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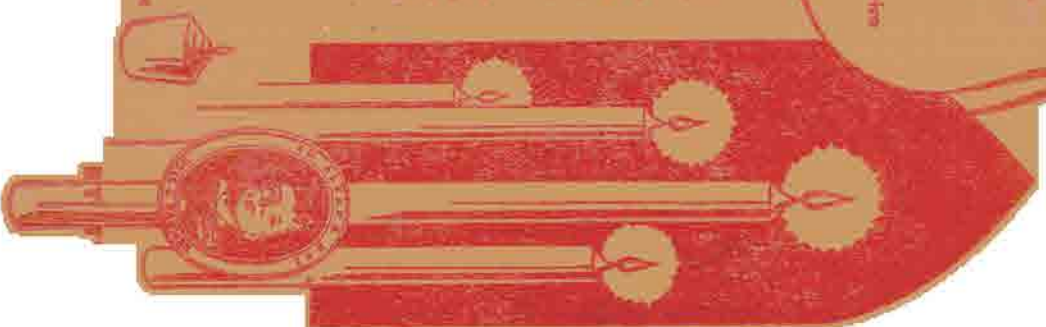
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A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

VOL. X, NO. 12, DECEMBER, 1960

A Commentary on the Psalms:

Father Jerome A. Kelly, O.F.M.

Psalms 44

Poets, as you may have noted, are inclined to boast, as Horace did, that their poems really constitute a "monument more lasting than bronze." This enduring quality of a great poem confers a kind of immortality upon the persons it commemorates because, as Shakespeare says of one of his sonnets:

*So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

And though a poet may be forgotten and his name fall into dark oblivion, his poems may still live on and so give life to the characters depicted in it.

In the Psalter we find Psalm 44 to be a striking illustration of this truth. *Who* wrote this richly imaginative poem we no longer know, but *why* it was written is clear from the words with which it closes:

*I will make your name memorable through all generations;
you forever and ever.*

What prompted the composition of the poem, too, is set down at the very outset:

My heart overflows with a goodly theme.

And so enraptured is the poet by this theme that the verses flow as freely as the words of a secret too good to keep:

*As I sing my ode to the king,
my tongue is nimble as the pen of a skillful scribe.*

Here, again, we have a poem framed, as it were, by the verses with which it commences and concludes. But the artistry is more sophisticated than in Psalm 8, in which a simple refrain did the trick. Here, the opening verse of Psalm 44 ecstatically proclaims the poet's purpose of singing an ode to the king; the final two verses praise the king and promise him everlasting fame through the song of the poet. And between these lie the two central strophes of the ode—twin jewels in a single setting—verses three to ten commemorating the king himself, verses eleven to sixteen, his queen.

What charms the careful reader, in the second strophe, is the skillful speed with which the poet describes the king. Indeed his "tongue is nimble;" each verse like the stroke of "the pen of a skillful scribe," easily made, rapidly, adding precise detail to the emerging picture. The king is handsome, eloquent—

Fairer in beauty are you than the sons of men;

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CONTENTS

A COMMENTARY ON THE PSALMS:

Father Jerome A. Kelly, O.F.M.

FRANCISCANS AND CHRISTMAS

Father Stephen P. Brown, O.F.M.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE PROBLEM OF MEANING

Father Alfred A. Carey, O.F.M.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTORS OF THIRD ORDERS

Thomas P. McInnell

YOU HAVE WOUNDED MY HEART

Joseph Brown, Tertiary

BE FRANCISCANS OF THE EARLY SOUTHWEST

Sister M. Marion Engleton, O.S.F.

363

360

*grace is poured out upon your lips;
thus God has blessed you forever;*

*he is brave and manly—
Gird your sword upon your thigh,
O mighty one!*

*In your splendor and your majesty ride on triumphant
In the cause of truth and for the sake of justice;
and may your right hand show
your wondrous deeds;
victorious in battle—
Your arrows are sharp; peoples are
subject to you;*

*the king's enemies lose heart;
supereminently blessed by the
God he resembles—
Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever;*

*a tempered rod is your royal scepter.
You love justice and hate wickedness;*

*therefore, God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness above
your fellow kings.*

At this point, just as the poem becomes outrightly dramatic, the poet reveals his king to be the central figure in a procession moving through this poem.

The king is a bridegroom going forth to meet his bride and to accompany her home. We stand close beside him in the next two verses, at their meeting; we take in the luxury and the magnificence of this scene which he dominates:

*With myrrh and aloes and cassia
your robes are fragrant.*

We hear the gaiety and the bright expectancy of it all break into melody:

*From ivory palaces string music
brings you joy.*

The splendid pageantry unfolds:
*The daughters of kings come to
meet you.*

Then the unrivaled beauty of the bride:

*The queen takes her place at your
right hand in gold of Ophir.*

Only one detail is missing! Presuming that the ages would be as familiar as he with the names of this king and queen he glorifies, the poet fails to identify them. And so we are forced to conjecture.

Most scholars favor the view that Psalm 44 commemorates the marriage of King Solomon with the daughter of the King of Egypt (III Kings 3:1). Certainly such an alliance—with its far-reaching political and diplomatic implications — was important enough to merit the pomp and ceremony depicted in the poem. Such splendor and pageantry, too, seem to reflect court life in the reign of Solomon, which, from all we know of it, was breath-taking in its opulence. The kingdom of God's Chosen People was then at the zenith of its power and "Solomon was magnified above all the kings of the earth for riches and glory" (II Paralipomenon 9:22). So that Solomon practically appropriates the role of the bride-

groom in this nuptial ode and the daughter of Pharaoh, his bride, becomes its heroine.

It is to her that the poet devotes the third strophe of the poem. Perhaps I should have pointed out that some of the charm of the second strophe comes from the delicate balance, in the poet's tone, of familiarity and deference. Admiration, the pride of a friend, deep feeling pulse through the verses, but these emotions never break through the restraint and reserve proper to a subject; they are blended always with the reverence that a king deserves. This same deft performance is repeated in the third strophe.

You might almost imagine it to be an old man, the father of a family himself, who speaks in greeting to the young, beautiful stranger:

*Hear, O daughter, and see; turn
your ear.*

Then from the deepest wells of experience he pours advice: to be loved, love, unselfishly, without measure, with a single heart—

*Forget your people and your
father's house.*

*So shall the king desire your
beauty;*

*for he is your lord, and you must
worship him.*

You might almost think the words whispered, so abruptly does the tone change as the poet, in the next verse, calls attention to the throne that has come out to welcome the bride:

*And the city of Tyre is here with
gifts.*

That could be expected, of course, because Hiram, King of Tyre, was Solomon's close friend and ally. And with the Tyrians mingle the great ones of Israel:

*The rich among the people seek
your favor.*

Beginning with the fourteenth verse, there is a shift in the attention of the poet: he talks no longer to the queen but about her. And thus, quite subtly, he reveals the movement back over the route it had travelled and the arrival of the procession at the palace of the king.

*All glorious is the king's daughter,
as she enters;
her raiment is threaded with
spun gold.*

*In embroidered apparel she is
borne in to the king.*

Entranced, the poet watches the shining retinue move behind her into the inner halls of the palace where the marriage rites will take place:

*Behind her the virgins of her
train are brought to you.*

*They are borne in with gladness
and joy;*

they enter the palace of the king.

The procession over, the ode closes, in the fourth strophe, in a fittingly graceful way. The verses voice the poet's wish for the happy future of the king and his dynasty—
*The place of your fathers your
sons shall have;*

you shall make them princes through all the land,—
and they announce the achievement of the poet through the ode that he has conquered—

I will make your name memorable through all generations; therefore shall nations praise you forever and ever.

How well this nameless poet has kept his promise is clear from this: that far-off and otherwise forgotten marriage stills lives in our reading of his poem.

