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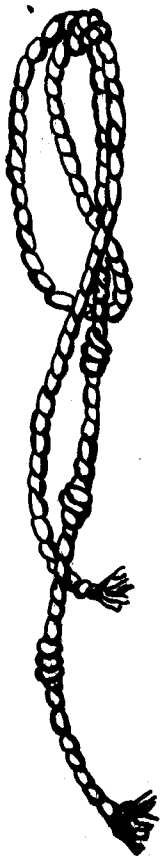
The CORD

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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., eds., *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

Commencement

DR. DONALD DEMARCO

Dear Franciscans and Friends, esteemed Guests and honored Graduates:

We pause here on this 19th day of May in 1991 amid the gentle rolling hills of Western Massachusetts in a commonwealth justly proud of its natural beauty, moral idealism, and glorious history, to reflect on the meaning of great beginnings, more formally known on this august occasion as "commencement."

What is required so that you can begin to do great things? A curious 18th century philosopher with the perambulating name of Count Henri Claude de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon thought he had the answer. As a youth, this French aristocrat was awakened each morning by his valet who would cry: "Arise, Monsieur le Comte, you have great things to do today."

Saint-Simon had sought greatness by sheer will power. His driving ambition was to become the first person in human history to combine philosophical achievement of the first rank with personal heroism of the first order. But he failed miserably. Having sold everything he owned but his clothes to pay for the publication of articles that no one read, he despaired and attempted suicide. But he failed even at this, only adding to his torment by merely wounding himself with his pistol. When his end finally came, he gathered the few disciples he had around him, exhorting them to "Remember that in order to do great things one must be impassioned." Yet Saint-Simon had done nothing in his life to warrant such an operatic ending.

Though delivered as a Commencement Address to the St. Hyancinth College and Seminary Graduating Class of 1991, readers will find much to reflect upon as we deal with our own "commencement" in 1992. Dr. DeMarco's deep and intense fascination with St. Francis is most apparent here as in other articles and poems he has contributed to The CORD. Recently Ignatius Press published his book BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE ASSAULT ON PARENTHOOD. Dr. DeMarco is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Jerome's College, Waterloo, Ontario.

You are not ready to do great things if you are armed only with pride and passion. We may regard this statement as a moral axiom.

The world is accustomed to recording "great achievements" in the language of bare statistics: the Gross National Product, the amount paid to an author in advance of royalties, lottery winnings measured in millions or a tycoon's worth measured in billions, the number of guests one has at a party or the number of votes one received in an election, a runner's time in the Boston marathon or a baseball player's batting average.

The mysticism of numerology that is associated with America's pastime, baseball, has been with us for some time and cannot be taken lightly. Even back in the year 1941, Joe DiMaggio lost a $10,000 contract with Heinz 57 for failing to extend his illustrious hitting streak one game beyond 56. Today the number 715 is an object of special reverence. Sportswriters have decreed that the night Hank Aaron eclipsed Babe Ruth's home run record by swatting his 715th is the most memorable event in the annals of baseball history.

"715" of itself may not symbolize greatness in any sense. Yet there is a story behind this number that is worth relating. In 1928, Hank Aaron's father, a gifted athlete in his own right, wanted to see his own idol, Babe Ruth, perform in an exhibition game in Birmingham, Alabama. Herbert Aaron was a poor black living in an environment where racial tensions were particularly volatile. In order to witness the event, he actually climbed a tree. He swears he saw Ruth hit a home run that day into the coal car of a passing train. The ball was not retrieved until the train arrived in New Orleans. As he watched from his precarious perch, like Zaccheus, little could he have suspected that the day would come when his own son would break the Bambino's career home run record.

The true significance of the record for Hank Aaron, however, is the fact that it earned him a forum through which he could work more effectively for civil rights causes. "I make it my business not to be content," he tells us in his recent autobiography, **I Had a Hammer**. He has exchanged his baseball bat for a hammer of justice.

In the background of something extraordinary there often appears something even more extraordinary. The seed of greatness, though less noticeable than the flower of achievement, is more potent.

In Bethlehem, long ago, a father and his expectant wife were denied entrance at an inn. It is the prototypic story that has been played out again and again of the outcast as a bearer of the transcendent. The secular world repeatedly ostracizes those who are trying to bring it light. Plato viewed this self-defeating phenomenon as the fundamental parable of education. The world persists in deriding its deliverers.

Felice Peretti was the son of a vineyard laborer and himself a swineherd. As the story is told, when the great 16th century prophet, Nostradamus, met the young Felice, he kissed the hem of the young man's garment, declaring that he was paying homage to a future pope. Felice later entered the Franciscan Order. He rose through the ranks of Bishop and Cardinal, and finally, in the year 1585, became Pope Sixtus V. Throughout his papacy he retained his Franciscan mode of life.

But in a deeper sense, the dramatic and victorious reappearance of the outcast should not be altogether surprising. In the words of the Psalmist: "The stone which the builders rejected has become the corner stone."

The outcast who is the cornerstone is primarily Christ. But the role also applies to the Church and to the followers of Christ. All great stories follow this counter-cultural motif. It is found in a strikingly literal form in a central incident in the life of Francis of Assisi. While praying before the Byzantine crucifix in the ruins of the Church of St. Damian, he heard a voice saying to him: "Now go hence, Francis, and build up my house, for it is nearly falling down" (**"Và, Francesco, e ripara la mia casa che, come vedi, va in rovina"**).

A church can always be re-built even though it has rotted away to its foundation-stone. The stone is both Christ and the rock on which He built His Church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

The secular world has not entirely forgotten the significance of rebuilding so that Christ can make His re-appearance. In the popular movie, **Field of Dreams**, an Iowa farmer repeatedly hears a voice that says to him: "If you build it he will come." But the world, as if it had drunk copiously from the River Lethe, thinks that what needs to be built is not a church but a baseball stadium and the person who needs to return is not a Savior or even a discalced Friar but a Shoeless Joe Jackson.

The world leans toward the memory of Bethlehem but, as if misled by a very bad translation, now experiences it as Bedlam, like the corrupted pronunciation of a fifteenth century London hospital known as St. Mary of Bethlehem, a home for lunatics.

The second church that St. Francis restored was the ancient chapel of Portiuncula, popularly known as "Our Lady of the Angels" for its painting over the altar depicting Mary and a host of angels accompanying her during her assumption into heaven. Los Angeles, California derives its name from this church having been originally Christened, The Town of Our Lady, Queen of the Angels of Portiuncula (**El Pueblo de la Nuestra Senora, la Reina de Los Angeles di Portiuncula**). Angelenos who have drunk deeply

from the River of Forgetfulness, however, now know their city only as L.A., not even realizing that L.A. means "Lost Attribute".

Christ, through the medium of the cross told Francis as well as everyone else that what is indispensable for a commencement is a cornerstone. From a cornerstone we may restore the Church, re-invite Christ, revive society, and re-build ourselves.

And what is our own cornerstone that allows us to commence living authentically, but the center or core of our being, namely our heart — our own personal "core-nerstone," if you will?

As wise an educator as Cardinal Newman, who understood the importance of a university education as well as anyone, had a clear grasp of the limitations of knowledge and reason. They are inadequate opponents in the struggle to tame our pride and curb our passion. "Quarry the granite rock with razors, or moor the vessel with a thread of silk," Newman challenges us, "then you may hope with such keen and delicate instruments as human knowledge and human reason to contend against these giants, the passion and the pride of man."

Anyone who is willing to begin at the beginning — the farmer with seeds, the builder with a cornerstone, the Christian with a heart — already has a companion virtue in humility. In the world, where humility is noticeably lacking, people want nothing to do with beginnings, hence the attractiveness of lotteries, premarital sexual experiences, accelerated educational programs, and the abandonment of dogma.

Humility and **heart** are what you need in order to begin to do great things. You need humility to be open to things — to truth, wisdom, other people, grace, and God. According to St. Thomas Aquinas, who had a genius for stating profound truths with simplicity and directness, "The human intellect is measured by things so that man's thought is not true on its own account but is called true in virtue of its conformity with things." Consequently, the better educated a person is, the more humble he must have been. The proud man thinks he knows it all without ever having been open to something other than himself.

You need heart in order to put into practice the good that you have learned. You need heart so that you are not tempted to believe that the things that you read are more real than the people whom you meet. You need a heart to keep your focus on reality.

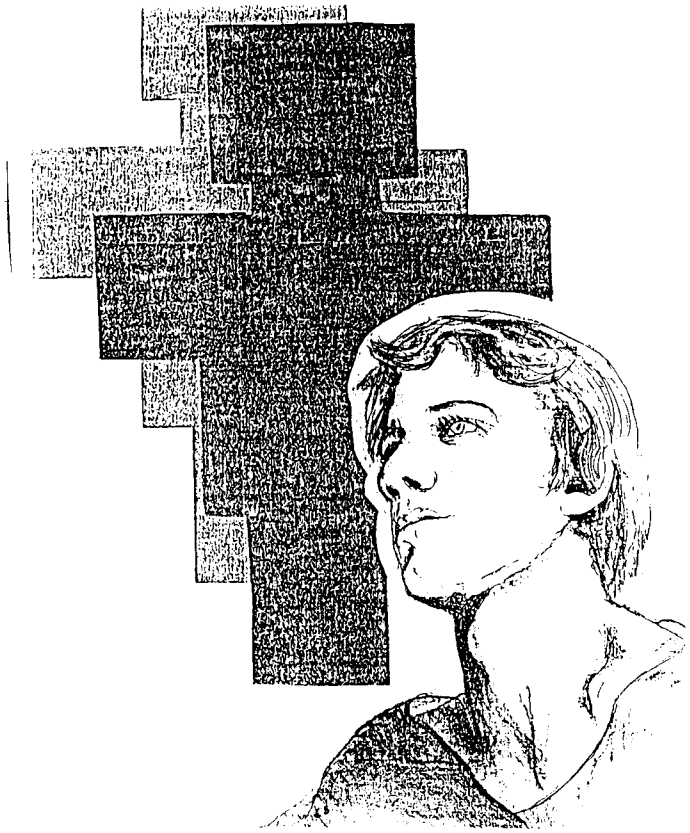
If you have humility and heart, achievement will take care of itself. The fundamental paradox concerning achievement is that it is best secured when it is least considered, that is, when it is anchored in a humble heart.

The achievement of great things, then, must be a matter of faith. You, like St. Francis, are builders, and like the builders of the great Gothic cathedrals, you do not expect either to complete or to inhabit the structures you create. The joy is in the building, in the faith-filled exercise of a humble heart.

Your good beginning will initiate the production of great things. You can be certain of that. Posterity will be kinder to you than contemporaneity. Thus, you will also need much courage and patience.

But you may rejoice in your good beginning and continue to rejoice as long as you continue to build, knowing that your work is God's work and that the good you do will be a priceless blessing for a weary world. You are the cornerstones of a great enterprise. Be not afraid.

Thank you and God's blessings upon you all. □



Sr. M. Raphael OSF

Rivulets of Goodness: Reflections of a Poor Man. Part Two.

EDMUNDO B. VALERA

The journey of the soul to God in Bonaventure's doctrine begins, as we saw, with the **affirmative way**: from the knowledge of creatures to the knowledge and love of God. But we also saw that Bonaventure realized that this journey does not really reach the goal of the soul. It only offers us a chance to perceive a distant and transcendent God. Yet the soul thirsts for a possession of God in one's self which is possible only if the soul raises itself beyond and above creatures including one's own body.[41] For the infinite cannot be had using finite ways and means. Being finite, the self cannot reach the infinite to which its very soul aspires and which alone can meet its need. To know God, the soul has to abandon every creature and every finite concept. To possess God, the soul has to renounce itself, and lay one's being in God and be lost in it.

Bonaventure is not downplaying the important role which creatures play in an effort to reach God. He is simply saying that in the process, creatures must be abandoned in order to reach God. For there are two possible ways in which we can relate to creatures: either we become transfixed by their beauty or we transcend that beauty for the Eternal Source of all that is beautiful. The first course leads us astray, the second course leads us to the goal. Bonaventure is well aware of the natural course of the rational mind in which creatures attract and impinge on the senses and occasion the intellect to think beyond what is perceived in nature. Thus, St. Bonaventure begins his *Soul's Journey into God* with the affirmative way,[42] i.e., from creature to Creator, from gazing into the beauty of creatures to pining for the infinite source of beauty. But as we saw above, he concludes his journey using the negative way.

> In this passing over, if it is to be perfect, all intellectual activities must be left behind and the height of our affection must be totally transferred and transformed into God. This, however, is mystical and most secret, which *no one knows except him who receives it,* no one receives except him who desires it, and no one desires except him who is inflamed in his very marrow by the fire of the Holy Spirit whom Christ sent into the world.[43]

Thus, the "All" can be possessed only by possessing nothing and by being nothing!

Poverty

There is a current or thread which pervades Bonaventure's journey. It does not appear as a consequence of the travails of the journey but it was heralded by Bonaventure even before he mapped out his itinerary. The phrase *Incipit speculatio pauperis in deserto* (Here begins the reflection of the *Poor Man* in the *desert*),[44] appears somewhat inconspicuously at the opening of Chapter I of the *Itinerarium.* It is the key opening Bonaventure's thought that the journey of the soul is going to be one of poverty.[45] The emphasis on poverty, using the symbols of the poor little one and the naked desert, in the *Soul's Journey into God* is not a unique and an isolated notion which separates this treatise from the other works of the Seraphic Doctor. In the opening sentence of the *Life of St. Francis,* Bonaventure writes that Francis "was appointed by God to prepare a way in the desert — that is, by the complete renunciation involved in perfect poverty. . ."[46] Perfect poverty, as meaningfully lived and expressed by St. Francis, became a fount of inspiration for St. Bonaventure who sought to develop a theological thought on Christian poverty in a masterful way.[47] As such, all of us Christians who are seeking perfection in an effort to come to know God can learn from Bonaventure, especially as we struggle in a world which is seemingly marked by an avid and compulsive materialism. For to reach God, the journey commences in the dry and lifeless desert which is the symbolic path to God. The image or symbol of a desert also represents the perfect poverty which, Bonaventure teaches, is where humankind must begin if they are to find their way to God.[48]

"Wonderment" can lead us to the depths and heights of our knowledge about the universe and all that it contains. But a genuine and honest "inward wonderment" is the only way we can come to know ourselves in all its nakedness. "Who am I?," is the very question which makes us aware

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This is the second part of an article begun in the last issue of The CORD. The author enables us to see and to appropriate to ourselves that which constitutes the Franciscan inner stance and consciousness so magnificently expressed and extolled in the theology and spirituality of Saint Bonaventure.

Part One of this article appeared in the December 1991 CORD.

of our inherent poverty. In his *Disputed Questions Concerning Evangelical Perfection,* Bonaventure proposes that the starting point of our coming to know our Creator is as follows: "No one comes to a full notion *(notitiam)* of God except through a true and proper notion of himself. No one rightly knows himself unless he recognizes his own nothingness."[49]

In confronting our self, we come into the realizations of how limited and imperfect we are. In the realization of our imperfect state, we can philosophically deduce that there must be somebody who is perfect, somebody who is different from us but who created us. He could not have created us from what He is for that would make us perfect like Him. Rather, He created us from nothing. Such is our state as human beings on earth, or better still, as poor human beings in the desert: we are from nothing and of nothing.[50] Our being as creatures is "from non-being" *(esse post non esse),* whose only conceivable source is neither a pre-existing matter nor some external force; but only the "creative power of God." Thus, our poverty is derived basically from our existence as creatures who are in no way equal to God. Our poverty lies precisely in our radical dependency on something other than ourselves who is the most perfect Being. As Hellmann notes, "to be" or "not to be" is neither in the realm of our decisions nor of our limited powers.[51] As creatures, we are essentially dependent on our Creator both for our existence and our future. Therefore, in our relationship to God we do not possess, we only receive. There is an inherent emptiness in our being that only God can fill. Apart from God, our Creator, we are nothing.

The emphasis given by Bonaventure to our inherent poverty as creatures is also foreshadowed in our relationship with other creatures which, like us, "are the communicative goodness of God."[52] As Hellmann poetically puts it, "the poverty of created existence" paradoxically "reveals the richness of divine presence."[53] God created all things in order to communicate His goodness and perfection to all creatures and to render glory to Himself. However, the glory rendered to God through creation is not an absolute necessity because His act of creation is essentially a free act. God's act of creation is not meant for His (added) glorification. Rather, creation is the means through which God's intangible perfection is externally manifested and communicated by means of the visible images of creatures. These creatures reflect the glory of a Creator whose very being constitutes eternal self-happiness and infinite goodness.[54] Thus, all of creation gives witness to the goodness of the Creator who generously and freely willed His goodness to diffuse throughout the universe.

All creatures, as they are created by and dependent on God, are manifestations of God's goodness. We can conclude then that God Himself

. . we must begin as Francis did and as Bonaventure so well articulated: as the poor man in the desert.

is the sole and primary agent of all the glory and praises bestowed on Him *by* and *through* His creation. In a strict sense, this constitutes what we can call "objective glory:" all creatures praise God in their very being.[55] Among rational creatures, i.e. human beings, the praise is rendered to God both objectively and intentionally.[56] On the other hand, irrational creatures can only "objectively" praise God by their very existence.

Concerning rational human beings' intentional acknowledgment of the inherent poverty of the human self and God's primacy over creation, it is interesting to note the different, although complementary, approaches adopted by Sts. Francis and Bonaventure. It is quite clear that St. Bonaventure followed the *via positiva,* as we saw in the first chapter. He found and rendered glory to God through the intermediary of creatures; he first realized that creatures are vestiges of God which prompted him to look inwardly into his being where the divine image is thought. Bonaventure then realized that in order to reach the Father, he had to imitate the "poor Christ" who descended into the likeness of man, emptied Himself, suffered the cruelest humiliation by dying on a cross. Quite obviously, Bonaventure ends where St. Francis began. Francis commenced his search for God along the *via negativa.* His approach was not induced by the whole process of perceiving and philosophizing. He did not go into the perceptual exercise of looking into creation externally and proceeding into the intellectual rigors of deducing the effect from a cause or positing an infinite as the necessary perfection of the finite. Instead, he is the passionate pilgrim of the Absolute, the infinite Love. He acknowledged early on that He must recognize his being a poor man in search for God in the desert. His thirsty soul longed to possess the absolute, which can be had only through a total renouncement of all that is relative; to possess the infinite love one must give up the finite love of oneself. To live in God, one must die like Christ and be nothing. For it is only through the "vacuum self" that God can fill us with His richness and fullness. In a sense, we are like probable poems yet to be filled with God's words and rhymes, or an unsung melody awaiting His sweet sound.

The story of the life of St. Francis gives us the image of an ordinary vivacious young man who enjoyed the world and all its material cares. During his youth, he probably loved and enjoyed nature like any ordinary

person. As for earthly cares, story has it that he did enjoy and looked for happiness in worldly pastimes. All of that took a crucial turn after an illness, when he was convalescing, and eventually facing the world with a different set of eyes. It was then that he began to look at nature which is different from how he used to. Nature, with all its beauty and grandeur, left him cold, numb, and with a sense of disillusionment and melancholy. His soul, it seemed, was awakened by its need of the infinite and the things around him could not satisfy this yearning. We find a most evocative expression of this yearning in St. Augustine's **Confessions**:

> You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our heart will know no rest until it rests in you.[57]

After Francis' illness, his weary indifference towards nature, along with his repulsion of worldly pleasures (i.e., bacchanalian parties and the idea of knighthood) drew him into solitude. He did not withdraw to engage in a deeper contemplation of the beauty and wonder of nature. Rather, he did the opposite: shut himself in a place where **nothingness** gave him the chance to turn his gaze into the **All**. Instead of nature, he contemplated the Crucified Christ from whom he recognized poverty, nakedness, and love. Even his reading of the Gospel transfixed him to the texts that spoke of renunciation, poverty and total charity. In all of these, he finally arrived at what he was longing for: letting all material or created things fall from his grasp to embrace God. His stripping himself naked before the Bishop (who represents the church) and giving back his clothing to his father (who represents the material world) is a symbolic expression of his new found liberty through renunciation. Here lies the route that Francis took in reaching and, thereby, possessing God. It did not follow the *via affirmativa,* which is the ascent from the beauty of creatures to the infinite beauty of God, but rather he followed the *via negativa,* the way of total renouncement of all things including himself.

From Nothingness to All

The *via negativa* of St. Francis does not entail a mere opting for a negativistic stance just for the sake of Renouncement. What he seeks is not the negative, the **no-thing**, but the **All**. There is a **coincidence of opposites** here in which the **All** can only be had by not having anything and to be **nothing**. Likewise, the Gospel-like poverty and humiliation that he seeks is not sought for the sake of poverty or humiliation. Rather, poverty and humiliation are sought (out of love no less) because they lead to the **All** which is the Crucified Christ and onto God.

God's Love is not found in creatures and material things, nor can it be found in personal pleasures and glory. For the love of material things only leads to an endless regress of wanting. Things come and go and so does the wanting for them. One want leads to another and on and on.

Francis realized this in contemplating the Crucified Christ. The nakedness and humility of Christ made him realize the futility of holding on to ephemeral material things. He thus finds it necessary to strip himself naked of everything, an act of self-renouncement and annihilation that will bring him the only thing that he needed and wanted: to be in union with God who is the **All**. God is the **All** that alone can satisfy the soul of a human being who is made for Him. Anything beneath or below God can never meet that need to be one with the All.

Francis' recognition of the sun and the moon, earth and air, fire and water, all animals and plants, all human beings, as brothers and sisters is grounded in one fecund insight: all creatures are united in the depths of their being because they all share the fact of being created by God. This also leads to the realization that, as a creature, one is finite and limited, that one is basically indigent or poor (being born naked). That one's being is dependent on God alone, outside of God, a creature is a nonentity. That only in the recognition that God is the source of our being and long to be in unity with Him can we transcend our nothingness. That we share with all creatures the fact that there is no intrinsic reason for our being apart from God makes us fully aware of our poverty.

The human person, as a special creation of God, is the expression of the self-gift of God. Here, it is important to bear in mind that humanity's uniqueness, manifested by the capacity for rationality (through participation with Divine rationality), is but a precise expression of God's supremacy and absoluteness and a manifestation of our minority and relativeness. All creatures are ordered to God, but only rational creatures are directed immediately to God. The irrational creature is related to God mediately. The rational creature alone can know, praise, and serve God consciously and so has greater conformity to God. This closer resemblance is called by Bonaventure *Imago.* Every creature, therefore, is a *vestige* of God but only the rational creature is the *image* of God. Man's closer resemblance to God is manifested in his or her possession of spiritual or rational powers.[58] By recognizing that we are *nothing* apart from God makes us thirst for Him in order to be *everything* to be a part of the *Infinite.*

The recognition and contemplation of poverty is also correlated to Francis' favorite image of the naked Christ *(nudus nudum sequi Christum).* These are foreshadowed in the Gospel which has Christ's doctrine emphasizing renunciation (or self-denial) and death as important conditions in achieving life, love, and happiness:

> If you seek perfection, go, sell your possession, and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. Afterward come back and follow me (MT 19, 21 — NAB).

> Anyone who does not take up his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple (Lk 14, 27).

If a man wishes to come after me, he must deny his very self (Mt 16, 24).

He who seeks only himself brings himself to ruin, whereas he who brings himself to nought for me discovers who he is (Mt 10, 39).

These Gospel passages can be found at the opening of Francis' earlier rule.[59] Therefore, these confirmations from the Bible are not far-removed from Francis' own brand of self-negation or renunciation which moved him ever closer to God. Symbolic acts like divesting in front of the Bishop, embracing and kissing the leper, being robbed by brigands, etc., are proofs of the *negative way* which Francis forded. He was able to conquer, debase, and to make nothing of himself and yet still he experienced "perfect joy." For Francis, the possession of the kingdom of heaven and its joy means the annihilation of self and losing one's life.

Thus, Bonaventure realized what Francis discovered: the journey of the poor man in the desert is the only way to recognize God's presence in all creation. It is only be recognizing our nothingness and dependence on God that we perceive the *All in all.*

Conclusion

In their article *The Sacrament of Creation: Toward an Environmental Theology,* the Himes brothers identify one of the great contributions of the Franciscan tradition to the Theology of Creation: **poverty.** We need only to look around us to see the wisdom of Francis' perception or vision. The catastrophic Exxon Valdez oil spill, the wanton assault on the Amazonian rainforest, the devastation of the Coral Triangle in Southeast Asia: all of these acts done by human beings in the name of progress and technology are, for the most part, manifestations of greed and personal gain. These too often overlooked tragedies have not only material and temporal consequences, they also gravely affect the spiritual aspect of humankind. For incessant grasping and irresponsible destructive ways abuse the gifts of creation through which and in which we can discover God.

The theologian Bonaventure, articulating the vision of the mystic Francis, teaches us anew that all creation forms a sacrament expressing the hidden presence of God and leading us to Him. However, we must begin as Francis did and as Bonaventure so well articulated: as the poor man in the desert. It is only then that we will recognize what the English poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins, wrote: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God."

Endnotes

[41] 1 Sent d.la.3 q.2 concl.; Itin 1,1; Sol 1,6.

[42] For a further discussion of this aspect of Bonaventure's approach, confer Leon Veuthey, OFM Conv., *Cuaderni di Spiritualita Francescana, v. 14, 1967.*

[43] Itin. 7,4.

[44] Itin. 1. Italics are those of the author.

[45] For an in-depth comparative study of the notion of poverty in Francis of Assisi. Bonaventure and John of the Cross, confer Lyn M. Falzon Scheuring, *"The Poverty of Francis of Assisi according to Bonaventure and its Relation to Poverty in John of the Cross"* (Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University 1990).

[46] Cf. Wayne Hellmann, "Poverty: the Franciscan Way to God," *Theology Digest* 22 (Winter 1974) pp. 339.

[47] Hellmann pp. 339-345.

[48] Hellmann, p. 339.

[49] Perf. Ev. q. 1, concl. (V, 120-121). Cited according to the Quaracchi edition of the Omnia Opera. Translation of the texts are by Wayne Hellmann, OFMConv.

[50] ...quod sola creatura fit de nihilo sive est de nihilo... I Sent. d. 5, dub 9 (I, 123 b). Hellmann.

[51] Hellmann, 340.

[52] Hellmann, 341.

[53] Hellmann, 341.

[54] Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure,* trans. Trethowan and Sheed (Paterson, N.J., 1965), p. 181.; Cf. Bonaventure, *Collationes in Hexaemeron* II, 27, in the Opera Omnia (Quaracchi, 1882-1902), t. V, p. 340.; Cf. *Itinerarium,* II, 7.

[55] Susanna Peters Coy, "The Problem of "Per" in the Cantico di Frate Sole of Saint Francis," *Modern Language Notes* (1976, January), Vol. 91, No. 1, p. 7.

[56] Ms. Coy also claims that "even things which are evil can praise God, insofar as they *are;* and in this objective way, even sinful men give glory to God." p. 7.

[57] *Confessions,* I, 1.

[58] *History of Philosophy,* pp. 267-8.

[59] *Francis and Clare,* p. 109.

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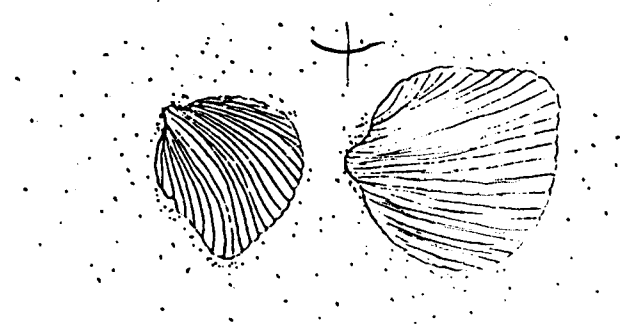

Sr. Corinne Didisheim, FMM

The True Light

God said, "Let there be light"
  and there was light,
The world said, "Let there be glitter"
  and there was gloom —
For light without Light
  is gloom
Since the darkness of that gloom
  oppresses and excludes.

Light is Light only at the Source
  and every light must glow within that Flame,
It is not better to turn on the television set
  than to curse the solitude
For light that is not Light
  is solitude —
Only the illuminating Light can liberate
  the hypnotizing light enslaves.

John said, "God is Light"
  that lighteth every man,
The Media said "Lighten up"
  and all became distraction —
For light divorced from God
  can only be distraction
Where the detour denies the destiny
  and dissolves in a dead-end.

D. DeMarco

Does a mission statement make a difference? Catholic and Franciscan - A Case in Point

F. EDWARD COUGHLIN, O.F.M.

Mission statements are attempts to articulate the desired future and the distinctive nature, service and qualities of an organization. In theory mission statements ask hard questions about present practices and policies. Ideally, these statements enable leadership to face the challenge of managing the transition from what *is* to being more what an institution *hopes* or *claims* to be.[1] This is an especially important question in religiously affiliated educational institutions on any level; as religious personnel decrease, costs increase and competition for students intensifies. James Flynn posed the question well when he wrote recently: "How can (independent institutions of higher education) continue to fuel a unique identity which gives a distinctive spirit to their mission?"[2] In this essay I would propose to reflect on the role of key leadership personnel in facing the challenge of mission effectiveness, focus briefly on the Church's understanding of the distinctive nature of a Catholic institution, and offer a model for better integrating the Franciscan vision into educational institutions which claim the Franciscan tradition as part of their identity and uniqueness.

Leadership and Mission

The **question** in our title becomes **more critical than rhetorical** when key leadership personnel (Trustees, Presidents/Principals, Administrators and Faculty), give serious consideration to their **leadership function** within an academic institution. A **leadership function** asks key personnel to

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Brother F. Edward Coughlin is director of the Franciscan Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the Catholic University of America and an M.A. in theology from Boston College. Besides conducting numerous workshops for religious groups, he has published articles in HUMAN DEVELOPMENT and other publications. Whether engaged in the education ministry or not, all Franciscans will find this article most profitable.

consider whether or not they believe they have the **"ability to create an organization of [their] choosing."**[3] This entails, on the one hand, **an educational institution** that reflects a commitment to the highest standards of quality education and the search for truth. On the other hand, it entails **an organization** which reveals an equally strong commitment to a vision of the human person, the world and meaning that (a) **nurtures leadership's desire** to educate and (b) **shapes leadership's distinctive approach** to education.

If key leadership personnel within an educational institution are convinced they have not only the **potential** but the **actual power to create a place that they can truly believe in**, they have confronted what may well be described as the most critical issue facing leadership today. Regardless of the level of the academic institution, it may also be helpful to remember that few schools have come into existence which:

(1) did not respond to some genuinely felt need for something more or better than what was;
(2) did not require that there were some individuals involved who were willing to take a substantive risk; and
(3) which did not ultimately require a dynamic interdependence among individuals with widely varying gifts, areas of expertise, and specializations who were bound together by a shared vision toward which all of their human activities were directed.

What I am suggesting here is that key personnel within an institution cannot lose sight of the **roots of the leadership challenge they have inherited.** As leaders reflect on their leadership function, it must always be in reference to and in service of the what, the who and the how that gave birth to a particular educational institution. This **kind of remembering** will focus the leaders sense of mission. It should also continually challenge them to **make conscious choices** about the future they desire to embrace. This **kind of remembering**, even as key personnel attend to the concerns of the institution's portfolio, enrollment, facilities, faculty and students, also **asks hard questions about how their choices both reflect and reveal their vision**, the core — the heart — of the institution. This kind of faithful remembering is an urgent concern not only for the present but future of any institution that hopes to remain a viable and attractive place of alternative education.

Attentiveness to the originating inspiration and distinctive mission must be a critical frame of reference for all levels of leadership. It is no secret that institutions in general, and educational institutions in particular, almost as soon as they begin to develop and take on a definite shape become:

(1) **more** concerned about ***maintaining what is*** rather than considering what ***more might be*** [mission], not in terms of quantity as much as in terms of quality;
(2) **more *cautious* than *courageous*** in their capacity to dream and to act in ways that give witness to their core beliefs; and
(3) more inclined to defer and submit to emerging structures of governance and authority rather **than to empowering individuals** and groups to use their gifts and resources to give witness to their embrace of the valued future.

No one should be more attentive to these issues than the key leadership personnel. In a very real sense leaders are challenged today, as never before, to embrace their power to make choices and reflect on the kinds of choices they are making. To put it more precisely:

(a) **Are the choices** of leadership **making a valued difference** within the educational institution?
(b) Are **choices** welcomed as the **opportunity through which**, at different levels, leadership gives concrete expression and authentic **witness to that core set of values** that both define and differentiate the educational institution in a valued way?

A "Catholic" Institution

The Catholic affiliation of educational institutions raises a number of questions and makes many, both from the Catholic and other religious traditions, uncomfortable. This should not surprise anyone, given the various ways the word 'Catholic' can be understood and is frequently perceived. 'Catholic' can be heard in an especially problematic way due to the sometimes limited, restrictive or negative understandings that are often associated with that word. A good example of this might be found in the justifiable anxiety of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities when it received a preliminary draft of a proposed statement (1985) from Rome on Catholic Universities.[4] Among the statements that aroused concern was "all teachers who are to be chosen... distinguished by academic and pedagogical ability as well as doctrinal integrity (#26)." Another article proposed that "(t)hose who teach theological subjects... have a mandate from the competent ecclesiastical authorities (#31)." After considerable debate and dialogue — and to the surprise of many — John Paul II's *Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities*[5] was quite well received[6] just a few months ago. In fact, the content, tone and direction is seen by many as presenting a clear and rather formidable challenge to all Catholic educational institutions to be what they claim to be not only in image but in fact. For example, in the Introduction the document speaks

of Catholic universities (colleges) as **having the privileged task** of being able to unite what too frequently stand in opposition; "the **search for truth** and the certainty of already **knowing the fount of truth** (#1)." It explicitly calls the scholars of Catholic Universities (colleges) "to be engaged in a constant effort to determine the relative place and meaning of the various disciplines within the context and vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel...(#16)." The document also reminds educators that "(i)t is essential that we be convinced of the priority of the ethical over the technological, the primacy of the person over things, of the superiority of the spirit over matter (#18)." Furthermore, the document also speaks in a forceful way about ***the Mission of Catholic universities*** in terms of (1) Service to Church and Society, (2) Pastoral Ministry that is directed toward "the integration of faith and life [#38]," (3) Cultural Dialogue, "the privileged place for a fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and culture [#43]," and (4) Evangelization.

While the space limitations of this essay will permit us to refer only briefly to the Church's contemporary understanding of the fundamental mission and tasks of a Catholic university [and by extension other types of Catholic schools] the recent document from the Vatican must be referenced. It clarifies the Church's understanding of what is expected of universities that claim in their mission statements to be Catholic in their affiliation. More importantly, as Alice Gallin, OSU put it, the document "stressed the unique role of the University in the dialogue with contemporary cultures and urges the universities to bring the ethical and religious dimensions of human existence to the table at all levels."[7]

Catholic in the Franciscan Tradition

The *Apostolic Constitution's* statement on the core mission of any institution that is Catholic is placed in the context of the purposes of a University as stated by Pope Alexander IV in a letter to the University of Paris in 1255. At that time the university as we know it today was beginning to take shape and the Church was playing a key role in its development. During that same time period, the early followers of Francis were not only involved in university life, but attracted many scholars into the Franciscan way of life. Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure of Bagnoregio are but two outstanding examples of this phenomenon. And although the friars' involvement in university life was not without its problems, not all of which were related to internal issues, they made significant contributions to the development of the intellectual life. Unfortunately, perhaps ironically, the Apostolic Constitution of 1990 makes no reference to St. Bonaventure, a member of the faculty at the University of Paris in 1255

nor to his work entitled *"On the Reduction of the Arts to Theology."*[8] The work articulated a unitive vision and comprehensive theory of all knowledge as coming from the hand of God and included an understanding of how **all human activity** leads one ultimately to the knowledge of God. Bonaventure's vision describes the creative union between the search for truth and the knowledge of the fount of truth which the Church identified in its recent document as the privileged task of the Catholic university/college. The task, therefore, of bringing the Gospel into dialogue with the various disciplines in the academy is one of the reasons why Franciscans were initially involved in university life and may give insight into why they have continually been involved in the ministry of education in a variety of ways. It is also one of the fundamental reasons why they should continue to be involved in education today. This involvement, if it is truly faithful to its tradition, would continue to make a substantive contribution in various disciplines in the search for truth while calling for the full development of both persons and cultures through an incarnational and Gospel-centered approach. Regardless of the level of education, however, Franciscans must honestly ask themselves how deeply they have appropriated the tradition and how ready they are to bring it, in a living and viable way, into the academic world in this final decade of the 20th century.

To be sure, the Franciscan tradition continually turns to Francis as the primary source of its inspiration. A person of both historical and prophetic significance, Francis, the man of God and brother of all, is a man about whom most of us probably have some rather fixed images. These images range from Francis' standing naked before a bishop, to throwing himself in the snow to overcome temptations, to kissing and caring for a leper, and even to standing in the birdbath in some backyards. He is a man whose historical and prophetic significance is not easily captured in a few words — no less easily related to our contemporary context and its emerging questions. And yet, the followers of Francis cannot back away from the challenge of understanding his vision, and the 800 years of tradition that he inspired, in both theoretical and personal ways. This type of personal and communal knowing would enable his sons and daughters to bring Francis' vision into a fruitful dialogue with contemporary peoples and cultures.

Towards a Working Model for an Integrated Approach to Education

As the Church has suggested, there is no better place for that dialogue to take place than in an education setting. But we must first ask: How can the life, writings, vision and personal experience of a Francis, Clare, Alexander of Hales or Bonaventure become an integral part of a contemporary

Franciscans must honestly ask themselves how deeply they have appropriated the tradition and how ready they are to bring it, in a living and viable way, into the academic world...

dialogue, in a contemporary educational environment? Secondly, we must ask: What elements would an adequate model include?

Given the nature of the task, an adequate model would have to include at least three integrally related elements: (1) an attempt to communicate the basic content of the tradition (**curriculum**), (2) an approach to education that gave witness to the core values of that tradition (**context**), and (3) the ability to demonstrate in experiential and practical ways how the vision might be engaged in a dialogue that either celebrates or critiques values and cultures (**connection-making**). The challenges of curriculum and context are the more obvious, though not necessarily more easily achievable, elements of the proposed model. The challenge of connection-making, however, is not only the most complex but ultimately most important element of the model. Even when someone knows what was believed, and has some sense that it shapes the life and commitments of women and men who claim to believe and are trying to live the values of that tradition, it still may not invite others to ask: Why? What difference does it really make? Does it make a valued difference? Is it something that could be important to my life?

For example, radio stations are playing Julie Gold's song "From a Distance" as performed by Bette Midler, which was awarded the Grammy for being the best song of 1990. It is an engaging and moving song. The lyrics state that "(f)rom a distance... we have all we need, and no one is in need, and there are no guns and bombs, and no hungry to feed... But God is watching us, from a distance... From a distance, you look like my friend even though we are at war... But God is watching us, from a distance."[9] While it may inspire us or move us we should not overlook the important fact that these lyrics reflect a dichotomized and disconnected kind of experience; they leave God in the distance, the listener dreaming about "playing songs of hope, songs of peace" and our bodies in a world where there is a war, disease and people in need. In reality, this is a song

which names some of our experience but offers us no real hope of experiencing the peace and the love about which we sing.

Those who are familiar with the history of the 12th and 13th centuries know that even in that very different time there were conflict and radical social upheaval. There was much dissatisfaction with an institutional Church that was finding it difficult to preach the Gospel in a credible way. It was also the time when Francis found himself personally confused by his proud feelings, comfortable life and dreams of glory. His experience did not satisfy his desire for inner peace and gave no real sense of meaning to his life. He had tremendous difficulty in connection-making. As his biographer Bonaventure put it, "He was distracted by the external affairs of his father's business and was drawn toward earthly things... he had not yet learned to contemplate the things of heaven nor had he acquired a taste for the things of God."[10] In other words, Bonaventure is telling us that Francis, without a personal relationship with God and the wisdom of the Gospel, lacked a personal experience and vision that could offer meaning to his life and give him the peace that he was longing for within himself. Bonaventure would further explain that through a variety of personal life experiences, Francis began to discover how God was not only 'at a distance' but also touching and gracing his life in unsettling and unexpected ways, how Francis began, and would later teach others, to incline the ear of their hearts and obey the voice of the Son of God... so that they, like he, could give witness to that voice and bring everyone to know that there is no one who is all-powerful except God.[11] Francis learned to make concrete connections between his personal experience and the teachings of the Gospel; through an inner dialogue that included the religious dimension of his experience, the attitudes and the actions of the man from Assisi took on radical new forms for his age. As Bonaventure described it, Francis began to "render humble service to lepers" and "to beggars he wished to give not only his possessions but his very self."[12] Thomas of Celano wrote that it was not very long before, "many put aside worldly cares and gained knowledge of themselves from the life and teaching of the most blessed Francis... (m)any people, both noble and ignoble, cleric and lay, impelled by divine inspiration, began to come to St. Francis,... (t)o all he gave a norm of life, and showed in truth the way of salvation in every walk of life."[13]

What we must try to capture here is how Francis embraced the questions that his experience of life presented to him, questions which Francis began to consider in the light of the Gospel, questions which led Francis to embrace the poor Christ and his teachings as his source of wisdom and truth. A process of inner dialogue led to the transformation of every dimension of his life. In the eyes of others, Francis became 'a living Gospel.' His whole manner of life, not just his words and teaching, became an

evangelizing presence. Francis was "affecting and, as it were, upsetting through the power of the Gospel, humanity's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought... and models of life that were in contrast with the [Gospel]."[14]

In the historical remembering of Francis, his followers must also grapple with the prophetic Francis, whose relationship with God, acting in the concrete historical circumstances of his life, is the key to understanding, and perhaps learning ourselves, what he learned. Such learning would include a knowledge of what he believed and taught, most especially in his writings and the writings of those who followed him (curriculum). This kind of learning would include the opportunity to not only observe but interact with those who are committed to Francis' unique approach to Gospel living (context). Finally, it would be a kind of learning experience that invites others into a dialogue with their human experience and a search for the footprints of God's love and grace. Franciscan learning today might/would be:

> An ongoing attempt at connection-making between the realities of hunger, guns and bombs and the kinds of choices that our government and other governments are making. A critical consciousness that questions the scope and depth of ones vision and is attempts to the broader implications of policies and decisions. A genuine willingness to recognize individual and corporate responsibility for our actions as concretely reflected in our abusive relationship with our environment. A reflective consciousness that makes us painfully aware of the reasons why "our smoke capped mountains" are only white "at a distance (cf., "From a Distance")."

Where Julie Gold's song leaves us stuck, torn and at a distance from God's redeeming and enabling grace, Francis shows us another approach. He offers us his life as an example of a person who was increasingly willing to ask hard questions about values, choices. Through a similar entering into a dialogue with the various dimensions of our human reality, we too might be able to see how our criteria of judgment, our points of interest, lines of thought... and models of life are in contrast with the Gospel. We might find a pathway to a brother/sisterhood with those with whom we are now at war and who now, only "(f)rom a distance like look like (our) friend."

This type of inner dialogue, undertaken in the context of faith, enabled Francis to call all things by the name of brother and sister because he knew they had the same source as himself.[15] A kind of dialogue that enabled him to become a humble servant for the sake others as the way to peace that surpassed all human understanding. This kind of personal and experiential connection-making is not easily achieved. It demands that we

not only search for an adequate vision of life but that we also allow that vision to touch and challenge every dimension of our lives. For Francis, it was only God's enabling presence and the message of the Gospel that had the power to change that which was "bitter into sweetness."[16] It was an experience of radical upheaval, and it led to true change in the life of Francis. The challenge to us is no less enormous nor radical in terms of our own lives. Bonaventure seems to have understood this point well, for he reminds us: "To arrive at such knowledge without a human teacher is not for everyone, but the privileged few. Though the Lord himself chose to teach St. Paul and St. Francis, it was his will that their disciples be taught by human teachers."[17]

Conclusion

St. Bonaventure believed that St. Francis could challenge us to embrace his teaching because, as a true disciple of Christ, Francis was an authentic teacher. Authentic in that Francis taught what he himself had learned, shared generously of his learning with others and put his learning into practice.[18] If key leadership personnel in educational institutions with a mission described as Catholic and Franciscan used Francis as their leadership model, they would have it within their power to create an educational institution of their own choosing. **They could create** an institution which would be **truly distinctive** and attractive to men and women who are looking for more than information, who want not only career preparation but a vision that will continually invite them to an integrated experience of life.

The creation of this type of institution begins when key leadership personnel take "ownership" and have a sense of personal responsibility for the mission statement. I refer here to a type of ownership whereby leaders know that mission statements are only fulfilled to the degree to which (1) one's vision is continually being clarified, (2) one's best understanding of that vision is the horizon for assessing the quality and effectiveness of present efforts, and (3) one is willing to invest oneself in managing the transition to a better realization of the mission. Through an ongoing effort to learn the meaning and implications of their mission, these leaders can also be/become authentic teachers.

Our three pronged model, and the cursory attempt to apply it, hopefully invites key leadership personnel in educational settings to do some critical reflection on the degree to which the curriculum, the educational context and connection-making mechanisms within their institutions are in place and how they might assess their adequacy and effectiveness. Connection-making calls them to evaluate how systematically, simultaneously and experientially they are addressing the demands of a quality education in the Christian and Franciscan tradition, and whether or not it is an education

which invites each person to be conscious of their dignity,[19] awakens their desire to search for truth while remaining open to the fount of all truth, and asks each one to be responsible for the ways in which they use their gifts and capacity to care not only for themselves but **for the sake of others.** In this way everyone within the institution or in relationship to it will be invited into a relational experience. Everyone might be continually being brought, therefore, to the realization that, in the Franciscan approach to education, it cannot be believed that: "reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavor without divine grace."[20]

Endnotes

[1] R. Beckhard and R. Harris, *Organizational Transitions* (2nd. Ed.), Ch 5: Defining the Future State, 1987, Addison-Wesley Pub.

[2] J. Flynn, SJ, "Sustaining the Founding Spirit: Institutional Identity and Mission," *Review for Religious,* Jan-Feb., 1991. Cf also., J. Healy, *America,* 137:14, Nov. 5, 1977.

[3] Peter Block, *The Empowered Manager:* Positive Political Skills at Work, Jossey-Bass, 1988, p. xvii. Chapter 1: Personal Choices That Shape the Work Environment is the primary source for additional comments on the leadership challenge as it is presented in this section of the presentation.

[4] Congregation for Catholic Education, Proposed Schema for a Pontifical Document on Catholic Universities, 1985, *Origins,* Vol. 15, No 43, p. 706ff.

[5] John Paul II, "The Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities, [Ex Corde Ecclesiae]" *Origins,* Oct. 4, 1990.

[6] Alice Gallin, OSU, Executive Director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities, Statement: Sept. 24, 1990, excerpted in Origins, Oct. 4, 1990, p. 270.

[7] Ibid.

[8] St. Bonaventure, "On Retracing the Arts to Theology *(De reductione artium ad theologiam),* in The Works of Bonaventure III: Opuscula Second Series, J deVinck trans, New Jersey: St. Anthony's Guild, 1966.

[9] "From a Distance," written by Julie Gold, performed by Bette Midler on the album: *Some Peoples Lives,* 1990.

[10] St. Bonaventure, "The Major Life of St. Francis," Chapter 2.1, in *Bonaventure:* The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. E. Cousins, New York: Paulist, 1978.

[11] Francis of Assisi, "A Letter to the Entire Order," No. 5-10, in *Francis and Clare:* The Classics of Western Spirituality, trans. by R. Armstrong, OFM Cap., New York: Paulist, 1982.

[12] Op. Cit., St. Bonaventure, "The Major Life of St. Francis," Ch 1.6.

[13] Thomas of Celano, "The First Life of St. Francis," No. 37, in Francis of Assisi: *Omnibus of Sources,* trans., by M. Habig, Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1973.

[14] Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation: *Evangelii Nuntiandi,* December 1975, No. 19.

[15] Op. Cit., St. Bonaventure, "The Major Life," Ch 8.6.

[16] Op. Cit., "St. Francis, The Testament," No. 3, in *Francis and Clare.*

[17] E. Doyle, OFM, translator and editor, *The Disciple and the Master:* St. Bonaventure's Sermons On St. Francis of Assisi, Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1983, p. 64.

[18] Ibid., pp. 63-65

[19] Op. Cit., St. Francis, Admonition 5, p. 29.

[20] Op. Cit., St. Bonaventure, "The Soul's Journey Into God," Prologue, No. 4.

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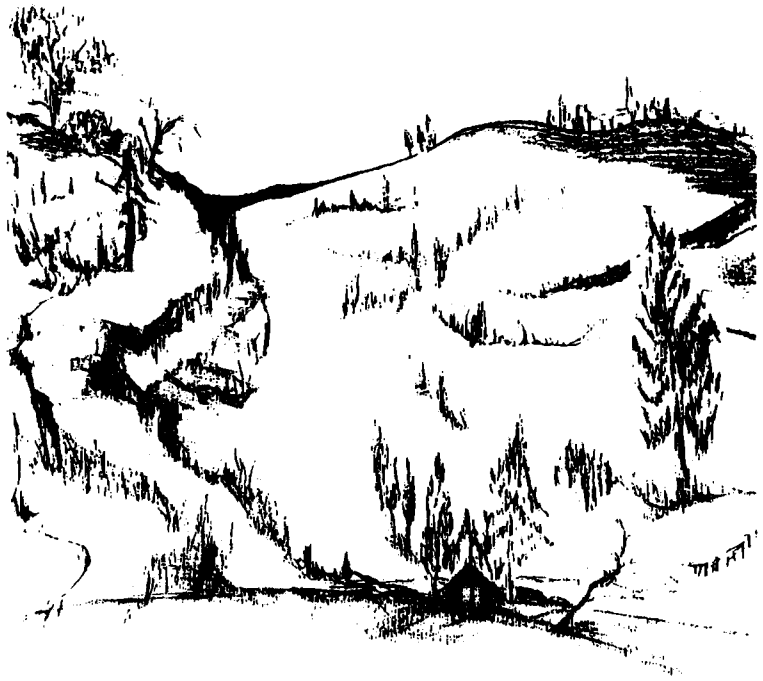

Sr. M. Raphael, OSF

Assisi in World War II — Another View

ANDRE CIRINO, O.F.M.
with JOSEPH RAISCHL

Introduction

It was a hot and humid July 31, 1990 when Don Aldo Brunacci, director of the Casa Papa Giovanni and Prior of the Canons of the Cathedral of San Rufino, invited me to an evening eucharist in the Casa chapel. After working all day with the pilgrims making the Assisi Experience, I was tired and not up to attending another mass. However, when I arrived in the chapel, I changed my mind when I saw several of the *anziani* or senior citizens of Assisi gathered. They gathered to remember, to remember fondly Dr. Valentin Müller on the anniversary of his death. They call him, with great respect, the savior of Assisi during World War II. Some information that has been made available about Assisi during this war has come from the book and film "The Assisi Underground." Don Aldo Brunacci says of "The Assisi Underground": "E' un romanzo!" "It's a novel," basically not expressing the deeper and more beautiful reality of what actually happened in Assisi during those war years, and certainly not painting a realistic picture of Dr. Valentin Müller. Having visited Dr. Müller's family in Eichstätt several times, it was during my last visit that Robert Müller's son-in-law, Josef Raischl, translated this article from German. It was originally prepared as a joint project of two students at the Catholic University of Eichstätt — Thomas Schuhmann and Christoph Neuberger. I have edited it and offer it as another picture of Assisi during World War II and of Dr. Valentin Müller. It fits well with the tribute paid Dr. Müller by the people of Assisi in the memorial they have erected in his honor, seen on a city wall as one comes up the road to Assisi. One cannot miss it, for it is at the crossroads of two gates leading into the city.

Andre Cirino is a member of the Province of the Immaculate Conception with headquarters in New York City. He is a staff member of THE ASSISI EXPERIENCE. Andre and Josef Raischl have conducted eight day retreats based on St. Bonaventure's ***Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*** *in Italy, Canada and the United States.*

"Daddy went on alone to the Hotel Subasio. The desk clerk recognized him instantly and excitedly called the proprietors, Mr. and Mrs. Rossi. It was a wonderful welcome from a grateful people." In these words from her travel journal, Irmgard Müller, daughter of Dr. Valentin Müller, describes her father's return to Assisi in 1950. Just six years after the departure of the German army, the former Medical Colonel and Commander of Assisi, returned to the city of Francis and Clare for a visit.

Ironically, the former occupier and enemy is practically given a hero's welcome just a few short years after the war. The former Mayor, who was in office during Müller's time, the present communist Mayor and the Bishop received him. Müller received numerous invitations from the citizens of Assisi to come visit. Upon his arrival, some women placed flowers at the hotel entrance that formerly served as his headquarters. Now he and his family are invited guests of the Hotel Subasio. And the City Council wants to erect a monument in his honor.

Dr. Valentin Müller's presence is celebrated in the streets and squares of the city. People crowded around him, shaking his hand, embracing him. Why this adulation of a former Nazi occupier? Let the people's stories and personal experience of the Commander explain why. In her travel journal, Irmgard Müller wrote: "A woman approached us, happy and very moved, to share of the *grande paura* — the great fear — she had during the war. But when *IL Colonnello* moved into the city, the fear left her.

The inhabitants of Assisi revere Müller as its savior. They claim it is due to his presence that the city's sanctuaries, medieval walls, treasures as well as its inhabitants, remained untouched. During the war the people used to exclaim: "We've got three protectors: God, St. Francis, and *Colonnello* Müller."

Concerning the details of Müller's assignment in Assisi, he himself said very little. "My father never boasted of his heroic deeds," says his son Robert Müller, M.D., who continues his father's medical practice in Eichstätt together with his own son Dominik. For the most part he was a man of few words who wrote even less. Moreover, he had only a short time to live, for on 31 July, 1951, he died at the age of 60. Therefore, what we have gathered about his presence in Assisi comes mainly from the people of Assisi themselves.

At the beginning of World War II, Müller was working as a doctor in Eichstätt, about 75 miles from Munich. He moved there in 1933 because of problems he had with the local Nazi authorities in a nearby village called Titting. As a medical student, Müller served in World War I. He was awarded the Bavarian Silver Medal for bravery for saving some injured

soldiers at the front line. So in 1939 he was called to war again — this time as a surgeon and captain. He participated in expeditions in Poland, France, and Russia. In Stalingrad he was supposed to set up the first hospital in 1942. Just a few days before a Russian army surrounded the city, Müller was transferred to Lourdes to establish a medical transport unit. And as its chief he later came to Italy in 1943.

While he was replacing the Medical General of the troops of southern Italy, he heard about the general's plan to establish Assisi as a hospital city. Müller succeeded in getting himself assigned to Assisi as Commander, later receiving more than 2,000 sick and injured people.

Because of his extraordinary energy and organizational ability, Müller was promoted to the rank of colonel, a rank in the health corp ordinarily restricted to professors of medicine. His son Robert describes him as "a courageous, active, no, a super-active man who was part of everything."

When Müller took up his assignment in February, 1944, the closest allied position was at Anzio, 110 miles south of Assisi. At that time, cities of ecclesiastical and cultural significance like Assisi were not considered neutral or exempt from war. The Benedictine Abbey of Monte Casino, a cultural monument comparable to Assisi, was completely destroyed in 1944. Moreover, Assisi was strategically important because of the nearby airports of Foligno and Perugia.

Very early in the war years, the (Conventual) friars of Assisi appealed to their General Minister in Rome, Bede Hess, who, with the support of the papal curia and Bishop Placido Niccolini of Assisi, approached both sides in the conflict asking them not to touch the city. On 10 July, 1943, the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, declared his country's intention not to touch the Vatican nor its possessions (which, according to the Lateran Pact included some ecclesiastical buildings in Assisi). Later on, Arnaldo Fortini, Mayor of Assisi, contacted the allied forces and received assurance from Field Marshall Alexander, their Commander, that Assisi would be preserved.

The German army was not willing to do the same. Müller immediately tried to cut through the red tape to get the status of either a hospital city or open city for Assisi, according to international law. According to the Geneva Convention of the Red Cross, no fighting forces were allowed in a hospital city. The law of the Hague ordered that all military personnel must be removed from an open city. All of this must be accepted by both sides. But the German headquarters in Berlin delayed such a declaration until the front line approached the city in question, thus trying to avoid tactical disadvantages. So Müller's first efforts were in vain.

The Medical Colonel then took the matters into his own hands. He sent the remaining troops out of the city, locked the gates at night, and placed guards as well as signs on the gates and walls to keep the withdrawing German troops from entering. Müller did not have the authority to act as he did. Nevertheless, the Colonel's persistence finally paid off. On 1 June, 1944 von Kessel from the German embassy advised the Vatican that Assisi was declared a hospital city. The German Ambassador to the Vatican, Ernst von Weizsäcker and the German Commander in Italy, Field Marshall Albert Kesselring, concurred. So Assisi was left untouched when on 16 June, 1944, the German Army retreated. Müller, the last one to leave, posted signs all over the city as well as leaving behind a letter to the allied forces (the British were first to enter Assisi), pleading with them to respect the city's dignity.

Colonel Müller was respected and loved by the citizens of Assisi. As Commander, he cared for St. Francis' city. He had a good rapport with Bishop Niccolini and Mayor Fortini. He frequently visited the friars. Everyone knew that *IL Colonnello* would listen to them, their problems, or injustices experienced. Desperate people would telephone him at his office for everyone knew his number, 210. Müller tried to stop the German soldiers from exploiting the people, and if he could not, he personally worked for reparation of the damages.

For example, one day two German captains commandeered two taxi's, pretending there was an emergency. Müller himself followed them by motorcycle and caught up with them near Perugia. He had them return the stolen cars. After many years, Francesco Pettirossi, one of the taxi owners, has never forgotten and enthusiastically tells his guests about *IL Colonnello* who brought his taxi back to him. Another time German soldiers started to confiscate bicycles, loading them on to a truck. Only *IL Colonnello's* order stopped them. And on night, Müller helped a woman and her two children who were being taunted by drunken soldiers. And to a young wife of an Italian soldier who was in a German concentration camp, *IL Colonnello* gave her the possibility of contacting him. Müller put her letter into an official envelope from his office, making himself, at great risk, the sender.

In the city hospitals *IL Colonnello* treated not only the injured soldiers, but freely treated the poor, attending them in emergency or even in their homes. Before the Germans withdrew, Müller ordered that all medical equipment — medicine, beds, surgical instruments, etc. worth ten million Lire — be left to the Bishop of Assisi for distribution. Müller was aware of the danger he incurred by aiding the enemy. He is supposed to have said: "Now at the peak of (German) oppression, people will be fast to judge

as traitors those who helped the enemy." And the great esteem Müller had among the people was evidenced by the announcement of the partisans near Assisi, that upon withdrawal, *"Colonnello* Müller will not be harmed."

Just as in other territories occupied by the Germans, the Jews were persecuted. In Italy about 32,000 Jews survived in hidden places, about 300 of them in monasteries and private homes in Assisi. Did *Colonnello* Müller know about them? "I suppose so," says Robert Müller, the Colonel's son, "and if he was deceived, then it was because he wanted to be deceived." What would he have done it he would have known, Robert Müller was asked? "Nothing, he would have allowed it because he looked at the Jews the same way he looked at all people." It is also known that in 1937, Dr. Valentin Müller bought his house from a Jewish family and paid for it immediately with cash, thus giving them the means to escape. Moreover, Müller was the last medical doctor in Eichstätt to visit Jewish homes for treatment.

In 1984 the Jewish director Alexander Ramati, who once came to Assisi as an allied war journalist, made a movie on the Jews saved by the people of Assisi. The film, shot at original sites in Assisi, had Maximilian Schell portray Müller. Schell once said he would never again accept the role of a German officer in a film. Yet, getting to know some of Müller's person and character, he accepted the role. Robert Müller claims his father is portrayed as "too slow and sedate, respectable, but not seeing through the situation." In Robert's opinion, his father was much more vivacious and flexible than the film portrayed.

The memory of *IL Colonnello's* important role in preserving Assisi during World War II is still alive among the city's inhabitants. In 1982, a commemorative stone monument was placed in the cloister of the Würzburg Conventual friary, bearing the names of Mayor Fortini, Father Bede Hess, Bishop Niccolini and Dr. Valentin Müller. It was brought by a delegation from Assisi on a pilgrimage of peace during the eighth centennary of St. Francis' birth to the first Franciscan friary established north of the Alps. On their way the group also stopped at Eichstätt. After a reception at the City Hall, the Italians brought olive branches to Colonel Müller's grave, on whose tombstone the facade of the Basilica of San Francesco is carved. Above are the words: *"In serviendo consumor."*

☆ ☆ ☆

Book Reviews

Accept Yourself With Love and Confidence. By John M. Scott, S.J. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1991. Pp. 128. Paper, $5.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Raphael Bonanno, O.F.M. Editor of ***Holy Land*** *Magazine and Postulator for the Causes of Saints, Jerusalem.*

There are many books on the market to build up self-esteem but not all of them, in fact most of them, are not Catholic. They serve up human opinions, human experiments and human psychology but not necessarily the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, this book by a Jesuit author and a Catholic publishing house raised one's expectations quite a bit.

The first chapter starts high all right with the title: "You are a Child of the Universe." The person with a low self-image probably thinks: "After that chapter, it can only go downhill! The UNIVERSE, no less. I have enough trouble just being the child of my mixed-up parents. Me, child of the universe, indeed." Scott writes of an enquiry into nearly 2,000 middle-class boys and their families, tracing them from pre-adolescence to early manhood. He felt that the one thing that characterized the successful people was an attitude of high self-esteem. Ralph Waldo Emerson, always good for a quotation, said: "A person is what he thinks about all day." Lest that be too purely intellectualistic a view, I would add that "a person is what he loves all day long."

Chapter Two is entitled "From Andrew Thunder Hawk to the Elephant Man." Andrew is an Indian who in spite of extreme poverty keeps his sense of self-worth by faith in the Great Spirit. With the Elephant Man Dr. Treves pulls out of him, ever so slowly, his innate humanity, his keen sense of beauty and his responsiveness to kindness. Dr. Treves took a lady to him and she smiled at the poor, deformed man who promptly melted into tears and sobs. It was the first time in his life that a woman had smiled at him. This chapter cites many positive effects of a good sense of self-worth.

The book is written in an aphoristic style, one thought to a paragraph, short paragraphs, and most of the thoughts are from the self-esteem cult books. For example, on page 48 you find this: "Dreams are the seedlings of realities. "The longest journey begins with a single step." "What you are to be, you are now becoming." According to an unknown author, "A man's life consists not of what he has but of what he is." And the book continues on in this manner — a string of pearls of conventional wisdom that never seems to penetrate beneath the surface. The author seems to have had one eye continuously on Bartlett's "Famous Quotations."

Scott's examples of self-esteem range from Hank Aaron of baseball fame to Zurbrigger, a world class skier. Some are more detailed than others, but all are uplifting.

Chapter Five is entitled "Don't Sell Yourself Short" and is filled with examples of people who became geniuses in spite of severe limitations. John Greenleaf Whittier, for example, could

only write between cranial pains. Mental effort of two hours' duration was intolerable. Yet, though doctors predicted he would never reach 50, he lived to the ripe old age of 85.

The topic of Chapter Six is "Stress" and Lawrence Welk is singled out as a man who coped with stress and achieved great success. After sixteen years on ABC-TV, the network dumped him because his show no longer fit in with its formula for success. Welk, however, went on to have the largest network of stations in the history of syndicated shows — 264 stations in the USA and Canada boasting of 14-20 million viewers each week.

In Chapter Seven we encounter the title "Better to Light a Candle" and this is obviously drawn from the Christopher Movement and the writings of Fr. James Keller.

Chapter Eight is the most beautifully written: "Christ's Hands in Yours." This piece on Christ and our Lady is well written and forms a marvelous coda to the entire book.

I tried to read this book as one whose self-image needed uplifting. The author's presentation, however, did little in that regard. Perhaps because of his reputation as a writer I expected something much deeper and more profound. All in all the book seemed to be a concatination of pious thoughts. There was no consideration of self-worth and its relationship to evil, as for example in the case of a serial killer. Scott mentioned that a negative self-image can lead to criminal acts, as verified by prison psychologists. But he never wrote about the far more common debunking or devaluation of one person by another (relative or not) that ends in a bad self-image in the one debunked. This constant berating and belittling of another human being goes on with couples, families and religious communities and does untold harm to a person's self-image.

The book hardly mentions the dogma of the Divine Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in the soul of a justified person. Recently the Pope beatified Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity, a Carmelite nun, who has been called the apostle of the Indwelling. One important reflection concerning her beatification is exactly this: People who suffer from a bad self-image need this doctrinal support from the Church to know that God created them good and still considers them good enough to live in as in a temple. This is far more ontological and important than our Indian friend Andrew Thunder Hawk invoking Wakan Tanka — the Great Spirit — and feeling good about it. The Great Spirit has already come down and made his tent among us and even within us!

Fr. Scott, who holds degrees in theology, philosophy and physics, has authored 21 other well-known books. This book deserves a rewrite from so gifted an author. Meanwhile you may read it as it is and perhaps get something out of it that I did not.

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FEBRUARY, 1992

The CORD

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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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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).

Reflection: "We are like the leaves and buds of a great tree. . ."

MARGARET PIRKL, O.S.F.

On July 3, 1991, creatures great and small somehow knew that they had lost a friend. Dad died that afternoon in the farm home where he and Mother had lived for more than 64 years. The struggle with cancer had finally come to an end; yet, through it all, our 96-year-old father kept a keen and clear mind, a good sense of humor and an interest in life. In particular, he was concerned about what was happening outside in the garden, in the woods, in the five-acre lawn, and in the fields he had once tilled and nurtured. Birds at the feeders delighted him, running spring water soothed him, sprouting seeds prepared for planting satisfied him, dry weather tested him, a family of deer wandering through the yard caught his full attention, baby kittens made him smile, growing crops pleased him. All of these affected him deeply, for he was intimately linked with everything of earth.

The five great burr oaks that now extend protective arms over our small family house were already magnificent trees, probably 150 years old, when Mother and Dad moved in as newlyweds in 1927. These trees were loved from the beginning and enjoyed a more special place in our life than did the others in the yard and in the woods that nearly surround the yard. Dad soon discovered that one of the five was in desperate need because it had been mistreated for years as a hitching post for horses. A gaping hole in the trunk, shoulder high or about half-way up to where the branches began, revealed rotting wood in the tree's center. According to Dad's account, removal of one decaying layer led to another layer and another.

This reflection was written by Sr. Margaret in memory of her father who died some months ago. A specialist in the area of religious responsibility for the future of the earth, Sister Margaret has contributed several articles for the CORD.

It was clear that the tree would die unless some creative action was taken immediately. Dad cleaned the heart of the oak as best he could and filled the cavity with concrete, thus sealing off the sources of damage.

Knowing now how much our father loved that tree, we are certain that he performed his task as gently and thoroughly as he could, in tune with the earth's healing power and with trust in the Divine Creative Presence that still shone forth clearly and surely from the wounded burr oak. This beautiful 200-year-old creature of God still graces the yard, along with its four companions. Examination of the trunk yields no evidence of the mending operation Dad performed; the bark has grown naturally over the scar. With a twinkle in his eye, Dad liked to tell us that anyone trying to saw through the tree will be in for a rude surprise!

Our father's special link with trees was more than a sentimental feeling; we believe it had to do with his own life journey. Although he had never read Carl Jung, he was in touch with what Jung meant when he said:

> ...the earthly manifestation of "God's world" began with the role of plants, as a kind of direct communication from it... Trees in particular were mysterious and seemed to me direct embodiments of the incomprehensible meaning of life.[1]

It was this insight, or one close to it, that explained Dad's distress and pain at the unnecessary destruction of a healthy growing tree as well as the strength and pleasure he drew from the sight of a grove of trees, spared and nurtured in its natural state.

Our father's life, in John Muir's words, was "hitched to everything in the universe." And Dad's faith in God intermingled with his faith in the ways of the earth. Rain, snow, sunshine, wind, whether in moderation or excess, were accepted by him as part of God's providence. If they caused pain and loss, they were incorporated into the mystery of the Crucified, but they were also implicitly understood as a piece of the earth's "big picture." The dependability of natural processes deepened Dad's belief in God's faithfulness. Spring flowers, June's loveliness, ripe golden fields of grain, "fairyland" trees covered with hoarfrost — all beautiful creatures — led Dad to wonder about how beautiful their Creator must be. Working hand in hand with the earth was for Dad linked inextricably with working hand in hand with God. Respect for life was bound to respect for the Source of Life. Gratitude for the land's bounty was gratitude to the Divine Giver of all gifts.

Our father's faith in God as Creator of all determined his way of life and thus overflowed to our entire family. It was so integral to our thought and behavior that we did not name it most of the time because we did not recognize it. In the months since our father's death, this faith, grounded in memories of life close to the land, becomes more clear as Dad's precious legacy to us. Further, it beckons us to hold carefully the religious nature of our relationship to earth. It calls to mind some wise words from Teilhard that reflect our father's earthy understanding of life, words in which we now find Dad's invitation to meaning and to responsibility:

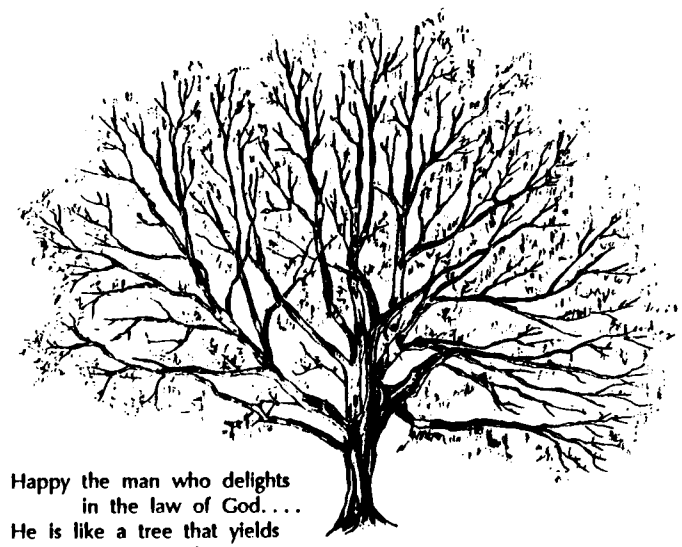
> We are like the leaves and buds of a great tree on which everything appears at its proper time and place as determined by the good of the whole.[2]

For this invitation we thank you, Dad!

Endnotes

[1]C.G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1963) 67-68.

[2]A quote from Pierre Teilhard Chardin found on a greeting card.



Happy the man who delights
in the law of God....
He is like a tree that yields
its fruit in due season
and whose leaves never fade.
-From Psalm 1:1-3

This drawing is from a photo of the tree the late Mr. Pirkl helped in its healing back in 1927.

"Speak Lord, your servant is listening": Obedience and Prayer in Franciscan Spirituality

TIMOTHY JOHNSON, O.F.M. CONV.

Two thousand years ago, the Stoic philosopher Epicetus said: "God gave man two ears and one mouth so he would listen twice as much as speak".[1] Unfortunately, that is not always the case...

In the Lower Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi there is an allegorical painting of the vow of obedience found over the main altar.[2] This painting, which is often attributed to Giotto, depicts a friar minor bowing his head to put on the yoke of obedience. The person who offers him the yoke has a finger over his lips indicating that he should be quiet. As I'm sure you already know, the word "obedience" comes from the Latin "oboedire" which means "to listen" as well as "to obey".[3] To be obedient is to listen and no one can listen unless he or she learns to be quiet. Thus, an obedient friar minor is one who disciplines himself to be quiet and listen. But to whom? Certainly to God, but also to himself and others.

In the days and months preceding chapter we have tried to live obediently by trying to quiet ourselves and listen in prayer so that we could somehow hear how we are to live out our calling as friars minor. Our obedience has been to ourselves as we have listened to the desires of our hearts, to others as they voiced their hopes and fears, and to God whose Spirit

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The author hold a doctorate from the Gregorianum in Rome. He has taught at the Institute of Franciscan Spirituality (Antonianum) in Rome and currently is associate director of novices for his province in Arroyo Grande, California. Fr. Timothy presented this material on prayer to the chapter delegates of his province (Our Lady of Consolation) in August of 1991. We are grateful to him for sharing with us insights that inspire deeper commitment to franciscan prayer.

moves mysteriously within and around us. I pray we have listened well, for as a result of the many decisions that will be made during this chapter period, numerous friars all over the world will receive obediences calling them to listen and respond to the will of God by living out their vocation as friars with particular responsibilities within particular communities. Some obediences will be received with great joy and relief while others, no doubt, will provoke their fair share of anguish and suffering. I pray we have been truly obedient in prayer, for the ramifications of our decisions will have a far reaching effect on our friars as well as their families, friends, and the people to whom they minister.

Our call to obedience, which is expressed in prayerful listening, does not end with the beginning of chapter. We are reminded in various ways throughout these days together that we are to go beyond the limited horizons of our own wants and needs, preferences and wishes, to once again listen to God. Yet, before we turn our ear to God, and to others for that matter, we must learn to once again listen to ourselves in honest prayer. That is to say, we need to be obedient to ourselves so we can discover our deepest desires.[4] They are a fundamental element in the process of discernment. To refuse to stop and listen to ourselves, as well as to others and then to God, is the height of absurdity. It is to remain deaf to ourselves, to others, and to God. In fact the word "absurd" comes from the Latin "surdus" which means "deaf".[5]

We begin to be obedient to ourselves by listening to ourselves. This is the first or primary school of prayer. If we do not learn our lesson well at this stage we will never learn to listen to God. This is especially true for Franciscans since we have traditionally placed a great amount of emphasis on interior experiences as criteria for spiritual discernment.[6] We can be tempted to look all over outside of ourselves but not within where the Word of God dwells and speaks to us within the uniqueness of our experience. Retreats, spiritual exercises, days of recollection — or, for that matter, spiritual conferences during chapter — are important to the degree that they foster our desire to turn inward and listen.

The idea of turning within in order to learn how to pray is hardly new. In fact, it is a constant in many religious traditions. The Islamic tradition also speaks of the need to turn inward — even though we may be drawn to look outside of ourselves instead of within in our search for God. There is the famous Islamic story of the Master who looked for his key outside in the town square even though he had lost it inside his house. When asked why he was looking outside he responded by saying that there was more light outside than inside![7] Our own Christian tradition speaks time and time again of the inward journey. Christ himself reminds us in the Gospel that we need to enter into the solitude of our own rooms and pray in secret to the Father (Mt. 6:6). The word "room" can be interpreted

literally or symbolically. We of course need to find a quiet and tranquil place if we truly intend to learn how to pray. Our hearts are, however, the most secret room in which we can retire to learn how to pray. Many of the accounts of the Desert Fathers and Mothers speak to us of the importance of developing our inner life as a privileged way of leading to the discovery of the presence of God.[8]

Our own Franciscan tradition stresses the link between turning inward in the search for self-knowledge and in the encounter with God in prayer. As Bonaventure writes in his work *On the Perfection of Life:*

> Oh my God, from whence [comes] such blindness in a religious? Behold the reason is evident. Listen: because the mind of the person, distracted by *cares,* does not enter into itself through the *memory;* because darkened by *images* it does not return to itself through *intelligence;* because attracted by *illicit desires,* it never turns back to itself through the *desire* of internal sweetness and spiritual happiness, lingering therefore completely in these sense objects, it is unable to enter into itself as the image of God. And so, completely miserable, it is ignorant of itself and does not know its very self. Therefore, after all these things have been disregarded, acquire the memory and knowledge of yourself. Blessed Bernard use to pray for this saying 'May God give to me to know nothing other than that I may know my very self.'[9]

The knowledge of self, regardless if it be painful or joyful, depressing or exhilarating, is seen as the point of departure for all true prayer. Without it, there can be no true encounter with God. The link between self-knowledge in prayer and knowledge of God in prayer is conveyed in John of Capistran's admonition concerning prayer in the novitiate. He writes: "One hour of mental prayer is to be instituted for the novices so they may learn to know themselves and thus arrive at the knowledge of God".[10]

The encounter with self and God in solitude can often delude us because it is much different than we expected or hoped for since the first person we meet in prayer is ourselves and not God. This encounter can be frightening as we begin to listen to the chorus of voices within ourselves. We can be afraid of what we will find or where we will end up if we continue to listen honestly to ourselves. Francis himself, as Celano relates, was tempted to avoid the solitude of prayer lest he end up in worst shape than he was:

> But while he frequented hidden places as more suitable to prayer, the devil tried to drive him away by an evil suggestion. He put into his mind a certain woman who was monstrously hunchbacked, an inhabitant of the city, and who was a hideous sight to all. He threatened to make him like her if he did not leave off what he had begun. But *strengthened in the Lord,* he rejoiced to hear a reply of salvation and

> grace: 'Francis,' God said to him in spirit, 'what you have loved carnally and vainly you should now exchange for spiritual things, and taking the *bitter for the sweet,* despise yourself, if you wish to acknowledge me; for you will have a taste for what I speak of even if the order is reversed'. Immediately he was compelled to obey the divine command and was led to actual experience.[11]

In the midst of our attentive solitude we can hear the confusing echo of numerous, contradictory sentiments such as jealousy and thankfulness, hate and love, laziness and zeal, passion and apathy, egoism and humility, stress and peace, sadness and joy. We may feel at times the desire to do great things for the Lord — things that we may or may not ever do. The reality and intensity of some of our sentiments can cause us to be uneasy with ourselves and to believe that they really do not belong to us — they must be the result of others and their clearly negative influence on our lives. We are tempted to believe that they come from somewhere "out there" like the hunchbacked woman who was outside the cave waiting for Francis.

Or, when we finally do recognize the broad range and intensity of our feelings, we can be tempted to ignore or suppress them with the hope that they will simply disappear in time. All we need to do — or so we think — is to try to concentrate on God. Sometimes the experience of these sentiments can be so strong that we are tempted to run away from prayer. It is precisely in these moments that we need to practice obedience to ourselves by remaining still and listening to the chorus of voices with us. If we decide to bolt by refusing to listen to the voices within, we will never pray and God will not take us seriously. To quote Cyprian, the great African doctor who wrote a commentary on the Our Father: "How can you ask God to listen to you when you are not even willing to listen to yourself"?[12]

To listen to ourselves leads to an authentic expression of prayer in which we can confess who we are before God. God readily responds to prayer which is authentic and sincere. Honest, authentic prayer is an experience of liberation because it flows from the radical acceptance of self — we do not have to hide from ourselves anymore. This point is brought home in the story of the drunkard's prayer. I would like to use this story, whose origin at the moment escapes me, because it conveys well the power of honest and authentic prayer. According to this story, a drunkard came into town and all the bars were closed. Finally he found one that was about to close. He asked the bartender as he was closing up the bar why all the bars were closed. He responded that the town priest had died and everyone had gone to his funeral. Overcome with despair because of his inability to get a drink, the drunkard fell to his knees and prayed that the priest might be brought back to life: "Dear God, I really wish you'd bring the priest back to life because I'm going to die if I don't get a drink"! Sud-

denly the priest appeared alive and well and the bartender, obviously stunned, asked how it was that he came back to life. The priest responded that God answered the prayer of the drunkard because it was the first honest prayer that he had heard in a long time!

