of Cusa: accepting in a humble and reverential spirit the limits set by supreme Wisdom to the manner of knowledge with which it has endowed the human mind. This is not fideism—which Wust calls "fallen Gnosticism" since it is really the faith of despair.

The genuine Christian keeps his distance from both pitfalls [fideism and Gnosticism] equally. When he witnesses to his trust in the universal Order, his witness should not be interpreted as mere surface optimism, but recognized as the result of his reverential attitude towards the whole of reality [Ibid., pp. 235–36].

Nietzsche declares, in *Joyful Wisdom* (Book IV): "I still live, I still think; I must live, I must think. I wish to be at all times hereafter only a Yea-sayer."³ He too was occupied with the problem of the ultimate yes or ultimate no. Man's greatest possibility, in the words of the greatest Nietzschean poet, Rainer Rilke, is "to praise in spite of" (*dennoch priesen*), to become aware of the worst in life and still accept it. The fact that he could say neither yes nor no troubled him: was this just the nature of life, or could a man exist who could say finally: I accept everything? His own determination to be a "Yea-sayer" was the effort of a despairing man. To "praise in spite of" is a noble ideal, but, given Nietzsche's perspective, doomed to failure. And so we return to Saint Francis—a man whose ideal was not "to praise in spite of," but "to praise because of."

Francis as "Yea-Sayer"

FRANCIS CERTAINLY HAD in a truly abundant way that filial relationship and loving reverence to God of which Wust speaks. His declaration before Bishop Guido: "Henceforth I will only say: Our Father, Who art in heaven," was not just a dramatic phrase. It was the declaration of a lifelong program. Francis was what Nietzsche sought, the man who could say Yes to everything—not because he was shallow or because he did not see life's misery, but because of his living relation of trust in his heavenly Father. Towards God his attitude was one of overwhelming awe and love. I think it can be best conceived by thinking of a saying of Francis reported in the *Mirror of Perfection*: "The Love of God is so high and so wonderful that it should never, save in rare and great necessity, be

³Quoted by Colin Wilson in *The Outsider* (London: Pan, 1963), 144. In Chapter Five, "The Pain Threshold," there is a treatment of Nietzsche, to which I am indebted.

named."⁴ We also have the opening lines of the "Song of the Creatures":

Most High, omnipotent, Good Lord!
To thee all praise, all glory and all blessing;
To thee alone, Most High, do they belong,
And no man is worthy to pronounce your name.

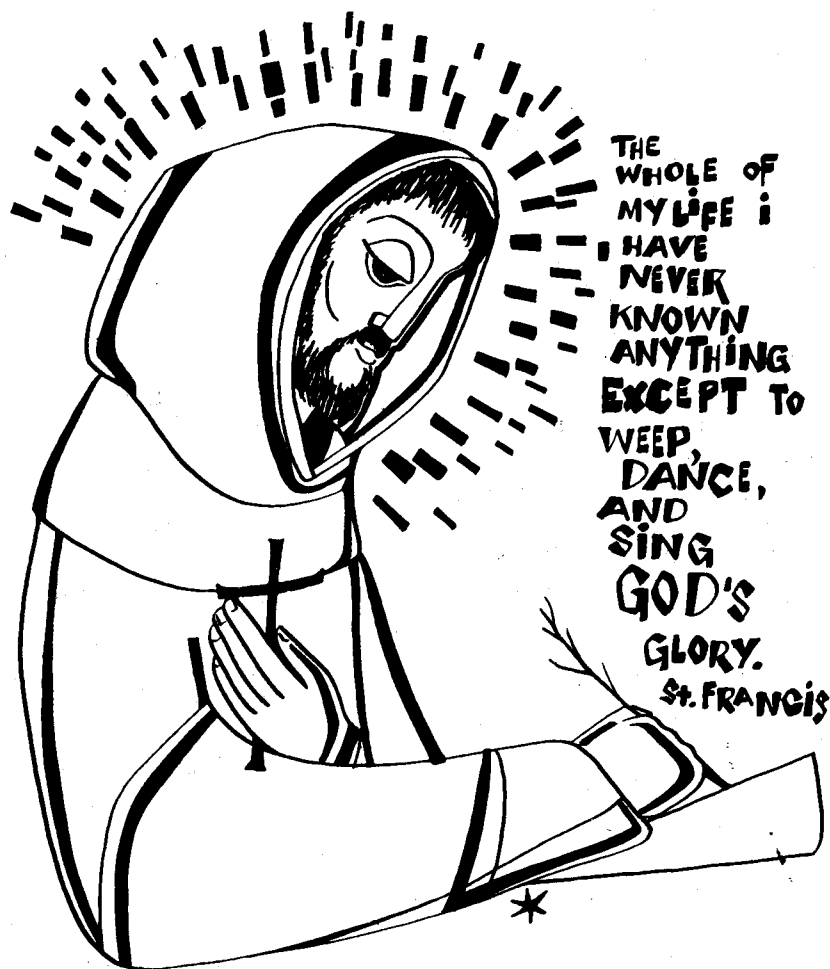
This attitude of reverence, where God is spoken to in the secret of the heart because his wonder and love are too great for human words, must have been taught by Francis to the brothers, for we find Brother Giles many years later bluntly telling two learned and self-satisfied preachers that Saint John the Evangelist had said nothing about God. Naturally they were amazed, and he said, pointing to a nearby mountain: "If there could be a mountain a thousand times higher than that, and a sparrow began to peck at the foot of it, how much would the great heap sink in a day, a year, or even a hundred years?" Of course they admitted that it would not diminish noticeably. And Brother Giles concluded: "The mountain is so tall and the everlasting divinity is so immense that Saint John, who was like that sparrow, could express nothing at all compared to the greatness of God."⁵

