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A Commentary on the Psalms:

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Psalm 96

One might certainly argue that any conference on so sacred a thing as a Psalm ought to start out with something more impressive than a reference to the weather. But if we are going to talk about Psalm 96, we have to storm. Not the boisterous kind that rolls up suddenly, rumbles and flashes for a little while, spills some rain, and then capriciously blows away into the distance. No, the lashes it with fire and lightning, begin by talking about a thunder ing in the second verse, and runimagery in this Psalm, commencning through to the fifth, brings abruptly into being a tempest, one that smothers the land in darkness, and convulses it with earthquakes. You can actually trace its progress through the poem:

Clouds and darkness . . . fire . . .

the world . . . the earth . . . lightnings illumine

the mountains melt like wax. trembles

out of context. We had to break sure, that to watch this storm, though, we had to lift these details the association the poet made between each and all of them and You will have noticed, I am

Clouds and darkness are round about him . . . "the Lord."

His lightnings illumine the Fire goes before him . . . world ...

The mountains melt like wax before the Lord

lines are lines in which the association is alternating between God and the aspects of the storm: Furthermore these counterpointed by more pronounced

Clouds and darkness are round about him,

justice and judgment are the foundation of his throne.

and consumes his foes round Fire goes before him

His lightnings illumine the world; The mountains melt like wax bethe earth sees and trembles. fore the Lord,

before the Lord of all the earth.

What is observable, certainly, some majesty, the tremendous power of God. More than that, is the poet's seizing upon the storm as a perfect symbol of the aweeven, it is the kind of terrifying cataclysm that fittingly accompanies the manifestation to his

runs, incidentally, through the creatures of the Lord, God, Creatthe Lord as Judge: is suggested, too, the coming of cluding verse of this first strophe half of the poem-in the confirst six verses to constitute one ing verse of this strophe-which You will notice in the concludor, and Judge of the Universe.

The heavens proclaim his justice, and all peoples see his glory.

with the solemn salutation Israel used at the accession of its kings verse, wherein God is acclaimed the theme enunciated in its first (4 Kings 9:13): Thus the strophe carries to climax

The Lord is king; let the earth let the many isles be glad. rejoice;

sion which calls it a Psalm "of stored." Not too much credence is David, when his land was reto Psalm 96 in the Septuagint Vervindicated his reign over Israel. that God has once more and anew doing so in order to emphasize must remember that the poet is his accession to the throne, we grounds for supposing that the Psalm. But they do find solid that David is the author of this given by scholars to the statement This is an inference from the title were wont to hail a new king at poet salutes God as the Israelites If we find it curious that the

restored" to David in the person of truly a time "when his land was around the year 538 B. C. That was rebuild the Temple after the come back to Jerusalem and to Jews were permitted by Cyrus to of David's compositions-when the Psalm was written-in imitation his descendants. Babylonian Captivity somewhere

happy home-comers to do, who not hard for these ecstatically makes "the mountains melt like the Lord which "goes before him thee to carry out my whole purshepherd's part to play; it is for perfectly he fulfilled the prophecy seeing Cyrus as God's anointed, ist. They had no trouble at all in were contemporaries of the psalmwax before the Lord." But it was trembles;" the conqueror who before which "the earth sees and about;" the lightnings of the Lord and consumes his foes round of the "justice and judgment" of and the victorious ascendancy of that says to Cyrus, I give thee a restore their ruins; . . . my voice cities of Juda rise again, while I Jerusalem grow populous, and the things . . . It is my voice that bids of Isaias: "Thus says the Lord . . . No trouble at all in seeing how accredited with a divine mission. God. Or to see in Cyrus the fire of collapse of the Babylonian Empire hard for us at this distance from I am the Lord, the author of all Cyrus as dynamic manifestations the events to see the humiliating It is perhaps understandably

> dedication of her Temple, the poet image of the tempest. express all this in his poem is the And the figure that he uses to nations, of his justice to Israel manifestation of God's omnipoof this Psalm sees one more lishment of Jerusalem, the rerestoration of Israel, the re-estabupheaval and uprooting of Babyagain" (Isaias 44:24-28). In the tence, of his judgment upon the lon by Cyrus and in the resulting Temple, Thou shalt be founded Thou shalt be built up; and to the pose. And to Jerusalem it says

most successfully in Psalm 17. you find David using it, perhaps among the Hebrew poets. Anyway started, in fact, by David, supreme a convention among Hebrew poets. justice was, you might say, almost manifestation of his power and of a storm as a symbol of God's in his choice of imagery. The use The convention may have been 96 was not surprisingly original admit that the composer of Psalm tation I think that we can openly Without detriment to his repu-