As previously mentioned, the process of listening to ourselves inherent to authentic prayer can be a confusing and painful experience. It is to enter into the hurricane of conflicting and disturbing emotions. Yet, not to enter into the hurricane is to remain in the false security of those who find themselves in the eye of the hurricane. We remain oblivious to the true force of the storm that surrounds us. This is dangerous because in a moment's notice we can be swept away by the raging force of our emotions. We should also remember that it is dangerous to enter into the hurricane because it means to engage in spiritual combat. To engage in spiritual combat is to enter into the desert, so to speak, where demons dwell. Like Christ, each one of us is called to enter into the desert with him. As Bonaventure writes in *The Tree of Life:*

> Come then, disciple of Christ, search into the secrets of solitude with your pious teacher, so that having become a companion of wild beasts, you may become an imitator and sharer of the hidden silence, the devout prayer, the day long fasting and the three encounters with the cunning enemy. And so you will learn to have recourse to that [teacher] in every crisis of temptation because *we do not have a high priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tried in all things as we are, except sin.* [13]

In fact, as the desert temptations depicted in the Gospel reveal, Christ practiced obedience as he listened to himself in the desert. There he was assailed by many of the temptations common to humanity. He did not turn and run. This point was brought out well in the, albeit controversial, movie *The Last Temptation of Christ.* In one very powerful scene from this film Christ sat down in the middle of the desert and drew a line around himself in the sand. Throughout the night he wrestled with any number of demons. He did not leave the circle even in the midst of great temptations. Instead of fleeing, he responded with the Word of God which he heard in solitude. We find Christ doing the same thing in the Garden of Gethsemane before his death. Instead of running he listened to his heart and expressed his anguish in the presence of the Father. In the midst of his prayer he also listened to the will of the Father and responded with an obedience unto death.

In the life of Francis of Assisi we find a man who had the courage to be obedient to himself and God by listening to himself and God. In the *Prayer before the Crucifix* we see that fear did not keep him from admitting that he was in darkness, that his faith was deficient, his hope shaky

and his love weak. He readily conceded that he was unable to carry out the will of God without grace:

> Most high, glorious God, enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge, so that I may carry out Your holy and true command. [14]

The prayers of St. Francis reveal a man who was so free that he did not have the need nor desire to hide himself from God. His manner of prayer suggests this very same freedom:

> But when he prayed in the woods and solitary places, he would fill the woods with his sighs, water the places with his tears, strike his breast with his hand; and discovering there a secret hiding place, he would often speak with his Lord in words. There he would give answer to his judge; there he would offer his petitions to his father; there he would talk to his friend; there he would rejoice with the bridegroom. [15]

Francis became a living prayer because he became transparent to himself, others and God. The false images of self and God which often function as seemingly insurmountable barricades for some in their search for God did not keep him from listening to and accepting himself in God's presence. When he could obediently affirm the truth of himself, he could accept the true God with a devoted obedience of mind and heart. This truth did not come without a steep price as Francis' wrestling with demons in prayer so clearly attest. As he struggled, his prayer became a way of life; or better said, his manner of living was transformed into prayer. As a result, he became a living, continual prayer offered in the presence of God. The power of his prayer did not escape the eyes of those around him who approached him so that they might learn from him how to walk the path of true prayer. Ultimately Francis' obedient prayer brought him to the heights of Mount La Verna where, in the midst of comtemplation, he was transformed in the image of the very same Word to whom he had listened with such attentiveness.

. . . the ascent to God begins when we descend into our humanity by listening to and accepting ourselves before God.

Bonaventure reflected theologically on Francis' experience and taught that true prayer is born in the experience of ourselves as we are before God; that is, as crippled mendicants completely dependent on his love for our continued existence. [16] For Bonaventure, we are, spiritually speaking, already like the hunchback woman Francis feared. To affirm that we are

hunchbacked, bent over and crippled, was for Bonaventure the simple admission of the reality of sin and its effect in our lives. The human condition, as described in *The Journey of the Soul into God,* appears in a seemingly negative light. Such language should not startle us today as we often hear talk in psychological circles of the dark, shadow side of humanity and the necessity of rediscovering and reaffirming the reality of sin. However bleak the situation of humanity before God may seem to those who read Bonaventure, it is crucial to remember that he views the human condition through the perspective of the gift of salvation offered in Christ Jesus:

> According to the original state of Creation, the human person was created fit for the quiet of contemplation, and thus *God placed him in the paradise of pleasures* (Gen. 2:15). But turning away from the true light to a changeable good, he and all who were to follow, were through his own fault bent over by original sin which infected human nature in two ways; that is the mind with *ignorance* and the flesh with *concupiscence.* And so it is that the human person, *blinded* and *bent over,* sits in darkness and does not see the light of heaven unless grace with justice come to aid against *concupiscence* and unless knowledge with wisdom come to aid against *ignorance.* All this is done through Jesus Christ, *whom God made for us wisdom, justice, sanctification and redemption.* [17]

In the Bonaventurian view of things, the incarnate Word, out of obedience to the Father, descended into the stark poverty of the human condition so that he might lead us out of the bondage of sin back into the freedom of God's Kingdom. We, who were already poor by nature of the fact that we are creatures, are in need of the divine intervention of the Most High because sin has rendered us anxious mendicants. As Bonaventure says, we have made ourselves poor through our decision to chose temporal, transistory goods instead of the eternal, everlasting good which is God himself. Consequently we are never really at rest. Instead of looking to God as the source of truth, our intellectual powers look elsewhere and are plunged into ignorance, misery and doubt. Instead of conforming our will to God as the highest good through love, we settle for lesser goods and lesser loves which leave us unsatisfied. Our choice to look elsewhere for truth and to focus our desires on transitory goods of the earth both blinds us and pulls us, so to speak, toward the ground and leaves us bent over like a hunchback. Bent over and blinded by sin, we are like the beggar Bartimeus of Luke's Gospel seated at the gate of Jericho. We call out to the Saviour to heal us and join our prayer to Bartimeus': "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me". Just as the crowd around Jesus both helped and hindered Bartimeus as he called out for mercy, so too does the world around us both draw us closer to the Lord and lead us away from him.

Just as Jesus had Bartimeus lifted up and brought to him, so too are we lifted up and brought to Christ through grace and healed of our spiritual blindness. In the same way, just as Jesus reached out and raised up the son of the widow of Naim from his death bed, Christ extends his hand to raise us from the dead back to life. As a result, we are no longer condemned to a life of selfish, and ultimately deadly, pursuits which would turn us back toward ourselves and leave us perpetually bent over. Set free from the insistent pull of concupiscence and illuminated by the light of grace, we can stand straight once again and contemplate the glory of God reflected so brilliantly in the face of Christ. His intervention into human history allows us to once again stand before God as the free sons of the Most High God. Certainly the price of our liberation is high: the death of the Father's only begotten Son. Yet, the death of Christ becomes a paradigm for our own contemplative journey: in death he goes before us and calls us to follow in his footsteps along the path he has opened back to the Father.

To return to the Father in contemplation along the path marked out by the Son is to accompany the apostles James, Peter, and John as they ascend Mount Tabor with Christ. To those who are at all familiar with Bonaventure's predilection for the number three and his work *The Triple Way,* it should not be surprising at all to see that there are three ways back to the Father. Each apostle represents in his own fashion one particular manner of following Christ:

> ...the *three ways of ascending* to the peak of contemplation are understood by means of these three people. For instance, in one manner the ascent is made by the way of *splendor,* and Augustine teaches this way of ascending, and it is represented here by Peter. The ascent is made in another manner by means of the way of *sorrow and lamentation,* and this [way is pointed out] here in Jacob, and this manner is common to all who pray. [The ascent is made] in the third manner by means of the way of *love,* Dionysius teaches this [way], and it is represented here by John... [18]

According to Jerome, the name Peter in Hebrew means "the one who knows". "Evidently Peter is given this title because he knew that Christ was the Messiah and acknowledged that reality when asked by the Lord: "Who do you say that I am." Bonaventure thus understands Peter as a symbol of all those who come to know God through intellectual investigation. This way is the Augustinian "way of splendor" whereby the contemplative rises into the mystery of God through reflection on the traces of the Trinity revealed in the splendor of created reality. The first six chapters of *The Journey of the Soul into God* represent this theological approach known as positive or kataphatic theology. The apostle John, for his part, represents those contemplatives who are drawn upward into the

mystery of God through the power of divine grace. This interpretation is based on Jerome's statement that John in Hebrew means "the one in whom graces resides." From a theological perspective, the way of John is that outlined in the negative or apophatic theology of the Pseudo-Dionysius and found in the seventh chapter of *The Journey of the Soul into God.* The apostle James, or Jacob, is a figure symbolic of all people who seek out God in penance and the struggle of prayer for his name in Hebrew means "the wrestler" or "the one who struggles."

In his *Major Life of St. Francis,* Bonaventure considers Francis to be a Jacob figure who wrestles with his own demons in the darkness of the night. He sees Francis as a new Jacob as he struggles to hear and incarnate the Word of God which had been spoken to him in the cave outside of Assisi, in the deserted chapel of San Damiano, in the fraternity of friars, in the community of the Church and in the splendors of Creation. In the process of his struggle which is proper to conversion, Francis suffers the same fate as Jacob who was wounded by the mysterious angel in the night. Like Jacob, he comes away crippled from his encounter with the Seraph. The brand marks of the Seraph reveal Francis to be a living witness to the transforming power of the Most High. As a result of his transformation, he, like Jacob before him, receives a new name. Bonaventure points out that Francis is no longer simply Jacob but Jacob-Israel for according to Jerome the name "Israel" means "the one who sees God." In his spiritual transformation through struggle, Francis becomes a model for all of us who would be obedient to our true selves, honestly embrace own unique poverty and become molded into the image of the living Word of God.

Our poverty, which we also recognize as we listen to ourselves in the solitude of our hearts, leads us to wisdom. We do not have to be ashamed of ourselves. All of our thoughts and feelings, dreams and fantasies, express our state as creatures. Since we are totally dependent on God, we do not have to be afraid of giving ourselves over to him with confidence. Our failures, errors and sins are one dimension of our poverty along with our joys, successes and good deeds. We need not tremble in fear as we recognize that image of the hunchbacked cripple within us. Why? Because the cripple acknowledged and embraced is molded like molten wax by the searing power of the Seraph into the image of Christ. This reality indicates to us the radical, revolutionary nature of Franciscan prayer: the ascent to God begins when we descend into our humanity by listening to and accepting ourselves before God. In this light we can affirm that the ascent to heaven comes through a descent to earth. The ascent to the spiritual world begins with a descent into the material world. This is the struggle of Jacob which lead to the contemplative experience of Israel and was revealed by God to Francis on Mount La Verna.

Let us then descend into the solitude of our hearts where we can listen to ourselves and as we do so, listen to the Spirit of the Lord who prays unceasingly within us...

Endnotes

[1] Quoted in Diane Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses* (New York: Random House, 1990) 191.

[2] A reproduction of the fresco of obedience is found in Paschal Magro, *The Tomb of Saint Francis* (Assisi: Casa Editrice Francescana, 1982) 55. On this fresco and the others on poverty and chastity found in the lower basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, see: Franco Tardioli, *Dante Alighieri Francescano* (Roma: Editrice Nouvi Autori, 1983) 92-98.

[3] See: "Oboedio" in Charton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1975) 1239.

[4] On prayer and desire, see: Ann and Barry Ulanov, *Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 13-25. Several insights from this book have been instrumental in the conception of this conference.

[5] See: "Surdus" in Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary,* 1817 and Ackerman, *A Natural History of the Senses,* 175.

[6] Johann Auer, *Die Entwicklung der Gnadenlehre in der Hochscholastik. Das Wesen der Gnade* (Freiburg: Herder, 1942) 347.

[7] Leo Buscaglia, *Living, Loving, and Learning,* ed. Steven Short (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982) 192.

[8] Roberta C. Bondi, *To Pray and to Love: Conversations on Prayer with the Early Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991) 75-95.

[9] *Perf vitae,* c. 1, n. 6 (VIII, 109b). All translations from the works of Bonaventure and others are mine unless otherwise noted.

[10] The latin text is quoted in Ignatius Brady, "The History of Mental Prayer in the Order of Friars Minor," *Franciscan Studies* 11 (1951): 334, n. 71.

[11] 2 *Cel,* 9 in Marion A. Habig, ed., *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of Sources for the life of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973) 369.

[12] *Tertulliano-Cipriano-Agostino: Il Padre nostro,* trans. Luigi Vicario, ed. Vittorino Grossi (Roma: Borla, 1980) 117.

[13] *Lig vit,* fr. 3, n. 10 (VIII, 73b).

[14] *OrCruc* in *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works,* trans. and intro. Ignatius Brady and Regis Armstrong (New York: Paulist Press, 1982) 103.

[15] 2 *Cel.* 95 in *Omnibus,* 440.

[16] Timothy Johnson, *Iste Pauper Clamavit: Saint Bonaventure's Mendicant Theology of Prayer* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 1990). The remainder of the conference is based primarily on the research found in this thesis.

[17] *Itin,* c. 1, n. 7 (V, 297b-298a).

[18] *Comm Lc,* c. 9, n. 49 (VII, 232a).

YOUTH

upright
I cited the shades of light
by name
the star glided to my finger
wedding-ring
I clasped sunshine between my fingers
basic whiteness crest of the wave
night's songster swallowed harmony in my laughter

deluded

serpent cheetah my brother
the one I had to master the only one recognizable
the soul of my soul
face to face
pledge of your promise its roots in our most sacred selves
tree of purity
the white flower never opened its bridal gown
the tree refolded its leaves
worm-eaten
on my nape the sky
chrysalis
I shall know the mystery of putrid columns where a bird
bumps its wings
I shall know the mystery of the note suspended at the tree
glued on a horizon of icy embers

miasmas of arabesque indifference in fluid
hollowed by a ripple

the sea lurked
the sky sinks into ecstacy
the long wings of a gull dance over the sea

A summer vision surged before my eyes

emotion embossed in a bird's throat
the hymn of joy

castrated barbarians penetrate the temple
the sun suspends its note

outcries

the organ vibrates mystic at the threshold of worship

paired lanterns
wind up in the tomb at the edge of the waltz

hands joined outside the waltz

waltz of beings suspended

beyond death will we be a star

the friend sleeps

dungeon of blasphemies
final prayer sacrifice of blood

captive

on my forehead I attracted sunshine

the flash of blood and ice

the Image mastered me

a cluster of blue bushes
liquid sun between my teeth
enclosed

a mast its roots in the water
its arms from east to west its top sturdy

I no longer fear the white flame
I no longer fear the anguish of the sea
night's grip on my body is no longer

joy exists

I am joy's companion

Lisa Boscane

Boscane wrote this poem before entering the Poor Clare Monastery, Nice-Cimiez, France. It was published in her volume, *la part d'ombre* (Paris: éditions saint-germain-des-prés, 1972, pages 24-31). It is translated into English for the first time here by Sister Mary-Theresa McCarthy, RSM, professor of French at Georgian Court College, Lakewood, NJ.

Rerum Novarum, The Collapse of Marxism, and Francis of Assisi

DR. ANTHONY MURPHY

Introduction

Today we celebrate both the Eve of Francis Day, the day of the Transitus, as well as the centenary of Leo XIII's seminal encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, or as it is sometimes translated: *The Conditions of the Workingman*. Although this papal letter establishes Catholic social policy concerning the rights and duties of capital and labor, develops a critique of totalitarian socialism, argues for the right of private property, develops a doctrine of a minimum fair wage, charges the state with a special obligation to protect the poor, and develops a natural rights defense of trade unionism, I wish to argue that at the heart of the message is a radical Christian vision of social peace as the reconciliation of heretofore antagonistic classes. Finally I wish to suggest that a return to the Gospel message, as called for by Leo XIII one hundred years ago, represents a viable social alternative in today's world, following the collapse of Marxism, to the excesses of either unrestrained capitalism or violent nationalism. The pope's ideals regarding peace and fraternity, we shall see, are central to the vision of Francis of Assisi.

The Marxist Doctrine of Class Warfare

At the very center of the Marxist critique of capitalist economies is the doctrine of class warfare; it is this doctrine that the encyclical wishes to meet head on. To cite the letter directly:

> The great mistake that is made in the matter now under consideration, is to possess oneself of the idea that class is naturally hostile to class; that rich and poor are intended by nature to live at war with one another.[1]

To be sure the letter recognizes class struggle, it is a fact of history. Whereas Marxist doctrine holds not only that such class warfare is the driving engine of history, it is inevitable; it must necessarily continue until all classes other than the working class are eliminated.

Foreseeing the inevitable social upheavals that are bound to follow on the heels of such a doctrine, Leo XIII speaks in 1891 of an imminent crisis fostered by the spirit of revolution:

> The elements of a conflict are unmistakable. We perceive them in the growth of industry and the marvelous discoveries of science; in the changed relations of employers and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of individuals and the poverty of the masses.[2]

Indeed, the plight of the poor is singled out repeatedly for special consideration. It is significant to note that for Leo XIII, one of the chief factors responsible for the woes of the poor is the passing of the medieval guild and the repudiation of the Church as an effective spokesman for the poor.

> But all agree, and there can be no question whatever, that some remedy must be found, and quickly found, for the misery and wretchedness which press so heavily at this moment on the large majority of the very poor. **For the ancient workingmen's guilds were destroyed in the last century, and no other organization took their place. Public institutions and the laws have repudiated the ancient religion.**[3]

One might ask what relevance these remarks have for the modern world? One hundred years after *Rerum Novarum*, has not the socialist experiment come and, within this year, failed? What ideology is going to replace Marxism in the East? If the experts are correct, Marxist ideology will be replaced by various form of violent nationalism and other form of human exploitation. The plight of the workingman will soon be desperate, if it isn't already in the collapsed Eastern block. Is not the line between North and South, between the first and the third world, a line that distinguishes rich from poor? Even if we look to our own land, at the plight of the inner cities, is it not obvious that Leo XIII's description of human misery still holds true?[4] Similarly, Leo XIII's justly notable dictum still holds: "There is nothing more useful than to look at the world as it really is."[5]

Leo XIII's rejection of the inevitability of class warfare is complete:

> So irrational and so false is this view, that the exact contrary is the truth. Just as the symmetry of the human body is the result of the disposition of the members of the body, so in a State it is ordained by nature that these two classes should exist in harmony and agreement, and should, as it were, fit into one another, so as to maintain the equilibrium of the body politic. Each requires the other; capital cannot do without labor, nor labor without capital.[6]

Anthony Murphy (Ph.D., Notre Dame University) teaches in the Department of Philosophy at St. Bonaventure University. He offers special courses in the philosophy of the Franciscan masters. The author prepared this address for a convocation at St. Bonaventure University on the eve of the Feast of St. Francis, 1991.

Underpinning this commitment to equilibrium is an uncompromising affirmation of the equal dignity of each person, a spiritual equality. The remedy for radical social inequality, as it turns out, is none other than a universal return to the Gospel message (I prefer, in the year 1991 of the common era, to speak of a return to the Hebrew-Christian message) affirming the radical equality and dignity of all men and women:

> But, if Christian precepts prevail, the two classes will not only be united in the bonds of friendship, but also in those of brotherly love. For they will understand and feel that all men are children of the common father, that is, of God.[7]

Now we have reached the core of the letter, — the sufficient condition for overcoming class warfare is a return to the Common Scriptures. In a short introduction to the encyclical, Etienne Gilson highlights what he takes to be Leo XIII's view of the fundamental error of the modern world, the very source of the conflict between classes:

> Practically all the positions rejected by Pope Leo XIII are so many varieties of one and the same error, namely, the refusal to recognize the existence of God, of a supernatural order, and of the duty we have to submit to it.[8]

By way of summary it may be said that the letter presents two reasons for the distress of the masses and the consequent class warfare after the industrial revolution: 1) the destruction of the guilds without their replacement by new associations based on Christian principles, and 2) the repudiation of the Church as a common home for both capital and labor.[9]

Return to a Modified Guild

I have decided to look closely at Leo XIII's understanding of the guild and the possible role it might play in overcoming social conflict. The last of four sections of the letter deals with "Workman's Associations" and what are interestingly referred to as "societies of mutual aid."[10] Since for Leo XIII it was the loss of the guilds that was in great part responsible for rendering the workingman powerless, it is reasonable to believe that the reintroduction of the Christian guild, modified to meet the new circumstances of the industrial, or even post-industrial world, will remedy the modern distress. *Rerum Novarum* has often been called the Workingman's Charter and is seen as giving its blessing to the Labor movement, which it has, but we must be careful not to misrepresent Leo XIII's intentions, making a distinction, as he does, between true and false labor associations. It becomes clear in reading *Rerum Novarum* that Leo XIII is not speaking of unions as we know them but of an association that is radically different. For this reason I prefer to contrast modern unions from what I prefer to call "Christian Industrial Guilds."

In a discussion of Workmen's Organizations Leo XIII remarks:

> The most important of all are Workmen's Associations; for these virtually include all the rest. History attests what excellent results were affected by the artificer's guilds of a former day. . . . Such association should be adapted to the requirements of the age in which we live.[11]

The reason for the coming together of workmen is simply that there is strength in numbers. Quoting *Proverbs* 18:19 "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city." Such associations might be called brotherhoods or fraternal organizations. They are strictly private associations formed for "the private advantage of the associates."[12]

The fraternity was to be a model of peaceful reconciliation of social antagonisms.

At this point Leo XIII offer's a natural rights argument for the existence of such associations; "they cannot," he argues, "be prohibited by the State absolutely and as such." The argument is to the point:

> If it (the State) forbids its citizens to form association, it contradicts the very principle of its own existence; for both they and it exist in virtue of the same principle, viz., the natural propensity of man to live in society.[13]

In a discussion of what are referred to as "false labor societies," we are told that they are:

> in the hands of invisible leaders, and are managed on principles far from compatible with Christianity and the public well-being; and that they do their best to get into their hands the whole field of labor and to force workmen either to join them or starve.[14]

In short, the modern Christian Industrial Guild cannot be so large as to be either alienating to the individual workers, or of such a size as to have the power of monopoly. In addition it must be a voluntary organization, beyond all compulsion. Most importantly, it must be either guided by, or at least compatible with, Christian principles and with an eye to the common good. A whole host of questions concerning practicality arise at this point. Is there to be one union for Catholics and other Christians, another for Jews, and another still for the unbeliever? Minimally it appears that all that is called for is that the association be not incompatible with Christian principles. At the time of the writing of this letter, the words "compatible with Christian principles" were code words for non-Marxist. It was always thought advisable that in the U.S., Catholics should join neutral-secular unions on the condition that they also join a Catholic Association **where they could have the necessary training in Catholic social principles.**[15]

The aim of these associations is not only to empower the workingman but more importantly,

> to infuse the spirit of justice into the mutual relations of employers and employed; to keep before the eyes of both classes the precepts of duty and the laws of the Gospel. For it is the Gospel which, by inculcating self-restraint, keeps men within the bounds of moderation, and tends to **establish harmony among the divergent interests and various classes** which compose the State.[16]

Reconciliation of both classes comes about as a result of a joint commitment to the Gospel message. The role of the Catholic association was to proclaim that message to workers. Understood in this context, one of the primary aims of association is education, — the radical transformation of the consciousness of the Christian worker. A working class aware of its own dignity and of the precepts of Justice would be a formidable force for social change.

The empowerment of the worker should be accompanied by a social policy that encourages as many people as possible to become owners. "The law, therefore, should favor ownership (contrary to Marx) and its policy should be to induce as many people as possible to become owners."[17] Again we are told that:

> If working people can be encouraged to look forward to obtaining a share in the land, the result will be that the gulf between vast wealth and deep poverty will be bridged over, and **the two orders will be brought nearer together.**[18]

For Leo XIII, the way to overcome inequality is not the abolishment of private property, as the socialists would have it, but rather the adoption of a policy that encourages universal ownership.[19]

The distinction between the modern trade union and the Christian industrial guild becomes clear when we examine the features of the modern guild. The heart of the updated guild is its educational function, — it is the equivalent of the moral educator of the working class. The following features are significant: 1) "It must pay special and chief attention to piety and morality, and that their social discipline must be directed throughout by these considerations." Otherwise they become indistinguishable from organizations that pay no attention to religious considerations at all.[20] 2) It must "look first and before all to God; let religious instruction have therein a foremost place, each one being carefully taught what is his duty to God, what he is to believe, what he is to hope for, and how he is to work out his salvation."[21] It must urge upon all men of every class the Gospel message of justice, universal brotherhood, peace, and reconciliation. In short, it is the chief tool not only of empowerment but also for the Christian formation of the worker, for his education in Christian social principles.

Peace and the Ideal of the Christian Fraternity

At the heart of Leo XIII's message is a Christian vision of social peace as the reconciliation of heretofore antagonistic forces or classes. Not surprisingly such a vision is central to the life of Francis of Assisi. Since this is Francis week, it is fitting that I conclude with a reflection on Francis's vision of the relation between peace and brotherhood. In an intriguing remark in a recent work on the foundation of the Franciscan brotherhood, Theophile Desbonnets stresses the centrality of peace to the early vision of Francis, Desbonnets remarks:

> The first aim of the Franciscan brotherhood was to establish a bond of charity among persons of very different origins, gathered around a program of religious life that was identical for them all. Thus the first Franciscans provided the image of a small cell where society is reconciled. Antagonisms, including legitimate ones, were overcome as a prefiguring of the heavenly society. They achieved **peace** among themselves, the ideal state in the mind of medieval people.[22]

Here, I argue, we have many of the elements of Leo XIII's Christian Guild: small voluntary brotherhoods of disparate people and classes brought together and reconciled in the bond of Christian charity. Such cells were to be the vehicle of a larger social transformation, serving as images of a transformed social order. The fraternity was to be a model of peaceful reconciliation of social antagonisms. One might argue that such brotherhoods are themselves modeled on the experience of the primitive Church as described in the *Act of the Apostles*. The only difference being that Christian Guilds would be limited associations of workingmen in pursuit of their economic advantage.

Whatever the case, it is clear that for Francis's chief interpreter, St. Bonaventure, peace was the highest good. In the Prologue to the *Itinerarium*, Bonaventure makes it perfectly clear, uttering his request in his initial prayer, that the greatest good in human life, that toward which all humans must direct their efforts if they wish to find ultimate happiness, is Peace. Indeed the word "peace" is uttered some 12 times in the first paragraph of the Prologue and 17 times in the entire Prologue.

For a clear statement of Francis's proclamation of peace it would be helpful to turn to the *Legenda*. There Bonaventure writes of Francis:

> Under divine inspiration the man of God now began to strive after Gospel perfection and invite others to penance. In all his preaching, he proclaimed peace, saying: "May the Lord give you peace" (Matt, 10:12; Luke 10:5), as the greeting to the people at the beginning of his sermon. As he later testified, he had learned this greeting in a revelation from the Lord. Hence, according to the words of a prophet and inspired by the spirit of the prophets, he proclaimed peace, preached salvation and by his salutary warnings united in a bond of true peace

many who had previously been in opposition to Christ and far from salvation.[23]

Bonaventure's source for this passage is found in the *First Life of Celano*; there Celano writes:

> In all his preaching, before he proposed the word of God to those gathered about, he first prayed for peace for them, saying: "The Lord give you peace." He always most devoutly announced peace to men and women, to all he met and overtook. For this reason many who had hated peace and had hated also salvation embraced peace, through the cooperation of the Lord, with all their heart and were made children of peace and seekers after eternal salvation.[24]

Rerum Novarum as a Radical Document

If I am correct, *Rerum Novarum*, is far more radical than one might first expect. The denial of the inevitability of class warfare, the commitment to the Gospel message, the stress on the reconciliation of all classes through the development of Christian Industrial Guilds and the consequent empowerment and education of the workingman, is nothing other than a program for the recommitment of the West to the Gospel values of Peace and Justice. That this is the case is stated clearly:

> If, then, society is to be cured now, in no other way can it be cured but by a return to Christian life and Christian Institutions. When a society is perishing, the true advice to give to those who would restore it is to recall it to the principles from which it sprang. For the purpose and perfection of an association is to aim at and to attain that for which it was formed; and its operation should be put in motion and inspired by the end and object which originally gave it its being. So that to fall away from its primal constitution is disease; to go back to it is recovery.[25]

Today, the collapse of Marxism is being touted as a victory for the free market, a vindication of the capitalist system. Are we to believe that the only viable visions for the future are exhausted by capitalism and nationalism? *Rerum Novarum*, rooted as it is in a Hebraic-Christian tradition stretching from *Isaiah* and *Amos* to Francis and the *Catholic Worker*, in our day, may indeed offer the West a non violent alternative, at this crucial juncture in human history, to unbridled capitalism and nationalism. Perhaps we are faced with the same decision in 1991 as in 1891.

Endnotes

[1] *Rerum Novarum*, (15) collected in Joseph Husslein, S.J., *Social Wellsprings* (Milwaukee, 1940), p. 177.

[2] *Ibid.*, (1), p. 167.

[3] *Ibid.*, (2), p. 168.

[4] The September report of the U.S. Department of Commerce released 9/26/91 has shown a startling increase in American poverty; over 33.6 million Americans, 13.5% of our population (*one person out of seven*), now live in poverty. This is an increase of 22% since 1973, a period in which 11.1% of the population or one out of nine people were living in poverty. Currently there are more poor in the U.S. than there are people in Canada. Surely much of this increase is due to the current recession but, beyond that, the ever widening gulf between rich and poor over the last decade has been well documented. Reported in the *Buffalo News*, 9/27/91.

[5] *Ibid.*, (14), p. 177.

[6] *Ibid.*, (15), p. 177.

[7] *Ibid.*, (21), p. 182.

[8] Etienne Gilson, *The Church Speaks to the Modern World* (N.Y., 1954), p. 7.

[9] *Rerum*, p. 168, note 2.

[10] *Ibid.*, (36) - (45), pp. 195-204. The very mention of "mutual aid societies" cannot help but bring to mind the utopian socialist tradition.

[11] *Ibid.*, (36), pp. 195-6. It is curious to note that these societies may be associations of workmen alone or "of workmen and employers together."

[12] *Ibid.*, (37), p. 197.

[13] *Ibid.*, (38), p. 197.

[14] *Ibid.*, (40), p. 198.

[15] See *Rerum*, (42), p. 201 note 36.

[16] *Ibid.*, (41), p. 199.

[17] *Ibid.*, (35), p. 194.

[18] *Ibid.*.

[19] Certainly, for Leo XIII, inequalities are a part of nature but their economic effects, the distress they cause for the poor, can be greatly reduced. All notions of producing a social order that is totally equal are not only utopian but also unnatural and dangerous.

[20] *Ibid.*, (42), p. 200.

[21] *Ibid.*, (42), p. 201.

[22] Theophile Desbonnets, *From Intuition to Institution: The Franciscans* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 19-20.

[23] St. Bonaventure, *The Life of Francis*, Ewert Cousins, *Bonaventure* (New York, 1978), p. 200. See also Is. 52:7.

[24] Thomas of Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago, 1962), p. 24.

[25] *Rerum*, (22), p. 183.

Yokels at the King's Banquet: Bonaventure on Receiving the Eucharist Worthily

HARRY AVELING, T.S.S.F.

This is the third of five sermons preached by St. Bonaventure on the Eucharist on various Maundy Thursday occasions. It is undated and because of its "incomplete" nature (having a theme text but no second "protheme") may be the earliest of them all.

The sermon deals with the way the Christian should receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which all Catholics had been encouraged to do at Easter by the IV Lateran Council in 1215. Bonaventure speaks to his listeners on matters of philosophy (the sacrament as "sign") and theology (there is a brief, and not altogether clear, digression on the Atonement, which follows Anselm's thought on the topic). But his major aim is practical: the sacrament requires deep self-examination beforehand, our whole hearted response to the love and glory of God at the time of communion, and our deepest thanksgiving afterwards. Bonaventure makes a thorough use of scripture, as well as of fable (the yokel at the banquet) and of his listener's own experience of the delights of feasting.

One of the most important features of the banquet is the characteristically medieval generosity of the host. He serves us with fine food which is, stunningly, Himself: His gift of Himself to us, for our redemption to the full humanity for which we were created. Those who abuse this gift — whether through professional calculation, over-familiarity, or simple

Fr. Aveling is a member of the Third Order of the Episcopalian Society of St. Francis. He is currently attached to the Dept. of Malay Studies, National University of Singapore, where he is conducting research on religious themes in Malay prose of the 1980's. His evenings are spent reading Alexander of Hales.

indifference — receive "beans and lentils" instead of nourishment, strength and eternal life. They eat physically, as Bonaventure argues in other sermons given on this same day, but not spiritually. They are condemned by their own actions. The sermon, in facts, ends on this sombre note, with a serious warning from Isaiah. What we are not given, but know to have existed as an essential part of the medieval "university" sermon, are the final words of hope: "Let us pray. . .", that we may be made worthy of the promises of God.

The sermon in its original Latin is to be found in Volume IX of the Collected Works, *Opera Omnia*, pages 253 to 255.

Sermon III

"The bread I give is my flesh. It is for the life of the world" (John 6:51).

These words express the mystery of the sacrament. Today our most holy mother, the Church, recalls the institution of that sacrament. The text describes that institution in three ways. The first part, *"The bread I give"*, describes an extrinsic sign, which is available to the senses. The second part, *"is my flesh"*, deals with the intrinsic content of the sacrament, which is not available to the senses. And the third part, *"It is for the life of the world"*, tells us of the obvious and beneficial effects of the sacrament. The appearance stimulates the senses. The invisible existence dumbfounds our intellect. But most of all, the marvelous effects of the sacrament deeply stirs our most profound emotions.

Christ promises to give his disciples bread in this text. The promise is fulfilled in the Last Supper. Matthew 26:26 tells us that: *"As they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples"*. And the first epistle to the Corinthians, 11:23-24, says: *"The Lord Jesus, on the night in which he was betrayed, took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and said: 'Take this and eat it'*, (The Lord also turned a small amount of bread into a large amount; we dealt with that in the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday in Lent.)

This bread is to be *"taken"* in a particular way. Firstly, we must be sincere within ourselves, Paul writes, again in 1 Corinthians 11: *"Let a man examine himself, and then eat of the bread and drink of the cup in the light of that examination. For he who eats and drinks eats and drinks a judgement upon himself"* (verses 28-29). There are a number of aspects to this judgement:

(i) There are physical consequences. Unworthiness brings illness and even death upon so. Paul continues: *"So many among you are sick and feeble, and many have passed away"* (v. 30).

(ii) There is the danger of losing our spiritual benefits. Habakkuk 2:8 states: *"They will plunder you because of the blood of a man"* — that man being, of course, Christ.

(iii) The soul becomes blind, foul and polluted. Lamentations 4:14 states: *"the blind walked in the streets, polluted with blood"* — the blood of Christ, which we receive in the sacrament.

(iv) Finally, those who receive the sacrament unworthily will be accused more severely and condemned more harshly in the Last Judgement. The blood of Christ itself will indict them. Christ will cry out against insincere preachers and those who merely make a living from His body and blood: *"On earth, do not cover my blood,"* just as Job did (16:18). They are the most unworthy of persons. Pope Gregory has written: "He who dares to violate the inviolable Sacrament of the body of the Lord, as Judas did, also betrays the Son of Man." What a terrible thing it is to celebrate and take communion in such an unworthy manner! And they do it not just once, but time and time again. When we realize the severity of the punishment that will be meted out to those who have committed a single act of sexual misconduct, a single act of arrogance, greed or envy, can we even begin to imagine what awaits those who betray Christ so often?

So we must purify ourselves inwardly if we are to receive such a precious thing, such comfort, the whole treasure of heaven, the absolute glory of the Angels, the Lord of the ages, the judge of the living and the dead. To Paul's text in Corinthians we can add Isaiah 52:11: *"purify yourselves, you who shall bear the vessels of the Lord."*

Secondly, there should also be a spiritual response in the person who receives the body and blood of Christ. There is a story about a country yokel who was invited to dine with a prince. Instead of dining lavishly, he filled his belly with beans and lentils. Those who are fascinated by the things of this world are like that yokel. 1 Corinthians 10:21 tells us that: *"You cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons as well."* You think you deal well when you are offered the choicest cuts at a banquet. Here we are offered three noble courses, all on the one plate. There is the sweetest meat: Christ said, *"My flesh is food for you"* (John 6:55). There is His soul, which is even sweeter and nobler. As John states: *"It is the spirit which gives life."* And there is His godlike nature, which is the sweetest of all. *"How abundant is the extent of your sweetness, Oh Lord,"* sings the Psalmist (31:19). The book of Wisdom says: "You gave your people bread from heaven, containing every *sweetness and such delight"* (16:20). Why is this bread so marvelous? Christ was the One whom *"the angels desired to see"* (1 Peter 1:12). Looking is good, but tasting is

A person who gives you the things which belong to him shows you love. But the person who gives you himself, gives you the greatest love of all.

---

in a certain way Christ's glory is already here, although it is hidden within this Eucharist.

And Christ did indeed give himself. He gave himself as a sacrifice of reconciliation. Psalms tells us that God does not desire *"sacrifices and offerings"* (40:6), as provided by the Mosaic law, because these things give Him no pleasure. Rather, the coming of Christ was promised as a far greater offering: *"Behold, I come"*, says Psalm 50:3. Through the offering made by Christ, His most beloved Son, God the Father receives *"the sacrifice of justice"* (Psalm 51:19).

He also gave Himself as the price paid for our redemption. 1 Peter 1:18-19 reminds us: *"You have not been redeemed by perishable gold and silver but by the precious blood of Christ, who is like the purest of lambs."* In Revelation 5:9, too, we read: *"You have redeemed us for God through Your blood."* By this means, humanity was taken back from Satan, who had laid claim to the human race. Not that God had to pay the devil anything to liberate humanity. The price was offered to God Himself, whose Majesty had been offended by sin. Once human dignity had been restored, the devil was plundered of that which he had so unjustly seized.

And, again, Christ gave Himself in the form of a food which serves to restore our health. Because Adam ate forbidden food, he brought death on himself and his descendants. Christ is also food, but life-giving food.

I regret to say that there are some persons who do not find this divine food to their taste. There are three reasons for this:

(i) Some people are overwhelmed by their senses. Those who are sick often have no interest in food or any enjoyment in eating, no matter how good the food might be. The psalm says: *"Their soul abominated all food and they came close to the doors of death"* (107:18). Job 33:20 tells us: *"his life loathes bread and those foods which he once found so desirable."*

(ii) Again, the senses can be ruined through excess, as happens when one eats too much. Proverbs 27:7 states: *"A full spirit will even trample on honeycomb and accept the bitter rather than the sweet."* And 1 Corinthians 11:20 warns: *"When you come together as a group, it is not for the purpose of eating the Lord's Supper. . ."* Bernard of Clairvaux states that: "Divine consolation is precious, but it is not given to those who seek other delights"

(iii) Finally the senses can be rather weak. Those who are weakened by hunger, or oppressed by want, never seem to be able to taste anything. *"My eyes became weak because of my deprivation"*, says Psalm 88:9. 1 Samuel 3:2-3 tells us about Eli *"who could not see"*, even though *"the lamp of God had not been extinguished."*

The person whose senses have been spoiled cannot receive the body of Christ in any decent way. Solid food is only for the healthy, for those who through long and *"regular exercise, have trained their senses to enjoy the good"*, as we find in Hebrews 5:14.

Thirdly, once we have taken this bread, we should make an act of thanksgiving before we leave the church. So the psalmist tells us: *"The poor will eat and be satisfied, and shall praise the Lord"* (22:26). We praise God for the many benefits which this bread bestows upon us. It has the power to give us life. In fact, without this bread, no one can have any life at all. John 6, verses 48 and 58, say: *"I am the bread of life . . . he who eats this bread will live forever."* It has the power to destroy our sins. As Innocent III wrote in his work *On the Wonderful Sacrament of the Altar*: "The Eucharist, when properly received, frees us from evil and confirms us in the good; it removes venial sins and helps us guard against mortal sins." And it also has the power to make us glorious. *"Man ate the bread of angels"*, says Psalm 78:25. *"I will be satisfied when your glory appears"*. Psalm 17:15 — in a certain way Christ's glory is already here, although it is hidden within this Eucharist. *"I will give you a kingdom"*, Christ states in Luke 22:29-30, *"just as my Father gave Me a kingdom, and you shall eat and drink with Me at My table in the kingdom."*

Woe to those who neglect this table. They will not sing; they will cry in misery. The servants of God will rejoice, they will be cast into utter despair. As Isaiah 65:13-14 says:

Behold, my servants will eat and you will be hungry!
Behold, my servants will drink and you will be thirsty!
Behold, my servants will rejoice and you will be confounded!
Behold my servants will feel exultant and sing for joy,
but you shall howl because of your misery.

☆ ☆ ☆

RIVERS

Each river
is as love
streaming
from above,
winding,
past peaks
and vales,
peaceful,
like a dove.

Each river is enraged
following the storm,
as moonbeams of happiness
engage a blissful morn.

Each river
has a season,
changin'
in the sun
and raindrops from heaven;
a river's never done.

Each river has its places
where all the folk commune,
for playin'
and singin'
rhythms to
the ripple of
nature's tune.

Fr. Roger L. Katz

Book Reviews

Mother Teresa: Her Life and Her Works. By Lush Gjergji, Brooklyn, NY: New City Press: 1991. 144 pages, $8.95.

Reviewed by Fr. Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English and Campus Minister of the University.

Lush Gjergji is editor of the Albanian magazine, *Drita*. He recognizes that many articles and books have been written about Mother Teresa of Calcutta, but, as a fellow countryman (Mother Teresa was born in Albania), he thinks that not enough has been written about Mother Teresa's family background and her early years. He writes: "I wanted to know what influence her childhood has on what she is today" (page 7). Gjergji writes about the years before Mother Teresa followed her calling to the religious life, about the early years of Agnes Bojaxhiu and her family in Skopje in Albania. He feels that Mother Teresa's missionary life was strongly influenced by her family background and her early life in Skopje.

Agnes was one of three children (two girls and a boy) born of Kole and Drana Bojaxhiu. Kole ran a business and Drana raised the children. They were a well-to-do family and often entertained guests in their home. Agnes grew up with an interest in music and in studies. She was sociable with her school companions and early in her life she was interested in religious studies and practices. The author quotes from a conversation he had with Agnes' brother Lazzaro: "As long as father lived, our house was a center of political fervor. After his death, we lived more on faith. Mother and the girls were untiring in organizing and carrying out religious activities" (page 21).

Agnes became very active in her parish church, especially with the choir. The author cites an event that had a tremendous influence on the young girl. As a high school student, Agnes heard a visiting missionary from India say "Everyone has his road to follow, and follow it he must." From that point in her life, Agnes was interested in a missionary vocation (page 22).

The family made annual visits to the Shrine of Our Lady of Letnice, occasions when Agnes felt especially called to the religious life. At the age of eighteen, Agnes wrote to the Sisters of Loretto, who had missions in India, and was accepted into the Congregation. She left Skopje in September 1928 to enter the religious life.

The Sisters of Loretto are an Irish missionary congregation with headquarters outside of Dublin. Agnes and her fellow Albanian, Betika Kajnc, went to the motherhouse of the Congregation. At the Motherhouse the two young women received the religious habit and their religious names: Agnes became Sister Maria Teresa of the Child Jesus and Betika became Sister Mary Magdalene. On December 1, 1928, the two new religious, accompanied by two older sisters, set sail for India.

The long voyage brought them eventually to Darjeeling where the two young women began their novitiate on May 23, 1929. During her two-years' novitiate Teresa worked in a hospital run by the Sisters. After novitiate, she went to a teachers' college where she obtained her teacher's certificate and then began her teaching career, a profession she dreamed of as a little girl (page 32).

While she was very happy as a teacher, she taught in two different locations. Walking between the two schools gave her an opportunity to observe the poverty of the people of the city of Calcutta. Little by little, she began to feel a calling to a different kind of ministry. In July of 1946, Teresa felt that God spoke to her directly to live and work among the poor. After some time her religious supervisor in Dublin and the archbishop of Calcutta allowed her to leave the convent of the Sisters of Loretto and to begin a new group of Sisters who adopted the Indian dress of a sari in the place of a religious habit. At first Mother Teresa went among the very poor by herself — accompanied by a former student or by a young person who wanted to help her. It was three years before the first member of the Missionaries of Charity joined Mother Teresa. Gradually the numbers increased. The basic principle of the Sisters is "love for God and for one's neighbor: being ever ready to serve the suffering, the most needy, the poorest of the poor" (page 51).

The author traces the development of the Missionary Sisters of Charity and of the Missionary Brothers of Charity showing how the numbers increased and spread over the world. He enumerates the many honors and awards Mother Teresa has received (Chapter 8) and emphasizes that her early years in Skopji and her family experience prepared her for her selfless giving of her life to the love of God and neighbor. This reviewer has been edified by the presentation of Mother Teresa's life and works and recommends this book to all readers who applaud a life of love and generous giving of self.

CHOCOLATED CONES

Tiny fingers
toy
chocolated cones,
making riverlets
across sun-flecked
faces,
punctuating the
savoring smiles;
and,
leaving drippings
for reaching
the tiny feet
of barefoot summer.

Fr. Roger L. Katz

SPARROWED BRANCHES

Sparrowed branches
spar the wind rhyme,
spewing crystal gnomes
upon the ground,
dazzling the morn
with its chimneys
puffing wind curls,
incensing
the chilly dawn
filled with
sparrows' song.

Fr. Roger L. Katz

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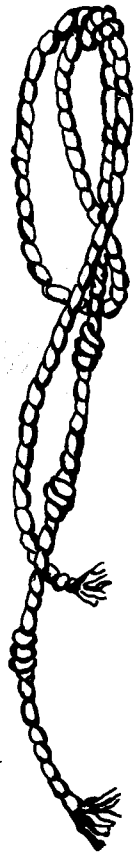
MARCH, 1992

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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

[1] 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
Mir: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
LegClare: Legend of Saint Clare
ProcClare: Process of Saint Clare
FF: 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

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).

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How the Friars Held Their Chapter of Pentecost in Faraway California

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1. Shortly after the feast of Pentecost 1991, about 150 ministers, servants and delegates of the Fraternity of the entire world arrived on the shores of California, on the Pacific Ocean, to hold a Chapter in accordance with the prescriptions of their Father and Brother Francis. They chose the city which bears the name of Saint Diego of Alcala (1400-1463). This is where the first missionaries of the Fraternity, led by Junipero Serra, had begun the evangelization of this region and of its inhabitants. The friars, faithful to their origins, but also open to the signs of the times, full of gratitude and with a pure heart, wished to reflect on the 500 years of evangelization in the two Americas and themselves to begin a new stage in the propagation of the Gospel in all cultures. After having listened in the first week to various reports, and after having recounted to one another the signs of the growth of the kingdom of peace and justice, but also of the thorns and the thistles (Gen 3:18) of this so hard kingdom of earth (Mt 13), they were all worn out and sought, after the example of their Father and Brother, consolation and inspiration from simple and exotic beings in the Balboa Park Zoo and in the famous "Sea World" of San Diego's Mission Bay. Some admired the intelligence of the dolphins and the docility of the whales, which move forward with extreme rapidity and in this are also an example for the ongoing formation of the friars. Others, especially those who are concerned with finance and new forms of fund-raising, lingered before the kangaroos who can make great leaps with their pockets

Fr. Hermann Schalück, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, gives us in his inimitable style his reflections on the General Chapter at which he was elected to office. Readers of The CORD have continued to express appreciation for the depth of franciscan insight reflected in his writing. We thank Fr. Hermann for taking time out from his numerous responsibilities to share his experiences with us.

empty, or else they "contemplated" the many-coloured birds of heaven, who do not sow but reap just the same (Mt 6:26). Still others stopped fraternally by the lions, for, according to the word of our Brother Francis (2 Cel 194), the brothers who draw their knowledge and their missionary vocation from poverty and the contemplation of the divine mysteries, are comparable to a "raging lion attacking everything with ardour." And did not the Lord Pope himself, in his letter to the Chapter, solemnly reaffirm the bond between poverty, contemplation, applied study and mission? Others again strolled by some simple doves and cunning serpents (Mt 10:16), and by the falcons who once wakened Brother Francis to invite him to profound prayer (2 Cel 168).

After these visits, all the brothers returned invigorated and filled with new ideas to their cells, to their coetus groups and to the "Aula Magna" which the Lord Bishop of the place had put at their disposal.

2. The day of the feast of Saint Anthony, under the presidency of a Cardinal of the Roman Church, a new minister and servant of the whole Fraternity was elected. The lot fell on a brother who until then had been at the Curia of the brothers in Rome as a Transalpine, but had also visited many times the surrounding areas. He was so astonished and disconcerted that he asked in all confidence to be reassured and counselled by the Lord Cardinal, to know what all this signified. The latter, full of goodness, took him by the hand and spoke to him this word of Oriental wisdom, "Every long and difficult journey begins with a first small step", and the words of Scripture, "The Spirit of the Lord comes to the aid of man's weakness" (Rom 8:26), "The Lord disciplines those whom he loves" (Heb 12:6), and much will be forgiven to those who give proof of much love. Upon this, the brother minister, full of confidence, took the oath of loyalty and hope, and promised to love everyone and to obey all the brothers. He also abandoned the name Transalpinus and took henceforth the name "Hermannus Universalis". He immediately named a private secretary by the name of Arminius Romanus, who began that same day to take notes.

3. After that, the assembled brothers continued the "camino real" of their own evangelization in the Pentecost Chapter, following in the footsteps of the great exemplary figures of centuries past. They decided upon a plan for the next six years, following which they would bring the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, under old and new forms, into the deserts and into the towns, into the centres and into the peripheries, even to the frontiers of the visible Church, for the building of the kingdom of a new order in peace, justice and respect for all created things and for all living beings. They recognized to what an extent the example of Diego was for them precious and timely, a simple friar minor, a superior, a missionary, a preacher and

a lay brother, who with great modesty and competence lived and preached the Gospel, not only in Spain and in the Canary Islands, but also in Rome at a time when the plague was ravaging there. In their very special loyalty towards the Holy See, they solemnly promised to reorganize their formation and their studies, in the spirit of the Lord Pope and of his paternal letter, and even to draw up a "ratio studiorum." In this theology would have a choice place as a "scientia practica et sapientialis," as a service of the poor and of their liberation, as a "speculatio pauperis in deserto" — just as the Doctor Seraphicus had already said in his "Itinerarium mentis in Deum." The brothers recognized the great value of music for the following of Christ and the formation of all the brothers and sisters of Saint Francis: a question not of training soloists so much as members of a world orchestra, who listen to one another, and who each in his own way and in obedience to a "conductor" makes his own contribution to the harmony of the whole. Did not a most famous Swiss theologian write that truth is like a symphony (Hans Urs Von Balthasar)? And are not man's singing and playing before God, as someone else said, "man's smile before God" (Joh. Seb. Bach)? Will not the Fraternity have need in the future of many more musicians, dancers, storytellers and singers to praise the Lord and to live and to spread his Gospel under new forms?

4. Towards the end of the Pentecost Chapter the minister of the whole Fraternity went on with two other brothers to spend 40 hours in the Nevada desert, to pray there and to encourage the brothers and sisters who there bear witness in favour of a culture of life and peace, and against a culture of war and modern arms. The brothers Ludovicus Vitalis and Alanus Gallicus, as well as certain sisters, informed them about this form of Franciscan evangelization. A certain sister Rosemary was astonished that the general and universal minister made his first pilgrimage to the desert and its surroundings and not to some sanctuary of renown in Europe. And at the common celebration of the Word and of the Bread, a brother of the Quaker community wished the visitor the peace of contemplation and even of sleep in his service in Rome and beyond, like that of Jesus in the midst of the storm on the lake (Mk 4).

5. After their return to San Diego, the brothers saw a happy ending to the Pentecost Chapter. The minister exhorted them all to set out on their homeward way with a new heart and a new spirit (Ez 11), and with eyes purified, in the certainty that a Fraternity which does not serve others does not serve any purpose, and that a people without vision is on the way to ruin (Pr 29:18). Finally he sent forth his brothers into their provinces and their fraternities, and he himself returned with his secretary to the holy and eternal city of Rome, to the curia of the friars minor.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Holy Companions

Who calls forth my very best? To whom do I give example?

WAYNE HELLMANN, OFM CONV.

In choosing a holy way of life, we must choose to surround ourselves with companions who are holy! We need companions willing to join us on the spiritual journey. We cannot climb the mountain alone. To offer and receive nurturance for a holy life, which is heroic in Gospel virtue, is the nature of the bonding we realize in our profession. There can be no other authentic motive for joining the Order, nor can there be any other motive for remaining within it.

This feast of All Saints of the Order no only reminds us that we have successful companions, but, as today's feast dramatically demonstrates, we are also stimulated to bring that same success into our Franciscan lives today. The greater our knowledge and appreciation is of our heritage and examples of holiness within the Order, the greater is our possibility to realize the same in our own generation. This is, as any feast, celebrated to assist us in our self-understanding and to aid us in the clarification of our goals.

This feast applies for us, in a concrete way, the Catholic understanding of the "communio sanctorum" which is articulated in our ancient creed. Holiness is a shared reality! The very Spirit of the Lord, which makes us holy, is that unique divine "communio" of persons. It is this divine communion of persons which reveals that our God is a God of continuous

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Fr. Wayne is Minister Provincial of the Conventual Franciscan Friars of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation. He holds a doctorate from the University of Munich (Germany) and has taught at St. Louis University and at the Franciscan Institute. This article was originally a letter he wrote to his franciscan brothers. We are very grateful for the opportunity to share it with our readers.

diffusion of shared and connected love. In other words, without the grace of shared fellowship with the holy men and women of our Franciscan life and heritage, we do not have a chance to know the God who has called us to live within that divine communion of holy persons.

Those great men and women, who were instruments for passing on to us the possibility of our Franciscan vocation, are not just our past. They are our future! It is only with them, and through them, that our vocation will one day be complete. With these saintly brothers and sisters, we will enjoy the presence of God who, in the eternal vision, called them and calls us to share within the Church the same vocation and way of life.

Likewise, and in the same way, we are the future of those who will be called after us. Thus, in our feast today, we celebrate our past in communion with those who have gone before us; we celebrate our present with those who support us in virtue and holiness now, and our future with those who will yet follow us in our way of life. In God's own good time, all will be brought together into the fullness of the eternal "now". In today's feast, we already begin to taste the fullness of that joy!

Holy Things

What "things" do I treasure? Why?

The notion, "communio sanctorum", has a depth of meaning. It can refer not only to the "communion of the saints", but it can also express our "partaking in holy things." If we are to share in holiness, we must cultivate "holy things." These have been given to us and these connect us to the holiness of others — past, present and future. As Christians we share the "holy Word", and, particularly, as Catholics, we share "the holy cup" at the "holy table."

As Catholic Christians, bonded in communion with the saints, we live and we are rooted in a shared experience of "holy things" and "holy practices". We are the keepers of the holy symbols! This fosters our openness to the transcendent and to a deep mystical communion with God and with each other, in a manner which is far beyond the immediacy of the visible order.

From the women and men whose feast we celebrate today, we receive, in our own life as Franciscans, a beautiful bounty of "holy things." Are we not to accept and integrate them and pass them on to those who will

follow us? Were we not to do so, it would be a grave and sinful injustice, especially, toward those whom the Lord may call to come after us.

The Rule

What is it?
Does it form my conscience?

As friars, our primary "holy thing" is the *Rule,* approved by Pope Honorius III, on this very day. It is our sacred text! It is a "holy thing!" It has been publicly read, reflected and commented upon, discussed and lived, by friars across the ages. Especially, on this feast, as we renew our profession, the Rule unites us and draws us ever deeper into a practical and a mystical communion.

Our increase in "communion of holiness" demands the cultivation of our own "holy things." I am not so naive as to maintain that an individual or specific thing can make us holy. Quite frankly, the interior life we are committed to share cannot be cultivated unless we express, concretely, in a real human experience and in a real conscious discipline, our shared and sacred symbols. Otherwise, we are caught up in the superficial, and we spin our wheels in an empty abyss.

Dress

What does it speak?
Style or symbol? Status or simplicity?

Our Franciscan habit is a "holy thing!" In the human experience, dress is a primal symbol. Dress speaks more about our attitude toward others with whom we live and work than it does about what we think of ourselves. The concrete practice concerning when and where we wear the habit can very well be determined by local circumstances, but the habit does visibly connect us with our shared heritage, life, and mission.

Our province chapter's desire to request the grey color for the habit indicates our appreciation of the habit's significance. The wearing of it is not to be thoughtlessly or conveniently disregarded. Rather, the discipline of this "holy practice" of wearing the habit is to be consciously cultivated among us.

Living and celebrating our communion with the saints and with each other does not come easy! It takes deliberate effort to overcome the many negative and powerful influences and the determined materialistic values of our contemporary Western culture. Our sacred communion with each other and with the saints demands deliberate, constant, and conscious cultivation of our own "holy things" — both as Catholic Christians and as Franciscans.

What we extend to and share with each other is precisely what invites new brothers into communion of heart and mind.

Effort

How do I spend my energy?
To what is it directed?

If we so choose, we can make the necessary efforts. We can overcome the spiritual sluggishness and the unsteady sense of purpose that so often plagues our province and custodies. We can free ourselves from the hollow excuse: ". . . the demands of ministry prevent me from developing more deeply and more consistently an appreciation of my Franciscan life and vocation."

The grace of this Feast of All Saints of the Order offers us motivation and vision! One concrete way to more forward, in effort toward the cultivation of a deep communion of life in the shared and practical experience of "holy things," is to give conscious, concrete, and deliberate efforts to reaching out and sharing our life with new brothers. Vocation efforts are effective to the extent that these efforts reflect a renewed appreciation of our own life and heritage.

Vocation efforts must be efforts which are experienced in a shared communion of brothers — holy and committed to "live the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hospitality offered to potential new brothers is only the overflow of our hospitality to one another! What we extend to and share with each other is precisely what invites new brothers into communion of heart and mind. This, either way, is not always convenient.

Personal Prayer

From whence is it drawn?
How is it shared?

Within the Order, we have received a tradition of devotional prayer. This, too, is a "holy thing." This form of prayer is obviously to be integrated around the centrality of the Liturgy of the Eucharist and the Hours, but, graciously, this rich tradition of prayer also forms a part of who we are in our history and heritage.

One feature of Franciscan devotional prayer acknowledges that Mary is central to our communion with the saints. Marian prayer can foster our affective and contemplative prayer stance. In our Province, dedicated to Mary, Consoler of the Afflicted, the practice of singing the *"Ultima"* is dear to many of us. Within the Order, the scriptural prayer of Mary's choice for God, the *Angelus,* has been promoted and prayed by the friars for generations. Within the context of the Liturgy of the Hours, we Franciscans have promoted the Marian antiphons at the conclusion of Evening Song.

St. Francis simply could not see that a choice to follow Christ could be made or lived apart from the choice of the first Christian disciple, Mary, the Gospel woman. In communion with her, we find the deepest root of our own intuitive desire for the transcendent. With her, we learn what it is to be open to God and to ponder holy things in our own heart. With her, we find, thereby, the deepest meaning of our communion with the saints. She is central to the very feast we celebrate today! With her we yearn to conceive and bear the Word of God!

Chapters

Are they opportunity for conversion?
What witness do they give?

In an area of practical fraternal life, our chapters are "holy things." Thus, we are to surround them with celebration and with holy ritual. Chapters are the extraordinary and symbolic expression of our ordinary communion of life. The celebration of this feast, and all Franciscan feasts, particularly, Advent and Christmas, are "holy things." Our Constitutions are a "holy" and visionary expression of our own contemporary generation of friars. They state the current understanding of our life. The Constitutions express a marvelous communion of hearts and minds, flowing from recent General Chapters.

To share our life with potential new saints for the Order, invites us to radical inconvenience. It is an inconvenience which should be the sweet burden of each and every local community, because the responsibility for fostering vocations rests not alone on the individual friar but on each community as community. Only communion among ourselves prophetically cultivates a new and radical "communio sanctorum!" Our work to foster communion among "holy persons" and to express this in "holy things," brings us into the future joy of new brothers.

To those friars who have labored with me to the end of this letter, I extend "thanks!" It is to you that I proclaim our passion to invite and to share our life with new brothers to be an accurate indicator of our own desire and commitment to enter into the mystery of what we celebrate in today's feast.

As we renew our profession, I invite you to join me in revitalizing three important facets of our lives: communion with "holy men and women;" visible and shared expression of that communion in "holy things;" and, finally, the purpose of it all — an imaginative invitation to the future, namely, new brothers to join us in witnessing the first two. "Thy Kingdom come!"

☆ ☆ ☆

LA VERNA IN STAINED GLASS
(Tau Center Chapel, Winona, Minnesota)

If you look prone, Francis, it's really we who are,
So upside-down this end-of-century sphere.
Your head's haloed in sea-blue, amethyst,
Its tonsure neat. Grey robe, cord, cut of glass.
Knife-edged, a God-shape, in Ulysses' shroud.
Your left hand holds it off, that speeding Cloud,
Your right hand welcoming blood-bright agony.
Fixed by its human gaze, your heart-shaved face
Irradiates into an amber star
As Brother Sun gives new intensity.
This artist's mountain scene — a half-abstract
Wild dream — is valid in a stranger way
Than words your holy friar managed to say.
How many forms exist to translate fact!
Help me, O saint, translating wish to act.

Sister Bernetta Quinn, O.S.F.

The Province of Saint Francis in Vietnam and the Work of Evangelization 1975-1991

GUY-MARIE NGUYEN HONG-GIAO, O.F.M.

The province has been pursuing the work of evangelization these last ten years in a new context.

Following the events of May 1975, a communist regime of the Soviet type spread throughout the entire country which, despite the efforts deployed to recover from the ruin caused by the war, remains one of the ten poorest countries in the world.

With a congregation of five million people facing a population of sixty-five million, the Christian Church, already a minority, felt even more lost in a society which was declared atheist and under a totalitarian regime. More than the diocesan clergy, the members of religious orders thus saw their means of life and action narrowed.

The province was forced to abandon charitable and scholastic endeavors and divide the friars of six communities into seventeen fraternities which were given other work. Certainly, the allotment of personnel and the disassembly of regular structures posed new problems. However, the situation comprises factors which are favorable for evangelization.

In the first place, stripped of privileges and prerogatives, the Church becomes closer to the people and becomes better understood. Like any

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The author, Provincial Minister of the Friars Minor in Viet Nam, presented this official report in French to the General Chapter at San Diego in June of 1991. Readers will be inspired by the uniquely Franciscan creativity of the Vietnamese friars in responding to the Spirit-given call to evangelization.

The CORD thanks Beth Reiter, a French major at St. Bonaventure University, for her translation into English.

Christian, the Franciscan continually sees himself impelled to the purification and the deepening of his faith.

As early as the first few years, a spontaneous movement of conversion to Christianity took place. The same was happening even in the midst of the reeducation camps, for, having lived in contact with their prisonmates, a great number of whom were priests and Christians, soldiers and government officials of the old regime began to request baptism.

Actually, on the high plateaus, certain ethnic minorities converted. There are people who came to baptism thanks to their listening to the religious programs transmitted from abroad, the Vatican radio, the Manillan radio, and the radio Source of Life.

Generally speaking, eighty percent of the people profess religious beliefs, despite the official public declaration of the Marxist ideology. This is why religious policy, well-known as being restrictive and even repressive, was able to be pragmatic. It is this social and political context which marks out for us the paths of evangelization.

Paths of Evangelization

1. Entry point into the new society.

It is known that orthodox communists accept religion only as a given fact and tolerate it as an irrational need of the people. So it is the Church must not expect that the regime will help it to become integrated in the new society, but it is up to the Church itself to obtain a place which would be acceptable for the authorities if it wants to actively continue its mission there. There is an enormous temptation for a minority Church like our own to live on the fringe of society with a conscience satisfied at being a martyred Church. The Vietnamese Church did not succumb on that point but rather declared itself attached to the nation and ready to bring its sincere collaboration to the reconstruction of the country. Commitment and service are two words which are keys to the bishops' pastoral letter of July of 1976.

Fortified by this spirit and in agreement with other religious families, the Franciscans participated in different organizations and activities which were encouraged by the government wherever the opportunity was offered to us; in other words, agricultural and craft cooperatives, the Red Cross, the Association for the promotion of Education, senior citizen clubs, socialist days of work, and neighborhood meetings.

These entry points permit us to be legally present in a society which doesn't tolerate any rivalry. After one or the other initiatives made as early as the beginning of the social upheaval, we chose to establish our brother-

. . . the witness of life constitutes the main part of our practice of evangelization.

hoods in rural zones often neglected by the secular clergy. There especially, and everywhere in general, manual work was for a long time the privileged means by which one might share the fate of the poor, to become close to them, to insert ourselves into their way of life.

In the course of examining the entry points, it appeared that if, in principle, they do not favor religious institutions, the Communists willingly tolerate those who can be useful for the country and close to the people. It is thus that our seventeen brotherhoods took under their charge about twenty parishes, mostly in the rural zone, where the friar priests work in different ways.

2. Testimony of the life.

The language which proves to be the most understandable and always acceptable even amongst non-believers is that of charity, of humble patient service, good neighborly actions, and sharing the lot of the local community. Whatever comes from this experience, the witness of life constitutes the main part of our practice of evangelization. For there where the account of the word as the explicit proclamation of Christian doctrine is not allowed outside of the walls of the places of worship, there isn't a possible dialogue other than that of a practical daily life.

We believe that we see certain analogies between the Saracens, of whom brother Francis speaks, and the orthodox communists. The sixteenth chapter of the RNB remains current for us; we take it as a principle source of inspiration in the work of evangelization. It concerns living a Christian and Franciscan life with an open mind and heart, in every way full of humility and patience, ready to be subjected to annoyances and humiliations without ever ceasing to do that which is good. To live with and not against life.

Speaking one day of the pastoral orientation of his diocese, a Vietnamese bishop told me that he was opting for a Church of the Epiphany, which simply acts by the truth of its being and the warmth of its presence. There is something there which represents the method adopted by the province. Is this an efficacious method? It is difficult to respond in few words. In any case, it is a method which our situation seems to demand. Moreover, it is not a small matter that in these places where God is blasphemed,

fought, and denied, that there are believers who sing His praise from the bottom of their heart.

3. The service of man as an integrating part of evangelization.

In 1987, the provincial chapter voted for the program: The Franciscan announces the Gospel today in the society and Church of Vietnam. Among others, the communities, using their real possibilities as a basis, each established their project of sharing with the poor of their area. Given the meager means, the projects aim less at the improvement of the living conditions of the poor than the new awareness of the brothers concerning the problems of the people in their surroundings. Projects are only able to be very modest: to help in repairing some classrooms, to offer a bicycle to a family, a plow or a corner of a garden in the community, to open a small workshop where the young come to learn sewing, hairdressing, and the crafting of simple bamboo household implements.

For three years, since 1988, the government has been encouraging charitable activities without dropping surveillance. On our side, thanks to the aid that our brothers abroad bring to us, the human development to which we devote ourselves more actualizes the work of evangelization officially recognized and sanctioned by us. We do not make of it a simple means of pastoral and missionary work but, thanks to the efforts deployed in this field, we benefit from the part played by authorities who are billing to simplify our insertion into new zones. The summer of 1989, a new Franciscan community established itself in a new economic zone, an event which is rare for all of us religious. The process was long. First came the construction of two classrooms for children's instruction, then, in agreement with the local authorities, the clearing of about fifteen acres of land for needy families, then the authorization to build a chapel and a public meeting room; from then on, every Sunday, three friars from the community would go to various points of the region, organizing liturgical celebrations and catechetical sessions. Thus it is by the human development, combined with the pastoral and missionary work, that recently the brothers of Nhatrung returned to a village of Montagnards, forcibly abandoned since the liberation of 1975. Already a young brother who is a nurse, whose professional training was supported by the local administration, comes once a week to insure that there is medical care there; no one forbids him to speak of God to his patients.

On religious holidays, these Christians travel many kilometers on foot in order to come as early as the evening before to our parish which is the only one for this vast region. We have set up for them a shed to spend the night, dug a well of decent drinking water, and provided what is

necessary to prepare their meal. It is in this way that the ties between the brothers and the congregation become more and more profound.

Conclusion

The mission of evangelization forcibly places us on the route of kenosis, along which the practice of love and service for one's fellow man, as a Friar Minor, passes through the conversion to Christ's humanity, by forgetting the idea of self. It is by the eventual light produced by a positive meeting or not between the Vietnamese life and the Franciscan spirit that the particular context has been favorable or unfavorable for the work of evangelization.

Actually, the Vietnamese society is opening progressively but necessarily to the exterior world. If one is still unaware of how far perestroika will go, one already notes that a freer life, which will be less austere and uniform, is on the horizon. Whatever the future of the nation may be, the experience that we have acquired comprises positive lasting elements. In my opinion, a double question poses itself to the province:

— how to live in full consciousness certain evangelistic and Franciscan values the practice of which was more or less obligatory until now?
— how to seriously transmit these same values to the young vocations who haven't had these same experiences which we have lived during the past sixteen years?

This is precisely the same problem that our brother General John Vaughn reminded us of at the time of his short but precious visit which he bestowed upon us at Hochimin city during the last days of 1990.

☆ ☆ ☆

BARGES

Day and night they float north and south,
Being pushed to their destinaton.
Slow, persistent speed they sail,
Such as my contemplation.

Sister Anna Rick

Two Mystics: Padraic Pearse and Francis of Assisi?

CLARE IMMACULATE MC DONNELL, O.S.F.

It is no simple task to distinguish between feelings, emotions, and moods. Magda B. Arnold has done this remarkably well, making use of accumulated psychological research and her own spiritual insights.

It was after reading her work[1] that I received from a friend returning from the grave-site of Padraic Pearse the poet's moving lyric, "The Wayfarer." I felt compelled to contrast its emotional mood with that of "The Canticle of Brother Sun" of Francis of Assisi.

"The beauty of this world hath made me sad," reflects Pearse. Why sad? I thought. To which no doubt Arnold would reply: The same sensation, the beauty of this world, can be pleasant or unpleasant for different persons. Emotions involve a double reference, both the object experienced and the self experiencing the object.

For Pearse the memory of particularly loved features of Ireland's fleeting beauty, "some green hill where shadows drifted by" or "children with bare feet playing upon the sands of some ebbed sea" filled him with sadness and longing for the land that "will pass." The revolution in which he was engaged as commander-in-chief of the Irish forces was unsuccessful. He was arrested and executed at 3:30 a.m. on May 3, 1916. For his own-passing, Pearse offers no regret. In fact, shortly before his death, he wrote to his mother:

Sister Clare Immaculate is Assistant Professor of English at Neumann College, Aston, PA. She holds graduate degrees from both Catholic University and Penn State University. Her previous contribution to The CORD was entitled "In the Fields of Light" (December, 1989).

"I have just received holy Communion. I am happy except for the great grief of parting from you. This is the death I should have asked for if God had given me the choice of all deaths — to die a soldier's death for Ireland and for freedom."[2]

It surprised me at first to read the well known mystical authority, William Johnston, S.J. declare Pearse to be a false mystic. "Pearse," claims Johnston, "made the liberty of Ireland his idol. The great challenge for the mystic is to keep love unconditional and unrestricted, not conditioned or restricted by any object less than God. Christ was not born to set men free from national chains, or any chains but sin. Pearse confused patriotism with holiness."[3] Because he chose in his fanatical love for Ireland to glorify blood and death, he went, I suggest, upon his way sorrowful. The mood of his lyric about fugitive beauty is one of sadness and despair.

This was not the case with Francis of Assisi. Although he too wrote in a time of crisis, in his last illness, a time of intense pain and suffering, the prevailing mood of "The Canticle" is one of joy. Transcending all negative feelings and emotions regarding his own personal loss of the beauty of this world, he exalts:

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
And all blessing,
To you alone, Most High, do they belong.

The Canticle is the product of contemplative and creative prayer by the saint of universal brotherhood. Francis exemplifies the true mystic whose life will continue to effect the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace.... (Galatians 5:22).

Pearse, though an idealistic poet and profoundly heroic, I concur with Johnston, has left a trail of continued violence and hatred that lived on in the civil war of 1922, the murder in the streets of Belfast and in the activities of the IRA in our own day.

THE WAYFARER[4]

The beauty of the world hath made me sad,
This beauty that will pass;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening,
Lit by a slanting sun,
Or some green hill where shadows drifted by,
Some quiet hill where mountainy man hath sown

And soon will reap, near to the gate of Heaven;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands
of some ebbed sea, or playing on the streets
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me;
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy;
And I have gone upon my way
Sorrowful.

Padraic Pearse (1879-1916)

Endnotes

[1] **The Nature of Emotion** ed. by Magda B. Arnold, Penguin, Baltimore, MD. 1968.

[2] See **The Wounded Stag**, originally published as **Christian Mysticism Today** by William Johnston, Harper and Row, San Francisco.

[3] **ibid.** 168

[4] From **The Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse** Frederick A. Stokes Company, New York, introduction by P. Browne, 1917.

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RETURNABLE BOTTLES

When cold air feels good,
when snow and ice hide in shadows,
the crossing of sharp words ring clearly.
Curses give voice to anger
that guard poverty's possessions.

Shards of glass gleam like snow.
when moonlight beams.
A bramble of cyclone fencing,
a rose bush once well-pruned runs wild.

Cranes are at work downtown
while an emptied bottle of hope
rests on barren February ground.

Michael Barrett, OFM

The New Evangelization VII: The Challenge of Inculturation

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

The fourth Synod of Bishops, held in 1974, was devoted to evangelization. That theme is such a vast one that there was considerable difficulty in determining how best to deal with it. The then Cardinal Karol Wojtyla presented a report that helped focus the discussion. He spoke of five major areas of concern, presented by five continents:

— "indigenization," today called **inculturation**, the African challenge;
— "the great non-christian religions," the Asian challenge;
— "liberation," the challenge of Latin America;
— "secularization," with the danger of theoretical and practical materialism, as the problem in Western Europe and North-America; and
— "atheism," the Church's problem in countries living under Communist domination.

While the question of inculturation may have seemed in 1974 to be principally an African concern, subsequent reflection on missiology has shown it to be a major concern everywhere. As Pope John Paul II now says: "A Gospel which has not permeated a culture is a Gospel not fully proclaimed."

The "new evangelization" requires a "new missiology" and a new missiology can be created best by local churches that have the freedom to develop their own proper identity. Catholic unity needs to be distinguished carefully from stifling uniformity. That this has not always been done is made

This is the seventh in a series entitled "The New Evangelization." Readers will find this article of Father Charles most informative and provocative. He currently is involved in the ministry of the Franciscan Mission Service in Silver Spring, Maryland. Previously Father Charles served as a missionary in Brazil for almost two decades and as minister provincial of Holy Name Province (New York).

strikingly clear in a statement of Mexico's Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia: "We must admit with profound sadness and almost with shame that in the entire [American] continent in all [these five centuries] there has not arisen a single indigenous church." Mexico's Bishops' Conference now looks forward to "the creation of indigenous Churches rooted in Indian culture with their own organization, and able to provide for their own needs in terms of catechists, ministers, priests and bishops." (1) Many historians believe that the last successful attempt at inculturation by Catholic missionaries was that made by Sts. Cyril and Methodius, the 9th century apostles to the Slavs.

What Is Inculturation?

Inculturation can be described as

> ...the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about a "new creation."[2]

Or:

> [Inculturation is] the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them.[3]

Inculturation is not just the transfer of faith from one culture to another; it is not a one-way process. Cultures being evangelized already have their unique values before the arrival of Christian missionaries. The entire church is enriched when all peoples have the freedom to share their native genius with the whole church, and, on the contrary, the whole church is impoverished when any culture is not given this freedom. The Church not only "gives" when she brings people the gospel; the Church also "receives" much from the native genius of those people. Since all cultures present defects and even dehumanizing elements, all cultures need the liberating and transforming energy of the gospel to become more truly human. The Church needs the contributions of all cultures to become more truly catholic.

The recent Special Synod of European Bishops (28 Nov. to 14 Dec. 1991) said: "[We seek] to inaugurate a culture more profound, more Christian and therefore more human." In G. S. (**Gaudium et Spes** [43 and 44]) the Second Vatican Council spoke not only of the services the church offers the world, but also of the many benefits the church receives from the world. Among the latter the Council specifically mentioned "the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture." Similarly, in no. 58: "The Church,

conscious of her universal mission, can enter into communion with various cultural models, to her own enrichment and theirs too." That very open and respectful approach with its emphasis on mutuality is the heart of inculturation.

By itself, the word **inculturation** could be taken to mean the transfer of faith from one culture to another, a one-way process. For this reason some missiologists, precisely to preserve the reciprocal character of mission, prefer to speak of **interculturation**. (4)

The Basis in Tradition

The first recorded use of the word **inculturation** in a theological sense seems to be by Fr. Joseph Masson S.J., professor at Rome's Gregorian University. Shortly before the opening of the Second Vatican Council in 1962 he wrote: "Today there is a more urgent need for a Catholicism that is **inculturated** in a variety of forms ("d'une façon polymorphe").[5] The first assembly of the Federation of Asian Episcopal Conferences in April of 1974 spoke of "an indigenous and inculturated Church." The introduction and popularization of the term is largely due to the writings of Jesuit missiologists. The first papal use of the word "inculturation" occurs in Pope John Paul II's **Catechesi Tradendae** (1979), and its use by the official magisterium since then has been frequent.[6]

If the word "inculturation" is new, one can find the idea, or at least approximations of it, from very early times. Three patristic insights, repeated by Vatican II, have special importance.

1. All cultures contain real values and much that is good. This "natural goodness" is a "preparation for the gospel" and "leads to the true God." This theme was developed by the 4th-century bishop — historian Eusebius of Cesareia, in no less than fifteen books. Said Vatican II: "Everything found among them [non-Christians] that is good and true, the Church perceives to be a preparation for the gospel, given by Him who enlightens all, that they may have life."[7]

2. St. Justin (d. 165), apologist and martyr, discovered in pagan Greek philosophy (especially in Socrates) the "seeds of the Word" that God planted in all humanity. Vatican II: "With happiness and respect let Christians discover the seeds of the Word hidden [in non-Christian religious traditions]."[8]

3. According to St. Irenaeus of Lyons (d. 202), cultures need to be "assumed to be redeemed." Just as the Word assumed human nature without destroying it, so the gospel "takes flesh" in human cultures without destroying them. Vatican II: "In a way similar to the Incarnation, the young

churches, in a marvellous exchange, assume all the values of the nations, the inheritance of Christ."[9]

The same St. Irenaeus, in a text cited by Vatican II,[10] wrote: "From the beginning the Son is present to creation, revealing the Father to all,"[11] and the Council, repeating the teachings of St. Leo the Great and St. John Chrysostom, makes the same claim for the Holy Spirit: "Without doubt, the Holy Spirit was already active in the world before Christ was glorified."[12] Missionaries always arrive late; God has always been there before them. As Leonardo Boff says: the first step in evangelization is for the missionary to be converted to the people, and the people are converted to Christ.

Pope Paul VI was drawing his inspiration from the ancient Catholic tradition when he wrote:

> The Church respects and esteems these non-Christian religions because they are the living expression of the soul of vast groups of people. They carry within them the echo of thousands of years of searching for God, a quest which is incomplete but often made with great sincerity and righteousness of heart. They possess an impressive patrimony of deeply religious texts. They have taught generations of people how to pray. They are all impregnated with innumerable "seeds of the Word" and can constitute a true "preparation for the Gospel."[13]

Some Historical Notes[14]

Missionary inculturation presumes that the church approach cultures, and particularly the religious dimension of cultures, with great respect. The witness of church history in this regard is ambivalent.