In spite of the hyperbole, this story does express Francis' attitude to God, and it explains his great veneration for the Holy Scriptures, for the Eucharist and the priesthood, and for theologians. Because God in his infinite condescension has given us a knowledge of himself in the Holy Scriptures, Francis prized them above everything. And in Christ we have the very image of the invisible God. In the God-man Francis had the object of his greatest love. And his devotion to the Priesthood and for theologians comes from their actualization, corporally and spiritually, of God's Word in our midst.

For the same reason, Francis promised "obedience and reverence" to the Lord Pope and was ever "subject and submissive" to Holy Church. Fundamentally it all goes back to his childlike love and reverence for the unspeakable mystery of God. It was the *docta ignorantia* of all the mystics of the Church, which finds its most striking artistic expression in the wordless melismata of Gregorian music. The tension between solemn reverence and overflowing joy in the best pieces of the Gregorian repertory, for example in the incomparable Easter Introit *Resurrexi*, which is

⁴SP I, ed. P. Sabatier (British Society for Franciscan Studies, 1928), 93.

⁵Cf. *Golden Words: The Sayings of Brother Giles*, tr. Ivo O'Sullivan, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 30.



an "ecstasy of God in God,"⁶ is wholly mystical. The spirit bows down in reverence before the wonder of God's love.

This theme has a very characteristic expression in the Eastern Churches. Here we find that "Christ, incarnate God, man transfigured, the *Logos* glorious in loneliness and suffering," is at the same time "merciful and a friend of man." In face of this glory the sinner prostrates himself with a heart-rending feeling of his total abandon and absolute confidence in his pardon. This is the *Oumilénie* (total humility) of the Byzantine

⁶Dom Joseph Gajard, "Commentaire sur les chants de la Semaine Sainte et de Pâques," *Revue Grégorienne* (mars, 1946).

spirit.⁷ It is a very positive attitude. It was because Gogol had not got it that he allowed fear of Satan to overcome him, so that he destroyed the second part of *Dead Souls*. It is to be found abundantly in Dostoevsky. Even the worthless pseudo-liberal Stepan Verkhovensky, in *The Devils*, when he comes to die, can speak thus:

The whole law of human existence consists merely of making it possible for every man to bow down before what is infinitely great. If man were to be deprived of the infinitely great, he would refuse to go on living and die of despair. The infinite and immeasurable is as necessary to man as the little planet which he inhabits. My friends—all, all my friends: Long live the Great Idea. Even the most stupid men must have something great. . . .⁸

This may sound strange from Verkhovensky, but it is most definitely Dostoevsky's own creed, for it occurs in many of his novels. And he does not mean it in a simply utilitarian sense, in which, as Unamuno says, God would be simply an umbrella to protect us from life, capable of being opened and shut as required; no, it is an ontological relation constituent of our very nature, what Wust calls "the filial relationship with the Supreme Spirit."