And that brings up a question! How is it that we are still reading this poem? Grant that it is a noble example of the epithalamion or nuptial ode—graphic in imagery, dramatic and intense in feeling, majestic in execution; grant it all the artistry it surely has, you still do not explain its inclusion in the hymnal of the sons of Core among the masks—psalms with musical setting of especially delicate and artistic character—used in the Temple service, as this poem was, sung to a familiar tune called “The Lilies,” as we learn from the title prefixed to the Psalm. Why should the Jewish people have treasured this poem among their holiest writings, sung it as a hymn in their sacred liturgy if it merely commemorated a wedding even of King Solomon? And, at that, of one only among many of his marriages. And he, too, although their greatest king, one who in old age fell away so that “the Lord was angry with

Solomon, because his mind was turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice . . . but he kept not the things which the Lord commanded him” (III Kings 11:9 ff.).

It was always mere to the Jews than a lovely reminder of a marriage of a great king in days gone by. According to an abiding tradition among the Chosen People, Psalm 44 is Messianic and so eminently worthy of inclusion in the liturgical worship of the Temple. They were no doubt guided in their understanding of this poem by the very Spirit of God who is its author. The very Spirit who inspired the composer of his poem to write it exactly as he did, enlightened the readers of it, we may suppose, so to comprehend its significance that they realized that everything spoken here of Solomon was in reality prefiguration of one “greater than Solomon” (Matthew 12:24). This Psalm sings the praises, not merely of Solomon or any other earthly monarch, under whom actually the temporal power of the kingdom passed away, but of that Son of David in Whom would be fulfilled God’s promise:

*Once, by my holiness, have I sworn;
I will not be false to David.
His posterity shall continue forever,
and his throne shall be like the sun before me;
Like the moon, which remains*

*forever—
A faithful witness in the sky.*

(Psalm 88:36-38).

The king of Psalm 44, then is the Messiah, the Anointed One, whose “name is called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Father Forever, Prince of Peace . . . He shall sit upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and forever” (Isaiah: 9:7, 6). Such was the interpretation given to this Psalm by the people of the Old Testament, one taken over and so completely shared by the people of the New Testament that Saint John Chrysostom could exclaim that on this one point Jew and Gentile were in perfect agreement. And if the Jew had inspired guidance, so did the Gentile. It is verses from this very Psalm that Saint Paul falls back on for his defence in the Epistle to the Hebrews of the preeminence of Jesus Christ, the Son of God:

*Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever;
a tempered rod is your royal scepter.
You love justice and hate wickedness;
therefore, God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness above your fellow kings.*

(Hebrews 1:8-9).

To read Psalm 44 carefully and attentively as a description of

of Christ can be a rewarding experience. Would we ever stop to imagine, otherwise, how impressive, how divinely handsome he must have seemed to those who saw him face to face? He was pointed out to John and Andrew; they looked at him, followed, and were friends for life—and ever after. A few words were spoken and Nathaniel joined him. Matthew passed up a career and followed him at the sound of his voice and the words he spoke. How gracious then must have been his voice; how compelling and encouraging his words. His dignity of bearing, his abiding awareness of divinity, his serene statement of it, how evident these must have been that day in Nazareth, for example, when He “went into the synagogue there, as his custom was, on the sabbath day, and stood up to read. The book given to him was the book of the prophet Isaiah; so he opened it, and found the place where the words ran: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me, and sent me out to preach the gospel to the poor, to restore the brokenhearted; to bid the prisoners go free, and the blind receive their sight; to set the oppressed at liberty, to proclaim a year when men may find acceptance with the Lord. Then he shut the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All those who were in the synagogue fixed their eyes on him, and thus he began speaking to

them. This scripture which I have read in your hearing is today fulfilled. All bore testimony to him, and were astonished at the gracious words which came from his mouth" (Luke 4:16-22).

Christ, while among men, so almost exclusively manifested patience, meekness, gentleness, and mercy, that one could easily overlook other traits he possessed if one were not reminded of them by a reading of Psalm 44. The picture of Christ is not complete unless we envision him as a warrior, brave and mighty in combat, victorious, a conquering king bringing punishment and retribution to his enemies. If we shrink from applying to Christ all that this Psalm suggests, on the grounds, perhaps, that its imagery is drawn from a more barbarous age than our own, it might help us to right our thinking by recalling how like the Psalm are the words of the Beloved Disciple in the Apocalypse. "In my vision heaven opened, and I saw a white horse appear. Its rider bore for his title, the Faithful, the True; he judges and goes to battle in the cause of right. His eyes were like flaming fire, and on his brow were many royal diadems; the name written there is one that only he knows. He went clad in a garment dyed with blood, and the name by which he is called is the Word of God; the armies of heaven followed him, mounted on white horses, and clad in linen white

and clean. From his mouth came a two-edged sword, ready to smite the nations; he will herd them like sheep with a crook of iron. He treads out for them the wine-press, whose wine is the avenging anger of almighty God. And this title is written on his cloak, over his thigh, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords" (Apocalypse 19:11-16).

It was not, however, the fear-some might and pre-eminence of Solomon, any more than it was his beauty, merely, that captivated the imagination of the poet. Not Solomon the man or Solomon the king, so much as Solomon the bridegroom inspired his ode. Even here, that unnamed writer, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, soars beyond the ceremonies of the moment to utter a forecast that will be fulfilled in Christ. Centuries later Saint John the Baptist, in speaking of the Savior, will refer to him specifically as a bridegroom. The Precursor's understandably jealous disciples had reported that the people were deserting him to follow Jesus. "You yourselves are my witnesses," John said, "that I told you, I am not the Christ; I have been sent to go before him. The bride is for the bridegroom; but the bridegroom's friend, who stands by and listens to him, rejoices at hearing the bridegroom's voice; and this joy is mine now in full measure" (John 3:28-29). And the title given him, Christ took. To these same

disciples making a problem of fasting he said: "Can you expect the men of the bridegroom's company to go mourning, while the bridegroom is still with them? No, the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them; then they will fast" (Matt. 9:15).

If Christ is the bridegroom, who, then, is the bride? The answer is there, in the words of John: the people who believe in Christ; the people who join him; the Church—*she* is the bride. Her members chosen from all peoples, drawn away from their father's house, hearts intent on worshipping the king, the Church always remembers the words of Saint Paul, "I have betrothed you to Christ, so that now no other but he should claim you, his bride without spot" (II Corinthians 11:2). The sacred nuptials have commenced already, but their completion will come only at the end of time, on that stupendous occasion foreseen and foretold by Saint John: "I heard, as it seemed, the noise of a great multitude, like the noise of water in flood, or the noise of deep thunder, as they cried out, Alleluia, the Lord our God, the Almighty, has claimed his kingdom; let us rejoice and triumph and give him the praise; the time has come for the wedding feast of

the Lamb. His bride has clothed herself in readiness for it; hers it is to wear linen of shining white; the merits of the saints are her linen . . . And I, John, saw in my vision that holy city which is the new Jerusalem, being sent down by God from heaven, all clothed in readiness, like a bride who has adorned herself to meet her husband" (Apocalypse 19:6-8; 21:2).

That nameless poet of long ago had a "goodly theme," to be sure, when, inspired by the Holy Ghost, he sang his "ode to the king" and so made "memorable through all generations" the nuptials of the "King of Kings," Jesus Christ, who "showed love to the Church when he gave himself up on her behalf . . . He would summon her into his own presence, the Church in all her beauty, no stain, no wrinkle, no such disfigurement; . . . holy . . . spotless" (Ephesians 5:25-27). And in as much as we are members of the Church we are challenged and encouraged by Psalm 44 to lead lives that shall add to her beauty for "the wedding of the Lamb." And in as much as the Church in that joyful day of her triumph is perfectly symbolized now by her most holy and spotless daughter, the Virgin Mary, this Psalm fittingly finds a place in her Office.

Francis, Franciscans And Christmas

Father Stephen F. Brown, O.F.M.

The Franciscan vision of life begins with Christmas. It is a vision of life that is a vision of love, a vision of love that derives its light from the Birth of Divine Love. Before the *fulness of time* came men had challenged God: *Wherein hast thou loved us?* (Malach. 1, 2). With the Birth of Christ they could no longer question. They had their answer: *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son* (Jn. 3, 16). Could He give more? Man awoke to realize that God's love knew no limits. He discovered that Love and God are identical, that *God is Love* (1 Jn. 4, 16) and that His every act is an act of love. This was the lesson of Bethlehem. In the stillness of that night man beheld God's masterwork, His greatest creation, His most perfect act of love. *The Firstborn of every creature* (Col. 1, 15) was born of a Virgin and man received God's eternal answer to his challenging question: *Wherein hast thou loved us?*

The Birth of Christ tears back the curtain of doubt covering God's love. Here stands the supreme proof that God loves man, and O, to what a degree! The picture of life becomes clearer; all the world comes into focus. Our eyes have found a new light, the light of God's love. Our vision discovers divine love all about us. *God is love* and all His creation is His love-letter to us. With this realization in our hearts how could we fail to respond?