From very early times there were sincere efforts to appreciate the real value of some pagan cultures and some examples of this have been mentioned. At the end of the second century, Clement of Alexandria taught that "God is the source of all good; either directly, or indirectly as in the case of philosophy. But it may even be that philosophy was given to the Greeks directly, for it was a 'schoolmaster' to bring Helenism to Christ, as the Law was for the Hebrews."

The approach of St. Gregory I, who sent Augustine of Canterbury and his fellow monks to evangelize pagan Anglo-Saxon England in 597 is of special interest. It illustrates an often used missionary method, "functional substitution." While Gregory expresses no awareness of the need of dialogue nor of the need to respect the consciences and religions of the pagans, he does advocate a certain tolerance. He writes to Abbot Mellitus, a fellow missionary of Augustine:

> Tell Augustine not to destroy the temples of the gods, but only the idols housed therein. Tell him . . . to set up altars and place the relics

> of the saints [in the pagan temples]. The people will see that their places of worship have not been destroyed, and will therefore be more inclined to renouce their error ... and adore the true God for the places to which they come will be familiar to them.[15]

Since the anglo-saxon pagans were accustomed to offer animal sacrifices to idols (Gregory calls the idols "devils"), he instructs Augustine to institute another Solemnity, such as a day of Dedication, in which the people can kill animals for food "and give thanks to the Giver of all gifts for his bounty." In other words Gregory advises against the total supression of pagan rituals; he wants to keep some elements, giving them a new meaning. He advocates tolerance in combatting error: "It is certainly impossible to eradicate all errors ... at one stroke, and whoever wishes to climb to a mountain top climbs gradually step by step and not in one leap." Are there not many occasions in our evangelizing ministry today when such pastoral tolerance would be very helpful?

Centuries later, Francisco Ingoli (d. 1649), one of history's most remarkable missiologists, based himself on Pope Gregory's tolerant teaching but went far beyond it. Ingoli served as the first secretary of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (known for short as **Propaganda**), established in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. Largely due to Ingoli's influence (felt even after his death), in its early years **Propaganda** showed great broadness of vision, a geniune **catholicity** in its approach to other religions and cultures. A 1659 Instruction to Chinese missionaries reads:

> Do not regard it as your task, and do not bring any pressure on the peoples, to change their manners, customs and uses, unless they are evidently contrary to religion and sound morals. What could be more absurd than to transport France, Spain, Italy or some European country to China? DO YOUR UTMOST TO ADAPT TO THEM.[16]

The Instruction goes on to say that even when native customs are perverse, it is better to correct them gradually, helping the people themselves to see the need for change, rather than by direct attack and verbal condemnations.

Such a view of mission has much in common with St. Francis' vision, as found especially in chapter 16 of the RegNB and also in chapter 3 of RegB.

Cultural pluralism in the Church is an obvious prerequisite for inculturation, and the development of the Eastern Catholic rites is perhaps the clearest example of diversity that does not destroy but rather affirms true unity. During the first three centuries the evangelization of the Middle East was completed: Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Persia, Armenia, Romania,

Southern Russia and in the fourth century that of Egypt and Ethiopia. In his 1964 visit to the Holy Land, Pope Paul VI spoke warmly of the traditions of the Eastern Churches. He described how the apostles left Palestine to found churches, and added:

> Each nation received the good seed of their preaching according to their own mentality and their own culture. Each local church grew with its own personality, its own customs and its own personal way of celebrating the same mysteries, without this harming the unity of faith.[17]

In other words, the gospel was inculturated! If such pluralism was possible and even fostered in the apostolic church, it is equally possible and necessary now. In his 1969 visit to Africa, Paul VI assured the Africans:

> You will be able to remain sincerely African even in your interpretation of the Christian life; you will be able to formulate Catholicism in terms congenial to your own culture; you will be able to bring to the Catholic church the precious and original contribution of negritude, which she needs particularly in this historic hour.

All peoples and cultures need to be given that guarantee, and the fulfillment of that promise is surely one of the most effective ways to promote the ecumenical dialogue, as well as the dialogue with non-Christians and even non-believers.

It is gratifying to note that in the years immediately following Vatican II, some Roman dicasteries were actively promoting more pluralism in the church. Thus, a Vatican Instruction on translating liturgical texts in 1969 said: "In a really renewed liturgy we shall not be content with texts translated from another language. **New creations will be needed.**" (Emphasis added)[18] Thanks largely to the perseverance of Cardinal Malula of Kinshasa, the church in Zaire has its own rite and the Holy See is considering other 'rites' for approval, from India, the Philippines and Latin America.

Less Positive Examples

We need to recognize honestly that in addition to many examples of ecclesiastical openness to cultural pluralism, history also provides examples of real shortsightedness. The tendency to confuse unity with uniformity began early, almost as soon as Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Yves Congar O.P. has written:

> There existed an imperialism which tended to impose everywhere the Roman customs and rites, in a word, considering the universal church as a simple extension of the Church of Rome. We find in Pope Siricius in 385, in Innocent I in 416, the astounding affirmation that no one

can truly have the faith of Peter unless he desires the customs and rites of Peter, that is, of Rome.[19]

Over the centuries, for all the obvious reasons, missionaries especially have felt the need to plead against too much Roman centralization. Thus, the Capuchin martyr Blessed Agathangelus wrote from Cairo to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda:

> To pass judgment on [the question of Catholics participating in the worship of the Copts] one must have full and accurate knowledge of all the circumstances. Since teachers [in Europe] have no knowledge of the practice of these regions, they cannot have that full and accurate knowledge. It seems to me then that the judgment in these matters must be left to the missionaries.[20]

In what may come as a surprise, Pope John Paul II has claimed that too much centralization may have impeded the desireable pluralism, so necessary for inculturation:

> There was perhaps a time when some put too much stress on the authority of the **magisterium** in the organic life of the faith. Vatican II has clearly shown that the understanding of Revelation develops . . . also by "the contemplation and study of believers" and "the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience" (**Dei Verbum**, 8). For their part, theologians have had their important place in the Church recognized.[22]

Freedom of theological inquiry by the local church is absolutely essential for promoting inculturation, and the same would have to be said for the human sciences, whose contribution is also essential.

Tragic Arrogance

"Wilfred Cantwell Smith, the distinguished historian of religion, has noted that 'the fundamental flaw of Western civilization in its role in world history is arrogance, and . . . this has infected also the Christian church.'"[21] Regrettably, one of the most deplorable expressions of this arrogance is found in the bull **Dum diversas** of Pope Nicholas V, sent to the King of Portugal in 1452:

> In the name of our apostolic authority, we grant you the full and entire faculty of invading, conquering, expelling and reigning over all the kingdoms . . . of the Saracens, of pagans, and of all infidels, wherever they may be found; of reducing their inhabitants to perpetual slavery, of appropriating to yourself those kingdoms and all their possessions, for your own use and that of your successors.[23]

The African slave trade to Europe had been begun by the Portuguese ten years earlier. This wretched merchandizing of human beings, so

. . . only an attitude of profound respect for "the other," for those who are "different," is an absolute prerequisite for inculturation

deplorably advocated by Pope Nicholas, would last for over four hundred shameful years!

This kind of arrogance makes totally impossible anything even resembling inculturation; on the contrary the Christian west has often felt it had the right to destroy "pagan" cultures as the works of the devil, and even force people to accept conversion. The great Augustine of Hippo even used the Lord's words in the gospel ("compelle intrare") to justify forced conversions. After some hesitation, St. Bernard of Clairvaux adopted the same position some seven hundred years later. Thus, the conversion of many barbarian nations was carried out by force. Among other repressive laws, Charlemagne, for example, laid down the rule: "Any unbaptized Saxon who attempts to hide himself among his own people and refuses to accept baptism will be put to death."[24] It is recorded that Charlemagne put to death 4,500 Saxons in a single day. A great deal of violence accompanied the conquest of the Americas also, and many natives were forced to accept baptism. To cite only one example: the conquistador Gonzalo de Alvarado sent this word to the Mayas before attacking them:

> Let it be known that our coming is beneficial . . . because we bring tidings of the true God and Christian Religion sent by the Pope — the Vicar of Jesus Christ, God and Man — and the Emperor King of Spain, so that you may become Christians peacefully of your own free will; but should you refuse the peace we offer, then the death and destruction that follow will be entirely of your own account"[25]

A good example of "oppression theology" — a contradiction in terms! This technique of "conversion or extinction" is a shameful chapter in mission history. We cannot judge consciences, nor can we fairly evaluate the past by modern sensibilities, but it is important to recognize the horrific injustices attributable to the illusion of a western superiority complex. The poisonous fruits of this legacy, such as racism, are still in our church and society. In his address to Native Americans in Phoenix, Arizona (14 September 1987), Pope John Paul II honestly confessed: "The cultural oppression, the injustices and the destruction of your life and traditional societies need to be recognized . . . We are called to learn a lesson from

the mistakes of the past." The best way to make amends for the past mistake of cultural oppression is by promoting now its opposite — inculturation!

The Example of St. Francis

If it is true that only an attitude of profound respect for "the other," for those who are "different," is an absolute prerequisite for inculturation, the example of St. Francis will be an enormous help to us in dealing with this delicate question. Not without reason is Francis known as "the universal brother." If there was anything he did NOT want to do it was to dominate and control others. In his writings Francis uses the word "power" as an attribute that belongs to God alone; in treating of the life of the brothers he uses the word "power" only once, and that is to say that they should never have it.[26] He spoke with great respect even of hardened sinners.[27] As he dictated his Testament, he recalls how he (after his conversion) and his brothers treated others: "We were simple and subject to all."

As the church in Francis' day considered the killing of Moslems to be not homicide but "evilcide"[28] and granted indulgences to those who went on crusade to kill infidels, Francis adopts just the opposite approach.[29] The story of his visit to the Sultan in 1219 has been embellished by many legends but one thing is certain: he who showed so much respect to these "enemies of Christ and the Church" was himself greatly respected by them. It seems that Francis wrote his "Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples" after returning from Egypt, and in that letter asks the Rulers to have a signal given each evening so that all the people may give thanks and praise to "the all-powerful Lord God" — a Muslim custom he had witnessed and had come to appreciate. Similarly, Francis tells his brothers that they are sent to the whole world "to bring everyone to know that 'no one is all-powerful but God'" — a Muslim creed that Francis would have heard often while in Egypt. Openness to everything that is good and the desire not to dominate others but serve them — these are among St. Francis' chief characteristics. They are also the qualities that most effectively make inculturation a real possibility in the church and in the Franciscan family.

Reflection Questions

1. In E.N. 20 Paul VI wrote: "The rift between Gospel and culture is without doubt the drama of our time." What evidence can you find to support that statement? How does the example of St. Francis help us to meet that challenge?

2. The apostles determined "not to lay any burden on you beyond what is strictly necessary" (Acts 15:28). What are the implications in this for the Church today?

3. In their statement "1992: Time For Remembering, Reconciling and Recommitting Ourselves as a People" (**Origins**, Jan. 9, 1992) the U.S. bishops emphasize the importance of "inculturation of Catholic faith within the Native American community . . . [to] demonstrate deep respect for native culture and spiritualities." What are the broader implications in that statement?

Endnotes

[1] Quoted, **The Tablet**, 20 Oct. 1990, p

[2] Pedro Arrupe S.J. in his "Letter to the Whole Society [of Jesus] on Inculturation" (15 April 1978)

[3] Marcelo de Azevedo, "Inculturation and the Challenge of Modernity," p. 11

[4] For example, Bishop Joseph Blomjous: "The period 1960-1980 can be considered as the main transition period from the traditional Mission to the new Mission of the future. It has been characterized as the period of 'inculturation,' though the better term would be 'interculturation' in order to express that the process of inculturation must be lived in partnership and mutuality." Cf. Aylward Shorter in his "Towards a Theology of Inculturation" (Orbis) p. 13

[5] **ibid.** p. 10

[6] Cf. Nicholas Standaert, ""L'histoire d'un neologisme. Le Terme "inculturation" dans les documents romains" en NRT, 110 (1988), 555-570

[7] **Lumen Gentium** (L.G.) 22

[8] **Ad Gentes Divinitus** (A.G.) 11

[9] AG 22 and LG 22

[10] **Gaudium et Spes** 57, n.5

[11] **Adv. Haer.** (Cf. Office of Readings, Wednesday of first week in Ordinary Time)

[12] AG 4

[13] **Evangelii Nuntiandi** 53

[14] "Inculturation" in the Scriptures is obviously of the greatest importance but is beyond the limits of this brief study. For information on this cf. "The Biblical Foundations For Mission" by Donald Senior C.P. and Carroll Stuhlmueller C.P. (Orbis), especially the references in the index to "acculturation" (sic) and indigenization. Also Shorter, **op. cit.** 104-134. In "Earthing the Gospel" (Orbis) Gerald Arbuckle S.M. points to Jesus' Last Supper as "a perfect example of inculturation" (p. 10). Of special importance for inculturation is the apostolic decision "not to lay any burden on you [gentiles] beyond what is strictly necessary" (Acts 15:28).

[15] **ibid**,. p. 142

[16] "Adaptation" falls far short of inculturation but is a move in that direction. Stephen Neill in his "History of Christian Missions" (p. 109f) provides an interesting

example of early Franciscan adaptation: "The Mongols were nomads; if they were to be evangelized, the missionaries must also adopt the nomad way of life. About the year 1335 we have word of small groups of Franciscans who wore Mongol dress, followed the Mongol 'hordes', and carried their portable altars and vessels on wagons very much like those of the pastoral people to whom they ministered. It was said that those who worked through these 'mobile convents' were far more successful than others in winning converts."

[17] Address in St. Anne's Church, Jerusalem, 4 January 1964.

[18] **Notitiae**, 1969, p. 12

[19] East Asian Review, 1981, p. 310

[20] Office of Readings, 7 August.

[21] African Ecclesiastical Review, October 1983, p. 317.

[22] Commonweal, 11 January 1991, p. 21

[23] Cf. "A Handbook on Inculturation" (Paulist Press) by Peter Schineller S.J. p. 34

[24] "Capitulatio de partibus Saxoniae". Cf. Neill, **op. cit.** p. 69

[25] Cf. "The New Internationalist" Dec. 1991, p. 6

[26] Cf. RegNg V,9

[27] Cf. L3S 58 and **Anonymous of Perugia** 38.

[28] St. Bernard of Clairvaux in his **Sermo ad Milites Templi**

[29] Cf. RegNB XVI and RegB III, 10f

FIRST FLIGHT

Birdwing flashes, fluttering overhead.
He lands softly and settles on the branch.
Flute notes he makes within the maple grove,
Hazy with greenness and mist.
Light as a dewdrop he shakes his head,
Fluffs up downy breast and sits awhile to rest.
Then tightening like a spring,
Uncertain courage pushed within,
He explodes into the air to try again.

Kathleen Collins

JOB'S LAMENT

Roots of broom I eat in darkened caves,
prepared on smoking brush
salvaged from the desert floor
before the rains came,
and the wolves.
My cloak,
spun with threads that have no strength,
offers little warmth from bitter winds
that howl in my soul.
I am cold to the bone.
I have been thrown out
into the night to wander
with dogs as my companions.
Tears wash my aging face;
sorrow spills upon my grief.
My bent steps are tortured by injustice.
I have been forced to take up lodging
with the poor;
eating old bread, dark and stale,
choking on the words I used to chew,
no longer asking questions,
waiting only for God's mercy.

Sister Rosemary Stets, OSF

The Third Order Regular of St. Francis and the "Irish Connection".

SERAPHIN CONLEY, T.O.R.

This past year, I had the opportunity to visit the historic Friary of "San Isidoro" here in Rome, the site of the Irish College established by the famous Luke Wadding, OFM for the education of young friars from his country during the long period of religious persecution there. In the Refectory is an impressive set of drawings of the ruins of some of the ancient houses of the Friars Minor in Ireland. I thought it would be nice to have a similar drawing of the ruins of a house of the Irish Friars or Sisters of the Third Order Regular for an honored place in our Generalate at the Convent of Sts. Cosmas & Damian. In the process of searching for my ancient and picturesque ruin, I discovered a number of interesting things.

First of all, that in the fifteenth century there was a rapid expansion of the TOR Friars in Ireland similar to the remarkable response to the Order in Italy and in Spain. In that century, during which it seems there were no fraternities of the TOR in England and only two in Scotland, some forty friaries would be founded in Ireland. The Order took root in Connaught and spread most successfully in the western part of Ireland beyond the Pale where the native Irish were still dominant. Obviously, there was something about the Rule of the Franciscan Order of Penance which was attractive to the Irish spirit and a flexibility which enabled the friars to respond to a need in the local Church and culture.

Fr. Seraphin Conley, TOR, writes from Sts. Cosmas and Damian friary in Rome where besides being local superior he serves as General Definitor of the Third Order Regular of Penance. Previously he was engaged in the ministry of formation. He is a member of the Immaculate Conception Province (Washington, D.C.).

Another interesting and curious detail, given the numerous congregations of Tertiary Sisters, is that there seems to have been either no communities or only two communities of women following the TOR Rule during the same period. In light of this, one of the historians wondered why certain papal letters to Ireland were addressed to the Brothers... and Sisters... of the Third Order Regular of Penance! Most probably the solution to this not very great mystery is that since the Rule has always been "The Rule of the Brothers **and Sisters** of Penance", any papal document granting a privilege or referring to the entire Third Order Regular would use this formula.

The Irish Congregation of the Franciscan Third Order Regular was made up of both clerics and non-clerical members. It is known that a number of secular vicars and canons had resigned their offices and benefices to become friars. Under their influence, the religious strove to live a life of penance and self-sacrifice in community while cooperating in the pastoral work of the neighboring parishes. However, the special work of the TORs in Ireland was teaching. Each monastery was to a greater or lesser extent a center of learning and had its own "free school" for boys. As teachers in 15th century Ireland, their cultural and teaching interests would not have centered so much around the classics of Greece and Rome as around the native learning — the grammar, the poetry and songs of Gaelic Ireland and the sagas of its important heroes. In an important time in Irish history, the Third Order Regular Franciscans as teachers preserved the native culture, as priests they provided pastoral assistance to the faithful in their districts and as sons of St. Francis their loyalty and obedience to Rome was unshakable.

The Reformation was eventually to wipe out the TOR in Ireland. However, it took a long time before English law could effectively reach into the rural areas to definitively suppress their Convents. The Friars would come back to places several times after their expulsion but probably by 1635 the last of the TOR Friars had died. Over the following centuries even the memory of their connection with certain ruins of churches or friaries was lost to the local people! Of the 47 Third Order Regular foundations, there are remains of 21 of them. The only Convent to be fully preserved is that of Rosserk Friary founded sometime before 1441. It is built of cut stone work of the highest quality and beautifully situated on Killala Bay at Rosserk, County Mayo.

There is a famous monastery with the confident motto: "If cut down, it will sprout anew". That could very fittingly be a description of the Third Order Regular in so many countries. In Ireland, it did "sprout anew" especially in the Congregation of Franciscan Brothers of the Third Order

Regular with their Motherhouse at "Mountbellew" in the Diocese of Tuam. In the very best TOR tradition it was rooted in the Local Church and in service to the people. The fraternity began with two brothers dedicated to teaching children their catechism and their language. More young men joined them and they developed three types of schools: Sunday Schools for those young men working in the mills during the week; Evening Schools where the brothers handed on their skills as tradesmen; and the Day Schools or the regular grammar school for boys. The Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. McHale was an enthusiastic supporter of the Brothers and saw in them a revival of the monastic system of education on which he would base his Catholic school system. In modern times, the TOR Brothers still remain faithful to their service to the local Church and people, especially by means of their Agricultural College at Mountbellew. The emphasis is on the best methods of scientific farming to get the most out of the type of land in their area and allied subjects such as Marketing, Development of new products. With this type of training more and more young people are able to stay on the land and avoid the need to emigrate.

The Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn have their roots in this Franciscan Congregation as do the two American Provinces of my own Third Order Regular. Mountbellew might be called the "Irish Connection". So, perhaps, it might be more fitting if there were two drawings to have a place of honor here at Ss. Cosma e Damiano: Rosserk Friary for the ancient Congregation of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Mountbellew Monastery for the modern brothers who carry on its great tradition.

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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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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).

Guest Editorial: About the Question of the Evangelization of Europe

HERBERT SCHNEIDER, O.F.M.

The question of the evangelization of Europe is not first and foremost a question as regards Europe, but a question to the Church as such.

Certainly in some ways, though not in every respect, Europe is undergoing spiritual tribulation, and this causes us to reflect on its Christian origin, shape and definition, and to affirm it in a positive manner. However, we should also see the positive beginnings, which are experienced in many Christian groupings, communities and religious orders.

Also it cannot be denied that the impulse to freedom is of Christian origin, as is the impulse towards intimacy and the integrity of the person, towards questions as regards justice and peace, towards the preservation of life and environment, and therefore we can easily consider ourselves in the lead of all these endeavors. And yet we experience a subtle distancing away from Christian values, a revaluing of the Christian task beyond the social commitment, a negation of the lifegiving power of faith.

In the analysis of our contemporary society, I notice coming from members of the Church a ready complaint about our present times, as if the cause of all would lie outside ourselves, outside the Church. This analysis is only partially correct and therefore does not find the echo as we would desire it.

I take as my premise that we must start with ourselves. Only then is the evangelization of Europe possible.

A former provincial and professor of theology, Fr. Herbert Schneider is now General Delegate for Poor Clare Nuns at the General House in Rome. Though specifically reflecting on the evangelization of Europe, the author's insights are easily applicable elsewhere.

1. The secularization of the Church herself and of her communities.

In many aspects the Church secularizes herself. She lives, of course, in secular forms that include computers, organization, administration, direction and decisions. She readily enters into all this — and by this fact contributes a strengthening towards secularization.

An analysis of enterprises, companies and other forms of society has shown that in spite of excellent organization, a community stagnates, if communication concerns itself only with the organization without an exchange of vision, that is, aims and endeavors. Therefore in pastoral care one can be perfectly organized but this will be ineffectual if the vision and the inspiration are not present.

Evangelization, however, is such a vision, and therefore cannot simply be begun on the sociological and organizational level. Evangelization is a question of our inmost convictions which need to shine forth.

If the Kingdom of God is not alive in us, moreover if we do not even think of it when we talk of evangelization, but only of methods, then we must not be surprised that our conferences and our synods will not help us further. I am not advocating fundamentalism here but a simple and natural faith in the affairs of the Lord. A friendly human face can be considered as an important aid.

2. Loss of self identity

The pluralism of the world has made Christendom unsure of itself, wondering whether it is still on the right path, particularly as other religious and ethical movements present their positive forms of lifestyles.

Even if I can appreciate that I am journeying to God along with other religions, I can still acknowledge with deep gratitude that I have found in Christ an answer for my searching. Without this attitude evangelization is not possible.

As long as a Christian or even a priest or a member of an order makes obvious an attitude that says: "Excuse me, I am a Christian", or "Excuse me, I am a priest", then the process of evangelization has been sapped of its energy. We create too many problems by superficial disagreements and forget our own depth. And people watch us and shake their heads.

There needs to be fraternal exchange and there can be different perspectives on the foundation of the one and only revelation and in conjunction with the teaching authority, but no manifest disunity, of which Christ speaks when he says: "A house divided within itself will surely fall." However many good deeds a community performs, if this community is disunited, it will disintegrate.

No community can exist without a positive identity. By this is not meant a ghetto mentality, but a community from within, which expresses itself outwardly in a living and friendly manner.

3. The regaining of experience and mysticism

Our expression of religion is on the one hand bound by signs, because Jesus gave us signs, such as the breaking of the bread. But in the signs he gave himself not materially but personally.

By mysticism we mean the experience of the living presence of Christ, which is given to us in sign and in the Holy Spirit. The recapturing of the mystical is a basic to evangelization. Without mysticism there would have been no evangelization of Europe.

Karl Rahner has rightly said: "The Christian of the future will be a mystic who has experienced, or he is not a Christian!" Perhaps many Christians have deep experiences in faith, but can these experiences be communicated? Who talks about them and helps people to explain them in the light of the Gospel? In a changing and dynamic world, the interior mystical stronghold constitutes a great help. In mysticism and contemplation, man gains a stance and does not consider himself defenseless before the events of the time.

If the Church lives her mysticism, she will bring about the necessary preparation for evangelization. Words about evangelization alone will not help, neither analyses of our present times, however important they are.

From mysticism, such is my experience, comes a new natural existence as a Christian. From this standpoint I have communicated with the princes of Europe, with other movements such as the Freemasons, the Society for the Protection of Animals, University clubs and Lion clubs, I have also been involved in radio transmissions and in TV programs. It works out well for I am not first and foremost a religious salesman, but a religious person from within, who has the treasure of faith to give and who lives from within in the Church as his true homeland.

4. First and foremost comes salvation and not morality

Every human being, because of the order of creation, needs morality, and the teaching of Christ has as its consequence an ethic and a morality. But first and foremost comes salvation. As much as Jesus points towards the order of creation and represents this, much more does he bring salvation, as in the case of the adulterous woman.

Far too much does the Church give the appearance, be it by design or not, of an institution for morality, and with this she forgoes her

proclamation of salvation. If we really desire to grasp the mandate of evangelization and are serious in our endeavor, then we have to bring salvation into the fragile and fractured situations of life. From necessity, and defeated by sociotechnological processes, many live in destruction without wanting to be destroyed themselves. Who can bring comfort here and show the mercy of God?

How much we ourselves ignore salvation is shown by our inability to renew the sacrament of confession, while people have recourse to psychiatrists (without in any way desiring to minimize their importance). But there is a value for confession which is not a moral institution, but an encounter with the healing Lord.

5. Christ is attractive

It is tragic to discover that the Church in Europe has such an enormous lack of religious vocations. This shows the spiritual distress of the Church herself. What form shall evangelization take then?

Have we insisted upon a system of doctrinal statements, much as these are needed, and neglected the Lord himself? I wrote to Chancellor Kohl for the unification of Germany, that he himself could now help, so that Germany and Europe would become "one man in Christ", as the Apostle Paul says. The great figure, the model of the European of the future, is Christ himself.

Francis of Assisi had received and accepted Christ in his entirety into himself; in that way he became not only a European but he became a "homo novus", a truly new man of this whole world of which Europe is one part. □

The Franciscan Charism of Matt Talbot

THOMAS JEFFERSON MC KENNA

Introduction

Matt Talbot was a Dublin laborer hopelessly addicted to alcohol. His conversion to a life devoted to Christ is a beautiful and inspiring story of the healing power of God. Matt was also a secular Franciscan and, as Franciscans, we share a special joy in the good fortune of our brother. Unfortunately, in our zeal and piety we have often misinterpreted Matt's Franciscan charism in a superficial and misleading light.[1]

In fact, Matt's life bears little resemblance to the life of Francis. The societies in which they lived and the challenges these societies presented were radically different. Francis' Assisi was virtually a microcosm of the most recent, most exciting, and most important developments of thirteenth century Italy.[2] Fed by the new moneyed economy which was reconstructing the basis of wealth and power, the vital new commune was wresting her independence from the decaying feudal structure. Though she was an important pawn in the struggle between the pope and emperor, she successfully asserted herself in the regional politics of the day. She was able to hold her own in the regular and comparatively petty warfare of medieval Italy. She was a significant if not overly bright light of the century and her walls bustled with all the opportunities her world had to give.

Francis, as a powerful and successful merchant's son, was thrust into the leadership circles of this world. Before his conversion he enjoyed much of the wealth, power, glory and ambition which our world still holds too dear.

The author is a recent graduate of the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University and is affiliated with the Secular Franciscan Order. In this article he gives us penetrating insight into the unusual nature of Matt Talbot's franciscan commitment. Mr. McKenna lives in Delaware where he works as a professional musician.

Matt's Dublin was located on the forgotten fringe of a vast if crumbling empire. Early twentieth century Ireland was a powerless nation often exploited by an oppressive overlord. She suffered from extreme poverty and her turmoil was intensified by the upheavals of war, depression and labor unrest. These factors conspired to push the downtrodden into desperate action. Ireland rose in rebellion in the strike of 1913, the uprising of 1916 and the Anglo-Irish war of 1919-1921. The causes of unrest, the struggle for freedom and the cost of victory were in no way comparable to the situations of Francis' Assisi. These modern conflicts were of a scale and a nature beyond anything possible in the thirteenth century. Moreover, Ireland paid a much higher price for fewer gains than did Assisi. Ireland's lingering intellectual and economic decline serve as testament to the cost of her victory.

Matt, though not destitute, was born into the poor depths of this sad and troubled world. He enjoyed little of what our world values.

The challenges which their respective societies presented to these men were, therefore, entirely different. Francis was an important merchant's son and a leader of the wealthy Assisian youth. Though we can not conclude to what degree Francis practiced decadence or the exact nature of his sins, his failings seem to be a general love of comfort and a longing for worldly glory. All were sins of a wealthy and powerful world.

Francis' conversion was marked by the events of war, pilgrimage, visions, periods of prayer, the challenge of meeting a leper, public trial and family separation. In a six year process Francis slowly renounced all the so-called benefits of wealth, power and social status.

Matt's life was centered about one specific and destructive practice. Alcohol was his one master. Beginning at the early age of twelve, he increased his dependency on alcohol until his late twenties. Alcohol intensified this poor man's poverty. In spite of making a comparatively good wage, he found himself in perpetual debt. He even sold his boots and shirt so that he could buy alcohol.

Matt's conversion was marked by a single incident. He was penniless and his companions did not offer to buy him a drink. Previously unaffected by the efforts of others to help him, he realized the emptiness of his life in one crushing experience. He returned home to take a pledge of abstinence for several difficult trial periods and then as a lifelong commitment. Matt began to turn to God to help him overcome his addiction. Soon Matt thirsted for the sweetness of the presence of God as ardently as he once thirsted for alcohol.

Matt's Spiritual Formation

Matt entered the Third Order of St. Francis at the Franciscan Church in Merchants' Quay, Dublin, on October 12, 1890. He made profession on October 18, 1891 taking the name Francis Joseph. He attended the meetings and communal liturgies with remarkable dedication. He observed the regulations of the Leonine Rule and recited the prayers of the Order. He possessed a leaflet of Franciscan prayers and a Franciscan manual, the latter heavily used. He was buried in the Franciscan habit.

If this were our only evidence of Matt's spiritual life, we could conclude that he was distinctively formed as a Franciscan. However, Matt practiced a more varied spirituality.

He was an active member of a vast number of lay organizations. At the Jesuit church he belonged to four such groups: the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, the Arch-Confraternity of Bona Mors, the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart and the Apostleship of Prayer. Other organizations to which he belonged, local and foreign, included: an Association attached to the Vincentian Fathers, the Perpetual Lamp Association of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Confraternity of La Salette, the Confraternity of the living Rosary, St. Patrick's Roman Legion, the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, the Confraternity of St. Michael the Archangel, St. Joseph's Union, an orphanage support association, the Crusade for the Preservation of the Holy Shrines in Palestine and two Confraternities of the Agonizing.

Though only a few of these required as great a commitment as did the Third Order of St. Francis, it is obvious that the Third Order was not the central community in Matt's life. The Order did not meet most of Matt's spiritual needs. Matt was called to a life of intense spirituality that no single lay organization of his day could provide. Matt's practices of prayer and abstinence went far beyond the demands of the Rule. Furthermore, Matt's spiritual advisors were either Jesuit or secular clergy. His extensive reading list and library confirm that there was no peculiarly Franciscan stamp upon his education or spiritual reading. There is, therefore, no evidence that formal instruction in the Franciscan charism was a dominant factor in Matt's spiritual development.

However, a true follower of Francis is not one who worships the man, but one who lives his spirit. The living of this spirit need not be a formal or even a conscious act. And so it was with Matt. Because he did not consciously walk any particular spiritual path toward Christ, he did not realize that he reformed his life in a Franciscan manner. This makes Matt's Franciscan charism all the more valid.

Matt unconsciously lived his life in a Franciscan manner exhibiting most of the characteristic elements of the Franciscan charism.

The rules of the Franciscan family clearly state that the life of the Franciscan is to live the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The essence of Franciscan spirituality is not any distinctive aspect of Christianity, but rather the total living of the total gospel.[3]

The primary manifestation of this life in the gospel is a life of love of God and of others. This love is expressed in a life balanced between both prayer and apostolic activity. It is also a Christocentric life. The Franciscan lives a poor, humble obedient and penitent life in imitation of the poor, humble, obedient and suffering Christ. The Franciscan is devoted to the humanity of Christ as marked by his nativity, his Passion, and his continuing presence in the Eucharist. Full of joyful enthusiasm, the Franciscan is both a preacher of the good news and a herald of peace. The Franciscan life is shared in various levels of community where God's creatures practice love for one another and for their Creator. It is a life of dedication to the scriptures, devotion to Mary, learning in service to God and to others and fidelity to the church.

No Franciscan's life has manifested every element of the gospel. But because he reformed his life according to the model of the gospel, Matt unconsciously lived his life in a Franciscan manner exhibiting most of the characteristic elements of the Franciscan charism.

A life of Prayer

Matt's life in the gospel was primarily realized as a life of prayer and liturgical devotion. Prayer consumed Matt. He prayed all the day, devoting all his free time and even the natural pauses in work assignments at the lumber yard to prayer. Once he was so absorbed in prayer that he lost track of the time and was locked in the workyard after dark. He prayed a large number of offices and litanies to Christ, Mary and many saints. He was also devoted to saying the rosary, the dolor beads, the beads of the Immaculate Conception, of the Holy Spirit, of St. Michael and of the Sacred Heart. But Matt's practice of prayer was not confined to verbal formulas. He was also reputed to be a master of mental prayer, often

absorbed in a state of ecstacy. During his illness in the final years of his life a less demanding work schedule enabled him to spend even more time at prayer.

Matt's devotion to the sacrifice of the Mass is particularly impressive. He began to visit churches to avoid the temptation of frequenting the pubs. Soon, he was visiting different churches at least three times each day, for Mass in the morning and midday and for an eucharistic visit in the evening. On Sundays, however, his dedication was truly remarkable. Beginning in the early morning, he traveled from one church to another, attending as many masses as was possible. One Sunday in particular, that of August 22, 1915, he attended twenty one masses. In fact he died while hurrying from one Mass to another.

Deeply devoted to Mary, Matt prayed to her often and slept with a statue of the virgin and the Christ child. Through Mary, God answered Matt's prayers for guidance in the major decisions of his life such as marriage. He claimed that he was devoted to her even while he was drinking and attributed his conversion to her intercession. The mortification of wearing chains in her honor can be traced to his reading of the popular book **True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin** by Grignon de Montfort.

Devotion to the saints provided him with consolation and inspiration. He identified particularly with the saints who had been great sinners. He had a vast knowledge of the Jesuit saints and showed particular devotion to St. Catherine of Siena, St. Teresa of Avilla, and St. Magdalene de Pazzi.

Matt's Christocentrism is clearly evident in his devotion to the Eucharist. His regular evening visits to the church were in honor of the Eucharist. He was also deeply given to weekly Communion, the most frequent reception considered proper in his day. His reverent deportment and his practice of changing from soiled work clothes to cleaner garments revealed his respect for the real presence. In his first hospital stay at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in the summer of 1923, he spent as much time as possible before the Blessed Sacrament. During his final hospital stay he took Communion as often as it was offered, but out of humility never requested the sacrament. After his mother died in 1915 he was deeply hurt, but he was not lonely; "how can anyone be lonely," he said, "with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament?"[4]

His sacramental devotion was also evident in his practice of weekly confession, a natural component of a penitential life devoted to the Eucharist.

The Passion of Christ played an important part in his prayer life. A crucifix was one of the few possessions in his room. Coming home, he knelt and kissed the crucifix. His books on the crucifix and the Passion show signs of much use.

A Life of Ministry to Others

In his ministry to others, Matt preached the gospel in both word and deed. Grieving over peoples' lack of love for God, his conversations always focused on the topics of the saints and religion. He also gave informal instruction to children concerning the saints as role models. His admonishments were primarily aimed against the use of foul language, a practice which he detested. He checked the use of foul language with gentle warnings, but when his temper was aroused he would boldly produce a crucifix and exclaim: "Look, boys, see who you are insulting!" In time, his example alone was enough.[5]

In zeal he sometimes brought others with him to sermons or to visits with priests. Through the grace of God he once brought a man back to the sacraments who had been gone for thirty years.

However, Matt preached the gospel best by way of example, a most Franciscan practice. He was a model laborer, a diligent worker, well respected and dependable. In no way did Matt seek worldly praise, yet his spiritual advisors, fellow workers and the wider public respected him for his obvious dedication to God. They never derided him for his faith nor regarded him as a fanatic. He remained a humble and common man whose life was devoid of striking incidents. Instead he struck the world about him "as a light happens to a dark room."[6] Once, while in the hospital, he mentioned to a nurse that it is not enough to thank the doctors and nurses, one must also thank God the great healer. She was so moved by his example that she instructed her other patients to do the same.

A Life of Poverty of Self

Matt's life of poverty in imitation of the poor and humble Christ began with poverty of self. Like Francis, he attributed his conversion to God alone. In humility he did not change his outward appearance after his conversion, except that he no longer drank and maintained a higher level of personal cleanliness out of sacramental devotion.

His devotion to humble, private prayer distanced himself from others. No one knew him intimately. Few knew the total extent of his prayer life save his mother and Dr. Hickey, a spiritual advisor and friend. He tried to avoid all notice, never speaking of his good deeds and walking with his eyes cast downward. He took pains to hide his mortifications from the world. When dining with others, he gave up his fasts and abstinence. Like Francis, he ate what was set before him even if such a full meal disagreed with him. He removed his chains prior to his entrance into the hospital. They were discovered only after his death. Like Francis who hid his

intimate embraces with the Lord from the public, Matt also sought to conceal his prayer life. He was to be found in the back of the church, embarrassed when caught praying.

He rarely stood up for his rights as a human person, but offered up all offense. When struck by a large pole at work and when denied a pay increase given to his co-workers, he remained silent.

Out of humility he offered all credit to God for his gift of prayer and his intellectual achievements. He gave credit to the Holy Spirit and to the intercessions of Mary for his ability to understand the meaning of the advanced works he read.

His humility was not superficial or self-deprecatory. He never spoke ill of himself. The only record of harsh self criticism was his honest admittance of the intemperance of his youth.

In his relationship with his superiors at work, Matt was respectful but blunt. He hated falsity and never curried favor. He refused orders which were against his conscience and allowed no one to interfere with his devotions to God.

A Life of Material Poverty

Matt's life of material poverty was not entirely voluntary. He and his family shared in the poverty of his society. But his conversion only increased this level of material poverty.

Throughout his entire life he gave away a considerable sum of money, keeping for himself only enough to survive. In order to avoid the temptation of buying alcohol, he never carried money with him except when taking it to give away to the needy. During the labor crises of 1913 Matt gave away much of his strike pay. The little that he received he gave to struggling families. He also readily lent money, but, when the time for repayment came, he would generally forgive the debt. He generously donated to many charitable organizations until his illness reduced his income to a scant minimum. His last donation was to the Maynooth Mission in China, his favorite charity, in December of 1924.

His appearance and lifestyle were also poor, but in no way dirty. He never bought clothing for himself and was always poorly dressed in gifts of old and oversized clothes. He never asked for these gifts and, out of a love for poverty, he actually gave away a suite of new clothes he had received. He initially denied bonus pay at work, until convinced to take it as a gift, not as a right. He promptly gave it away. His room was sparse but tidy. There were no luxuries. Other than a stool and a small bed, he had only a few devotional items: small holy pictures, a crucifix and a holy water font.

A Life of Penance

In his life of penance, Matt practiced mortification as an expression of contrition for his sins. Disturbing his sleep, he woke every morning from 2 a.m. until 4 a.m. to pray. He almost always prayed on his knees whether he was at home or at a church.

As we have already seen, Matt wore chains beneath his clothing in honor of Mary. He wore the chains regularly, even while he slept. Over a period of years they caused Matt's shoulders to sloop and they wore indentations into the skin. Out of humility he hid the practice from the public. After he died it was discovered that he wore chains around his waist, a leg and an arm. They were buried with him in honor of his sanctity.

Instead of a mattress and bed linens, Matt slept on a board covered with a thin sheet and used a block of wood for a pillow. He practiced this mortification so regularly that his face grew numb and his hearing became impaired.

From the beginning of his conversion Matt practiced abstinence and fasting. He ate on his knees and far outpaced the regulations of the Leonine Rule for the Third Order. For breakfasts and lunch, a slice of plain bread with tea and/or cocoa was his standard fare. Meat was a rarity at any time and completely absent for nine months of the year. Only his illness, itself intensified by his mortifications, caused permanent but slight mitigation of these extensive practices.

The Herald of Peace

Matt was a herald of peace in his dedication to social justice. Boldly, he freely spoke his mind and did not hesitate to tell his superiors about fairness. When the governor of the Irish Free State was appointed, Matt commented "isn't it a terrible thing to have that man up there in the Park with 10,000 a year, and poor people starving."[7]

More often, however, Matt was a passive sower of justice. Detached from the world, he took no interest in politics, the propaganda of the news media or public opinion. But his did not mean that he was not interested in his country's struggles for freedom.

He was deeply involved in the labor crises which erupted in the strike of 1913. Because he believed himself unable to judge the situation, Matt sought the church's teachings on the subject. He concluded that "no one had the right to starve the poor into submission." Though he personally did not feel maltreated, he supported the workers.[8]

Matt was a full member of the labor union and remained in good standing with them all his life. But neither God nor the union called him

to action. This inactivity in the strike must not be interpreted as non-support. It was his commitment to poverty, rather than his non-support for the cause, that kept him from collecting his strike pay. Though he did not picket, it has been pointed out that no worker his age was asked to picket. He neither crossed the picket line nor sought favor from the management.

Instead he offered effective passive support. He helped primarily through prayer, spending his free time during the strike with God. He brought financial aid to other families who were suffering. When he did talk of the situation, it was without any bitterness or violence. The other workers respected his approach.

The years of war and then revolution also affected him deeply, but less directly than the labor struggle. Here, again, he remained a-political. He continued his normal activities during World War I, the uprising and the revolution. As before, he prayed as an informed son of the church rather than as one swayed by public sentiment. His deep sense of concern is evident in that he gathered the names of many of the dead, praying for the fallen not merely in general, but in particular.

Joyful Enthusiasm

Matt did not embrace a gloomy faith, but a joyous one. He expressed his joy through everything that he did. He was cheerful, pleasant and well liked, given to laughter and good stories. He possessed a loud singing voice which he often used, even in prayer.

This joy is evident in his relationships with others. Though strict with himself, he was frank, but kind and gentle with others, doing them favors whenever he could. He was fond of his family, in spite of the alcoholism which affected many of them. He was particularly devoted to his mother. She became his only human confidant after his conversion. His words and deeds of edification were always done with impassioned enthusiasm and peaceful joy.

A Life of Learning in Service to God and Others

Matt's dedication to learning had one purpose: to increase his devotion to God. Matt explained that "in prayer we speak to God, in spiritual readings and sermons, God speaks to us."[9] He believed that reading illumined him and raised him to God's presence.

Like so many in his society, Matt was poorly educated. Though he went to school until he was twelve, he was not attentive to his studies and his attendance was poor. However, he had a good memory. He was shrewd,

clearheaded and possessed a strong desire to increase his faith through study. In spite of his rudimentary education, his zeal for God inspired him in the pursuit of knowledge.

His intellectual accomplishments were extraordinary. The Bible was by far his favorite work. He became well versed in Scripture, which he avidly read and meditated on. He also read a great deal on a wide variety of spiritual and devotional themes and memorized the biographical dates of many saints. He left twenty six scraps of paper on which he had written reflections and insights. They are reported to reveal a deep understanding of the spiritual life.

Matt's response to the upheavels of labor unrest, war and revolution revealed his fidelity to the church. Unswerved by public propaganda, Matt sought the opinion of the church. However, he did not adopt these views blindly, but after much research, consideration and prayer. He held on to these views even when they were considered unpopular.

His fidelity to the church was also an act of patriotism. In Matt's Dublin the Catholic church was under formidable assault from her Protestant overlord; proselytization was rampant. The church was also under attack as a promoter of Irish culture. In an effort to destroy Irish nationalism, anything associated with the Irish cultural identity was officially debased. But the Catholic church as a whole was undergoing a revival in these years. More importantly, the oppressed found strength in their Catholic heritage and remained faithful to the church even when she took an unpopular stand.

Conclusion

Matt was a true, albeit unconscious, imitator of Francis and a participant in the Franciscan charism. Because Matt embraced a life in the gospel, he embraced the Franciscan life and expressed this gospel life in a characteristically Franciscan manner. Indeed, there is no important characteristic of Matt's life in the gospel which was not Franciscan, nor, with the exception of dedication to community, was there an important characteristic of the Franciscan life in the gospel which he failed to adopt. Even if he was unaware of his heritage, Matt was a true son of his seraphic father Francis.

Endnotes

[1]The three most noteworthy sources for the life and spirituality of Matt Talbot are the early pamphlet by Sir Joseph Aloysius Glynn, the full biography by Glynn and the most recent biography by Mary Purcell.

The remainder of the sources are all heavily dependent on these and fall into various categories. There are several translations of these three sources which, for the most part, are adequate. There are many works which offer no new insights nor relevant evidence. Many of these are short pamphlets of which the best is "The Dubliner" which appeared in the **Anthonian** in 1972. There are also many biographies and works on his spirituality that are of questionable scholarship. These are either fanciful, superficial, or filled with prejudicial distortion and misinterpretation of the evidence.

[2]Paul V. Riley, "Francis' Assisi: It's Political and Social History, 1175-1225," **Franciscan Studies** 34 (1974): 393.

[3]Cyprian J. Lynch, **Encyclopedia Dictionary of Religion** (Philadelphia: 1978) 2:1395-6.

[4]Mary Purcell, **Matt Talbot and His Times** (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977) 188.

[5]Purcell 178.

[6]Purcell viii.

[7]Purcell 177.

[8]Purcell 173.

[9]Purcell 111.

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Bonaventure, St. **The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, The Life of St. Francis.** The Classics of Western Spirituality. Trans. Ewert Cousins. New York: Paulist, 1978.

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☆ ☆ ☆

familiar with nails
and crossbeams
He is hammered to a tree

Sister Mary Thomas Eulberg, O.S.F.

VERONICA WIPES JESUS' FACE

My sight is a haze
Through the pain in my head,
But I feel the calming cloth
Touch my face —
its warmth,
Its smoothness somehow seems
Ridiculous amid all this.

Returning my daze-stare
A woman
Looking at me,
Clutching the cloth
Holding my sweated pain.
In the caverns of my breaking heart
I feel
Her pity,
Her compassion.

My face
Is already bleeding again,
Spittle mixing with
Sweat.

The thorns dig deep
Into my forehead flesh.
The wiping of my face
Another brief moment
Of peace,
Of rest,
Of ease.

My sight is a haze
Through the rain in my head;
But in that pain,
In that agony

People are not afraid
To reach out to me.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Evangelization: Making Known the Mystery of Christ[1]

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

> There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed... The Church, constantly gripped by the desire to evangelize, has but one preoccupation: whom to send to proclaim the mystery of Jesus? In what way is this mystery to be proclaimed? How can one ensure that it will resound and reach all those who should hear it?[2]

The second Vatican Council and the post-conciliar magisterium speak frequently of "the mystery of Christ," "the Mystery of God," the "Mystery of Salvation," the "Mystery of the Incarnate Word," the "Paschal Mystery."

What is the meaning of the word "mystery" in the conciliar texts? The question is of some importance since modern languages often describe "mystery" as something that is impossible to understand or even something that makes no sense ("the whole matter is a mystery to me"), or something fictional as in "mystery story." Some synonyms for "mystery" given in the Random House Thesaurus are: puzzle, problem, secret, riddle, conundrum, enigma, obscurity.

The conciliar texts themselves never say what they mean by "mystery." However, an official **relatio**, given to the bishops by a conciliar commission in 1964, defines the word thus: "As many recognize today, the word 'mystery' does not mean only something unknowable or abstruse, but a divine reality, transcendent and salvific, that in some way is revealed and

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In this particular presentation on the New Evangelization Father Charles explores the rich biblical and theological meanings of the Mystery of Christ. A prayerful and reflective reading of this article will provide Franciscans with a solid appreciation of the call to evangelization.

made visible. This word is entirely biblical ("omnino biblicum") and is very apt to describe the church." Opening the second session of the Council in 1963, Paul VI spoke of the Church as "a mystery, that is a reality impregnated by a divine presence."

"Mystery" in the Scriptures

The Hebrew Scriptures use the word infrequently: twice in regard to the mystery cults (Wisdom 14:15,23) and several times to mean **secret** (Sirach 22:22; 27:16,17,21; 2 Macabees 13:21). The "secret of the King" (Tobias 12:7; Judith 2:2) is the king's **plan**, a meaning that St. Paul will attach to the word. They "mysteries of God" (Wisdom 2:2) are God's saving plans, the same meaning attached to "mystery" in the New Testament often.[5]

In the New Testament the word **mysterion** occurs in the Synoptic Gospels in Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11 and Lk 8:10 where Jesus speaks of "the mystery of the kingdom" which is revealed only to the disciples. It is the Pauline corpus that makes most frequent use of "mysterion" and in these writings the word means:

1. God's plan (Eph 1:9)
2. hidden from the ages (Eph 3:9; Rom 16:25; Col 1:26)
3. finally realized and brought to fulfillment (Rom 16:25; Eph 3:8ff; Col 1:26);
4. and consists in making us holy in Christ (Eph 1:4,9).

The "Mystery" is the nucleus of God's plan calling Jews and Gentiles to form one body of Christ (Eph chapters 1-3; Col 3:1; 4:3)

At the very center of the "mystery" is Christ Himself: He **is** the "mystery of holiness" (1 Tim 3:16), "The mystery is Christ among you," says Col 1:27. In 4:3 of the same letter the apostle asks for prayers "asking God to show us opportunities to proclaim the mystery of Christ" — might we not make that prayer our own? As St. Augustine comments: "The only mystery God has is Christ, and those who died in Adam need to be given life by Him."[6]

In Paul the word **mysterion**, often translated into latin as "sacramentum," never means a sacred rite as it would come to mean often in a later tradition.

"Mystery" In the Patristic tradition

Among early Christian writers the word "mystery" or "sacrament" did not have the precise meaning it would be given in the 13th century, when under the influence of Peter Lombard (followed by Thomas Aquinas)

the word would be used to designate the liturgical rites that Trent would define as the "seven sacraments, no more and no less." St. Justin Martyr (†c. 165) considers all the facts "of the flesh of Christ" to be sacraments: His birth, for example, and His death on the cross. Among the Greek Fathers, especially Origen, Christ Himself, the Church, Scripture, Baptism, Eucharist, and other liturgical rites are all called sacraments. Origen gives us an understanding of his notion of "mystery" when he explains why Christ is a "mystery;" "one thing was seen, but something else was understood. His flesh was seen, He was believed to be God."[7] In this understanding, the mysteries both reveal and conceal. What they reveal can be seen by all; what they conceal can be perceived only with the eyes of faith.[8]

St. Augustine considers sacraments to be "everything done by the Church in time" ("quidquid in Ecclesia agitur temporaliter").[9] In his writings he lists as sacraments: the mysteries of faith, the figures of the Old Testament, the bible, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, the creed, the Lord's prayer, exorcisms, fasts, the ceremonies and prayers of the Mass, the washing of feet, the feast of Easter.

To sum up: the human, visible reality of the mysteries is there for all to see; God's presence in the mysteries, and God's power at work can be perceived only by those to whom the gift of faith is given and accepted. Thus, all can see the visible structure of the church, but only people of faith believe that the church is the body of Christ, filled by God's Holy Spirit with the life of the Risen Christ. All can see water being poured in baptism; only the faithful believe that the baptized are "born from above." Anyone can see the bread and wine used at Eucharist; only people of faith believe that the Eucharist perpetuates the mystery of the cross, and the bread and wine are truly the body and blood of the living Christ.

The Mysteries: Saving Power at Work in Us

The mysteries, however, are not given us by God only to be believed; they are sources of divine power. All the events of Christ's life are "for us and for our salvation." If we are being saved, we are being saved by these mysteries, and no one is saved independently of them.

The events of Christ's life, death and resurrection give a whole new meaning to human existence. Very succintly, but also very splendidly, the fourth Sunday preface expresses the transforming power of Christ's mysteries:

> By his birth **we are reborn**. In his suffering **we are freed from sin**. By his rising from the dead **we rise to everlasting life**. In his return to you in glory **we enter** into your heavenly kingdom.

From earliest times the catholic tradition has emphasized the power of Christ's mysteries. St. Ignatius Martyr (†c. 107) calls Christ the "bodily and spiritual doctor." Christ acts through His human nature, including His body (sarx), as well as through His divine nature (pneuma) and heals both our spirit (to which He communicates the Holy Spirit) as well as our bodies which He will raise.[10]

As he contemplates the mystery of the Incarnation, St. Gregory Nazianzen exclaims:

> This is why God became human: to raise up our flesh, to re-create humankind, so that all of us might become one in Christ who perfectly became in us everything that he is in himself. We are to be so formed and molded by him that we are recognized as belonging to his one family. If only we could be what we hope to be by the great kindness of our God! He asks so little and gives to such, in this life and in the next.
>
> He who enriches us is made poor; he takes on the poverty of my flesh that I may gain the riches of his divinity. He who is full is made empty that I may share in his fullness.

After contemplating the power of the Lord's Incarnation, Gregory exclaims in astonishment:

> What is this wealth of goodness? What is this new mystery surrounding me? I am both small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. I am to become a coheir with Christ, a son of God, and indeed God Himself. (sic!)[11]

As he contemplates the same mystery of the Incarnation, Augustine too is awestruck:

> God became human so that human beings might become God. (sic!) The Lord of angels became human today so that humans could eat the bread of angels. Humankind sinned and became guilty; God is born a man to free humankind from their guilt. Humankind fell, and God descended; humans fell miserably, and God descended mercifully; humankind fell through pride, God descended with his grace My brothers and sisters, what miracles! What prodigies! God is born. I tell you again: for your sake, God became human. You would have perished, had he not come. Ask if this were merited; ask for its reason, for its justification, and see whether you will find any other answer but sheer grace.[12]

We can sum up the power of this mystery: The Eternal Word of God, The Father's perfect self-expression, becomes what we are, to make us what He is. That is truly something to be awestruck about!

Liturgy: Making the Mysteries Present

All the mysteries of the life of Christ happened in a determined time and place. In a real sense, they are unrepeated and unrepeatable. But in a real sense too, the liturgy makes these mysteries present to us so that we can experience their saving power. Thus, when we celebrate the solemnity of Christmas, Jesus is not born again as a baby, but as we celebrate His birth with faith, we experience the saving power of that event: "but his birth we are reborn"

In the Apostolic Letter "Mysterii Paschalis," Paul VI wrote:

> Thus as we celebrate the "sacrament of the birth of Christ"[13] it is right and proper for us to pray that "through him who is like us outwardly, we may be changed inwardly."[14]

In a very forceful statement Pius XII wrote in "Mediator Dei":

> The liturgical year is not a cold and lifeless representation of past events. It is not a simple and bare record of a former age. It is rather Christ Himself ["Annus liturgicus ipse Christus est"(!)]. He is ever living in His Church and **these mysteries are ever present and active** not in a vague and uncertain way.[15]

The second Vatican Council expanded on this teaching:

> In the course of the year the church unfolds the whole mystery of Christ from the incarnation and nativity to the Ascension, to Pentecost and the expectation of the blessed hope of the Lord's return. Thus recalling the mysteries of redemption, she opens up to the faithful the riches of the Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way **made present** for all time; the faithful lay hold of them and are filled with saving grace.[16]

This text explains what the council means by "the whole mystery of Christ" — everything from His first coming to His return in glory, when He will bring His saving work to a glorious fulfillment: "we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Very importantly, the mystery of Christ includes His Easter gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.

Conciliar Teaching

The second Vatican council rediscovered the rich biblical and patristic theme, mystery, and speaks of it in some 60 texts. To cite some examples: Christ reveals "the mystery of the Father."[17] In exercising their duty of teaching, bishops are to "propound the whole mystery of Christ."[18] God opens the door for missionaries "to proclaim the mystery of Christ."[19] The laity draw their unity and solidarity "from the mystery of Christ."[20] Missionaries are sent to "make known confidently the mystery of Christ."[21]

The OFM General Constitutions (art. 100) followed the lead of the council in directing preachers "to proclaim faithfully the mystery of Christ in its entirety."

It is essential for priests to "penetrate ever more deeply through prayer into the mystery of Christ."[22] God's saving plan is quite simply "the mystery of Christ."[23] The function of sacred theology is to "scrutinize in the light of faith all truth stored up in the mystery of Christ."[24] Ecclesiastical studies are to be revised "to unfold ever increasingly to the minds of seminarians the mystery of Christ."[25]

The OFM General Constitutions (art. 100) followed the lead of the council in directing preachers "to proclaim faithfully the mystery of Christ in its entirety."

The Paschal Mystery

Conciliar teaching attaches special importance to "the Paschal Mystery" — the Liturgy constitution alone speaks of it nine times.[26] In his letter on mission Pope John Paul II writes: "the council affirmed the centrality of the Paschal Mystery." This emphasis was evident very early in the Council to the delight of many. Among them was Canada's Cardinal Leger, who said in the aula: "Never since the first centuries of the Church has the Paschal Mystery been held in so much honor."[27]

The liturgy constitution describes the paschal mystery in a few words found in the 7th century Gelasian sacramentary, and often repeated in liturgical books ever since: "dying he destroyed our death; rising he restored our life."[28]

The Paschal mystery (or Easter mystery) celebrates the Lord's death and resurrection as one inseparable whole. The New Testament too consistently presents Jesus' death and resurrection as two inseparable parts of the one saving mystery.[29]

One of the first great controversies to trouble the church, at the end of the second century, was precisely about the Easter celebration.

The church in Asia, emphasizing the Lord's death, celebrated Easter on the 14th of Nisan. The Roman church, wishing to emphasize the Lord's resurrection, celebrated Easter on the following Sunday. Both were in

perfect agreement: Easter celebrates both Jesus' death and resurrection. It was only a question of emphasis. (There was no special liturgical commemoration of the Lord's death on Good Friday until the fourth century.) Easter was the one celebration of the indivisible Paschal Mystery.

Of all the mysteries of Christ, the paschal mystery is principal. This mystery is celebrated every year with the greatest solemnity during the Easter triduum, and throughout the Easter season which is a 50-day Feast "like one great Sunday," said St. Athanasius. The season of Lent ends and the Easter triduum begins with the evening Mass of the Lord's supper on Holy Thursday. (For this reason the Good Friday fast is not called a lenten fast, but an Easter fast![30])

In emphasizing the absolute centrality of the paschal mystery, the liturgy takes its lead from the New Testament. Jesus Himself refers to his passover as his "hour" — the hour of His greatest work.[31] The apostle Paul says emphatically:

> If Christ has not been raised from the dead our preaching is worthless, and your faith is in vain... If Christ has not been raised from the dead you are still in your sins. And worse yet, all who have died in Christ have perished.

Paul then solemnly proclaims the very heart of the Good News: "But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead."[32] At the very core of the Christian gospel is the triumph of life: Christ died, but now truly lives, and because He lives, we too shall live.

Living the Paschal Mystery

In 1 Cor 5:7, Paul writes: "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed." We have no passover other than Christ; His passover is our passover.

The Risen Christ draws us into the Paschal Mystery of His death and resurrection principally in baptism and the eucharist:

> By Baptism human beings are grafted into the paschal mystery of Christ; they die with him, are buried with him, and rise with him.[33]

The Eucharist is the principal celebration of the paschal mystery, the great "memorial of Christ's death and resurrection," a living memorial that brings those saving events in a mystical but real way into the present. We are then caught up in those events and experience their saving power. When we celebrate the Eucharist, "the victory and triumph of Christ's death are **again made present**" taught the Council of Trent, a teaching repeated by Vatican II.[34] Christ's victory is made present so that it might be our victory also, the victory of "the whole Christ." The Church prays in the Palm Sunday preface: "By his dying he has destroyed our sins. By his rising he has raised us up to holiness of life."

As Christ has drawn us into His own passover, so too does He share His own consecration with us:

> The Lord Jesus "whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world" (Jn 10:36) makes his whole Mystical Body sharer in the anointing of the Spirit wherewith he had been anointed, for in that body all the faithful are made a holy and kingly priesthood.[35]

Thus, in the body of Christ that is the church, there is only one consecration — the consecration that belongs to Christ by right, is ours by grace. In the body of Christ, the head does not have one consecration and the members another. He and we together share the same consecration by a stupendous gift, the anointing of the same Spirit. "You are properly called 'Christs,'" said St. Cyril of Jerusalem to the newly baptized, "by receiving the mark [antitypos] of the Holy Spirit. You were given the anointing, and this is the Holy Spirit," the Risen Lord's Easter gift. The teaching of St. Basil the Great may seem downright astonishing: "Through the Spirit we acquire a likeness to God; indeed we attain what is beyond our most sublime aspirations — we become God." (sic!)[35] It is as if the early Christian teachers felt they had to use hyperbole to express the awesomeness of the Paschal Mystery and its transforming power. As we contemplate this mystery, we too can share in St. Augustine's feelings of sheer wonder: "Let us be grateful and give thanks, we have been made not only Christians but Christ. Be amazed, rejoice! We have been made Christ."[36]

All Christian morality flows from the fact that we have died with Christ and have been raised up with him: "Since you have been raised up in company with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven... You have died, and now the life you live is hidden with Christ in God." The Christian on earth lives in a hidden way the identical life the glorified Christ lives in heaven, and this will be made manifest when the Lord returns: "When Christ is revealed — and he is your life — you too will be revealed in all your glory with him."[37] As we, open to the grace of continual conversion, move away from the reign of sin and death to share more fully the life of the Risen Christ, the victory of the Paschal Mystery is going on in our lives, until the day comes when we, transformed by the Lord's mysteries throughout our lives, are called into the new creation. We are indeed an Easter people.

The Franciscan Tradition

As St. Francis contemplates the mystery of Christ, and especially the Eucharistic mystery, he too is overcome with awe:

> Let the whole human race tremble, the whole world shake and the heavens exult when Christ, the Son of the living God is present on the altar in the hands of a priest. O admirable heights and sublime lowliness!

Without the shadow of doubt, Francis excels even among the Saints for his singular and deep love of the Crucified Christ and his reverence for the mystery of the Cross. The depths of Francis' devotion is itself "a hidden mystery," as 2 Cel (n.203) says:

> Who can explain or even understand how Francis wanted nothing except to glory in the Lord's cross? Only he can understand it who has experienced it. Our words are incapable of expressing such marvels. Let silence speak where words are useless.

St. Francis' mystical experience before the Crucifix of San Damiano was surely a turning point in his life. In her Testament St. Clare considers that experience to be the definitive moment of Francis' conversion: kneeling before the Crucifix in prayer "he felt the decisive impulse to leave the world completely."

Francis composed the "Office of the Passion" which could also be called the "Office of the Paschal Mystery" since Part I is to be used during the Easter Triduum and Part II during the Easter season.

When Francis and his early followers had no liturgical books and were thus impeded from praying the canonical hours, "day and night they turned over the book of the cross of Christ, which they always had in view, encouraged by the example and word of their most loving father, who frequently preached to them with inexpressible sweetness the glories of the cross of Christ."[38] Similarly, when Francis' first followers asked him to teach them to pray, he taught them the "Our Father" and the prayer: "We adore you, most holy Lord Jesus Christ... because by your holy cross you redeemed the world."[38a]

The Stigmata, that most singular of privileges, marked Francis' body with conformity to the Crucified Christ, a conformity that had already taken place in the depths of his soul. "The Father of mercies imprinted on his body the glorious mysteries of the Cross."[39]

It comes as no surprise then to hear that when Francis came to die he wanted to celebrate his death as a passover, and asked that the words of John's gospel be read, beginning with "Before the day of Passover arrived." His soul took flight "when all the mysteries of Christ had been fulfilled in him."[40] Totally transformed by the powerful mysteries of Christ which he contemplated and celebrated with such devotion, there was nothing left for Francis in this world. He was perfectly ready for the fulfillment that is found only in the new creation.

In his prayer Francis speaks of the mercy of God who chose Francis' family "to fulfill the mystery of your gospel."[41] At the center of the gospel is the paschal mystery. Therefore, "on a certain Easter Sunday," when Francis was staying with some brothers in a hermitage, he encouraged them "to celebrate continually in poverty of spirit the Lord's passover, that is the passage from this life to that which is eternal." Living "in the desert of this world as pilgrims and strangers" Francis wanted his brothers to think of themselves as "true Israelites."[42] Israel's passover was a "pale reflection of what was to come; the reality is Christ."[43] The great passover, the only passover which saves the whole world is Christ's. Those who are drawn into His passover and celebrate it in faith are the "true Israelites."

It comes as no surprise to learn that St. Clare, who considered herself to be St. Francis' "little plant," shared his devotion to the mystery of Christ. If Clare emphasized so much the ever so necessary contemplative dimension of Franciscan life, it was so that she and her Sisters could "withdraw from all disturbance and cling only to the depth of the mystery of God." She herself was "inflamed with love for the mystery of the cross" and encouraged Ermentrude of Bruges to "meditate tirelessly on the mystery of the cross."[44]

Like Francis and Clare we too are called to believe the Mystery of Christ, to contemplate it, to celebrate it, to be transformed by it, and to live and die immersed in it. Consider all this with a sense of wonder, and see if you can find any other explanation for this marvel "except sheer grace!"

Endnotes

[1] Ad gentes (AG) 24.

[2] Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN) 22

[3] Cf. Bonaventura Kloppenburg in his "A Eclesiologia do Vaticano II," p. 21

[4] ibid.

[5] Cf. "Mystery" in **Dictionary of the Bible** by John L. McKenzie S.J.

[6] Ep. 187,34

[7] Comm. in ep. ad Rom. 4:2

[8] This patristic teaching was very influential at Vatican II. The church is called a "mystery" in the title of chapter I of **Lumen Gentium** (LG) and in nos. 5,39,44,63; in nos. 2 and 20 of **Unitatis Redintegratio** (UR); in nos. 9 and 16 of **Optatam Totius** (OT); in n. 16 of AG; in nos. 2 and 40 of **Gaudium et Spes** (GS), and in n. 4 of **Nostra Aetate** (NA)

[9] Enner. in Ps. 146,8

[10] Cf. C. Vagaggini OSB in **Ephemerides Liturgicae**, 1964, p. 234.

[11] Cf. his **Sermons** in the Office of Readings: Tues., 1st wk. of Advent and Fri., 31st wk in ordinary time.

[12] Cf. his **Sermons** in the Office of Readings, Sat. after 2 Jan. and 24 Dec.

[13] Leo the Great, **Sermo XXVII in Nativ. D. ni**

[14] Roman Missal, Prayer, Baptism of the Lord.

[15] n. 165

[16] **Sacrosanctum Concilium** (SC) 102

[17] LG 3

[18] **Christus Dominus** 12

[19] AG 13

[20] AG 21

[21] AG 24

[22] PO 14

[23] PO 22

[24] **Dei Verbum** 24

[25] OT 14

[26] articles 5, 6 (twice), 61, 81, 104, 106, 107, 109.

[27] "Numquam a primis saeculis Ecclesiae, Mysterium Paschale tanta in gloria repositum est." (23 Oct. 1962)

[28] SC 5

[29] Cf. 1 Pt 3:18; 2 Cor 15:4 and 13:4; I Tim 3:16

[30] Cf. "Norms Governing Liturgical Calendars" Tit. II,I,20

[31] Cf. Jn 12:23 and 17:1. On the meanings of "hour" in the gospel of John, cf. Raymond Brown, "The Gospel According To John," vol. I, p. 517.

[32] 1 Cor 15:14ff

[33] SC 6. The scriptural references given for this teaching are Rom 6:4; Eph 2:6; Col 3:1; 2 Tim 2:11

[34] SC 6, n.19

[35] Cf. Office of Readings, Tues. 7th wk. of Easter

[36] In Ioan. tract. 21:8 (Quoted by Paul VI in **Ecclesiam Suam**).

[37] Col 3:1ff

[38] LM IV, 3

[38a] 1Cel 45; L3S 37; T5

[39] LMin I,1

[40] 2Cel 217; LM XIV,6 and LMin VII, 5.

[41] 2Cel 156

[42] LM VII,9

[43] Col 2:17

[44] Cf. The Legend of St. Clare nos. 36 and 32 and Clare's letter to Ermentrude.

JUDAS' LAST REFLECTION

Perhaps the rope is not as rough
As it was made out to be
And his words at the last
Extended even to me.

And should I have gone to him,
Looked him in the eye, the touch
Of his poor cheek still
On my teared lips

And asked him to forbear
With my weakness? To look
Him face-to-face and see
Too much love, for me, too much.

Ah Jesus, my friend, how much
I loved you. How much I loved you
And would dearly love to kiss
You once again to ease the pain

And erase my other kiss that etches
Itself into my neck twisted and tortured
With every inch of tightened strain
Throughout this fateful rope.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

How the Minister of the Fraternity Began His Service in Rome

HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

1.

After the Minister of the whole Fraternity had returned from the Pacific to the Mediterranean coast, shortly before the feast of the Blessed Bonaventura, he hurried to visit the Roman Curia of the Lord Pope and some of the prelates in it, in order in the name of all the brothers to bring them the greeting of peace, and to promise reverence and collaboration for the good of the Church and the Kingdom of God. At the same time he asked that he together with his counsellors and secretaries might be admitted into the presence of the Lord Pope himself as soon as he came back from one of his numerous missionary journeys. Then in the Curia of the Friars Minor — thus is it named — on the Gelsomino hill in Rome he began his novitiate, so as to understand better and by small steps the true nature of the commission which the Lord had given him through the Pentecost Chapter.

2.

To begin with, he asked all the brothers who had remained on the Gelsomino during the Chapter their counsel about how he could best perform his service for the good of the Fraternity and who else could help him in this. Because above all things they desired to live faithfully in accordance with the Rule and the Constitutions and to have a Guardian,

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In this captivating report, Fr. Hermann Schalück, the new Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, describes in his inimitable style some of the activities of his first few months in office. The stories have a special appeal to our franciscan sensibilities and communicate an energizing force that easily stirs our franciscan hearts.

a certain Brother Aloysius, who up to then had been on the shepherds' field in Bethlehem and initiated pilgrims and young brothers into the mystery of the Incarnation, was named as Guardian. There followed him several other fellow workers from various other Provinces. The new Definitorium met together for several weeks in spite of the great heat and dryness of Latium in summer, in order to make a beginning of drawing up their own "Six-Year Plan". These brothers tried to perform their manifold task with great creativity but also with sober foresight. On a particularly hot day the Minister encouraged them all with these words: "Let us plan with great foresight. Like Noah, who began his building work before it began to rain." And they spoke of how important it was, on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of evangelization in the Americas to understand the ideals of the young and the tears of the poor; in opposition to the inflation of words and the culture of noise to live out a culture of stillness, of contemplation and of listening, and so to give a name to the rose; to develop an ability to understand the secret message of music and of the other arts, even if it was only the message of the wooden violin of our Father and Brother Francis; and to invite all the brothers to compose new melodies, rythms and dances.

3.

Then came the feast of the Porziuncola, and the Minister of the Fraternity hurried to make his first visit (second only to a simple visit to the bare desert of Nevada) to Assisi in Umbria. There, before the little chapel, he preached penance to the people who had hurried to gather from all the directions of heaven and at the same time proclaimed the forgiveness and liberation which can come from God alone. He spoke of how the poor and crucified Jesus is to be found in our impoverished and crucified fellow human being. The important thing is to fight with a reconciled heart for the Kingdom of God, faithful to the commission of the Lord to Brother Francis to build up the house of faith, of fraternity, of the Church and of creation. He reminded them of the patrimony which comes to us from the past, but at the same time with no less urgency of the obligations which come to us from the future, and called to support him in this the words of a great and wise man from the East: "Indifference and lack of interest towards the poor are the primary forms of violence." (Gandhi). But he also quoted a theologian with a more Western orientation, according to whom the important thing is not to give alms, but rather to bring about justice. Then he joined with them all to beseech the Lord for his Fraternity, that it should prove capable of casting out from its own ranks and communities not only the demons who are dumb, but also those who talk too much, so that all may preach more by deeds than by words.

4.

On the evening of the same day there gathered in front of the Porziuncola a large crowd of young people, some two thousand of them, from the whole of Italy and some neighbouring countries as well. They had been travelluing on foot to Assisi for a whole week in order to pray for the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of pilgrimage and the spirit of prophecy, for their own lives and for the Church's journey, and to obtain the blessing of the Minister General. Standing on a wooden podium, the latter began by giving a brief account of the Pentecost Chapter and recounted how Diego of Alcala, that blessed brother who had not received holy Orders, was able to "inspire afresh a world grown old and tired" (Bull of Canonization). The Minister praised the young people for the example of their pilgrimage, given also to his Brothers, "many of whom want to return to nature, but few of them want to do it on foot." And then he spoke of the hope he cherished, that one day he might be able to send many of them on their way to Vladivostok, Novosibirsk, Alma Ata, to Albania and Samoa, Easter Island and Fiji, and to Xian and Jinan-fu in distant China. Yes, it might become necessary to send a new mission of brothers even to Germany, as in the times of Brother Francis. For, and here the Minister cited a saying from distant Rwanda, "What moves the heart will also set in motion the feet." Thereupon he imparted to them all the blessing. And a young man from Umbria, for whom a certain Brother John from that Province begged a special blessing from the Universal Minister, thus strengthened immediately began his period of probation in the friary at Monteluco, where he still is today.

5.

A short time thereafter — it was long before the first rainfalls of autumn — the Minister undertook a few further short journeys, which were to prepare him better for his service to the whole Order. First, he went for a Chapter of Mats to San Severino in the Marches. In this place a great poet and song-writer had once become a member of the Order as Brother Pacificus (LegM 4). In this place, too, Brother Francis had once caught sight of a little white sheep in the midst of a great many goats and gently compared it to the Lord Jesus among the Scribes and Pharisees. The Poor Clares of San Severino had later taken it into their care and from its wool made a warm habit for him (I Cel 77-78). And it had to happen just here in San Severino that the Minister Universalis noticed that he had forgotten his capuche. A certain Brother Aurelius lent him another, because he had two, and since then he holds the one worn by the Minister in great veneration. It was at this Chapter of Mats that the Minister announced

his intention of calling together in the near future a meeting of all the Brothers who are poets, singers, painters, sculptors, tightrope-walkers and artists of any kind. All of them, he said, should help the Fraternity to recognize with eyes and hearts purified yon mission old and ever new which comes from contemplating and listening.

6.

On the way home they called on the Poor Clares, so that together with them they might be mindful of the living heritage which Francis and Clare left to the Church. The Sisters made a promise to the Minister who is the present successor of Saint Francis that they would make him a habit with capuche. And as he travelled back home to his Curia on the Gelsomino, the Brother Minister prayed fervently that he and all his counsellors and secretaries might be made worthy of carrying out their service in such a manner that its truth shine forth increasingly not only as a hard diamond but also as a tender blossom and a gentle accord. And the Lord Pope received the Minister and the Definitorium sooner than they could have expected, and imparted on them and on all that they had resolved to do his fatherly blessing.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

☆ ☆ ☆

PALM SUNDAY

I smelled the colour on Palm Sunday And felt
The fine splendour of imported cloth bought
From his misunderstanding father. I looked
Down and saw the ground come to meet me,
Swayed as some drunken lout who hoped to be
Found in good health and happiness. But, I stayed
To find my own Palm Sunday and entered through
An unused side-door that became my narrow gate.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

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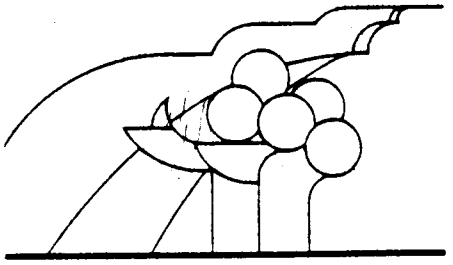

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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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).

Guest Editorial

Francis of Assisi and the Use of Titles: A Reflection on the Canticle of the Creatures

FATHER GABRIEL B. COSTA

More than seven and a half centuries have passed since the **Canticle** appeared. Much has been written about this poem-prayer. Truly, it remains a classic; inspired by the Author of all Art written by the Poverello himself.

One point of interest is the consistent and constant use of titles: "Brother" Sun, "Sister" Moon, etc. And while courtesy has always been a part of Francis, indeed even before his "conversion", one gets the feeling that Francis was an informal individual who enjoyed intimacy and never stood on ceremony. A question that arises is: were these titles intentional or were they employed because of the way they looked or sounded?

My own feeling is that Francis was not "just being courteous" with these titles; they were neither randomly chosen nor accidentally used. There are just too many other stories, miracles, and legends which portray Francis addressing all Creation (human and otherwise) with titles. For example, when facing "eye surgery" in his later years, he asks Brother Fire to be gentle with him. No, Francis was too convinced, too aware, of a universal brotherhood and sisterhood and that all Creation, made by The Father, had been redeemed by Christ.

It was how he lived. Saint Francis gave **quality** time; Saint Francis exercised **saintly** compassion; Saint Francis preached **proper** respect. For

Father Gabriel B. Costa, Ph.D. is a priest of the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey. He is an associate professor of mathematics and computer science at Seton Hall University where he is also an adjunct professor of Franciscan spirituality at the seminary. He is a professed member of the Third Order of Saint Francis. He has written for ***The CORD*** *in the past.*

him to address any part of creation by other than its proper title would have been, in a broad sense, a sin. Somehow, that would have gone against his grain, counter to his mission of radical love. And although, in the greater scheme of things, this would not upset most people, for one like Francis it was important. Possibly (probably?) an important factor in the making of a saint.

Perhaps Francis used titles as a reminder: both for himself and others. A reminder of the dignity of all peoples and things; of each and every fiber of creation. Words of respect to and for all people; signs of each person's dignity. For example, the titles of "Brother" and "Sister" recalling the vows of those consecrated to Religious Life; the title of "Father" for a priest as a reminder of his ordination; appropriate titles to all in their respective walks of life.

And "Little Brother Francis" was certainly not shy about identifying himself as a friar; that is, when he was not referring to his body as "Brother Ass".

Francis believed in equality but not sameness; he used differentiation without practicing discrimination. He was not afraid to call Brother Sun,...well, Brother Sun!, because Sister Moon might be offended. He used titles to acknowledge a person and his/her calling in life, just as he labeled the rest of the universe as he saw fit. For Francis, titles did not divinize anybody or anything; it was just his way to christianize all.

Maybe the use of titles can assist us in our time. It seems that lawyers, teachers, nuns, priests (you name it — any other vocation and/or career) seem to lack the respect they once had. Maybe the "specialness" of the idea of Call has not been emphasized enough. In the striving for a comfortable informality, could it be that familiarity has bred a certain unconscious contempt?