Especially in their Liturgy the Orthodox show their reverence—so much so that it was a complaint of the Orthodox delegates at the 1968 World Council of Churches meeting at Uppsala that modern worship tends to emphasize the horizontal at the expense of the vertical. The "brittle clarity" of many prayer-forms leaves no room for the mystery of God. Reverence entails a certain distance, a lack of familiarity, something different from every day. The devout worshipper feels the need of this; hence external solemnity. (Was this spontaneous urge to distance, of non-coincidence, the reason why Francis liked to praise the Lord in French?) Saint Gregory the Great expressed what this concept should be in the life of the monk when he called it "in *sollemnitate amoris habitare*" (living in the *solemnity* of love). And it has ever been the experience of those who humble themselves that God bends down in love and raises them up:

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing;
thou hast loosed my sackcloth
and girded me with gladness [Ps. 30].

⁷Charles Moeller, *Modern Mentality and Evangelization—Part III: Jesus and Mary* (New York: Alba House), 20.

⁸Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Devils*, tr. Magarshack (Penguin), 656.

Reverence for Creation

G. K. CHESTERTON ASKED HIMSELF in a very early verse through what incarnations or prenatal purgatories he must have passed, to earn the reward of looking at a dandelion. In his *Autobiography* he returns to this theme, stating in his own inimitably robust way that the only way to enjoy even a weed is to feel unworthy even of a weed. People feel that they can look down on dandelions and compare them with other, superior flora. And "all such captious comparisons," declares Chesterton,

are ultimately based on the strange and staggering heresy that a human being has a *right* to dandelions; that in some extraordinary fashion we can demand the very pick of all the dandelions in the garden of Paradise; that we owe no thanks for them at all and need feel no wonder at them at all; and above all no wonder at being thought worthy to receive them.⁹

Now this precisely is the attitude of Saint Francis. In the story about him and Brother Masseo at the fountain eating their stale bread, the very words of Francis are: "O Brother Masseo, we are not worthy of such vast treasure" (Fior 13). For one who has the power to see "the dearest freshness deep down things," all is grace and a direct gift from God. Hence springs Francis' reverence for water and for fire, gifts of God and symbols of Him. The whole world becomes a reminder of Love, and God's children are fully free and at home in it. Things are good because they *are*; they are, because God has created them. Francis tells the birds to praise their Maker, and by their very existence they do it. "All creation, all creatures, every leaf, are straining towards the Lord, glorify the Lord, weep to Christ, and unknown to themselves, accomplish this by the mystery of their sinless lives." Thus Father Zossima in *The Brothers Karamazov*.

Dostoevsky has a notion that may seem strange to us: even this life can be heaven if we but realize it. Markel, Zossima's elder brother, exclaims: "Life is paradise and we are all in paradise, only we don't want to know it, and if we wanted to we'd have heaven on earth tomorrow." And in *The Devils* Kirilov, Dostoevsky's most "metaphysical" character, tells Stavrogin:

"Man's unhappy because he doesn't know he's happy . . . he who finds out will become happy at once, instantly. . . ."

"And what about the man who dies of hunger, and the man who insults and rapes a little girl? Is that good too?"

"Yes, it is. And the man who blows his brains out for the child, that's good too. Everything's good. . . ."

⁹G. K. Chesterton, *Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson, 1936), 332.

Obviously Kirilov does not use the word *good* in any normal sense. But by this shocking passage Dostoevsky flings into relief the problem of suffering and pain. And he seems to say that it has no explanation for us. God permits it; it enters in some way into his plan. But no facile explanation can unveil the mystery for us. It's only left for us to bow down before the mystery, as Job did. (The Book of Job fascinated Dostoevsky; he tells us through Zossima that he has never been able to read it without tears.)

This strong faith—actually frightening in its absolute trust—was the faith of Francis. He believed against all evidence that God had all things in the palm of his hand. He did all in his power to alleviate human suffering, but he knew that in the final analysis one can only worship. For Dostoevsky, who had once been pardoned at the foot of the gallows, life is so wonderful that nothing else matters. The most miserable are blessed. Francis knew that over and above existence we have redemption and God's Love, the greatest gift; therefore he was always happy deep down in his heart. His very being was reverence; it was the air he breathed. To have existed, to have known God, even for one moment, is enough for an Eternity's thanks.