The great fire of Divine Love that brightened Bethlehem was a consuming fire. We can watch its flames sweep through Syria, Samaria and Galatia, leap from Corinth to Ephesus, to Rome. The world has a new glow. Eyes have a new vision, the vision of love. Hearts are ready to burst as they cry in ecstasy: *Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us* (1 Jn. 3, 4).

Twelve hundred years later the ardor had waned, the vision had dimmed, the world had lost its meaning. Men had forgotten that creation was a love-letter. No longer did they stop to read. They ceased to look at creation because they had ceased to look at Christ. As Celano tells us: *Jesus was forgotten in the hearts of many* (*Vita Prima*, XXX, 86). Men had forgotten the astounding miracle of God's infinite love which produced the manger of Bethlehem. It had slipped their distracted minds that God had become *Emmanuel* — *God with us*.

360

FRANCIS, FRANCISCANS AND CHRISTMAS

In one heart, however, love was still aflame. This heart belonged to Francis. And how it pained that heart when he saw that *Love* was not loved! Challenging the forgetfulness of men, Francis on that memorable Christmas night re-enacted before the eyes of his fellow Umbrians the drama of Bethlehem in so simple and unsophisticated a manner that the most unlettered peasant could not fail to comprehend its meaning. With the crib Francis taught the world once again that God had become *Emmanuel* — that He had come amongst us clothed in the garment of our flesh, that He was born of a Virgin and laid as a tiny Babe in the cold manger of that dark cave of Bethlehem. And for what purpose? — that He might draw us to Himself by this example of unparalleled love. If God would so humble Himself as to hide His Divinity under the cloak of humanity, if the Creator of heaven and earth would take on the weakness of a child, if the Lord of the celestial palaces would deign to suffer the cold and discomfort of a gloomy stable, O how great must be His love for us!

These were the thoughts Francis endeavored to awaken in the hearts of those who gathered round the crib of Greccio. But if anyone stops reading the story of Greccio at the description of the crib he has read only half the story; he has learned only half the lesson Francis intended. Indeed, he hasn't learned the lesson at all. To capture the lesson of Francis we must listen to Celano as he continues: *The Sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated over the manger* (*Vita Prima*, XXX, 85). There is the lesson in ten words. Francis was not only looking back to the moment in the past when God became *Emmanuel*. He was looking at the present when God is still *Emmanuel*. Francis looked at the crib constructed before his eyes and saw the image of Christ his Brother. He looked at the altar and saw his Brother really present. He realized that his Brother Christ is still *Emmanuel* — *God with us*.

By connecting the crib and the Mass Francis wanted to share with the people of Umbria the great insight God had given him. He wanted to make them realize that Christ was still with them everyday in the Sacrifice of the Mass. He wanted them to discover that God still loved them, that it was the same flame of divine love that stirred God to become man and urged Him to remain with men on the altar.

When Francis constructed the crib he was not carrying out a mere sentimental fancy. Sentimental fancies pass. The outlook of Francis did not. He lived it his whole life. He realized the great love of God for him. He realized that it was out of love that God became man and out of love that He stayed amongst men. Francis realized this in his heart of hearts and his life became a ceaseless response to the voice of divine love.

The response of Francis to the love of God came in the form of imitation. He would imitate Christ, the *Light* of God's love. He would *walk unerringly in the footsteps of Christ with all care and zeal, with all the affection of his soul and all the fervor of his heart* (*Vita Prima*, XXX, 84). To him the way to God was no longer a vague plan, but a *Person* to be imitated. The truth of God was no longer an abstract formula, but a *Living Example*. The life of God was no longer a reality totally foreign, but a *Life* he himself must share. Christ was his *Way*, his *Truth*, his *Life*. Francis' vision, which began with the Birth of Christ, did not stop with the celebration of the Birth of Christ. It penetrated his whole life and changed it radically. For Francis every day was Christmas because every day Christ was still on our altar. He was still *Emmanuel* — *God with us*. This was the realization that kept alive in the mind and heart of Francis the great love of God for him. The Franciscan vision of life begins with the Birth of Christ in Bethlehem; the Franciscan vision of life continues with the "Birth" of Christ on our altar.

As children of Francis this vision is our inheritance. It is a vision of love enkindled in us by the same realization that possessed Francis, awareness that all the world is bathed in the love of God. This vision itself is a loving gift of God, a spark of divine love in us, a spark that demands constant feeding, a flame that needs continual contact with its Source to remain alive.

Celebrating the Feast of Christmas we return to Greccio with Francis. Look at the scene with the eye of Francis and learn the lesson of divine love. Look at the dramatization of the crib and recall the Birth of Divine Love. Realize that it was for love of us that *God Himself* became man, that *God Himself* took on human flesh, that *God Himself* became *Emmanuel*. But don't stop at the crib. The lesson of God's love doesn't end there. Follow the eyes of Francis to the altar, to the Sacrifice of the Mass. Share the vision of Francis, the true vision of Christmas — realize that every day at the *Christ-Mass* Christ out of love for us is still *Emmanuel* — *God with us*.

Some Reflections On The Problem of Meaning

Father Alfred A. Carey, O.F.M.

In one of Ernest Hemingway's short stories a certain character recites a blasphemous parody of "The Lord's Prayer." "Our nada (nothing)," he says, "who are in nada, nada be thy name, thy kingdom nada thy will be nada in nada as it is in nada. Give us this nada our daily nada and nada us our nada as we nada our nadas and nada us not into nada but deliver us from nada; pues nada." To Hemingway these words represent a judgment on mankind and on life. For him man is doomed, life is meaningless and all one can do is walk with a certain amount of "dignity" into the destruction and annihilation which is the ultimate fate of all being.

Hemingway is not alone in his judgment of man and man's destiny. A similar philosophy may be found in dozens of writers who flourish in the middle of the twentieth century. One watches with despair, for example, a Thomas Wolfe thrashing around the Eastern seaboard and Europe, searching, searching, searching, forever lonely and unsure. One remembers with sorrow the death of a Hart Crane or a tortured Dylan Thomas, prophets without a creed in which they could find solace, pursued by furies which they could not subdue.

The tragedy of these men, and so many others, it seems to this writer, is that they have grasped a vital truth and the very grasping has destroyed them. For it is true, unquestionably and undeniably true, that there is literally *nothing* in the world which has meaning, nothing which deserves the total allegiance of man, nothing which in the light of eternity should be powerful enough to hold his faith and win his uncommitted support. Neither philosophies, nor nations, nor men have been able to stand the tides of history and stagnation. And as people like Hemingway look at national governments and political systems they remember the Versailles and the Yalta; as they look at philosophies they remember the ineffectiveness of the philosopher in answering the final and ultimate questions, and his not infrequent personal refusal to live up to his own principles; and as they look at the religious of the world they see, or think they see, sanctimoniousness and and superficiality and what they believe is a fearful emphasis put on



the material and the social at the expense of the spiritual. Thus they come to their conclusion that there is nothing of meaning in the world, that ultimately all systems which have tried to give man's place in the universe a purpose and a goal are futile and doomed. And so they crawl into a narrow world of their own and resolve to live their lives in any way they see fit: Hemingway in chasing bulls in Spain or tigers in Africa; Wolfe in a wild bacchanalian orgy of life; Thomas with a bottle as his constant companion. And one day they die, so many of them tragically, empty, futilely, their magnificent talents poured out senselessly and without profit; or they live on, becoming parodies of themselves, losing contact in turn with the new world as in their youth they had accused their elders of having lost contact with their own.