In light of the above one does wonder if indeed the use of titles has gone away? If so, then is it possible that with the titles, out went respect also, albeit unintentionally? For the past few years priests and members of Religious Orders have pointed out that there is a "shortage of vocations". Furthermore, we are all aware of the tremendous difficulties faced by those called to the married life; divorce rates, etc. (With regard to this, Francis would certainly agree that although used in different ways, the titles of "husband", "wife", "mother" and "father" are just as crucial as the other titles above for they, too, serve as excellent reminders.)

Titles are important, maybe even essential, for Francis. And while I don't believe Francis would say that the use of titles is in any way a sufficient remedy for "vocation crises", I believe he might say that the proper use of titles could assist all concerned in putting callings and lifestyles in perspective.

Sort of a gentle reminder that God has made us. And called us to special things.

A Way Towards Peace

GIANMARIA POLIDORO, O.F.M.

We all commonly think that we know what "peace" is, and consequently we think that we know what we're talking about when we talk about peace. Very few people realize that one can speak about peace with semantic horizons so different as to lead to a fundamental misunderstanding.

In fact peace is not a concept with fixed boundaries because it is a value which various peoples and cultures have always felt, proposed and sought after with a large variety of meanings and delimitations. The very words used in the various languages to indicate that which we call peace show very different cultural and conceptual backgrounds. For example, we have the Hebrew "shalom" which fundamentally expresses a general idea of integrity and completion; or the Greek "eirene" which probably has to do with the idea of a joyous space of time between one war and the next; or the Roman "pax" which underlines the dimension of a pact signed between two parties.

I believe that this brief initial punctualization is enough to make us see which path we need to follow to lead us to speak about that value which today we call "peace".

Eberhard Jungel, in his precious writing "The Essence of Peace", leads us to discover the weight of the value of peace, through enlightening research on the use of the term so as to be able to understand, as fully as possible, just what common people or the learned world mean by peace.

Thus we find ourselves dealing with a word and a concept in full evolution and in a dynamic context, and for this reason we are solicited on one side to pour some light on the meaning of the term itself, while

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Fr. Gianmaria Polidoro is guardian of the franciscan community at Our Lady of the Angels Basilica in Assisi. Recently he was named delegate for the franciscans in Albania. He delivered this paper at Siena College (Loudonville, New York).

on the other to help increase the potentiality of the concept with study, reflection, suggestions and practices which history continuously offers us.

It is for this reason that this talk is meant to provide a basis and an opening towards more ample horizons.

Without a doubt, in the short space of a conference I cannot illustrate and clarify in a complete way the progress which the concept of peace has made down the course of the centuries. But I can say one thing which practically sums up the entire progress of this concept of peace: in our common western culture to which I refer, war and peace are not antithetical terms as maybe all of us believe. Only apparently are they antithetical terms. In reality, they are consequential. In our culture (with the exception of a current which I indicate as a minority) peace has always been lived as a fruit of war, as the conclusion of a war, and not as an autonomous, primordial reality.

Studying cultural anthropology and history, we learn that for some people peace is the result of the annihilation of the enemy; for others (as in ancient Egypt) peace is the victory of cosmos over chaos by means of the Pharaon-god who with a war forces the enemy (chaos) to become part of Egyptian order (cosmos) which he imposes and defends. Then we have the example of the Roman pax (directed under the law of Rome), and so on until we arrive to the present day with an "American pax" which, with other forms and appearances, imitates the Roman pax. It's a Roman pax year 2,000 A.D.

Nevertheless, in the progress of our civilization, thanks to Christian revelation, we are learning, in concrete day to day life, to realize and live a peace which is not the consequence of a war, but is an inborn, primitive value. In this discovery, the study on violence and non-violence can help us.

So we can affirm that there are, on the whole, two conceptions of peace:

1) The peace which can be obtained only through violence;

2) Peace recognized as fruit of the civilization of peace. They are two points of view, two alternative roads which can be traversed.

The road to peace by means of violence, I think we already know well enough.

The road to peace as recognition of an ancient state of nature, reconquered after the Redemption and possible, though not perfectly, only after a tiring journey, we need to get to know better.

Unfortunately, the lack of serious study and application of this second road forces us to speak of it in only a general way, as with something of

which we've only taken a quick glimpse and which we don't yet know. For example, we do not yet know how to live concretely the non-violent attitude, and for this reason the choice of non-violence is normally considered a faded dream or as utopia.

Today it would seem that there exists no alternative to violence. The best we can do as far as non-violence goes in our world is a "peace" imposed by the United Nations by means of international military contingents. It would seem like a good start, until we realize just how much the UN depends on the economical-political powers. The fact that the UN has begun to have some success only after the fall of the Communist empire helps us understand the truth of what I say.

But this is not peace.

A true peace maker is a person who wants to overcome the concepts expressed before (that is, peace obtainable only through violence; a peace which derives from fear and not from love). These persons I call true peace-makers. They are persons who believe in peace as a positive, primary concept, not derived from the concept of war. The peace-maker totally disagrees with the fifty-third fragment of Heraclitus: "Polemos (war) is father and king of all things; some he reveals as gods, others as men; these as slaves, those as free men."

In these days we must work, and we are working, so that a concept of peace different from the Heraclitan one may emerge. We believe that peace was the initial condition of Creation and we want to work on this basis. We affirm that "in principio erat pax." We refuse to assert that "in principio erat bellum."

We've already seen how the most commonly accepted tradition begins with the ideological conviction that war was the beginning of the composition of human reality. The mythologies at the foundations of a good part of our civilization speak of a cosmogony which is fruit of a war between the gods. Only the tendency of a small minority, as far as I know, has a contrary conviction. We can point out some tribal societies with convictions so non-violent as to consider mean and unworthy whoever tried to gain power by means of violence. We can think of Hesiod who in his "Works and Days" speaks of peace and justice as a gift of the gods to man. But, as I said, it's but a minority part of our tradition. However, a totally positive idea of the subject of peace we can find in the Biblical concept of "shalom", found in the prophets (especially the post-exile ones) which leads to the Christian message in which peace is the beginning and final aim of the way.

Allow me to quote what I tried to sum up in a writing of mine ("And peace I say to you", 1991) regarding the Christian message of peace, which is, I believe, the only message which contains a total vision of peace.

Christianity has no theory on war. It speaks of war only in an occasional and referential way. War doesn't enter into the evangelical horizon, because the Gospel has peace as its horizon. Peace, on the positive side, is not the contrary to an armed conflict. The horizon of peace to which the Christian message refers is the Kingdom, in contrast with sin and condemnation; it is the brother in comparison with the inimicus (enemy). It is, in practice, the cancellation at its very roots of the structure of enmity. The homo inimicus, in fact, is the devil (Mat. 13:25), father of lies (John 8:44), he who refuses the light of God.

Christ came to remove this devil of enmity: "He is our peace, who has made of the two one single people, breaking down the wall of separation which was in between, that is, the hostility. . .to reconcile both with God in one body, through the cross, destroying in himself the hostility" (Eph. 2:14-16). "For in him (Christ) all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20).

For this reason the person who is truly mature, the person of the beatitudes who works for peace, is called son of God (Mat. 5:9).

And so the evangelical proposal offers a vision of life in comparison with a vision of death.

In this way, the antithesis of the Gospel is not war, as is commonly believed. The collocation of Christian peace is much higher than to be reduced to being compared to an armed conflict. And it's also for this reason that in the Christian message we don't find an antimilitarist strategy. Instead there is a strategy to make a person a child of God (John 1:12) through the presence of Emmanuel (God-with-us), the Prince of peace (cfr. Is.7:14; 9:5).

Therefore we don't find ourselves confronted with a war to be fought, but with a plan to carry out (the plan of God), removing all that impedes its fulfillment. This plan to be carried out is called peace which is the fruit of Redemption, as appears from the greeting of the Risen Christ (cfr. John 20:19) which practically sums up his own messianic action with the words: "Peace be with you!"

We now are in the situation of the redeemed. To be in the situation of the redeemed means being persons with access to this peace; and this means that peace is possible, and not utopian.

The Second Vatican Council sees peace in the context of a road and of a construction, in so far as it is "in its substance regulated by the eternal law" but is subject "with the progress of time, for that which concerns its concrete requirements, to continuous variations." And so "peace has never been something stably reached, but it is a "house" in continuous construction" (Gaudium et Spes 78). This means that there's a road to be run.

I believe that one of the greatest proclamations offered to us by Christianity is the concrete possibility for a road to peace. We are not dealing with a consolatory or utopian thought (like that which could be formulated by someone who leaves faith out of consideration and thereby has only a partial vision of reality). We are dealing with a concreteness manifested to us with religious language and thereby within reach of as many as open themselves to understand such a language.

Peace, then, has a positive meaning which shapes the person of tomorrow, as one on the way to the civilization of peace; with an interpersonal and intercreational relationship able to found a civilization superior to that which we enjoy today.

With what I have said above, I mean to affirm in religious language a vision and reality which others can and must translate into political language, economic language, sociological language and so forth. This is a work to be done by the laity in general and by Christian laity in particular.

From these preliminary remarks, though very brief, there emerges the need for an actualization. I mean that it's clear that there exists the necessity to begin a road to peace and a work for peace, not in opposition, but as an alternative to the diplomatic channel or any other way. A road which instead of just being functional to economy or politics, is created to make us grow, to free us and to show our worth.

In this regard, I have had some experience. They may seem but marginal experiences, but I'm convinced of the strength of new ideas. Ideas are like the force which makes a seed germinate. Whether you are aware of it or not, the seed which has been sown moves, grows, breaks through the soil, and a field which until then was barren, suddenly becomes green. It's a sign that spring has arrived.

For this reason, we need a personal and social effort to transfer peace from being an ideological conception, from the field of utopia, to being a prophetic reality. A prophecy is announcement of truth, it's being able to look far ahead. It's not an ideology, which puts on a pair of glasses to see reality in the way most convenient to oneself. Prophecy is looking far ahead and it means choosing the road and preparing the means to be

able to reach the goal. So there's a conception of life to be lived and a methodology to be followed. Both the one and the other I tried to apply and it seems to me that the first be a good method for living and the second a good method for acting.

The first thing which a man of peace has to do is to change his mental categories. The judgements (conjunction of subject and predicate) of the man of peace are fundamentally different from those expressed by someone not working to bring about a civilization of peace because it has to do with civilization itself, and with culture also. Much is written about the demilitarization of man. Well then, having mental categories of peace is one of the fruits of demilitarization. The man who doesn't judge on the basis of mental categories such as the enemy, of that which is different... is the man who demobilizes that "military" which he carries inside himself.

The relationship with others, once we've been demilitarized inside, is a much changed relationship: the other, different, opposer, handicapped, unlearned, competitor...all acquire in our conscience the fundamental qualification of brother, associate, collaborator. As far as this goes, it's interesting to note the expression of St. Francis. "Brother Robber", where two truths are affirmed: the theological one of "brother" and the sociological one of "robber". St. Francis, with his demilitarized spirit, was able to make these two appellatives live side by side, even to cement them together by means of a concrete and real love.

As one can see, even this is an experience to be achieved. We need to learn to overturn certain ways of understanding and certain points of view which otherwise seem indestructible. To do this, the first element to be used is the valorization of the positive side.

In a new relationship, if the other is for me a "positive" towards whom I must move, only then will I be able to establish a relationship of peace.

The relationship which is created is a relationship of love (man made to the image of God has an interpersonal relationship modeled on the Trinitarian relationship in God!). It is a relationship which appreciates the good in the other, which he or she is, and therefore non-violent. Non-violence still needs to be studied and applied in our western society, which continues to think of non-violence as a behavior which eliminates the negative (non-violence) instead of a positive way of acting, for which we don't even have an adept term. (In Italian we can write nonviolence as a single word, but all the same it's not the right one.)

Then there's a methodology which needs to be applied in various situations of peace. It's a bit revolutionary, but I think it's worth knowing and using.

I've written something about this methodology of peace and I looked for ways to apply it in interpersonal and international relations. Maybe something came out of it!

Methodologically, to be able to pass from simple words to concrete facts, we have to learn to consider peace a prophecy and then we need to act consequentially. We don't need consolatory words. Moralistic exhortations don't touch reality. Above all, we need to avoid thinking of peace as a "good work", which we do, not so much because it's vital for us, but, as we're used to saying, because it will get us to Heaven. Too many think of peace as a pious feeling nourished by a good, holy person, knowing well enough that in reality there will never be peace. We know, on the other hand, that to be a prophet means to state a **truth**, to work for a reality which, with time, will be manifested.

The "homo oeconomicus" invests his money in an activity which he judges productive and which on a short, medium or long term will bring him profit.

The peacemaker invests time and activity not for a generic aim, but in a specific expectation for the productivity of peace.

And so, for peace, plans have to be made on a short, medium and long term. Precise conduct needs to be put into action. It has to be clear in one's mind just what can be reached. Peace, therefore, not as simple chattering but as a serious pledge towards a concrete goal.

We need to follow Christian teaching which is the only one that has a project of peace. I don't think that there exists any true project of peace outside of the Christian vision, because there are no reference points, principles or aims.

Christianity speaks of human reality previous to sin, of a reality stained by sin, and of another reality of humanity redeemed by Christ. We can say it in this way: in the beginning was peace; then man's sin broke this peace; the Redemption effected by Christ gave us back the possibility and capacity to return to the "Earthly Paradise" and also it put into his reach a future to be achieved.

It may appear strange or fideistic talking about the concrete possibility of bringing about peace (even though not total) and make it all depend on a religious standpoint. That's true, it could seem fideistic, but only to a certain Western mentality, spoiled by the idea that rationality is everything and therefore has gotten rid of things like faith, intuition, love, etc. as cognitive instruments upon which man can and must base his activity and his programs if he really wants to be concrete. To forget the knowledge which can be had by means of faith doesn't mean to be antireligious. It

just means to have the prejudice of considering the religious standpoint as merely optional.

With this introduction, maybe a bit long and maybe still in need of further explanations, I'll go on to a more precise discussion on the methodology of peace.

1) First of all we have to know what our aim is: to reach a state of interhuman relations based on non-violence, on coming towards one another, on the complementarity of individuals and peoples. This level of relations doesn't mean laziness or the impossible evolution of such relations. On the contrary it means progress in continuous dialogue. In place of arguing and violence, we put dialogue and complementarity. In this same point of view, we can and must include ecology, which means knowing how to put every reality in the place given to it by God. As we can see, it's a dynamic goal and not a static one, which goes along with Gaudium et Spes which indicates peace as a road to be run. The gradual achievement of running this road, we call peace or a way towards peace.

2) We need to change our mental categories. For example, non-violence shouldn't be considered and lived as if it were a "good work", but as a natural attitude of redeemed man. The positive aspect of the other should be retained as the fundamental point of every man, which always overcomes the negative aspect. It means getting by every barrier to be able to meet the other. It means respect for every difference, for every culture, etc. Doing this, in practice we renew our mind and therefore our heart and our actions as well.

3) Attention must be given toward creating a non-violent language. Too often we use cultural models which derive from the violence of wars to indicate states of mind or actions. For example, practically all sporting language is based on bellocose expressions. Often we're unable to tell athletic competition from warlike challenge. Any football game, or other sport, is none other than the simulation of a war instead of competitive sport. Another example: many discussions, even cultural ones, are looked upon as a sort of battle, with winners and losers.

4) So-called diplomacy is a thing of the past. It's no longer possible to use an international language based on concepts of power and reciprocal mistrust. Reasonableness and complementarity need to be the main points of international relations. We can't sit around the same table with each person holding a gun in his hand. Every important meeting should be preceded by a personal meeting between the protagonists on a human level so that human misunderstandings and human defects don't get in the way of the negotiations. Personally, I remember when Gorbachev, through the

Italian premier Craxi, asked us of the International Center for Peace of Assisi a methodological explanation about the message which we had sent him. I myself prepared the answer and the first indication I gave was that the meetings between him and Reagan be preceded by a good amount of time dedicated to knowing each other personally. Maybe it was just a coincidence, but their meetings, beginning with the summit in Geneva, have been carried out in just this way. I had the joy of being present in the various cities of these different meetings.

5) The economy can't continue to be a field where power has its way. Competition is a good thing. It helps growth. Crushing another helps make money, but it doesn't help make peace. Take food away from people and they'll start a war. Humiliate a people and you'll give them fuel to start the next fire.

6) Cultural domination, as well as economical and political, is a subtle, invisible cause of war. That's because it humiliates. One has to be aware of this and learn to abstain from forms of domination which, sooner or later, provoke rivalry. Trade is one thing, imposition is another. We have to remember that economical, political and cultural domination are a triad which reciprocally support each other and make nations explode.

7) The appreciation of the other, of that which is different, is the key both to one's own growth and to every peaceful collaboration. To appreciate the other means to consider his worth and to esteem him. Without this, peace cannot come about. Therefore, together with the capacity of non-belligerence, we need the capacity of accepting that which is different and respecting that which is contrary. This is the great lesson which comes from tolerance. It's a question of social maturity which makes us not be afraid of the other. Tolerance is a civil way of living; and to be tolerant means to allow the other to exist even when this means having to reduce ourselves or to withdraw from positions of excessive expansion.

8) Therefore, there's a new world to construct in peace and in justice. To combine peace and justice, to be able to open oneself to this new world, every person needs to live a spirituality. I believe that a pure materialist, if he really is so, will have a hard time going towards the good of peace. In fact, if we don't grow on a spiritual level, we can't be leaders of civilization. Our technological progress will just be an obstacle on our road if it's not accompanied by spiritual maturity. History offers us shocking examples of barbarity which occur every time man finds himself being a technological giant and a spiritual dwarf. For this same reason, a child is not capable of playing with weapons or using dangerous electrical instruments. It's tragic how we, despite our insufficient maturity, administer

things like nuclear power, chemistry and genetics with a rudeness of motivations and lack of attention which are absolutely foreign to such great responsibilities.

So attention to spirituality, in the more ample sense of the word must be restored, in those fields where people assert that their intention is to work for peace. This is true even for those who consider the spiritual problem of secondary importance, thinking of themselves as champions of the concrete. As far as peace goes, true concreteness lies in the capacity of transcending purely material interest to project our actions beyond it, towards a complete project of civilization.

9) To be true peacemakers, we also need to realize the insufficiency of running back and forth like firemen trying to put out the fires of war. We have to rediscover the important work of prevention which is a hidden activity and whose result can't be measured, for the very fact that it is prevention. The peacemaker who comes onto the scene which is already afire, does a very important job; but we have to learn to put at his side a creator of conditions of peace.

To create conditions of peace is not easy. We live in a civilization which still hasn't faced the question of peace as a prominent and fundamental problem. And we can say this despite the fact that everyone talks about peace, as if it were our greatest aspiration. Unfortunately the concrete structure at the base of our whole national and international society is not a structure which promotes peace. Situations of peace will always need to be "invented" thereby creating alternatives to the current ways of conceiving both life and interpersonal and international relationships. □

Good Theology and Good Geometry: Creation and the Cross in the Works of Bonaventure

PATRICK QUINN, T.O.R.

In the past decade much attention has been given to the role of creation in the spiritual life. Many books and articles have explored the various facets of creation, including the inner dimensions of the human person, as a means of encountering and finding union with God. These spiritualities summon the reader to a greater awareness of the presence of God's reign here and now, falling heavily on the side of realized eschatology. Such "creation spiritualities" are often critiqued however, for the lack of recognition given to the reality of sin and its effects on the created world.

St. Bonaventure also recognized the import of creation as a way of encountering the presence of the divine, but he escapes the critique of contemporary "creation spiritualities." There is no doubt that he was greatly influenced by St. Francis' love for nature and respect for all creatures. Like St. Francis, he understood that all creatures of this world reflect the glory of their Creator. However, the Seraphic Doctor was also greatly influenced by Francis' deep love for the Crucified Christ. The Cross has a special prominence in the life and spirituality of St. Francis. His life of conversion begins in prayer before the crucified Christ at San Damiano and culminates in his reception of the stigmata, an exterior manifestation of his total conformity to the Crucified Lord. The writings of St. Bonaventure are thus greatly affected by this spirit of St. Francis, not only regarding the revelatory character of creation, but also in the recognition that this same created

Patrick Quinn holds an S.T.L. in Spirituality from the Gregorian University in Rome where he is presently studying Systematic Theology. He worked for several years in spiritual formation at the St. Paul Seminary, School of Divinity in St. Paul, Minnesota.

world is in need of redemption through the Crucified Lord. Accordingly, Bonaventure gives primacy of place to the cross as "the way" and "the door" to entering into God. As Duns Scotus has been called the "Theologian of the Incarnation," Bonaventure is rightly called the "Theologian of the Passion."[1]

In spite of St. Bonaventure's emphasis on the centrality of the cross, he does not exclude nor neglect the importance of creation as a means by which our God draws humanity into intimate union. In describing the way in which God calls us and restores us through the cross, the Seraphic Doctor ever respects the harmonious order of creation, as well as the created nature of the human person as a subject endowed with freedom. He is, however, fully cognizant of the reality of sin and its effect of distancing the human person from God. He acknowledges that creation does have a value in drawing us toward knowledge and union with our Creator, but at the same time, he recognizes the Cross of Christ as the indispensable instrument by which we are brought to full knowledge of God and restored to union with God. His theology is one of balance and symmetry, with the cross planted firmly in the center.

The Role of Creation

At the onset of the **Itinerarium mentis in Deum**, Bonaventure holds that the Crucified Christ is the one and only way to enter into God (Prologue 3). However, six of the work's seven chapters are dedicated to the role of creation and the consideration of the human person as pointing the way toward God and revealing the presence of the Creator. In so structuring the work, he expresses the fundamental truth of our faith that we have been created in the image and likeness of God, both male and female. In spite of the reality of sin, through reflection on the human person, specifically on the human faculties of memory, intellect and will, Bonaventure admits that one can arrive at a certain knowledge of God. Furthermore, he notes that our capacity to experience Creation through the bodily senses and to contemplate invisible realities such as "Being" and the "Good" also leads us to knowledge of God. For Bonaventure,

> . . .the universe itself is a ladder by which we can ascend into God. Some created things are vestiges, others images; some are material, others spiritual; some are temporal, others everlasting; some are outside us, others within us" (**Itinerarium** I,2).

The Seraphic Doctor thus recognizes the value of creation and of the human faculties as a way of coming to know God. However, he also acknowledges that human reflection on the created world is limited and can not bring us to full knowledge of God. Such reflection can only dispose

the soul as one ascends toward God through contemplation on the various levels of created being. The consideration of the created world leaves the soul wanting as it affords but an "awareness of something divine, an obscured knowledge, in which the divine reality was seen, but only through the fog of created things and the human expression of Revelation."[2] Therefore, according to Bonaventure, creation does serve in pointing us toward God, but we are ultimately led to an abyss which can only be bridged through the mediation of the crucified Christ. It is only the Cross of Christ which can carry us over into full knowledge and union with God.

The Fall From Original Grace

In the **Itinerarium**, Bonaventure explains the origin of the abyss which had been created between God and the human family. He states that in the "original disposition of nature," humanity was fit for resting in God through quiet contemplation. However, because Adam turned away from the light, he and all his descendants were by his fault "bent over by original sin, which infected human nature in a two-fold manner: the mind with ignorance, and the flesh with concupiscence" (I,7). The effect of original sin has caused a curvature in the human person, directing the individual in toward him or herself, resulting in inordinate self-love and concupiscence.[3] Being bent over, the person is absorbed in self-interest, perceiving the self as the center of existence and is consequently blinded to the Eternal Light.

Bonaventure's understanding of the human condition after the Fall accounts for the limitation of the created world as being a means for attaining full knowledge and union with God. The reality of sin distorts human perspective and impedes the person from seeing the fullness of God in creation because human vision is impaired by a chronic curvature. We are unable to see God clearly because we are using our own self-interest as the prism for looking upon creation. Creation then becomes regarded as something to possess, appropriate and consume. According to Bonaventure, it is only through the cross that we are restored to our upright condition and thus enabled to look beyond the self and upon the Eternal Light.

The Cross and Our Restoration

For Bonaventure, the cross is the antidote to our fallen condition. It alone can reverse the effects of sin and lead us into God. He points to several ways in which the passion and death of Jesus on the cross restores us, bridging the abyss between God and humanity.

> As the restoring Principle created us in orderly fashion, so must He also restore us in orderly fashion. He must restore us in such a

way as to respect not only the freedom of the will, but also the honor of God and the harmonious function of the universe. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, ii)

In this rather stilted theological language, Bonaventure is trying to demonstrate the harmonious manner in which God restores us in Christ. He is illustrating how our redemption wrought upon the cross respects the honor of God, the dignity of the human person as a freely willing subject, and the original created order of the universe.

a) The Harmonious Order of the Universe

Bonaventure again recognizes the goodness and the import of creation by detailing how the redemptive sacrifice on the cross respects the original created order of the universe. He acknowledges that in spite of the Fall, God continues to work in and through the created world, and that it still reflects the Creator, albeit imperfectly. As in the original dispensation, all life had been brought into existence through the **Uncreated** Word, now it is recreated through the **Incarnate** Word. Just as the world had been created through the divine Logos, so too would it be restored through the same Logos. Hence, the import of the Incarnation, the Uncreated Word becoming the Incarnate Word, comes to the fore as a means in which God respects the harmonious order of the created universe in the restoration of humanity.

This harmony is respected further in Bonaventure's notion of the "coincidence of opposites" which is effected through the passion and death of Jesus upon the cross. Bonaventure perceives in the Fall and in Redemption a coincidence of opposites in which the cross is at the center.

> It is most fitting that evils should be healed through their opposites... To heal humanity by the appropriate remedy, God-made-man, willed to be humiliated and to suffer on a tree. As an antidote to universal infection, he willed to suffer a passion most comprehensive; as an antidote to lust, a passion most bitter; as an antidote to pride, a passion most ignominious; as an antidote to death not willed but incurred, he chose to suffer a death not deserved but freely willed. (**Breviloquium** IV 9,iv)

Thus the death of Christ repairs the damage done by original sin which consisted in pride, disobedience and greed. The Crucified Christ provides the antidotes for these sins: pride is taken away by accepting a humiliating death among thieves; disobedience is repaired by being obedient to the Father even unto death on the cross; and greed (lust) is countered by the bitterness of his suffering in the Passion. Death, not willed, but merited through sin, is transformed into life eternal by means of a death not merited, but freely willed. The cross, through the uniting of opposites, thereby restores humanity to wholeness in a dynamic way, honoring the mathematical harmony of the created order.

b) Respecting the Honor of God and the Dignity of the Human person the Seraphic Doctor illustrates the way in which the Cross respects the honor of God by employing Anselm's well known "Theory of Satisfaction" (cf. **Breviloquium** IV, 9, iii). In this respect, Bonaventure is typical of the theologians of his day, maintaining that only Jesus, both fully divine and fully human, was able to repay the infinite offense committed against God by the sin of Adam. However, he departs from Anselm by also relying on the notion of the "example" given by Christ in going to the Cross. Although the Council of Sens in 1140 had condemned the doctrine which held the life and the work of Christ to be but a mere teaching and example, Bonaventure did not view the theories of satisfaction and moral example as mutually exclusive, but rather as complementary.[4]

According to Bonaventure, the example given on the cross plays an active and effective role in our restoration, and at the same time respects the freedom of the human person.

> Christ therefore restored humanity through his all efficacious example. An example is all efficacious when it both invites to the summit of virtue and shows the way thither. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, ii).

Bonaventure says further, that nothing better exemplifies the way to virtue as Christ's being obedient unto death. Nothing could move us more strongly to virtue than the goodness which Jesus displayed in willingly enduring a cruel and humiliating death, so that we, the undeserving, would have life. He concludes by saying,

> For how could God who has not spared his own Son but has delivered him for us all... fail to grant us also all things with him? We are invited, then to love him and follow his example. (**Breviloquium** IV, 9, iii).

The means chosen by God to redeem humanity was meant to attract persons by the love displayed in and through God's giving his own Son to death on a cross. This is a most fitting means since it preserves the person's liberty. One is invited, illumined and stimulated to follow the example of Christ in the way of love.[5] The human person remains free to personally decide whether to accept or reject the love of the Crucified and follow his example. Bonaventure poses this question to the Lord in his "De perfectione vitae ad sorores": "Why did you let your blood pour forth in a river when a single drop would have sufficed for the redemption of the world?" The reply given by Bonaventure is that it was for "no other reason than to show your love for me" (IV, 6). For the Seraphic Doctor, the cross is the revelation of God's infinite love. It is in our turning to the Cross and seeing this great love that we are attracted to imitate that love, and are thereby freed from our egotistic curvature and restored to

our upright condition, able to cast our gaze outward beyond the self. Through the Crucified's example of love, the human person is called and invited to that same love and to participate in the fruits of his work.

Bonaventure speaks further of the effective power of the example given by Christ on the cross in reversing our fallen condition.

> Consider who is suffering...that Christ is truly the Son of God, the Principle of all beings and the saviour of all...unite yourself to him with the movement of compassion, sharing the pains of the utterly blameless...loving Christ, consider why he is suffering and forget yourself in a rapture of devotion...consider how he is suffering and put on Christ by endeavoring to resemble him... Follow his example, strive therefore to be kind to your neighbor, severe to yourself, humble before God and shrewd against the devil's guile. Consider how much he is suffering and embrace the Cross. (**De triplici via** III, B. 3).

The Seraphic Doctor is bidding the Christian to meditate on the passion and the death of Jesus as a means of appropriating the example given by Jesus. He recognizes that it is in this example that we are not only invited but, also shown the way to wholeness, to union with God. The example given by the Crucified invites us to embrace our restored human condition and live in the reality of that condition in the here and now. By our responding to the example of Christ in his free acceptance of the cross, the deformity caused by original sin is healed and the human condition is restored. No longer is the human bent over and absorbed in the self, but rather, one is able to look out beyond the self in love toward one's neighbor and upward in humility toward God.

Relocating the True Center

Bonaventure maintains throughout his writings that while creation can lead us toward God, the cross remains the only way to union with God, to find the true center of our being. In **Collationes in hexaemeron**, he writes that Christians who reject the centrality of the cross oppose their own salvation, they are unable to measure themselves, to know their true worth. Such persons lose their true center, and once again turn in on themselves as that center, reverting to their fallen condition. Bonaventure employs a helpful image borrowed from geometry in demonstrating the cross to be the way to find our true center.

> How marvelous is divine wisdom, for it brought salvation through the cinders of humility. For the center is lost in the circle, and it cannot be found except by two lines crossing each other at right angles. (**Hexaemeron** I,24).

The Seraphic Doctor always holds the goodness of the created world in tension with the reality of the sinful condition of the human person...

According to Bonaventure, created reality is in need of a center and that center is not to be found in the self, but in God. Just as the center of a circle is found by drawing two lines at right angles, the way to our true center is found in the Cross of Christ, two linear pieces of wood joined at right angles. Looking to the cross draws the eye away from the self and outward toward God and neighbor. The cross corrects our vision and reveals the true, admirable God. It opens the eyes of the believer to an authentic understanding of him or herself in relation to God.

Conclusion

St. Bonaventure recognizes that God calls us into loving union in many and varied ways. He is acutely aware that creation itself is one such way. However, he also realizes that the created world is limited and taken by itself, can not unite us to God. He further recognizes and gives proper place to the reality of sin that affects all of humanity, and the consequent need of the Divine Hand to lift humanity from its fallen condition. Bonaventure points to the Cross of Christ as the way chosen by God to do this. Through the Incarnate Word nailed to the Cross, we are brought to union with God and restored to our upright condition. The Seraphic Doctor always holds the goodness of the created world in tension with the reality of the sinful condition of the human person and the need for redemption. In so doing, he maintains the perspective of the "already" and the "not yet" of God's reign. He thereby avoids a realized eschatology which the experience of greed, hatred, violence and war radically contradicts. His is a theology of balance and symmetry, good theology and good geometry.

Endnotes

[1] Leone Rosato, "Il mistero della passione di Cristo nella teologia francescana," in **Quaderni di spiritualita francescana** 4, (1962), 63.

[2] Philotheus Boehner, **St. Bonaventure's Itinerarium Mentis In Deum: An Introduction, Translation and Commentary** (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1956), 131.

[3] Ibid., 113.

[4] Justo Gonzales, "The Work of Christ in St. Bonaventure's Systematic Works," in **S. Bonaventura 1274-1974** v. IV (Grottaferrata: Quaracchi, 1974): 379.

[5] Rosato, 68.

STAR QUILT

Obedience these days
is to trade marriage's
lush burgundy comforter
for the ethereal
star quilt mantle
of Guadalupe.
Perhaps in some
mind's eye
this is merely
tip-toeing parallel
the Via Crucis,
never really setting
firm foot or bending
the back to the road.
But I distinctly heard
the turquoise Lady
amidst the mandorla
of fires
say that she and
the beloved disciple
died also
that day
her Child united them
as mother and son,
and she added:
first came the blood,
then the water,
then light, and then
the tongues of fire.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

FIRE ABOVE/WATER BELOW

The least little brothers
had this tale to tell,
how once he had
accepted the offer
of a prostitute,
is she would obey
the nature of brother fire
and lay down
with him
in the womb of the hearth
where all our desires
are purified.
And they recalled
this wonder too,
how one night
out of the heart
of the hearth he flew,
all engaged
in dazzling flames,
driven like Elijah
enroute Home.
He spun round and
round their waking dreams,
touching their
hopes and prayers
with tongues of fire.
And this
most amazing miracle,
which made them weep
and run like rain
to remember:
how mercy had
always poured out
through him
because he used
all authority given
to him
to serve.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.

If Anyone Wishes To Go Among The Saracens
Witness In Fraternal Peace As The Context For Inter-Faith Dialogue (A Friar's Experience In East London)

SÉAMUS MULHOLLAND O.F.M.

When St. Francis strode through the massed ranks of the Crusaders during the battle for Damietta in 1218 into the camp of the Sultan Al-Melek with that typical single-minded purposefulness, he laid the foundation for any future work which the Friars might engage in with other religious faiths, and his experience in the Sultan's camp gave the context for such work. It is true that in that bold march Francis, motivated by his life-long desire for martyrdom, had great trust and confidence in God — and no doubt the Muslim troops were stunned into disbelief at the sight of this little beggar man moving towards them. But unlike the Crusaders, Francis does not carry any sword in his hand, nor does he wear a scabbard round his waist, nor does he come to them on an armored charger: all Francis carries is the gospel of Christ. While it is true that Francis went to the Sultan with the intention of converting him and to experience martyrdom, it is also true that Francis learns something himself in the way in which he is received by the Sultan.

The incident is described in various texts: LM IX, 1 Cel.57, LMin 3,9.LP37, Fior 24 and while the form and nature of the stories vary what does not vary is the fact that Francis proclaimed the gospel by his very presence as well as verbally, and that the Sultan received Francis with respect

Fr. Séamus Mulholland is a Friar working in parish ministry in London's East End. Besides parish ministry, he also teaches English Literature, is a school chaplain and a Member of the Executive Committee of the London Borough of Newham's Association of Faiths.

and courtesy and in the end admired him. The Fioretti text tells how the Sultan was actually converted to Christianity, the Major Life text relates how Francis could see *no genuine spirit of religion in the Sultan* [and also relates the humorous incident of the Islamic priests slipping away when Francis mentions walking over fire]; 2 Celano text tells how Francis foretold the defeat of the Christians and forbade the war. But all agree on the attitude of both Francis and the Sultan and it is this which sets the tone and approach for us today as we try to dialogue in fraternal peace and understanding in a genuine spirit of openness with other religions.

I am not sure that I would agree with Bonaventure's description of the Sultan as having no genuine religious spirit. The Sultan had already told Francis that he could not embrace Christianity for fear of a revolt among his people; he was after all their religious leader and had responsibilities which outweigh personal considerations. The offering of gifts by the Sultan is not an attempt to "buy" Francis, it is simply hospitality and generosity, although I accept that the biographers do have a certain hagiographical intent. But if the texts are all taken together and the sections on the attitude of the Francis and the Sultan analyzed, then a few things can be deduced.

In the description that Bonaventure gives, it seems as if the Sultan is some kind of tyrannical despot. However, a truer picture would be to see the Sultan as a humble man of his own faith, who in reality has the good of his people at heart [and thus does not feel that he can convert to Christianity] and he certainly does not engage in the forceful proselytizing that Francis uses. It may also be assumed that the Sultan is committed, cautious, courteous and is certainly truly "Islamic" i.e. submissive to the will of Allah, as much as Francis is to the Will of the God and Father of Jesus Christ [who in this instance indicates that Francis's desire for martyrdom is not to be realized and from the other viewpoint it is the will of Allah that this little beggarly Christian infidel lives]. We do not know what Francis and the Sultan eventually spoke of in the few days Francis spent in the camp — but it may be supposed it was not of mutual death: the Sultan is a warrior, not a barbarian. We know that Francis preached the gospel to him and perhaps went on to speak of the Scriptures, the teachings, life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the "True God." The Sultan perhaps spoke of the teachings of Mohamet [Blessed be the Prophet of Allah! *this is said each time the Prophet's name is spoken*] and the teachings of the Holy Qu'uran [which itself speaks in reverent tones of Jesus as a great prophet and holds to the Virgin Birth]. And more importantly, perhaps Francis even saw the Sultan take out his mat, fall to his knees, face Mecca — and pray five times in the day.

In other words, despite the seeming arrogance and irreligion of the Sultan as it is given in the Bonaventurian account of this encounter, the Sultan would not have been fighting a "**hajah**" [a holy war] for something he did not believe in with sincerety and integrity — otherwise his strong Islamic beliefs would have no real basis and this can be dismissed. The main point that I wish to try to make in considering the story as an inspiration for any Friars working with other religions, is that Francis and the Sultan shared their faith-experience, their spirituality and their scriptures — and did so in understanding and respect [quite apart from what was going on around them]. It is this genuine spirit of fraternal dialogue which has contextualized the inter-change between the Order and Islam, and why there is a continuing movement towards understanding between Franciscans and those who follow the teachings of the Prophet. However, for me in the multi-faith/ethnic/cultural situation I find myself working in as a Friar in London's East End, there is an even wider context for this faith sharing.

I work in the parish of St. Antony's, Forest Gate, which is the Mother-house of our Province, which is in the East London Borough of Newham. Newham is the second poorest borough in the country: it has a serious unemployment problem, a high substance/chemical misuse rate, one of the highest HIV/A.I.D.S. rates in the country, and recently headed the table for teenage pregnancies nationwide and has the highest influx of refugees — and Forest Gate is a poor part of the borough with all the attendant problems that go with inner-city areas. The Friars who work in this Borough [our other house is in Stratford which is the next parish] do their best to meet the many needs of the people inside and outside the parish both spiritual and social — we too find ourselves "among" the poor and other faiths.

Forest Gate is also made up of a wonderful diversity of cultures, races, languages and creeds. The main shopping area, Green Street, is rather affectionately known as "Little Delhi" because of the preponderance of Asian sari shops, delicatessans, confectionary shops, music shops. We have Irish, English, African, Asian, Caribbean, South American, Phillipino, Sri Lankan Tamil, Sri Lankan Sengelese, Ethiopian; there are Christians [of all denominations], Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Ba'hais, Quakers, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Sai Babas and even some Zoroastrians. We have Churches, temples, mosques, Meeting Houses, Kingdom Halls and a new Sikh temple in the final stages of completion just 200 yards from the Church — and all this within the parish of St. Antony's

It is within this rich diversity of culture and faith that I work with the Newham Association of Faiths. Sometimes our work is hard [our last

meeting lasted nearly three hours — by which time everyone was ready to give up inter-faith work!!] and there are moments when we have to deal with intemperate, ill-judged remarks and prejudiced misunderstandings of what we are trying to do. There are moments when tension is high in the area [as at the moment over an educational issue] and bigotry, racism and cultural clashes surface and we as an Association have to try to deal with these issues realistically as brothers and sisters working for understanding, tolerance, justice and peace. The friary has been used for meetings, the walls of the meeting room covered in multi-language greetings and prayers and the Prayer for Peace attributed to St. Francis is frequently used as an end of meeting reflection and meditation. At the moment we are working hard to organize a festival of faiths for the area as a preparation for the World Year of Faiths in 1993 and are drawing on the tremendous good will among the people. So there will be Indian, African, Irish, Asian, South American food and music, and dancing; a poster competition, opportunities for other faiths to visit each other's places of worship where they will be welcomed with the same respect and courtesy which the Sultan gave to Francis. There will be talks on different spiritualities, teachings and scriptures with the opportunity to ask questions and explore other faiths with sensitivity and openness.

While the work is hard and at times unrewarding [we were recently turned down for a grant because we had a member of a particular religious faith on our Committee and the organization felt that inter-faith dialogue, work and worship was incompatible with Christian teaching on Jesus as the True God and One Saviour of all] we nevertheless struggle together for peace and harmony and understanding.

As a Friar I have certainly been enriched through coming into contact with these different faiths and am constantly discovering the meaning of fraternity in peace and seek to understand the religious doctrines, hopes, expectations and fears of other faith communities. I do not feel under threat [no one does], nor do I feel my Christian faith in any way compromised or diluted [rather the opposite], nor do I, or could I, deny or devalue the universal redemption of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. There is a real sense in which I feel this to be "among" the *Saracens and unbelievers* [though these are people of very DEEP belief!] sharing my own faith and Franciscan fraternity in poverty at a wider level, working for greater co-operation and acceptance and seeing the great unity-in-diversity within which I live and minister. None of us underestimates the many difficulties of the task facing us in an area such as this, but this does not prevent us from meeting together and trying to quietly and peacefully break down the barriers of mistrust, suspicion and prejudice.

The context for me is always the experience of, and sharing in, fraternal poverty. Like Francis I go to the meetings and undertake projects armed with nothing but my own Christian faith and Franciscan commitment and it is within the context of sharing my own faith experience that I learn about sharing the faith of others. I believe that Christ is the Saviour of all men and women regardless of their credal confession, and I believe that Christ is the completion of any world religion or faith. But I am also aware that Christ does not reject those who do not consciously reject him and that the brethren of other world religions and faiths may well, in the words of Eucharistic Prayer IV be seeking Christ "with a sincere heart." I am convinced that as Friars we can help them do this, not by evangelical proselytizing, but by evangelical proclamation through fraternal, peaceful, witness-in-presence which finds its root and source in our commitment to Christ in the way of Francis of Assisi and our powerlessness. We, as friars have nothing to share with the other faiths of this world but such commitment in poor fraternity, as the Ratio Formationis 18 points out:

The Friar Minor welcomes the others as a gift of the Father, lives in full communion by prayer, rejoices in the good which God works in the life of each one, and considers the fraternity constitutive and an essential element of his being a Minor and of his gospel calling.

While it is true that the text refers to the Brothers in the Fraternity, it can be extended [as "among the Saracens and other unbelievers"] to a wider understanding of the fraternity which for us as Friars Minor must be universal and indiscriminate. If I may once again just take a text from the Ratio, which, though again directed specifically to the fraternity that must be present among the Friars, can be applied as the context for dialogue and work with other faiths.

The Friar Minor progresses in knowledge and acceptance of himself and others intensively cultivating a family spirit, so that the entire fraternity becomes a privileged place of the encounter with God.

It is not unfair to meditate on these texts within a wider context since as Friars the context of our fraternity is the universal gospel, and not only do they speak in profundity about out fraternal relationship with each other as Friar, but also as Friar with, to and for others in the world in peace, harmony and mutual understanding. In doing this the nature of the

fraternity changes while the gospel context always remains the same; it changes and remains because I believe that it becomes even more deeply rooted in Christ the Word, who, through what is revealed to us in the brothers and sisters of other faiths, shows us how his Spirit of Inspiration, justice and peace, is at work in a world ravaged by fear, mistrust, religious bigotry, racism and intolerance. In this vison evangelization becomes a much more profound and meaningful concept and experience [as well as a reality realized] and I have the beginnings fo the faintest glimmer of what is meant by "the kingdom" — that all-embracing reality in which God is present in his fullness in Jesus, the Lord. It is this same Jesus, as the Council pointed out, and as the present Pope reiterated in his marvelous encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* who is the Light of the Nations and is present to, and enlightens every person coming into the world. He is present with his love, his saving death and resurrection, his freedom and forgiveness and who calls every person to knowledge and love of the Father through him in the Spirit.

What may appear to be grandiose theological, soteriological, ecclesiological and even Christological concepts, I am convinced, are slowly through much work, prayer, discernment, struggling to be lived out here in the multi-ethnic/cultural/religious area of Forest Gate in London's East end, in a poor borough, by poorer people and poor friars. I feel privileged and graced to be involved in this work in some small way, and I would like to conclude this personal reflection by yet another extension of a Franciscan text — the Testament. Francis writes:

When the Lord gave me some brothers and I did not know what to do, the Lord himself showed me that I must live the holy gospel.

In my own Franciscan life I feel that Lord has not only given me the brothers of the Franciscan fraternity, but the brothers and sisters of the inter-faith community and through them all is calling me to live an even deeper gospel centred life in fraternal witness-in-peaceful-presence. My joy is to live with the poor of this area as their lesser brother and to be evangelized by them so that my own weak witness in fraternal peace may bring to the brethren of other faiths something of the great love that is Jesus, the Christ and Lord of the whole Universe to whom all things tend in love and through whom all things will return to the Father. Perhaps we may even be glad that Francis did not convert the Sultan to Christianity — the riches of Islam and other faiths are not lost to us, and perhaps they can also, like the creatures of Francis' Canticle, in some mysterious way speak to us about the majesty and glory and all-embracing love and salvation of the Triune God, who calls us to union with Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Book Reviews

"De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam" — The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation. By Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M. Rome: Instituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1991. Pp. 461. Paper, $45.00.

Reviewed by Sr. Ramona Miller, O.S.F. Staff Member of Franciscan Pilgrimage Program

The book's cover symbolically conveys the focus of its historical content and the intended readers. A glossy-print, colored photo presents the manuscript of St. Francis's earlier version of the "Letter to the Faithful" — a manuscript discovered by Paul Sabatier in the Guarnacci Library of Volterra and sometimes referred to as the Volterra Letter. State-of-the-art publishing provides a clear observation of the distinctive red script used by the scribe for the introduction to Francis's letter in contrast to the black script for the body of the work. There, in red, we read: "De illis qui faciunt penitentiam" ["concerning those who do penance"]. All Franciscans, therefore, are the intended readers of Stewart's lengthy and detailed study of the development of the Secular Franciscan Rule. The valuable collection of the thirteenth century sources on Francis and the penitents designates this book as a necessary reference text for any study of the early Franciscan penitential movement. In addition, the entire second chapter is an overview of "penance" in the church from Old Testament understanding up to and including Francis's understanding of penance.

The detailed study of the early Rule for the penitents and how it developed through the centuries, along with extensive footnotes, might intimidate a prospective reader, but the persevering mind will find refreshment and hope in the culminating chapter. Here Stewart synthesizes Paul Ricoeur's method for interpreting a text [no small feat!], and then applies it to the earlier version of the "Letter to the Faithful." He presents his belief that the primitive Rule is about radical conversion and proceeds to explore what the Rule is about for contemporary Franciscans, that is, what "radical conversion" means today. Surprisingly, in this scholarly account of the development of the SFO Rule, a gem appears for spiritual director(s): an analysis of conversion and the meaning of conversion from psychological and theological perspectives. Franciscans looking for an invitation to growth, a book to indicate the direction for becoming "palpable expressions of God's love and presence in our world," would do well studying and appropriating this landmark publication in Franciscan research. Since the scholarly nature of the text places this book in the category of texts for serious historical study, it is unlikely that the ordinary SFO membership will read the book in its entirety. Hence, I would invite Stewart to write another book to popularize his important findings "concerning those who do penance." But, meanwhile, all Franciscans who risk the reading will find a treasure.

The Making of Saints. By Michael Freze, S.F.O. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1991. Pp. 239, inc. Indices and Bibliography.

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

This is a book which combines inspiration and information. The Introduction, three chapters on the Call to Sanctity, Jesus and the Eucharist, and Life in the Spirit fall into the former classification. The chapters on heroic virtues, and special charisms, Parts II and III on the Background for Canonization and the Way to Beatification, together with the Appendices comprise the second category. A chapter on the ceremony of canonization is both informative and edifying.

Specially valuable in this book are the spelling out of the 1983 Norms and Procedures to be followed in regard to Causes of the Saints. Those norms follow a lead of 1969 decrees placing the origination of the Cause not with Rome and the Holy Father where it had been, but with the Bishop of the Diocese in which the Servant of God died. Any Catholic or Catholic group can petition the Bishop to start the Cause for a particular person who has died with a reputation for sanctity, the Norms indicate.

Also helpful are facts and figures about the Saints, e.g. their ages, emblems, and meaning of saints, short biographies of Saints by station in life; a Glossary of their names; Terms and a collection of sayings about holiness from various Saints.

I think the book would have been helped by some thematic diagrams, or — a time-line, and by some more historical examples (e.g. of cases where the process was stopped because of a cultus). Nevertheless THE MAKING OF SAINTS IS A READABLE NARRATIVE and a useful addition to any personal or community library.

A Handbook of Catholic Sacramentals By Ann Ball. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1991. Pp. 222, inc. Index & Bibliography. Paper, $7.95.

Reviewed by Julian A. Davies, O.F.M. Associate Editor of The CORD.

This is a very handy reference manual, written in clear and easy to understand language. An introductory essay by Michael Miller, C.S.B. explains the theology—the faith—involved in the use of Sacramentals and roots it in the Catholic understanding of the goodness of Creation and the Incarnation. Miller indicates clearly, when superstition is operative rather than genuine religious awareness. Another essay on Sacramentals in the Oriental Rites is informative.

The body of the book considers Blessings, things designated for Sacred Purposes, Crosses and Crucifixes, Water, Christmas and Easter Sacramentals, Images, Cords, Medals, Scapulars, Chaplets and Rosaries, and "Miscellaneous" Sacramentals. In each of the accounts there is a physical description of the Sacramental, a narration of its history and spiritual significance, and, when appropriate, an indication of how the Sacramental may be obtained. One of the fascinating discoveries made was that the Christmas Song "Twelve Days of Christmas" was a catechetical code used by Catholics during persecution in England — two turtle doves being the Old and New Testaments, three French hens being Faith, Hope and Charity, etc. (See p. 70-71).

Photographs (not always placed near what they are describing), a list of Sources, and Index and a complete Table of Contents make this work a very useful tool. Sacramentals are a way of awakening faith, hope and love in ourselves. Ann Ball's work helps us appreciate such opportunities.

Kenosis By Fr. Kevin M. Cronin, O.F.M., Rockport, MA: Element: 1992. 116 pages, $9.95.

Reviewed by Br. Thomas Conway, O.F.M., a Campus Ministry Intern at Siena College in Loudonville, NY.

Fr. Cronin's recent work is a theological reflection based primarily on his experiences of the summer of 1973. Two years prior to Fr. Cronin's ordination to the priesthood, he spent a summer working as a lay brother at St. Francis of Assisi Church, a service church in Manhattan. He kept a detailed journal of his activities and reflections of that summer.

The Franciscans staff a number of service churches on the East Coast. Service churches provide an opportunity for shoppers, workers, and tourists to participate in the sacraments, consult with religious, meet for popular devotions, and gather for either presentations or self-help groups at convenient urban locations. The wide range of his ministerial experiences in New York City provided Fr. Cronin with fertile ground for reflection on the many dimensions of Kenosis in his life.

Kenosis is a Greek word for the act of emptying oneself for the sake of God and others. Fr. Cronin understands this experience of Kenosis as a spiritual exercise, one that leads himself and the other into a greater closeness and experience of God. With sincerity and enthusiasm, he draws us into the very specific and concrete ways in which the Kenosis of Jesus challenged this Franciscan to become both a more loving minister and a more fraternal friar.

Fr. Cronin integrates the passages of Scripture in a style which imitates that of the writings St. Francis of Assisi. To read this book, to read the stories of ministry to ordinary people in ordinary situations, to read about the presence of God in a seemingly cold and heartless city, is to pray a prayer, a uniquely Franciscan prayer at that.

The humanity of the person of the minister shines forth brilliantly in this work. Fr. Cronin describes the acts of being, believing, living and serving as a minister. In many ways, he goes forth to do the unthinkable in a manner that is both natural and fearless. He empowers the homeless to laugh, talks aloud to nature, goes to the movies with the mentally ill, and wears his distinctive Franciscan habit to talk to teenagers who are waiting in line for a rock concert. In a typically Franciscan style, he brings the Church to marketplace. The people respond, although sometimes unpredictably, to the presence of this lovable Franciscan suddenly in their midst. Through the example of his life, he teaches the strong and the weak to acknowledge that we are indeed humans, with failings, fears, and an intense need for one another and for God.

Fr. Cronin brings us through many intimate dimensions of his life and his experience of this particular summer. Each chapter begins with a wonderfully heart-warming story from his life prior to his arrival at St. Francis Church. We journey with the author in an amazingly personal way, feeling that which he feels, as he comes to shed light on his identity as a human being, a Franciscan, a man of God, and a person who is present for others. As he interacts with nature, a child, other friars, and migrant workers, he comes to an understanding of the meaning and the value of Kenosis and perhaps of life itself. He reaches from the depths of these stories, extracts the meaning, and applies it to these new ministerial and fraternal situations at St. Francis Church.

In many ways, Fr. Cronin unlocks for the general public many of the mysteries surrounding the question "Why would a well-educated young person want to join religious life today?" He concisely and passionately exposes the joys, the hardships, and the challenges of post-Vatican II formation to religious life. While his work is primarily a spiritual reflection, it would also seem to have several very practical uses. Because he risks to bare his soul in describing very typical ministerial situations, his story would be valuable to adults who are considering religious vocations. A reflective reading of this work by a lay minister would be valuable because Fr. Cronin, through entertaining narrative, points out many of the pitfalls inherent to ministry. Finally, it would be valuable to many in religious life, especially Franciscans. This book both rekindles our instinctive idealism and refines our appreciation of the ordinary.

Drinking From a Dry Well. By Thomas H. Green, S.J., Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1990, 125 pages, $5.95

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association and Campus Minister at the University.

The author of **Drinking From a Dry Well** presents a book of encouragement for pray-ers who are striving for contemplative prayer. He writes this book as a sequel to a book he published in 1979, **When the Well Runs Dry.**

Father Green bases the first part of his book on the writings of St. John of the Cross, especially on **Ascent of Mount Carmel**. The author explains the three stages of the spiritual life as presented by John of the Cross as "getting to know the Lord, knowing and loving God, and truly loving God" (page 17). The author spends a lot of time on the third stage of prayer, the stage where, as St. John puts it, there is often a "dark night." It is to the pray-ers in this "dark night" that Father Green directs this book.

The second part of the book deals with the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus. The contrast between the contemplative life as described by St. John of the Cross and the apostolic life as described by St. Ignatius is interesting to reflect upon. Father Green shows that both saints are directing their followers to the same end, namely union with God. Union with God is the aim of all prayer and all life.

Drinking From a Dry Well may be a difficult book to read for readers who have not read other books written by Father Green. The author repeatedly refers to earlier works he has written, assuming that his readers are acquainted with them. The author seems to be implying to the reader, "If you haven't read my earlier writings, you should have." Still, this reviewer found **Drinking From A Dry Well** instructive and encouraging and recommends the book to anyone who becomes discouraged with his or her prayer life. The message of the book appears to this reviewer to be that a person serious about contemplative prayer must remember this truth: at a point when one's efforts at prayer bring little or no consolation, the pray-er has to entrust herself or himself to the Lord and allow His Spirit to take over.

Praying By Hand. Rediscovering the Rosary as a Way of Prayer. By Basil M. Pennington. San Francisco: Harper/Collins, 1991. Pp. 128, and Bibliography. Cloth, $14.95.

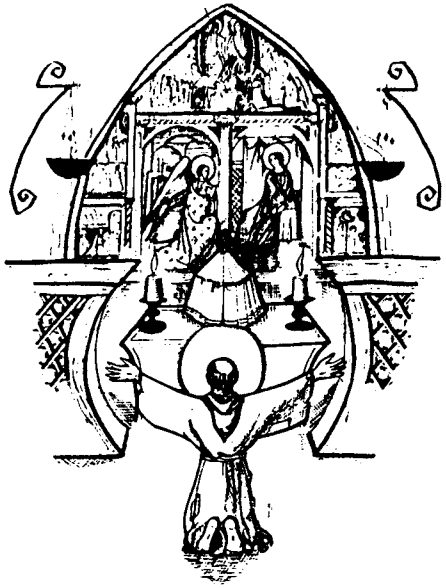
Reviewed by Fr. Julian A. Davies, O.F.M. as associate editor of this Review.

This compact and thought-provoking book is both informational and inspirational. Fr. Pennington, the well known Trappist spiritual writer, begins by situating the Rosary as a form of prayer using beads. Then he moves on to describe the historical development of the Christian Rosary. Reflections on the constituent prayers of the Rosary follow, and then a listing of the Scriptural texts which correspond to the fifteen mysteries associated with the Rosary as we know it today.

Fr. Pennington then briefly considers, one by one, the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries. His thoughts are all personal, and quite pertinent to the spiritual life of religious. I found the thoughts on the Annunciation particularly striking.

Something new in the book is the presentation of several lists of alternative sets of mysteries to reflect on, for instance the Sacraments, or the hidden life, Jesus' encounters with Mary, Jesus relationships with women, etc. He reminds the reader that the key to praying the Rosary, as Paul VI had noted, was freedom, it is not something we have to be concerned about doing just right. Rather it is a means of bringing us into contact with Jesus, for Mary never fails to lead us to Him.

A couple of references to the Holy Spirit as "she" seem uncalled for, and theologically questionable. However, Praying by Hand is by all means a worthwhile book. □



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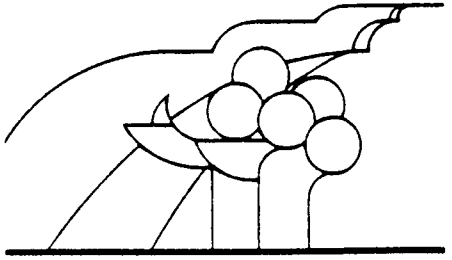

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Standard Abbreviations used in **The CORD** for Early Franciscan Sources

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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).

Jesus breathed on them and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit"

ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M.

The Holy Spirit of God who dwells in the mystery of God's existence for ever and ever, as the bonding between the Father and the Son, is probably the most mysterious of the persons of the Blessed Trinity.

For the Word of God took our way of life and our existence to Himself. And so ever since, from the time of Jesus, humanity can never be separated from God. And to think of the best and the kindest, the most mature, the most integrated of people, which is to think of Him, is now to think of God. For Jesus is Emmanuel — God with us.

And he used, during his earthly life, terms of intimacy and indescribible familiarity when he spoke about the One whom we call the Father. Not that we can really get an idea of God from an earthly father, but we have to go to this man Jesus to understand something of what he means by that word; that word used of the One who is Creator, from whom all is derived and from whom for all eternity there wells up the truth of the Son and the love of the Spirit.

But when we come to the Holy Spirit, then there is a little difference. For we have to use so often analogies which say a little about Him but seem in the end rather limp. And certainly however beautifully he may be depicted as a dove, it does really little to understand the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. If however there is a way to understand a little of the Holy Spirit, then it surely must be through his workings. How something works will give you a little clue as to what it is made of — what makes it tick, so to say.

This unpublished sermon of the late Franciscan scholar and writer, Eric Doyle, O.F.M. was preached on Pentecost Sunday, 1984, in the Chapel of St. Francis at St. Mary of the Angels Friary, Canterbury, England. The CORD is privileged to be able to make it available to its readers.

Everything that is beautiful. . .all words we say about Almighty God, all poetry and art, all of it, has its source in the creative Spirit of God — and there is none other.

The Holy Scripture associates the Spirit of God first of all with someone who brings order from chaos. The primeval chaos over which the Spirit broods, brought from it the order that we call cosmos. But then we meet it so beautifully in the episode of the Annunciation. The Holy Spirit is not only responsible for order but he is responsible for the real, true, historical Presence of the Word in our world. "How can this come to be, since I know not a man?" said Our Lady. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," and there from the Holy Spirit we have that tiny, vulnerable, adorably attractive little child and that is God.

And then the Holy Spirit is the principal author of Holy Scripture. And anyone, even with the most cursary acquaintance with the Holy Scripture, knows this is the hand of a poet, knows this is the hand of creativity, knows this is an eminent litterateur. Let us consider the Psalms, consider the Prologue of St. John's Gospel, consider the end of the Book of Revelation: all that is rich and beautiful, never have words been used so beautifully for such a purpose.

And if this is not enough, he creates the power in the Church so that what came forth from the side of Christ on the Cross, the Church, the Blood and Water — as was said in my prayer book this morning — was now made manifest by a power that one could not believe possible. Not only were they bonded together, but they were bonded together without fear. And they could proclaim a Presence because they were it. And that selfsame Presence continues until now.

And as if this was not enough, then we will hear the priest at Mass call down upon the elements of the Bread and Wine the Holy Spirit, so that he should now make the Risen and Glorified Saviour really and truly in his very Being, present in our midst under the tiny form of the little Host and the few drops of Wine in the chalice.

Everything that is beautiful, all our desire for unity, all our desire for identity with the world of our experience, all words we say about Almighty God, all poetry and art, all of it, has its source in the creative Spirit of

God — and there is none other. That is the font whence it all is derived; that tells us what the Holy Spirit of God must be like. And then floundering, we find ourselves coming upon such words as the Creative One, the Original, the Sustainer, the Tender, the Eternal Mother in God as St. Ephraem speaks of the Holy Spirit. The Eternal Feminine in God, all that is creative and tender and caring and motherly, which opposes all violence. And all that is destructive: the antipodes, the opposite of all this, which comes from the Father of Lies, the Destroyer and Murderer from the beginning.

He is then certainly the Soul of the Church. He is our common soul, so to speak. And it is because of the Holy Spirit that we are here, and this real, true Presence of the Holy Spirit which is ourselves, is the proof that there **is** a Holy Spirit and that there is the ongoing Pentecost.

Notice in that reading, they were in the Upper Room, they were afraid. What is the first result of love according to Holy Scripture? It drives out fear. Where love is, there is no fear. Where love rules, there is no will to power. And there we see the doors smashed open as Christ himself had broken down the gates of Hell in his descent to the lower regions, so the Holy Spirit broke open the gates of fear in the hearts of the disciples. And that which was there in them, was now shared — so much so — that they were now thought to be sozzled; that is the best way to neutralize people, you either say they are mad or they are sozzled, in which case you think you had it all. Not the way, of course, I suppose. Let us say, we all sat in a tea-chest. Locked away in a box, you know at least where you are, but it is highly doubtful, if you know who you are. You need the others to attempt that. And that is why the Holy Spirit is the one who makes the Church a people by the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is not, so to speak, alone in the tea-chest. He is always related to the Son, and the Son always related to Him and vice-versa through the Holy Spirit. Everything is possible to the Holy Spirit of God.

First of all, He will teach us to pray. That is the first act of the true disciple to worship Almightly God. To reverence his Holy Name and to worship Him, that is the **essence** of the mission, it is the **essence** of the Gospel. And the Holy Spirit is the One who teaches how to worship.

St. Paul describes Him as "dwelling in temples", the temple that is ourself. And it is in the temple that we learn to con-**template**: to be with our own temple. And in the temple in Jerusalem which the High Priest entered, the Holy of Holies, but once a year on the day of Atonment, in that Holy of Holies, dwelt the Presence of the Living God. In this temple he dwells at the very centre of our being, there, at the heart of conscience, there at the core of who we are, he now dwells and makes us holy.

Then, if we speak of the Church, we have of course through the Holy Spirit a great image created for us in Our Lady. And Our Lady has been described as the Spouse of the Holy Spirit. She is the Mother of God through the Holy Spirit. If she is an image in this regard to each of us as well as to the Holy Church, then we may take up the point made 700 years ago by St. Bonaventure that we can also be his mother:

> that He wishes to be conceived in us through the Holy Spirit, and by a change of heart and a radical conversion, to grow in us as the child grows in the womb of its mother. And then, mystically, to bring forth this child by a holy life and by words that edify, and by example that spurs people on to what is better and holier and nobler, to name Him. And what name shall we give this child? The name is Jesus. To say the name over and over again, for it is the **Gospel** of the name that we preach. And this name was given Him from God the Father, the Saviour. And there is no name more holy in heaven or on earth or under it. Jesus — so we name Him.

And then when it seems that He recedes, and He does not hear us in prayer, and we feel we've lost Him, then to go with the Magi looking for Him. For he will then be found in all the places that we never thought he would be. We thought he might only be in Church. Oh, that is a vulgar error. He is found everywhere, lifting the stones, looking in the nooks and crannies, the little corners, under the cobwebs, in a tiny word, in somebody's wink as distinct from a blink. We find Him by looking for Him with the Magi, and we ask, so often:

> Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?
> We have seen his star in the East,
> We have seen his splendour shining in the mind,
> We have caught his fragrance and it is alluring,
> We have heard his voice and it is soft and tender,
> We have felt his embrace and it is irresistable.
> Where is He? And looking He is found.
> And then we can kneel down and
> Offer Him the gold of our prayer,
> And the frankincense of our devotion,
> And the myrrh of our sorrow for our sins,.
> And then led by the Spirit we can take Him in the temple,
> The temple of the heart, to present Him to God the Father.
> And there standing before the throne of God
> To offer Him the only gift — in any case there is —
> The gift that makes all of us a gift.

And finally, by the Holy Spirit we are made Apostles. The Church is apostolic not simply because there are 12 Apostles but first, because God

sent an Apostle to us from the distant nearness of His eternal life: the Apostle Jesus. And when Jesus was glorified and sat down at the right hand of God the Father in his Lordship, then did he send the Holy Spirit, who is the **second** Apostle. And this second apostle is the one who gave the twelve their courage to go out and to proclaim what they themselves had received. And that selfsame Apostle is the One who gives us the power to do the same.

> Saying to us: there is **nobody** who has not a talent and a gift in Christ. There is nobody who is not an Apostle. There is nobody who is exempted from proclaiming the Word of God. Everyone receives the Holy Spirit. He has been poured out upon us. And everyone is obliged, because of that gift, to share what was so generously received.

It is common place in accidents, when one hears of people collapsing, to give them the kiss of life. That is the image that came into my mind as I heard the words of the Holy Gospel earlier this morning and now during Mass: "He breathed on them" and in that breathing He brought back to life forever the heart of the whole Church.

In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

☆ ☆ ☆

GOD'S EYE

Empty my senses and fill me with God
That I may know the poverty of Love.
Enfold me in a silent velvet night.
Breathe out your molten Spirit like hot rain,
Transforming me into a burning stream.
Surrender so complete I liquify
And see eternity reflected in Your eye.

Kathleen Collins

Reweaving Religious Life, More Reflection

LYNN PATRICE LAVIN, O.S.F.

Come down into the darkness.
Let the One who longs to be be born.
Come down into the darkness. (mantra — sung)
Come down into the darkness.
Come down into the darkness.
Let the One who longs to be be born.

In Thomas of Celano's life of Francis of Assisi he recounts that Francis often would go off with a trusted friend to remote places, places well-suited for quiet reflection and discernment. On one occasion Francis and his companion went outside the city gates, up the winding hill to a cave that was a favorite place for Francis. Francis entered the cave while his companion waited for him outside. Celano writes, "He wanted no one to know what he did within... He took counsel with God alone... He prayed devoutly that the eternal and true God would direct his way and teach him to do his will... He was afire within himself with a divine fire and he was not able to hide outwardly the ardor of his mind..." Consequently, when Francis came out again to his companion it was as if "one person seemed to have entered and another to have come out." (1 Celano 3:6)

In this account Francis literally moved into the darkness of the cave but symbolically moved into his own inner darkness to find the God dwelling within himself and to discern the mystery and direction of God's life alive within him. That cave experience, that experience of shadows, confusion, darkness, gave birth to a deep inner fire within Francis that

Sr. Lynn Patrice Lavin, O.S.F., delivered this talk at a Province Renewal Day. She is provincial of the St. Joseph Province of Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. Besides facilitating chapters for various Third Order Congregations of women, Sister Lynn Patrice has taught and worked with Formation Directors and Leadership groups in Rome. This year she will again facilitate the National Assembly of the Franciscan Federation, Third Order Regular, of the Brothers and Sisters of the United States.

would shatter his darkness. That fire would ignite his Gospel journey that even today touches us as members of the Sisters and Brothers of the Third Order Regular.

As I reflected on how I might begin my presentation to you today as we continue looking at reweaving religious life I chose the images of darkness, light or fire, and birth as a means to symbolize our present lived experience as Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. How often, as the provincial council and I have moved among you, has our conversation centered on the present situation in which we find ourselves, that of transitional change. We find ourselves moving from the known to that which is not yet known, from an established government structure to an evolving new way of organizing ourselves, from what seemed to be clear or light to what is covered with what, at times, feels like darkness, uncertainty, shadow.

In our sharings with one another we have heard each other verbalize a Pandora's box of opinions. We've said this process is "challenging", "energizing", "creative". We've said, "This will never work"; "What possessed them to make this decision"; "How will we manage?"; "Things feel so unsure. We usually have a clearer game plan."

As we heard Eileen tell us this morning, change shakes our comfortable moorings. It challenges us to look an ending in the face so that we might name and own the feelings that are such an integral part of who we are. It challenges us to live into the darkness, to be open to the messages, insights that we receive there so that we might use them to shape our future together. In thinking about this I was reminded of a favorite poem of mine, "East Coker" by T.S. Eliot:

In order to arrive there,
To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstacy.
In order to arrive at what you do not know
You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance.
In order to possess what you do not possess
You must go by the way of dispossession.

Have you felt that you're not sure where we are? I have. Have you wanted to know with certainty yet only experience unknowing? I have. Have you wanted to possess, to control the pieces of this puzzle? I have.

A way wherein there is no ecstacy...the way of ignorance...the way of dispossession...these are the ways of conversion of heart that lived in the darkness of Francis' cave. These are the paradoxes of the Gospel way that invite us to deeper faith in God, deeper faith in one another and in

who we have been as a congregation for over 137 years. These are the paradoxes that give birth to new ways of seeing, that upset our status quo and invite us to delve more deeply into the values and meanings of our life and mission as Franciscan women living religious life in this time and place. In my own prayer and reflection so many times I have been drawn to this passage in Mark's Gospel:

> No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old cloak; if she does, the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and the tear gets worse. And nobody puts new wine into old wineskins; if she does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins too. New wine, fresh skins! (Mark 2:21-22)

Sister Kathleen Popko's presidential address to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in August, 1991 offers us insight into our present experience as she reflects on this last decade before the year 2000:

> The last decade before a millennium, futurists tell us, is a time marked by the disappearance of traditions, boundaries, habits and practices. It is the end of an old age, the beginning of a new age. Moorings loosen; foundations shake. Changes occur beyond our imaginations. Shock waves break over the planet and signal a new consciousness, new ways of thinking and being in the world. We anticipate now a decade of redesign.
>
> Even in the earliest days of this decade of redesign, we experience the premonitory signs of the approach of the Third Millennium. Among the shock waves we have experienced on the global level are the collapses — almost without warning — of ideologies and boundaries. How many of us would have predicted even one year in advance the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, the dismantling of oppressive totalitarian governments in Eastern Europe, the demise of Communism in the Soviet Union and the reunification of the two Germanys...
>
> These same forces of change impact religious life. We too are redesigning in the midst of complexity. Seismic shifts in global understandings of economics, politics, ecology, culture, religion, and cosmology influence our lives personally and communally...The questions confront us: What is the design of our future? How can we be present to the loci of change in ways that promote Gospel values and vision? How can we infuse this pervasive change with the spirit of the Gospel?

Does this sound familiar? In many ways doesn't our present experience of transition feel like a seismic shift in perspective? How often have we asked and continue to ask ourselves the same Gospel questions voiced here? These insights make clear to me that what we are experiencing as a congregation is mirroring the larger, global process of change in which we are living in this decade of redesign. Religious women and men in this

Without shared faith our shared vision will perish.

decade of redesign are creatively trying to reweave the fabric of our lives so that our Gospel mission may make a seismic impact on the fabric of society in the Third Millennium. We are in the process of birthing a renewed presence for our world.

We ask ourselves how we can continue to be present to this reweaving process, or this birthing. Kathleen Popko suggests that we can only be present as promoters of Gospel values and vision "if we are discerners and contemplators of our reality, if we foster a contemplative attitude toward all creation, if we are attentive to and motivated by the presence of the sacred everywhere." How reflective her words are of our Franciscan charism, of our congregational refounding stance that has invited us over these past few years to more deeply integrate into our lives the values of contemplation, of faith sharing, of witness to the Gospel to our world and to all of creation.

The vision of that refounding moment has strengthened us for this part of our journey together. This past Fall, through our congregational government task force, we gathered regionally to talk with one another about what is at the core of our life together, what we value, what common meanings we share. For most of us this was an energizing, life-giving experience because it clarified for us again how far we have come together, how shared faith and dialogue bond us with one another.

Shared faith around common meanings...Each one of us here, I believe, could offer our own personal assessment of our lived experience of the challenges we have faced in naming faith sharing as a value that is at the core of our Franciscan evangelical life. Immediately, I'm sure, memories flood in, memories that open another Pandora's box of feelings from our congregational story. Some of our memories are treasures for us; others are painful reminders of hurt or misunderstanding. But, whatever the case, we did not let go of the value. We persevered and we are who we are and where we are this day because we took the risks necessary to let go of former ways of relating to one another so that a deeper level of communication among us might be given birth. Here I'm thinking of Eileen's image of the captured monkey. What would we look like today if we were all caught with our fists clenched inside the gourd of previous

patterns of communication that minimized our sharing of life and faith? We wouldn't be here today talking about how we feel about the changes that are happening around us nor would we be shaping a new structure of government by a process that values the opinions of each of us rather than the decisions of a select few.

Without shared faith our shared vision will perish. In the January, 1992 issue of REVIEW FOR RELIGIOUS William Hogan reflects this in his article on "Evangelizing Community." He writes:

> Sharing faith is not an extra step in the process of communication, but the root of community life in Christ, community life that evangelizes. Without becoming free from whatever bonds hold us back and moving to the point of being able to share Jesus Christ with one another in community, we will merely teach about the Good News instead of communicating it to others in true evangelization.

So we need to foster this dialogue with one another, knowing that each of us is being challenged in different ways to different degrees by the risk of trusting each other with what is most precious to us. No one is naive enough to think that this is easy. It invites us again and again to ongoing conversion of heart, to know the stirrings, the hopes, the fears of our own hearts and to be willing to share them to whatever degree we are able, believing that they will be heard with reverence and respect. Without shared faith our shared vision will perish.

Another voice who I believe has a message for us is Benedictine Sister Joan Chittester as she reflects in her February 21st article in the National Catholic Reporter. She believes that religious life is at the brink of renewal and faced with two choices: personal comfort or prophetic presence. She writes:

> The world is waiting to see whether prepared by twenty-five years of cosmetic change and adaptation if religious will take the next and final step...The Church is waiting, the world is waiting, as are the young people whose mail tells me each week that they are looking for a religious life that is so immersed in the contemplative moment that it does significant things in significant ways at this significant moment in history.

Either personal comfort or prophetic presence...What a startling either/or statement! Of course we would choose prophetic presence! That's how we would name ourselves. But are we fooling ourselves here? Are we too quick to find ourselves on that side of the statement?

When we first reflected together on reweaving religious life last year we were invited to look at ourselves as products of a consumer culture that focuses on the individual and personal self interest. We were challenged

to look at the attitudes of individualism that blur the meaning of "I" and "we", the relationship of the individual to community. We directly challenged our middle-class mentality in light of our Franciscan call to conversion and simplicity of life, trying to become clearer about what is really NEED and what is really WANT. We challenged ourselves to be healthily self-critical without being overly judgmental of ourselves and others, trying to confront the natural tendency to go along with the cultural flow because this is the way things are. Isn't that an attitude that reflects the personal comfort to which Joan Chittester is referring? Can we dare ask ourselves: Where am I a year later? Am I living a comfortable life? Am I open to anything challenging me to become a more countercultural prophetic presence? We must be willing to continue to reflect and act on this as individuals and in our life together if Gospel values and our shared vision really mean what we say they mean to us. Gospel living is living on the cutting edge, not the comfortable edge.

Shared vision — we are in the midst of coming to know more clearly what this means for our governance structure but we are not strangers to a shared vision of MISSION as Franciscan women in the Church.

In the book Habakkuk God said:

> Write the vision clearly upon the tablets so that one can read it readily. For the vision has its time, presses on to fulfillment and will not disappoint. If it delays, wait for it for it will surely come; it will not be late. (Habakkuk 2:2-3)

We have been writing down the vision of our MISSION as we believe that God has been speaking it to us for over 137 years. An excerpt from the report given to us by the Sister Madonna Marie and the General Council in 1990 as preparation for our General Chapter says it so well:

> During that span of time, our society experienced the height of the industrial revolution, a civil war, two world wars and several area wars, a major immigration, a revolutionary peace movement, a shift to becoming a technological society, a breakdown of societal values, a new immigration, new found freedoms in the communist block countries, and the age of the martyrs in Central America...
>
> Through this...history, our congregation was challenged constantly by Church and society to adjust its mission and ministry to the evolution of the times. Thus, our sisters opened and closed homes for the aged and orphans, a maternity hospital for black women, schools, general hospitals, rural, urban and inner city ministries, a poor man's room, soup kitchens, clinics and prisons. Change is no stranger to us. Our mission shifted from the poor solely, to the middle class and the poor.

> Like the Church, however, we have experienced Vatican II as an earthquake. It has challenged us, not only to adjust our ministries, but to achieve a clarity in our identity, our charism, and our mission. Since 1969, our congregation has been about the task of identifying who we are and what our Franciscan charism is. By 1986 we were able to define our mission for the next ten to fifteen years. We continue to allow that Mission Statement to give direction to our decisions today.

This birthing process for greater clarity, greater light about our identity, charism and mission was a care-filled process that moved us from focusing internally on the updating and renewal of our own life and practices to turning our faces outward to the meaning of our mission for the sake of the Kingdom, for the sake of our brothers and sisters throughout our troubled world.

We were able to do this because we have a rich congregational heritage filled with stories of faith-filled women who were willing to be pilgrims on the journey of religious life. They were willing to find themselves in strange lands doing unfamiliar things, being creative and ingenious in shaping their life and ministry to the needs of their age. Theirs are stories of passionate commitment, courage and resourcefulness. They embody the meaning of what we believe to be our congregational charism of trusting in the providence of God. And, they exemplify the challenge in Mother Francis' imperative: NO RISK, NO GAIN.

Each day, especially these days, as we live into the reweaving, the rebirthing, we need to remind ourselves of those faith-filled women. We have a collective wisdom that is ours today because they have gone before us. Each of us can reach back into our treasure chest of memories to find our wisdom figures, our internal sages who may or may not still be living among us. We need to draw strength from their story and let them encourage us on our journey today. Their stories can fill us with hope. They lived in challenging, troubled times and they made it. They were hope-filled in the face of so many different strains of change. They had to have confronted their fears and let go of their desire to control the future or we would not be who we are today. Leo Buscaglia, a popular writer and psychologist, has this to say to us about hope:

> As long as we have hope, we have direction, the energy to move, and the map to move by. We have a hundred alternatives, a thousand paths and an infinity of dreams. Hopeful, we are halfway to where we want to go, but hopeless, we are lost forever.