17 is far richer, though in detail attribute Psalm 96 to David. Psalm the Septuagint translators either, of what probably prompted And you are left with no doubt, to which is the better, poetically. 17, you are left with no doubt as compare the first strophe of Psalm odious but they do have to be 96 with the third strophe of Psalm made sometimes. And when you Comparisons are said to

> of the storm to the earth-shaking a picture of the tumultuous rise organized, and more realistically height of its fury. more graphic, more imaginatively

The earth swayed and quaked; the foundations of the mountains trembled

and shook when his wrath flared

And he inclined the heavens and Smoke rose from his nostrils, that kindled coals into flame. and a devouring fire from his mouth

He mounted a cherub and flew, borne on the wings of the wind. with dark clouds under his feet. came down,

And he made darkness the cloak dark, misty rain-clouds his wrap. about him;

From the brightness of his pres-

coals were kindled to flame.

And the Lord thundered from heaven,

the Most High gave forth his voice;

He sent forth his arrows to put with frequent lightnings he routthem to flight,

Then the bed of the sea appeared, and the foundations of the world were laid bare,

ed them.

At the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the wind of his

(Psalm 17:8-16)

100

We shall, of course, make a

phenomena. The tree planted near holy writer's sense of the underlying significance of all natural fact that the Psalms illustrate the and relevance. If you take that to on the grounds of poetic beauty poets selected their imagery simply mistake if we suppose that these be the sole grounds, you miss the Because the Holy Ghost over the World broods with warm breast

and with ah! bright wings.

ning fill the hearts of men with

the land, while thunder and lightthe storm clouds roll up and cover ways recalls whenever he watches that he can never forget and alin this Psalm. It is a living fact

we are somehow reminded of God's awe. And if, in reading this Psalm,

we sing this Psalm attentively and of our father's voice every time almost be said to catch the echo are his children, therefore, might were made for you, O man." We creature speaks and says to us: We anyone who listens. The poet of which God is forever speaking to Francis, who insisted that "every Psalm 96 knew that. So did Saint

will of God, and so is free to be spiritual facts. Nature is a symbol would more than have agreed with things. The poets of the Psalms sheep of the flock, these are not the mind and matter is not fancied of spirit . . . This relation between natural facts. Particular natura they are true symbols of spiritual merely pretty or familiar figures, have understood perfectly what a known by all men." They would by some poet, but stands in the facts are symbols of particular the view that "words are signs of Ten manifestation of himself. Historic with Israel and gave Moses the Sinai when he made his covenant rounded the coming of Yahweh on very circumstances which surally, you will recall, these are the in the mind of the poet with God's Commandments. "Behold

modern poet beautifully proclaim-The world is charged with the They would have known as he did, Crushed . . . It gathers to a greatness, like the It will flame out, like shining grandeur of God. ooze of oil from shook foil;

The world is a word through

alone on the housetop, the hind

the running water, the sparrow

palm tree and the cedar of Lebanpanting for the running waters, the

on, the breakers of the sea, the

the storm should be associated reason-if that is the way to phrase it—why the dreadful turbulence of There is even a more concrete

history is about to be ended? How suggestions of the divine maninot also inclined to find in it festation that will come when all the Chosen People begins, are we judgment as the psalmist depicts like they are: God's coming in

upon you like a thief. The heavens so transitory; and what men you achievements will burn away. All dissolved, earth, and all earth's elements will be scorched up and will vanish in a whirlwind, the ing, and when it comes, it will be that "the day of the Lord is com-24:27-30). And the same Spirit of inspired Saint Peter to warn us Truth who spoke through them

your life, how reverent towards ought to be; How unworldly in for the heavens to shrivel up in for the day of the Lord to come, God, as you wait, and wait eagerly,

> strophe of Psalm 96 because in a consideration of the second

the effects of God's coming and these verses, 7 to 12, are treated away," make an easy transition to