What is the point of all this? Simply that these men have grasped a great truth. They have penetrated one of the great secrets of life and have plumbed, in some cases much more profoundly than we might be led to expect from their lives, the essence of existence. For it is true, this insight of their's; political systems, philosophies of man, and all religions, save one, are, in the ultimate final analysis, meaningless. And the world itself, with its tremendous challenges, its promise and its wonder, its beauty and its sorrow, the world itself, too, is, in the profoundest sense, meaningless. Ultimately, finally, it too offers nothing to man; it can assuage his body and intrigue his intellect, but if his soul is restless and will not be satisfied with half-truths and partial answers then the world will destroy him with its seductive temptations and its ultimate emptiness. "My kingdom is not of this world." The words are clear and without compromise, and they must be accepted with the starkness with which they were expressed.

Of course there is a danger in all this, a fearsome and terrible danger, one that Fr. William Lynch, for instance, in his recent book *Christ and Apollo*, has treated at length, the danger that in grasping the undeniable truth that the world is meaningless and empty, we shall ourselves fall into a modern Manichaeism, shall fail to understand the true nature of material things and their relevance, that we shall turn on the world and despise it, not for the right, but for the wrong reasons. For while it is true that these troubled and searching writers of the twentieth century have grasped an important and eternal truth about the nothingness of the world and its pleasures, that they have seen one side of the coin, it is equally true that they have missed the thesis to their antithesis: namely, that God looked on his work and saw that it was good, that the world which fell was redeemed,

and that the material, the sensible, the flesh and blood of man have been touched forever by something outside themselves, that in a small Jewish village south of Jerusalem nineteen hundred years ago, time and eternity, the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit met, and nothing, literally nothing has ever been the same since.

It is here then that the relevance of Francis and his example must be made clear. For Francis' whole life was permeated with the concept of nothingness. The great scene before the Bishop of Assisi is familiar to all of us. Stripped naked, possessing nothing, literally nothing he went forth to face the world; and for the rest of his life he owned nothing, received nothing, wanted nothing. And yet, in that sublime paradox which all of us in the religious life are familiar with to some extent or other, having embraced nothingness he was given all. And the world, which he had approached in his youth as it is approached by millions upon millions, as a source of pleasure and enjoyment, the world became, in the course of time, for him a source of wonder and enchantment, it became an almost living image of its Creator. Trees and rocks, mountains and seas, birds and animals, and, above all, man became invested with a new meaning which gave them an existential importance far beyond what they possessed in themselves.

Nothingness, too, is the basis of our own Franciscan lives. For we as individuals and as an Order possess nothing. We have looked upon the things of the world and have turned our backs; we have seen that truly there is nothing there; we have left home and family and possessions, the things which are considered by so many essential to happiness, and in return, like Francis, we have received, not nothing, but everything. Remember the year of our first simple profession, when we had finished our novitiate. That year above all, not only as individuals, but as a group, we had nothing; no possessions except the barest necessities, no acts of the will except the minimum ones which enabled us to make a good novitiate. And yet on that day when the year was over, the happiness and joy which filled the gardens or the hall where we met our friends and families, were something which bubbled and danced and filled everybody there with laughter and love, so real they seemed, so full of meaning. Having emptied ourselves we were full, having given all we had received all.

This, then, is the tragedy of so many writers and artists today. They have grasped an essential truth about the world, its meaninglessness and its nothingness, and yet, lacking the Faith, lacking the key which opens the door of meaning they wallow in a slough of despair; they reach out for every pleasure of sense and body as Wolfe, or move with a stoic, almost animalistic dignity like Hemingway, living life on

a level never far from total despair, grasping their stupid and sometimes frightening substitutes for the truth, bewitching and seducing others, who lacking their talent, have the same basic insight into the world. There is no room here, of course, for self-righteousness on our part. Faith, after all, is, in the last analysis, a gift. Whether or not these men have rejected graces is not for us to judge. One thing we do know, we have received graces. We have been given the insight not only to see the meaninglessness of the world as it is in itself, but its profound meaningfulness in the light of Christ's touching it with His Divinity.

In that instant when the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed Our Blessed Mother at creation, in one dazzling instant, was altered, never to be the same. The world, which was good and had fallen, became something Adam never dreamed of. The Word became Flesh, the Spirit clothed itself with Humanity, the Light shone in the darkness. And so for us, as Catholics and Franciscans, the world is a place of joy and beauty and wonder. It is full of an infinite meaning and a value which is beyond measure. For it has been touched with the flesh of God himself and bathed in His blood. "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only-begotten Son, that those who believe in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." If God himself loved the world, can we do less?

Our problem today is how to convey this Franciscan sense of joy in the world without either seeming to become part of the world or actually compromising our religious standards. For convey it we must, since the writers whom we have mentioned are only a small portion of those genuinely perplexed men and women of the twentieth century who seek desperately some solution for what seems to them the hopeless confusion of man caught in a frightening complex of passion and desire on one side and emptiness and despair on the other. The ones who eventually find a home in the Church are all too few and in some cases it would seem that even these have not caught the essential joy which should be a part of their lives as Catholics.

It is, of course, true that there exists a terrible amount of sordidness and sin, of envy and lust and brutality and greed and hatred in the world today; it is true too that the forces of the barbarian are straining at the leash and Western Civilization with all it stands for seems up for grabs. It is quite possible, though the imagination shudders at the horror of it that Russia and China may indeed one day succeed in their plan for world conquest. One does not, one cannot, turn to the world of 1960 with any sense of satisfaction, with any feeling that it has a safe future. But that is not the point and never was. The world of today and the values it has

built up may indeed perish in fact, as they have perished in the minds of so many. The Turkish powder which ripped the Acropolis, the German bombs which gutted Coventry Cathedral, the American atomic device which destroyed Hiroshima, were only the puny forerunners to the terrible weapons we have in our power today. If these weapons are unloosed centuries of philosophy and art and painting and music and literature will come crashing down in the ruins of New York and Paris and London and Rome and Moscow, and the world which will arise out of the ruins will surely be in many, if not all, ways far different from that of today. And yet what will it all mean? Augustine faced the problem fifteen hundred years ago and he did not shrink from it. It will be a terrible thing to see the Sistine chapel go up in flames and Notre Dame of Paris a heap of rubble. But the world as Augustine knew it, and as we know it, has meaning only *sub specie aeternitatis*, only as a reflection of its Creator and only in so far as it is directed toward that Creator. If only it were possible for us as Franciscans, as followers of Francis and Christ, to get this message across to the thousands and millions of men and women who fail to understand it: we who are in the world and not of the world; we who have truly embraced nothingness in the only real and significant application of the word.

For the writers, then, whom I have mentioned and the millions like them, we can only have charity, only an infinite desire to win them for Christ. And for ourselves we can only rededicate our lives to a fuller and more perfect following of Francis, to clothing ourselves in the nakedness in which he left his earthly father's home and in the nakedness in which he entered the home of his heavenly Father that October day in 1226. In doing this, in wanting nothing, in desiring nothing, in refusing nothing in the service of Christ, we will, at the very minimum, set the example, we will at the very least be able to show those who are still searching so desperately that their basic instinct is right, that the world in the sense in which they approach it is, and must be forever, meaningless and empty, but that seen in the light of Christ's incarnation and redemption, and in the further light of His bodily presence for all time in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist, it is full of a meaning and profundity which can scarcely be imagined by any man.

An Open Letter — To The Directors of Third Orders

Reverend Fathers:

I beg of you, in reading this letter, not to be overly aware of the deficiencies of its author. I am only too painfully aware of them myself — but they are, in fact, not the issue at hand. Rather, I write to you from a sense of conviction, which, I hope, may not be taken for sheer and unknowledgeable presumption. At least you will come to know what one particular layman is thinking on one particular subject, and though I should not presume that this is in any way a representative view, it must logically be taken in good faith as the kind of insight which spiritual directors, in their hearts care most to know. Further, as Pope Pius XII said in an address to the International Catholic Press Congress: “. . . I should like to add a word about public opinion within the fold of the Church — about things that can be left open to discussion, of course. Only people who know little or nothing about the Catholic Church will be surprised to hear this. For she too is a living body, and there would be something missing from her life if there were no public opinion within her, a defect for which pastors as well as the faithful would be responsible . . .” (*Observatore Romano*, 1950). It is, therefore, in such a spirit that I now write to you.