Conclusion

IN A JOURNEY in Palestine, H. V. Morton describes a Bulgarian peasant he had seen at Christ's tomb.¹⁰ That description sums up what we have been saying:

He was kneeling at the marble slab and kissing it repeatedly, while tears ran down the deep wrinkles of his face and fell on the stone. . . . He had probably been saving up all his life for that moment. . . . This was his life's dream. Never in all my life have I beheld peace and contentment written so clearly on a human face. . . .

He knelt before the low entrance, his hands held out on each side of his body, his head slightly on one side, the tears running down the furrows of his face. I thought he looked like an elderly martyr who might have been painted by Giovanni Bellini. Then it seemed to me that the simple, contrite creature kneeling there in the half-light at the doorway of Christ's tomb was a symbol not only of the questioning ache at the heart of humanity, but also of its answer. Ω

¹⁰H. V. Morton, *In the Steps of the Master* (London: Rich and Cowan), 12-14.

The Incarnate Word

So great a thing in flesh so pure,
At once creature and Creator,
Such a marvel love has done,
Creator creature has become.

Run, O lovely souls, to find Lord Jesus, run,
Who lies secure in his dear Mother's arms.

Run, run, do not delay,
Your love to pay,
Run, run with hearts afire,
The one whom you desire
With love will pierce your heart.

My dearest, kindest Jesus, Lord,
You who come down from heaven above,
To bear the heavy weight of love,
Debtor in my place become,
You suffer woe and suffer pain.
You call to me, you wait for me,
You cancel my deficiency.
You're always calling me to you
And helping me what's good to do,
You draw me to a life so good,
Just like a real magnet, Lord.
King of kings, sweet Lord above,
Make me worthy of your love.
Please come from your realm divine
And listen to these prayers of mine.

Here he comes, fair Babe of mine,
So divine, so divine,
He comes with burning love so full,
He warms my soul, he warms my soul.
When on your face I fix my eyes,
Rays come forth from paradise,
And when my eyes meet yours, O see,
You shoot at me, you shoot at me,
Your arrows wound my heart and soul
With love so full, with love so full.

O Jesus mine, good Jesus dear,
O Jesus mine, good Jesus dear,
What made you come from heaven here?
For love, for love, for love,
To kindle again our heart from above.
O my Jesus, I will love you;
O my Jesus, I will serve you;
And your glories, I will sing your glories due.

St. Joseph Of Copertino

Translated by Francis M. Pimental, O.F.M.Conv.

Fear to Freedom:

Saint Francis and the Fatherhood of God

JOHN HARDING, O.F.M.

CELANO RECORDS how Saint Francis was brought before the Bishop of Assisi by his father, who sought restitution of the property which his son, in what must have seemed like a fit of madness, had taken and sold for money to repair a ruined chapel. The series of events leading to this confrontation are too well known to be reviewed here. The result of the action is our concern.

Saint Francis, having accepted the counsel of the Bishop that it was not lawful to use ill-gotten gains for sacred purposes, took the opportunity to demonstrate clearly and dramatically his new purpose in life. Laying his clothes at the feet of his father, he declared:

From now on I can freely say Our Father who art in heaven, not father Peter Bernardone, to whom, behold, I give up not only the money, but all my clothes too. I will therefore go naked to the Lord [2Cel 12; *Omnibus*, 372].

This event marks a critical moment in the process of Francis' conversion. It represents that all important transition from a life bounded by fear to one lived in the freedom of the sons of God. This transition from fear to freedom has profound significance for the evangelical life. Fear resides in the depths of the human heart. Fear of what? While there is much to fear, it seems that our fundamental fear is fear of the All-Holy God. Before God we stand naked and empty. This we fear, and thus it is that we flee for cover.

Father John Harding, O.F.M., who has contributed several poems and monographs to our pages in recent years, writes from the Franciscan Study Centre, Canterbury, England.