So, we move forward in hope, believing and trusting in God's providential care of us as we live into the mystery of our future together. We move forward believing and trusting in our own experience, in our own

common sense, in the knowledge that we have faced challenges many times before and we have prevailed. We will prevail. We may look differently, use different terms, relate in different patterns but the bonds of relationship that we have worked so hard to keep alive among us will not be broken because we are who we are — together.

I close this afternoon with words that Mother Francis wrote to her sisters during times of change:

> Courage then, dear sisters, courage must animate us, courage must stimulate us, courage must guide and support us in seeking out and in handling every detail that the work of holy vocation requires.

Faith, hope and courage and our belief in the strength of relationship that bonds us — these will see us through.

☆ ☆ ☆

ALL OF A SUDDEN

All of a sudden
I'm a compulsive writer.
Absurd!
Especially after I swore it off forever —
about four weeks ago.
Why write, then?
Because I'm absurd?
Partly. . .
Mostly because I'm in love with the Word
and I really believe he can be found
in a special way among written words —
even mine.
Someday (all of a sudden)
all words will cease
and the space will be filled
with the unspeakable silence of your love.
But 'til that day comes
here I stay
struggling with pen and words
praying that I may be led ever more fully
into the presence of your Unspeakable Word.

Timothy J. Fleming, O.F.M. Conv.

A Note on Bonaventure's Appropriation of Augustine

KEVIN M. TORTORELLI, O.F.M.

It is customary to acknowledge the Augustinian influence on early Franciscan theology. One can see this influence at work in the early chapters of the **Itinerarium**, for example. By one estimate, the **Opera Omnia** of Bonaventure quotes Augustine over three thousand times.[1] For some, a final indication of Franciscan Augustinianism may be seen in the Averroist controversy and in the condemnations of Aristotle in the 1270s. All of this is I suppose true as far as it goes. But there is a point so to say at which Bonaventure arrived in his reading of Augustine where the Franciscan strikes out on his own. The ascent doctrine which is common to all forms of Platonism is fundamental as well to all forms of Augustinianism. But it will not do for the Franciscan who has climbed La Verna. The Stigmata is unintelligible on the terms of that ascent doctrine based as it is on the siren call of Diotima (**Symposium** 201D-211D). The issue is joined over the nature of the beautiful. I maintain that Augustine's views on the beautiful contain a notion of escape from lower to higher forms of beauty while Bonaventure teaches an encounter with God **in** the beautiful.[2] This functions as a corrective to Augustine. Besides, how else could Bonaventure have set out the intelligibility of the Stigmata? In these pages then I wish to illustrate the burden of these claims.

Augustine

During the autumn and winter of 386-387, Augustine had retired to the welcome rest and peace of Cassiciacum. He was a member of that little company of family and friends which had accepted the kind loan of the villa which Verecundus had offered them. While there Augustine wrote several works, among them the **De Ordine**.

The **De Ordine** develops the theme of beauty over against the problem of evil. The guiding question seems to take the form, how can God order all things and yet not be responsible for evil? Augustine's discussion of beauty in the **De Ordine** is set out in terms of the principle of antithesis, which views evil as justified in that it brings the good into higher relief, and in terms of the principle of totality, which encourages one to view the unity of architectonic order so as to understand the individual part which may otherwise appear painful or evil.[3] It is especially in the context of this grand view, this aesthetic, architectonic unity of order, that we meet Augustine's prescription for the soul in his **De Ordine**. According to this prescription, the **artes**[4] or the liberal disciplines promote the soul's ascent from the partial, fragmented beauty of the world of the senses to the contemplation of invisible, intelligible beauty, of perfect order and harmony. The influence of Plotinus on the **De Ordine** (and on the **Soliloquia**) is clear.[5] Robert J. O'Connell, S.J., has characterized Augustine on beauty in this period of the **De Ordine** in this way:

> ...beauties wherever found are providentially intended to remind us of that beauty we once beheld, beyond all sensible embodiment. Admonishing us, sensible beauties stir our restless hearts, set them musing, remembering — and longing; for escape from this sense-world, which, however beautifully divine Reason has ordered it, forever remains essentially a place of misery for the fallen soul, a ladder providentially designed for its return.[6]

Augustine completed the **De Musica**. In the first book of that work, Augustine defines music as a **scientia**, a knowledge of the numerical relationships governing the production of harmonious sounds. But these numerical relations are to be found in a temporal order characterized by the first sin of pride. The soul, when proud, tries to subjugate other souls by an action that is expressed through the body. These actions are of the nature of signs, looks, nods or words.[7] These actions include all aesthetic activity which Augustine now finds entangling the soul and turning it aside from the contemplation of eternal truth.

In the midst of this gloomy assessment, Augustine asks about the action that is divinely commanded for the soul to make its return to God.[8] He observes that the ascent is structured by Divine Providence from sensible beauty to the beauty of the cardinal virtues and charity is the principal operator of the ascent. The heart of this idea of ascent or return is the view that the soul may love God alone and that love orders all lower things.

Fr. Kevin directs the Classics Program at Siena College, Loudonville, New York. He holds graduate degrees from Boston College, St. Bonaventure University and from the Washington Theological Union. *This perceptive study enables us to appreciate more deeply the rich contribution of St. Bonaventure to Franciscan spirituality.*

These lower things, or the sensible world, are created by God and so are not at all evil. They are however degrading to the dignity of the soul and only worthy to be used by the soul and then discarded:[9]

> The whole point of **De Musica** is that through a study of number and order in the arts one can progressively work past the bodily senses until one comes to the abiding place which is foreign to all body. These arts play a part, but they must be abandoned before one can know God. The soul is really seeking the eternal which is not found in the changing beauty of the world.[10]

In a higher, immaterial and invisible world it is otherwise[11] but here below Philocalia and Philosophy are as two sisters, born of the same parent,

> but the former, brought down from her place in heaven by the attractions of wanton desire, and enclosed within an ordinary cave, still retained the likeness in name to remind the fowler not to despise her. So her sister, while flying about freely, often recognizes her although she is unkempt, deprived of her wings, and greatly in need; but philosophy does not often set her free. For philocalia does not perceive to what family she really belongs unless philosophy makes it known.[12]

The beauty of the finite and sensible is not seen by Augustine as disclosing knowledge or truth. In his view, as with Plotinus whom he follows closely, such beauty is conceived on the analogy of a ladder which one climbs up only to abandon. This venerable ascent doctrine, so dear to all forms of Platonism, is not easily Christianized. In its Christian forms it is prone to express this inner ambiguity on the evaluation of matter, the physical and bodily. Augustine did not overcome this ambiguity. I believe Bonaventure did. And I believe the difference between them has to do with the incident at La Verna.

Bonaventure

We must place ourselves atop La Verna. To do this requires that we follow Bonaventure in his discussion of the nature of the beautiful since it is on this point that the connection with Augustine may be noted as well as the breakthrough represented in Bonaventure. He goes beyond an instrumental view of the sensible world, whereby the visible creation is seen as the vestige of God, to the view that God may be seen **in** the sensible world to the extent that God is in it by His essence, power and presence.[13] To this orientation to the presence of God in the sensible world, Bonaventure correlates the five human senses, each with a particular function:

> Then is one apt for contemplation and for the vision and embrace of Spouse and bride which come about through the spiritual senses. The supreme beauty of Christ the Spouse is seen in that he is Resplendence, His supreme harmony heard in that He is the Word, His supreme sweetness tasted in that He is Wisdom comprising both Word and Resplendence, His supreme fragrance inhaled in that He is the Inspired Word within the heart, His supreme delightfulness touched in that He is the incarnate Word dwelling bodily in our midst, offering Himself to our touch, our kiss, our embrace, through ardent love which makes our soul pass, by ecstatic rapture, from this world to the Father.[14]

Through the senses the **similitudines** or likenesses of external things enter the soul and are known. Pleasure or delight **(oblectatio)** follows upon this apprehension of the similitude or likeness of a suitably proportioned object.[15] Finally, there is judgment **(diiudicatio)** which provides the reason why something is pleasurable and that reason lies in the proportion of harmony or equality **(proportio aequalitatis)** in the object of delight.[16] Human reason, in the act of judging, manifests the presence of divine reason in its own proper, human activity since our reason abstracts from dimension, succession and change when attending to sensible objects. This activity can only be carried out by a reason which is unchangeable, unlimited and without end, by a reason then which is eternal. The laws or criteria or the reason which guides judgment exists eternally in the Eternal Art.[17] By virtue of this Eternal Art, by means of it and according to it, all that is beautiful is formed and judged by us to be beautiful.[18] Thus the whole world enters into the human soul through the doors of our senses by means of apprehension, delight and judgment.

Bonaventure extends this consideration of the unity of sense experience in the direction of Augustine's theory of numbers. He concludes his discussion of numbers in this way:

> Now, since all things are beautiful and in some way pleasurable; and beauty and pleasure do not exist without proportion; and proportion exists primarily in numbers: it is necessary that everything be made up of numbers; from this it follows that 'number is the principal exemplar in the mind of the Creator' and in things the principal vestige conducting to Wisdom. And since number is most evident to all and closest to God, it conducts us, be means of its seven distinctions, most closely to God. It makes Him known in all bodily and visible things when we apprehend numbers, when we delight in numerical proportions and when we irrefutably judge by means of numerical proportion.[18]

So far Bonaventure appears to speak, perhaps unremarkably, from within the broad Augustinianism to which he was heir. But there is a difference to be noted in Bonaventure's account of sensible beauty and its symbolic nature and that difference lies, as much as anywhere, in his

*Precisely **in** the beauty of the Stigmata is the manifestation of the truth of divine love.*

meditation on the life and significance of Francis. As an example of this, Bonaventure writes:

> In everything beautiful, Francis saw him who is beauty itself and he followed after his beloved everywhere by means of His vestiges imprinted on things. Out of everything Francis fashioned a ladder to his beloved and by it he would climb up to embrace Him who is his whole desire. By the power of his extraordinary devotion, Francis tasted that goodness that wells up in every single creature like a stream.[19] He appears to have perceived a kind of heavenly concentric circle in the harmony of the powers and faculties God has given His creatures and like David the prophet of the Lord he warmly urged them to praise God.[20]

Francis' perception of the **minoritas** of Christ in the Incarnation gave the saint a new vision, perhaps best expressed in Bonaventure's observation that Francis called every creature, no matter how insignificant,[21] with the name of brother or sister. This perception on the part of St. Francis appears to be the exemplary form of the spiritual senses. These are the same five human senses made over in grace and supplied with new powers of perception and experience.[22] Since Bonaventure, in the **Itinerarium**, is consciously reflecting on the Stigmata Francis received atop La Verna, the Seraphic Doctor contemplates the wounds of Christ become the wounds of Francis — See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself (Lk 24:39).

Precisely here lies the difference. The Augustinian tradition with its intellectual mysticism is inclined, as we have seen, to leave behind sensible beauty to ascend to the contemplation of eternal truth. This ascent therefore has no necessary relationship to anything particular or limited inasmuch as these can be and are abandoned. Bonaventure however contemplates with the spiritual senses an event of enormous particularity of person, place and time, namely, the Stigmata of St. Francis. Precisely **in** the beauty of the Stigmata is the manifestation of the truth of divine love. This is the proper focus, the correct vision, but Bonaventure expresses the same truth in the form of a syllogism. The major proposition is the eternal, divine nature of Christ, the minor proposition came about on the cross and the conclusion appeared in the Resurrection:[23]

> And this is the reasoning Christ used, during forty days appearing to them. 'Did not the Christ have to suffer these things before entering into His glory?' Concerning this central position, John writes: When it was late... Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you!' He is showing two things here, the loftiness of the state of glory, in that, being impassible and immaterial, he entered as God while the doors were closed; later, he showed them his hands and side and forced Thomas to confess: 'My Lord and my God!' Consider the progression. First he entered as God while the doors were closed: this is the major proposition. Then he proposed the minor by showing them his hands and his side. Finally, he wrested out the conclusion so that Thomas confessed: 'My Lord and my God!'[24]

The marks of the crucified, the stigmata, constitute the proper logic for Bonaventure. What does one know with this logic? In the sensible, bodily impress of the stigmata there is seen the expression of divine love and glory. This is the distinctive form of Franciscan thought and spirituality because in the encounter on La Verna the beauty of Christ's love is manifested and it mediates or discloses the truth of Christ's love. La Verna corrects the ambiguity which underlies a Platonist and Augustinian assessment of sensible beauty.

Endnotes

[1] J. Guy Bougerol, O.F.M., **Introduction to the Works of Bonaventure**, (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1964), 33.

[2] Readers may recognize in my remarks the spirit of Hans Urs von Balthasar's interpretation of the Franciscan charism and they are quite right but I have developed my own views here along slightly different lines.

[3] On the aesthetic dimension of Augustine's theodicy, see John Hick, **Evil and the God of Love**, (London: Macmillan ? Co., Ltd., 1966), 88-95.

[4] De Ordine II, 35-42

[5] The **quosdam Platonicorum libros** of Confessions VII, 9-10 may have these works in mind. In any case, see Robert J. O'Connell, S.J., **Art And the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine**, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 17-25. Further observations on the influence of Plotinus and, possibly, Porphyry are given in Alfred Warren Matthews, **The Development of St. Augustine From Neoplatonism to Christianity 386-391 A.D.**, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1980), 26-28.

[6] O'Connell, **Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine**, 27.

[7] Mus VI, 41-42

[8] Mus VI, 43

[9] Mus VI, 46

[10]Matthews, **The Development of St. Augustine From Neoplatonism to Christianity 386-391 A.D.**, 114.

[11] Retractationes I,11,3

[12]Contra Academicos II,3,7 quoted in Sr. Mary P. Garvey, R.S.M., **Saint Augustine Against the Academicians**, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1942), 35.

[13] Itinerarium II,1

[14]Breviloquium V,6,5. Translation taken from Jose de Vinck, **The Works of Bonaventure**, the Breviloquium, Vol. II, (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1963), 205.

[15]Itinerarium II,5

[16]Itinerarium II,9

[17]The Eternal Art is the Eternal Word and Son in whom the Father has expressed (**expressit**) everything. The Son is the Father's artistic medium. See In Hexaemeron I,13.

[18]Itinerarium II,10. The translation is mine.

[19]Inauditae namque devotionis affectu fontalem illam bonitatem in creaturis singulis tamquam in rivulis degustabat...

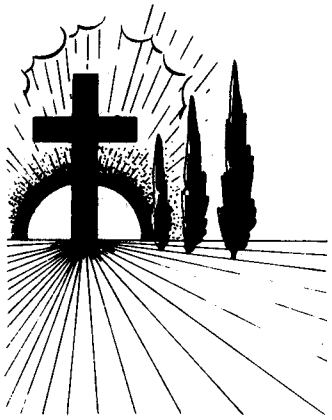
[20]LM 9,1. The translation is mine.

[21] Creaturas quantumlibet parvas, LM 8,6.

[22]Itinerarium IV,3

[23]In Hexaemeron I,28

[24]In Hexaemeron I,29. The translation is taken from de Vinck, The Works of Bonaventure,V,15.



The Mystery of the Trinity and Contemporary Franciscan Prayer

SR. PACELLI MILLANE, O.S.C.

INTRODUCTION

The prayer of the Franciscan is to be deeply rooted in the mysteries of God. There are many different moments in the experience of God throughout life. We will try to consider these different movements into the mystery of the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit as reflected in prayer.

Francis teaches us by example that scripture is necessary to the understanding of life and of prayer. In the writings of Francis and Clare we have many direct quotes of scripture as well as many other passages which trace their inspiration to the scriptures. Their understanding of God, whom they know and encounter, has been revealed to them primarily through the Scripture and the Liturgy.

To begin to pray in the Trinity it is helpful to see the Trinity as saving mystery rather than logical mystery. The Trinity touches our daily life experience of struggles, sufferings, joy and love; genuine prayer must always be rooted in the real life of a person. Francis writes that we are called, "To follow the will of the Lord and to please Him."[1] All of this calls for attentiveness and discernment in and with the indwelling presence of the Trinity.

I. THE MYSTERY OF THE TRINITY AS INVITATION TO PRAYER

Prayer experience precedes theological reflection. Unfortunately though for Christians the Trinity remains a mystery of the faith and it is not one that they often associate with their prayer. We need to approach prayer

Sister Pacelli Millane, o.s.c., a Poor Clare, is a graduate student at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University.

aware that we are entering into the mystery within the Holy of Holies. An attitude of veneration, of awe, of reverence, of praise and of open waiting is basic to prayer, but most especially when we are called into the deeper life of God. We need to encompass the mystery with the breadth and depth with which it was understood in the early church. They knew God and the Persons of God as revealed mystery encountered in their lives.

Mystery does not represent the limit of reason, but the unlimited sphere of reason. Mystery invites expansion of the mind and heart. It is not that which leaves us dumb and terrified, but that which leads us forth in joy and thanksgiving. It is not a wall, but a doorway through which we go to the infinity of God.

How is one to approach the mystery of the Trinity? Most persons pray more often to one of the persons of the Trinity than in the total mystery of God. It is more common that we are lead to one or the other persons of the Trinity as the center of our prayer.

Trinitarian prayer is not usually the prayer of the beginner, but the Church does place this mystery before us in liturgical and devotional prayer in the doxology. "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit" is one of the early prayers that we learn. Doxology is an attitude of adoration, thanksgiving and respect in the awesome encounter of the Trinity. Many of the prayer forms of the Liturgy end with some Trinitarian form.

The Eucharistic prayer ends with a doxology: "Through Him, With Him, and In Him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, forever and ever" and requires the consent of the assembly in the "Amen." It is important to notice the words that we say so as to let the mystery penetrate deep within our soul.

II. FRANCIS AND THE TRINITY

In the Gospel of John, Jesus tells the disciples, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Now that you have known me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."[2]

Francis uses these texts and incorporates other Scripture texts with them in the **First Admonition**. "The Father lives in inaccessible light and God is Spirit. No one has ever seen God. Therefore, He cannot be seen except in the Spirit since it is the Spirit that gives life. . . But neither, inasmuch as He is equal to the Father, is the Son seen by anyone other than the Father (or) other than the Holy Spirit." This is a wonderful text to help us see the way of life and prayer in the Trinity. Jesus is the way and we can only

We find in Francis a progressive deepening of the Trinitarian relationship, which is reflected in his relationship to the world around him.

enter into this deeper mystery through Jesus. Francis draws in the other text of First Timothy to broaden our vision of the dwelling of the Father in inaccessible light. The full life of the Trinity will always be beyond us — it is inaccessible.

We find in Francis a progressive deepening of the Trinitarian relationship, which is reflected in his relationship to the world around him. In Chapter Three of the **Earlier Rule** Francis teaches his brothers to pray the Our Father with the **Glory to the Father** for all the Hours of the day. Their praise and honor of the Trinity in prayer is to have its incorporation in their daily lives. Scattered throughout the whole of Chapter Twenty-three in the **Earlier Rule** are references to the three Persons of the Trinity associated with creation, redemption and thanksgiving. Further, Francis begins **A Letter to the Entire Order** "In the name of the most high Trinity and the holy Unity: the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" and has a very rich Trinitarian prayer at the end of it:

> Inwardly cleansed,
> Interiorly enlightened,
> 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 simply Unity,
> and are glorified
> God all-powerful
> forever and ever. Amen.[3]

This prayer of Francis reflects deep experience and understanding of the journey into God. It is through the action and cleansing power of the Holy Spirit that we begin, through the enlightenment of the Spirit that we proceed and through being inflamed that we know to follow the way

of Jesus. We are continually cleansed and enlightened and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. It is the action of the Holy Spirit within us which prepares us to follow in the footprints of Jesus, the Christ. It is only Jesus who knows the way to the Most High and who can bring us to follow the invitation to divine entry into God given us in Baptism and nourished in the Eucharist.

Truly this gives us an image of movement, of journey. The relationship to the Trinity is one of dynamic movement, not static and methodical as we sometimes think through the esoteric language with which we speak of the Trinity.

Francis writes to Clare and her Sisters in **The Form of Life** which he gave them:

> Since by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the most high King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel...

Armstrong's footnote on this text[4] notes that this shows us the Trinitarian pattern of Gospel life Francis envisions as a result of the working of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

IV. BONAVENTURE AND TRINITARIAN PRAYER

Bonaventure uses the beautiful image in his work **On the Perfection of Life Addressed to Sisters**, "Prayer is a vessel with which the grace of the Holy Spirit is drawn from that overflowing font of delight, the most blessed Trinity."[5] Then he develops a further image, "Rather the soul should mount a Cherub and fly, borne on the wings of the wind; that is, ascend with the choirs of angels to contemplate the Trinity Itself and the humanity of Christ, and to meditate on the glory and joy of the citizens of heaven, the angels and saints."[6]

We need to be freed from our strong rootedness in the earthly existence to be in prayer in and with the Trinity.

Bonaventure in **The Soul's Journey Into God**, Chapter 6 gives a beautiful elaboration of the attributes of the Triune God. For one more advanced in prayer he develops an image of the Cherubim who face each other with their faces turned toward the Mercy Seat. This, he says, "is not without a mystical meaning, so that what Our Lord said in John might be verified: This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."[7]

If you are the Cherub you should contemplate God's essential attributes, you should look at the Mercy Seat and wonder that the eternal God is joined with temporal man.

If you are the other Cherub you should contemplate the properties of the Persons and know the amazement each can exist with the other. Be amazed that "the Son is sent by the Father and the Holy Spirit by both, who nevertheless is with them and never departs from them."[8]

Bonaventure goes on to say that if you turn your face fully to the Mercy Seat with faith, hope, love, devotion, admiration, exultation, appreciation, praise and joy and behold Christ hanging upon the cross, you will make the passover with Christ. He gives us the example of Francis' passing over into God in ecstatic contemplation. Francis is the new example of the passing over and spiritual ecstasy. One can think that this is irrelevant for today, but it is certainly the life of the contemplative to keep the eyes fixed on the Mercy seat. It is that adoration and desire that allow us to be lifted up and beyond ourselves.

In Chapter Seven of **The Soul's Journey Into God** Bonaventure gives direction as to how the soul who has reached this depth of prayer and union should enter deeper in the search of God:

> Ask grace not instruction,
> desire not understanding,
> the groaning of prayer not diligent reading,
> the Spouse not the teacher,
> God not man,
> darkness not clarity,
> not light but the fire
> that totally inflames
> and carries us into God
> by ecstatic unctions and burning affection.
> This fire is God, and his furnace is in Jerusalem
> and Christ enkindles it
> in the heat of his burning passion.[9]

Bonaventure's theological vision is based on the doctrine of the Trinity as the mystery of the self-diffusion of the Good. The Father is the fountainfullness and out of his boundless fecundity, the Father generates his Son, expressing himself in his perfect Image, his eternal Word. This fecundity issues further in the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son as their mutual love and the Gift in whom all good gifts are given."[10]

Each of us is called to encounter this mystery of God as Trinity. We are not called to this encounter in the same way although there will be similarities in our experience. We can speak much of the kinds of prayer, the way of prayer, the persons of prayer — which is to focus on our part of the encounter. We focus on the Triune God and are allowed to speak very little in faulty language of who is this Trinity of Persons in Unity of

Being. But even though we read the language of the mystic, we still know very little of this sacred mystery.

Bonaventure in the seventh Chapter of **The Soul's Journey Into God** quotes the opening prayer of Dionysius.[11] It expresses what we need to pray to find our way into the eternal blessedness of Trinity:

> Trinity! Higher than any being,
> any divinity, any goodness!
> Guide of Christians
> in the wisdom of heaven!
> Lead us up beyond unknowing and light,
> up to the farthest, highest peak
> of mystic scripture,
> where the mysteries of God's Word
> lie simple, absolute and unchangeable
> in the brilliant darkness
> of a hidden silence.
> Amid the deepest shadow
> they pour overwhelming light
> on what is most manifest.
> Amid the wholly unsensed and unseen
> they completely fill our sightless minds
> with treasures beyond all beauty.

V. RUBLEV'S ICON OF THE TRINITY

In our distracted Western mind we need images to help us to focus and deepen our attentive stance in prayer. The English term "icon" comes from the greek work eikon meaning image or likeness. The icon, an essential part of Eastern worship and prayer, invites us to enter into a closer relationship with God. An icon is a sacred image through which we experience the presence of God, and, in a sense, the icon enables us to see through God's eyes rather than our own.

Rublev's Trinity Icon is a magnificent visual representation of our call into the Trinity. As you place yourself before the icon with reverence and attention, you quickly become aware of the invitational stance expressed therein. You are invited into the depths of this relational dynamic.

Rublev painted this icon for the Monastery of the Trinity and St. Sergius probably between 1408 and 1425. It portrays three angels, but the rest of the biblical events[12] are passed over in silence. The historical aspect, biblical event and dogmatic meaning is minimal here so that the main significance of this section lies in the experience of prayer to which we are invited in the Trinity.

This icon is unique in that its basic form of composition is a circle. The figures are united in a flowing movement along the line of a circle. The icon has action, expressed in gestures, communion, expressed in the inclining of the heads and the postures of the figures and a motionless peace. This inner life, uniting the three figures enclosed in the circle and communicating itself to its surroundings, reveals the whole inexhaustible depth of this image.

Although Henri Nouwen is not Franciscan, he is a modern author who speaks clearly in this passage of the beginning stance in deeper prayer. Nouwen describes his experience of God:

> As I sat for long hours in front of Rublev's Trinity, I noticed how **gradually** my **gaze** became a prayer. This **silent** prayer slowly made my inner restlessness melt away and **lifted me up** into the **circle of love**, a circle that could not be broken by the powers of the world. Even as I moved away from the icon and became involved in the many tasks of everyday life, I felt as if I **did not have to leave the holy place** I had found and **could dwell** there whatever I did or whereve I went. I knew that the **house of love** I had entered **has no boundaries** and **embraces everyone** who **wants to dwell** there.[13]

The bold typeface words in this passage are mine in order to emphasize some tangible stances that are part of the deeper prayer. We need to know that we must prepare and ready ourselves for this encounter of God so that we not waste the secrets the Lord wishes to give us.

A different way of meditating is to become attentive to the visual representations in the Icon. The individual Persons as they sit around the table: do you know them, can you name them, who is the one to whom you speak most? Scripture tells you that we need a wedding garment to come to the banquet. Acknowledge that you have soiled your baptismal garment through sin. Have you cleansed it and let it be washed white again in the blood of Jesus? Are you ready for the invitation? Are you like the five foolish virgins who have fallen asleep and who have no oil of charity for their lamps? Can you hear the call of the Book of Revelation: "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with them and they with me."[14]

Theophane the Recluse says that prayer is standing in the presence of God with our mind in our heart. And so, any deeper form of prayer requires much time and waiting. God can work in the soul in any way He desires and we must never be so short sighted as to miss how He might choose to grace a soul with illumination. Normally, however, God allows us to go through a process of growth in the revelation of deeper mystery of Himself.

CONCLUSION

Raimundo Panikkar writes:

> The Trinity, then may be considered as a junction where the authentic spiritual dimensions of all religions meet...In the Trinity a true encounter of religions takes place, which results, not in a vague fusion or mutual dilution, but in an authentic enhancement of all the religious and even cultural elements that are contained in each.[15]

In a similar stance Father Bede Griffiths says:

> I think now that the Church is recovering her mystical life she is also rediscovering its very heart, the Trinity. This rediscovery will have an important influence on the other world religions as we enter into dialogue with them.[16]

In the vision of these men we see the reality of the mystery of the Trinity in the transformation not only of the individual person, but of the religions of the world. In another place Bede Griffiths has said that it is mysticism that will unite the World Religions as it is the one thing that we hold in common. It is a call to all to reach deeper into the Holy One where each comes to recognize the full Reality and know that it is our narrow understanding that has divided us.

Leonardo Boff sees its implications for the poor:

> If oppressed believers come to appreciate the fact that their struggles for life and liberty are also those of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, working for the kingdom of glory and eternal life, they will have further motives for struggling and resisting: the meaning of their efforts will break out of the restricting framework of history and be inscribed in eternity, in the heart of the absolute mystery itself. We are not condemned to live alone, cut off from one another; we are called to live together and to enter into the communion of the Trinity.[17]

The poor and oppressed sometimes understand the totality of God with deep faith and hope. Too often, however, in our world they simply exist in deep misery and want. When the faith is strong among the poor there is a deep dimension of the Christian life that overflows both in love of neighbor and of energizing prayer.

We need to fall prostrate in adoration with our faces to the ground and humbly ask without ceasing to be admitted into the eternal communion of the Trinity. Gregory Palamas said: "The Holy Spirit is the eternal joy of the Father and the Son and all three are happy together."

Endnotes

[1] **Regis J. Armstrong, ofm cap.**, Francis and Clare: The Complete Works, **(New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 127.**

[2] **John** 14: 6-7.

[3] cf. Armstrong, **Francis and Clare**, 61.

[4] Regis J. Armstrong, ofm cap., **Clare of Assisi Early Documents**, (New York: Paulist Press, 1988) 244.

[5] Saint Bonaventure. **The Works of Bonaventure, Volume I.** Trans. José de Vinck. (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960), 236.

[6] cf. de Vinck, 238.

[7] Ewert Cousins, Translator. **Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey Into God**, (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 106.

[8] cf. Cousins, 107-108.

[9] cf. Cousins, 115.

[10] cf. Cousins, 24-25.

[11] Colm Luibheid, Translator. **Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works.** (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 135.

[12] **Genesis** XVIII.

[13] Henri J. M. Nouwen, **Behold the Beauty of the Lord**, (Notre Dame: **Ave Maria Press**, 1987), 21.

[14] Revelation 3:20.

[15] Raimundo Panikkar, **The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man** (New York: Orbis, 1973), 42.

[16] Bede Griffiths, "A Meditation on the Mystery of the Trinity", **Monastic Studies**, no. 17 (Christmas 1986): 69-79.

[17] Leonardo Boff, **Trinity and Society**, trans. Paul Burns (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 157-158.

☆ ☆ ☆

ATTRACTIONS

As magnet to iron.
As nectar to bee,
As home to a wanderer,
So You, Lord, to me.

Marie Regina Leis, O.S.F.

Book Reviews

Witness and Service: Questions About Religious Life Today. David F. O'Connor, S.T. 1990: Mahwah, N.J., Paulist Press 195 pp. $10.95 (cloth)

Reviewed by Rev. Vincent B. Grogan, OFM, JCD. Provincial Canonist, Holy Name Province, and Judge of the New York Metropolitan Tribunal.

Why another book on religious life? The author himself provides the response in the Foreword. From the many questions put to him in recent years by religious themselves, he perceived the need for assembling between one cover topics relevant to contemporary religious life. Hence, the very sub-title of this book tells it all: Questions About Religious Life Today.

Here, the reader will find discussed not only the usual topics germane to religious institutes, such as formation of candidates and the congregation's obligations to its members but such recently emerging issues as the disruptive religious, the re-admission of former members, the involvement of religious in secular politics, lay associates of a religious community, the transformation of the role of brothers in clerical communities, and the distinction between secular and religious institutes.

While O'Connor is himself a canonist, he treats the issues from varied perspectives, not simply the legal. As he states, "Not only was I conscious of the theological background and historical settings necessary to understand church regulations and practices, I was also very much aware of the necessity of considering the observations of sociologists and psychologists on the contemporary ecclesial scene." (p. 1) Nor does O'Connor speak from an ivory-tower perspective. In addition to his teaching experience, he has held the role of superior in his own institute, and he has collaborated, in an advisory capacity, with several religious communities, hence, he knows first-hand American religious life in its variety of manifestations.

Before delving into more concrete topics, the author, correctly I deem, stresses the ecclesial nature of religious life, the Church's responsibility for guiding and nurturing the particular charism of each community, and the consequent public and visible witness that religious are expected to offer in both the Church herself and in society. Likewise, O'Connor provides some insights into the meaning of the traditional three religious vows for contemporary American culture. Especially thought-provoking is his recommendation that the vow of poverty be interpreted to signify a vow of common life and goods, since in our country, the term 'poverty' implies dehumanizing economic straits. Also challenging is his linkage of religious garb with simplicity of lifestyle.

His treatment of secular institutes vis-a-vis religious congregations is most helpful in delineating the differences, differences that perhaps have not been fully explored as religious communities went about the task of renewing their life, structures and corporate ministries since Vatican II. Similarly, O'Connor discusses the possibility (sometimes bruited about among religious) of going non-canonical; i.e., of seeking formal dissolution as a religious institute and re-grouping as a private association of the faithful. The author takes a dim view of pursuing such a route.

O'Connor performs a splendid job of detailing the several reasons (both canonical and psychological) for having superiors, especially on the local level, and his description of the model superior is well-worth pondering by both subjects and those maintaining leadership positions.

The segment devoted to formation, I found to be particularly interesting and forthright. Emphasizing that religious institutes are not rehabilitation agencies, O'Connor focuses on the need to attract and admit candidates who are psychologically and emotionally balanced. He questions the motivation of certain types who seek religious life because of the acceptance and nurturing that can be found there, acceptance and nurturing they cannot seemingly experience in secular society — this mentality is frequently linked to a prolonged adolescence and a refusal to become mature adults.

The chapter on disruptive religious is especially instructive. Here, the author borrows from the work of an Australian Oblate priest and clinical psychologist, who offers five categories of disordered personalities that are most disturbing to common life. O'Connor himself minces no words in stressing that religious have a **right** to live in a healthy and balanced community environment.

In sum, this book provides a well-arranged, intelligent examination of religious life in the late twentieth century Church. The author possesses a pleasant, easy to follow style. Very helpful is the brief summary provided at the conclusion of each chapter. Footnotes are abundant, but are unfortunately placed at the back of the book. One only wishes that certain topics (e.g., the inter-relationship of community life and ministry, the influence of American culture on the candidates applying to religious institutes) were more extensively treated.

Assessing the future of religious life, O'Connor ends on a cautiously optimistic note: "History offers us the consolation of knowing that forms of the religious life have endured many traumatic changes and found many new and different expressions — new forms, new apostolates, new life and new vitality — at the very times it appeared to be dying out. . . As a people of faith, we put our trust in God. We shall serve, personally and collectively, as long as God wants, knowing that our lives are wrapped in mystery." (Pp. 161-162)

RUNNING IS LIKE RELIGION

I have been running enough years worth counting now,
and I find tonight that running is like religion.
God talks to me here.
Running is a prayer,
each step another psalm.
When I have run far enough
my body will settle.
My spirit groans within.
When I finish one day,
I shall be spent,
poured out as I have asked.
And I can be glad for it.
This way I have come is marked for me.
When it calls, I answer.
Maybe with a stubborn footfall,
but answer.
The kingdom can escape me at times,
but not when I run.
Running is like religion.

J. Adam Pickett, O.F.M. Conv.

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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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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).

Meeting Clare

KIERAN M. KAY, O.F.M.Conv.

Clare, I don't really know how to begin to say what needs to be said. I've not met you before in so personal a way. Years ago, way back in 1975, I met you in the way that I needed to meet you at that time. You know better than I the full impact of our first meeting — how hungry I was to know you at the time. You recall, I needed at age 46 to come into a fuller experience of what my Franciscan call meant. All during that period I felt I was coming into a deeper knowledge of Francis, a deeper walk with him, his way of seeing Jesus, and I was thrilled by it all. But there was something lacking in my full appreciation of my Franciscan walk — and I knew that gap was you. I knew a bit about you, but I didn't really know **you**. Then that fateful day arrived — August 11, 1975 — and when I awakened in the morning, the sunlight flooded my bedroom. But I knew there was more than sunlight in that room. There was a light flooding me that came from inside me. I knew immediately that it was you, Clare. And in that moment my Franciscan call became infinitely bigger and more significant. I not only had the unmistakable knowledge of Francis walking with me, but now of you walking hand in hand with Francis and me. Again, I thank you for that profound visit. The fruits of that have continued to this day; the impact of that still reverberates deep within me. And, praise God, you continue to grow within me, gentling me and letting me see that the feminine part of me is beautiful and good, and that its continued integration into my Franciscan personhood is necessary for the full flowering of what God asks and wants of me.

And now this present grace of spending a weekend getting to know you further and deeper. I've been delighted by what you've shown me — the real person that you are, the loving and vibrant woman of faith, the faithful companion of Francis and all those early friars, the woman who must be with us men if we are to realize the full potential of who we are

Fr. Kieran is chaplain to the Poor Clares, Sancta Clara Monastery, Canton, Ohio.

meant to be in a patriarchal society that is disintegrating from honest questioning. Thank you for showing me yourself in a new and deeper way. Give me, Clare, the strength that you showed in your day, to stand firm in your desire that men and women walk hand in hand as brothers and sisters, complementing and completing each other in reforming a church that has shamefully ignored, degraded, and debased women. As you and Francis model for us how we are to walk, may our hearts, like yours, be touched and tendered by Jesus. May our eyes always be upon Jesus so that we will know always what we are to say and do in all the circumstances of life. May Jesus' Spirit of Truth guide us into all truth and give us the courage to lay down our armor and be open to the pain that is always a preface to truth. Let our joy be that we are truly the children of a loving Father, content to be poor and little so that all the glory can rightfully come to him. Lead us to the cross and help us to see that beyond its shadow is the glorious light that you walked in with Francis at your side. Lead us into Jesus. Amen. □

☆ ☆ ☆

Sr. M. Raphael, O.S.F.

Life according to the Perfection of the Holy Gospel *

ENGELBERT GRAU, OFM

The two should be mentioned in one breath, Saint Francis who still, or better, more than ever continues to attract the attention of the widest circles and stirs the heart, and Saint Clare, who over the centuries has lingered in his shadow and is only now and then brought into her own light. We must name them in one breath, for they are the twofold expression of the one and the same reality, which God's providence more than 750 years ago desired to awaken into a new and dynamic presence: **Life according to the Holy Gospel**, according to the Good News of Christ, our Lord and Brother, and of God, whom we are invited to call: Abba, Father!

The Gospel which Francis not only heard, not only knew so well, but which he lived and perfectly retraced into its ultimate possibilities, both internally and externally — this gospel finds in Clare its ultimate feminine presentation and expression. Herein lies the inspiring and exemplary power for christians of our day, especially for women, and above all for those who profess to follow Francis and Clare. This also necessarily includes those who live as Secular Franciscans.

Already at an early date Francis had written of this to Clare and her sisters. Clare herself informs us of this in her Rule:

> When the Blessed Father saw that we had no fear of poverty, hard work, suffering, shame, or the contempt of the world, but that, instead, we regarded such things as great delights, moved by compassion

---

* *We present here a translation of the first part of a work by the Franciscan scholar Engelbert Grau, O.F.M. entitled* ***Clare of Assisi and Her Sisters.*** *The CORD is grateful to the Dietrich Coelde Verlag (Germany) for the opportunity to publish this portion of the work in English. Fr. Joseph Doino, editor of this periodical, did the translation from the original German.*

he wrote for us a form of life as follows: "Since by divine inspiration you have made yourselves daughters and servants of the most high King, the heavenly Father, and have taken the Holy Spirit as your spouse, choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel, I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers always to have that same loving care and special sollicitude for you as [I have] for them" (Rule, VI,2).

Clare was born into a noble household of Assisi in 1194. Already as a young girl she gave strong indication of a life of interiority. At the age of eighteen when her parents and relatives proposed that she marry, Clare already had encountered Francis, twelve years her senior, several times. She had heard him preach and had opened her burning heart to his appeals for the cause of Christ.

On Palm Sunday night in the year 1212 Clare forces open the door of her family home. It was not the main entrance of her paternal home but a secondary door blocked with wooden bars and heavy stone. She forces her way through this door and hastens to Francis who with his brothers waits for her in the poor chapel of the Porziuncola, in the valley below.

The next morning Clare's family and relatives go searching for her in great consternation. They find her in the cloister of the Benedictine nuns of Bastia, an hour's walk west of Assisi, where Francis had brought her and where she was to wait "until the Lord would provide for something else" (Life of Clare 8). Clare is besieged by her family with advice, promises, and flattery; finally they try to force her return with threats. Clare takes refuge at the altar, wraps herself in its linens and unveils her shorn locks. They depart with this bitter remembrance of her. Clare had forced open the door of her paternal house; very soon she will close another door behind which she had withdrawn and which she bolts tight for ever.

The walls of the little cloister of San Damiano near Assisi rise up between the future life within and all that stands outside. Thus in that special place the streaming rays of what seems an apparent contradiction of the gospel and of christianity begin to express themselves: that a woman loves far from all that we call "the world" and nevertheless with an astonishing spiritual power exercises an influence on this world; that a woman lives hidden away and yet is there as open as a light on a candelabra; that a woman lives in silence and yet calls out forcefully like a loud voice in the wilderness; that Clare though ill for twenty eight of her fifty nine years of life nevertheless expends all the possible energies of her life and fills it with all the grandeur of which it is possible; that a woman takes on a kind of renunciation that embraces all that makes up a normal life, a denial that for all appearances seems inhuman and deathly and which

nonetheless leads to a wondrous dimension of humanity and femininity; that, as the Bull of Canonization says, "since in the austerity of her cloistered solitude, she broke the alabaster jar of her body with her severity, the whole Church was thoroughly imbued with the aroma of her sanctity" (Bull of Canonization 4).

Clare spent the remainder of her life in the cloister of San Damiano enclosed in the cold, demanding sobriety of its narrow spaces in which she prayed, worked and slept. She was buried in this baren masonry and yet at the same time shone for all as light in the midst of the darkened world, an unchanging image of kindness and a glowing source of warmth. In this special place of unsurpassable poverty she was far from being a broken, crippled or abnormal person. She kept in her heart an exquisite sense of beauty. The alb which she sewed for her father Francis is a most precious remnant of medieval embroidery.

In the very narrowness of the space to which she "banned" herself, Clare is a woman of stupendous liberality and in the broad expanses of her heart she brings together into a peaceful, inner harmony both an extraordinary austerity toward herself and a gentle sensitivity toward others. She possesses the transparency of a genuine compassion: she corrects others with a certain reluctance, is moderate in giving commands and prefers to recognize others than to be given recognition. Together with all of this, in a spirit of happiness and joy, she lives a life of extraordinary self-denial so that both Francis and the Bishop of Assisi had to explicitly advise her to allow herself to be cared for during an illness.

The noble heart of Clare is the source of an amiability that overwhelms others, and she causes astonishment through the firmness with which she pursues her goal — following in the footsteps of the poor and humble Christ. Thus we read in **The Legend of Saint Clare** (37):

> Once when the Lord Pope Gregory forbade any brother to go to the monasteries of the ladies without permission, the pious mother, sorrowing that her sisters would more rarely have the food of sacred teaching, sighed: "Let him now take away from us all the brothers since he has taken away those who provide us with the food that is vital." At once she sent back to the minister all the brothers, not wanting to have the questors who acquired corporal bread when they could not have the questors for spiritual bread. When Pope Gregory heard this, he immediately mitigated that prohibition into the hands of the general minister.

Clare resisted the Pope when he tried to persuade her to accept possessions in order to provide for the daily needs of the cloister of San Damiano. "If you fear for your vows, We absolve you from it," the Pope reassured

her. Her reply was immediate: "Holy Father, I will never in any way wish to be absolved from the following of Christ" (Life 14).

Clare is an outstanding figure of her times for her unbreakable integrity both as a person and as a woman. She does indeed deny herself that life's fulfillment which nature offers to womanhood, but this is not at all because of a lack of inner spirit nor because her heart might have been ignorant of the meaning of love. Indeed, she does this precisely because she knew and understood the meaning of love so deeply, because through faith and inner enlightenment and the fire of her most committed heart she had personal knowledge of that love which is without measure and which seeks always to give itself away in love.

For this reason Clare is not **also** a woman. Her womanly being is magnified and elevated to exemplary heights. Her first biographer, the same Brother Thomas of Celano who gave us the first detailed life of Francis, is unafraid to say: She is "an image of the Mother of God, a new leader of women" (**Life**, Prologue).

Clare remains in the shadow of St. Francis not because she must remain there and not because it is only correct that she remain there. Clare desires to stay there: as a woman she desires to live out in the shadows what Francis as a man was called to bring into the open. She desires to be the recipient and to preciously guard in her hidden silence that which Francis gave voice to and made available to the public. She is as a vessel open to receive the fullness of Francis; and from this same vessel which bears the name of Clare, Francis repeatedly draws his own fullness. He too can find peace in her soul. He is at home in the intimacy and transparency of her heart although he seldom, indeed very seldom saw her and with the passing years even more seldom encountered her. This caused her pain. And in this too was she totally feminine and through her tears loved even more.

She is totally feminine in her sensitivity toward people, toward everything that moved her whether internally or externally. She encountered with deep reverence each and every thing which often in her hands in the face of her profound respect bent before her, almost miraculously. But before all she encounters with this deep reverence people in their individuality, their conscience, their weaknesses and their gifts. She is always congenial and possessed of a marvelous immediate warmth: "Dearly beloved, may you too always rejoice," she writes to Agnes of Prague, daughter of the King and abbess of the cloister in that city. "To the cry of her heartfelt and unique love," Clare offers her greeting; and toward the end of her letter she writes: "What more can I say? Let the tongue of the flesh be silent" (Fourth Letter).

Clare must in accordance with the decree of the IV Lateran Council of 1215 accept the title of Abbess. She refers to herself as "the most lowly and unworthy handmaid" (Third Letter, 1). This she calls herself because it is a fact. She knows and desires one thing: to love by serving and to rule by loving. Her feminine heart is perfected in a love that is truly virginal and a truly motherly love that is totally creative.

Clare was canonized two years after her death. With the judgment of the church she receives the seal of God's approval of her grace-filled life. This she receives because already through all her years the authenticity of her life caught the attention of the world, that very world to which she seemed extinguished. She had taken refuge in solitude, had withdrawn from the world and it is as if she had taken this very world to herself.

Just as the errant moth is drawn to light, so the world feels itself drawn to her. People come to her with their needs, the cares of this world, their illnesses which she often heals through a mere sign of the cross. People seek her wisdom, her counsel, her advice. It seems as truly symbolic that when a barbarian army storms Assisi (1241) the troups are put to rout not by walls and arms, but through the faith, the grandeur of a defenseless woman, by a Clare who prays in solitude. Clare is a tower of peace, a fortress against which the waves of the ocean splash and are broken (**Life**, 21). □

☆ ☆ ☆

Sr. M. Raphael, O.S.F.

THE DEATH OF ST. CLARE

It must have seemed at times
as if the pearl of great price
asked a price to heavy to pay.
I would love to have been there
on that endless August day
when you waited with time to spare
as your patient Sister Death chimed
the rhythmic knell.

At times the toll
seems to high: him shattered,
broken, and naked; you battered
by the struggle to maintain
the integrity of all
that had been revealed
in love — his loved sealed
the covenant and you gained
the pearl of great price.

A picture forms in my mind, Clare:
you waiting for that approval,
it arriving at the very last
and you clasping it to kiss
as if it might revive your breath-
but then at that moment Sister Death
would not, could not wait another knell.

A picture forms in my mind, Clare:
you lying at long last at peace,
your once youthful face heavy with age
the lines crow-feeting your eyes,
the skin saggy on your slim hands
circling the inked vellum page,
and a light sheen of tears
forming in slowly closing eyes.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

What is more Chaste than holy Charity? (Brother Giles)

IGNATIUS BRADY, O.F.M.

We have said much about Saint Francis and his way of looking at life and specifically, our life. We ought to turn likewise to his "little plant" and truest follower, our Mother and Sister Saint Clare, to learn how we should live not only in obedience, and without anything of our own, but also in chastity: **vivendo in obedientia, sine proprio et in castitate.**

Although her life was hidden from the world, "The news of her death (11 August 1253) spread like wildfire among the people of the town of Assisi. Men and women alike flocked to San Damiano, and all cried: 'A Saint! One dear to God!' The podestá came in haste with a troop of soldiers and armed men, to keep diligent watch lest they would suffer the loss of such a precious treasure" as her holy body. (Legenda, c.30). The Pope, Alexander IV had to be persuaded not to celebrate immediately the Office of Virgins in place of the Office of the Dead!

Seven hundred years later both Pius XII and the Minister General made special reference to the example, the lesson of her life which revealed the true appreciation of virginity and chastity and its positive character and value for the Church of God, even though it is so often misunderstood in our day. Clare herself had truly treasured to the full this most holy virtue, as she so clearly presents it in her Letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague over the space of some twenty years. They glow with praises of the holy virtue and above all reveal her delight in Christ her Spouse.

In this, assuredly, Clare demonstrated for us the approach, the attitude, we should have for the virtue and the vow of chastity. In her writings

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The late Ignatius Brady wrote this piece some 10 years ago; its franciscan message, however, is timely and instructive. Among other things, the article reveals the simple and powerful spirituality of the great franciscan scholar.

there is little or no mention of the difficulties that may arise; indeed, her whole approach, her attitude, her emphasis, center on the positive qualities, the total YES to God implied in this vow.

This is certainly the Franciscan approach: to stress the charity of chastity, far more than the negative elements, far more than the renunciation involved. Suffice it to recall the discussion Blessed Brother Giles had with one of the friars. He was asked: "Do you not prize chastity as one of the greatest virtues?" Giles replied that he did hold it dearer than many other virtues. Then another brother asked, or objected: "But, Father, is not charity a greater virtue than chastity?" Giles, a man filled with the wisdom of God, answered a bit bluntly: "Brother, what is more chaste than holy charity?" (Cf. Ivo P. Sullivan, **Golden Words: The Sayings of Brother Giles of Assisi** [Chicago 1966, p.72]).

The Franciscan is to see in his or her chastity the expression of his charity. We might draw the same conclusion (for friars and Sisters) from **The Salutation of the Virtues** of Saint Francis, save that we must read between the lines, so to speak, since the **Salutation** does not so much as mention chastity! But a closer look at the text reveals that charity seems to do the work, so to speak, of chastity: **Sancta caritas confundit omnes diabolicas et carnales tentationes et omnes carnales timores**: "Holy charity puts to flight (or confounds) all temptations that come from the devil and the flesh and all fears that derive from our (poor) human nature."

Hence we need not hesitate to say that there is indeed a special bond between charity and chastity; and that charity in itself gives sense and meaning to our vow of chastity. We might even suggest that for Saint Clare charity is the support and goal of obedience also. She writes of the Abbess: "Let her strive to rule others more by her virtues and holy manners than by her office, that the Sisters, animated by her example, may obey out of love rather than out of fear" (Rule, IV, n.7).

Quite aptly indeed the older Constitutions of the Poor Clares, using the words of St. Francis, insisted that we must say No to creatures and Yes to God in all things if we would have an undivided heart filled with holy charity and totally centered on the Lord:

> I beg all my Brothers in the holy charity which God is (John 4, 16), to do away with every care and worry, so that we may seek in the best possible way to serve, love, adore and honour the Lord God with clean heart and pure mind, which is what He desires above all else. (First Rule of St. Francis, c.22, n.26).

The reason for such an admonition is given slightly earlier, in n. 19 ff: "Let us beware of the malice and subtlety of Satan, who does not wish

This is certainly the Franciscan approach: to stress the charity of chastity, far more than the negative elements, far more than the renunciation involved.

that man give his mind and heart to God. And he goes about seeking under some pretext of reward or help, to snatch away the heart of man and choke out of his memory the word and the commandments of the Lord, and tries to blind the heart of man by worldly pursuits...and so take up his abode there..." — On our part, we must be conscious of our need of God's grace, and humbly ask for it.

Charity and Chastity in the Church

One final aspect, which Pope Pius XII of holy memory emphasized in his **Encyclical on Holy Virginity** (25 March 1954), is the fruitfulness of chastity for the Church. This Pope Alexander IV had specifically pointed out in praising Saint Clare in the Bull of Canonization. Clare herself had seen and understood the saving and sanctifying role of the virginal life of her daughters in the Church when she wrote to Blessed Agnes of Prague: "To use the words of the Apostle himself, I hold thee to be a co-worker of God Himself (I Cor. 3,9), and a support for the frail and failing members of His glorious Body" (The Third letter to Bl. Agnes,n.3; in **The Legend and Writings of Saint Clare of Assisi** [trans. I Brady, OFM, St. Bonaventure, NY 1953, p. 93]).

We should not forget moreover the remarkable words of St. Francis which find application to the chaste friar and layman too (as well as the Sisters) in the Church. Speaking, in **The First Letter to the Faithful** of those who have the Spirit of the Lord, and thus addressing in reality all who are serious in the pursuit of perfection, he cries out:

> O how happy and blessed are those (men and women) as they flee self-love...and bring forth worthy fruits of penance...because the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them and make His abode in them. They are indeed children of the heavenly Father whose works they do; and they are spouses, brothers and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ. — We are spouses when the Holy Spirit joins the faithful soul to Our Lord Jesus Christ. We are brothers to Him when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven. We are His mothers when we carry Him in our heart and body by the love of God and a pure and sincere conscience. We bring Him forth (into the world) by the way we act,

which should be a light and an example to others. Oh how glorious...to have such a Father in heaven. How holy and peaceful to have such a Spouse! such a Brother and such a Son: Our Lord Jesus Christ!...

One might say that it is especially through obedience that we become His mothers (Our Lady's **Be it done unto me**...is the model implied here). Or indeed through poverty of spirit which has emptied our hearts of all else, that they may be His dwelling-place by love and by a pure and untarnished conscience. Only thus can we bring Him forth by our holy life and actions which must shine as an example to others. — Chastity then is but another aspect of our Christ-likeness; and as such must and will lead to a fruitful apostolate for souls.

As someone has said (who escapes me): "If the life of chastity were embraced primarily or exclusively as a means of self-sanctification, it would soon become purely self-centered and ultimately sterile and unproductive. Instead, it must be transformed into a spiritual marriage with Christ and thereby changed into spiritual motherhood which shares in the fruitfulness of the life which Christ lives in His Church." — How well the first Franciscans understood this sublime task and the ultimate meaning of the life of chastity, is revealed in a phrase of Blessed Brother Giles: "Carry tenderly the Virgin's Son!"

Brethren, let us begin
for until now
we have done little or nothing!

A religious institute remains strong and flourishing as long as the full spirit of the founder persists and breathes in its discipline and activities and in the lives of its members...That is not a renewal...which does not accord with the nature of the Order, or which in any way departs from the mind of its Founder —

(Paul VI).

Duns Scotus Seminary
Southfield, Michigan,
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Life in Holy Unity According to Saint Francis and Saint Clare

FR. OPTATUS VAN ASSELDONK, O.F.M. CAP.

For some time, I have been struck by an expression in the Prologue * of the Rule of St. Clare. Pope Innocent VI, speaking of the petition by Clare and the Sisters of San Damiano for approval of their form of life, says: "According to which you should live a **life in common in unity of spirit** and in the bond of most high poverty which was given to you by the blessed Francis and was freely taken up by you."

The execution of this pontifical approval was entrusted to Cardinal Rainaldo, who writes in the same Prologue: "Therefore, inclined to your holy desires, we confirm forever by the authority of the Lord Pope and by our own authority...the form of life and manner of holy **unity** and most high poverty, which your blessed Father St. Francis, by word and writing, delivered into your keeping for your observance. It is this: 1. In the name of the Lord begins the Form of Life of the Poor Sisters."

We are concerned with the words: "live a life in common in unity of spirit" and in "holy unity." In context, both these expressions, which in both cases precede most high poverty, refer to the same reality and seem

* Throughout this translation I shall retain the word Prologue, which most of the Italian and Spanish writers employ for the Bull of Pope Innocent IV.

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to be identical, that is: the life of holy unity, lived in common in unity of spirit.

So the form of life consists particularly in two parts, that is, in the life of holy unity and in the life of highest poverty. The words used by the Pope and by the Cardinal almost suggest that Clare used the same or similar words in her petition. It seems further that this form of life was granted in word and in writing by Francis himself, at least in substance. This is a thought which corresponds exactly with the thought of Clare and is often repeated by her.

Much has been written about the life of poverty, especially as contained in the **Privilege of Poverty**. However, I find that studies on the life of holy unity are less precise and less clear, even though there is no lack, among the writers, of clear indications of the fact and importance of the life of holy unity. Recently Fr. Iriarte and Fr. Garrido especially dwell on it.

The aim of this study is to search in the writings of Clare and Francis, in the biographical sources and other works, for the best indicators of the exact role of this life in holy unity as a form of "community life" or life of Franciscan fraternity.

I. THE WRITINGS OF ST. CLARE

Let us begin with the **Testament**, since it was written prior to the **Rule**. After recalling the conversion of the first Poor Sisters, in paragraph no. 5, she speaks of the form of life given by Francis, and, "this above all, that we should for all time persevere in holy poverty." And, concluding this point, she proceeds thus: "I direct and urge on in the Lord Jesus Christ all my Sisters, those who are present and those who are to come, that they always strive to imitate the way of holy simplicity, humility and poverty and likewise the integrity of a holy way of living (ac etiam honestatem sanctae conversationis) in the same way that we were taught by our Blessed Father Francis from the beginning of our conversion to Christ: not by our merits, but solely by the mercy and grace of our Benefactor, that Father of mercies, may they always remain in the fragrance of good renown as much for those who are far off as for those who are near." (par.9).

So, besides the way of holy simplicity, humility and poverty, they are also to imitate **the integrity of that holy way of living** which Francis taught them from the beginning of their conversion. In paragraph 2 of the **Testament**, Clare refers to the words spoken by Francis in French, while repairing the little Church of San Damiano: "Come and help me in this work... Because later on ladies will come to dwell here, by whose renowned and holy way of living our heavenly Father will be glorified throughout all his holy Church" (**quarum famosa et sancta conversatione...**).

Francis foresees, therefore, that the famous and holy manner of living of the Poor Ladies will glorify the Church. But what is this holy manner of living? Clare continues (in paragraph 9): "And loving one another with the love of Christ, may you show outwardly by your actions the love which you have within you, so that roused by this example, the Sisters may always grow in the love of God and in charity for one another."

It seems, therefore, that this holy way of living consists, at least in part, in the love of God and in mutual charity, inspired by the love of Christ in one's heart. However, the word "unity" is still lacking in the context.

In paragraph 10, Clare continues, and she explains in what this "mutual" charity actually consists, first on the part of the Mother and then on the part of the Sisters: "I also beg the one who will be in the service of the Sisters that she strive to lead the way for the others more by her virtues and holy way of acting (sanctis moribus) than by her office (officio), so that, roused by her example, the Sisters may obey her not so much because of her office but more out of love. Let her be discerning and foresightful toward her Sisters, as a good Mother toward her daughters; and let her strive to provide for them according to the need of each one out of those things which the Lord will give (dabit)."

There seems to be a clear pointing to Francis here: **Audite, Poverelle:** "With great love I beg you to use discretely the alms which the Lord will give you."

Clare continues: "Let her also be kind and courteous, available to all (benigna et communis) that they can confidently make known their needs and trustingly have recourse to her at any hour as will seem to them profitable to do, both for themselves as for their Sisters."

On the part of the abbess, therefore, "maternal" love, according to the Rule, is foresightful, courteous and available to all.

And on the part of the Sisters: "The Sisters, who are subject to authority, should keep in mind that they have put aside their own wills for the Lord. Thus I will that they should obey their Mother as they have promised the Lord of their own free will, so that their Mother, seeing the charity, humility and unity which they have toward one another, may carry more lightly the whole burden of the office she bears and that which is vexing and bitter be turned into sweetness because of their holy living."

So, in this context is seen the internal relationship which exists between the integrity of a holy way of life and the charity, humility and unity which reign among the Sisters and which beget sweetness for the Mother (paragraphs 9 and 10). Indeed, the holy manner of living is the mutual charity, humility and unity among the Sisters, inspired by the exemplary

maternal love of the Abbess and, after all is the fruit of the love of Christ in us. By this holy manner of living in charity, humility and unity, the Mother carries the burden of office with sweetness.

As we shall see later, the **Audite, Poverelle,** which Francis gave to the Sisters after the **Canticle of Brother Sun,** had precisely the purpose of rousing this holy manner of living in unanimous, humble and obedient charity, without property.

In this manner, the **Testament** becomes a key to a better understanding of the holy unity spoken of in the Prologue of the Rule and in the Rule itself.

Chapter IV of the Rule speaks of the election of the Abbess in complete concord and for the common good. The expressions "common good" and "common consent" recur frequently in the Rule. In the same Chapter she says that the Abbess should "hold fast" to the "common life" in all things (communitatem), and, as explained by Fr. Olgiati, this is meant in the sense of a full fraternal equality without privileges. This fraternal equality is immediately applied to the weekly Chapter of the monastery, in which all, including the Abbess, confess their common and public faults, and all together, even the youngest ones, discuss whatever concerns the welfare and good of the monastery.

Then a typical text follows: "Toward preserving the unity of mutual love and peace (unitatem mutuae dilectionis et pacis), all the officials of the monastery should be elected by the common consent of the Sisters (paragraph 13). Therefore, the purpose of this "common" consent, as well as that of the participation of "all" the Sisters, of which Clare also speaks elsewhere, is the unity of mutual charity and of peace. And for the same purpose — the common consent of all the Sisters — "at least eight Sisters shall be elected from among the more discerning, of whom the Abbess is always bound to take counsel about those things which our form of life requires" (paragraph 13).

It seems very clear therefore, that the unity of mutual charity and peace is the inspiring principle of all that concerns our life and it is best served by consent. In this light, the words of the Prologue of the Rule take on a greater importance. To approve the form of life "according to which you should live in common in unity of spirit;" "we confirm forever the form of life and the manner of holy unity and most high poverty." Indeed, the way of holy unity in common consent, or unity of spirit, should inspire the whole of life, as also that of most high poverty. It is striking how many times Clare exhorts all the Sisters always to observe the vow of most high poverty in common consent. This repeated insistence, even to having the

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Church approve the **Privilege of Poverty** that is absolute, proves in an express manner how Clare feared that the Sisters might not remain "united" among themselves on this vital point. Surely it is not without purpose that the Prologue first speaks of holy unity and then of highest poverty.

The central place given to unity and mutual charity appears, however, even more forceful in Chapter X of the Rule. In it Clare inserts word for word from the **Regula Bullata** of Francis, a passage that is singular in this regard: "I direct and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ that the Sisters beware of all pride, vainglory, envy, covetousness, care and solicitude about this world, detraction and complaining, **dissension and division. Rather let them always be solicitous to preserve intact among themselves the unity** of mutual love which is the bond of perfection."

Clare could not underscore more forcefully the manner of holy unity, that is, of mutual charity, than by defining it along with St. Paul as the bond of perfection; therefore as the essential purpose, and central to the form of life and to poverty itself.

The principle enemy of this holy unity in charity is discord and division, the fruit of pride, vainglory, envy, etc. — as always, the spirit of the flesh, the beloved "I." Then Clare continues: "And those who do not know how to read should not be eager to learn. Rather, they should study closely that which they ought above all to desire: to have the Spirit of the Lord and his holy way of working, to pray to him always with a pure heart. . .and to love those who persecute us."

The Spirit of God inspires perfect unity with God and with neighbor and also with our enemies and persecutors. The Prologue says it well that the Sisters should live a life in common in unity of spirit and according to the way of holy unity, "the holy operation" of the Spirit of the Lord desirable above every other thing.

It does not seem out of place to note here that Clare twice uses the typical wording of Francis when she intends to communicate formally a deep Gospel mystery, and that it is the expression "moneo et exhortor"

of the **Regula Bullata**. Clare repeats it in Chapter X of her Rule in her great fundamental exhortation on the unity of charity and on the Spirit of the Lord. She also uses it in the **Testament**, speaking of the poverty and holy way of life in charity, humility and unity, thus inculcating in the Sisters the two essential parts of the form of life.

In conclusion: **Poor Sisters** are Sisters living in fraternal unity and in poverty. Nomen est omen!

For completeness, I should mention that the Rule of Ugolino (1218-1219) mentions the obligation of the Sisters to make known to the Visitator whatever concerns the observances of the religious life and the unity of mutual charity (paragraph 13), a very precise indication that, in the form of life and in the manner of living the unity of mutual charity had an important role.

Paragraph 14 of this Rule or form of life concludes by imposing "uniform" observances upon all, so that the Sisters who are separated by the distances between their places, are united and joined in the bond of charity by the identity of the life and the conformity of customs (quatenus per locorum distantiam separatas, vitae identitas et morum conformitas caritatis vinculo uniat et coniungat). Both of these expressions make one think of St. Clare's own Rule.

II. THE WRITINGS OF ST. FRANCIS

In the Prologue of the Rule of St. Clare, the life "in common in unity of spirit" and "holy way of life" become "the form of life which your blessed Father St. Francis by word and **by writing** delivered into your keeping for observance. . .". We shall see now if and how these thoughts are found in the writings of the Saint.

a) Audite, Poverelle (Listen, Little Poor Ones)

Of Francis' three writings for the Poor Sisters, the one which, in an express manner, brings us closest to the life of holy unity is, without doubt, the **Audite, Poverelle**. Father Boccali, to whom we are indebted for the study of this writing, compares the text with the one concerning it in the **Legend of Perugia**, and thinks that the author of the passage regarding it gives the impression of having been present at the occurrence which is narrated, or having himself been the bearer of the poetic vernacular text. In fact, there are too many parallels in the two texts that cannot be explained except by a direct knowledge of the happenings and of the text.

It would be a matter, therefore, of an eye witness account. To better understand his evidence, let us first cite the text of **Audite, Poverelle** that concerns us: "Listen, little poor ones, called by the Lord, who have been

gathered from many parts and provinces: always live in the truth, that you may die in obedience."

And now the words of the **Legend of Perugia**, 85; "In these he briefly told them that then and always they should live in charity (caritate esse unanimes) and in close harmony **(et ad invicem conversari)**, because, following his example and words, when he yet had but few brothers, they were consecrated **(converse)** to Christ. Their conversion and their life **(conversatio)** give glory to the Order of friars, whose little plant they are and to the whole Church."

The first thing that impresses one in this text is not so much its direct affinity to the contents of **Audite, Poverelle**, but rather its affinity to the **Testament of St. Clare**, of which we spoke above.

In paragraphs 2, 9 and 10 the **Testament** speaks of: a. the conversion and holy way of life of the Sisters, "famous" in the whole Church (paragraph 2); b. this conversion and holy way of life becomes "renown" as much for those who are far off as for those who are near (paragraph 9); c. this holy way of life consists in mutual charity (paragraph 9), in humility and reciprocal unity (paragraph 10). Therefore, Clare, in her **Testament** also speaks of the **Audite, Poverelle**. The conclusion seems logical.

The Mirror of Perfection has a similar text: "deberent vivere et humiliter conversari et esse unanimes in caritate."

The Legend of Perugia continues the poor and austere life of the Sisters and of St. Francis' compassion for them. The passage makes one think of the **Testament of St. Clare**, paragraph 4. And then he writes: "In these words he reminded them that the Lord had gathered them together from various parts, so that the might live in holy charity, poverty and obedience and always live in this profession until death." The Latin text says: "sicut Dominus ex multis partibus in unum congregavit ipsas ad sanctam caritatem. . .".

The first part of the sentence really makes one think of the **Audite, poverelle**. The second is more free, like a personal synthesis, that makes one think again of the **Testament of St. Clare**, paragraphs 9 and 10. In each case, the **Testament** and the **Legend of Perugia** are very valuable eye witnesses to give us a clear understanding of the deep meaning of the **Audite, poverelle**.

Let us return to the **Audite, poverelle**, word for word, comparing it with the words of the **Legend of Perugia**: "Always live in the truth that you may die in obedience."

Father Boccali writes, concerning the word "veritas" (truth): "The expression vivere **in veritate** (to live in the **truth**) shows traces of the Bible; it is the foundation of the real life in charity, which is Christ-God." Indeed, understanding the Johannine climate in the writings of St. Francis, the typically Johannine word "veritas" recalls, for example, Jn. 17, a text well-known to Francis and, in his two **Letters to the Faithful**, translated as "unitas" (unity), that is, sanctified "in unum." In John's context it has the sense of affection or love, with which the Father loves the Son and the Son the Father, in which love or affection (or truth) all of us share: sanctified in the truth or in unity.

The **Audite, poverelle** speaks about obedience, as does the **Testament of St. Clare**. It also speaks of poverty, but indirectly, inasmuch as Francis exhorts the Sisters in the **Audite** to be discreet and to provide from the alms, in the same sense that Clare speaks in the **Testament** cited above. But the longest and most deeply-felt part of the writing to the Sisters insists upon mutual charity and patience during the illness of the infirm. The **Legend of Perugia** also speaks of it, saying that Francis insisted above all (**maxime**) on this compassionate service.

As far as I know, no student of St. Clare has until now indicated in a direct and express manner, the inner relationship between the **Testament** and the **Audite, poverelle** on the one hand, and the **Legend of Perugia** on the other hand. For this reason it seemed opportune to speak of it in detail.

b) **The Form of Life** and the **Last Will**

The "form of life" (1212-1213) for St. Clare and the Poor Sisters is the first preserved writing of Francis. In that part of it which Clare puts in her Rule, Francis speaks of the intimate trinitarian life in which the Sisters share in familiar communion. The insertion of only this passage in the Rule, in its "trinitarian" conciseness, denotes that, in Clare's thinking, this mystery is considered the heart of the entire form of life. Why, otherwise, would she have reproduced only this passage?

The same consideration avails, moveover, for the **Last Will**, likewise preserved in the Rule of St. Clare. In this last document he insists on fidelity to the evangelical life in poverty, and to the following of Christ and his Mother.

The conclusion seems compelling, therefore, that in these two writings we must find the fundamental aspects of the "whole" **Form of Life**, both that given by Francis at the beginning, and that written by Clare at the end of her life. In Clare's thinking they are basically identical.

The veracity of our conclusion depends on the very content of the documents. The **Last Will**, written in the final days of Francis' life, the

last writing to the Poor Sisters and the last of his writings to be preserved, confirms the following of Christ and of his Mother in a life of poverty to the end, according to the Gospel. And he then continues: "and I beg you, my ladies, and I counsel you, that you always live in this holy life and poverty. And take good care never to distance yourselves from it in any way through the teaching or advice of anyone."

The ardent concern for perseverance in highest poverty, against any opposition from without or within, was always deeply shared by Francis and Clare, evidence that these dangers were serious and imminent, as, indeed, is known. And Clare continued until her death the struggle to overcome this vital danger, begging for the formal pontifical approval of the form of life contained in her Rule.

In his **Last Will**, however, he speaks not only of poverty, but also, in a more general way, of the life of Christ and of his Mother. To follow this life and poverty in the Gospel was, therefore, the principal goal of Francis and the Poor Sisters. Concretely and basically, in what does this **life** of Christ and Mary according to the Gospel consist, this life which Francis and Clare with their brothers and sisters intend to follow?

Let us look for the answer to the question in the early **Form of Life** to which the **Last Will** refers us. The text of the **Form of Life** reads: "since through divine inspiration, you have made yourselves daughters and handmaids of the most high sovereign King, the heavenly Father, and you have espoused yourselves to the Holy Spirit by choosing to live according to the perfection of the holy Gospel. . ." * According to Francis and Clare, everything begins with the "divine inspiration;" fundamental throughout their writings there is a call "in the Holy Spirit."

After that, the principal focus is on the choice made to live the perfection of the Gospel. The deep sense of this perfection is, as the **Last Will** states, the life of Christ and Mary in poverty; in other words, to live Christ and his Mother.

This life of Christ and his Mother, since chosen in perfection, involves in actual fact and in depth, being made "in the Holy Spirit;" that is to say, according to the literal context, "through divine inspiration," daughters and handmaids of the Father and spouses of the Holy Spirit. Observe Francis' words which underscore the actual initiative of the Sisters: "you are made," "you are given in marriage," "choosing."

* The original text says: "**Quia** divina inspiratione fecistis vos. . . et Spiritui Sancti vos desponsastis **eligendo** vivere secundum perfectionem sancti Evangelii. . ." The sense seems to be truly this, namely, the choice of the perfect life according to the Gospel under divine inspiration, implies becoming daughters. . .spouses.

This choice to live Christ and Mary in the Gospel discloses an intimate and dynamic life union and communion with Christ and with his Mother in trinitarian profundity, in the sense of a continuation of the life of Christ and of his Mother, sharing and communicating their trinitarian life in the Church. Indeed, in the Holy Spirit the Sisters become daughters and handmaids like Mary most holy; and like her, spouses of the Holy Spirit, living Christ and making him live in them and in others, mothers like Mary.

Sister Chiara Augusta Lainati has written in detail on this theme of intimate union and communion of life in a trinitarian sense, in the following of Christ and his Mother in the Gospel. She was not thinking directly, however, of the holy unity in communion of spirit of which we spoke above. Her thinking is, moreover, equally valuable and convincing since she starts from another point of view and arrives at an analogous conclusion.

In that section of her work, **The Spouse of the Holy Spirit**, she gives a profound explanation of the subject, supported by other writings of Clare and Francis and other sources such as the **Process of Canonization**. Speaking of the **Form of Life** she writes: "This passage, the only one which can be said with absolute certainty to have been given to Clare by Francis at the beginning of her religious life, seems to me to be of exceptional importance. It contained the spiritual direction, the theological-spiritual foundation of the Second Order as Francis had thought of it and desired it, with clear, ineludible reference to the Annunciation Gospel of Luke 1:26-37. . . . For that Gospel-centered man, Francis, Clare is the daughter and maid-servant of the most high heavenly Father, and spouse of the Holy Spirit, in order to incarnate Christ by following the Gospel (**Rule**, Ch. VI,3); like Mary, the 'virgin made Church'. . . . It is the first time (1212-1213) that the writings of Francis resort to the terms **servant, Most High, Spirit of the Lord**: key words in the Franciscan heritage. And they occur in Francis' writings with reference to the Gospel of the Annunciation, which is a context of espousals in the Holy Spirit in order to bring forth Christ in the Church. Through this parallelism with Mary, Clare is the 'spouse of the Holy Spirit' for Francis."

On my part I can add, explicating Sister Lainati's writing, that this "Marian-spousal" life, in the trinitarian context, that is, as an intimate communion in the trinitarian life as children, spouses, brothers-sisters and mothers of Christ, is also the fundamental and common Gospel vocation of the Friars Minor, the penitents in the world and, therefore, of all "Franciscans," without difference in this regard.

To better understand this intimate union of the one Gospel vocation, lived in different complementary forms, we must continue our research

into the writings of Francis and elsewhere. But at this point we can conclude that the life of Christ and his Mother in Gospel poverty, in the thought of Francis and of Clare, implies in a precise manner the trinitarian life in intimate union with the Father (sons-daughters), as spouses of the Holy Spirit and mothers of the Son. And this is based on the **Form of Life** and the **Last Will**.

c) Other writings of St. Francis

From the **Form of Life** to the Poor Sisters (included in Clare's Rule of 1253), it appears that Francis, together with Clare, saw his vocation as profoundly trinitarian from the beginning of his evangelical conversion.

This fact is also confirmed in the first **Letter to the Faithful** or penitents, whose composition probably dates back to the years 1213-1215 and, therefore, close to the **Form of Life** itself. This letter begins, and in this it is unique among medieval documents on penitence, with the precept of the love of God and of one's neighbor as oneself. The Spirit of the Lord which rests on these penitents in the world makes them children of the Father and spouses of the Holy Spirit; brothers and mothers of Christ: an intimate trinitarian communion, even more explicit and elaborated than in the **Form of Life**.

Francis seems to be deeply struck by this intimate trinitarian union in which we all participate: "We are spouses, we are brothers, we are mothers;" he sings warm praises of our brother and son Jesus, the good Shepherd, who gives his life for us and prays for us at the Last Supper: "O Holy Father," and he makes clear the trinitarian union by using the words "spouse" and "son," which we do not find in the quoted texts, whether synoptic or Johanine.

In the end, he gives a personal synthesis of the priestly prayer of Jn. 17, in which he changes the Johannine word "truth" to "unity," in this manner: "I pray for them, not for the world: bless them and sanctify them! And for them I sanctify myself so that they may be sanctified in **unity**, as we are."

This sanctification in unity refers to those in the world who will believe in the words proclaimed by the penitents.

It should be noted that Chapter 17 of the Gospel of John, in different forms, occurs four times in the writings of Francis, namely, in the two **Letters to the Faithful** and in the **Regula non Bullata**, an obvious proof that Francis wanted to underscore the essential content for his brothers and for the penitents, that is: filial, fraternal and apostolic unity, based on the unity of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit and communicated to all of us in Christ our brother.

In these Johannine texts there are recurring thoughts such as: "that they should be one as we are," "that they should be perfect in unity," "that the love with which you have loved me be in them and I in them," "for their sake I consecrate myself so that they should be consecrated in the truth, consecrated in unity, like us."

The idea of intimate trinitarian union is, therefore, forcefully present in these Johannine texts; but it lacks the expression or the word "unity" or "holy unity" which is present in the Prologue of the Rule of St. Clare, in the Rule itself and in the Testament.

Moreover, it is widely known that the Gospel life lived by Francis and Clare was profoundly trinitarian. The persons of Christ and Mary themselves, whose footsteps both desired to follow in poverty and humility, are always seen and lived in a trinitarian context and this fact appears, in part, in the above-mentioned texts, but it can be proved throughout the writings of both Francis and Clare: less forcefully in those of Clare; more clearly expressed in those of Francis. Our Lord Jesus Christ is always described as Son of the Father (God-Man) in the Holy Spirit, and Mary always shares in the trinitarian life as daughter-handmaid, as spouse and Mother.

However, in the writings of Francis the expression and the word "unity" occurs always and only in direct relation with the Most Holy Trinity. The closest text to the Prologue of the Rule of St. Clare occurs in the **Letter to the Chapter of the Friars**, which begins "In the name of the Most High Trinity and **Holy Unity** Father and Son and Holy Spirit. Amen." This **Unity** of the Holy Spirit is placed here also as an example and incentive of the **unity** in the life of fraternity. In the same letter Francis insists, for example, on a single Mass celebrated by all the priests together "for the love of charity," because Christ, One and everywhere "indivisible," acts in the Eucharist with the Father and Holy Spirit. He then also insists, with regard to the Divine Office, on the concord of voice and mind, and on the "harmony" of the mind with God. And, at the end of the same letter, he adds a prayer in which he proposes the unity of our will with the will of God without, however, using the word "unity" so that we can, in the Holy Spirit, follow the footsteps of the Son and thus reach God, who lives and reigns in perfect Trinity and simple Unity.

Francis shows his fervor in celebrating and having celebrated the Unity and Trinity of God elsewhere in his writings. In his **Exhortation to the Praise of God**, one of his first writings, we read: "Blessed be the holy Trinity and undivided Unity."

In the **Regula non Bullata**, Chapter 17, which makes one think of the early years of the Order, Francis speaks of the Spirit of the Lord which

works interior holiness in us with its diverse virtues, and above all, with divine fear, divine wisdom and divine love of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: therefore, intimate union with the most Holy Trinity. In the same Rule he invites all the friars everywhere to exhort all people to penitence with the words: "Fear and honor, praise and bless, thank and adore the omnipotent Lord God in Trinity and in Unity, Father and Son and Holy Spirit, creator of all things. Do penance. . . ."

Most of Chapter 23 is a solemn hymn of praise and thanksgiving to the Father in the Son with the Holy Spirit, for only in the Son, with the Holy Spirit, can we give sufficient thanks. And to this trinitarian praise to the One and Triune God, he invites all humanity of all times, **per modum unius**, in the today of eternity.