When I was professed into the Third Order, I was naturally impressed by, and enamored of, the Franciscan ideal — or as one perhaps should more properly say — of the Franciscan *life* in so far as it could be lived in the world. It seemed to me, and I'm sure to my lay brothers in profession, that the paramount experience was that of an authentic identity with the faith and good works of the Franciscan Order. The monthly meetings became familiar to me — the Franciscan Rosary, the prayers, litany, sermon, and adoration of the Host — but as time went on I began to feel that the “service,” in substance, was not much different from, say, the ordinary parish novena, etc. It is difficult to say these things, because they no doubt imply a degree of piety which I do not actually possess; but, Reverend Fathers, may I remind you that I do not write out of a need to solve a personal problem. To go on, then, it seemed to me that a gradual lessening of that original encounter — the *Franciscan identity* — began to take place, and this despite the wonderfully open and free comradeship of the Friars themselves. Now why should this be so? That is the disturbing question I have asked myself.

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE DIRECTORS OF THIRD ORDERS 369

The answer may be found, I have come to believe, in what George Tavad, A. A. calls the “emphasis of piety” in relation to our present attitudes on the Eucharist. Frankly, let us admit that the Third Order “service” is all but completely removed from the central liturgical Act, by which of course is meant the Mass and not the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. “In the Middle Ages,” writes George Tavad, “the penitential aspects of the sacrament were stressed along with the concept of Redemption by atonement and merit, both emphatically penitential. The Fathers’ cultus had focused on the Church’s collective thanksgiving; the medieval piety centered on penance and more individualistic forms of expression. The Holy Eucharist became a sacrament to be ‘seen’ oftener than received. The ‘desire to see the host’ helped to spread the practice of elevating both host and the chalice at consecration, and to popularize the nascent processions of the Blessed Sacrament. Seeing may be done in a crowd. Unlike singing or praying the Mass together, however, it is not a corporate activity.” (*Jubilee*, 1960).

In the excellent article referred to, “The Eucharist,” Father Tavad goes on to distinguish the “two sorts of eucharistic piety today.” Students of the subject will recall that after the congealing effect of Jansenism in France, with its debilitating influence which had indeed spread throughout the continent, the wisdom of Holy Mother Church returned — or more accurately, progressed — toward the liberalizing practice of frequent communion. But in our time, unfortunately, this holy and actually organic practice has withdrawn into “a more or less thorough unconcern for the corporate liturgical implications of the sacrament.” In other words, a pious individualism has, in considerable and disturbing degree, quite displaced our participation in “the total liturgical drama, of which communion constitutes the last act . . .” So it is entirely reasonable to suggest that only in a restorative piety — that is, in the total liturgical action — can we at length become identified with the ultimate mystery of sacrifice. Such a piety, Father Tavad says, must view “other aspects of eucharistic piety, such as adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, in relation to this.”

Writing as a layman, Reverend Directors, I should feel uncomfortable in attempting to abrogate the niceties of distinction in an area where I have no training. So allow me to proceed, however naively, and come to the point as I see it. It seems to me that the ceremony of the Third Order meeting is concerned chiefly with a secondary emphasis of piety. Even its high point, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, is a beautiful (though peripheral) mirror of the true sacrifice. There is no doubt that the “co-existence” of the two pieties (the *private*

versus the communal) fulfill the special requirements of diverse temperaments within the Church. "Yet one cannot by-pass," as Father Tavad says, "the question of their relative value. While he condemned neither, the late Pope himself noted the priority of the altar over the tabernacle, of the Mass over private adoration: 'It is only during the celebration of holy Mass that Christ offers himself in the sacrifice of the altar — not after, nor outside of, Mass.'" Consequently, is it not reasonable, Reverend Fathers, to ask ourselves whether the fullest possibilities of spiritual development are now being realized within the Third Order? An *avant-garde* of lay spirituality in the world is most desperately needed today, but may we not ask whether an atomistic piety, however sound in name and program, can become the means of achieving that need?

Before going on to the conclusions of this letter, which you no doubt have already anticipated, I should like to mention an interesting paradox that is pertinent to the problem before us. But again I must lean upon Father Tavad. In his essay in *Jubilee*, Father Tavad reveals that Protestant piety has moved in a direction away from "the individualism of worship." It has become, in fact, a kind of "organic piety" which itself evokes "an experience of intense fellowship" — in Christian participation, I would add. Of course the church alone has preserved the integrity of the eucharistic action which now has become all but obliterated in Protestant worship, but we have ourselves relinquished something of the vitality involved in organic piety. Father Tavad succinctly points the paradox: "In the Church, piety was far behind the liturgy; among the reformers, the liturgy was far behind piety."

Let us now, Reverend Fathers, apply this paradox to the present situation in the Third Order. I do not think that any tertiary can deny the experience of "intense fellowship" that he feels in the ceremonies of a Third Order meeting. But the question to ask, and I submit it with whatever humility I may possess, is why we should stop at this half-way house of Father Tavad's paradox. That is to say, the Third Order meeting is an admirable return to organic piety, but is it a return to the authentic action of the liturgy? I think it is not. The solution, of course, would be to re-direct this organic piety into the mainstream of the ultimate liturgical reality. In other words, the Third Order meeting should become a meeting, and only that, after the celebration of, and active participation in, the eucharistic action of Holy Mass. It seems to me, Reverend Fathers, that nothing could be more important to the advancement of lay spirituality than that. Nothing more important, since it would help recover the organic piety largely alien to Catholic

worship today — and who knows what ecumenical effects this might have in returning Protestant piety closer to the liturgical center.

I spoke earlier, Reverend Fathers, of the tertiary's experience of authentic identity with Franciscan life. But that identity is fruitful only, it would seem, in Saint Francis himself as living in the imitation of Christ. But let us candidly admit that the Third Order meeting, as it now stands, is not overwhelmingly important to lay spirituality. The point, then, for the tertiary, is to make Franciscan piety liturgical piety. If we do that, we "will also be putting forward," as Father Tavad says, "the most cogent argument for Catholicism that can be devised: their oneness around the Lord. 'By this shall men know that you are my disciples: if you have love one for another' (John, 13:35)." The love in question, *agape*, is the mutual love expressed in the Last Supper and in every subsequent Eucharist." And it naturally follows that this is the source from which lay Franciscan piety must flow.

Finally, Reverend Fathers, I should like to conclude this letter in the context of charity in which it was written. I consider it strength, rather than a weakness, to draw upon sources of authority that express so well the substance of what I wish, myself, to say. Thus do I relate what I have said here to a passage in Father Karl Rahner's *Free Speech in the Church*: "If the laity could only make their views known (and they would, when asked), it would undoubtedly be very useful . . . And why shouldn't the clergy make this a way of finding out the kind of questions the laity regard as particularly urgent and want to hear discussed from the pulpit? Are there any Church organizations, or at any rate societies with some sort of Catholic basis, that dare, or even think, to pass on their worries and wishes and their queries about the part the Church is playing in public life by way of suggestions to the powers-that-be in the Church? One hopes that there are, but does this kind of thing happen often?" (Sheed and Ward, 1959). One hopes, too, Reverend Fathers, that the almost humorous effect of "*does this kind of thing happen often?*" may not deflect, for more than an amusing moment, your serious consideration of these remarks.

Thomas P. McDonnell

You Have Wounded My Heart

The Life of St. Charles of Sezze, Franciscan Lay Brother

Raphael Brown, Tertiary

CHAPTER XI

ECSTASIES AND DEMONS

Brother Charles' spiritual director in Palestrina was the Vicar, Padre Eugenio, who guided him along the safe and sure road of the common life, without venturing into extraordinary austerities. He also insisted that Charles above all avoid conversations with lay persons, so as to preserve both humility and recollection.

It was during this period in Palestrina that the Saint, who was then just over twenty-five years old, began to experience mystical ecstasies for the first time. He had now undergone over three years of intensive passive purifications since he entered the Order, and God was about to lead him from the purgative into the illuminative way of the mystical life.

Just what is an ecstasy? St. Charles himself wrote the following definition: "It is nothing else than a supernatural uplifting in God and a spiritual exultation or inebriation of spirit that arises from the soul's being utterly intoxicated with the love of God through the Holy Spirit, without the least contribution from our own imagination or fantasy."