The fundamental revelation of Jesus is that God is our Father and not to be feared. Jesus is sent to calm that ever present unease between creature and Creator (cf. Jn. 6:20; Mt. 14:17) and to show us the "way to the Father" (Jn. 14:16). In him the All-Holy God is made accessible as never before and in a way we cannot fear. The unease in the human heart is very deep seated and can be calmed only before God: "Thou hast made us for thyself, and our heart is restless until it rest in thee" (St. Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1).

Setting aside all idols and father-figures,
[Francis] . . . became a son of God.

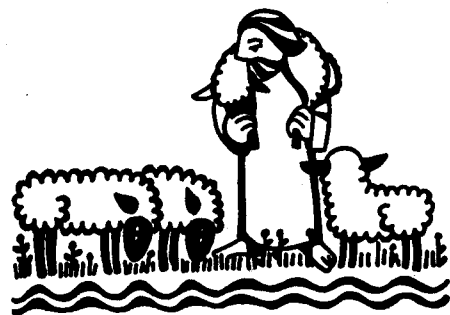
Prior to stripping himself, Saint Francis had experienced that restlessness of heart. His human searching for glory had constantly seen him returning home without having alleviated that ache in his heart. Military exploits and revels with his friends had not been able to quell or divert his preoccupation. He needed an answer, and only in God could this be found. Thus Francis' declaration in front of the cathedral in the presence of the Bishop, his father, and the townspeople was so significant. Here he began to discover where the answer lay.

Saint Francis had begun to face the question put to him earlier in a dream: who could do better for him, the servant or the Lord (cf. 2Cel. 6; *Omnibus*, 366)? He had begun to make the transition from fear to freedom. This transition might just as easily be expressed as one from darkness to light.

Jesus saw that people, willingly or otherwise, were trapped in desperation, in darkness. By revealing God as Father, he sought to call them from darkness to light, for only in the light can the truth about God and man be known. As long as people prefer darkness it would be impossible for them to recognize the way to overcome their fundamental fear. The light is feared for what it might expose; yet, before God who is Father, there is nothing to fear. Saint Francis came to an awareness of this. Sometime later he would confidently assert: "for what a man is before God, that he is and nothing more" (Adm XIX; AB 33).

In the light we are seen for who and what we are; but, being afraid, we retreat into the shadows and hide. Jesus felt deeply for this most human of conditions. His summons into the light is a call to enter into a new set of relationships with both God and neighbor. In Jesus we see the way by which we can enter into these relationships. In him we can be at one with the Father.

Those who did heed the invitation seemed so often to hover between the darkness and the light, as if desiring this closeness to God and yet seeking to hold onto the old idols and so not accepting the freedom which is offered. This manifests itself in the preference for the state of servility rather than true friendship. In short, there was a reluctance to take the risk. The



father-figure was substituted for the Father. Jesus has to issue the stern command: "... call no man father on earth, for you have one Father who is in heaven" (Mt. 23:9). This command calls on those who venture out into the light to leave behind all their former attachments and to have faith in God alone.

Saint Francis must have perceived this, for he responds so radically to the command by forsaking his natural father and in doing so loses his assured heritage and future. He takes the risk to come out from the dark and to stand naked in the light of God, whom alone he now calls Father.

The way to the Father is the way of free, mature self-surrender and is exemplified in Jesus Christ. By imitating Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, the disciple enters into a new relationship as son or daughter and is forged into a universal brother/sisterhood in Christ. Saint Francis came to appreciate this fully and hymned it in his *Canticle of Brother Sun* (cf. AB 37-39; also SP 118; *Omnibus*, 1257).

Freedom is possible only for those who will take such a radical risk. This freedom allows the disciple to see God in all and to have his or her whole attention centered on God. This too is manifestly true of Francis. He wished, Celano tells us, to center his life wholly on God; and, as Saint Bonaventure explains, he saw God and revered God in all (cf. 1Cel 102; *Omnibus*, 316; LM IX.1; *Omnibus*, 698). No longer was the fear which resided in his heart the fundamental fear of the All-Holy God, but the fear of turning back to his former way of life. Francis had passed from fear to freedom, from darkness to light. All his being was centered on God, and this is most evident in his *Exhortation to Praise God* (cf. AB 42-43), where he sings as one who has been set free from bondage, as a "Herald of the Great King" (LM II.5; *Omnibus*, 643).