In the **Office of the Passion**, of which the **Praises at Every Hour** form a part, the antiphon to Our Lady is trinitarian, as are various other prayers. This praise thus becomes a "unitarian" and a "trinitarian" liturgy, in the Lord Jesus Christ, the immolated, exalted Lamb, together with all humanity in heaven, on earth and in all creation. Francis knew how "to gather" all the universality of creation into unity around Christ who unites all in Himself as Son of the Father in the communion of the Saints for the praise, honor, glory and benediction of the Blessed Father in the Holy Spirit.

This mystery, total in unity and salvific in universality, synthesis of the history of salvation, found in Francis a particular devotee, a devotee of the Holy Trinity and of holy Unity. This "universalism" was profoundly and critically expounded in Leonard Lehmann's thesis and, in part, also in Nguyen-Van-Khanh's.

In conclusion: regarding the writings of Francis in which the trinitarian and unitarian aspect is very forceful, although the word "unity" or "holy unity" would be applied literally only to the Most Holy Trinity, it seems probable to me — in order not to say too much — that the trinitarian life described in the **Form of Life** in an express manner by both Francis and Clare, is really and profoundly seen and lived as a deep inspiration of their life in fraternal holy unity.

III. IN THE BIOGRAPHIES

In the biographies, especially in Celano's, there are several very precise texts which expressly exalt the unity of mutual charity among the poor sisters and the friars minor in the early fraternity.

Regarding the Poor Sisters Celano writes: "Among the Sisters there predominates above all else the virtue of a continual and mutual charity that unites their wills so deeply that even in a fraternity of forty or fifty

persons, as are in that place (San Damiano) there is an identity of willing and non-willing that molds a single spirit out of many" (1 Celano 19).

Only later does Celano speak of humility, of chastity and of poverty. He speaks first of all of charity, which predominates among them "above all else," in perfect unity of spirit. The practice of **holy unity** of mutual charity in **unity of spirit**!

"Regarding the early fraternity of minors founded," he writes, "on humility," he gives this testimony: "And truly, on this foundation they built, splendidly, the edifice of charity. And as living stones, gathered, so to speak, from every part of the world, they grew into a temple of the Holy Spirit. How ardent their fraternal love was... a real explosion of their spiritual affection, the only love which, above any other, is the source of true fraternal charity... Having despised all earthly things and free of any selfish love, from the moment they turned all their heart's affection into the bosom of the community, they tried with all diligence to give even themselves to meet all the needs of their brothers" (1 Celano 38-39).

Only later does he speak of obedience, of poverty, and of the other virtues; and he concludes: "Jealousy, malice, rancour, quarreling, suspicion, bitterness found no place among them; only great harmony, constant serenity, the action of grace and of praise filled them" (1 Celano 41).

Celano was struck by their fraternal unity, as appears more clearly elsewhere: "They were so filled with holy simplicity, innocence, purity of heart as to be unaware of all duplicity. Of such oneness (**una**) was their faith that unity of spirit (**unus** spiritus), harmony of purpose and customs, charity itself... agreement of thought (**una** voluntas, **una** caritas, animorum cohaerentia semper, morum concordia)" (1 Cel. 46).

Moreover, Celano himself suggests that we should not marvel: "because (Francis) said that one and the same Spirit brought forth the brothers and the poor ladies from this wicked world" (2 Celano 204). Truly a single Temple of the Holy Spirit.

Elsewhere the biographer furnishes the explanation of this fraternal unity by speaking of its opposite in the case of civil war between cities: "They were alienated from the One and Most High God; it was inevitable that unity could not remain among them" (2 Celano 37).

An allusion from outside the Order does not seem out of place, and the first that we know of is by Jacques de Vitry in 1216. Speaking of the friars minor and of the sisters minor, he characterizes them thus: "They live according to the form of the primitive Church, of which is written: 'the multitude of the believers were of one heart and one mind.'" These words seem almost to confirm those of Clare when she writes that their

holy way of living would become a cause of "fame" throughout the whole Church. Jacques also speaks of their good reputation in this context.

Lastly, in Celano it seems a special concern of Francis, from the beginning of the Order, to protect the unity of the brothers among themselves. In fact, seeing that "his children grew in numbers and grace everywhere, and were spreading even to the ends of the earth and their shoots were rich and marvelous and heavy with fruit, he began more and more frequently to reflect, and to be concerned that the young plant should grow and be preserved in the bond of unity. He saw, even then, that many, like wolves, raged against the little flock — old men hardened in wickedness (cfr. Dan. 13:52) — urged on to cause injury merely by their novelty. He foresaw that among his sons themselves difficulties could arise and injury be done to peace and unity" (2 Celano 23).

The expression "holy peace and unity" makes one think spontaneously of Clare's words in the **Rule** (Ch. IV) where she speaks of the necessity of preserving the unity of mutual charity and of peace to which he alludes above. It should be noted that Francis and Clare were united in their preoccupation to preserve fraternal unity against whatsoever danger from within and without.

According to Celano, Francis was thinking of the future rebels impelled by the senses and the spirit of the flesh "ready for quarrels and prone to scandal" (2 Celano 23).

Once in a dream, Francis felt like a mother hen incapable of gathering the many chicks which sought shelter under his wings, to protect them "from the disturbance of men and the attacks of evil tongues." He therefore decided to apply to Holy Mother, the Roman Church, as protector of the full Gospel liberty against the attacks inspired by the Evil One.

The text in which he mentions the real reasons for his appeal to the Holy See deserves to be cited literally. "Even she (the Church), who is holy, will emulate the glory of our poverty and will not allow the disorder of pride to eclipse the great value of our humility. She will preserve unharmed the bonds of charity and peace among us, striking rigorously and severely whoever causes discord. In her presence, the holy observance of evangelical purity will flower and she will not permit the good fragrance of life to fade for even an instant" (2 Celano 24).

Celano reports these words as the words of Francis himself, adding at the end: "This was the true and only intention of the Saint in commending himself; and these were the holy proofs of the foreknowledge of the man of God concerning the necessity of entrusting the future to the Church."

We are struck that St. Clare shared this same preoccupation of Francis, seeking without surcease throughout her life the papal approval of her **Form of Life**, whose essential characteristics are "holy unity" and "most high poverty," as expressly confirmed by Pope Innocent IV and Cardinal Rainaldo in the Prologue of the **Rule** or **Form of Life**. And Celano tells us that from the beginning, Francis had exactly the same two reasons or motives for having recourse to the Pope; the true and sole intention of the Saint was to protect the glory of poverty-humility and the bond of holy charity and peace against the dissidents. Truly a holy unity of spirit and intent between Francis and Clare from the beginning! Both had a profound understanding that the pure Gospel, lived in a holy unity of charity and in highest poverty, had the vital need of the defense of Holy Mother Church against every human weakness. The many-centuried history of the Franciscan Order has abundantly proven this human weakness. May the history of the Order be a teacher of life!

Celano also mentions several cases of friars who disrupt the unity of the Order (2 Celano 32-33), causing discord and division among the friars.

Among the causes of this discord, Francis feared in a special way "malicious tongues," gossip and detraction... and Celano gives a very stern description of it on Francis' part: "Finally, like every soul full of charity, Francis, too, detested whoever was odious to God. But among all other wicked persons, he abhorred with real horror, all detractors, and he said that they had poison under their tongue, with which they injured their neighbor... One day he heard that a friar had denigrated the good name of another, and turning to his Vicar, Brother Peter of Catania, uttered these terrible words: Grave dangers confront the Order if these detractors are not corrected. Immediately the sweet odor of many will change to a disgusting stench, if the mouths of fetid ones be not closed. Courage, get moving, examine diligently, and if you find innocent a friar who has been accused, punish the accuser with a severe and exemplary chastisement!..."

I will, he continued, that you take care with all possible diligence, you and all the ministers, that this pernicious malady does not spread further.

It was for this reason that the friars of that time rejected this vice particularly and made a pact among themselves to avoid carefully all that could injure or offend the honor of others. Indeed, what is the detractor if not the gall of men, the yeast of evil, the disgrace of the world? What is the man of double tongue if not the scandal of the Order, the poison of the religious cloister, **the destruction of unity**" (2 Celano 182)?

In this context it is even easier, perhaps, to understand St. Clare's words in her **Rule**, added to Francis' **Regula Bullata** after "detraction and

murmuring," namely, "from discord and division." "Let them be solicitous to preserve intact among themselves the unity of mutual love which is the bond of perfection" (Ch.X).

Celano also discloses to us the deep-rooted reason for Francis' solicitude for unity among his friars: "It was his constant desire and vigilant solicitude to maintain the bond of unity among his sons in such a way that those who were drawn by the same Spirit and generated by the same Father, would live in harmony in the bosom of one single Mother. He wished them to be founded on greater ones and lesser ones, so that the learned ones would be bound to the simple ones with fraternal affection and the religious, even those among them who were at a distance, would feel united by the cement of love (2 Celano 191)."

In Celano's context, this unity seems to be the fruit or inspiration of the same Holy Spirit, the Minister General of the Order, who without distinction of persons rests equally on the learned and the simple (cfr. 2 Celano 193). It should not be forgotten here that the Saint, before dying, constituted Mary, Mother of Jesus our Brother, Lord of Majesty, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit, as Advocate of the Order: "Under her wings he placed his sons, whom he was about to leave, so that they might find warmth and protection there until the end" (2 Celano 198).

CONCLUSION

At the end of this study we give a first general conclusion which is: the words of the Prologue to the **Rule** of St. Clare have a vital and central importance. In fact, the **Form of Life** of the poor Sisters is composed of two principal parts: the life in holy unity and the life in most high poverty. This life in holy unity is echoed in the very **Rule** of Clare and in her **Testament**.

The same is revealed in the writings of Francis to the poor Sisters (the **Form of Life**, the **Last Will** and the **Audite, poverelle**). There seems to be a close tie between the **Testament** of Clare and the **Legend of Perugia** compared with the **Audite, poverelle**, whose deep meaning is clearly seen.

From the writings of Francis, even besides those to the poor Sisters, there emerges a depth expressly "trinitarian," which forms the basis of the life in fraternal holy unity. In the biographies, particularly those of Celano, one discovers the primary importance given from the beginning to the life in fraternal unity against every danger of division. Gossip is pointed out as a special danger in this regard. Because of this danger of division, Francis and Clare have recourse to Holy Mother Church, to protect and save forever the life of holy unity and highest poverty.

To specify still more concretely:

a) The trinitarian life, shared by the poor Sisters (and by the friars and penitents), as daughters and handmaids of the Father, spouses of the Holy Spirit and mothers of Christ, in union with Mary most holy, seems to be the fundamental inspiration of the **Form of Life** of the poor Sisters.

b) To this "vital" base is infused the holy unity of mutual charity, the bond of evangelical perfection, fruit-gift of trinitarian unity in which we share with the Spirit of the Lord.

c) The right place of holy unity in the **Form of Life** is found, therefore, after the trinitarian life and before the life of most holy poverty, as indicated in the Prologue of the **Rule** of Clare. Because filial-fraternal-maternal unity, founded on the most Holy Trinity is lived among us in the Church-Mother (Mary), it is realized in persons disappropriated of self-love, who live with "nothing of their own," in poverty-humility, following the footsteps of Christ poor-humble and crucified, and of his Mother.

Not having anything of our own (love) we can always live better in communitarian unity of spirit and of charity, totally liberated and free for the Love which is God, Father and Son in the Holy Spirit.

"In the name of the most high Trinity and of the holy Unity of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." □

☆ ☆ ☆

Francis and Clare

Meditation on a picture

They met one another and stayed devoted to one another throughout their lives: Francis and Clare. Was it a spiritual friendship?

They each hold in their right hand God's gift of Himself: the Bible and Eucharistic Body of Christ — both signs of the love of God. Francis found in the Bible the definitive direction for his life. He held the Bible not only in his hand, but in his heart as well. In this way he became a living Gospel. He became an image of the Lord for us. We too can receive and accept the Word of God as Francis did.

Clare carries to the centre of the picture what was the centre of her life. In that sign of bread, surrounded by the symbol of love, the colour red, she meets the friend she loved, for whom she lived and suffered. She directs the viewer to Him: "It is He for whom I live." For whom do we live?

Many signs, some important, others less so, stand beside the path along which we journey through life. Does Clare point the way for us? While Clare offers us in the monstrance the sign of the Eucharist, Francis, with his raised left hand presents to us the sign of the wounds of Christ. The red colour of his wounded hand shows us what the crucified Lord in His love has suffered for us.

The outstretched hand of the Saint looks like a monstrance which presents the events of Calvary. And is the gesture of this hand not at the same time also an expression and sign of care and reverence for the Lord present in the Holy Eucharist? Several times Francis urges such reverence in his writings even from us today.

This is a wonderful encounter: monstrance and wounded hand; the Last Supper and Calvary; signs of the sacrificial meal and the sacrifice of the cross.

Which hand offers me more for my meditation and reflection: the right hand of St. Clare or the left hand of St. Francis? It is the same Lord who speaks to me in these signs: the High Priest of Holy Thursday and the High Priest of Good Friday.

What the hands wish to express is the symbolic language of the heart, the expression of the whole person: not only his hand but the whole body of Francis shows his reverence for the Eucharistic Lord; all the wounds of Christ in his body speak of his loving union with the crucified Lord. In the same way Clare's hand not only points to the Lord, but it expresses her total dedication to Him whom she loves so much. Francis and Clare show us Jesus Christ each one in their own way, and in that way they become themselves signs on our common way to the Lord.

We see them wearing the Franciscan habit — almost the same for each — the sign of their Franciscan life. With common ideals, they walked their own separate ways; but the friar minor and the poor sister knew one another united in the Lord, who was for each of them, all and everything. This closeness should be a sign of the orders today as well.

While in the different parts of the picture we are struck by the colour red — the Bible, the monstrance, and Francis' wounds — the brightest red is found in their halos. What does this mean? In heaven they no longer see God's love in signs and symbols as they did in this world. In eternal life with the Lord they experience Him in a direct way, radiant and bring-

ing them joy. Francis tried to describe God in his Praises with the following words:

"You are holy, Lord...
You are strong, You are great.
You are the most high...
You are good, all good,
the highest good...
You are inner peace; you are joy.
You are our hope and joy...
You are all our riches.
You are beauty, You are meekness.
You are our charity.
You are all our sweetness.
You are our eternal life:
Great and wonderful Lord,
God almighty, Merciful Savior."

Lord, I must admit: to live for you is beyond everything. Francis and Clare give us the example. □

This splendid meditation on a painting of Francis and Clare comes as a brochure of three panels in white double-sided kromekote printed on a glossy index-type of stock. The painting, in color, occupies the middle panel while the meditation appears on the two side panels as well as on the rear. Measuring approximately 4" by 6" it is obtainable from:

Correspondence Course on Franciscan Missionary Charism
National Office
P.O. Box 14355, Nairobi, KENYA

The cost is $.25 plus postage.

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SEPTEMBER, 1992

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
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

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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).

Guest Editorial

Genesis. . .The 1982 Rule
— a personal remembrance

ROLAND J. FALEY, T.O.R.

It is hard to believe that a decade has passed since the present pope approved the new **Rule of the Franciscan Third Order Regular** on December 8, 1982. It is even more difficult for some of us to remember that the Rule's inception began for members of the Third Order Regular family ten years before that. I was privileged to be part of that from the start.

To pinpoint an actual date is not easy twenty years after the fact. I remember the first conversations taking place in my office in Rome on a beautiful fall day in 1972. It was a highly theoretical, unfocused talk between Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. and myself about the inadequacy of the 1927 Rule in the light of the Council and all the work that had been done subsequently on the T.O.R. charism.

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*As Sister Kathleen Moffatt OSF, Executive Director of the **Franciscan Federation**, began the initial design of this commemorative issue on the Rule of the Third Order Regular it seemed no better place to begin than with the first architect of the renewed understanding of the TOR charism, Roland Faley TOR.*

***Roland Faley** was Minister General of the Third Order Regular Friars at the time of the writing of the new Rule. His biblical scholarship on **metanoia** and his study of the 800 year tradition of Francis' Third Order led to the Order's self-understanding as modern day penitents.*

*Presently, Roland is Spiritual Director for the religious and clerics of the diocese of Austin, Texas. His new book **FOOTPRINTS ON THE MOUNTAIN, Preaching and Teaching The Sunday Readings** will be published by Paulist Press at Christmas time.*

In both of our communities, the work of revising constitutions had already begun and we regretted the absence of a strong basic document, owned by all Tertiaries, to give direction to the work of revision. We ruminated aloud about the possibilities of revising the Rule, the alleged sacred and untouchable character of which remained an almost undiscussed given. We had no idea of what the possibilities were. But with the undaunted and mindless courage of youth (certainly true at the time!), we decided to test the waters and attempt a revision of the Rule. Our task was gargantuan, of course, in light of the fact that several hundred congregations of Franciscans followed the Rule. Moreover, the greater number of these were women.

Nonetheless we began work in earnest in 1973 to produce the first draft of a new Rule based on the Order's largely rediscovered charism, conversion of life or *metanoia.* Since the congregations with which we had an historical and direct contact were the male communities, we first wanted to measure their reaction to the initiative. The men had their own organization, known as the Inter-obediential Congress, which had met periodically over the past twenty year period. Therefore, we had a structure in place through which to work. The men and women had no history of a joint organization wherin common issues were addressed. During the generalate of Louis Secondo, T.O.R., after consultation with the other men's communities, it was decided to hold another international meeting to explore the possibility of a revised Rule. There was a unanimous consensus around the idea. The meeting was set for April, 1974, in Madrid, Spain. For the first time, representatives of women's congregations were asked to join us. The enthusiastic reception which the whole idea evoked was most encouraging.

In the meantime Thaddeus and I, with the help of valuable experts in matters Franciscan, worked on the draft to be presented for consideration in Madrid. The document was wholly centered around the conversion theme; the vows were seen as an expression of conversion. There was the earnest effort to remain true to Francis' own vision as expressed in his writings, as well as the best values found in the various revisions of the Rule through history. The Madrid Congress took the draft article by article, made its own recommendations, and then gave the final version its approval. This became known as the **Madrid Statement**, which circulated widely in the Franciscan Tertiary world during the next decade. Many communities included it with their revised constitutions as an expression of charism.

As encouraging as all of this was, we were still far from a revised Rule. Little did we realize at the time how far away we were. There were

landmines in abundance on the terrain still to be traveled. It became evident as work on the **Madrid Statement** progressed that other Franciscan bodies, in particular countries, had already launched their own initiatives to revise the Rule. Efforts were well underway in France, Germany and Holland. The most prominent of these, the French undertaking, was much further ahead than we. By the mid-1970's, the Tertiary congregations in France and many in Italy had lined up in support of this Rule project, which was written for women only.

We realized that to continue along separate tracks, without bringing these initiatives together, could be disastrous by ultimately splintering a centuries-old unity around a single Rule. It would be even worse if the division were along lines of gender. The Vatican had indicated that a joint undertaking should be pursued. Yet all of this was more easily said than done. We were no longer at the beginning stage. Much work had already been done and approved on both sides. After much thought, a new collaborative effort was seen as essential, one to be marked by diplomatic expertise as much as by history or theology.

At this point there were only two main contenders for Rule revision: the French document, intended only for women, and marked by strong Minorite leanings; and the **Madrid Statement**, intended for women and men, and focused mainly on the tertiary or Penitential charism. The French work had been remarkably well done, with great fidelity to Franciscan sources and largely drawing on the words of Francis himself. What it lacked was any strong reliance on the Tertiary history and tradition. What the **Madrid Statement** lacked, with all its clarity regarding charism and its inclusiveness of men and women, was that strong emergence of original Franciscan sources that the French had drawn on so effectively.

The two groups decided to come together to work out a compromise position. Most of the 1970's, after Madrid, were spent in tackling what gave every appearance of being irreconcilable differences. In his Master's thesis, **The Development of the New Third Order Regular Rule**, Paul McMullen, T.O.R. has capably outlined every step of this journey. But in recounting facts, much of the emotional investment is omitted. And that, at this point, is all for the best. Suffice it to say that more than one gathering ended in a spirit of total frustration. There were moments when both sides felt that it might be better to go it alone. But there was always some glimmer of hope. A joint working group was finally established to work out a compromise document. Both Thaddeus Horgan, and Margaret Carney, O.S.F. represented Madrid's best interest in a collaborative mode and played a vital role in the felicitous outcome.

The day finally arrived. March 1982. Ten years after **Genesis I**; eight years after Madrid. Some two hundred Franciscan major superiors of women and men, representing nearly two hundred thousand religious, gathered in Rome to debate, amend, and hopefully approve a new Rule of the Third Order Regular. I remember heading toward the large hall for the opening session with a deep sense of foreboding. We had made gains in understanding but I was by no means certain that these were sufficient. As the representative of my own Order, which takes its roots in the first group of Francis' Penitents, I could not vote in favor of a document that did not express satisfactorily the origins and charism of our Institute. I went to the opening with fear and trepidation. It was the beginning of ten vitally important days.

Ever so slowly my outlook changed. I could actually feel the answer to prayer. The Spirit was in the atmosphere. Attitudes changed; friendships were made; logic held sway. Defending one's turf was not center stage. People were searching for the good of the whole. A sense of openness prevailed. Both viewpoints had their defenders and they did it well. The value of the penitential charism never had better defenders than the Franciscan women generals from the United States, members of the Franciscan Federation. They had done their homework well and were highly qualified to address the issues. But they were not intransigent nor were the champions of the French document. Inclusion of men and women in the Rule's purview was by this time a foregone conclusion.

What began to emerge was the realization that we could have the best of two worlds. The French had drawn on four fundamental Franciscan values in constructing the Rule. These it was felt were important and shared by all Franciscans. Moreover, the French let Francis speak for himself in articulating the values, without extraneous commentary. This was a genuine plus. What Madrid proponents argued with effectiveness was the necessity of highlighting one of the four values, conversion of life, since to treat it on the same plane as the other values would betray the penitential tradition. This direction was overwhelmingly accepted by the hall. The overarching priority of conversion can be seen clearly in a careful reading of the Rule.

On the final working day, the Rule was approved article by article, chapter by chapter. There were few dissenting votes. The consensus of some two hundred participants was practically unanimous. I remember going home that final night, knowing that we had made history. This was an event not to be repeated in our lifetime and probably that of many others. There was lightness to my step and a "Te Deum" in my heart. Never before or since in my lifetime have I so concretely experienced the truth of the psalm, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it".

The text of the rule went to the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes where it received some minor modifications. It was approved by Pope John Paul II before the end of 1982. Of course, Rules are not like books or finished projects. If the proof of the pie is in the eating of it, the proof of a Rule is in the living of it. Only history will tell how effective the work of the last twenty years has been. My own terms as Minister General of our Order ended within months after the Rule's approval. And let it be said for the record that I felt that it was a great note to end on. The 1982 Rule will outlive all of us. It has already outlived one of its prime architects, Thaddeus Horgan, who was one of the first to be called home. I was not present for his funeral. But on the day it occurred I remembered that fall day in Rome when, with leaves falling outside the window, we dreamed of a new spring. □

Art for this issue by
Sr. Marie Monica Borden, O.S.F.

"Everywhere and in Each Circumstance"
Reg. N.B. 23:11
The TOR Rule — 10 Years Later...
An Interview with The Original Work Group

SISTER ALMA DUFAULT, F.M.M.

"Our small blue planet spins breathlessly towards the end of a century..." wrote Sr. Margaret Carney ten years ago in her introduction to the Commentary on the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. We have already counted down, 10..9.., in the last decade of this millennium. Not only do we see this planet without frontiers, but somehow we seem to see better the layers of its historical transformation that permit us to distinguish the constants and the variables that provide familiar landmarks and new terrains as its history and ours has unfolded. Just as we gain new perspectives when we see things from a distance so, after ten years' experience in Franciscan living according to the renewed Rule, these few pages share with the reader contemporary reflections of some of those who drafted the Rule. When they set about the herculean task of up-dating the Rule, they pierced the layers of seven centuries of TOR life and the vision it expressed in its three

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Sister Alma Dufault FMM *was the first Secretary General of the International Franciscan Commission (IFC), Rome, Italy, which was created to assure the collaboration that had been the Order's experience in writing the new Rule. Sister Alma was Superior General of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (over 8,000 members in 70 countries) while the Rule was written and promulgated ten years ago.*

Presently, Alma ministers with immigrant Mexican people in Chamberino, New Mexico. She is a member of the ***Spirit and Life Committee*** *of the* ***Franciscan Federation***. Her letters and phone calls to France, India, Brazil and Italy, and subsequent translations of the Work Group's responses to her interviews, give us this special article.

previous Rules. In a deep spirit of prayer, community and universal fraternity, and with steadfast scholarship in their work, they implemented for the TOR the two guidelines of Vatican II for the renewal of religious life: a return to the charism of Francis of Assisi, and attention to the signs of the times.

Those seven members of the Work Group remain bonded by that experience though now scattered in different directions: **Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, SA,** in his Eternal Dwelling with the God whom he loved and served so fully in life; **Sr. Margaret Carney, OSF,** fully alive today in her God-given role of "serving" her congregation and animating TOR life on the national and international level. **Sr. Marianna Jungbluth, FHF,** who is in an interior mission in Zaire, Africa, a country wrought with political, social and religious upheavel, probably never received our request for her reflections on "ten years later." Our gratitude and prayer accompany her as she "announce(s) peace"(30).

Sr. Honoria Montalvos, FMI, presented to the nearly 200 superiors assembled in Rome in March, 1981, Chapter 8 of the Rule, "The Obedience of Love". She has since been involved in formation in her congregation in Colombia, after two years in Peru collaborating in the program "Evangelization 2000". Most recently she worked in social and pastoral promotion of people in the conflictive Red Zone of Almaguer. The spirit of universal fraternity in the Franciscan family has urged her and her sisters to respond to the demanding call of John Paul II for a NEW EVANGELIZATION, "to accompany our people in giving birth to a continent that is different, fraternal, at the service of the civilization of love." Her community's specific mission is the proclamation of the Gospel and human promotion. In seeking to implement personally and communally the spirituality of the Rule and Life, with its permanent attitudes of conversion, contemplation, poverty and minority, they have felt impelled to be more closely inserted among the poorest, the weak. The "Obedience of Love" has encouraged them to "go against the current of the many attitudes that are destructive of peace and unity, so common in our Third World, assuming the consequences if necessary of 'those who suffer persecution for justice sake'(Mt.5,10)." The "obedience of love" proposed by Francis of Assisi calls forth today as it did ten years ago...800 years ago...2000 years ago..."effective collaborators with the Creator to eradicate hunger, ignorance and poverty, and to begin a new era that recognizes the rights of each human being, in communion and participation and that will witness a new People of God journeying towards a land of justice, order, liberty and peace."

Sr. Maria Luiza Piva, CF, another member of the Work Group, writes from her new mission in Curitiba, Brazil. She had presented to the

The Rule and Life is a bridge of unity among Franciscan congregations.

Assembly of 1981 Chapter 3, "The Spirit of Prayer", and now recalls the rich experience of having lived and worked with the Work Group. She shares her reflections, born out of her work with a group of Franciscan womens' congregations. "Delving into the Rule and Life", she notes, "is integral to the process of renewal of Franciscan congregations. The method used in this work permits the participation of a great number in the study and reflection on our Franciscan origins, the history and plan of evangelical life. With the dynamics used, congregations have welcomed the text with "carinho," love, at their Chapters, seminars, retreats and during the different stages of formation."

"The Rule and Life is a bridge of unity among Franciscan congregations. It has inspired them in renewing their Constitutions. Congregations from northern and southern Brazil, together with a group of brothers and sisters in Angola, Africa are collaborating...There has been much participation, sharing and creativity; there has been questioning, searching for ways to live our Franciscan charism in the midst of realities marked by injustice and poverty, where so many people are bruised, living on the margins of society." Maria Luiza writes again: "In this context, we feel strongly challenged. The Rule and Life, written with Francis' own words, continues to speak to us loudly and calls us to be truly brothers and sisters who assume the mission of: creating fraternal relationships; struggling for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; living with minorities, the poor, the marginalized and snf making their causes our own; sharing with each creature the love of the Trinity. The Rule and Life is a gift and a blessing for our Franciscan life and mission...Now, after ten years, if I were to re-write the text, I would start over again with the Franciscan sources and write the words of Francis and Clare, letting Clare speak more than in the actual text. I would reinforce our mission of justice, peace and the preservation of creation, and our mission with the poor."

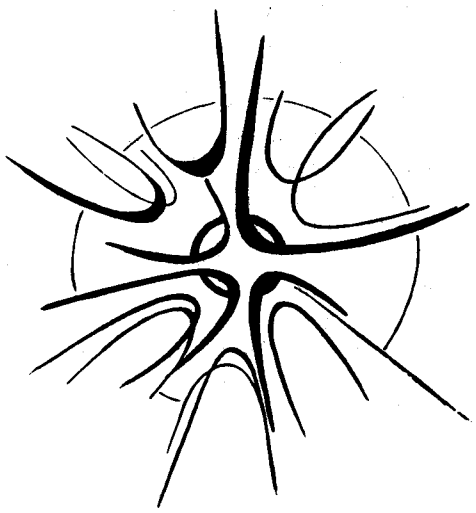
Sr. Marie-Benoit Lucbernet, SF, received our request for her reflections just when she returned to France after nine years in Togo, Africa, and the completion of her General Chapter. "My reflections are probably influenced by my long time in Africa", she writes. She had presented Chapter 7, "Fraternal Love", to the 1981 Assembly and now recalls that ten years ago,

in the Work Group, they had spoken briefly of something that, today, she considers essential, i.e., that "the Rule, which was composed from the writings of St. Francis, calls for an ongoing deepening knowledge of the Franciscan sources. In fact, our Rule needs to be seen in that context of the sources which are always under study, if we are to give it all its meaning and worth. The Rule becomes for each one of us a kind of "materialization", a visible sign of our belonging to the greater Franciscan family and of a living Franciscan spirituality."

Sr. Marie-Benoit shares her central thought: "This work of deepening our understanding of the texts can only be done **together with the whole franciscan family**. Consequently there is a need for all branches of the family to come closer, to work together, First and Second Orders, Third Order Regulars and SFO, **not only on the texts** but also in the commitments that are the outcome of collaboration...The common basis [of our Rule] has already brought about more common efforts among some Franciscan congregations (associations, federations) and the Rule has clearly inspired the writing of many of their Constitutions." She remarks too that there have been more frequent and deeper commitments between secular and religious brothers and sisters. "There is evidence of greater union with the First Order in regard to mission, firmly based on a search for peace, with commitments on the international, national, regional levels, particularly being involved in Justice and Peace Commissions. But also at the grassroots level, this demands [of the Sisters] strong Gospel attitudes, Franciscan attitudes, in face of ethnic conflicts (30). A sensitivity to care of the earth, which goes beyond ecological folklore, has brought about new commitments, too, at all levels. The phrase "As poor people"(18) has inspired the choice of new insertions, of new types and places of work, of service in the Church, almost as a natural consequence of a deeper understanding of our call." She asks: "But doesn't the manifestation/visibility of the Franciscan charism call us to an ever greater common witness with the whole Franciscan family, brought together in the 'obedience of love'?" (Chapter 8) In answer to our question: "Now after ten years, is there one thing more or different that you would write into the Rule?," Sr. Marie-Benoit comments that "The texts chosen for the Chapter on chastity jarred somewhat the flow of the rest of the text," and she suggests that some part of the Antiphon of the Psalter of St. Francis, or an extract from the Second Letter to the Faithful, 48-54, might be more appropriate.

Sr. Ignatia Gomez, of N. India, who presented Chapter 6, "The Life of Poverty", to the 1981 Assembly, has since worked with tribals in a remote area of India and presently is administrator of a hospital and nurse's training school in Ajmer, as well as conducting seminars at the Franciscan

Institute of Spirituality in Bangalore, S.India. Now, ten years after the "inspiring, enlightening and enriching" experience of working and living with the Work Group, she shares "how the revised TOR Rule has affected my personal life"... her prayer life, her life of poverty, obedience, chastity, her fraternal and apostolic life. She is "surrounded by Hindus, Moslems, Jains and others. Here I realize the importance of witness through love" and the Franciscan call "to be an instrument of peace." The four fundamental values take on a special significance in her milieu and in the service that is hers. In conclusion, she feels that: "Even today, after ten years, I do not feel I would add anything to the Rule. There is so much in it to strive for, if we really wish to live up to it." The responses of these four members of the Work Group of ten years ago confirm the wisdom of having decided to use the words of Francis in composing the Rule and Life. **These words continue to impact new generations, to motivate groups of Franciscans to live the fundamental values that permeate the Rule and that call us to be among the marginalized, the poor, the weak of our times and to serve their causes in action for local and world-wide peace, justice and the preservation of creation.** Words such as: "whenever they meet each other, they should show that they are members of the same family" are a continued call to increase collaborative efforts among the different branches of the Franciscan family in witness to universal love and mission. □



A Decade of Development

MARGARET CARNEY, O.S.F.

One of my favorite stories of the early franciscan brotherhood is the description of the return journey from Rome to the Spoleto valley after the approval of the Rule in 1209. Let Celano's words refresh our memories:

"While they wre going along the way, they talked with one another about the number and the quality of the gifts the most kind God had bestowed upon them, and about how they had been received most kindly by the vicar of Christ, the lord and father of the whole Christian world; about how they might be able to fulfill his admonitions and commands; about how they could sincerely observe the rule they had taken upon themselves and keep it without failure; about how they should walk in all sanctity and religion before the Most High, and finally, about how their life and conduct might be an example to their neighbors by an increase of holy virtues." (1Cel XIV: 34)

Many times in the past decade I have had the distinct feeling that I was living this description in a twentieth-century context. The re-incarnation has happened countless times as members of the Third Order Regular have convened in their own congregations or in workshops or retreats in order to reflect on how we "could sincerely observe the rule [we] have taken upon [ourselves]." Like those primitive companions we have known the incredible

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__Margaret Carney OSF__, newly re-elected General Minister of the __Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God__, Whitehall, PA, is co-author of the T.O.R. Rule, and author of the soon-to-be-published __The Rule of St. Clare and the Feminine Incarnation of the Franciscan Evangelical Life__, her 1988 Antonianum Doctoral Dissertation.

Margaret is also an Instructor at __The Franciscan Institute__, St. Bonaventure University, Summer Session, and was the first Chairperson of the Spirit and Life Committee of The International Franciscan Commission, Rome, Italy.

Margaret is known throughout the English-speaking world as both the message and the messenger of a vibrant re-discovery of TOR life and rule.

gift of seeing our Rule and Life approved by Pope John Paul II after years of work. We have been thrust into a critical examination of the motives and means by which we live our particular aspect of the franciscan life as this text becomes more and more central to our identity and consciousness. What have we learned as we have searched individually, corporately and globally for the answers to the very questions our ancestors were asking during that stay in Orte seven centuries ago?

A Communitarian Vocation

First of all I would suggest that we have learned something crucial about the communitarian nature of our franciscan vocation. Even as we have struggled with both the power and the inadequacy of language, (terms such as *fraternity/sisterhood, evangelical life, minority* have not always translated easily) we have recognized the compelling centrality of relational spirituality for us. The very nature of the Rule Project enabled us little by little to grope our ways towards that realization.

Various cooperative attempts to formulate contemporary understandings of the Third Order Regular vocation began as early as 1965 when the French and Belgian Third Order Regular sisterhoods began their work on the text. The next fifteen years were to witness a variety of such national and international collaborations. Following the Assisi assemblies of 1976 and 1979 it became increasingly clear that separate initiatives promoting the composition of a new Rule had produced a range of responses and developed a new critical and energetic sense of identity for franciscans of the penitential tradition. It was equally clear that the separate initiatives had also produced separation. Adherents of one or another project, one or another national identity, one or another historical interpretation often found themselves at loggerheads in attempting to resolve differences. (An excellent summary of this evolution will be found in Raphael Pazzelli's *The Franciscan Sisters: Outlines of History and Spirituality* soon to be published in English by the University of Steubenville Press.)

With each new stage in the evolution of the text ultimate resolution of difficulties emerged in reponse to prayerful and disciplined engagement of numerous participants in the various commissions. When the complete history of the project is told at some future date, it will be replete with "little flowers" depicting individual sisters and brothers who came to moments of conviction along the way. The dawning of these moments brought increasing light to bear on the complexities of the work. Even though it is possible to look back and see extraordinary talents emerging in certain persons' contributions, it is equally evident that the final product was always the culmination of a communal effort and discernment.

I doubt that any one member of the original work group would deny that while each was assigned specific charges at various moments in the progress of our task, all of the work, in all of its parts was truly the achievement of a community that reflected on the "working of the Holy Spirit" as found in life experiences of vocation as well as in authentic sources and historical analyses. (Members of the group responsible for the final redaction of the text were: Sister Margaret Carney, USA; Br. Jean-Francois Godet, Belgium; †Fr. Thaddeus Horgan, USA; Sister Ignatia Gomes, India; Sister Marianne Jungbluth, Belgium; Sister Marie Benoit Lucbernet, France; Sister Maria Luisa Piva, Brazil; Sister Honoria Montalvo, Columbia.

An abiding "amazing grace" gradually drew this group of individuals from several continents and cultures into a community rooted in an indescribable experience of God's favor which in every age, as Mary foretold, is poured out upon the poor, the hungry, and those of low estate.

When Francis directed prayer upon prayer to the Trinity, he addressed himself to the Community of life and love that is the source of All. When Francis discovered the gift of brothers and sisters as a source of this same goodness, he discerned therein a manifestation of this most intriguing mystery. In placing this rootedness in fraternity at the center of his scheme of things he intuitively placed a Trinitarian understanding of human reality within the grasp of all who would come later into this way of evangelical life. The Rule itself is testimony to the necessity of community for fullness of revelation to be heard, understood and assimilated in wisdom and charity.

A New Historical Consciousness

The second reality that manifested itself in the progression of this work was the necessity of re-examining our ways of teaching and writing franciscan history. It has become clear that enormous amounts of work wait to be done in order to provide adequate materials on the development of the Third Order in both its religious and secular forms and the history of the Second Order. Related to this is a need to examine the evolution of franciscan women as a topic in itself. This effort needs to be undertaken in such a way that the lives and contributions of franciscan women will be made accessible in studies that will emphasize common threads of spirituality and history without segmenting consciousness artificially by insisting on too great a demarcation between the women of the Second and Third Orders. Each Order needs its particular chronicles to be organized and documented for a wider reading public. At the same time, attention to lessons learned in the contemporary woman's movement will demonstrate the necessity among franciscan women to approach these tasks in a spirit of solidarity, not one of separation and competition.

Let it be said as well, that there is an urgency to giving recognition to the particular history of the congregations of brothers who hold a unique and indispensable place in the Third Order family. At the moment there are — such communities. In the existence of these fraternities of lay men we find modern mirrors of the aspirations of the early franciscan movement. Some of these congregations are facing a serious decline in numbers. In developing nations new brotherhoods are being formed. Attention to the importance of this expression of our charism is a common responsibility. Support and encouragement for new foundations should be of interest to all. Collaboration and communion with those of longer standing is an important aspect of franciscan mutuality.

The work involved in these three commitments to expand our knowledge of the Second and Third Orders, franciscan women and the Third Order brotherhoods is of almost inconceivable scope. Until it is done, however, our understanding of the manifold ways in which the franciscan charism draws breath will be limited. The great danger of such limitation is its power to abort the imaginative fecundity necessary to carry our vocation into the next millenium.

An International Structure

The third reality that emerges out of the Rule project and the Rule's promulgation is the necessity of creating and sustaining regional, national and international linkages of Third Order Regular franciscans. Some of the most painful experiences of the long journey to completion of the new text resulted from the lack of any previous communication among the hundreds of separate TOR institutes. The years between 1976 and 1982 were filled with experiences of misunderstanding and tensions created by the simple fact of forging a path through a communications wilderness. When one considers that never in our history had there been an attempt to create a global consultation of the Third Order Regular, the success of the effort borders on the truly miraculous. In 1985 we succeeded in forming a permanent International franciscan Conference of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular. Thus the work preceding the Rule which included the effort to communicate with one another in our Order for the first time in history has been translated into a permanent structure.

This organization has since celebrated a major assembly on the theme of the franciscan contribution to the renewal of the planet, peace and service to the poor. Prior to this assembly (Assisi, 1989) the IFC-TOR gave the first international endorsement needed to begin the work for the Franciscan NGO at the UN. Thus, our new TOR organization is demonstrating a capability to unite us in major initiatives for developing our self-understanding and translating that into global mission.

This power to expand and, in that expansion, to touch lives across continents is a new fact of franciscan existence for those with eyes to see and ears to hear.

Continuing Educational Needs

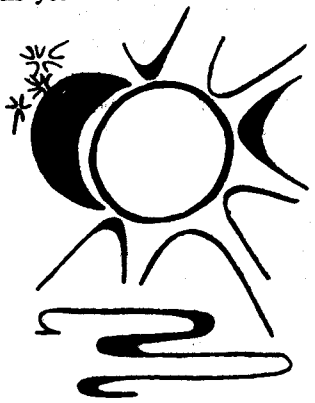
Much has been done in the efforts to provide adequate and engaging experience in initial and continuing formation programs on this Rule. The fact remains that in each country there are congregations that opted, for various reasons, not to make this education a priority. And there remain entire countries where a poverty of resources and communication technology make the efforts to do this work nearly impossible. Another ten years will not be enough to allow all who desire some education/formation experience to help internalize the text to achieve their goals completely. A whole new field of communication is also opening before us with the emergence of the religious orders of Eastern Europe, most of whom were prevented from cooperating in the consultation of 1982.

We also need to develop commentaries that allow for different cultural and ecclesial perspectives on the Rule and Life text to be articulated and disseminated. We lack, so far, a reading of the text from the vantage point of liberation theology. We lack an Asian perspective in written form, although the Franciscan Institute of Asia has provided admirable leadership in offering seminars on the text. In Africa, where young members are often numerous, few directors of formation have had direct contact with the sources they need. In the summer of 1991, the IFC-TOR did sponsor a very successful program for formators from Third World countries to begin to close this gap. The Federation of the USA pioneered in the innovative "Roots and Wings" seminars that were replicated hundreds of times throughout congregations. Today, however, additional groups need resources and models to use for initial and continuing formation programs of their own.

As religious women and men of the Northern Hemisphere face a new century, we acknowledge that this is a moment of transformation for religious life in our cultures. Recent research sponsored in the U.S. by LCWR and CMSM offer a great deal of data and analytical narrative to help us discern trends that seem to offer paths into future models of religious life and ministry. How can we allow our Rule and Life to speak

to this effort to forge new models and mentalities that will allow the emergence of a future religious life in a world labeled, post-modern and post-Christian? What is the meaning of the fact that we have retrieved a source that roots us in seven centuries of evangelical life and that it is providing a basis for global connectedness as we enter into this uncharted phase of development?

When I entered my Third Order Regular congregation thirty-three years ago, my world of franciscan meaning was circumscribed by the small community of sisters who taught me, the energetic young Capuchins who ministered to local youth, and the occasional friar retreat director who reminded us of our lofty ideals with greater or lesser success each year. (Not a bad circumscription at that!) Today my world — and my community's — includes franciscans from every part of the U.S. and many other international franciscan friends as well. That this is the result of extraordinary opportunity and God's gift I do not deny. But I also insist that it is sign and symbol of the possibility of becoming a family whose boundaries become more and more inclusive with each generation. This power to expand and, in that expansion, to touch lives across continents is a new fact of franciscan existence for those with eyes to see and ears to hear. I believe that the courage to dream of a new Rule began that expansion. I believe that the courage to accept the task of writing and approving that Rule encouraged and enfleshed that expansion. I believe that the lived experience of making that Rule the focus of contemplative faith and the matrix of ministerial choices will continue to create a new world of franciscan meaning. Francis recommended from his death-bed that we seek what is "ours" to do. Clare reminded us that this immense gift is something we receive daily (Cl. Test 2-11). Ours it is, then, to write our own page of franciscan history, to live in the happiness of re-founding and re-weaving this vocation and handing it on the better for our lives and our labor to generations yet to come. □



"Hold Back Nothing" . . . Remembering Our Brother EpORD 29

DENIS SENNETT S.A. & JOANNE BRAZINSKI, O.S.F.

At the end of Francis of Assisi's own life he declared to his followers: "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours."

As we celebrate this 10th anniversary of the TOR Rule these words seem to echo in our hearts from two of our brothers — Francis and Thaddeus.

Thaddeus Horgan, S.A. along with Margaret Carney was a member of the International Franciscan Commission and formed part of the work group to re-write the Third Order Rule. After that monumental task he gave much time to workshops and conferences sharing with others about the newly revised Rule.

His untimely death on April 19, 1990, left many in a state of shock and disbelief. In many of us questions flourished: "Why? Why now? He was doing so much to help our understanding of the Rule. How could this be?" To all of the questioners and to each of us, it seems that Thaddeus replies: "I have done what is mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours." Somehow Thaddeus' death seemed a catalyst for many to stop and realize more profoundly the challenge of incarnating the values of the TOR Rule, to embrace the Gospel, and to be enthusiastic and excited about doing "what is ours to do."

Denis Sennett S.A. *is Archivist/Records Manager for the* ***Friars of The Atonement,*** *Thaddeus Horgan's congregation.* ***Joanne Brazinski*** *is a Whitehall PA Franciscan, and a member of the General Council while directing the Office of Fraternity and Minority. As an original member of the Franciscan Federation's "Roots and Wings" Seminar Team, Joanne shared in the scholarship and enthusiasm of Thaddeus in helping us shape our new awareness of the charism.*

Matthew 10:8 can simply summarize Thaddeus' contribution to the Rule, to the Franciscan Order and to the world: "The gift you have been given, give as a gift."

Those who knew Thaddeus, knew the Gospel was important to him. It seems as if the passage from Matthew 10:8 can simply summarize Thaddeus' contribution to the Rule, to the Franciscan Order and to the world: "The gift you have been given, give as a gift." On this anniversary of the TOR Rule it seems as if Thaddeus invites each of us to "give graciously what we have been given" to form the unique mosaic that we call the Franciscan evangelical life.

Thaddeus indeed gave the gift he had been given without charge. He was brother, animator, fun-lover, Gospel oriented. His work on the writing of the revised Third Order Rule is just one example of this. He brought to the work committee his energy, insight and deep sensitivity to the Gospel life and to the ecumenical movement. This latter gift was his to offer because of wide personal experience in ecumenical ministry.

Thaddeus' life as an Atonement Friar was one of proclamation and reconciliation. He saw, felt and understood the misunderstandings which not only caused disunity among Christians but also, in some cases among Franciscans as well. He always tried to bring together, in his ministry and life, proclamation of the Gospel and a reconciliation within today's world. This gift was Thaddeus' to offer because he lived the experience of listening, sharing and praying with God's children of all faiths, which gave him a sensitivity and an insight to offer the Franciscan Federation guidance and direction in preparing the TOR Rule.

The Gospel revealed to Thaddeus that all creation has intrinsic harmony; the proclamation of the Gospel meant a participation in the celebration of this harmony. As we thank God for these 10 years of living the newly revised TOR Rule, we say:

> Thanks to God for the gift of Thaddeus, thanks to God for the gifts we have been given, thanks to God for the challenge of our Franciscan evangelical life.

"To Desire One Thing Alone" (Reg.B.10) The Holy Spirit and the TOR Rule

MARGARET ELETTA GUIDER, O.S.F.

On December 8, 1992, the tenth anniversary of the ratification of the **Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis** will be commemorated throughout the world. This occasion gives us reason to pause and reconsider once again the initial questions that inspired and guided the process of renewal, namely: **Where have we been? Where are we going?** and **Who are we?** In giving ourselves over to these questions, we continue to grow in our understanding of how the particular gifts which the Spirit has bestowed upon us are given not only for our own renewal, but for the face of the earth.

At the present time, we live in a world in which the image and works of the Holy Spirit engage the religious imagination of ever-increasing numbers of Christians. Pentecostalism and various forms of charismatic renewal give particular expression to this phenomenon as do communities of faith endeavoring to behold the feminine face of God. As Franciscans, our own expressed desire to have the Spirit of God at work within us, serves as an indicator of our own predilection for the Font of Life and Fire of Love. It is not surprising to find divine inspiration, grace, revelation, the virtues, gifts and beatitudes, to be prominent and recurrent themes in the works of Franciscan theologians and spiritual writers, including those of our own time.

***Margaret Eletta Guider** is a Joliet, IL Franciscan, completing her ThD degree at **Harvard Divinity School** and teaching at the **Weston School of Theology** as Assistant Professor of Religion and Society. Meg is consultant to the **Build With Living Stones** international study on the franciscan missionary charism, and also a member of the **Spirit and Life Committee** of the Franciscan Federation.*

As we consider the significance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Third Order Regular, we find that the **Rule** informs and enriches our understanding.

In accord with the **TOR Rule**, we discover the Holy Spirit is our reward for doing good and the means by which we are united to Christ. The Spirit is the Holy Paraclete, a beautiful and admirable Spouse, the object of our affections and the reason for our labors. The Spirit participates in our creation into the divine image and likeness and seeks to abide within us. The Spirit fills us with blessing and provides us with the words that are spirit and life.

In essence, the **Rule** highlights for us the images and attributes of the Holy Spirit that have been central to the Church's teachings since the early councils of Nicea and Constantinople. Though, in and of themselves, the images and attributes are constants, it is important to be conscious of the meanings and nuances that are particular to our own time and experience.

. . . meanings given to longstanding images and attributes at the close of the twentieth century may not be identical to that which were given in the thirteenth century, much less the fourth century or the first.

Shaped as we are by the theology of the Holy Spirit, as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, we must grapple with the fact that the meanings given to longstanding images and attributes at the close of the twentieth century may not be identical to that which were given in the thirteenth century, much less the fourth century or the first.

Given the diversity that exists within the worldwide Franciscan family, a common preunderstanding of images can no longer be presumed. For example, our own essential difference as women and men, our very embodiment and the human experience relative to it, affect our preunderstanding of a concept such as spouse, in ways that are fundamentally distinct.

A Consideration of Context

As we attempt a foundational understanding of the Holy Spirit that builds upon both tradition and experience, it is essential to reflect upon the ways in which the Holy Spirit is at work not only within us, but within

the **TOR Rule** as well. To this end, the **Commentary**[1] is an invaluable resource for coming to terms with the interpretation and application of the **TOR Rule** in diverse cultural and sub-cultural contexts. The following values are perceived to have particular significance. They include: **metanoia** (art. 2), **vocation and inspiration** (art. 10), the **Greatest Commandment** (art. 23), and, **beatitudes and martyrdom** (art. 30).

Implicit in the value of **metanoia** is an acknowledgement of the Spirit of truth, the light of consciences, who makes her way into the human heart through human history. The saving power of the Holy Spirit reaches into the unfathomable depths of the human conscience. As deep calls unto deep, **metanoia**, the experience of conversion and forgiveness is accomplished.[2] Not only is it an experience of **turning away** from evil and **turning toward** good, it is also an experience of **turning with** the Holy Spirit. Building on this process of conversion, **vocation and inspiration** are understood to be expressions of communion and confidence. Not only do we turn with the Spirit of God, but we are **joined with** this Spirit in faith and faithfulness. Such fidelity manifests itself in **single-heartedness**, as the influence of the Paraclete abounds and the desire to will one thing finds its fulfillment in the freedom to love and to serve. An undivided heart makes it possible to **see with** the Spirit, to create an inner space for **contemplation**. Within this space, the **greatest commandment** is given roots and wings as we attune ourselves not only to the Spirit of God, but to her holy manner of working. Alert to the exigencies of the Reign of God, blessedness and courageous witness, the **beatitudes and martyrdom**, confirm that the Holy Spirit is truly at work within us and among us.

Conclusion

In and of themselves, these considerations are but a staring point for reflection. They are indicators of possible directions for ongoing inquiry and investigation. Above all, they serve to remind us of the significance of fostering in ourselves and in our communities the desire for one thing alone: the Spirit of God at work in us.

Endnotes

[1]See Margaret Carney, OSF and Thaddeus Horgan, SA, **The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis and Commentary** (Pittsburgh: Franciscan Federation, 1983).

[2]See John Paul II, **Dominum et Vivificantem** (The Holy Spirit in the Church and the World), art. 45.

The Third Order Regular Rule and Franciscan Spirituality

THADDEUS HORGAN, S.A.

"Now that we have a new Rule, will that change our franciscan spirituality?" some are asking. The answer is "no." The Rule Text puts into sharper focus and clarifies just what our spirituality is in this post-Vatican II era. Yet it is written in Francis' own words, a definite mark that our spirituality, like all spirituality, is as it always has been: a way to God. That way, however, is distinctive. Spiritualities are not essentially different, only distinctive. Franciscan spirituality is the life-process of applying to ourselves Francis' way of encountering and experiencing God. For Francis God is known eminently in Christ, the Christ of the gospel who announces repentence and peace for all. To know God is a gift of the Spirit (hence "spirituality").

Because of our call by the Spirit to be franciscan, Francis' life, example and experience are most important. This is why, it seems, Francis went to such great pains in the **Testament** to tell us of them (Test. 1-23). Like Francis we are to embrace charism, God's gift of insight into the mystery of salvation and God's grace enabling us to appreciate and respond to it in a threefold way: personally, according to the spirit of our particular congregation, and in our current circumstances. For us in the Penitential,

*As the height of intense interest and study on the TOR Rule, **Sister Ann Carville OSF**, as Executive Director of the Franciscan Federation, began a series of PROPOSITO'S for the NEWSLETTER of the Franciscan Federation. This one by **Thaddeus Horgan S.A.**, co-author of the new Rule, was the very first one.*

As a member of the Work Group of seven international franciscans, Thaddeus' zeal for presenting the Rule's values touched thousands of franciscans worldwide. His untimely death, April 19, 1990, left both an ache and a legacy in the telling of the Rule's story. It is a privilege to present this special contribution to that story from 1982.

"To know God, to adore God, to serve God in true conversion of heart."

or Third Order Tradition this particularly means responding to the Lord's call to be turned totally and continuously to the Lord and to neighbor by following in Christ's footprints as Francis did **but** to do so in our way, today.

The prologue of the text focuses on the charism of **conversion** or **metanoia**. Its first two chapters further clarify it. And article two explicitly spells out the practical meaning of continuous conversion which is the very center of the gospel message. This is done in the words of Francis (RNB 23:4). Three expressions in that passage summarize the whole Rule as well as our franciscan spirituality. The new Rule then calls us to a renewed fidelity to the spirit of Francis. Unfortunately, neither time nor space allows for an extended exposition of that spirituality. Therefore, through a schema — using Francis' three expressions about our charism — let us begin to reflect and apply our spirituality as the Rule projects.

Francis' three expressions are: "...**eum cognoverunt et adoraverunt et ei servierunt in poenitentia**..." "To know God, to adore God, to serve God in true conversion of heart."

A) **TO KNOW GOD** for Francis is to be open to true faith and to our loving compassionate God (RNB 23:7; II Ep. Fid 63-71) who loves the world so much that He sent his only Son. And they sent their Spirit to make us perfectly one in God and with one another. (cf RNB 23:1-7) Being one with God is only possible in Christ (Ep. Fid II:48-53) So we must put on Christ. All franciscans do so by assimilating the values and attitudes (Phil. 2:5) of the Lord. We penitential franciscans literally and throughout life "Turn to God and believe the good news." (Mk. 1:15) We do what Christ did in His life of presence to God and neighbor. Like Francis, we make ourselves experience Christ and who Christ was because of his values and attitudes. This is all possible because Christ experienced our humanity totally through the Incarnation. For Francis we do this, as the Lord did, by adoring God and serving our neighbor.

B) **TO ADORE GOD** is more than a form of prayer for Franciscans. Following Christ's example, adoration for Francis was the total investment of self, the total handing over of self to God, and the total commitment of self to God's purposes. Francis recognized that God's greatest glory

is the obedience of Christ (Ph. 2:5-12). God's will is humanity's salvation. For this Christ emptied himself and became obedient. To do what is salvific, then, is God's greatest glory. According to Francis there is only one way to be salvific: the way of Christ in his humanity. In his humanity and through human experience, Jesus taught his followers how to be turned genuinely to God. This is discipleship: listening and learning from the Lord how we are enabled to be present to God and to be filled with God's life. Francis' scriptural reflections taught him that to adore the Lord is a total life-style, the life-style of Jesus in his humanity, a life-style characterized by prayer, poverty, minority and fraternity.

1) **Prayer** is consciously being with God so God can be fully with us in our experience, and with all humanity in theirs. (Mt. 10:37-42) Adoration and praise, the substance of prayer for Francis, is our thankful and loving response to the love, the care and the goodness of God for us (the pardon, provision and protection themes of the Lord's Prayer) which are expressed in the paschal mystery now Eucharistically celebrated, in all of salvation history, in creation, and in our relationships with God's people (II Ep. Fid. 61-62). To live this prayerfulness is a) to "recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration" (ICel.84); b) to do all one can to transform our faith in the reality of our unity with the Father in Christ by the Spirit into an experience. This is done by devoted prayer in which one remains open to the surprises of God who continually reveals his wonders in Creation, the Church and in the circumstances of life! c) to join with Christ in the rhythm of his church's daily priestly intercessory prayer, (The Liturgy of the Hours) and to do these things with purity of heart and a sense of total consecration to God.

2) **Poverty** is the commitment to assimilate values revealed by God rather than those of this world (Col. 3:1-3). It requires as it did of Christ and Francis that we live as pilgrims here, emptied of worldly value systems, and captured by those proclaimed by the Lord in the beatitudes (Mt. 5:1-10). Status, manipulative self-seeking power, and wealth that is greed or deprivating to God's people, we reject as the Lord did. We live simply (ITim 6:8) having "enough food and sufficient clothing; with these we are content." We are to use well this world's goods to fulfill our needs, the needs of one another and the other poor, especially the helpless (RNB 2:4).

3) **Minority**. Because prayer implies that we realistically accept and gratefully acknowledge God's plan for the world's salvation, and because poverty implies our acceptance of God's values for living salvifically and God's will that we use well the gifts in this world, Christian life is equated with dependence on God. The attitude necessary for a healthy dependence on God, Francis well knew, is minority. In one sense it is interiorized

prayerfulness and lived poverty because it is childlikeness. Biblical littleness is the one thing necessary for entrance into the Kingdom (Mk. 10:15, Lk. 18:17, Mt. 18:13, Jn. 3). An aspect of Francis' insight into the gospel was to note that the other qualities of gospel life are counsels. Childlikeness is an absolute (cf Mt. 19:14 vis-a-vis the rest of that chapter). The childlike spontaneously come to the Lord (Mt. 11:29, Jn. 6:44); remain with the Lord (Mk. 8:34) and experience what their destiny in the Lord is. (Eph. 5:1-2) The adult experience of childlikeness is the joyous awareness that one has been and is the object of the pure love and favor of God. Possessing this littleness is total conversion, the changed mind and heart that is the result of knowing the God who loves us in Christ and sees in us what Christ is to God, Child (Beloved Son).

Minority also is seeing in ourselves who Christ is "for us" because we are "in Christ." Jesus is the servant of God sent into the world showing us how to be gentle, meek, humble, compassionate, peaceable, patient and singlehearted. Like Christ the attitude of minority impels us to love the world, the "place where" of our redemption. It is where we work out our redemption and do God's redeeming will for and with our brothers and sisters. Minority also infers going into the word as efficacious servants of redemption bringing good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom to captives, giving sight to the blind, setting the downtrodden free and announcing the Lord's year of favor (i.e. the self-conscious of Christ, cf. Lk. 4:17-19).

4) Fraternity for franciscans is life together, but lived in the consciousness that we are gathered in the Lord's name (Mt. 18:20) Jesus is in our midst as BROTHER (II Ep. Fid.56). Our fraternity is a sign of the Church, Christ's Body, within the Church for the world. Francis' notion of fraternity is identical to Vatican II's expectation that religious life itself should be a sign of Christ's presence among us. (Mt. 28:20). We are called also to live out the gospel with those called to share life with us (Jn. 15:12ff; RNB11,5). This must happen before we can bring Christ to others. Our fraternity then is itself a particular and special witness to the Church and a source of efficacious ministry. It ought to make credible what we proclaim and call people to, namely, to be the Church in the world. The Church is God's believing, praying, worshipping, and serving community in this world preparing the way for the Kingdom. Fidelity to fraternity as well as fidelity to intercessory prayer for the Church and world are the signs of our fidelity to the Church.

The Rule Text further points out in chapter 2 that fraternity is or should be an ongoing formation experience. **Metanoia** is ongoing. The presence of Christ among us is ongoing. Fraternity then must be the same. For Francis, fraternity is never ideal, but always concrete. His Admonitions

show how practical Francis views our gospel living together. Fraternity shows how down to earth franciscan spirituality ought to be.

C) **TO SERVE GOD** is to live continuously and concretely God's law of love (I Jn. 2:3 ff). In our tradition, this has meant doing the works of charity and living fraternal life. In both instances, it requires that we do justice and be instruments of peace, effecting reconciliation with God, with one another and among all God's people.

The gospel call to free men and women from every form of alienation (Lk. 4:16-22) so all can realize their God-willed destiny to be fully brothers and sisters to Jesus our Brother and to one another is our shared Franciscan service to God. This is seeking first the Kingdom of God and its justice. This is possessing the attitudes and doing the deeds of gospel life concretely (Mt. 5:10) (RNB 16:10-12). The Franciscan attitude toward establishing the justice of the Gospel requires deeds — or as one says today — involvement. Think of Francis' love of the Cross. Think of the meaning of the Cross on which Jesus embraces all the inhumanity and alienation men and women can muster. Think of Christ establishing our peace and reconciliation out of obedience to the Father. He overcame all inhumanity and poured our new life on humanity. Grasping and being this with our entire selves through repentence and lived gospel values along with doing what is renewing, reconciling and restoring among men and women is franciscan spirituality. It is integral gospel living.

While it is true that we each may not be graced to be and do all our franciscan penitential calling and charism summons us to, we are, by the fact of vocation, able to be committed totally and constantly to realize within and among ourselves the giftedness God gives us individually and communally. That we must do realizing that there is a variety of gifts but one Spirit. This is the basis of that mutuality and sharing that should characterize our lives. This is the basis of that joyful humility which recognizes God's gifts in self and one's brothers or sisters, gifts for upbuilding the Body of Christ, the Church, in our world. Holding fast to, clinging to and assimilating into the reality of our lives the words, the life, the teachings, the deeds and the holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ (RNB 22:41) is how Francis put it. The proposed Rule uses Francis' words throughout and attempts to present his inspired way to God through Christ in the Spirit faithfully yet briefly, thoroughly but reflectively. This is thoroughly franciscan for we are renewalists today in an age of renewal. We begin anew, as we should, with ourselves. □

"That They Might Give Witness" (Mission as Third Order Regular Franciscan)

ARLENE MC DONOUGH, O.S.F.

> "Let the sisters and brothers glorify the Lord
> in all they do. 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?
>
> TOR Rule 9:29

We wait and God comes to us. The world has seen peace and prosperity, strife and starvation. Generations have come and gone. People have experienced life, joy, struggle, reconciliation, fear, hope. Their lives have been touched, graced, inspired by a God who comes and enters into their world. They know their God as one who brings deliverance, healing, comfort, life. And at some precise moment in time, this God, who-is-for-us, comes to us, as one of us. God comes to us in Jesus.

We are frequently summoned by Isaiah who speaks to us of hope and promise, lambs and lions, a God who yearns to be with us and who is called Emamnuel. In the twelfth chapter of the book of the prophet Isaiah we are addressed: "Give thanks to Yahweh, call God's name aloud. Proclaim God's deeds to the people, declare God's name sublime. Sing of Yahweh, for he has done marvellous things, let them be made known to the whole world." Isaiah 12:4-5

As Third Order Regular Franciscans in 1992, how do we attempt to "proclaim God's marvellous deeds to the whole world"? As we approach

---

***Arlene Mc Donough OSF** is a member of the General Council of the **Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia**. Her participation in the first North American Seminar of **Build With Living Stones**, 1988 in Aston, PA, resulted in this reflection on Mission as TOR Franciscan. Arlene's theological studies and effectiveness in pastoral ministry is evidenced in this approach to MISSION.*

Our awareness of mission has been evolving and expanding, as we have attempted over recent decades to clarify our identity and charism, to develop our mission statements, to rediscover TOR values and to live faithfully our daily lives.

the twenty-first century how do we say to the world that God is "great in the midst of us," and is called Emmanuel?

Our awareness of mission has been evolving and expanding, as we have attempted over recent decades to clarify our identity and charism, to develop our mission statements, to rediscover TOR values and to live faithfully our daily lives.

We need now to respond to the call to deepen our sense of what it means to be missionary, for that is what we are. It has been said that "to be a Christian, to be a Franciscan, is to be. . . in mission, to be a missionary." Walbert Buhlmann, a Capuchin missioner, holds that "even if missions have come to an end, mission continues."

We will explore the meaning of mission by using a simple three-step tool. First, we will describe mission. Then we will consider the source of mission. The third step is to look at Jesus' mission.

I'd like to share an idea I borrowed from Gerald O'Collins, an Australian theologian. O'Collins wrote an article which appeared in the Christmas issue of **America** magazine in 1988. In that article he pointed out a pattern which I would like to apply in today's reflection. O'Collins sees a pattern in which **action** is followed by **witness** and witness is followed by **presence**. In Scripture O'Collins traces God's revelation first in creative **Activity** then in the **Witness** of the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures, and finally in the **Presence** of Jesus among us. **Action, Witness, Presence.** God acted to share love for and with all creation. The Hebrew Scriptures tell of a God who acts in behalf of those who wander in strange lands, acts in behalf of those who need to be saved, those who are in captivity, those without influence.

As centuries passed the prophets recalled God's involvement in history and **witnessed** to the saving power of God. The prophets unraveled and

explained the meaning of God's love for the people. They **witnessed** to God's promise to save and restore those who believe.

Action, Witness, Presence. The gospels tell us of Jesus who by his Presence reveals the power of God. Jesus is drawn by the needs of his contemporaries, and by his Presence ushers in the reign of God.

> Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was to come, he gave them this answer. The coming of the kingdom of God does not admit of observation and there will be no one to say, Look here! Look there! For, you must know, the kingdom of God is among you.
>
> Luke 17:20-21

Can't this same progression from Action to Witness to Presence be traced in our general pattern of life? In the enthusiasm of youth we invested energy in the acting out of our convictions, doing for others. No effort demanded by ministry was too much.

Later, having acquired some experience and some time to reflect, we turned to attesting to the gospel message, explaining its meaning. Thus, bearing Witness became the method for making God known to others. We became proclaimers of the Lord.

For those who have arrived at "ripened" maturity a new way of being in mission has emerged. Haven't we grappled with the question of "being" versus "doing"? The importance of Presence has begun to be recognized and valued.

Missionary experience and praxis have been going through an evolution similar to the pattern just described. It is this evolution which we address today.

1. **The Meaning of Mission**

> To be in mission is to enable the peoples to discover that God is in our midst.

To be in mission is to be a living witness to the presence of a loving God, as Christ witnessed to the goodness of the Father (Ep Ord 9).

> What has the term "mission" meant for us in the past? How does this differ from "being in mission"?

2. **The Source of Mission**

Mission is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity. It is the mystery of God, who sent the Son into the world, testified to the Son on the cross, and raised him from the dead in the power of the Spirit. Jesus is to reveal

to humanity the mystery of God. He is to show us who God is. God takes the initiative "to send" Jesus as the great missionary of God.

The U.S. Bishops pastoral statement on the missions entitled, "To the Ends of the Earth," describes Jesus as a missioner. As God's beloved Son, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit and sent to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God... In his very person, in all that he did and said, that kingdom was already breaking into the world, (but it will be perfectly established only in the fullness of time).

Mission finds its life in the heart of the Triune God. No one knew that better than Francis of Assisi. Mission is directly related to the Trinity as a community of love, and sharing and reciprocity. If I try to look at Jesus as a missioner, what do I see?

This leads us to a third consideration of the Incarnational context of mission: Jesus' Mission: The Reign of God.

3. Jesus' Mission — The Incarnation and the Reign of God

When the Second Person of the Trinity became flesh, Jesus was sent to live among us, to be one with us. God was no longer an abstraction. Jesus, Emmanuel, God-with-us, was with us as a baby, son of a poor Jewish refugee couple who settled in Nazareth, his father was a woodworker. His neighbors knew the boy as Jeshua bar David.

The Son of a Jewish woodworker made God tangible. How does my "being in mission" enable God to come into our world?

As Jesus' awareness of his mission unfolds, it is grounded in his Jewish heritage. God is always for Israel a saving God. When the time is right Israel, and Jesus, (aware of himself as a son of Israel), believed that God's saving power will prevail and show itself in a reign characterized by gratitude, reconciliation, peace, justice and liberation. The God Jesus knows is powerful, yet immediately responsive to his people.

It is Jesus' awareness of the reign of God or kingdom of God which helps us to understand the importance of presence as the mode or method of the missioner. In a book entitled **The Biblical Foundations for Mission**, Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller call attention to the relationship of Jesus' mission and the mission of the early church.

The authors make the claim that the kingdom metaphor at its deepest level was the saving relationship between Yahweh and his people. While Israel experienced itself as chosen or favored by God, it also inherited a prophetic intuition of God's presence among the nations. That is, even though God's name was revealed to Israel, the "others," the "outsiders" might also know something of the mystery of God. Israel was to be a light to the nations.

Within the early church this conviction about God's favor toward and presence among the nations became an explicit and dominant concern.

The early church's missionary spirit was grounded in their experience of Jesus.

Senior and Stuhlmueller describe it in the following way:

> The catalyst that triggered the missionary consciousness of the early church and shaped its basic message was the person and ministry of Jesus. In him the centrifugal forces we have detected in the Old Testament reach their point of explosion; in him the worldwide perspective of early Christianity finds its source. But a careful look at the biblical data reveals that this missionary impulse did not come from Jesus of Nazareth in the form of an explicit, clean-cut, and immediate missionary program.

What then are the characteristics of Jesus' person and mission which inspired the early church's missionary impulse and so grasped the heart of Francis?

Jesus' image of God,
awareness of his heritage, and
attention to the world in which he lived
led him
— to call God "Abba"
— to give sight to the blind
— to have dinner with tax collectors
— to restore twisted bones and pick corn on the Sabbath

From within his relatively small world
he crossed boundaries
— by touching and being touched by the unclean
— by entertaining discussion with the Samaritan woman
— by claiming to be brother to all created by God

It is the **person** of **Jesus**, his teaching and action which becomes the catalyst for and the shaper of **our sense of mission as TOR franciscans**. Our inheritance from Jesus' Kingdom Ministry, according to Senior and Stuhlmueller is threefold: Jesus has given us:

An expansive image of God
An inclusive view of God's people
A positive view of human destiny
and a glimpse of life in the Reign of God,
as found in the Beatitudes.

We wait and God comes to us. The world has seen peace and prosperity, strife and starvation. Generations have come and gone. People have experienced life, joy, struggle, reconciliation, fear, hope. Their lives have been touched, graced, inspired by a God who comes and enters into their world. God comes to us in Jesus. □

Seeding a New Hope

What: The **Franciscan Federation** is piloting the first of a national series of gatherings to celebrate the **10th Anniversary of the TORule**, and nurture our Franciscan life and presence in a new millennium — to serve the Franciscan family, regionally and/or congregationally as best meets your needs.

Where: **Franciscan Center** in **Tampa, FL**

When: **October 21 - 23, 1992**
The first of a number of such events to be planned!

Cost: $125.00 complete! For fees, meals and accommodations!

How: This is a specially designed four session retreat event integrating our **Franciscan TOR charism** and the **LCWR/CMSM transformative elements of religious life** presented by a carefully selected regional team of recognized and committed Franciscan women and men.

Seeds scattered and sown

+ by reflecting on our individual and community experience of "transitus" times, and remembering the women and men that have been our inspiration.

The transformative elements

+ by addressing courageously our fears, honoring our finest hopes, and inspiring renewed confidence in our contemporary experience of the transformational elements of our vowed life:

+ **prophetic witness**
+ **contemplative attitude toward life**
+ **poor and marginalized persons as focus for ministry**
+ **spirituality of wholeness and global interconnectedness**
+ **charism and mission as sources of identity**

The Franciscan perspective

+ by considering these transformative elements in light of the evangelical life, the **TORule**, and the Franciscan charisms.

What has been given us to do

+ by networking, celebrating, and mutually dedicating our renewed energies to Franciscan life as we stand together on the threshold of a new millennium.

For INFORMATION:

Sr. Kathleen Moffatt OSF
Executive Director, Franciscan Federation
Our Lady of Angels Convent, Aston PA
19014. (215) 558-9998

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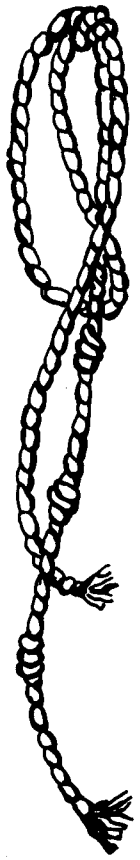
Nov. 6-8	MYSTICISM IN EVERYDAY LIFE Gabriele Uhlein, OSF
Nov. 20-22	"WINING AND DINING IN THE KINGDOM" Robert Calabrese, OFM, Cap.
Dec. 4-6	THE NERVE OF MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AND HER SUPPORT GROUP Joseph G. Donders, M.Afr.

For information write or call 215/459-4125.

OCTOBER, 1992

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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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
Mirac: Celano, Treatise on Miracles
Leg: Legend of Saint Clare
Proc: Process of Saint Clare
Fioretti: 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

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).

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

Reflection: How a Lay Sister was Led Among Ministers of the Order

JANET GIANOPOULOS

During the Lenten season in 1992, on a Sunday in New York, the lay sister from the Province's development office went to meet with the General Minister of the whole Order of Friars Minor.

The Lord led her among a handful of brothers to eat the things set before them in the friary. She was seated at the right hand of the Minister, a tall brother from Germany who now works from Rome.

Her Provincial Minister conversed with the young brothers, all in habits (she was the only one not in brown), while the General Minister, who said he was shy, quietly ate a sandwich. The sister wondered if St. Francis may have had "shy" moments. She slowly started talking with the soft-spoken Minister visitor — he had been out West, to a peace demonstration at a nuclear test site, and he told of his journey to her hometown named for St. Francis, to a church where many are fed and receive clothing. She sensed that it warmed him to talk of the poor, and said it was too bad the Minister would not be visiting our friars in Philadelphia in a forgotten neighborhood, as the poor Christ said, "I was hungry and you gave me food, naked and you clothed me." (Matt 25.)

The sister told the Minister brother that she had the fortune of going out and meeting many of the brothers in the Province. She stayed with released inmates at the friary in Buffalo and went where Christ "was in prison and you visited." One prisoner, noticing a picture of St. Francis on her shirt, had asked what the words "Pax et Bonum" meant, and it gave her great joy, in Attica prison, to say, "Peace and Good."

The sister's heart was encouraged, since the friendly brother Minister seemed filled with care about the tears of the poor. Indeed, he soon announced with energy, "I'm ready," to begin a planned interview.

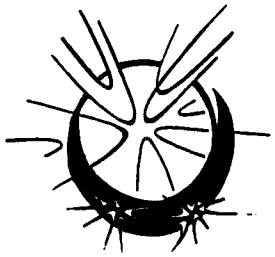
The General Minister, the General Definitor of English-speaking provinces, the Provincial Minister and the lay sister went upstairs into a room with books and pleasant sunshine and comfortable furnishings. The sister looked at the kind General Minister and said she had been looking forward to this. She silently prayed that the Holy Spirit abide here, and the spirit of holy Father Francis and the people who love him.

As questions were posed, and the man who had said he was shy seemed drawn to contemplate and answer, it gave the sister great joy. And while she had expected to speak with him alone, it came to be that the beloved Provincial Minister was also in the room, hearing his brother speak about poverty and St. Francis. Her heart sang inside, talking with the successor to St. Francis, and learned theology experts, and she hoped the Provincial knew she wished him peace.

When the Provincial announced that the hour had come, he and the Definitor left the room. The time had been generous but brief and the sister knew she would miss the tall visitor, who seemed invigorated as he paused in the sunny room. He took her hands in his large ones and a great warmth flowed; and she said he was truly the successor to St. Francis. She wondered how many would share communion and solidarity with this brother, whose order of St. Francis serves a hungry world of bombed churches and people's daily struggles for survival, where many institutions are shelter from simple needs. She was touched by his peace and simplicity and knew he would be in her prayers.

When they walked outside, the day, and her newly-met brother, seemed like special gifts. She could see more clearly how someone could give up the world with Francis. How holy and beloved, how peaceful, delightful, lovable it is to have a brother like this!

In praise of Christ. Amen.
Janet Gianopoulos April 5, 1992



Art for this issue by
Sr. Marie Monica Borden, O.S.F.

Celam IV and The New Evangelization

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

It is nearly impossible to exaggerate the challenges facing the bishops of Latin America as they meet this October in Santo Domingo for their Fourth General Conference (known for short as CELAM IV). Pope John Paul has established the theme of the meeting: NEW EVANGELIZATION — HUMAN PROMOTION — CHRISTIAN CULTURE. "Jesus Christ yesterday, today and always (Heb. 13:8)."

The bishops will meet precisely as pastors of their people, and not as experts in sociology or the economy or even in theology. To fulfill their role as pastors they will need the help of experts in those fields, as Vatican II recommended.[1] The input of theologians and sociologists at the last two general conferences of the Latin American episcopate (at Medellin in 1968 and at Puebla in 1979) proved extremely valuable, just as did the contributions of the periti at Vatican II. Obviously, to fulfill their role, theologians and other experts need to be guaranteed their "lawful freedom of inquiry, of thought and of expression."[2] The first Synod of Bishops (1967) saw "the need to recognize the freedom belonging to theologians so they can carry on new research and perfect the traditional patrimony of truth." Pope Paul VI gave his own personal assurances about this when he addressed the first meeting of the International Theological Commission in 1969. He even spoke of "the two primacies (sic): that of scholarship and that of authority" both of which "support the faith in different ways."

Readers of The CORD are already familiar with the important and informative articles on the "New Evangelization" by Fr. Charles Finnegan. This particular article provides us with the necessary background for understanding and appreciating the importance of the October meeting of the Latin American bishops in Santo Domingo. With typical objectivity Fr. Charles describes the history of the tensions which will be operative at this meeting which has powerful implications for the future of the church in Latin America.

The Antecedents

The Latin American bishops have a long tradition of meeting to discuss common concerns. In the colonial period three provincial councils were held in Peru and four in Mexico. In 1899 Pope Leo XIII convoked the Latin American bishops to a continental plenary council (the first in the history of the church). This meeting, held in Rome, was attended by thirteen archbishops and forty bishops, and dealt mostly with questions of ecclesiastical discipline.

In 1955, on the occasion of the international Eucharistic Congress held in Rio de Janeiro, the Latin American bishops met "in conference." Pope Pius XII convoked the meeting and appointed the Vatican's Cardinal Piazza as president, who affirmed that the "conference had no precedent or anything similar to it in the contemporary church." In his written message to the assembly, the Pope encouraged the bishops towards a greater unity and coordination of their efforts. He also encouraged them to "adopt new methods in their apostolate and open the way for new paths . . . to better adapt themselves to the demands of the present times." The Pope called attention to the importance of the lay apostolate, and ended his message by reminding the bishops of the importance of christian social action, absolutely necessary "because of its intimate relation with religious life."