His ecstasies took the form of trance-like states in which his external senses, particularly those of sight and hearing, were temporarily suspended, while the entire attention of his soul was concentrated on God. He found that they were usually the result of one of three specific causes: either hearing someone speak movingly of God, or simply meditating on some mystery of the life of Christ, or finally the direct influence of God attracting Charles' soul and binding it in the sweet bonds of love like a "prisoner in chains." To explain this supernatural process he also used a striking comparison, saying that it was just like a shepherd calling together his sheep, who run joyfully to him when they hear him call.

With the ever increasing experience of these mystical states, Charles was able to distinguish two successive degrees in his ecstasies. In the first, the divine influence was felt more sensibly; in others it had a more direct effect on the senses and even the body. For instance, at times he could only describe it as perceiving ineffable "odors, not of

roses, but of divine grace." Whereas in the second or more advanced stage, his soul received a powerful infusion of supernatural light which filled the intellect and inflamed him with a burning love for God, while enabling him to know God far better than ever before.

He also noted that these experiences somehow gave his body a renewed vitality and energy, which enabled him to travel long distances on foot with no more than normal fatigue, and sometimes they impelled him to run along roads or through woods. In more than one ecstasy or rapture he felt as though his body had lost all its weight, and in fact he perceived that the attractive power of God's grace had actually raised it several feet above the ground in the mystical phenomenon of levitation.

With the humility and wisdom of the saints, he was keenly aware of the insidious risk of yielding to vain-glory as a result of the ecstasies which God gave him, especially if they occurred in the presence of others. Therefore he always strove to resist an incipient ecstasy when not alone, following the prudent rule that if it was really God's work, the Lord might or might not make it continue, but in case it came from either the Devil or self-delusion, then it could be stopped before any harm was done. As he wrote, "until we have reached the point where we have a certain spiritual stability and sturdiness, we must proceed very cautiously in order not to let ourselves be seized with the idea that we are favored with ecstasies, visions, and revelations, particularly when in public. But if such thoughts pass through our minds, we must ask God for the grace that He dispose our will to love Him perfectly, that He keep us humble, and that He give us patience in supporting slander in persecution, because there can be no self-deception in them, as there may be in ecstasies and visions. For although they may seem good in appearance, nevertheless the Devil sometimes leads souls along this path to the precipice."

During the year and a half which St. Charles spent at Palestrina, he was able to observe two interesting cases in which false ecstasies deceived members of the Third Order of St. Francis.

One of them, an otherwise good man, had visions and made prophecies. He predicted that a woman who had been sick for a long time would be cured if she were taken to a shrine of the Blessed Virgin outside the town and attended a Mass there. But at the elevation of the Mass, which was celebrated by Charles' Father Guardian, the tertiary began to act like a mad man and would have laid hands on the priest if he had not been restrained. Of course the sick woman was not cured, and many persons who had believed in his prediction were deeply disturbed. Later the deluded man came to visit Brother Charles, who

asked him whether he discussed his visions with his regular confessor. On learning that he did not, the Saint told him that he must always do so, for thus it would not be possible for the Devil to deceive him again.

The second case was a direct proof of that statement. God revealed to the Guardian of the friary in Sezze that one of the penitents, a thirty-year-old tertiary woman in Palestrina, was being deceived by the Devil. The priest came there and visited her, accompanied by St. Charles. The woman, who had previously been perfectly obedient, acted so hostilely toward them that it was evident that she was either possessed or at least obsessed by the Devil. The Father asked Charles to pray for her, and on a second visit ordered him under obedience to make the Sign of the Cross over her, which effectively liberated her from the Devil's influence. She then made a good confession to the priest, and for many years lived a holy life and was gifted by God with outstanding graces in prayer.

St. Charles wrote in his autobiography that the attacks which the demons made on him at Palestrina were "Very great and almost indescribable—they did to me things that they had never done before. Very few were the nights when they did not come to belabor me, so that they almost killed me. It seemed to me that that friary was filled with demons, all attacking me."

At times these diabolic persecutions were so fierce that the Saint could only escape them by fleeing to the altar where the Blessed Sacrament was kept.

One of the worst assaults occurred one evening just before compline. Charles was praying in his cell when it began, with the demons rushing at him "like the fiercest lions." Luckily a friar on his way to chapel heard the Saint's outcries and mentioned it to the Guardian—but only after the litany was over. The Superior and some friars found Charles lying in his cell, incapable of uttering a word, looking and feeling as though he would die any minute. The Guardian sent some friars to the chapel to pray for Charles, while he knelt beside him and repeatedly made the Sign of the Cross over his heart, which brought him some relief. Thinking that he might die, Charles then made a fervent confession to his Superior.

Soon afterward the Saint was granted an unforgettable vision of Christ in His Sacred Humanity that infused into his whole being a divine radiance brighter than the sun's. He ran impulsively to embrace his beloved Savior, but that favor was not granted to him. However, this mystical experience filled him with such healing power that, to the surprise of the Guardian, he was perfectly well the next morning and calmly went back to his work in the kitchen.

Another cunning plot of the demon's to induce Charles to take pride in their attacks failed miserably because of steadfast humility. One day the Father Provincial visited the friary and occupied a room directly opposite Charles' cell. That evening the latter heard a voice whisper in his ear: "Tonight when we attack you, scream! The Superior will hear it and think you are a saint!" But Charles forced himself to endure their attacks that night in complete silence, until they realized their defeat and left him in peace.

After six months as cook, Brother Charles was assigned the position of doorkeeper and server in the refectory, though first he had to teach a young friar just out of the novitiate how to cook.

The Saint accepted his new duties in the spirit of humble obedience, but he felt that he was too young to have extended contacts with the outside world, and he also regretted that he could not preserve his usual recollection in such work. However, he was perfectly aware that these regrets were a sign of self will and lack of detachment. In this connection he compared his emotions to those of a child who cries when deprived of something it wants. For he realized clearly that "Our good Lord, who is an intimate friend of the Cross, desires that sacrifice of our dying to ourselves. And as this is a step which is very hard for our nature, he prepares us for it very gradually, not only by graces and acts of virtue, but also by years of time."

(To be continued)

The Franciscans in the Early Southwest

Sister M. Florian Eggleston, O.S.F.

(Continued)

Settlement

Before the beginning of the 1600's, New Mexico had had six Franciscan martyrs. These were all men of brave heart and pure intention who went into the pueblo country to attempt to convert the many Indians they found there. In 1598 Onate led a party of colonists from Mexico to San Gabriel near San Juan where he started a colony which was moved in 1610 to the present site of Santa Fe. This gave the Franciscans who came with them their first real opportunity to organize

their labors in New Mexico and Arizona.

Under the guidance of a Father Commissary who resided at Santo Domingo, the friars went out in all directions to the surrounding pueblos, building churches and monasteries in the larger ones and preaching Christ crucified in all of them. The period from the time of the first colony until the time of the great revolt in 1680 was a period of comparative peace as far as the Indians were concerned. Only six more martyrs are recorded during this time.

More Martyrs

Before going into the causes that led up to the great revolt, we should probably look into the martyrdoms of the six who died between 1630 and 1680. One of them was Fray Francisco Letrado who had been the first resident priest at Zuni. Because his zeal was boundless, he asked permission to extend the field of his labors into Arizona. However, his request to go to the Zopias was not granted and he remained in Zuni where he met his martyrdom. On February 22, 1630, he was ready to celebrate Mass, but the Indians were not in church. When he went out to see what was the cause of their absence, he met some of the Indians. Admonishing them to come into the church for the divine services, he noticed the foreboding look on their faces and knew that there was trouble ahead. He immediately knelt and clasped his crucifix in both hands. While he was thus praying, the Indians shot him with many arrows.

Just previous to this time, Father Francisco had a visitor, Father Martin de Arvide who was being sent by his superiors to the Zopias where the Zuni priest had wished to go. Father Martin must have left Zuni just before the martyrdom of Fray Francisco. At any rate, the frenzied Zunis followed him into the Mogui country and murdered him five days after they had killed his friend.