The fear of turning back was a real fear, one that is often manifested in a subtle substitution of a father-figure for the Fatherhood of God. It is

possible to choose the path of servility rather than the authentic path of self-surrender in a free act of creative love. The freedom of the children of God is won by passing through the narrow door; it means foregoing the familiar securities for the sake of that security offered by God our Father.

Jesus had to contend with this temptation both in the desert and in Gethsemane. Like the Master, Saint Francis knew temptation. Celano relates how he was tempted to take a wife and build a family, to go back on his new way of life (2Cel 115ff.; *Omnibus*, 457ff.). The way of substitution is attractive and chosen by many who would gladly say, "We have Abraham for our Father" (Jn. 8:39).

The path which Jesus exemplifies and which Saint Francis chose is the path which forsakes every idol for the sake of God, who transcends all limitations and is supreme over every human sovereignty. It demands a strict asceticism and is lived in constant exposure to the searching light of the All-Holy God and Father. It is a path which can be trodden only in union with Christ, who is the way to the Father. By following this way the disciple is led to a greater experience of freedom; empowered by the Spirit, he can confidently say, "Our Father in heaven" (cf. Mt. 7:9) and "go naked to the Lord."

When Saint Francis stripped himself of his clothes, he also stripped himself so as to be wholly open and available to God. Setting aside all idols and father-figures, he obtained the reward of God and became a son of God! Ω

St. Bonaventure:

Letters V and VI

TRANSLATED BY CANISIUS CONNORS, O.F.M.

The following letters are the last contained in the collection of the *Opera Omnia* of Saint Bonaventure, published by the Friars Minor of Quaracchi. While they are of little historical importance and provide us with meager spiritual insights, they complete our presentation of these little known writings of the Seraphic Doctor. They also suggest his manner of dealing with his brothers, as in the fifth letter, and with other religious, as in the sixth letter.

The Friars of Quaracchi note that the hermitage mentioned in the fifth letter was established, according to Luke Wadding, by Saint Francis and a companion in 1220. The sixth letter, which reflects the tension that existed between the Augustinians and the Friars Minor, is yet another example, according to the Friars of Quaracchi, of Bonaventure's ever present desire for peace, a point of which he writes in the Prologue to his *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*.

Letter V

Brother Bonaventure, General Minister and servant of the Order of Friars Minor, sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to all the Brothers who read this letter.

I HAVE LEARNED from a trustworthy report that Montichiari and other places, which are inhabited around Lago di Garda by Veronians, were consigned by our most holy Father Francis to the brothers who were living in a place near Lago di Garda on the Brescian side, and that these brothers have been making use of this concession for many years now.

Since I thought that it would not be proper for anyone to infringe upon the will of our Father, I command all the brothers to enjoin them in virtue of the merit of salutary obedience to leave freely the above mentioned places to the brothers of the aforesaid hermitage for the purpose of begging for the necessities of life. And I forbid all other brothers from begging for anything in these places, notwithstanding the constitution of the General Chapter in which boundaries are given for begging in neighboring places.

Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

Given at Paris on the 27th of May, 1266.

Letter VI

Brother Bonaventure, General Minister and servant of the Order of Friars Minor, sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to that venerable and religious man, the Abbot of Santa Maria de Burgo Medio in Blois of the Order of St. Augustine, and to the other Canons of the same Convent.

I HAVE HAD and I still have a great desire that every reason for disagreement, about which you seemed to complain in reference to our brothers at Blois, should be put aside as much as it can be according to the will of God, and that these brothers should be inclined to be submissive to you [as much as is proper] with all humility, just as they were inclined before to be friendly and devoted to you. As a result there should exist between you and them an undiminished charity and that *peace of Christ, that is beyond all understanding* (Phil. 4:7). Wishing, therefore, and desiring to accomplish this as much as I can, I approve and confirm that concession of houses, of open areas, of squares, or of other things whatsoever, which Brother Peter, the Provincial Minister of our Order in Touraine, freely made to you with the consent and approval of our brothers of the convent at Blois, just as it appears in the letter of this Provincial Minister, which makes express mention of these matters. I wish and decree that you possess and freely hold all the above mentioned things which the Lord Count of Blois or anyone else has given to these brothers as alms. I assure you that neither I myself will do anything, nor will I permit anything to be done by our brothers, which is contrary to this concession or by which the concession of these things, made to you, may appear to be hampered in any way whatever.