Very importantly for the future of the Church in Latin America and beyond, it was decided at this meeting to create CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano = The Latin American Episcopal Council). This Council is not to be confused with the Latin American episcopal Conferences. The Council, at the service of the episcopal conferences, is composed of representatives of those same national conferences (chosen for two years), with the following duties: to study common problems of interest to the Church in Latin America; to coordinate pastoral activities; and, most importantly, to prepare the future conferences of the Latin American episcopate when these would be convoked by the Holy See. After consulting the bishops, Pius XII chose Bogota as the seat of the General Secretariat even though a relative majority of the Latin American bishops indicated Rome as their preference.

The creation of CELAM was due to the initiative of Latin America's most progressive bishops, such as Chile's Manuel Larrain of Talca, and Brazil's Helder Camara, then auxiliary bishop in Rio. They received strong Vatican support and encouragement (absolutely essential for the success of this venture) from the then Monsignor Montini, later Pope Paul VI.[3]

1968: Medellin — A New Way of "Being Church"

CELAM prepared the Second General Conference of the Latin American bishops, held in Medellin in 1968. This assembly was surely one of the most important ecclesial gatherings of modern times; its influence was felt far beyond Latin America. The assembly consisted of some 130 voting members, the majority of them bishop-delegates of Latin America's 22 episcopal conferences. Latin America's Confederation of Religious (CLAR) was represented by 13 voting members.

1968, the last year of the post-conciliar euphoria, was a time of great tension in the church, especially in Latin America. Military dictatorships were stomping on human rights, especially in Brazil. The ideology of national security, thanks to North American dominance, was imposed on entire peoples with frightful consequences, and Central America was largely controlled by the extreme right. In response, guerilla movements began to surface, and Camillo Torres, "the guerilla-priest," had died in combat two years earlier.

In such an historical context, the preparations for Medellin could only be fraught with strain. There was a good deal of tension between CAL (the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Latin America, established in 1958) and CELAM. The Vatican wanted tight control, and required its approval for the themes to be discussed, the presenters and experts, the time to be devoted to each theme and its discussion. At the last minute, four experts chosen by CELAM were denied Vatican approval.

The Medellin assembly took place then in an historical context of perplexity, and in some quarters, even of pessimism. In spite of that, the Conference injected new vitality into much of the Latin American church, and gave that church a very new direction. Its "Message To The Peoples of Latin America" calls for a "new evangelization . . . to obtain a faith that is transparent and committed." Thus the expression "new evangelization," used countless times by Pope John Paul II, was first used by the Latin American bishops at Medellin.

An early address by Alfonso Gregory, a Brazilian priest — sociologist, helped focus the Conference. He proposed that when considering the alarming phenomenon of violence that so plagued Latin America, the bishops should consider not only guerilla movements and "marxist" uprisings, but also the very real and savage violence that was so socially acceptable: the feudal-capitalist system that prevailed throughout much of Latin America, concentrating all the wealth in the hands of a few while millions lived in dehumanizing poverty. Gregory coined a term that, to his surprise, would become standard among many subsequent writers and

speakers — "institutionalized violence" — to describe the horrific injustice sanctioned by the ideology of state capitalism.

The participants at Medellin did not begin with a consideration of abstract principles, but with reflection on the reality of peoples' lives, and proceeded to judge that reality in the light of the Gospel and the Catholic social tradition. This led to some of the Conference's most prophetic pronouncements:

> Present structures violate basic human rights — a situation that demands changes that are global, courageous, urgent, and profoundly innovative. It comes as no surprise that the temptation to violence is appearing in Latin America. A deafening cry rises from millions of human beings asking their Pastors for a liberation that comes to them from absolutely nowhere else. The Christian, called to live in communion, must find it in the basic community. [Our aim is] the formation of a greater number of ecclesial communities in the parishes, especially in the rural areas and among the urban poor. Above all, Medellin's vision was one of deep faith: The Church has sought to understand this historic moment in the light of the Word that is Christ. The mystery of humankind makes sense only in the Light that is Christ.

One of Ecuador's most outstanding bishops was Leonidas Proano, known affectionately as "Bishop of the Indians." His assessment of the Conference: "Medellin was a fundamental commitment to work for the construction of a community church instead of the vertical church we inherited with its pyramid of power." Until Medellin, the Latin American Church had been allied to the oligarchies and ruling classes, often calling on them to practice "charity" towards the poor. In espousing the cause of the poor by calling for radical changes in socio-economic **structures**, in giving an impetus to Liberation Theology, and in making basic Christian communities a pastoral priority, Medellin represents nothing less than a new way of being Church. A five-centuries-old way of "being church" in Latin America died at Medellin, and a new way, more evangelical, was born.

Obviously, such momentous change would not be greeted with universal applause. To be sure, Medellin was enormously encouraging to the many bishops, priests, religious and laity who were committed to the renewal of the Church, mandated by Vatican II. But even within the Church there was opposition to Medellin, in some dioceses of Mexico, Costa Rica, Venezuela, and especially in Argentina and Colombia. In some instances, study of Medellin was forbidden in seminaries.

Medellin was seen as a threat especially to powerful elites, both inside and outside Latin America, who benefited from the status quo and were resolved to preserve it. Thus, the 1969 "Rockerfeller Report" to President

Nixon observed that the Latin American peoples' desire for change could endanger "national security" and U.S. interests in the region and, frankly suspicious of the changes fostered at Medellin, welcomed the growing influence of the military in Latin America.

Within CELAM itself opposition to the moderate and progressive elements grew after Medellin, reaching a climax in 1972 when, in what came to be known as "the coup of Sucre" CELAM was given a new directorate. Little by little the moderates and progressives were replaced by more conservative counterparts. One unfortunate result of this change in CELAM was the growing tension between CELAM and CLAR.[4]

Almost from the moment the Church in Latin America committed itself to the poor and their struggle for justice, it became a Church of martyrs.

In their "Message To The Peoples of Latin America," the bishops at Medellin spoke of "the beginning of a new historic approach in our continent filled with the hope of total emancipation — liberation from all servitude . . . We foresee the painful gestation of a new civilization." The Church's contribution to the "new civilization" was to be the "new evangelization." But Medellin called for radical conversion, as Bishop Eduardo Pironio, then General Secretary of CELAM, noted: "Medellin hurts because it demands radical changes and an abandoning of privileged positions." The Church was to pay dearly for sounding that call.

Almost from the moment the Church in Latin America committed itself to the poor and their struggle for justice, it became a Church of martyrs. Their number is legion: bishops such as Oscar Romero of El Salvador and Enrique Angelelli of Argentina; priests such as the six Jesuits killed in El Salvador; Sisters such as Ita Ford, Maura Clark and Dorothy Kazal, killed by the Salvadoran military on 2 December 1980; lay men and women by the thousands, such as the couple Felipe and Mery Barreda — leaders in the basic Christian communities in Nicaragua — who were kidnapped by the Contra Forces in December of 1982, held captive and tortured for four months and finally executed.

Inevitably the scenario was the same: those committed to the poor and their struggle for justice were perceived as a threat to powerful elites who were well served by the status quo and were determined to preserve

it. Those calling for change were denounced as "subversive," "Marxist," and therefore fair game for the military forces who murdered them "in the defense of Christian civilization." A Church that proclaimed "good news to the poor," "freedom to captives," and "liberation to the oppressed," was denounced for engaging in "criminal activity." According to some Latin American scholars, by the end of the 1970's, incredibly, some 850 priests and religious had been murdered.[5]

1979: Puebla

CELAM's general secretariat was anxious to reverse at least some of the directions set for the latin American church at Medellin when the bishops met again eleven years later at Puebla. That this attempt was not successful was due largely to two factors: the leadership of the Brazilian hierarchy, especially that of Cardinal Lorscheider OFM, and reality itself in Latin America.

The situation of the peoples of Latin America was much worse in 1979 than it had been in 1968. "Every Latin American who is not blind is dissatisfied with this society," said a bishop-delegate from Venezuela. "Yet it is we [the Church] who more than anyone else have created and shaped it. Even today, nearly every influential person in Latin America, in or out of government, is an alumnus of our schools." Similarly, Venezuela's "Bishop of the Poor," Parra Leon warned: "Latin America will never forgive the participants of Puebla if they let themselves be overcome by fear and fail to denounce precisely the situation of injustice, oppression, falsehood and lies to which the powers of this continent have submitted the Latin American people."

Puebla confirmed the directions set at Medellin, and in some instances went further. Puebla's final document reserved a very harsh judgment for the doctrine of national security: when "understood as an absolute ideology, it is incompatible with the Christian view of human beings." Some other important texts:

ABSOLUTE CENTRALITY OF CHRIST. "Human beings, by virtue of their dignity as images of God, merit a commitment from us in favor of their liberation and their total fulfillment in Christ Jesus. Only in Christ is the true grandeur of human beings revealed. Only in Christ is their more intimate reality fully known. Being pastors, we speak to human beings and proclaim to them the joyful news that humanity has been assumed and exalted by the very Son of God. GOD IS PRESENT AND ALIVE, IN JESUS CHRIST THE LIBERATOR, IN THE HEART OF LATIN AMERICA. WE BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL." (Emphasis added)

SOCIAL INJUSTICE. "Viewing it in the light of faith, we see the growing gap between rich and poor as a scandal and a contradiction to Christian existence. The luxury of the few becomes an insult to the wretched poverty of vast masses. This is contrary to the plan of the Creator. . . . The Church sees [in this injustice] a situation of social sinfulness, all the more serious because it exists in countries that call themselves Catholic and are capable of changing the situation."

MARXISM AND CAPITALISM. "In its most rigid expression, the free-market economy is still the prevailing system on our continent. It has increased the gap between rich and poor by giving priority to capital over labor, economics over the social realm. Fear of marxism keeps many from facing up to the oppressive reality of liberal capitalism. One could say that some people. faced with the danger of one clearly sinful system, forget to denounce and combat another equally sinful system."

URGENT NEED FOR ECCLESIAL CONVERSION. "We are still far from practicing all that we preach. For all our faults and limitations, we pastors too ask pardon of God, our brothers and sisters in the faith, and humanity. We want not only to help others to self-conversion, but also to be converted along with them, so that our dioceses, parishes, institutions, and religious communities will provide an incentive for living the Gospel rather than being an obstacle to it."

If Medellin represented the baptism of Latin America's "new evangelization," Puebla was its confirmation.

1992: Santo Domingo[6]

It is planned that Pope John Paul II will open the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Santo Domingo, on 12 October of this year, precisely the 500th anniversary of Columbus' landfall and the beginning of the evangelization of the Americas.

Given the enormous complexity of the many questions the bishops will be facing, it is not surprising that the preparatory stage for CELAM IV has been at least as stormy as the preparations for Medellin and Puebla.

In February of 1990 the CELAM Secretariat released its "Elementos para uma reflexão pastoral em preparação da IV Conferencia Geral do Episcopado Latino-Americano" (dated 31 August 1989). It represented the outlook of the neo-conservative and restorationist movements. It considered "modernity" to be the Church's great adversary in Latin America. Secularization, with the danger of secularism ("the principal enemy") was seen as the Church's great challenge. The Church cannot control the modern culture that is largely derived from the French Revolution and the

Enlightenment. Unable to control it, the neo-traditionalists consider it an adversary. They see the need to regain control over culture to create a new Christian culture and see this as an indispensable role of the new evangelization.

CELAM's "Elementos" compared modern culture to the prodigal son, and had no hesitation in pointing out the path to be taken: the restoration of authority. Thirty-seven pages are devoted to this theme! There is no mention of participation in decision-making. Everything depends on "authority." Theology's role is to exorcize from culture the "three anti-authority rebellions": that of Luther (against the Pope), that of the French Revolution (against the monarchy), and that of Freud (against the father of the family).

Obviously, this document represented a serious departure from the priorities set by Medellin and Puebla. Many critics pointed out that Latin America's great challenge is not secularism, but the extreme poverty in which, according to a U.N. Study,[7] 270 million (sic!) of Latin Americans live and die. Medellin and Puebla called for a "preferential option for the poor" and CELAM's "Elementos," while mentioning that option, gives it much less importance."

CELAM IV represents a struggle for the soul of the Latin American Church...

The document invited criticisms and these were not long in coming. They were published as a **prima relatio**. The CELAM secretariat then published a second text in April of 1991, entitled "Documento de Consulta — Nova Evangelização, Promoção Humana e Cultura Cristã." Again, criticisms were requested. The comments of almost the entire Latin American episcopate were gathered together in a **secunda relatio.**[8] Some of the bishops' comments and suggestions:

1. There is a great interest among Latin American bishops in the new evangelization, thanks to the Holy Spirit and the bishops' contacts with their people, especially the poorest.

2. The documents prepared by the Secretariat do not represent the generally accepted thinking of the Latin American bishops.[9]

The bishops propose as the fundamental objectives of CELAM IV:

1. To celebrate Jesus Christ and the message of the Lord Jesus, Crucified and Risen, the center of the life and mission of the Church.

2. To continue and deepen the directions given by Medellin and Puebla.

3. To plan the evangelizing mission of the Church in Latin America, with the rich experience of the past, and with awareness of the profound changes taking place today.

Time and again the bishops insist on maintaining the preferential option for the poor as a priority: "Alongside Jesus, the main thread of the document should be the issue of poverty; therefore the preferential option for the poor should continue to be the structural criterion of the life and mission of the Church in Latin America, and not just a spiritual criterion. In consequence, the challenges of culture, modernity and the movements (charismatic and others) should not replace this, but situate themselves in relation to it, so that the option for the poor gives unity and inspiration to pastoral activity." The bishops trace this option back to Vatican II, "the most important ecclesial event of this century." They also call for a strengthening of the episcopal conferences and speak of "an ecclesial magisterium ... which represents the Latin American magisterium." The bishops reaffirm the value of Liberation Theology, "born out of evangelization and the tasks of human promotion on our continent." They emphasize the importance of basic Christian communities, "notable expression of the option for the poor, and the most powerful evangelizing structure for the present and the future." Rather than a single "Christian" culture, as the Secretariat's texts seemed to call for, the bishops insist that Latin America is multicultural, and point to three main strands: the cultures of the native peoples ("in this fifth centenary all they have to celebrate is their 500 hundred years of resistance"); the Afro-American culture; and the dominant Western culture.

On the basis of these and other suggestions of the episcopal conferences, the CELAM Secretariat, under the leadership of the new Secretary General, Brazilian Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, prepared the "Working Document" which was to serve as the basis for the bishops' discussions in Santo Domingo. The Vatican informed CELAM that it reserved to itself the right to veto the document in whole or in part, and appointed Mexican Bishop Javier Lozano as a kind of censor. The text was modified somewhat to make it more acceptible: references to Archbishop Romero and the six slain Jesuits of El Salvador as "martyrs" were eliminated and the self-criticism of the Church was toned down. As required, the Secretariat submitted this new text to the Vatican for approval in March '92. After a two months impasse and some further modifications, the "working document" was released by the Vatican. While the basic Christian communities are reportedly not given the prominence they enjoyed in the original document, the preferential option for the poor remains intact. The text also preserves a key insight of Liberation Theology: the Church's main challenge is to recognize "liberation and the total realization of the human person ... as the central preoccupation of

cultural, economic, political and social activity." It insists on "the new faces of poverty" expanding on Puebla's list.[10]

A final note. The Pope has appointed three Presidents for CELAM IV: Cardianl Angelo Sodano, Vatican Secretary of State; Santo Domingo Cardinal Nicolas de Jesus Lopez Rodriguez; and Archbishop Serafim Fernandes de Araujo of Belo Horizante, Brazil. For the first time, a second secretary general has been appointed: Chilean Bishop Jorge Medina Estevez (a signatory of the "Declaration of the Andes" — a manifesto against Liberation Theology), who will serve along with Bishop Assis.[11]

CELAM IV represents a struggle for the soul of the Latin American Church, just as did Medellin and Puebla. Can the Latin American Church count on the support of our prayers and our lively interest?

Endnotes

[1]Cf. **Gaudium et Spes**, n. 62.

[2]Ibid.

[3]The history of CELAM is instructive for many reasons, but is beyond the scope of this essay. I am unaware of any CELAM history in English. The French publication "Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religions," 1986 (62/1), pp. 93-105, published an interesting sociological/historical study on CELAM. The "Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira," 1987 (47), pp. 655-665 published a Portuguese translation of that study.

[4]For some interesting observations on this cf. Penny Lernoux's "The People of God," p. 353. In the first years after Medellin there was perfect agreement between the two Latin American Conferences: of Bishops and of Religious. When the CELAM Secretariat (to be carefully distinguished from the Episcopal Conferences) appeared to be moving away from the priorities set at Medellin, CLAR held fast. CLAR represents the 45,000 male and 310,000 female religious of Latin America. One of Brazil's most respected bishops, Dom Ivo Lorscheider (repeatedly chosen by the bishops as President of their conference) explained: "For years now the presidencies of CLAR and CELAM have not followed the same path. It was not so in the past when Cardinal Lorscheider (his Franciscan cousin) was President of CELAM." (SEDOS, 9 October 1990)

The Pope has already decided that "this spirit of renewed communion between bishops and religious in Latin America will be one of the topics for study and reflection at the fourth general conference of the Latin American hierarchy scheduled for 1992." (Letter to Latin American Religious, "Toward the Fifth Centenary of the New World Evangelization," 29 June, 1990) In his address to Brazilian priests (13 October 1991, in Natal, Brazil) the Pope told the members of religious institutes that their pastoral work had to be inspired by their particular charism, but then added emphatically: "It must however be entirely subordinated to the guidelines and direction of the Bishop with whom you work. The pastoral charge of the faithful of every local church, in all its dimensions and levels, is not up to your religious superior, but is entirely and exclusively the responsibility of the Bishop." (**L'Osservatore Romano** [English ed.] 2 October 1992, p. 8)

[5]Cf. Penny Lernoux, op. cit. p. 95

[6]For the information in this section I depend largely on the talks given at the twelfth meeting of the OFM Conferences of Latin American Provincial Ministers held in Lima. Peru, from 3-10th of May, 1992. I am especially indebted to the conferences "Hermanos Menores En La Nueva Evangelizacion: Ante La IV Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano" by Fray Benjamin Tapia OFM (Peru) and "Perspectivas da Nova Evangelizacao na America Latina" by Frei Nilo Agostini OFM (Brazil).

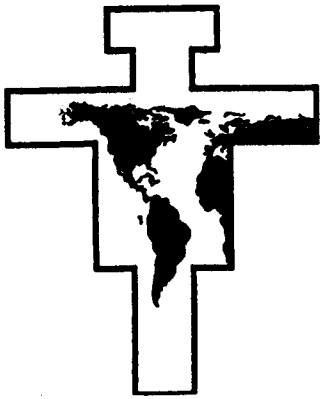
[7]Cf. **Revista Eclesiastica Brasileira**, Marco de 1992, p. 136.

[8]After admitting that the previous consultation document had taken almost no account of the comments from the episcopal conferences, Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, CELAM's new secretary general, called a meeting of the secretaries general of latin America's 22 conferences in February of '92 in Bogota. From this came the **secunda relatio** — the most important of the preparatory documents thus far because it was a faithful reflection of the general thinking of Latin American bishops.

[9]Some specific objections: the documents prepared by the CELAM Secretariat do not have a concrete audience in mind; do not take into account the lived experience of the people; use language that is incomprehensible even to the ministers of evangelization; maintain a vision that is excessively Western; and represent a real break with Medellin and Puebla.

[10]For further information see **The Tablet**, 20 June 1992 p.789f and **The National Catholic Reporter**, June 5 and July 31, 1992.

[11]For some background, see Penny Lernoux, **op.cit.**, pp. 149f.



ST. FRANCIS AND THE SULTAN

I often think it humourous
that you should calmly walk
through armed and dangerous
ranks of men so you might talk
with that seeming perfidious
enemy, the Sultan. An invidious
task you set yourself to bring
him to Christ, Miriam's Son:
a great prophet in his mind,
God's Son in yours. Allowing
for such differences, what can
be further said?

You kept your head
and walked back through blood
and death, through mindless war
and carried only the sweet scar
of realizing that he was a good
man: sincere, courteous, polite.
That thrown gauntlet to fight
his priests by fire-walking
was less challenging than talking,
listening, sharing, giving.

Not as powerful as forgiving
the violence that lay bleeding
the earth in two names invoked
as reason, cause, just and right.
There is a moment, Francis, when needing
to listen is stronger that being choked
by ignorance and intolerance:

You meeting the Sultan is a chance
for us to reflect on the violence
that turns men and women from other
possibilities of hope, and the dream
of justice, brotherhood, and peace

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Love and Understanding

Anthony M. Carrozzo, O.F.M.

On such a splendid occasion, it might be best to avoid the signs of our times for they could easily take the spirit of hope and renewal out of an event such as graduation. The burning and looting of Los Angeles; the presidential debates that seem to make us more and more concerned about the future of our country since they are going nowhere beyond blame and name-calling; and the newly found missionary vocation of a loved but all too sinful Irish bishop are all signs that make us suspicious and cynical about our times. However, there are at least hints of optimism: the simple and moving plea of Rodney King encouraging us to get along; the demands of ordinary people like you and me that politicians forget politics in order to work together for solutions to inequality, crime, and racial antagonism; and the subtle ways in which clergy are finally admitting to our lay brothers and sisters that we too are weak and fragile, preaching out of our weakness rather than our strength.

On such a significant occasion, we might be tempted to skirt such events and hints to speak in melodious and imagined ways about a future filled with hopes realized and dreams fulfilled. Yet an urgent concern confronts anyone graduating from a Franciscan institution in 1992. After all, you have spent four years studying and learning, giving many hours to philosophizing. You will continue on this educational journey by learning the way of theologizing. The thought must occur to you — as it often has to us: what good is learning in a world full of turmoil? Will it help us to minister in a world of confused values and diverse principles?

Fr. Anthony Carrozzo, OFM, is provincial minister of the Province of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. He delivered this paper at the commencement exercises of St. Hyancinth College and Seminary in Granby, Massachusetts on May 24, 1992. Fr. Anthony has had articles published in various periodicals including The CORD. We share the conviction of Fr. Daniel M. Pietrzak, OFM Conv., president of St. Hyancinth's, and the entire student body that Fr. Anthony's address deserves to be shared with a broader audience.

Specifically, we can no longer simply take education for granted and so we must raise an even more personal concern: what is the role of learning for a contemporary Franciscan friar who must lead a people aware of and frightened by the signs of our times?

The Franciscan Rule of Life is the only religious rule that commands its members to be in touch with and respond to the signs of the times. In the Rule of 1223, Francis of Assisi insists that we be concerned with times and places and climates, willingly adapting our way of life and ministry to the needs that arise at various times, in diverse places, and in cold climates. This principle of social analysis was operative in the Order from its earliest days, though the Spiritualists resisted it with all their moral outrage. Pope Honorius III who approved the Rule also dispensed from it for the sake of mission, allowing the wearing of secular garb and permitting the use of money.

. . . what is the role of learning for a contemporary Franciscan friar who must lead a people aware of and frightened by the signs of our times?

To read the signs of the times demands more than astuteness. After all, there is a real danger of confusing adaptation with assimilation. We must adapt our way of life and mission to the best instincts and values of our culture but we must also constantly and courageously battle against being assimilated into our culture thoughtlessly and foolishly. This demands wisdom that arises ever so slowly from prayerful and contemplative study, reflection, and dialogue both with living and deceased wisdom figures. It demands that we be students of the Word of God and discerners of the presence of God in our world. Graduation changes our status, to be sure, but we must remain students until we can say with Francis: It *is good to read the testimonies of Scripture; it is good to seek the Lord our God in them. As for me, I have already made so much of Scripture my own that I have more than enough to meditate on and revolve in my mind. I need no more; I know Christ, the poor crucified one* (2 Cel, 105). Francis is not speaking of memorization but rather of identification.

We find a wonderful example of this art of learning in the Franciscan presence at Santa Croce in Florence where the friars identified with Christ, were in touch with the needs and concerns of the people there, and

developed a ministry to respond to these needs. The friars, moving from the rural beauty of Assisi to the urban splendor of Florence, attracted the **populo** to their church. The artists and artisans, shopkeepers and professionals frequented the church to hear the friars preach. The friars quickly discovered that their ability to preach "for the instruction and edification" of the people as required by the Rule meant that they must first become aware of the needs and concerns of the Florentines, quite different from the needs and concerns of the Assisians. Once they were able to make this transition, they preached fearlessly yet with examined and chaste words uniting the Gospel way of life to the city way of life. Clearly the friars were learned preachers, learning being the handmaid of their preaching.

Even the more scholarly friars at the University of Paris, under the guidance of Saint Bonaventure, saw the importance of learning at the service of preaching. Recall the letter that Saint Bonaventure composed to silence the doubts and concerns of Roger Bacon. Roger, with a passion for knowledge and an admiration for the friars, could not reconcile the life of the friar with the life of the scholar. Struggling for a solution, he sought the advice of Saint Bonaventure who wrote an extensive and exhaustive response, asking *For whom does it befit to teach the Gospel than those who profess and observe the Gospel?* (14) and indicating that *The Rule sets forth clearly that the friars have the right and duty of preaching. To my knowledge, this is not found in any other Rule. Now, if the friars are not to preach fables but the words of God. . . They must read* [and study] (6). This sentiment is echoed by John Paul II in a letter to the friars minor last year in which he reminded us *The mandate* ***de paenitentia praedicanda*** *calls for a serious intellectual preparation, both in the human and sacred sciences* (7).

It becomes clear both in Florence and at Paris that learning was not seen as an end in itself by the friars. Nor was it seen as a means to power and prestige, even though our spiritualist brother Jacopone da Todi attacked philosophers and theologians as the corrupters of the Order: *That's the way it is — not a shred left of the spirit of the Rule! / In sorrow and grief I see Paris demolish Assisi, stone by stone. / With all their theology they've led the Order down a crooked path* (CWS, 31). How remote such a sentiment is from those profound words of our father Francis in his Testament: *And we should honor and respect all theologians and those who minister the most holy divine words as those who minister spirit and life to us.* No doubt there were — and still are — friars who sought an education for its own sake or to lord it over others. Today such friars speak incessantly of their "careers." However, the vast majority courageously struggled "in sanctitate et doctrina," searching for holiness and wisdom. This search was for the sake of ministering spirit and life to the Church.

While apostolically oriented, this search for wisdom has a contemplative aspect. The student becomes the disciple by participating in the mysteries he is contemplatively studying. This educational process is primarily affective rather than purely intellectual. As one of my more articulate and wise predecessors Thomas Plassmann stated so beautifully, Franciscan education does not center upon the "Ego" but rather upon the "Sursum Corda." (Cf. FEC, 11, 3), which in turn echoes those memorable words of Saint Bonaventure in his opening paragraph to the **Itinerarium:** *[Do] not believe that reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love, understanding without humility, endeavor without divine grace, reflection as a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom* (Itin. 4).

The Franciscan loves so that he might understand. This is the secret behind Francis' advice to a minister who is having trouble with one of his friars: *Love him in this and do not wish that he be a better Christian.* The learned friar-preacher, realizing that *God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son,* does not condemn the world that he reads with a contemplative and affective glance. Rather, in the Spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Bonaventure, he challenges good people to become better by presenting the best: the Kingdom of God where we live according to Gospel values and attitudes. At Florence — and in our cities today — Franciscan preaching, reading the signs of the times, must appeal to the emotions of our hearers through concrete and practical language so that they may be moved to action, to be different in behavior. To accomplish this, we must not only be philosophers and theologians, social analysts and psychologists, but also students of the liberal arts, who possess the vision of **De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam** where music and art, plays and poetry are all at the service of evangelization.

Generally at moments such as this, graduates are challenged to go out and seize the world and make it better. My challenge, however, is quite different. It is simply this: accept the enormous responsibility of the Franciscan heritage to understand the world through learning so that you may truly proclaim the encouraging Word of God to a people often discouraged by the signs around them. To do this you must remember what you have already learned and deepen that knowledge through the contemplative experience of theology. This is the Bonaventurean integration of the arts into theology.

Roger Bacon must have mulled over the message of Saint Bonaventure because he is not only listed among the forerunners of the modern scientific method but also among the franciscan friars. One of his more famous

statements is: *Without experience, nothing can be known sufficiently.* He opted, then, not for the masculine way of learning which is formal, competitive, and abstract but for the feminine way which is more reflective, shared, and experientially based. Again, we are confronted with the aggressive way to knowledge and the contemplative journey to wisdom. As Franciscans, we follow in the footsteps of Anthony of Padua whose learning was franciscanized so that he was able to preach profound theology through images and stories. Thus he gently moved his listeners from personal experience into the redeeming events of the life and ministry of Jesus. In this he was a faithful follower of Francis of Assisi, who Celano tells us: *Although the evangelist Francis preached to the unlearned through visible and simple things, in as much as he knew that virtue is more necessary than words, nevertheless among learned people and persons of greater capacity he spoke enlivened and profound words (2 Cel 107).*

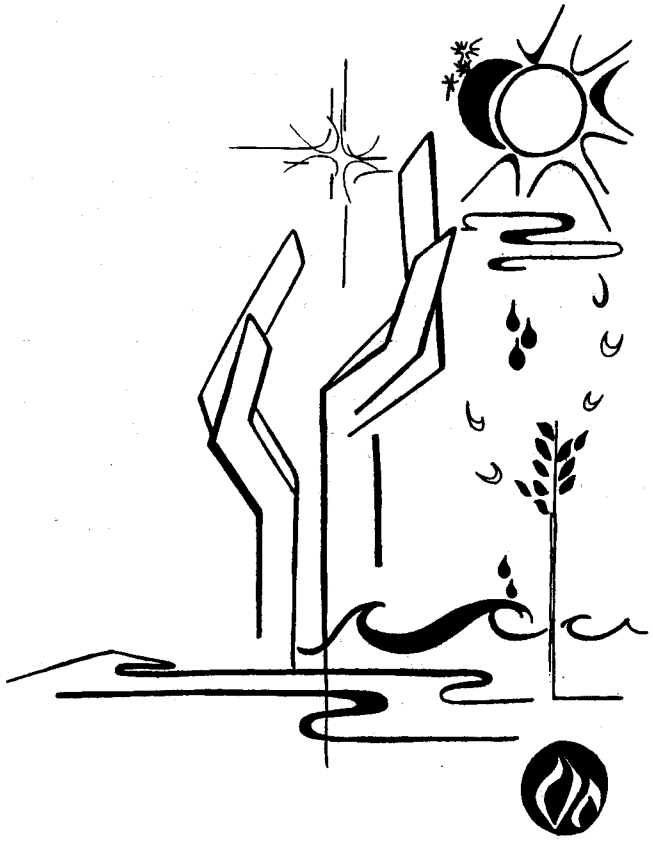
. . . in the Spirit of Saint Francis and Saint Bonaventure, he challenges good people to become better by presenting the best: the Kingdom of God where we live according to Gospel values and attitudes.

In order to accomplish such an awesome task, the Franciscan must acknowledge his poverty, for study arises out of poverty of spirit and poverty of mind. No longer clinging to answers to questions our people no longer ask, we must search with them for the wisdom to understand the mystery of God's presence in our times, following the advice of Vaclav Havel: *We must try harder to understand than to explain* (NYTS, 3/1/92). Perhaps Catherine de Vinck puts it best:

> *For this is the poverty you chose as a bride:*
> *To deliver yourself willfully to the needs of others,*
> *Leaving behind the shelter of your own identity,*
> *Renouncing the protection of your own boundaries,*
> *The prudence that requests endless explanations*
> *And strives to contain and defeat the ardor of love.*

Poverty and learning are not at all at odds then, for poverty is a new way of being with people and learning is a franciscan way of serving these people.

Our times are complex and challenging; our franciscan response must be contemplative and intelligent. Our call to repent from the growing gap of inequality among us, the escalating violence in our homes and streets, the racial antagonisms that harden in the face of this inequality and violence, and the ideological blocks that make conversation impossible and confrontation inevitable demand that we preach reconciliation — not a cheap and easy reconciling of warring factions but a demanding and lasting peace that arises from our belief in traveling the Gospel way. We can only do this if we accept our ministry as learned preachers. I pray you accept this challenge and prepare yourselves well for it.



SHARED SHADOWS

When you kissed the leper your shadow
side knew that defeat was not far away;
my shadow side still battles endlessly
with me — it is a cold, friendless
thing which always promises tomorrow
things will be better, another day

another chance to live the *forma* in
the spirit I promised. But battling
with shadows is as exhausting as battling
armies in Perugia, or confronting fathers
or even being challenged by the brothers,
it would be easy for me to simply give in

and kiss no leper, confront no shadow
and hope it would disappear to nothing:
but then if you climbed off your horse
acknowledging a crazed impulse to know
the truth of truly belonging and loving
then confronting shadows in the course

of knowing them in order to defeat
the dark side of all you were is a kiss
worth shaping, worth knowing, worth making.
In doing this, perhaps one day my feet
may stand on some mountain, my heart miss
a beat in the night air and be taken

into the court of heaven where shadows
are no more and in their place true love

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

How the Minister of this Brotherhood made a visit to San Damiano and upon Mount Subasio

BR. HERMANN SCHALÜCK, O.F.M.

After spending some months in Rome, the Minister decided to visit San Damiano once more. He felt a greater need than ever to return to the origins of Franciscan life, to the living example of St. Clare and St. Francis, in order to derive therefrom new impulses for the mission of the brotherhood in all cultures today. Following the mind of Brother Francis (LP 106) he sought counsel even from the youngest novices, asking them in what manner our past may have a future, and which signs of the times the Brotherhood ought in this to follow with particular attention. In all this his plan was to beg the Lord to enlighten him creatively and in a salutary manner to comfort him in the time of his own novitiate in the service of the whole brotherhood.

In that place, which Brother Francis had built up with stones and in which he himself had become a living stone in the history of God's relations with humankind (1 Cel, chap. 8) and which even today serves the formation of new Brothers, he read in the "Capita practica ad Anatolium" of the Church Father Evagrius Ponticus a passage about the noonday devil, the vice of "acedia": as the Brothers had complained to one another in the Pentecost Chapter, this is even today for many friars an obstacle on the way of the following of Jesus Christ, of "ongoing formation" and of the "new Evangelization". This is what he read: "The demon of acedia, who is

Readers of The CORD will recognize the author who has contributed many such splendid pieces over the past several years. As General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor he continues to serve his Franciscan sisters and brothers by sharing with us his personal and insightful reflections. In this he models in an unusual way how our every day experiences provide a rich source for our spiritual growth.

also called the noonday devil, is the most pernicious of all. He attacks the Brother at the fourth hour °10.00 a.m. and lays siege to him until the eighth °2.00 p.m. First, he makes the sun seem to move only with great labour or not at all and makes the day seem to last for 50 hours. Then he prompts him continually to look out of the window and jump out of his cell to see if the sun is still far from the ninth hour °3.00 p.m. and look around to see whether perchance another Brother might not be coming. Then he implants in him an aversion for the place in which he lives or against his whole way of life or against manual labour. He goes on to suggest the idea that all love among the Brothers has vanished, and that there is no one left to comfort him. The demon depicts life as going on for a long time and makes present to him the burdens of asceticism." The Minister reflected at length on these words. He also read in the Legend of St. Clare how at the time of the Poor Ladies in San Damiano "there was no place for acedia, because idleness was cast out by their burning fervour in prayer and in service of the Lord" (LegCl 20). He thanked the Lord for always having shown to the Brothers in moments of stagnation and crisis the way forward by means of contemplation, poverty and solidarity with the poor (SacrCom 55).

The Minister of all the Brothers therefore resolved to summon soon to the Portiuncola all those Brothers who in each Province are responsible for "formatio permanens," in order to confirm the entire Brotherhood in fidelity to its origins and to the signs of the times, and to win back that missionary dynamism which still in today's world proceeds from contemplation and poverty. This congress should be placed under the motto: "The only constant thing in the life of the minors is that they must be constantly changed and converted to the Gospel of Jesus."

Looking from the garden of St. Clare out over the wide vale of Umbria and especially towards the Portiuncula, our pilgrim became aware that, as the Pentecost Chapter had likewise repeated with emphasis, the Brotherhood is called to new forms of evangelization. The Brothers must learn to know and to love the thousand flowers which God makes blossom and bloom in the garden of his world, the signs of The Spirit and of The Kingdom in the various cultures, continents and religions, in the history of peoples as in the hearts of the poor, which must become more and more the protagonists of their own liberation, sacraments and signs of Christ, prophets of the Kingdom to come. He had an intuition that the secret of the Brotherhood's inner and outward growth lies in its capacity for sharing, in its courage to listen, and at times also to speak a prophetical word.

The new "Ratio Evangelizationis" for the whole Brotherhood, which the Pentecost Chapter had likewise requested, would have to speak of the

"internationality" of the brotherhood and of its mission. For, with no little surprise, he read that this was how it was even in the beginning: in the mission to Germany brothers coming from several nations were sent out from the Portiuncula. They came from Umbria, Tuscany, Lombardy, from Teutonia, Swabia, Hungary, 12 clerics and 13 laics all told (Jordan of Giano 19). England, too, back in 1224, at the time of Pope Honorius, was an "international project," with 4 clerics and 5 laics, among whom there were indeed Englishmen, but also Italians, Lombards, Frenchmen and even a diversity of Brothers from the Transalpine regions (Eccleston).

So the Minister decided to send brothers in the near future in the same spirit to Uzbekistan, to Armenia, to St. Petersburg and to Moscow, to Scutari in Albania, to Burkina Faso as well as to Mongolia. And he understood ever more clearly that the brothers would have to learn languages as a sign of the universality of salvation, and not only the better known ones, but also Quechua and Urdu, Bavarian and Hindi, Chinese and Arabic, as a sign that God's loving kindness is already present in all cultures, and that it matters not from what race or tribe one comes, but rather that one should be able to see God's image in every man and woman, each being able to meet the other with sentiments of peace, as "minores".

And when it came to the time of noon, the Minister slowly climbed up to Mount Subasio, to do penance and to pray in solitude. In the presence of the Lord he remembered all the brothers and sisters who bear in their hearts concern for creation as their contribution to the life of the world (Jn 14). On the heights of the Carceri, where the shrubs become ever barer, he read this verse from a poem of the Indians in the Andean highlands:

"The earth is full of heavenly signs,
and many a bush aflame with God's spirit.
But only one who can see with his heart
removes his shoes.
How many sit around
and look in the bushes
for nothing more than a few berries."

Is not all of creation, the Minister asked himself in that hour, like a colorful garden, or like a musical score with a multitude of known and unknown melodies and harmonies, all inspired by the Spirit of God? Does not someone who pollutes and destroys the earth destroy himself? And he perceived more clearly than ever before that the earth can become for us only what we are for it. For only someone who protects and loves the earth protects himself and builds his own future.

When he had reached the top of the mountain, the Minister rested a while in front of an old gnarled oak, which seemed to him like a symbol

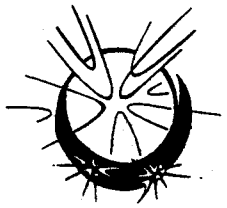
at once of the groaning of creation and of the music of the universe. And he prayed in the simplicity of his heart, not so much for himself as for the whole brotherhood on its way toward the third millenium, this prayer which the Spirit suggested to him in that hour:

"Most High, Almighty, Good God,
let our life be like a tree.
Give us roots that reach deep into the earth.
Let us grow into a robust trunk
which stands erect in its rightful place.
When storms rage, may it not fall
even though it should sway.
May its leaves, after every winter, turn green again
as a sign that you give a hope and a future
to everything created
as also to our Brotherhood in all the world.
And in due time, let us bear those fruits
which your Spirit alone can produce:
a conversion forwards, respect for one another,
peace in our hearts, the impatience of the young
and the wisdom of the old, humor, creativity,
patience with ourselves and with others,
knowledge of our limitations, trust in the Spirit of God,
present even in our world of today."

Then the Minister of the Brotherhood returned from San Damiano and from Mount Subasio back to Rome, to the place called the Curia on the modest Gelsomino hill.

Ad laudem Christi. Amen.

Haec omnia vidit, audivit et fideliter conscripsit Frater Arminius Romanus,
a secretis Ministri Universalis, tempore Quadragesimae
A.D. 1992



Prophetic Ministry and the Educational Leader

GREGORY HARTMAYER, OFM CONV.

"The church must propose an education that makes people agents of their own development, protagonists of history, not a passive, compliant mass, but human beings able to display their intelligence, their creativity, their desire for the common service of the nation. Education must recognize that the development of the individual and of peoples is the advancement of each and all from less-human to more-human conditions. Persons being educated must find in education a view of development as something in which they must be involved. They must not expect everything to be done for them but must lead the way, each one contributing to the transformation of Latin American." The late Archbishop Oscar A. Romero, who gave his life for the church and the people of his beloved country of El Salvador, spoke these words to his people on January 22, 1978.

The church in Latin America can and must play a vital role in recreating the "Moses movement." Walter Brueggemann, in his book entitled **The Prophetic Imagination**, contends that just as Moses intended to dismantle the oppressive empire of Pharaoh and present the formation of a new community focused on the religion of God's freedom and the politics of justice and compassion, so too, the modern prophet of today must do the same. Each of the Old Testament prophets played a vital role in criticizing and dismantling the "royal community" and the "royal consciousness" in their attempt to bring about a prophetic ministry in a new world order.

Father Gregory is Principal and Guardian at Saint Francis High School in Athol Springs, New York. He wrote this piece after visiting several school environments in Ecuador. His reflections upon his experience present challenging questions to Catholic education and especially to Franciscan educators. Following the model so powerfully expressed by Walter Brueggemann in ***The Prophetic Imagination,*** *Fr. Gregory shares with us his own personal insights into the prophetic nature of his mission as Educational Director of a Franciscan High School.*

Jesus of Nazareth, "the prophet," practiced in a most radical form the main elements of prophetic ministry and imagination. He radically criticized the world around him and at the same time practiced the energizing of the new future given by God as seen in the resurrection.

Brueggemann presents a simple yet profound hypothesis: "The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

Brueggemann maintains that the dominant culture in the American church is so largely encultured to the American ethos of consumerism that it has little power to believe or to act. As a result "the royal consciousness leads people to despair about the power to new life. It is the task of prophetic imagination and ministry to bring people to engage the promise of newness that is at work in our history with God." The task is not an easy one. The task of prophetic imagination and ministry is to bring to public expression those very hopes and yearnings that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply that we no longer know they are there. "Hope is the refusal to accept the reading of reality which is the majority opinion; and one does that only at great political and existential risk." [Oscar Romero is a prime example of a person who accepted the challenge and task of prophetic ministry and evoked an alternative community that knows it is about different things in different ways.] He sought to penetrate the numbness of the poor and present a new future that can be believed in. Romero had an in-depth understanding of God's presence in his own life and in the life of others.

Among the many memorable experiences that I had in Duran, Ecuador, was a day that was spent at Nuevo Mundo Centro Educativo. The co-founders and co-directors, Patricia McTeague and Sonya Rendon have every reason to be proud. Pat and Sonya are presenting an alternative model of education to the one that is embraced by the dominant culture. Their model of education "brings to public expression those very hopes and yearnings that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply. . ." Education is a critical solution to the plight of the Third World. Nuevo Mundo provides a first class, private, Catholic education for the poor. But more importantly, it is paid for by the wealthy. The "morning school" enrolls 650 students in grades K - 12. These students come from families that can afford the $50.00 per month tuition. Most of these students are chauffeured to school by a parent or professional driver. The majority of these students do not work and spend most of their day indoors. In contrast, the "afternoon school" enrolls the same number of students from families who cannot afford any tuition. These students are undernourished and impoverished. They are bussed to school after having worked all

morning at various jobs. These students are taught by an excellent faculty and make use of the state of the art facilities that are available at Nuevo Mundo. The beauty of this school is that it brings together two very distant worlds, i.e., the rich and the poor, with the hope and the goal of giving birth to a "new world" where these two sociological entities can learn from and live with each other. At Nuevo Mundo, the various members of the Mystical Body of Christ are beginning to recognize each other and are assuming responsibility for each other. As a result of this approach to education in the Third World, a new generation is emerging which is more altruistic and more mindful of the presence of God in each other. This model of education is an eminent challenge to the traditional, private Catholic schools in America whose founding Fathers would most certainly endorse.

The other Catholic schools which I visited are also making significant progress. They are providing a quality academic education as well as animating the Gospel values which serve continually to present an alternative model to the dominant values of modern society.

To a lesser extent, the Religious Education programs in the Campo provide an opportunity for young people to be exposed to the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. However, attendance, teacher preparation, materials and other limitations make it difficult to impact the students to the same degree as the Catholic schools. However, those involved in Catholic and Religious Education in these institutions can still be very proud of their accomplishments and should be encouraged by the results of their efforts. The Lord is surely working through them and the fruits of their labors will be great.

As I recall my experience in Ecuador, as well as reflect upon Brueggemann's **The Prophetic Imagination**, I cannot help but mention Fr. Jim Ronan, a member of the Society of St. James the Apostle from the Archdiocese of Boston. From my observation, Fr. Jim is the catalyst at the Santa Marianita parish. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent with Fr. Jim, especially witnessing his ministry to people in their sadness, and in their hopelessness, as well as in their joyful and spirited moments. He enjoys a special relationship with his people. He is truly a "Padre" to them and relates well with both the old and the young. My time in Ecuador was too short. I would have liked to have spent more time with Fr. Jim. I gained a great deal from our conferences throughout the two weeks. I was able to get a glimpse of his spirituality and I appreciated the brief talks we had on route to the Campo or late at night before retiring. Fr. Jim is a gifted priest, teacher and pastor. I feel privileged to know him and to have worked with him. He was a significant part of the Ecuador experience.

One of the questions that we discussed throughout the two week experience was how we would apply Brueggemann's thesis to our own educational philosophy. As the Educational Director of a Franciscan High School, I would first present the evidence for the need for an alternative model to the faculty. For it is the faculty who directly influence the students both in and outside the classroom. Together with the administration, the faculty can assist the students in formulating an "agenda for change" which will begin to address the issues that will effect the changes necessary to bring about a "school of passion" and a "school of wonder." This change in attitude is essential in order for an alternative model to be collectively accepted. The spirituality of the school must be authentic enough to influence every aspect of school life. The spirituality of the school must be the impetus and the motive for the school's altruistic response to the needs of the various segments of society both in and outside of school.

The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us.

The embracing of the alternative model may take many years to accomplish. But, as in the case of Nuevo Mundo, the process is Grace-filled and Spirit-filled. Those committed to the process, even though some may never live to see the process completed, have accepted "the task of prophetic ministry" which is "to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."

I am willing to accept the challenge of prophetic ministry in the Catholic secondary school setting. I see the importance of teaching the young in order to bring about the change in attitude and perception which is essential in dismantling the dominant consciousness.

Msgr. George Niederauer, in the most recent issue of "**Church**" magazine presents the "Beatitudes of the Dominant Culture":

Blessed are those who own their own homes;
Blessed are those who go to college;
Blessed are those who can write their own ticket,
are self-employed, keep getting better jobs,
promotions, and more money;
Blessed are those who live on clean, well-lighted,
safe streets;
Blessed are those who know the right people, have
reservations, make wise investments, and can
afford nice vacations;
Blessed are the winners;
Blessed are those who are charming, clever, witty,
and can handle people well;
Blessed are those who get waited on in a store,
and don't have to wait on others themselves;
Blessed are those who can demand and get respect
for who they are, and for what they say and do;
Blessed are the young, the strong, the healthy,
and especially those who are sexually
attractive to one another.
Woe to renters, the unemployed, drifters,
oddballs, the sick, the old, and people who talk
out loud to themselves on the bus — avoid them
like the plague, because losing is catching!

This is the task and the challenge of prophetic ministry in Catholic secondary education in America.

Book Reviews

Meeting Jesus. William P. Sampson. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1991, 164pp, $12.95.

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M., assistant professor of theology, St. Bonaventure University.

Walter Bruggeman remarks in the foreward to this text, "This book will not please a lot of scholars" (iv). But, he may be jumping to a hasty conclusion. Having Joseph Girzone, author of the popular text *Joshua,* give his endorsement on the top of the front cover certainly does raise suspicion with the scholarly mind. The scholarship of that text leaves a lot to be desired. William Sampson, on the other hand, has done his homework. While the text could never be classified as a systematic theological treatise, it does rest on a careful reflection on biblical passages.

The author makes clear from the start that he intends to involve himself in the task of "inventing." Sampson wants to invent the "probable past" of Jesus, a past when Jesus was confronted by choices. The Jesus found within these pages bears a certain similarity to the Jesus of Kazanzakis' *The Last Temptation of Christ.* Sampson repeatedly draws on references from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and has Jesus face the reality of everyday life, a reality marked with questions of direction, purpose, doubt and suffering.

The significance of the questions which Jesus faces in Sampson's "invention" grows in complexity as the life of Jesus unfolds. In the final chapters Jesus is confronted in a radical way with apparent failure, the threat of personal suffering and the harsh reality of his impending death. Earlier in the work Jesus faced the question of suffering in others and struggled to determine what it was that God was asking of him.

The theme of choice runs throughout the text. Sampson drives home his fundamental thesis — "We become ourselves in our choices" (102). With these few words the reader is powerfully reminded of the terrible responsibility of our human freedom. The author, in a very imaginative way, helps one to see the consequence of fully authenticated human freedom as the reality of Jesus. The point is one heard before, and one found in some of the best theological treatises. Sampson's rendition of this point makes it terribly personal.

Again one is reminded of the author's basic objective. He calls the reader to enter vividly into each biblical recreation, each moment when Jesus is confronted with a choice. Sampson intends that the reader become a participant in the event. To accomplish this task each chapter concludes with a "Prayer Exercise." Here he provides both means and material to help the reader become fully engaged with the choices every human must face in life. The reader who wants to be so engaged will be.

Certainly the work is spiritual reflection and not academic speculation. However, such reflection is not unknown to the best of scholars. In fact, such reflection may be precisely what constitutes some as the best. St. Bonaventure

comes to mind in this vein. He too engaged in "invention" with his spiritual treatise *The Tree of Life.* His goal was like that of Sampson, to have the reader be drawn into an event from the life of Jesus as an active participant. John Wesley attempted the same in his popular preaching.

Meeting Jesus with its twenty-four chapters can work well for daily spiritual reading over the course of a month or as a guide for a private retreat. Facing choices and remembering that we become what we choose addresses people in every moment and in all walks of life.

Natural Prayer, Encountering God in Nature. By Wayne Simsic. Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1991. Pp. vii-101. Paper, $7.95.

Reviewed by John Frambes, O.F.M., a long-time outdoorsman, alumnus of the Outward Bound Hurricane Island Program and lecturer at Siena College in Adirondack New York and Americana. John is also campus minister at Siena College.

"The silence of the woods forces you to make a decision which the tensions and artificialities of society may help you evade for ever. Do you want to be yourself or don't you?" This quote from Merton's **Contemplation in a World of Action** by Wayne Simsic in his chapter "Listening to Silence" is an indication that his book **Natural Prayer** is serious about the challenge nature places before those who are not afraid. Most people have places which are holy to them, where they go to pray. For those of us who relish encountering God in nature, Simsic's book provides insight into what happens to us when we leave behind the protective and insulating shells of brick or glass or artificial noise.

Simsic weaves the thoughts of numerous writers, such as Dillard, Rilke, Heidigger, Pieper and classics from the East and Native American sources throughout his pages. In places his own words are poetry. Through all, one finds a deeply Christian spirituality. Irenaeus' theory of the recapitulation of all things in Christ and the Christocentric spirituality of St. Francis are strong themes providing the foundation of Simsic's search for God in nature.

The beauty of nature, its tranquility and tumult, its fecundity and its violence, may leave us awestruck and inwardly pleased at the primal sense of awe that we feel, but Simsic realizes that the romance of nature alone does not satisfy someone on the road to spiritual maturity. The love of nature draws us to human love as we perceive the intricate relationship of all creatures and are led to compassion. Likewise, awe and reverence for creation necessarily draw us near to God. Our experience in nature, however refreshing and magnetic, does not hold us separate from human society, but returns us with a mission. God's love experienced in nature prompts us to love him, to believe, and to commit ourselves to making incarnate in our own lives the divine love evident in Creation. We are converted to "participate in God's creativity" and compassion.

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The CORD

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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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

[1] 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

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).

The Gift of Clare

By his own desire, Francis lingered behind his brothers along the road from San Damiano. He was still basking in the glow of his visit with Clare. It was always a sacred moment when they were together. The light that shone from Clare — her warm smile and radiant glow and the way she spoke of Jesus — made Francis' heart leap for joy. There was more than natural beauty there; there was a godly quality in the way she talked and walked. It was a loveliness that was beyond words, beyond description. It was as if Clare were his own soul.

That drove Francis immediately to prayer. He could not see her too often; she evoked something within him that he had to be cautious about. What was it? Francis asked himself. Was it just man attracted to woman? It seemed to be more. Was it the erotic in him that did not die easily, the old man in him that needed to be transformed yet more by the power of God?

Clare was important to Francis, and he did not want to lose her. She was a living testimony of all that Francis could not find within himself — all that was kind and gentle, all that was delicate and compassionate and warm. He loved her deeply. His eyes teared up as he thought of her. She was gift.

The brothers had walked long and hard that day. Francis sat down, apart from his brothers, by the shore of Lake Trasimene. The vastness of the lake spoke to him of the vastness of the mystery of life. There were so many questions to be explored; and yet, in the final analysis, one had simply to bow to what could never be explained. Life was, by and large, a mystery to be embraced and lived out in faith.

As the waves lapped gently at the feet of Francis, Clare tugged at his heart again. She and her sisters were the contemplative dimension of the vision that the Lord had given Francis. In and out the waves flowed ... the ebb and flow of life ... the fusion of the active and contemplative. Clare always seemed to be there, praying him and his brothers in the marketplace to another victory for Jesus. Her place in their hearts and in the Kingdom was unmistakable.

---

*This story appears in the book **The Touch of God: Telling Stories of St. Francis for Everyday Living** by Kieran M. Kay, O.F.M. Conv. Readers will enjoy learning more about this unusual work in the Book Review section of this issue of The CORD.*

"The Reign of God and Penance"
(1Cel 22)

CHARLES V. FINNEGAN, O.F.M.

Preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ necessarily implies proclaiming the Reign (Kingdom) of God. This was the great love of Jesus' life, the core of His message. "Thy Kingdom come" is the ardent longing of Jesus' heart and the petition He put in our hearts and our lips. For Jesus, God's reign is the only absolute; everything else is "the rest": "Seek first the reign of God and his way of holiness, and all the rest will be given you besides."[1] Paul VI's statement on the centrality of the reign of God is so emphatic that at first it may cause surprise: "Only the Reign of God is absolute. Everything else is relative."[2]

The Reign of God metaphor is very fluid and comprehensive. We can discover the specific meanings Jesus attached to it only by a study of the whole of His life and teaching. Scholars often point out three dimensions of the Kingdom motif: the **eschatological** ("the certainty that at the end God will reveal Himself as the absolute Lord of all the world"[3]), the **theological**, and the **soteriological** (the Kingdom is God's saving presence in human history).

The biblical authors are very aware that God acts not only in the sacred precincts of the temple, but also, and indeed very preeminently, in the **history** of His people. The Exodus, for example, is far from a "purely spiritual" event. It is also, and very conspicuously so, social, economic and political **liberation**. Salvation history is **our** history, and every dimension of human life is to be saved. Not confined to a place or a people — the Reign of God is not restricted to the church, for example, — it is God's loving self-communication and saving action

Readers of The CORD have expressed appreciation for Fr. Finnegan's series on the New Evangelization. This particular article addresses itself to foundational issues pertaining to evangelization and the Franciscan charism. All members of the Franciscan family will find the author's insights of great value for their spiritual growth.

freeing people from sin, sickness and death. Wherever and whenever people are open to the gift of God's loving presence in their lives, the Reign of God comes into being within them and among them.[4] The Reign of God is God making Himself present to us in Jesus, "the exact representation of the Father's being" [5] by the activity of the Holy Spirit.

God's Reign is then a loving **action** of God to which we are invited to submit in total trust, and in that very submission are set free. God means to rule at the center and core of our being to liberate us from the idols that enslave us at that very center and core; John 8:36 is emphatic: "If the Son sets you free, you are really free." God's Reign is not cheap grace; it is transforming grace. God Who created us in love, wants to recreate us in love: "This means that if anyone is in Christ **he is a new creation**. The old order has passed away; now all is new. All this has been done by God."[6] No one is **born** in the Kingdom; we need to be born **from above** to enter God's Reign.[7] By the power of the sovereignly free Spirit we are transformed in our innermost self, filled with the very life of God, and made partakers in the divine nature.[8] This work of our "divinization" is pure gift, God's sheer and abundant goodness at work in us. In his **Sermo 185** Augustine says: "Ask if this were merited; ask for its reason, for its justification, and see whether you will find any other answer but sheer grace." Similarly, St. Gregory Nazianzen, 4th century bishop of Constantinople and known in the East as "the theologian," writes: "What is this wealth of goodness? What is this new mystery surrounding me? I am both small and great, lowly and exalted, mortal and immortal, earthly and heavenly. I am to become a coheir with Christ, a son of God, and indeed God Himself."[9]

Those last words of a great bishop and Doctor of the Church may appear to us exaggerated, but they help us understand something of the awesome power and mystery of God's Reign among us. The radical demands of the gospel become doable only when one has been transformed by radical grace.

Apostolic Preaching

It is not Jesus alone who proclaims the good news of God's Reign. He entrusts that same message to the 72 disciples when he sends them out on mission.[10] While the Reign of God is not a major theme in the epistles of Paul, he does mention it in Gal 5:21; 1 Thess 2:12; 1 Cor 4:20; 6:9-10; 15:24, 50; Rom 14:17. The Kingdom motif appears also in Paul's speeches in **Acts**.[11] The last word we have of Paul in **Acts** is also the last sentence of **Acts**: "With full assurance, and without any hindrance whatever, [Paul] preached the Reign of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ." No doubt the other apostles made the proclamation of God's Reign central in their verbal proclamation, as Jesus had instructed them to do when He first sent them out on mission.[12]

St. Francis' Teaching

Given the importance of the Kingdom motif in Jesus' preaching and in that of the apostles, we are not surprised to see that same theme is central in Francis' ministry to the friars and to all who will listen to him. Before Francis sent his first friars out on mission, he "spoke to them at great length about the Reign of God."[13] Francis himself set out from the Portiuncula to visit many towns and villages "as a herald of the Gospel, to preach the Reign of God."[14] In his rule for hermitages Francis notes that "the first concern [of the brothers living in them] should be to seek the Reign of God and His justice."

The **response** to the proclamation of God's loving rule that Jesus asks for is **metanoia** (penance, conversion): "Do penance [**metanoeite**] The kingdom of heaven is near."[15] We turn our attention to this response, of crucial importance in the New Testament, and absolutely central in the Franciscan tradition of spirituality and mission.

Penance

In his First Life of St. Francis, Thomas of Celano informs us that one day when Francis was at Mass at Portiuncula, he heard the gospel reading in which Jesus sends His disciples out on mission. With his limited knowledge of Latin Francis understands the words of the Gospel "somewhat" (**utcumque**) and after Mass humbly asks the priest to explain it further to him. The priest explained that Jesus sent His disciples out on mission "without gold or silver or money ... to preach the Reign of God and penance." Celano concludes: "From that moment on, [Francis] began to preach penance with great joy."[16] Proclaiming the good news of God's Reign and preaching penance went hand in hand.

If that seems strange to us, it is because in our modern languages we have trivialized the notion of penance, depriving it of its rich biblical meaning. To a large extent we have identified penance with works of mortification and asceticism. Lent is a special time of penance and people speak of "giving up something" they enjoy doing as a "Lenten penance." Asceticism surely has its importance, but is not the heart of the matter.

When penance is understood in its rich biblical sense, as Francis surely understood it, **it is seen as the only adequate response to the central gospel message of God's Reign**. Penance, in the first place, is a change of mind, a change of heart. Those who live in penance are constantly "putting off the old self, and putting on the new person created in God's image."[17] Penance leads to reconciliation: with God, with one's true self, with others, with all creation. Penance and reconciliation are inseparable. Together they lead to our becoming "in Christ, a new creation."[18] In this, their primary meaning, penance and reconciliation bring about **the most radical of changes**, since they transform the

"core self."

Through the prophet Ezekiel God speaks to His people of this grace: "I will sprinkle clean water on you to cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols I will cleanse you. I will give you a new heart ... I will put my spirit within you."[19]

Gospel penance is turning away from a self-centered life to live an ever more God-centered life. It is seeking to discover one's true worth not in riches, talents, power, fame or pleasure, but in the free gift of God's unconditional love. This change at the core of one's being (what Scripture calls the heart) will surely be expressed in a change of conduct, "the fruits of penance." As we are continually converted our conduct becomes more loving. Thus the insistence of John the Baptist: "Produce worthy fruits of penance."[20] This changed conduct is the secondary meaning of penance. In the third place are acts of asceticism or mortification.

The gospel call to penance is then more than a call to acts of mortification; it is more even than a call to give up this or that vice or to practice this or that virtue. IT IS AN INVITATION TO RE-CENTER OUR LIVES ON GOD AND GROUND OUR WHOLE EXISTENCE ON THE FREE GIFT OF GOD'S LOVE. Penance consists of an **aversio** (turning away from the reign of sin and death) and a **conversio** (turning towards God). Penance is the grace to transcend the confines of an egocentric existence that so constricts the human spirit, and to reach out to others in love.

In the light of the Communion of Saints, this grace of self-transcendence benefits all humanity: "every soul that rises above itself, raises up the world."[21]

Penance is the grace to "deny oneself"[22] — one's **false** self, the self of one's own delusions, especially the delusion of absolute autonomy, and to surrender in total trust to God Who is Love. In that surrender one finds freedom. In discovering one's true worth in the free gift of God's unconditional love, one finds peace. Merton thus expresses this paradox: "In order to become myself I must cease to be what I always thought I wanted to be, and in order to find myself I have to go out of myself, and in order to live I have to die."[23]

Works of mortification, so dear to St. Francis, are important precisely because they express and nourish the change taking place on the inside, the change of heart. Consider, for example, the traditional penance of fasting. Fasting is more than cutting down on one's consumption of food. There is a difference between fasting and dieting. Dieting is something I do for myself. Fasting is something I do for others: "This is the fast I wish ... that you share your bread with the hungry."[24] To fast is to move away from a life that is less

compassionate to one that is more so. To be truly penitential, all the works of penance are at the service of love of God and neighbor.

Centrality of Penance

Jesus is totally centered on His Father. In Ernest Kaseman's phrase, "Jesus is a Jew of the first commandment." There are no false gods in his life, no idols. His very food is to do His Father's will.[25] He has come not to do His own will but that of the Father who sent Him.[26] Because Jesus is so totally centered on God, His life convicts us of centering elsewhere. He convicts, not to fill us with despair or remorse, but to call us lovingly to re-center our lives. He accuses us of walking in darkness only to invite us into the light.[27]

Thus, Jesus' first sermon is a call to conversion.[28] A typical exhortation of His public ministry is an urgent appeal to live in penance. Indeed not to live in penance is to invite disaster into one's life, for conversion is the essential condition for obtaining salvation.[29] Jesus' last command to the apostles is a commisssion to preach penance to all nations,[30] the Lucan equivalent of the command in Matthew "to make disciples of all nations" and in Mark "to proclaim the good news to all creation."[31] These are three different ways of saying essentially the same thing: preaching the good news = preaching penance = making disciples.

Penance then becomes central in the apostolic preaching. When Paul is on trial before King Agrippa, he sums up his ministry in one sentence: "I have been preaching a message of penance and conversion to God."[32]

The Tragedy of Refusing To Live In Penance

Those who do not accept the call to penance will decide against Jesus and refuse His invitation to discipleship. Of all the tragic lines in the gospels about the pharisees, the most tragic is surely that which says "they defeated God's plan for their lives."[33] How could such a thing happen to these men, the most religiously observant of their people and the most skilled in the law? Luke's answer may surprise us. They defeated God's plan because they refused the baptism of John! Why was John's baptism of such crucial importance? Precisely because it was a baptism of penance, as the New Testament says repeatedly.[34] The message is clear: to refuse the call to penance is to "defeat God's plan for one's life," and that, in Jesus' perspective, is the ultimate tragedy.

It is also the ultimate bondage. To the extent that human lives are not centered on God they are centered on something else, and that "something else" becomes an idol. As John Shea points out,[35] according to a biblical tradition, idols do three things to those who worship: they become an obsession, they

enslave, and in the end they destroy their worshippers. Speaking of idols, psalm 115 says: "Having eyes they see not, having ears they hear not, there is no breath of life in their nostrils." They're dead! The tragic result? Those who worship them will become like them."

The Scriptures mention a number of such idols: one's ego (the self turned in on itself), self-righteousness (soaring on the wings of delusion and deceit), the pursuit of wealth, power, prestige, pleasure. One can ground oneself and come to see one's self-worth in possessions, in an office (in the world, the church, the community), in one's accomplishments, in one's talents, even in one's appearance. Again, John Shea:

> Idolatry is a false centering of the self, an ultimate investment in that which is not ultimate. According to Paul Tillich "something essentially finite is given infinite significance (the best example is the contemporary idolatry of religious nationalism)."[36]

When we center our lives on God and ground ourselves on the free gift of God's love, we are set free from the Love substitutes — the idols that so constrict the human spirit. Says Jesus: "If the Son sets you free, you will really be free" and "you will know the truth and the truth will set you free."[37]

Penance therefore is not something predominantly negative, it is rather a new springtime in our spiritual journey

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Penance, a New Spring

Penance therefore is not something predominantly negative, it is rather a new springtime in our spiritual journey, a time of new beginnings in great hope. Interestingly, the English word **Lent** comes from an anglo-saxon word meaning "Spring." In our first lenten preface the Church prays: "Each year you give us this **joyful season**." The season of penance is a season of joy!

The Example of St. Francis

If anything is clear about the life of Francis, it is that he lived penance in the biblical meaning of that word. His life is ever more God-centered. He can truthfully say: "My God and My All." After receiving the stigmata, Francis' life is so God-centered that he can honestly say to God: "You are all our riches. You are enough for us."[38]

In his Testament Francis divides his life into two periods: "When I was in sin ..." and when "the Lord gave me to begin to do penance."

"When I was in sin" — that is, living a self-centered life, pursuing fame and wealth, quite willing even to kill in the pursuit of personal glory. (The battle of Collestrada [1202] in which Francis took part as a young man was an exceptionally bloody battle. How many men did Francis injure, or perhaps even kill, before being taken prisoner?)

"The Lord gave me [the grace] to begin to do penance" — that is the grace of freedom from the idol of self-centeredness, and the gift of the most wonderful of all discoveries: our only true center is God and any grounding other than God is a false grounding.

In this context it might be helpful to note that both Francis and medieval monasticism use the expression "leaving the world" but attach very different meanings to those words. The monks literally withdraw from the world ("fuga mundi"), spending their lives in prayer and work in the monastery and on its lands, often taking a vow of stability. In Francis' writings he speaks five times of the friars "going through the world" — the opposite of monastic stability. In the dialogue between Lady Poverty and the friars which takes place in that very early Franciscan treasure **Sacrum Commercium**, when the Lady asks the location of the friars' cloister, they "show her the whole world, as far as she could see, and say: This, Lady, is our cloister."[39] Similarly, in his **Chronicle**, Jordan of Giano recounts how he was asked at Erfurt "if he wanted a house built [for the friars] like a cloister." Jordan, "who had never seen a cloister in the Order" replied: "I do not know what a cloister is; just build us a house near the water so we can go down to it and wash our feet."[40] That is very different from the monastic view of "leaving the world." When Francis speaks of leaving the world,[41] he means embracing a life of penance. He does indeed leave that world which was so dear to him before his conversion, the world of his self-centered existence, the world of feudalism's divisions between **maiores** and **minores**, to begin a totally new life: the gospel of Jesus Christ, in a brotherhood in which all would be **minores** and entirely equal among themselves, whose greeting to all people would be: "The Lord give you peace!" No longer interested in building a kingdom for himself, Francis was free to be "the herald of the great King."[42] 3Cel 2 tells us that from the beginning of his conversion Francis decided to wear "a habit of penance" made in the form of a cross, so that as his mind was filled with devotion for the crucified Christ, his body would be clothed with the likeness of the cross. The Franciscan habit is "a habit of penance."

As he approaches the end of his life, Francis still encourages his followers "to begin again to serve the Lord God, for up till now we have made little or no progress."[43] Conversion for Francis was never an achievement but a process. Hence, "the Lord gave me [the grace] **to begin** to do penance"[44] for penance

would be characteristic of the rest of his life. Both Celano and Bonaventure tell us that Francis was "always new" and "always beginning again."[45] Francis' conversion was complete only when he embraced "Sister Death." But the journey began some 20 years earlier with another embrace — that of a leper. If Francis ministered to the leper,[46] even more so did the leper minister to Francis. It is **Francis** who is changed, and at a very deep level: "... that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body."[47] Embracing the leper, Francis redefines what is bitter and what is sweet. A complete reversal! He thus began the magnificent gospel venture of becoming "in Christ a new creation."[48]

Penance in Francis' Ministry

Penance was also a key theme in Francis' ministry to others. The first version of his **Letter To The Faithful** consists of two chapters: "Chapter I — Those Who Do Penance" and "Chapter II — Those Who Do Not Do Penance." It is as if these are the only two classes of people that Francis knows: those striving to live a God-centered life, and those who choose to live a self-centered life. Indeed not to live in penance is to be a child of the devil.[49] The great burden of Francis' ministry to the friars and to all who will listen to him is to call them to a life that is ever more God-centered. In the Rule of 1221 he writes: "And now that we have left the world we have nothing else to do except to follow the will of the Lord and please Him."[50] Nothing else to do! In chapter 23 of that same Rule Francis speaks of the only distinctions among people that are important to him: "the wicked who have not done penance and have not known you, Most High and Supreme God" and "those who have known You and adored You and served You in penance." Knowing God and serving God means living in penance; not living in penance is equivalent to not knowing God. The greatest grace given people is "to die in penance, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven."[51] To die in penance is to die still centering on God; death is then one's **final and definitive choice for God**, bringing our baptism/profession to fulfillment. Embracing "Sister Death" and celebrating his death as a Passover liturgy, Francis brings his conversion to completion. "When all the mysteries of Christ were fulfilled in him, his soul took flight to the joy of God."[52] Embracing his own creaturehood at its weakest, Francis fulfills his most ardent longing "to serve [God] in great humility."[53]

So important was penance in Francis' and the early friars' understanding of the gospel way of life, that when they went on their first missionary journeys through central Italy they identified themselves simply as "men of penance from the town of Assisi."[54] Penance was also central in their preaching. When Francis had only eleven brothers, and as the Lord shall deign to inspire you, preach penance to all."[55] Even earlier, when Francis had only six companions, he sent

them out to preach with the instruction: "Dear brothers, let us consider our vocation, and how God, in His great mercy, has called us not for our salvation alone but for that of many. For this reason we are to go through the world exhorting all men and women more by our example than by our words to do penance for their sins, and to live keeping in mind the commandments of God."[56] The entire chapter XXI of the RegNB is an exhortation to penance which "all my brothers [therefore, both lay and cleric] can proclaim ... among all the people." In his First Letter to the Custodians, Francis writes: "In every sermon you give, warn the people about penance."[57] In every sermon you give!

One final example. It is very likely that St. Francis was present at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.[58] On November 11 Pope Innocent III delivered a famous homily to the Council. It was a reflection on Ezekiel 9 which speaks of the TAU to be marked on the foreheads "of all who deplore and disapprove of all the filth practiced in [Jerusalem]." Said the Pope:

> The TAU ... has the form of a cross, just as [Christ's] cross appeared before the placard with Pilate's notice affixed to it. One bears on his forehead the TAU, and shows in his conduct the splendor of the cross; if one bears the TAU it is to crucify his flesh with its many sins and vices. Bearing the TAU one proclaims: "I wish to glory in nothing except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Whoever bears the TAU will find mercy; IT IS THE SIGN OF A PENITENT LIFE RENEWED IN CHRIST. Be therefore champions of the TAU and of the cross!

That sums up Francis' whole approach to life: a **penitent** life renewed in Christ! According to Ezekiel, only those who turned away from sin were to be marked with the TAU. No wonder that the TAU was so dear to St. Francis, and that he signed his letters with it and decorated the walls of the friars' cells with it.[59]

As Francis understood so clearly, the life of penance and continual conversion is not principally our work, it is grace: "**The Lord gave me** [the grace] to begin to do penance." The Scriptures often stress that conversion, reconciliation and the new life following are **gifts**.[60]

St. Clare "The Abbess of Penitents"

Of the twenty people who testified about St. Clare during the process of her canonization, there were fifteen Sisters from San Damiano and five others. Eight knew her during her youth, and six knew her very well. These witnesses stress repeatedly that from a very early age, while still living with her parents, Clare lived a very holy and penitential life, devoting herself to prayer, fasting, and generosity to the poor. One may wonder what it could mean to speak of the

conversion of such a saintly young woman, nonetheless, Clare does speak of the grace of her conversion:

> After the most high heavenly Father saw fit in His mercy and grace to enlighten my heart, that I should do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed father Francis, a short time after his conversion, I, together with a few sisters whom the Lord had given me after my conversion, willingly promised him obedience, as the Lord gave us the light of His grace through [Francis'] wonderful life and teaching.[61]

During the process of her canonization, so many witnesses spoke of Clare's penitential practices after she entered the monastery, that there would not be enough space to cite them all in a brief article.[62] One thing is certain. Pope Alexander IV was fully justified in calling Clare "the first of the poor, the guide of the humble, the teacher of those who live continent lives, and the abbess of penitents."[63]

Finally, we need to recall those followers of Francis who, since the end of the 13th century have been known as "Third Order" Franciscans. So essential is continual conversion as part of their charism, that originally they were known simply as "Brothers and Sisters of Penance" and later, "Penitents of Blessed Francis."[64]

Reflection Questions

1. In **Evangelii Nuntiandi** (15), Pope Paul VI spoke of the Church as "the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols." What are the idols that most tempt us and the church today? How does the example of St. Francis and St. Clare encourage us to resist these idols?

2. The scriptural and franciscan texts cited above point to the centrality of penance (continual conversion). In your **experience** of Franciscan life and ministry, does this theme receive its due importance?

Endnotes

[1] Mt 6:33

[2] **Evangelii Nuntiandi**, 8. [In the official Latin text: "Quare Regnum Dei absolutum quiddam est habendum, et efficit ut reliqua omnia ad idem sint referenda."]

[3] Walter Kasper in **Jesus the Christ**, 75.

[4] Cf. Lk 17:21

[5] Heb 1:3

[6] 2Cor 5:7

[7] Cf. Jn 3:3

[8] Cf. 2 Pt 1:4

[9] Cf. **Discourse 45** (found in Office of Readings, Tuesday, first week of Advent) and **Discourse 7** (Office of Readings, Friday, 31st week in ordinary time)

[10] Cf. Lk 10:9,11

[11] Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23

[12] Cf. Mt 10:7

[13] **1Cel** 29

[14] **LM** IV, 5. Cf. also **1Cel** 36 and **L3S** 54.

[15] Mt 4:17; cf. also Mk 1:15. The Greek verb used here is "meta-noeo" meaning literally "a change of mind." This was translated into Latin as "poenitentiam agere." Because modern languages attach a different meaning to **penance**, current English translations prefer to avoid the literal "Do penance," preferring instead such expressions as "Repent," "Reform your lives," and "Turn away from your sins."

[16] **1Cel** 23

[17] Cf. Eph 4:23

[18] Cf. 2Cor 5:17

[19] Ez 36:22 ff

[20] Lk 3:8

[21] Elizabeth Leseur, quoted by Pope John Paul II in **Reconciliation and Penance**, n. 72.

[22] Cf. Lk 14:26

[23] **Seeds of Contemplation**, 20.

[24] Is 58:6

[25] Jn 4:34

[26] Jn 5:30

[27] Jn 8:12

[28] Mt 4:17; Mk 1:15

[29] Lk 13:1 ff

[30] Lk 24:27

[31] Mt 28:19 and Mk 16:15

[32] Acts 26:20

[33] Lk 7:30

[34] Mt 3:11; Mk 1:14; Lk 3:13; Acts 19:4

[35] **The Challenge of Jesus**, 78.

[36] **op. cit.**, 76

[37] Jn 8:32 and 36

[38] **The Praises of God** on the parchment given to Br. Leo. In the original: "tu es omnia divitia nostra ad sufficientiam."

[39] **SC** 63

[40] **Chronica fratris Jordani**, 43

[41] **Test** 3; **RegNB** 22,9

[42] **1Cel** 16; **LM** II, 5

[43] **1Cel** 103

[44] **Test** 1

[45] **Analecta Franciscana**, X, pp. 80, 222, 366, 577, 621.

[46] **1Cel** 17

[47] **Test** 3

[48] 2Cor 5:17

[49] **EpFid I**, II: 1-6 and **EpFid II**, 63-66

[50] **RegNB** XXII, 9

[51] **RegNB** XXI, 7

[52] **2Cel** 217

[53] **Cant Sol** 14

[54] **L3S** 37

[55] **1Cel** 33

[56] **L3S** 36; see also **1Cel** 29

[57] **EpCust** (I), 6

[58] **LP** 67

[59] **3Cel** 3: "Of all the letters, TAU was dearest to him [Francis]. He signed his letters with it and decorated the walls of the friars' cells with it." At least two letters of Francis (that to the clergy and the blessing for Br. Leo) bear the TAU. Leo made a marginal note: "In like manner, he [Francis] made this sign [a large T] ... with his own hand."

[60] Cf. Dt 8:17f; Jn 6:44 and 15:5; 1Cor 1:26-31; Eph 2, esp. verses 4-10

[61] **Testament of St. Clare** 24-26 and **Rule of St. Clare** VI, 1

[62] Cf. "Acts of the Process of Canonization (1253)" in **Clare of Assisi - Early Documents**, ed. and trans. Regis J. Armstrong OFM Cap, 125-175 and "The Legend of St. Clare," **ibid**, 184 ff.

[63] **Bull of Canonization**, 10. See: "Clare, Abbess of Penitents" by Beertulf van Leeuwen in **Greyfriars Review**, IV (1990): 73-81.

[64] Cf. **Dizionario Francescano**, 1133-1166 and 1297-1310; **St. Francis and the Third Order** by Raffaele Pazzelli (Franciscan Herald Press); and **"De Illis Qui Faciunt Penitentiam" - The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation** by Robert M. Stewart (Roma: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1991).

* * *

The Life of Penance: A Grateful Response to the Lord

DOMINIC F. SCOTTO, T.O.R.

Early in the morning of a cold, dreary February day of 1978 Assisi seemed exceptionally quiet and melancholy. Several friars and I had driven up from our convent of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Rome at the confidential invitation of the friars of the Sacro Convento. The body of Saint Francis of Assisi had been secretely exhumed with the permission of the Holy See and as fellow Franciscans we had been discreetly invited to review the sacred remains before the body was once again reinterred.