Fray Pedro de Miranda met his death in 1631. He had been sent to Taos, but because the Indians there were not to be trusted, the Father Commissary sent with him two soldiers as body guards. One cold day the soldiers and the priest were together in the kitchen. Fray Pedro was kneeling in the corner praying when a great tumult arose outside. Several Indians rushed into the kitchen killing the soldiers and the priest.

Jealousy was the reason behind the martyrdom of Fray Francisco Porras. He was a very holy priest who worked among the Hopi people in Arizona. It is said that he always traveled barefooted, even in winter, and as penance did not wear a cloak in the bitterest weather. God worked several miracles through Fray Francisco. One of them was

THE FRANCISCANS IN THE EARLY SOUTHWEST

the restoration of the sight to an Indian boy who had been born blind. Many conversions resulted from this miracle. Even though the people loved and respected Fray Francisco, the medicine man hated him. One day in June of 1633, they gave him poisoned food to eat. The holy priest died repeating the words of Psalm 30: "In thee, oh Lord, have I hoped."

Many people were killed during the raids of the roving tribes of Apaches, Navajos, and Comanches. Among these were two Franciscan friars. Fray Pedro de Avila y Ayala was stationed in the pueblo of Hawikuh, southwest of Zuni, when the Navajos attacked the pueblo on October 7, 1672, the Hawikuh made their escape—only Fray Pedro remained behind to protect the church as best he could. When the infuriated Navajos found him kneeling near the altar with a crucifix and a statue of the Blessed Virgin in his hands, they dragged him out. In front of the church was a large cross. There they threw the friar to the ground and beat his head with a heavy altar bell until he was dead. Then they set fire to the church and threw the image of the Blessed Virgin into the flames. The next day a priest from a neighboring pueblo came and found the body along with three dead lambs, crushed under the heavy stones.

Three years later, in 1675, another Franciscan was killed by the Apaches when they went on one of their many raiding excursions. Wherever these warlike Indians went, they spread destruction. Little is known of Fray Alonso Gil de Avila except that he was murdered by the Apaches at the pueblo of Senecu not far from Socorro.

Trouble Afoot

It is necessary, however, to backtrack a little in order to understand the political situation that existed in New Mexico while these events were taking place. By 1607, Onate had become so unpopular with his colonists that he was forced to resign. There was a question as to whether the colony and, indeed, all of New Spain might not be wholly abandoned by the Spanish. There was no gold. In the eyes of the Spanish, it was a land of total poverty. Only the Franciscans found it a rich land—rich in souls. But even so, those souls were difficult to bring to a total conversion.

In 1608, the Council of the Indies recommended to the viceroy that New Mexico be abandoned entirely, but just as the question was being argued in Mexico City, Father Ximenez arrived from the colony with news that reopened the whole question. He reported that during the summer the number of Indian converts in the pueblos had jumped from four hundred to seven thousand.⁵ The council and even

⁵ Hewett, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

the crown reconsidered the question and decided that the missions should continue with an annual subsidy from the government. Eight new missionaries were sent to the pueblo country along with supplies for the colonists. Father Alonso de Peinado was appointed the new commissary and Don Pedro de Paralta was named governor. The province of New Mexico then became a crown province. The outlook was momentarily bright for the missionaries.

At the time that Fray Alonso Peinado took up his duties as commissary, there were probably only about four friars left in New Mexico. Some who had come with Onate had died natural deaths, some had returned to Mexico, and others cannot be accounted for. With the new commissary, came one of the most outstanding Franciscans of early New Mexico. He was Father Estevan de Peria whose name is encountered over and over again in 18th century New Mexico history.

In 1612, new supplies and new missionaries came to New Mexico and Fray Isidor Ordonez came as commissary in Fray Alonso's place. By this time, colonization was quite general throughout the province. The governor was powerful, and all too often he became a local tyrant. He was political leader of the province and commander-in-chief of the so-called army. But even with all this authority, or perhaps because of it, a new governor was appointed to the province almost as often as a new commissary was appointed, and that was every three years.

An institution inherent in the Spanish colonial system arose at this time and its influence on the work of the friars was felt later. It was a system of *encomienda* whereby leaders were appointed as *comenderos* or "guardians" of the pueblos. For their services, they received revenues from the natives. In a crisis they might be called upon to take command of a small army in order to defend the pueblo. The abuse came in, however, in the payment of these soldiers. The Indians were taxed, and this practice which became unreasonable in some cases, caused much trouble between the friars and the officials. In 1613 a great dispute arose between the governor and Fray Isidro Ordonez. It even went so far as to cause the governor to shoot at (and miss) the commissary, and the commissary to capture the governor and chain him in a cell at the convento at Sandia.

Paul Horgan calls the governor and the father commissary "the two majesties"⁶ and well they might be so called for the latter was fighting, often in an all-too-human way, for the kingdom of God and the former was carrying his mundane interests into selfish and ruthless channels. In 1619, the friars protested, and with good reason, against Governor Enlate, because he had urged the Indians to revert to the

⁶Horgan, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

old pagan dances that the Franciscans had worked so hard to eradicate from their practices. But the appeal to the king for relief of such abuses brought further disaster to the work of the missionaries. The crown ruled that no Indians be given in *encomienda* until after baptism. Then some Indians reasoned thus: if the system of *encomienda* is so abominable, then why become Catholics at all? It was difficult enough to convert an Indian without this materialistic drawback.

Such ignoble deeds of many of the governors during this time laid the groundwork for the revolt which was to follow. It greatly hindered the work of the friars and, in many cases, discredited the clergy and the Church in the eyes of the natives.

The Heart of the Matter

It is not difficult to state the external causes of the Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680. Facts point to the event as an ultimate recalcitrance against the unChristian treatment meted out by the Spanish officials of the province. However, there is something much deeper than that behind the whole idea of revolt and, in many cases, this still exists today in a less violent form. This is hard to analyze and synthesize. It can be stated in questions which have been asked over and over again by missionaries in the Southwest: what is it in the framework of the pueblo Indian's mentality which keeps him from total conversion? And was this intangible something partly the cause of the revolt? Had the Franciscans really done much good with all their efforts at church-building, preaching, and baptizing? God alone can answer this last question, of course, but humanly speaking it seems, even today, that total conversions are few and far between among the pueblo Indians. The Sisters of my community have taught and labored in the Zuni pueblo for about half a century and it seems that practical application of the catechism teaching is nil. Sunday Masses are practically unattended, and yet no Zuni Indian would miss the pagan shallako dances. Little children come to school and startle their teachers by insisting that there are seven gods instead of one.

Therefore, in approaching the great revolt of 1680, it is necessary to go deeper than mere facts. There is a basic difference in assumption, first principles, and philosophy which keeps the Indian from accepting the white man's view of the world.

The primitive mind—and specialists in comparative religion do call the pueblo mind a primitive mind—accepts an ethical relationship of man with God in which no system of apologetics is required. He also feels that there is one eternal background of the phenomena of existence which is a force universally operative. But wherever a people accepts

such a system as a whole, this presupposes a communal mind. The primitive man's is a non-rationalizing culture. Each man thinks as tradition dictates and no man has a singular view of the world. His approach to the questions of life is an emotional, rather than an intellectual, approach. Witnesses, for example, the dances of the Indian, the art he produces, his legends, and his very language which is purely conceptual containing no abstractions.

It is this adherence to traditions which made work difficult for the seventeenth century friars. They fought pagan beliefs and, in some cases, tried to baptize those beliefs by changing them into Christian concepts. But the Indians did not take wholly to the ideas of the outsiders.

We might say, then, that the problems of these missionaries were two-fold. First, they tried to do the best they could to instruct the pagan mind, and the thought that God is the all-knowing judge probably gave them courage to fight their battles against discouragements. Secondly, the friars had constant difficulties with the Spanish officials, as has been pointed out. In other countries, the missionaries have usually found it possible to follow the flag and devote themselves wholly to the task of conversions. In the Province of New Mexico, few of the friars found it possible to keep their hands out of politics because the political issues at stake hindered their work directly. Hence, the "two majesties" Paul Horgan refers to. It is a tragic history and it is written in Franciscan blood, for no less than thirty-three friars lost their lives in the revolt.