And that you may be assured and undoubtingly believe that we intend to have you as fathers in Christ, friends and masters—as is fitting—and that we desire to make everlasting peace with you, I for myself and for the brothers give you every pledge of assurance against redress for all the above mentioned matters.

Given at Paris on the 20th of March, 1273

Sentinel (Isaiah 62:6-7)

Remember your Promise
forget not your Word!

Like fake jewels in the crown
of a kingdom not yet come
we sequester the heights of Jerusalem's wall
to conjure a banquet
where now workers drip furrows,
and exhumation where gravediggers toil.
But to imagine your approach
lets our problems dance out to meet you
(the weightier the burden, the greater the alacrity)
for you, All-Boundless-One,
have fixed yourself as with tent pegs
by your Word:
the blind must see;
paraplegics, prance on this parapet,
and we poor mortals can hear about you.
Remember your Promise!

The chains of our people will be junked,
innocent exonerated, and guilty restored,
when we recognize your throne upon the weak.
Forget not your Word!

And may we not be the last to know
(though we rejoice to know at last)
that this day, in the shadow of Jerusalem's wall
All your promise is fulfilled.

Remember your Promise
forget not your Word!

Hugoline A. Sabatino, O.F.M.

Book Reviews

The Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi. By Lothar Hardick, O.F.M., with an Appendix by Sr. M. Ethelburga Häcker, O.S.F. Translated by David Smith. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. xxiii-316. Cloth, no price given.

Reviewed by Father Vianney M. Devlin, O.F.M., Ph.D. (English, University of London), a member of the Retreat Team at St. Francis Retreat Center, Rye Beach, New Hampshire, and Assisi Experience, which conducts Study Pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi each summer.

Among the writings of Saint Francis a very special place is occupied by the Admonitions—28 short addresses given at various times by Francis when the early friars were assembled in Chapter. Taken as a whole these Admonitions form "a mirror of perfection" which Francis held in front of anyone who felt called to lead the Franciscan way of Christian life (p. viii).

The noted Franciscan scholar Kajetan Esser, O.F.M., published between 1959 and 1969 a series of reflections upon these Admonitions, and the present book by Lothar Hardick, O.F.M., contains a "revised version of these reflections . . . offered in response to the desire expressed by so many to see them published as a whole" (p. ix).

The book is divided into 28 chapters, each devoted to a single Admonition and of varying length under a contemporary title such as "Knowledge and

Good Works" (Adm 7), "Knowing the Spirit of God" (Adm 12), and "Virtue Should Be Concealed" (Adm 28). In an Appendix, Sister Ethelburga Häcker, O.S.F., offers suggestions to help readers understand Francis' intentions in his 18th, 19th, 20th, 23rd, and 27th Admonitions—to draw conclusions from them and to make them a living, inner reality for themselves. These are models . . . [which] may stimulate the reader to assimilate these Admonitions and to make them his own" (p. ix). In other words, what Häcker offers are models for prayer and paraliturgical services suitable for retreats or days of recollection.

Although Hardick does not attempt an exegesis of the text of the Admonitions, he nevertheless draws clear distinctions between what was applicable to and serviceable for Franciscans of the thirteenth century and what is pertinent to us in the twentieth. Thus, e.g., in his discussion of Adm 23 on "True Correction" he points out differences in approach to this between Saint Francis' time, when the emphasis was placed upon corporal punishment, and our own time, when a renewed sense of responsiveness to community is called for as opposed to the sense of isolation from each other which Hardick declares a twentieth century phenomenon (p. 195).

Hardick is helpful in pointing out the interdependence of these Admonitions, thereby indicating that taken as a whole they offer an holistic Franciscan vision and the tendency to read them as isolated, sporadic statements is to be

avoided.

Understandably there is an uneven quality to these reflections; some are penetrating and practical, others merely "interesting." But taken as a whole, the book provides us with a clear, readable guide to the Admonitions. It can prove valuable to those engaged in preaching, retreats, or giving spiritual conferences.

A Voice over the Water: An Invitation to Pray. By William Breault, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 111. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association and Campus Minister at the University.