When Saint Francis died in 1226, he was temporarily laid to rest in the Church of San Georgio in Assisi under heavy security. There was a genuine fear that one of the rival states to Assisi, such as Perugia, would attempt to abduct the body, for Francis was revered by all and many sought the honor and prestige of possessing his mortal remains.

In the meantime, work had begun on the new Basilica of Saint Francis and upon completion of the first phase of construction the remains of Francis were to be relocated to this new site. Consequently, in the year 1230, when this goal had been achieved, the body was translated to what was to be its permanent resting place. Brother Elias, who was Minister General at the time, with much religious fanfare led the procession to the new Basilica. Unknown to all, except to Elias and a few trusted friars, a secret tomb had been excavated deep in the rock beneath the main altar. Upon arrival at the Basilica only this select group of friars was allowed to enter with the body of Francis so that the remains could be secretely interred in the newly carved out tomb and all chances of it being stolen at some future time be eliminated. After the death of Elias and his confidants, the actual site of the tomb was lost and no one knew exactly where it

Fr. Dominic is a member of the editorial board of The CORD and has contributed articles over the past several years. He is currently assigned to St. Anthony Monastery in Fairless Hills, PA.

was located within the Basilica. For six centuries this remained the situation until in the early 1800s when a search was initiated to relocate the exact site of the tomb. After tunneling deep beneath the pavement, on December 10, 1818 the remains were finally found under the main altar of the Middle Church of the Basilica where they are resting today. During the next six years the crypt chapel presently surrounding the tomb was constructed to accommodate the religious services and the devotional respect of countless numbers of pilgrims who have come and continue to come into Assisi each and every year to honor the Poverello.

At the prescribed time we were admitted into the monastery and were led into a well illuminated chapter hall in the center of which rested a thick hermetically sealed plexi-glass coffin containing the mortal remains of Saint Francis. While I had visited, prayed and celebrated Mass at his tomb in the lower crypt of the basilica many times, the feeling which I now experienced was unique. Here before me were the actual remains of Saint Francis neatly laid out in this small, simple coffin. It was a very moving and privileged moment for me as I stood next to and gazed down upon this rather small and delicate skeleton. As I prayed I was able to put flesh upon those meager remains and to imagine the painting of Francis by Cimabue to have come alive before my very eyes. But more importantly, it demonstrated to me that Francis true to his nature had left this world as he had entered it, with nothing. This deeply moving and religious experience remains with me in a very significant way to this very day.

Eventually word of the exhumation leaked out to the general public and newspapers and periodicals wrote extensively about it. Several of the articles revealed that a group of specialized scientists had been invited to examine thoroughly the remains of Saint Francis. Among their many observations was the fact that apparently, while alive, Francis had led a very mortified life. After knowing how severe Francis had been with himself in the practice of self-mortification and his overall penitential lifestyle, as well as personally having visited many of the places where he had lived and prayed — such as the Sasso Spico at Mount Alvernia, the caves at the Carceri, at Narni, at Fonte Colombo, the tiny cell at Monte Casale — these conclusions came as no surprise to me. All of these sites were austere, damp, cold and devoid of all comfort.

Yet, despite all of this, Francis never advocated his own severe lifestyle to others because he knew only too well that these practices did not embody the essence of his penitential pilgrimage. While they certainly symbolized an important part of his life style, they were not representative of its essential spirit. Although Francis practiced such a penitential lifestyle with every fiber of his being, his idea of the life of penance featured something infinitely more profound. For his understanding of the life of penance was translated primarily in the sense of METANOIA, a value which is rooted firmly in the Sacred

Scriptures. While this value is most often understood in terms of conversion, a turning to God, or as a separation, its meaning is actually much broader. Central to the Gospel message itself, it should be primarily understood as the force of God's love upon an individual which in turn elicits a reaction from that person in a radical, Christ centered redirection of one's life towards God.

As an ongoing dynamic extension of our baptismal commitment, it entails an ever deepening involvement in the Lord's paschal mystery. Since it connotes a break with or a separation from the past, METANOIA involves a daily taking up of one's cross and a dying to self which is ideally expressed in the living out of the life of love as preeminently delineated for us in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-12). Inseparable from the concept of reconciliation, it views peace with God and peace with other human beings as an indivisible unit which serves as a basis for all Christian efforts to overcome ill-will, disaffection and divisions at all levels of humanity. Far from being a forbidding and somber lifestyle characterized by fearful and austere ascetical practices, this ongoing conversion of life is simply the joyful expression of a grateful heart professing the wonderful works of the Lord who has called all of us out of the darkness of sin and ignorance into His own marvelous light of love and grace.

Francis incorporated this wider and deeper meaning of the "life of penance" in a most forceful manner in the twenty-third chapter of the non-confirmed Rule. In a rousing exhortation to all his followers Francis begins this chapter with a sublime prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord and King of the universe for all that He represents and for all the gifts of grace that we have so bountifully received from Him.

Beginning this chapter of the early Rule in this manner illustrates that Francis understood very clearly that the life of penance of every Christian must spring from an overflowing gratitude to God for all the loving and merciful gifts He has poured forth upon His children through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the life of penance is first and foremost our grateful response to God's saving and merciful call of grace to us. From this true and heartfelt response of love and gratitude flows our commitment to lead a penitential life. "You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you to go out and to bear fruit, fruit that will last ..." (Jn 15:16).

Obviously, the world today would reject this point of view since it is accustomed to viewing and judging everything from a purely human egocentric standpoint depending entirely upon the good will of the individual. Unfortunately, this viewpoint has also had its effects upon religious life. Francis, however, never countenanced such a humanistic point of view. That he should pursue a life of penance did not depend upon his own will but upon the will and action of God upon him. By taking such an attitude, Francis was able to give a

very definite and unique direction to religious life. Today there is a great need to present this starting point of Franciscan religious life as clearly and forcefully as possible, for to the extent that the modern view effects religious life, and the entire Christian life for that matter, it places it completely on the plane of the merely human.

No matter how well disguised or refined, no matter how vehemently denied, the truth is that from this approach everything becomes dependent solely upon one's own will. Consequently, religious life would only flourish within the parameters that such an individual would set for himself. Hence a religious vocation would cease to be primarily the result of a divine call from God followed by our generous response, but would instead become a personal question of choice which as we know is weak and vacillating at best. Eventually, dependent upon one's own will, it is subject only to the human foibles of that will with all its accompanying limitations. A personal commitment to God's loving call would therefore become merely a career choice which can be changed at the mere whim of one's own determination.

the life of penance . . . should be primarily understood as the force of God's love upon an individual which in turn elicits a reaction from that person in a radical, Christ-centered redirection of one's life towards God.

However, to be truly initiated into the genuine life of penance, a religious must divorce the self from this egocentric view of life. Instead one must be completely possessed to the very depth of soul by God's love and by a deep gratitude for all that God has accomplished and continues to accomplish in our lives through the merits of Jesus Christ His Son. Every moment of our lives we must learn how to thank God for His many gifts to us especially for the gift of our vocation. Only when we are possessed by this sense of awareness and this overflowing gratitude can God truly work in us and can we in turn be fully involved in the true life of penance.

This is exactly that life of penance, that METANOIA so firmly rooted in the Sacred Scriptures that Francis so forcefully demands of all his followers. It is the root value of the Franciscan tradition. Francis demonstrated his own joyful gratitude for all God's wonderful gifts of grace not only in word but most especially in action. He believed strongly that one must not be merely a hearer of the word, but above all he must be a doer of the word. The life of penance must not be something merely talked about, but above all it must be lived in a total renunciation of self so clearly required of all by our Lord himself in the holy Gospel:

> If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me. For he who would save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for my sake will save it. (Lk 9:23-24).

In a very simple and clear manner the Lord invites all who wish to live a true life of penance to renounce all self-seeking and to walk with Him whose only desire was to do the will of Him who sent him. Renouncing self in this fashion disposes one to become fully integrated into that wonderful harmony of grace and salvation which God effects in our redemption through Christ the Lord. Therefore, when one decides to live in this manner, in a state of true METANOIA for God alone, that person is in fact responding to the very first condition of Christ's preaching which remained at the heart of the earliest Christian kerygma or teaching:

> The Kingdom of God is at hand. Do penance and believe in the Good News. (Mk 1:15).

Consequently, the Kingdom of God can only become a living reality within us when we are willing to respond completely and without reservation to God's loving call.

In the "Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life" we find this particular point of view strongly underscored:

> The members of each community should recall above everything else that by their profession of the evangelical counsels they have given answer to a divine call to live for God alone not only by dying to sin but also by renouncing the world. They have handed over their entire lives to God's service in the act of special consecration which is deeply rooted in their baptismal consecration and which provides an ampler manifestation of it. (paragraph 5)

As an individual increasingly submits the self to the reign of God in this life, so will that person increasingly die to self and begin to live for God alone. And the more an individual forgets self and loves God, the more faithfully will that person deepen and perfect the life of penance, the life of METANOIA. This is the process so fervently referred to by Saint Francis in the third part of the twenty-third chapter of the earlier Rule. "Let us therefore desire nothing else, let us wish nothing else, let nothing else please or delight us, except our Creator and Redeemer and Savior."

This is an ongoing dynamic process in which we are constantly rewarded by God's grace and love the more intensely we seek to lead the penitential life. Above all we must always endeavor to deepen our gratitude to God by continuing to respond as fully as possible to His loving call. Francis understood this in a most profound way as illustrated by his own words in his early Rule.

> Nothing then must keep us back, nothing separate us from Him, nothing come between us and Him. At all times and seasons, in every country and place,

> every day and all day, we must have a true and humble faith, and keep Him in our hearts, where we must love, honor, adore, serve, praise and bless, glorify and acclaim, magnify and thank, the most high, supreme and eternal God ...

This is the essence of the life of penance, of genuine Gospel METANOIA.

In summary, therefore, what Francis so faithfully lived, and what he so strongly recommended in the final chapter of his earlier Rule was that every Christian life must essentially be a life lived in penance, a life of true METANOIA. In turn, this life of penance originates not in us but in God's loving call to us, in His church, through Christ our Lord. We in turn must open ourselves to God's loving action in a spirit of thanksgiving and must allow His grace to transform our lives.

Unfortunately, all too many Christians, religious included, credit themselves with the primary role in this entire process thereby succumbing to one of the principal temptations of our modern era. This heresy of individualism inexorably leads to a subtle form of self worship which is diametrically opposed to that true life of penance so passionately insisted upon by Francis.

If as religious, as Franciscans, we are faithfully to live a life of penance, then we must involve ourselves more fully in the process of an every deepening awareness of God's loving action upon us. Through prayer we must seek to develop a heightened consciousness of the many miracles of grace that occur continuously within our lives. With this increased sensitivity and knowledge of God's loving grace and goodness, one would be inspired to respond more gratefully to such an understanding of God's loving initiative towards us. Driven by this process a person would instinctively think less of self and would live more for God and others.

The entire vocation of a Franciscan is therefore to live a life of continuous and total conversion to the Lord. It is a life of Gospel METANOIA, a life of penance initially springing from a heart filled with gratitude in response to God's loving call.

> With all in the holy Catholic and apostolic Church who wish to serve the Lord, the brothers and sisters of this Order are to persevere in true faith and penance. They wish to live this evangelical conversion of life in a spirit of prayer, of poverty, and of humility. Therefore, let them abstain from all evil and persevere to the end in doing good because God the Son himself will come again in glory and will say to all who acknowledge, adore and serve him in sincere repentance: "Come blessed of my Father, take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world" (Mt 25:34). [The Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, I:2]

The Blessing of Penance

The 1982 Third Order Regular Rule

ROBERT M. STEWART, O.F.M.

To have the Spirit of the Lord...
Francis' words offer both challenge and promise!

Some seven centuries ago... amidst the deadening silence of massive suffering, amidst the chilling cacophony of oppressive structures... there arose a voice: Francis of Assisi sang anew the Gospel of Christ. Francis' voice and life proclaimed the visitation of God: "how happy and blessed are these men and women... the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them."

Many people heard his song and were touched by his person; they wanted to follow him on the way. When they asked him for guidance, Francis spoke of the joy and blessing of a life of penance:

> How happy and blessed are these men and women who:
> love the Lord with their whole heart, their whole soul and mind, and with their strength, and
> love their neighbors as themselves, and who
> despise the tendency in their humanity to sin,

Fr. Robert M. Stewart, O.F.M., assistant editor of The Cord *and a member of the teaching faculty of the Franciscan Institute, was invited to give a keynote address at the Franciscan Federation's 27th Annual Conference. Prompted by requests that his presentation be published, we here present his address as given in Greensboro on August 23, 1992 - hoping that the power of his creative juxtaposition of texts has not been lost in the move from oral to written form. One further editorial note: Fr. Robert's book on the SFO Rule, referenced here and in Fr. Finnegan's article (and reviewed in the May issue of* The Cord*), is available from the author at the Franciscan Institute for $37.00.*

Francis presented them with the challenge of penance, the Gospel call to radical conversion:

- to love God
- to love all people
- to turn from selfishness, from our self-centeredness
- to unite ourselves with the Body of Christ
- to practice the love we experience and profess

But as you well know, as inscribed in the Prologue of your 1982 Rule, Francis also proclaimed boldly the promise of doing penance:

> 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 will rest upon them,
> and the Lord will make His home and dwelling place with them.
> They are the children of the heavenly Father whose works they do.
> They are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ.[2]

I hope here to explore briefly the challenge and promise of Francis' words, both the challenge and promise of doing penance, for Third Order Franciscans moving toward the 21st century.

Towards the end of his life on earth, reflecting back on his own conversion, that movement of self-transcendence by which his world was transformed, Francis wrote:

> The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While 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 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.[3]

From the early sources we know that Francis' conversion developed gradually and extended over a span of years. Those thirteenth century biographies narrate a sequence of events, but leave the significance of the events clouded in silence. While we can wonder if Francis did not have some "near-death" or "limit" experience in the battle of Perugia, during his imprisonment or prolonged illness, he himself reduces the essential moment of his conversion to two critical components: God and lepers. Francis affirms that God brought him to do penance, and that his reversal of values occurred before lepers. In and through the lepers - in and through Francis' contact with the poor, the lowly, the suffering - God had acted in Francis. In knowing the suffering of the outcasts, Francis knew the suffering of his Lord who had been rejected, the Lord of lords who was born into poverty and who died on the cross.[4]

In the thirteenth century many people believed that suffering would make God's power manifest in their lives; the penitential culture nurtured the belief that the embrace of a rigorous life of penance and mortification could facilitate an experience of the divine.[5] But Francis does not speak a belief or concept; Francis proclaims the truth he has experienced. Toward the end of his journey of conversion, Francis' love of Christ crucified, his identification with the suffering of Christ, brings him to bear the grace of the stigmata. Francis encourages others to embrace the struggle precisely because he has experienced the promise, because he has experienced the gift of the Spirit.

Francis' insight, or better his experience - that by entering into the suffering of others we come to know Christ - weaves itself through many of his writings. I would suggest that the invitation to enter into the sufferings of others and the acceptance of our own suffering as grace is the very key to understanding that letter which you all must know so well, the Letter to a Minister. To that minister and to all of us who might at times want to retreat in prayer, Francis - a lover of solitude - offers an invitation:

> I speak to you, as I can, about 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. And you should desire that things be this way and not otherwise...
> And love them in this and do not wish that they be better Christians.
> And let this be more valuable to you than a hermitage.[6]

In effect: let *this* be your seeking after God.
In offering mercy, in bearing through trials, the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon us.

But what more can we say about this "doing penance"? Certainly, it means radical conversion in the Gospel sense of metanoia. This conversion or life of penance expresses itself externally: blessed are those who "bring forth from within themselves fruits worthy of true penance." But Francis clearly places the action of God and the interior attitude or change within the person before the visible manifestation of penance. This recognition, at the heart of Francis' understanding of penance, remains crucial for any articulation of a Franciscan penitential spirituality. Francis does not suggest simply the adoption of norms and practices of penance; he does not suggest that one begin with the "fruits of penance." Rather, for Francis a life of penance begins with God's action.

The beginning of both the Testament and the Earlier Exhortation to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance reveal the central dynamic of conversion or metanoia: the radical turning from self to God.[7] For Francis, penance is the only possible response to a loving God. The way of penance is a means to freedom,

the way to mystical union with God. For Francis, the way of penance is the radical choosing of God's love, the constant seeking after God, a "thirsting after fullness of mystical experience."[8]

The Prologue of the 1982 Rule must, therefore, be understood first as a call to an intimacy with God. For Francis, penance begins with a mystical experience, that is, an experience of God that radically changes the person. And Francis found this intimacy with God in and through Christ. For Francis, Christ remains the focus of the penitential life; identification with Christ is the way of penance. Francis calls people to that intimacy with God. Clearly, this intimacy begins with God's initiative, but this intimacy with God also demands the person's response. Francis experienced a deepening of that intimacy with God in and through a life of penance and thus exhorts others to that path.

In exhorting people "to do penance," Francis implicitly exhorted people to embrace the penitential practices of the Order of Penance. The way of life of those early Franciscan penitents became codified in the Memoriale propositi and, as it became further regularized, it included many specific penitential practices. But, Francis' exhortation is not about hating our bodies, or specific days of fasting, or working with lepers in any literal sense. But what then can we say about "doing penance"?

"those who do penance" live by a different wisdom, engage in a different struggle, and have a different understanding of power.

David Flood, in his analysis of the Later Exhortation in which Francis speaks more specifically about the "way of penance," offers some insights into Francis' concept of "doing penance." Flood claims that here Francis

> does not explain how to become Franciscan; rather, he explains what one does once one has heard Jesus' word and crossed over from darkness into light - he explains how one lives and what one does once one has become Franciscan.
>
> Franciscanism is not a set of ascetical disciplines. It is a way of dealing with the universe. One does not bend oneself to law and rule; one catches onto the rhythm of things. . . . Francis runs through the motions of Franciscanism. People have changed because they engage in them; by doing them they change. One goes through the steps in order to dance; and soon one is dancing and forgets the steps. . . . Francis emphasizes doing. Consciousness changes in doing the truth.[9]

Flood's analysis focuses upon the summary statement in verses 45-47 as the Franciscan way of penance. While these sentences follow upon the series of

injunctions which begin with "debemus" (we must), structurally sentences 45 and 47 receive an emphasis by the use of debemus twice in each phrase, both in a negative and positive form:

> We must not be wise and prudent according to the flesh; rather, we must be simple, humble, and pure.
>
> And let us hold ourselves in contempt and scorn, since through our own fault all of us are miserable and contemptible, vermin and worms, as the Lord says through the prophet: I am a worm and no man, the scorn of men and the outcast of the people.
>
> We must never desire to be over others; rather we must be servants and subject to every human creature for God's sake.[10]

According to Flood, these verses contain a summary of the Franciscan experience or way of penance. Here Francis explains that "those who do penance" live by a different wisdom, engage in a different struggle, and have a different understanding of power.[11]

But Francis also proclaims quite powerfully the promise, the blessing of those who live by a different wisdom, engage in a different struggle, and have a different understanding of power. Francis proclaims this radical conversion as the way of the mystic. Francis speaks experientially of those who do penance as the "spouses, brothers, and mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ."[12] He explains those relations:

> We are his **spouses**
> when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit with our Lord Jesus Christ.
> We are **brothers**
> when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven.
> We are **mothers**
> when we bear him in our hearts and bodies with divine love and with pure and sincere consciences;
> and we give birth to him through a holy life which should enlighten others because of our example.[13]

Francis moves beyond the Matthean response of Jesus: "Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is brother and sister and mother to me."[14] Francis expresses his own trinitarian experience of God in concrete relational language. Francis does not simply proclaim that we come to know God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Rather, we are children of the Father; we are brothers and sisters of Christ; through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are spouses and mothers of Christ.

Almost reminiscent of Jesus' parabolic response to the lawyer's question, in which he describes how to be neighbor, Francis here describes how to be spouse, brother, and mother. We are to do penance, to do the will of the Father,

to meditate on Christ, to love God in word and deed, to act with justice, to offer forgiveness, to carry within us always as the principle of our being, as lover and brother and Son: Jesus Christ.

Francis waxes poetically and mystically of his own intimate experience of God. In the doing of penance we know God in and through Christ. We live by the wisdom of the Spirit and know Christ as spouse. We engage in a different struggle and we come to know Christ as brother. We develop a different understanding of power as we carry Him in our heart and give birth to him by our lives in the Spirit.

In the Earlier Exhortation, Francis could speak of the "words of our Lord Jesus Christ" as "spirit and life" because he had come to know that intimate and loving God in and through Christ.[15] As he speaks of God's love and trinitarian life in terms of relationships, Francis offers to us and to our troubled world new ways to image "family" and our relatedness. Francis moves beyond family as defined by blood, ethnic or national ties. Francis has experienced "family" in Christ; Francis knows and invites us to know how we are related to all people and all creatures precisely by turning to God in and through Christ, in and through a radical conversion, in and through a confrontation with the suffering Christ in our world. Third Order Franciscans, as an international "family," as able to re-vision existing institutions in our world, as spouses, brothers, sisters, mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ, have much to offer a very broken world. Our world desperately needs new, empowering, Spirit-filled images of "family" as global, "creation" as sacred, "life" as God-given...

In our own century... amidst the deadening silence of massive suffering, amidst the chilling cacophony of oppressive structures... may the voice of Francis arise anew; may Franciscan women and men once again do penance and bring forth from within themselves fruits worthy of true penance... For how happy and blessed are these men and women... the Spirit of the Lord will rest upon them.

That **challenge** and **promise** might better be spoken in a familiar story, in a powerful franciscan symbol:

At a time when St. Francis was staying in the town of Gubbio, something wonderful and of lasting fame happened.

> With the cold war over, military spending on the decline, economic and political freedom expanding, and a growing public awareness of environmental issues, the world now has a unique opportunity to make a substantial break with the past.[16]

For there appeared in the territory of that city a fearfully large and fierce wolf which was so rabid with hunger that it devoured not only animals but even

human beings.

> 14 million children die every year before they reach the age of five.
> Over 100 million people were affected by famine in 1990.
> More than a quarter of the world's people do not get enough food, and nearly one billion go hungry.
> 1.2 billion people still barely survive - in absolute poverty.[17]

For while the Saint was there at that time, he had pity on the people and decided to go out and meet the wolf.

> We are brothers
> when we do the will of the Father who is in heaven.

But St. Francis placed his hope in the Lord Jesus Christ who is master of all creatures.

> We are his spouses
> when the faithful soul is united by the Holy Spirit with our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Saint made the Sign of the Cross toward it. Then, calling to it, St. Francis said: "Come to me, Brother Wolf. In the name of Christ, I order you not to hurt me or anyone."

> We are mothers
> when we bear him in our hearts and bodies with divine love and with pure and sincere consciences;
> and we give birth to him through a holy life which should enlighten others because of our example.

St. Francis said to it as it lay in front of him: "Brother Wolf, you have done great harm in this region... and this whole town is your enemy. But, Brother Wolf, I want to make peace between you and them, so that they will not be harmed by you any more, and after they have forgiven you all your past crimes, neither men nor dogs will pursue you any more."

> In practice, there are no development institutions managing the new integrated global economy - much less doing so democratically in the interests of the world's people. Democracy may be sweeping through individual nation-states, but it has yet to assume a global economic dimension. Global governance, if it comes at all, risks arising by default rather than by design. This situation is dangerous for the health of our shrinking planet, and it bodes ill for the majority of the world's people.[18]

Then St. Francis said: "Brother Wolf, I order you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, to come with me now, without fear, into the town to make this peace pact in the name of the Lord."

And the Wolf immediately began to walk along beside St. Francis, just like a very gentle lamb. When the people saw this, they were greatly amazed, and

the news spread quickly throughout the whole town, so that all of them, men as well as women, great and small, assembled on the market place, because St. Francis was there with the wolf.

> We are Franciscan men and women who are followers of St. Francis of Assisi. We believe that all of creation, from the smallest organism to human beings, is an interdependent relationship on planet earth. We are aware that this relationship is threatened by a refusal to admit this interdependence, by exploitation and by domination.[19]

"So, dear people," he said, "Come back to the Lord, and do fitting penance, and God will free you from the wolf in this world and from the devouring fire of hell in the next world."

> Within themselves, let them always make a dwelling place and home for the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, so that, with undivided hearts, they may increase in universal love by continually turning to God and to neighbor.[20]

Then in the presence of all the people the wolf raised its right paw and put it in St. Francis' hand as a pledge.

> Led by the Lord, let them begin a life of penance, conscious that all of us must be continuously and totally converted to the Lord...
>
> For He 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.[21]

And the crowd was so filled with amazement and joy, out of devotion for the Saint as well as over the novelty of the miracle and over the peace pact between the wolf and the people, that they all shouted to the sky, praising and blessing the Lord Jesus Christ who had sent St. Francis to them, by whose merits they had been freed from such a fierce wolf and saved from such a terrible scourge and had recovered peace and quiet.

> 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 will rest upon them,
> and the Lord will make His home and dwelling place with them.
> They are the children of the heavenly Father whose works they do.
> They are the spouses, brothers, and mothers of Our Lord Jesus Christ.[22]

Endnotes

[1] *Ep Fid I,* 5, 1-4. (This translation is taken from the Prologue to the Rule and Life of the Brothers and Sisters of The Third Order Regular of St. Francis.)

[2] *Ep Fid I,* 5-7.

[3] *Testament* 1-3.

[4] See: Raoul Manselli, "San Francesco dal dolore degli uomini al Cristo crocifisso," in *Analecta TOR* XVI (1983): 191-210.

[5] I offer some discussion and further bibliography on this point in *"De illis qui faciunt penitentiam" - The Rule of the Secular Franciscan Order: Origins, Development, Interpretation* (Rome: Istituto Storico dei Cappuccini, 1991), 120-123.

[6] *Ep Min* 2-3, 7-8.

[7] Roland Faley, T.O.R., "Visione Biblico-teologica della Penitenza e sua Espressione Oggi," in *Ritorno a Francesco* (Rome 1980), 93-94.

[8] Lino Temperini, T.O.R., "Penitential Spirituality in the Franciscan Sources," *Analecta TOR* XIV/132 (1980): 555.

[9] David Flood, "The Commonitorium," in *Haversack* (April 1980): 20.

[10] *Ep Fid II,* 45-47.

[11] Flood, "The Commonitorium," in *Haversack* (April 1980): 22.

[12] *Ep Fid I,* I: 7.

[13] *Ep Fid I,* I: 8-10.

[14] Mt 12:50

[15] *Ep Fid I,* I: 19, 21.

[16] *Human Development Report 1992* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8.

[17] *Ibid.,* 14.

[18] *Ibid.,* 78.

[19] Vision Statement of *Franciscans at the UN.*

[20] *TOR Rule* II: 8

[21] *TOR Rule* II: 6, IX: 29.

[22] *Ep Fid I,* I: 5-7.

* * *

Book Reviews

The Touch of God: Telling Stories of St. Francis for Everyday Living. By Kieran M. Kay, O.F.M. Conv. Hauppauge, N.Y.: Living Flame Press, Publishers, 1989. Paper, $6.95.

Reviewed by Gordon J. De La Vars, S.F.O., Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y.

In his Forward, Fr. Kieran admits that while most of the thirty-seven short stories in this collection "are based upon historical incident in the life of Francis," some are "entirely made up." All the stories, however, "deal with some aspect of Franciscan spirituality" that "every Franciscan knows with his or her mind, but often finds difficult to pin down in words." The intention here is not to chronicle Francis' life so much as to evoke the spirit of Francis' vision, to characterize his imagination, and thus to give us a way to approach him and his experience of God through our own imaginations, at an individual and intimate level.

Fr. Kieran accomplishes this handsomely for the most part, through deftly drawn portraits of Francis and his followers that display a lyrical quality reminiscent of Murray Bodo's **The Journey and the Dream** and, more recently, his **Tales of St. Francis**. In some stories, however, such as "Love Creates Light," "Healing the Hurts," and "Flowing with Life," he presents Francis himself too sentimentally and Francis' situation with too little depth or scrutiny; in others, contemporary jargon competes with evocative, metaphoric language, further blurring the intended message. Nonetheless, the best of these stories read like prose poems, with moments of spiritual energy and insight emerging suddenly from ordinary events. This is, of course, appropriate when considering Francis, for whom the ordinary was always extraordinary, the simple and the everyday invariably marked and informed by the divine presence. What comes through quite vividly in these accounts is the pattern of a man's life all but completely imbued with the knowledge that, as Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God."

Yet Francis' humility never allowed him to boast of this knowledge; so Fr. Kieran scrupulously avoids portraying Francis in any way confident or self-assured, and this is perhaps the book's most compelling feature. For it is a very human Francis we meet in these pages, a person with whom we can readily identify: someone haunted by desires, assailed by doubts, at times frightened by the enormity of life's challenges, at other times even bewildered by the grace sent to meet them. Significantly, the radical conversion that changed his life has not, in Fr. Kieran's telling, provided all the answers. A good example is an early story called "The Grey Days," in which Francis, despite his certainty of God's indwelling, experiences an almost palpable emptiness, a "weakness and powerlessness" that soon becomes an "agony." It is a feeling of isolation that C. S. Lewis once compared to that of having "a door slammed in your face, and the sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence." Gradually, though, out of this silence and seemingly "interminable" waiting, Francis hears a voice: absence becomes substance, and the empty moment itself speaks "softly of the mystery of God."

The honesty with which Fr. Kieran depicts Francis' relationship with God is also evident in his portraits of Francis with his followers. One especially moving story that demonstrates this is "The Gift of Clare." Here Francis, recalling a previous meeting with Clare, is overcome at once by exaltation and fear, by the sense that Clare in her radiant holiness symbolizes "his own soul," yet also by the suspicion that he is too much attracted to her physical beauty. "Was it the erotic in him that did not die easily," he wonders, "the old man in him that needed to be transformed yet more by the power of God?" Characteristically, neither of these questions is explicitly answered, and once again Francis is confronted by the ambiguity both of his own nature and of his response to God's call. The answer he does receive, however, is more profound and encompassing than he could have anticipated, coming in a moment of critical insight in which he at last understands who Clare is: "She was a living testimony of all that Francis could not find in himself — all that was kind and gentle, all that was delicate and compassionate and warm ... She was gift."

Fr. Kieran's book is filled with such moments of awareness, examples that grace moved mysteriously but steadily through Francis' life, as it does through our own lives, appearing when we least expect it, when we feel farthest from God's presence, when we are the most ignorant of his will. Francis' great strength, the gift of his conversion, was his ability to wait and listen for these appearances. So in these meditative stories we encounter a man who consistently allowed God to take control of his whole self and thus liberate it from the illusory belief that one can accomplish all things on one's own.

* * *

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

"Blown by all the winds that pass
And wet with all the showers"
They lie forever still, our dead
Condemned to their own cyclic bed
In Glen Riddle's convent churchyard.

They will not see the grass return
Nor hear the squirrels sport above them
Nor joy to find a sun-filled stream
Nor feel what loss their love can mean
To us who grope about without it.

Sr. Clare Immaculate

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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 Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
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
Form Viv: 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

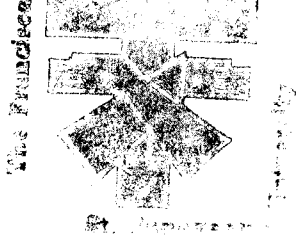
[1] I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

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
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).



Reflection: Story as Gift, Incarnation

ROBERT M. STEWART, O.F.M.

It has been cold these past November days, snow already covering the ground, but this evening in chapel during our prayer our hearts were warmed by the brothers and sisters who shared with us stories of faith. How is it that we do not always remember the power of story, its power to proclaim, to nurture, to challenge, to speak to the heart?

As I listened and basked in the warmth, I remembered the words of Walter Wangerin, a Lutheran minister, pastor and writer... *he* knew well the power of story; he had waxed poetic (and theologically) in his collection of stories called *Ragman and Other Cries of Faith*. In the silence of my heart I listened again as Walter spoke of his childhood, of his terrible bouts of poison ivy, of that one fateful day while suffering terribly with that itch how his father came to speak with him...

> Without turning my head, without so much as a sob or a moan, I began to cry. The tears trailed down my temple and pooled in my ear. I thought that I would die soon. But then I heard a strangled sound to my left. It was my father. He'd risen to his feet. His hands were up and empty. His face was so full of anguish, seeing my tears, that my own heart went out to the man. He turned, turned fully round in the bedroom, seeming so helpless; and then he bolted for the door, crying "Calamine lotion!"— hit the wood and left.
>
> Calamine lotion. I was experienced in the ways of poison ivy. I knew that calamine lotion was utterly useless... Nevertheless, when my father appeared again with a giant bottle of the stuff; when my father knelt down beside the bed, uncovered me, and began so gently with his own hand to rub it on; when my father's eyes damped with tears of suffering, so that I saw with wonder that my pain had actually become *his own pain* and that it was *our* pain that had sent him rocketing to the drug store; when I saw and felt that miracle, a second miracle took place: the ivy did not itch.

Calamine lotion did not do this thing!

My father's love did this thing - and I knew it! Oh, my heart ached to have such a father, who could enter into me and hurt so much that he took my hurt away.

I was a special child that day, abed and still and watchful.

For this was the love of God, incarnate in a man with a receding hairline and a patch of whisker on his chin and a smell I shall never forget.

Whom was I naked before? Whose hand made miracles against my skin? God. God's.

It was here I first began to discover the mercy of God and such magnificent preachments as "Vicarious Suffering." And it was here I learned that love was no word, but an event, a sacrifice. But as yet I knew none of the phrases, nor the *theou logoi*. Simply, I had experienced the power of God.

I tell you the story, dear brothers and sisters, to say — tell stories. It is the fullness of witness. (pages 81-82)

This evening some of my brothers and sisters gave witness. This evening we celebrated the commemoration of the deceased members of the Seraphic Order by sharing some stories about franciscans that they had known. Stories revealed how those men and women had spoken of God through their lives. Only a few present spoke story, offered witness; I suspect that all present treasured memories in their hearts and felt renewed in the challenge and promise of franciscan vocation.

My own thoughts ran to my earlier years at St. Bonaventure University, to that time when our provincial infirmary was located here on the first floor of the old friary. I remembered, in particular, Cyril and Henry. Brother Cyril Vey had been a tailor in the province for many, many years. His small body had grown quite frail and he shuffled ever-so-slowly down the long corridors of the infirmary and friary. We would meet in those corridors or in the refectory, for Cyril loved his coffee and donuts. I had quickly learned Cyril's favorite type of donut and how to fix his coffee: half coffee, half milk, and lots of sugar. We would sit and talk as he dipped those donuts in his cup filled-to-overflowing. I cannot remember exactly what we talked about, though I remember laughing often. I *do* remember his shuffling feet, his smiling face, his gentleness, his innocence, his simplicity... he was for me *Brother Leo*; he lived for me what our holy father Francis had asked: that "we must be simple, humble, and pure."

Fr. Henry Sharp also spoke powerfully to my heart during his days at the infirmary. During his struggle with cancer and radiation treatment, he had somehow developed a large open wound at the base of his spine which would not heal. It needed to be packed with gauze each day. Often I heard about his

pain - from the nurses and some of the friars who marveled that he could endure it - but never from Henry. His life was one of patient endurance. In my conversations with Henry he spoke with joy and enthusiasm about his life and ministry; he spoke of prayer and blessing; he spoke of God. In his patient suffering, he was for me *Brother Francis*, his pain becoming a prayer of praise, as he knew more deeply the suffering Christ.

I remembered my dear friend, Sr. Helen James, and the words she spoke to me one bright fall day, words that continue to sustain me: "Bob, a day does not go by when I do not remember you in prayer." She had spoken deliberately and with great love words of covenant. Indeed, I knew that every day of her life her faithful prayer embraced me. I remember my tears upon hearing of her death. The General, as I affectionately called Sr. Helen, was in her own way my *Sister Clare* sustaining me with her love, her prayer, her witness...

A peaceful calm seemed to settle upon us as we continued our prayer. We left the chapel, greeted by winter's frozen breath, to return home with holy joy. We had been strengthened by the witness, empowered for our journeys. And we had learned (I think... I hope) that we must tell stories, that we must remember the incarnation of God in our midst. For 'tis the season of Advent; we will soon celebrate Christmas and the mystery of the Incarnation. We remember the stories of salvation history; we revisit Bethlehem so that our imaginations might be formed by the One who came among us - Wonder Counselor, Almighty God, Prince of Peace; but who came among us as poor and lowly, suffering servant...

Francis knew so very well...

What he did on the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ near the little town called Greccio, in the third year before his glorious death, should especially be noted and recalled with reverent memory. In that place there was a certain man by the name of John, of good reputation and an even better life, whom blessed Francis loved with a special love...

Blessed Francis sent for this man... and he said to him... "I wish to do something that will recall to memory the little Child who was born in Bethlehem and set before our bodily eyes in some way the inconveniences of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he lay upon the hay where he had been placed." When the good and faithful man heard these things, he ran with haste and prepared in that place all the things the saint had told him...

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 forgotten in the hearts of many; but, by the working of his grace, he was

brought to life again through his servant St. Francis and stamped upon their fervent memory. At length the solemn night celebration was brought to a close, and each one returned home with holy joy. (*1 Cel* 84, 86)

So let us remember Christ born among us; let us celebrate by remembering those who have given witness to the truth that is God, the One who is Love... through being simple, humble servants.

This Christmas let us give the gift of story: let us remember and retell of Jesus born in Bethlehem, Christ born among us; let us remember and tell of those franciscan saints among us who have followed in his footprints, Christ born among us. Let us share stories that we might be strengthened in our journeys, that we might remember, celebrate and believe, that we might live the story, follow in his footprints, and speak to others this holy joy. This Christmas, let us give stories... "for they are the fullness of witness."

* * *

The faculty and staff of the
Franciscan Institute
join the editors
in wishing all of you
a most blessed and holy Christmas.
May the light which is Christ
enlighten your hearts
and give you
a correct faith,
a certain hope,
a perfect charity,
so that you may more fully follow in his footprints
throughout this new year.

The Christian Religion, Ethics and Environment

GIANMARIA POLIDORO, O.F.M

So as to avoid any misunderstandings, it would be convenient first of all that I specify exactly what I mean by "*environment*." Air, water earth, mountain ranges, plains, plants and animals, all this fruit of creation I call "*environment*." It is in this same sense I intend the term *nature*, which I willingly substitute with the term *creation* at times.

Then when I speak of ecology (borrowing from Alfonso Auer's book *Ethics of the Environment*), I intend it as the doctrine the world as home (from the Greek word *oikos*). In view of the fact that the doctrine of ecology is developed by human beings for human beings, it needs to be treated as the correct way that a person must live in this home which is the world.

The ecological problem, that is the problem of the correct way of our living in our home which is the world, was not felt only by our contemporaries, even though, as I said before, only now has the question become more alive and explosive.

Ever since we as human beings began making our way in the world, using our intelligence through which we are able to create technologies which produced an ever progressive growth, the problem of human beings and their environment began to be both objectively and subjectively relevant to ethical

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A previous lecture by Fr. Gianmaria Polidoro was published in the May issue of The CORD. A member of the International Center for Peace in Assisi, Fr. Polidoro also serves as a delegate of the Order of Friars Minor for Albania. This lecture was delivered at Siena College in Loudonville, New York.

reflection. As long as the human species was a hunter in the same way as other animals, human actions fitted into an environmental balance. Human predatory activity could be either pleasant or difficult for primitive peoples, but certainly by no means was it an activity which bothered nature and its preservations.

Bit by bit that human intelligence created a more developed and powerful technology; nature began to be subjected to the human species who developed a purely instrumental vision of nature. Undoubtedly in early times and for many centuries nature's subjection to humans was of little weight. Human beings were frightened by the forces of nature which, not being able to overcome, they sought to befriend by means of various magical rites. However, in this last century it seems that the human species has overwhelmed nature to such an extent, because of ever advanced technology, that we can envision the possibility of destroying that very environment in which we live. Now we fear only great apocalyptic phenomena which we are not able to dominate, such has earthquakes. We no longer fear drought or floods; we have enough resources to take remedial measures. (This naturally refers to the so-called "first world" which more than any feels the ecological problem.) As for ecological alarm, it's interesting to read what Thomas Sieger Derr writes in *Ecology and Human Liberation* (Italian translation, Brescia 1974) concerning human wrong-doings against nature ever since ancient times. He states that:

> the destruction of the pastures, forests and other similar mistakes of such enormous dimensions as to destroy entire civilizations were committed by Egyptians, Assyrians, Romans, North Africans, Persians, Aztecs... More than three centuries before the Christian era, Plato already deplored in his *Critias* the cutting of the forest in Attica. Ever since the dawn of history, man has never ceased from altering his environment dramatically, upsetting every ecological equilibrium. Primitive hunters used to burn the woods to be able to drive the game out. (page 58)

We can add to these observations the need to find cultivatable land, which for many centuries was so great that often it drove people - agriculturally unskilled - to plant predatory cultivations and thus to be unable to regenerate the used lands. Many deforestations and desertifications have been the work of humans, even though helped by nature itself.

During this early history of the ecological problem we can see how ethical ecological thought was being organized. It is interesting to re-read different descriptions which exalt times of peace over against times of war when everything is destroyed. It is moving to read words of ecological concern in Deuteronomy:

> If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them. Although

> you may take foods from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you? (Dt 20:19).

This verse has value even though it is followed by a seemingly utilitarian verse which permits the cutting of trees, which don't bear fruit, to make bulwarks.

Let us now enter more deeply into this view of things. For that which concerns the philosophical systems of ethics regarding nature, I recommend the precise analysis offered by Sergio Bartolommei in his book *Ethics and Environment* (Milan 1989), particularly in the second and third chapters.

The main question in the present discussion taking place in our Western tradition we can find in two options or antithetical visualizations: one anthropocentric and the other physiocentric.[1] The terms of this debate can be stated in this way: Do humans have moral obligations toward the environment, the non-hunting species and natural system? Do moral principles exist when dealing with the non-human world? Or are such principles to be used only in interhuman relationships?

Bartolommei, in above-mentioned work, singles out two groups into which the various philosophical positions can be summarized:

> The first group, or "party" radically protests against the idea of "human domination of nature" and sustains that such new problems for ethics, such as the relationship between man and his natural environment, are problems which also demand "new ethics," and with new principles, new values and a new hierarchy of these values. This is the "party" of those who sustain the urgent need for an *ethical* ecology, which founds the moral worth of natural objects on ecological notions such as the "biotic pyramid"; the "interdependence of living and non-living beings," the "balance of nature."
>
> The second "party," on the contrary, sustains that there is no need for any revolution of the ethical theory in order to face the new questions on how humans treat nature; all that is asked for is to enlarge the context of what comes under the influence of morality and for this purpose it is enough to extend, to integrate or to render more flexible the categories of traditional ethics so as to be able to include new topics and new questions. This is the "party" of the supporters of the ethics of "rights," of "respect for life" and of utilitarianism applied in the field of the relations between man and nature. (page 25)

[1] In the Anglo-Saxon world in particular, there is an articulated debate on the relationship "man-nature" which dates back to the beginning of the seventies. Some very interesting publications have given birth to an inter-disciplinary magazine *Environmental Ethics* dedicated to the philosophical aspect of the environmental problem. This magazine began in the Spring of 1979 at the University of New Mexico and presently is published by the Department of Philosophy at the University of Georgia.

As one can well see, the whole debate is centered on the theme of anthropocentrism - those in favor of it and those against it - almost like a "Manichaeism," with no more ample vision of things.

Regarding anthropocentrism, an accusation against the Judeo-Christian tradition claims that such tradition is responsible for the concept of the human species as a being all on its own in the context of nature. This tradition has greatly influenced moral and intellectual habits in the West. For example, L. White Jr. in *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford 1952) states: "No more fundamental change in the idea of man's relation to the soil can be imagined: once man had been part of nature; now he became her exploiter." (page 56)

I have tried to present a broad enough vision of the question so that one can see the novelty of Christianity within the context of ecological discussions. It is a novelty expressed with religious language which must be translated and introduced into other languages: economical, ethical, social, political. The religious language in fact allows us to enter into the problem using categories which are not contrary but complementary, and in some ways basic for a correct approach to reality.

Peace with Creation

In an article of mine I stated:

> This word *ecology* arouses in us, first of all, a sense of worry. Like saying: But what are we up to? What are they doing to nature? Don't they realize that the waters are dying (who would have ever thought a hundred years ago that the waters could die?), that day after day whole breeds of small and large animals are disappearing (who knows if we will get to a point of having only cows, sheep and chickens...?), that pollution is making Planet Earth unlivable?
>
> These are things which we say when we talk about ecology and we are very worried about what we are losing: if there were only someone who cared about chickens? Or somebody who felt compassion for the flea's fate!
>
> That is the picture. That's what normally gets written: ecology considered as apprehension of that which is growing short or of that which is about to be lost; and this fills us with emotion.
>
> This kind of ecology is not for me. It gives me the impression that a lot gets written just from an egoistic standpoint, just because we are about to lose or we are about to be left without something.

We Christians understand ecology in another way: in the light of Revelation. That is why I prefer an alternative to the word "ecology" using in its place "peace with Creation." This latter expression contains and manifests our religious point of view on the ethical problem regarding the environment. On the

first page of the Bible we find the description (using its own categories) of the beginning of the adventure of the whole creation, including the creation of human beings. Creation is presented as an act of God's love. This basic principle, when we talk about peace, leads us to perceive the human person as having been created constitutionally non-violent. When we talk about ecology, it leads us to see fraternal relationship in all created things, though each single creature has its own precise distinctions. It is God who creates heaven and earth and all that is therein. "He who lives forever created the whole universe" (Sir 18:1) and if the Creator is "the Living" then he can not be the author of death. Let us recall the Biblical Narrative of Creation. The scene presents God who creates heaven and earth and all the animals with the power of his word. The sacred writer, during his narration, continually inserts the expression: "And God saw that it was very good" (the Greek word *kalos* which can be translated as "beautiful" is significant). According to the Bible's viewpoint, the environment is something which is very good/beautiful, or, so to speak, corresponding to God's plan, perfectly brought about according to his will. The Sacred Scriptures add: "God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Gn 1:27). Here we have the same creative act as for all the rest, with this particularity that humankind is created in the image of God. For this reason the human is a creature just like all the rest of creation, and at the same time is also something more, as an image. From this point in common and from this difference stems the problem of their relationship; that is, there begins a relationship which has to follow certain rules, and this is a problem. If human beings and other creatures had only this point in common in that they were all created together, there would have been no problem. However, the problem rises up on account of this particularity which is added on to the common meeting point, the particularity of the image, which is also intelligence, reflection, etc. In this matter, we can say that God himself offers rules for relationship in the context of creation: God blessed them (the man and woman) and said to them: be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Gn 1:28). The rule which God entrusts for this relationship is included in the words "subdue" (the earth) and "have dominion" (over living things). These are definitely words which to modern day ears, given our enormous technological power, can sound very alarming. But they didn't sound so alarming to our ancestors and forefathers who are used to doing battle tirelessly in order to maintain their own vital living space.

However, the whole issue is clarified and made more precise: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it." (Gn 2:15) To subdue and to dominate must be interpreted in this new light: to till and

to keep. Just like saying: to subdue is to cultivate and, in a certain way, to take possession, but not by means of an evil exploitation. A similar consideration can be made regarding the following decision made by God: "To every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps in the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food" (Gn 1,30). This is a decision which opens the issue on food and which, as we'll soon see, is also quite a problem. God gives to all the living creatures every green herb for food and this balances the providence foreseen for the human creature, that is, cultivation - foreseeing and providing for our own nourishment using our own intelligence and ability. Human beings are given the intelligence to be able to till the land, that is, to modify the environment, and also the ethical rule of "keeping" it. In other words, we have the ability to modify it, but at the same time we have to take care of it. I'll speak later on the richness of the development of this religious viewpoint of the ethical support in relations between human beings and the environment. However, it seems necessary here to make a distinction between the technical solution to the environmental problem and the ethical solution. The technical solution is consequential to the ethical one and cannot take its place. In other words, we cannot just say that the water is polluted and thus seek a technological method to clean it. Before using any kind of technology, we must first identify the ethical link that needs to be reconstructed where it has been destroyed; and only after that can we choose a more apt way to reach our goal. Too often when treating ecological problems or environmental safeguard, the point of arrival in our worries and measures is simply to restore the usefulness of some benefit, without worrying about whether or not the foreseen use be in conformity with God's plan in creation.

The Sense of Created Things

The Sacred Writer opens the narration of the creation of Eve with a motivation which seems very interesting. Verses 18-20 of the second chapter of Genesis (which according to Scripture scholars comes from another tradition, which however, takes nothing away from its religious teaching), confronts us with other information.

> And then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper like unto him." And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and he brought them to Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And so Adam gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the air and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper like unto him.

In the mentality of the Bible, to give something a name means to take intellectual possession of that certain reality. For that which concerns us, the Sacred Writer wishes to show us that the man created by God understood God's plan for creation, and in this way he understood the sense that it had.

In this wider vision, the figure of the garden expresses in its totality this theological concept: there exists a reality, besides the human, which is not purely instrumental. It is a reality, an environment, where human beings cooperate not (or not only) on an instinctive and natural level like other living things, or as mass and energy like the inanimate world, but with intentionality and for certain purpose, because they are the image of the Creator who created with intentionality and with a purpose in mind.

When I realize that the environment belongs to me in the same way that I belong to Christ, and that Christ, the Son of God, belongs to his Father, then my way of treating things, my way of treating the environment becomes a wonder-full experience.

Thus the first step of human ethics regarding the environment is that of making a "garden" out of it; that is to say putting order in it by completing (if you'll allow me to use this verb) the work of creation, in a certain sense. This seems to be in line with what a Christian must do in order to cooperate in his own redemption - we must "add on" so that redemption can become functional in us. St. Paul says: "I am now rejoicing in my suffering for your sake and in my flesh I am completing what was lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church." (Col 1:24). If Christ had done everything, he would have avoided any human collaboration and he would have taken away any human creativity, intentional action, and free expression. This is what happens with creation: human beings are called to live ethically in relationship with the environment forming the *cosmos* (neither exploiting it, nor trampling on it, nor making an instrument out of it). In the *cosmos* humans and animals and plants and rocks each have their own purpose and their own place. In the light of this vision we can say, for example, that the nuclear energy used to make bombs is not respected in its dignity and in its sense as "force of nature" which we are called to discover and to "cultivate" and to put in order. A force of that nature created by a God of love cannot be used to do evil without a lack of respect for

its particular significance. If we should do this, then instead of cosmos we create chaos *(caos)*. We do not act as an image of that God which instead of chaos created the cosmos.

One might object that this is an idyllic vision: very rewarding emotionally, but which in no way corresponds to reality where, on the contrary, we see so much violence. To such an observation, the Bible offers an explanation for the violence which stains the various relations in the context of the created world. This explanation is centered on the reality of sin. The Bible looks at it and explains this very evident reality from a religious standpoint, offering its own interpretation to cosmology. For this reason we will have to introduce here the narration of Adam's sin, underlining that part of the story which most pertains to our topic:

> And to the man he said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, "You shall not eat of it," cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and dust you shall return." (Gn 3:17-19).

What is the meaning of this sin and of this malediction which from the man flows upon nature as well? If we want to interpret it in a language which isn't religious, it means that in nature there's an imbalance which should not be there, which is not "natural." Relations among created things are of mutual violence and exploitation. Such relations are wrong! It cannot go on like this! It must not be like this (ethical commitment) because in the beginning it was not like this. Old Testament thought waits for a redemption.

As we have seen, the Old Testament concludes its discussion on the environment in a pessimistic way, however remaining open to hope. Nature, which followed man in the curse, will follow him also in the redemption. Thus we read in psalm 36 (35):

> Your steadfast love, O Lord extends to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your judgments are like the great deep; you save humans and animals alike, O Lord. (verses 5-6)

As with sin of Adam even the earth was dammed, in the same way with the redemption of human beings there is also a redemption of the earth. It is a mysterious redemption, just beginning to germinate, eschatological, but certainly a redemption. Christ is the hope. Jesus Christ redeems us, and with us all creation.

Before going any further with this discussion, I think it would be worth citing a few enlightening lines from the book *Creation Theology* by J.L. Ruiz de la Pena (Italian trans, Borla 1988):

> If the Old Testament faith in creation was not, as we have seen so far, so much simply information regarding the past, as the assertion of the beginning of a salvific process opens toward the future which is in need of it, so also the coming of Christ, culminating point of history begun with creation, would be decisive for that faith...the New Testament brings an absolute novelty to the Old Testament's teaching on creation: the insertion of Jesus Christ... Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New can we find anything like a purely "chemical" cosmology; the cosmological aspect is in the function of the historical-salvific aspect, or, speaking in New Testament terms, Christological. (pages 55-56).

The theorist of this Christological vision, of a way that leads towards redemption, is St. Paul. He profoundly senses the various potentials of the redemption worked by Christ. In his letter to the Colossians, after having spoken of Christ by means of whom "all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible," he continues, adding on Christ's work as a renewer of all that which had been scattered by sin: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross." (Col 1:19-20).

These expressions are filled with significance which we still need to unfold. This theme is definitely the result of a personal drama between sin and redemption lived by Paul himself. Surely the words and ideas have to do with the curse of Genesis referenced above.

This opens up to our evaluation a new relationship which human beings have with creation after the redemption. We pass from a relationship of "custody," to that of reciprocal violence due to the curse, finally to arrive at a new relationship of reconciliation, of joyous peace, which is s prophecy to be brought about bit by bit as the redemption enters into our hearts and very flesh.

I believe that the sensibility so felt today for the environment and for all non-human creatures can be ascribed to this view of pacification which is coming about even in the midst of so many human contradictions. The fatigue of this pacification is very dramatic. The ethics of present human-environment relations is to be found in the methodology and in the fatigue of rebuilding peace, of bringing forth peace, of once again making cosmos out of all that which sin had transformed into chaos. Looking again to Ruiz de la Pena, we read:

> Paul can't hide the fact that the impressions stamped upon the world by the divine creation have been deformed. Creation is presently "subject to frailty"; it lays under the "slavery of corruption" (Rom 8:20-21). It doesn't faithfully reflect harmony and the divine order. On the part of creatures, the path towards God runs by way of similarity-dissimilarity dialectic. The deformation of the initial order calls for restoration, a new creation. This is where Paul will introduce the event of Jesus Christ into the theme of creation. (page 61)

The Magna Carta of this dramatic passage from sin to redemption, from the malediction to the reconciliation, we find in the letter to the Romans:

> I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of one who subjected it. I hope that the creation itself will set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom 8:18-21)

The picture presented here is intense and dramatic and points out the effort of human beings and creation in the "way of return." How different from the Christian point of view is the approach to the environmental problem of certain ecologisms.

The ecologism in vogue today looks at things poetically. Very often it just works on one's emotions. It mainly has confidence in human laws and depends on egoistic fears. A Christian cannot act like this: the Christian knows that the environmental problem, separate from momentary emotivity, is a problem which has to do with the human person as a whole and with effort one makes to change interiorly. Only the person at peace with self and well-balanced can be sure of living a good relationship with nature. The question is not marginal. In fact, for many currents of thought regarding ecology, it is enough for human beings not to damage nature to be able to have a good relationship with it. For a Christian it has to do with nature's liberation from a violence (which would seem impossible to exterminate), in such a way that this violence gets turned into a force, like human violence which becomes *power* if one accepts being redeemed by Christ. It is the power which we call *non-violence.*

Relationship of Belonging

This relationship of united effort to be freed from the conditioning of sin, brings us still further in our reflection to be able to perceive a more perfect ethical relationship between human beings and nature.

Here again we have the Pauline theology which is sensitive to this matter: "all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollo or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future - all belong to you, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God." (Cor 3:21-22).

In this simple yet dense expression we can perceive all created reality in a coral relationship, though distinct one thing from the other. All things are yours: like saying everything belongs to us. But how does it belong to us? As a possession? Through exploitation? No! Everything belongs to us just like we belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.

This type of belonging has nothing to suggest exploitation or egoism. It is a belonging understood in a positive, not negative way. When I realize that the environment belongs to me in the same way that I belong to Christ, and that Christ, the Son of God, belongs to his Father, then my way of treating things, my way of treating the environment becomes a wonder-full experience. My ethics goes beyond the ethics of respect for every created thing, beyond the ethics of respect for their real sense, beyond th ethics for accepting their rights, and even beyond the ethics of benevolence. My ethics becomes an ethics of participation, of loving care, of peace. Keeping in mind the due distinction, in a way we can apply to our relationship with the environment that very invocation in which Christ prays for the highest level of relationship among all Christians: "I pray... that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (Jn 17:20-21). Even seeing the way we treat nature, the world may believe "that you have sent me."

This type of vision is truly wonderful and suggestive. But like the Commandment of Love of which it is a part, either it seems unreachable or it clashes with concrete human behavior. One of the points which can most cause friction is the problem of food. How is it that we who claim to love with a love of participation eat not only vegetable life but even animal life? Though no easy problem, it has to be dealt with so that the ethical picture of the relationship human-environment may be even better clarified and enlightened.

Some time ago, I attempted to draft an ecological decalogue to which I gave the title "The Decalogue of Francis at the Porziuncola," due to the Franciscan sensibility which animates it. In this decalogue, I inserted the problem of food, a topic which I have not seen dealt with, at least in an appropriate rather than emotional way. The sixth point of the decalogue reads: "You are given the task of discovering the mastery of food: because life is nourished with life."

It is a question which could destroy at its very root any fancy of an ecology of Love and not just mere convenience because it's useless trying to hide the fact: every time that we eat food, we kill life. A very small thing is the excuse of those who limit themselves to the problem of the killing of those animals which arouse in us a particular tenderness, or even the killing of all animals for that matter. Every time that we eat, even if it be only vegetables, it always has to do with life. Faced with so great a problem, which is eminently an ethical problem, I only tried to suggest an answer which I repeat here for intellectual honesty, with the hope of helping in some way to find a solution.

I'll make use of that typical religious reality which concerns the "mysterium" —mystery. This mystery is not the breaking into man's life of that which is irrational. Too often it has been confused with irrationality. Instead it is the ability to look beyond, if I can so express myself, to perceive that which cannot be expressed with the usual human tongue. It helps us to discover a new way of understanding. It is the understanding which comes to us from the "Wisdom" of God, which is able to untie even the tightest knots such as suffering and death.

"so that life may nourish life."

This "mysterium" transforms the expression "for life is nourished with life" into another with a much more profound meaning: "so that life may nourish life." In this way the possessive "devouring" of the first enunciation is transposed to a donation of life so that from the former we move to a way of acting: "... I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." (Jn 10:10). And again: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." (Jn 15:13). This is the way a hero acts, who sacrifices his own life so that others may be saved. It is the attitude of service of one who spends his or her own time and existence in order to help others. It is also like a mother who offers her breast to her new-born baby: life which joyfully nourishes life. This "mysterium" is found in this intuition and in this conviction: that the offering of oneself can be joyous donation. I make no claim to offer a solution, but rather, to offer an intuition that may lead to a possible solution.

This sense of giving up one's own life for another was suggested to me by a story of St. Francis narrated by Thomas of Celano (2 Cel 111). Once when the saint was near the monastery of St. Verecondo, it so happened that one night a ewe gave birth to a lamb, which unfortunately was bitten by a sow. When St. Francis heard of it, he wept for the lamb (being a symbol of Christ, and normally so sweet and calm), and cast this malediction: "Cursed be that evil beast which

killed you; let no man or animal eat your flesh." And so it happened that a short while later the animal died and was thrown into a pit outside the monastery "where it remained for a long time a dried like wood; and it did not serve as food for any hungry creature." (The same thing happened to a sparrow in 2 Cel 47.) This curse of Francis is very strange: "that no one eat of your flesh." I believe that Francis perceived the act of "becoming food" for others as an act of love, just like Christ becomes Eucharistic food for us. I wonder if this type of reflection would not prove to be enlightening for us.

In this way, we can present the Christian's ethical relationship with the environment in a dynamic way, a relationship which is developing and becoming even more perfect, bit by bit, that our capability of understanding increases. This relationship is a voyage, which accepts leaving the egoistic "shore" of the fear of the various types of pollution or the fear of losing nature, as long as it reaches the other "shore," that of love, of participation with the whole of creation which we thus realize to be brother, sister and mother (cf. The Canticle of St. Francis).

I would summarize this idea following with a line from Davide Marzaroli:

> All that which we see and all that which is unseen has been created by God. Everything has been created: the earth and the universe, living things, men and spirits. Only the Son was generated. All was created through the Son and for the Son. Thus "all things are yours, but you are Christ's and Christ is God's." In this ascending ownership indicated above, we have the Son who first received the creation from the Father and who then reconsigns it to the Father.

Today, post-redemption, we are living this reconsignment. Unfortunately however, we are committing a second original sin. If with the first original sin we ruined that which descended from the hands of the Creator Father ("dammed be the earth for cause of you"), now we run the risk of spoiling this "reconsignment to the Father." Creation, which is mystically returning to God, we are ruining once again. We are "consigning" to Christ a creation which God did not make. We are giving back to him a nature which is disfigured because it is not respected in its original sense and it is not loved with a love of belonging. We are reconsigning death and ugliness in place of life and beauty. For this reason, a Christian way of dealing with ecology is important... one which arouses an ethical commitment and which must be translated into the concrete languages of safeguarding and care and correct human behavior.

To our ethical commitment for a peaceful cohabitation this adds an attitude of humble repentance for the evil done to nature. This repentance is the beginning of a new life.

LEAVES GLUED TO PERPENDICULAR SKY
red clump sprouting silent.
Metallic quietude. I listen to the silence of your gaze. It
is mum. Something stirs on the stone, there, sombre.
You do not surmise it is a bird.

At the detour by scraggy genistas, your farewell smile
steals over the asphalt, faster than my searching eyes.
Trees run motionless in semi-darkness.

In the mirror I see the pointed sprout of sansevieria, some
books and, seated at this table, my head bent like
the neck of the lamp.

It is night.

I exhausted my dream with bronze syntactics
behind the closed door solitude screams its silence
copper curves the sea's hiatus
meeting my gaze I pursue my dream
basin with windy reflections

the heavy stone whirls round

Lisa Boscane, O.S.C.
Nice-Cimiez, France
[Translated by Mary McCarthy, R.S.M.
from a **dialogue de nuit** (Paris: Editions
St-Germain-des-Prés, 1976), 28, 29.]

Considerations on the Holy Stigmata
(Poems based on *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*)

III
The Third Consideration on the Holy Stigmata

Mid-September, at the foot of the Holy Cross,
feast day and Leo, again, across a narrowing
bridge. No answer; he moved closer, mouth open,
barely conscious, only that voice: "Who art thou,
O my most sweet God. And what am I, most vile worm,
and thy worthless servant?" Leo, yellow-faced in
the tourch descending, it rested on the unkept head,
the absent voice murmuring in the remaining leaves,
gilt above him. He turned to go, but heard
his rescue, his father. At forgiveness's still whole
feet, he wept. And Francis, this watered sprig,
this speech of God, what could he say beyond a
playful tug at Leo's ear, and then all of his own.
WHAT LEO HAD ALMOST HEARD? The dogwood was in bloom,
the carp swimming, mouths gaping and flakes of light,

David Craig, an assistant professor of English at the Franciscan University of Steubenville, published a book of poems based upon the Fioretti in 1980 entitled "The Sandaled Foot." Recently the poet revisited the Fioretti; here we offer one of his artful renderings of the Considerations on the Holy Stigmata.

the absolute love of God, over us, in every high
nettle, their graceful bobbings. And us, out
of sync, rioting over rock and road; we could beat
ourselves until we bleed. It would not help.
When we look then, leaning, in the water, we see
the best we can make of it: what He can do.
AND THE REACHING FROM HIS CHEST? God's three
perfect gifts, perfectly given: uttermost poverty,
chasity, obedience. Yes, and soon God would do
holy things on this mountain, all the world will
wonder. Leo wondered—what more of a sign could
there be?

Together they opened the Gospels three times:
each time to the time of our Lord's keeping.
The Passion. Francis' heart stuck each time:
this was the One who still dragged him up that
sorrow road, the One whose pulse beat above oblivious
gray trees, in the fat purple hearts of eggplant,
in the veined wheel and all of its turnings.
And when the stars rose above him, when the winters
bit him, His was the sweet dirt breast he slept on.
And the repaying? This small sad life given, though
he knew it couldn't be little enough.

The day before the feast, an angel for comfort,
to advise preparation. And the next day, heavy
on the spool of his nature, he faced east like
the Soldan, prayed, for two last graces. (As God
had reckoned this time and all his days, One's
delight having become the other's smile.) He wanted to
feel the passion bodily, not just psychologically,
but where it was real, in his heart muscle, in his
tendons, joints, the road, dolorosa beneath his feet.
He wanted, in short, God. And God, as He always
does, answered. He inflamed Francis. And Francis
felt God again touch the world through him, upward,
fiery, rising, and the Seraph came. On six wings,

a Soul to feed his own. It moved toward him like a
sun, had the form of a man crucified: two wings
extended above His head, the Father as ever, being
glorified. Two wings were used for navigation,
though their movement was more one of an intent, of
giving the appearance of movement rather than of
physicality. And two wings covered Him: this return
for Francis only, both hidden. And Francis, lost
in the cold of feathers, in the eyes of his Lord
who convulsed in a short spasm, a shiver, the side
wound yawning without blood, in his own splintered body,
the entrails speaking: Jesus nailed to the cross.
And that little man, the one who saw the truth and
had the sense to stand there, the measure of who
he was, where he was.

The whole left side of the mountain lit up.
Shepherds saw it from their rock seats for an
hour or so. Had another star settled down between
Italian cliffs, had the moon lost a sliver, thus
signaling early winter, or had the nearest king
decreed it day? A tax on all who resisted?
Silk or the mud they were in? Hostelry windows
blinked. So early, this rising, yawns in creaking
beds, the maid turning up and out, butter churn
in hands, cold as the months to come. And certain
multeers who were going to Romagna rose as if
slapped and groggy, believing that the light came
from the rising sun. They saddled and loaded
their beasts. As they journeyed along, they saw
the light cease and then the natural sun rise.
Awakened, they sat on muleback. A wise one
shortly spoke of two days pay, but their ride
soon became a silent one. Closed-in on themselves,
clinging to what they thought they knew, they
counted hoof beats or the buzz of flies, early,
too early in the morning.

And in that light, Giovanni promised an anniversary.
On his death date to descend, God's breath, out
over the pale waters, into Purgatory, deliver
any of his faithful. A sign, what God would do
for the least of these. And who would see him come
down, this kiss of Christ, dirt and wound to any
ruby-jeweled crown and sun on a now fully fleshed head?

The wounds remained. No heavenly blood stained
tunic, nether garments, and the red lines of pain
shooting upward, mapping the force and reel in
open air. He held his hands on his lap, a couple
of dying birds, quailing, or behind his back,
fingers that couldn't grip, gripping fingers.
His thought was to hide them. He asked his brothers.
Illuminato told him that this pain was for the world,
so Francis took God's way. Asked them not to tell
of his disfiguration while he was alive. Covered,
the wounds bled, stuck, ripped, and yawned. When
Leo cleaned them, he had to tear cloth off of his
hands and breast. Francis would cry out, Leo nearly
swoon from the piercing cries of heaven.

Francis left the relic, the mountain, to his
brothers. Where he was going they could not follow,
yet, as Jesus told Peter. With the absurdly quaint
Leo beside him, he went back to St. Mary of the Angels.
His hands, not his, he gave to the brothers, to touch
and kiss. The pain of living as an opened wound in
the wind, heart of God, its slow beat and decline.
Brothers reverently took their comfort, his pain
with them. He left them there, and with Leo,
Little Sheep, came down from the holy mountain.
He wanted to die on common dirt, feel the good
cold ground seep into the dust that was his flesh.
He wanted to feel it take him in.

BLACKEYED

Were you trampled, susan, by a toad?
Did a storm crush you against the limestone
  that rocks your bed?

Does your "shiner's" humiliation cause
  sleepless comparison with sparkling eyes of
  Sister Marguerite,
  Brother Cosmos,
  your Michaelmas cousins
  and the Astors?

Daisies don't tell, susan; neither will you!
But remember all cannot be
  graceful morning glories.

Your remedy is within reach:
  vaporized lavender to clear your head
  dewy eucalyptus to compress your hurt
  astringent rosewater to cool the sting
warm mint tea to lift your spirits.

Today, you can stand a sunflowery 10' tall
and tonight reflect the **PAX ET BONUM** radiating
  from (Saint Francis') Sister Moon.

Daisies don't tell, susan, but we easily guess
  those strewn loves-me loves-me-nots:
He loves you! — Does He not?

Mary McCarthy, R.S.M.

St. Bonaventure on "Light"

DONALD DE MARCO, PH.D.

The thought of St. Bonaventure is remarkably proportioned, symmetric, and unified. Perhaps this is nowhere more evident than in his discussions on **light**. We present here an outline of the Seraphic doctor's thought concerning "light" in association with **Creation** and **Our Knowledge of Creation**.

For Bonaventure, light shines so powerfully throughout the universe and upon the human soul, that it is no more possible to deny the truth it impresses on that soul than it is to deny its presence in the physical world. "For even if truth did not exist," writes Bonaventure, "it is true that truth does not exist: and so something is true. And if something is true, it is true that truth exists."[1]

Creation

In his **Breviloquium**, Bonaventure offers an explanation of the six days of creation in accordance with degrees of light varying from the **luminous** and the **translucent** to the **opaque**.[2] The luminous is represented on the first day of creation when God separated light from darkness. The translucent is evident on the following day when He divided the waters from the firmament. The opaque is manifested on the next day when God separated the land from the waters. Collectively, these three days of creation show us how **division** reveals Divine wisdom. God manifests His wisdom through a series of divisions that allows the emergence of light, water, and land. It should be clear that such a series of events illustrates a direction that God's creation is taking, one that is moving from the more general and numinous to the more specific and concrete.

The next three days of creation display a recurrence of the progression from luminosity to translucence to opacity. But in this second triad, God is manifest-

Dr. Donald DeMarco is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of St. Jerome's College in Waterloo, Ontario. He is a well known writer and lecturer. His most recent book is BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE ASSAULT ON PARENTHOOD published by Ignatius Press, Harrison, New York. We are happy to welcome Dr. DeMarco back to The CORD.

ing not the wisdom that is associated with **division**, but the goodness that is associated with **provision**. Thus, on the fourth day, God adorns the heavens with lights: the stars, sun, and moon. The following day He brings fish and birds from the waters. On the sixth day, He brings forth land animals: mammals, reptiles, other beasts, and finally human beings. In this way God provides us with the beauty, food, and companionship.[3]

At the same time, another triad is involved. Whereas the first three days reveals God's **wisdom**, and the next three days His **goodness**, the essential fact of creation manifests God's **power**. God, therefore, who begins creation with light and proceeds to translucence and opacity, intends creation to take place over a period of six days so that He can clearly and distinctly manifest to us three essential features of His personality, namely, that He is **omnipotent**, **all-wise**, and **all-beneficent**.

In addition, when God declared that "light" was good, He was calling attention to the existence of yet another trilogy. As the cause of being, light is **powerful**; as the cause of understanding, light is **clear**; as the cause of ordering life, light is **good**.[5]

St. Bonaventure reminds us, in his intricately balanced explanation of the **Genesis** account of creation, that God is speaking to us in a most personal way, that He wants us to know about His **power**, **wisdom**, and **goodness**. He wants us to know about these divine attributes because He wants us to feel comfortable in the knowledge that God is not only the creator, but a wise one who is generous and provident. He wants us to feel assured and confident — at home, so to speak — as inhabitants of the world He created. He created the world for us and will not abandon us in our times of need.

In his **Collations on the Six Days**, Bonaventure calls upon "light" in order to develop a correspondence between the six days of creation and six levels of **vision**. The first level of vision is provided by nature (including intelligence), the second day by faith, and the third by Scripture. The next three levels of vision are provided by contemplation, the enlightenment of prophecy, and rapture in God.[6] After these there is a seventh vision of the glorified soul. According to St. Bonaventure, St. Paul had all seven levels of vision. The first two belong to many, the following pair to a few, and the fifth and sixth to an extremely small number.[7]

The first day of creation corresponds to the light of natural vision in accordance with the Psalmist's proclamation that "The light on the countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us."[8] Secondly, faith is the **firmament** which divides the waters. Next, Scripture is relatable to the dry land. The lights created on the fourth day are associated with contemplation. The enlightenment of prophecy is a certain kind of sight looking into the Eternal Mirror and is represented by the fifth day.[9] The vision of the sixth day, rapture in God, is implicit in God's

decision to "make humankind in Our image and likeness." The seventh day coincides with the separation from the body and the promise: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise". [10]

Our Knowledge of Creation:

When God created the world, He signed His work. His sign reveals His glory. But due to sin, humans suffered a severely diminished capacity to perceive this sign that God established in His work. To remedy the matter, God gave us a second book, Scripture, to serve as a light by which we could rediscover the relationship that exists between creation and its Creator.

As we develop science, we are able to discover traces of this signature which appear to him as flashes from the light that theology offers in full. In his **De reductione artium ad theologiam**, Bonaventure distinguishes four lights, of which the lesser three may be reduced to the fourth which is theology.

1) **The Exterior Light** is the light associated with mechanical arts and crafts that produce things external to us.

2) **The Inferior Light** is that of sense perception which is made possible by the corporeal light within us.

3) **The Interior Light** is the light of philosophical knowledge whose object is intelligible truths. This light itself is subdivided into three branches: rational knowledge which seeks the truth of concepts and words (logic and epistemology); natural philosophy, which studies the truth of things (metaphysics); moral philosophy, which examines the truths of human behavior.

4) **The Superior Light** is the light of the Scriptures (of theology), which is directed to the truths of salvation. [11]

After describing the function of these four lights, Bonaventure shows how the three lesser lights are reducible to the light of theology. In this way, all knowledge is unified since it is brought under a single light, the light of Sacred Scripture. The exterior, inferior, and interior lights are all subsumed under one light and are all perfected by it.

The light by which we **make**, **know**, and **do** is one light that unifies all these activities. God's light permeates every facet of human life. It is possible, therefore, that by following the lesser lights, we may see God in all things as we are drawn ever closer to Him.

When the lesser lights are disconnected from the "superior light", we labor in vain. The divine light penetrates human intelligence as well as all five corporeal senses so that human beings, by tracing these lights back to their source, may return to God. [12]

God's light permeates every facet of human life

By following the path of light back to God, one finds no reason for pride. The proud person discontinues his journey at the point where he ceased to honor God by taking credit himself for what he knows. Bonaventure himself is both a philosopher and a saint. In his own spiritual journey, his philosophical acumen allowed him to see the path; his sanctity allowed him to follow the path to its divine origin. As Bonaventure writes in the "Fourth Collation" on the **Six Days**: "But many philosophers, while attempting to void the darkness of error, have themselves become involved in major errors. **While professing to be wise, they have become fools**. Because they boasted of their knowledge, these philosophers have become the likes of Lucifer. With the Egyptians was the densest darkness, but with Your saints was the greatest light. All those who properly followed the Law of Nature the patriarchs, the prophets, and the philosophers, were the sons of light." [13]

Endnotes

[1] St. Bonaventure, "Collations on the Six Days", **The Works of Bonaventure**, Vol. V, tr. by Jose de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970), p. 60. Subsequent references to this series of volumes will be designated as **Works**.

[2] **Works**, Vol. II, " The Breviloquium" —II", pp. 72-75.

[3] **Ibid**. p. 74.

[4] **Ibid**. p. 72.

[5] **Works**, Vol. V, "Fifth Collation", p. 73.

[6] **Ibid**. "Third Collation", p. 56.

[7] **Ibid**. p. 54

[8] **Ibid**. p. 55

[9] Saint Bonaventure, **The Mind's Road to God**, tr. by George Boas (Indianapolis: Library of Liberal Arts, 1953), p. 21: "But thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has transported us out of darkness into His wonderful light, when through these lights given from without we are disposed to re-enter into the mirror of our mind, in which the divine lights shine."

[10] **Works**, V, p. 57.

[11] **Works**, "Introduction to Bonaventure", tr. from the French of J. Guy Bougerol, O.F.M. by Jose de Vinck, pp. 163-168.

[12] **Ibid**. p. 165.

[13] **Works**, V, p. 59.

Book Reviews

In Mysterious Ways: The Death and Life of a Parish Priest. By Paul Wilkes, NY: Avon Books, 1990. $4.99.

Reviewed by Fr. Daniel Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association, Instructor in English and Campus Minister at the University.

George Bernanos was a French novelist who died in 1948. Most of his novels had a Catholic priest as protagonist or principal character. One of his novels was translated into English in 1933 under the title, *A Diary of a Country Priest.* The work became a spiritual classic. Paul Wilkes, an American journalist, was so impressed by the work that he wanted to write "a modern corollary to Bernanos' spiritual classic" (xv). Bernanos' hero was a fictional character; Wilkes wanted a real life character. He approached the authorities in the Archdiocese of Boston and eventually settled upon writing the story of Father Joseph Greer, pastor of St. Patrick's Church in Natick, Massachusetts.

The writer received Father Greer's permission to accompany the priest in his daily life and to observe how he dealt with a life-threatening illness and still continued his duties as a busy pastor. Author Wilkes begins his story shortly after Father Greer was diagnosed as having multiple myeloma - a cancer of the plasma cells in bone marrow. The author is able to describe in detail the medical treatment that Father Greer received as well as the priest's response both to the illness itself and the treatment and to his return to active ministry.

The author gives a background summary of the state of the Catholic Church in St. Patrick's, a typical suburban parish in the Boston Archdiocese. He locates Father Greer in a parish whose physical plant is in dire need of repair and whose parishioners have become settled in a customary laid-back pattern. Father Greer reluctantly accepted the responsibility of becoming the parish's fifth pastor and immediately started making plans to update the plant and the people (p. 10). A year and a half into his responsibilities, the priest discovered his life-threatening illness was cancer.

Paul Wilkes spent hours at a time with Father Joseph Greer. They had long conversations in which the priest spoke with the greatest of candor about his past life, his present life, and his outlook on his future life. The reader will learn much about the life of a parish priest, about the life of a Catholic parish in the years since the Second Vatican Council (1963-1965), and about the response of a particular cancer patient to a painful surgical technique. The description of Father Greer's hospitalization, surgery and recuperation is especially gripping.

This reviewer found *In Mysterious Ways* to be a compelling story about a modern Catholic priest who has a strong, ardent faith in a loving God. The illness taught Joseph Greer a lot about himself and about God's love and mercy. A reader will find much encouragement in living a life plagued by illness and strengthened by faith and courage.

The subtitle of *In Mysterious Ways* is "The Death and Life of a Parish Priest." The writer deliberately chose those words to describe the return of Father Greer to his parish in Natick. The priest's hospital and recovery experiences were so intense, powerful and life-threatening that the Father Greer who returned to St. Patrick's was a different Father Greer from the one who had left for the hospital seven months previously. This reviewer was strongly moved by the story of Father Joseph Greer, parish priest.

* * *

I salute you! There is nothing I can give you which you have not;
But there is much, that while I cannot give, you can take.

No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today.
Take heaven.

No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present instant.
Take peace.

The gloom of the world is but a shadow; behind it,
yet within our reach, is joy.
Take joy.

And so, at this Christmas time, I greet you,
with the prayer that for you,
Now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.

Fra Giovanni, A. D. 1524

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