Events That Led to Revolt

The long years of labor which the friars had put forth in the missions seemed by 1675 to be bearing nothing but bitter fruit. The contempt shown for the friars by the officials turned the Indians against them and their message. Paganism was once again rampant and it seemed almost as if Christ crucified had never been preached at all in the pueblo tongues. Several concrete events and a general prevailing atmosphere led up to this situation.

In 1660 a new governor came to the province. He was Diego Dionysio de Penalosa Bricena y Bertugo, commonly called Penalosa. He showed himself more diabolical in abusing his rights than any other governor who preceded him. He demanded that trumpeters come from the convent of each pueblo every week to play for him while he rose or ate. Some deep-seated hatred prompted him to threaten to hang every clergyman and to claim that he had orders from the Duke of Albuquerque in Spain to do so.

When a priest at Taos was murdered, Penalosa appointed the murderer as governor of the pueblo. He also forbade any Indian to aid the new priest who was sent there in rebuilding the church and set the penalty at death for anyone who attempted to do so. The new priest was thus forced to leave the pueblo since Penalosa thwarted his work from the outset.

Things became so bad that the friars protested to the crown about the situation. Their protests, however, were always twisted and reinterpreted by the laymen. But when the laymen protested against the friars, their words were full of untruths. They accused the religious of encouraging revolt, robbing the Indians, beating them, and violating their women. They said that the friars allowed pagan practices among the Indians so long as the Indians would work for them and plant their fields.

The climax of the situation came when the commissary, Fray Alonso de Posada, found it necessary to excommunicate the governor for his violation of the right of sanctuary. Penalosa said that he recognized no judge who could excommunicate him. He then proceeded to arrest the father commissary and put him into prison. This act was doubly shocking because Fray Alonso was not only the commissary, but he also held the office of Commissioner of the Inquisition in New Mexico. The clergyman sent an appeal to the Holy Office in Mexico, and Penalosa found it expedient to resign his post as governor. A confession was extracted from him by the Commission in Mexico City, and as penance he had to pay a fine of five-hundred pesos. He was also forced to walk through the streets of Mexico City in a penitent's robe bareheaded and barefooted carrying a green candle, and then he was banished from the New World. No amount of penance, however, could repair the harm his acts had done to the work of the friars in New Mexico.

Other Problems

Besides the battles of conscience against accusation, there were other very real problems in the province, problems of a wholly impersonal nature. The warlike Apaches were a continual threat to the pueblo dwellers. And then there was the smallpox epidemic of 1641 in which thousands of Indians died. Then there was often famine when the crops failed and the people had to eat field mice and soup made of saddle leather. These three factors took so many lives that the natives could not carry out the revolts they had planned several times. Meanwhile, Spanish oppression of the Indians continued. There

was a great deal of sorcery going on in the *kiwas* of the various pueblos. The pueblo people were more than annoyed by Apache attacks as well as by the Spanish, so the medicine men kept in constant contact, they said, with the devils in order to overcome their evils. The Spanish officials had often punished such sorcery, but now they essayed an all-out attempt to correct the evil. Governor Trevino was able to capture forty-five medicine men in 1675. Three or four of them were hanged and the rest were beaten. Among the medicine men was one from San Juan pueblo named Popay. After their release Popay returned to San Juan but was driven out by the pueblo governor, Francisco Xavier. He then went to Taos still smarting from the indignities of his punishment. There he laid elaborate plans for a general revolt. The time had come when the Indians would no longer bear the burden of paying heavy tribute to the Spanish and of seeing them live contrary to their teachings.

Popay took pains to keep his plans a secret and even murdered his own son-in-law whom he suspected of planning to become an informer. He and a few officials met secretly in the *kiva* and laid plans to elicit the support of all the pueblo people, set a certain time for the revolt, and then swoop down upon the Spaniards seizing their arms and killing all. Popay claimed that three infernal spirits had communicated with him in the *estufa* and had given him directions as to how to go about the revolt. The spirits, he said, sent forth flames from every extremity of their bodies (they took the form of Indians). Their names were Caidit, Tiliin, and Tlesime.

Popay then traveled in all directions and talked with the tribes of all the pueblos painting pictures of the wrongs they were enduring. All the pueblo people endorsed the plans except the *Pros*.

After the plans had been made and Popay was reasonably sure of secrecy, he sent out a rope made of palmilla leaves to each tribe. Knots indicating the number of days before the uprising were tied in the rope. The date assigned was probably the 13th of August, 1680. Many leaders from other tribes joined in the plans wholeheartedly because they, too, felt the smart of the Spanish yoke. They hoped to rid themselves entirely of the invaders.

In spite of the strict secrecy, the plot leaked out and Governor Otermín heard of it from three diverse sources on the same day, August 9. He took immediate measures which allowed the revolutionaries to know that he was aware of their plot. Consequently, Popay and his men struck earlier. On the 10th day of August, they swooped down on Santa Fe. The defense efforts of the Spanish were not the best and

the number slain was over four hundred. The attack on Santa Fe was repeated in every village. The Indians raided the conventos in each pueblo and killed the friars with violence.

Even the Christian Indians revolted. In a letter to the father visitor, Fray Antonio de Sierra wrote on September 4, 1680, "The Indians who have done the greatest harm are those who have been most favored by the religious and who are most intelligent."⁷

They plundered and sacked the villages. In the churches, they mutilated the statues and stole the sacred vestments and vessels. They descended upon the Spanish with bows and arrows and lances killing every Spanish male they could, and—even babies at the breast.

Journals and letters recorded the main events with understandable discrepancies. In a "declaration of one of the rebellious Christian Indians who was captured on the road," we read:

He declared that the resentment which all the Indians have in their hearts has been so strong, from the time this kingdom was discovered, because the religious and the Spaniards took away their idols and forbade their sorceries and idolatries; that they have inherited successively from their old men the things pertaining to their ancient customs; and that he has heard this resentment spoken of since he was of an age to understand.⁸

Such statements make it quite obvious that conversions were not true ones.

The circumstances of the deaths of most of the friars is unknown, but Pedro Hedalgo records⁹ the death of Fray Juan Pío of the Tesuque pueblo. The friar was coming to the pueblo at dawn on August 10, to celebrate Mass for the Indians. He and his witness found the village completely deserted. He looked around the pueblo and its surrounding area until he found some of the Indians wearing war paint and carrying bows and arrows, lances and shields. Fray Juan went up to them saying, "What is this, my children; are you mad? Do not be disturbed. I will help you and die a thousand deaths for you."

But the Indians responded only with war cries. They assailed the witness and captured him; then pursued the fleeing friar with their arrows. The priest was seen to go into a ravine and he was never seen again.

Other missionaries were killed in their churches, in their conventos, or in the fields as they tried to contact other friars to determine some action for the expected revolt of August 13.

⁷Charles Wilson Hackett and Charmion Clair Shelby, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico*. Albuquerque: 1942. Vol. I, 59.

⁸*Ibid.*, 61.

⁹Hackett and Shelby, *op. cit.*, I, 6-7.

The siege lasted nine days but the Spanish of Santa Fe lost so many men that they found it necessary to flee south to El Paso with what was left of their number.

Aftermath

Six years before the revolt a saintly Franciscan, Fray Jose Trujillo, who was reputed to have the gifts of healing and of prophecy, wrote to his superior. In the letter he told of a little girl who had been cured of a ten-year illness by the Blessed Virgin. This little girl, he said, had told him that the entire land would be destroyed because of the lack of respect to priests. Father Theodosius Meyer¹⁰ states that this same prophecy had been made by others. And how sad the circumstances are that made the prophecy come true. All the work that had looked so promising in 1598 was apparently ruined in 1680.

New Mexico and Arizona have fifty-one glorious Franciscan martyrs in all to boast of. Few people, however, realize the heartbreaking toils these brave men went through. The founders of the California missions are comparatively well-known and widely praised, but who has heard of Cristobal Figueroa or Juan Minguez or Domingo de Saraoz? There is a Cross of the Martyrs on a hill overlooking Santa Fe from the north, but few who see it know the cost in tears as well as blood that it commemorates. If "the blood of martyrs is the seed of faith" then we can still hope for further conversions among the Indians of the Southwest.

¹⁰Op. cit., p. 32.

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