In this volume, William Breault provides a book of reflections on various passages from Sacred Scripture. The author is known for his audio cassettes, all of which have titles related to the sea. The title of this book of reflections on Scripture follows his pattern of referring to water as a help toward reflective prayer. The method the author uses encourages the reader to open the book at random and to read short passages that can lead to reflective thought and meditative prayer. With no particular theme for choosing scriptural passages, Father Breault selects a sentence or a phrase or a group of sentences from Scripture and then presents some of his thoughts that the chosen passage suggests to him.

The reader can find help in praying simply by reading a chapter at a time.

Sometimes, only part of a chapter will be sufficient to lead the reader to pause and reflect a while or to stop reading and start praying. While the reader may not always be led to the same pattern of reflection as the author, the latter's writing style is such that one may merely use his words as a jumping-off point for prayerful meditation of one's own. The author writes in his Introduction: "Give yourself permission to respond to God in your own words or by your silence" (p. 9). The variety of topics that Father Breault lists in his Table of Contents gives the reader ample opportunity to choose whatever subject seems appropriate at a particular moment.

This reviewer recommends *A Voice over the Water* to all persons seeking help in praying. He believes that this book will be beneficial to a diverse reading public. For the beginner at prayer, the author's personal reflections will exemplify a way of applying God's Word to everyday living experiences. For someone more experienced, Breault's reflections on Scripture can be a source of encouragement to continue his or her own meditative prayer.

A small book divided into thirty chapters is easy to use. Since the author's purpose is not to present a discursive explanation of a method of prayer, but rather to offer "an invitation to pray," *A Voice over the Water* is the kind of book to pick up and refer to whenever one has a free moment or feels inclined toward a moment of prayer. This book can become a popular aid for prayer for those who call themselves followers of Christ; it can also be found helpful for all who recognize themselves as creatures of a loving God.

Thank God Ahead of Time. The Life and Spirituality of Solanus Casey. By Michael Crosby, O.F.M.Cap. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1985. Pp. x-334. Paper, \$9.50.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

This is a new biography of a Capuchin priest who died in 1957 and whose cause for beatification and canonization is being placed before the Holy See. It differs from previous biographies, e.g., James Derum's *The Potter of St. Bonaventure's* (reviewed in these pages by this author, vol. 19 [1969], p. 153) in drawing heavily upon Fr. Solanus' own words as found in his collected writings, and on oral reports from confreres and lay persons who knew him.

The book proceeds chronologically, starting with the 26 years of his life prior to entering the Capuchins, and then following his formation years and various assignments. People who have difficulty with studies might well use Solanus as a patron, for his difficulties prevented him from receiving faculties for hearing confessions and preaching formal sermons. In fact, prior to his solemn profession he had to put in writing that he would not seek ordination if his superiors judged him unfit because of his meager talents. Father Crosby wisely points out that no little of his problem came from the fact that the needed subjects were taught in Latin and German.

Once he was ordained, Father Solanus exercised a ministry of counsel-

ing and healing, and he was able to serve as weekend-priest at parishes. But he did not hear confessions—often having an arrangement with another priest to come and hear a confession he had already heard while standing at the friary front desk enrolling someone in the Seraphic Mass Association. Solanus attributed the healings to the power of the prayers of those in the Association, not to himself. And when people beseeched him for help (as they did), he asked them to "thank God ahead of time" for the favor received, and to do something as a gesture of good will on their part: e.g., communicate more frequently or give an alms to the poor. He took literally Jesus' words, "Ask and you shall receive," and he urged everyone else to do so too.

Those of us in community can well relate to his life in community, with its lack of appreciation (he was called a fraud by one of his brethren, and hooted out of the rec room when he entertained the brethren with his violin). He endured the former, and responded to the latter by playing on the violin in the chapel, before the Lord.

Although the author lets Father Solanus and his contemporaries speak most of the time, it is he who tells the story. He weaves in commentary on Solanus' spirituality, and he offers a concluding chapter which analyzes it. In making some comparisons of Solanus' and Eastern spirituality, the author, I think, falls into the trap of trying to explain something *more* familiar by reference to something *less* so. Apart from this fault, *Thank God Ahead of Time* is excellent spiritual reading, and I recommend it without reservation to all Franciscans.

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