"all earth's achievements will burn

note about this second strophe is greet it worthily. the dispositions of those who will Perhaps the first thing we must

will refuse her light, and the stars sun will be darkened and the moor manifestation when the history of then it is that the Son of Man shall powers of heaven will rock, and will fall from heaven, and the be seen in heaven ..." (Matthew it and as Christ foretold it. "The tone of the entire first strophe. contrasts. There is, first of all, an nations of the world. Now the poet other contrast is observable bewith God's reward of the just. Anment of the unjust; the latter, internal contrast to be observed been described than in the followwhere more accurately have these deities on which they relied. Nomajesty, coming to judge the depicted in terms of might and The God of Israel was therein tween verses 7, 8, and 9, and the is concerned with God's punishverses 10, 11, and 12. The former 7, 8, and 9, and the second section, between the first section, verses that it is one marked by strong that God will judge and to the turns his attention to the nations

Our God is in heaven; ing verses from Psalm 113:

Their idols are silver and gold, whatever he wills, he does. the handiwork of men.

They have ears but hear not; They have mouths but speak not; they have noses but smell not; they have eyes but see not;

heat" (2 Peter 3:10-12). fire, and the elements to melt in its Actually Saint Peter's words, They have hands but feel not; they have feet but walk not;

the poet's description of the storm

God, we feel, is somehow behind phany, that stupendous coming of and all the mount was terrible"

(Exodus 19:16-18). That theo-

arose from it as out of a furnace upon it in fire; and the smoke all Mount Sinai was on a smoke cloud to cover the mount . . . and

because the Lord was come down

thunders began to be heard, and

lightning to flash, and a very thick

Their makers shall be like them, And, concludes the psalmist: everyone that trusts in them. (Psalm 113:11-16)

ation of an old conviction: come upon Babylon and doomed of all who worship false gods. It for the poet simply a new confirmher to destruction. And her fall is is the fate that has most recently That has been the universal fate

All who worship graven things are who glory in the things of put to shame,

all gods are prostrate before naught;

This is the latest instance of God's strength to his faith. So latest comfort to Israel and proof that "the Lord is king;" the "justice and judgment;" the latest

Sion hears and is glad, and the cities of Juda rejoice because of your judgments, O

Because you, O Lord, are the Most exalted far above all gods. High over all the earth,

very sharply, as we have noted, is a quiet kindliness, a tenderness it in this second strophe. There with the three verses just ahead of verses 10, 11, and 12, contrasts The final section of the poem,

> about it altogether different from those who worship him-and, inexpected, of course, because now that hate evil." worship God is to be one of "those cidently we will learn that to we are learning how God rewards verses 7, 8, and 9. This is to be the stern and majestic tone of

The Lord loves those that hate evil;

he guards the lives of his faithful ones;

from the hand of the wicked he delivers them.

and as you move on deeper into is a calm gladness and a brightness its fury passed, fear and terror fore the Lord." The storm is over, mountains" melting "like wax beness . . . fire . . . lightnings . . . the strophe with its "clouds and darkall forgotten, it the perfect antithesis of the first about this section, too, that make the poem you discover that there

Light dawns for the just; and gladness for the upright of

and so is free to be known by all poet, but stands in the will of God, matter is not fancied by some is a symbol of spirit . . . This repoem if we fail to realize that the the fundamental fact that "nature poet is once more falling back on lation between the mind and Here again we impoverish the

the king in the brightness of thy tiles shall walk in thy light and be seen upon thee. And the Genarise upon thee and his glory shall mist the people; but the Lord shall darkness shall cover the earth, and is risen upon thee. For behold come, and the glory of the Lord ed, O Jerusalem: for thy light is of light: "Arise, and be enlightengoing to forsee and fortell in terms know about light what Isaias is men." And this poet may well rising" (Isaias 60:1-3).

hold in his arms and hail with shall give revelation to the Gencertain, who it is that Simeon will people Israel" (Luke 2:32). tiles, this is the glory of thy gladness: "This is the light which This poet knows, we are almost

with truth and certainty: "I am must know—Him who will say darkness; he will possess the light follows me can never walk in the light of the world. He who This poet knows-surely he

which is life" (John 8:12).

can close his poem with wor which is in his day yet to peace and faith and gratitu This poet, knowing all

Be glad in the Lord, you ju and give thanks to his name.

to reality what he could onl invitation. We can. passage of the ages has br see, can accept his advice We, reading his poem after

Be glad in the Lord, and give thanks to his

the glory of God the Fathe every tongue must confess thing in heaven and on eart Christ, as the Lord, dwelli under the earth must ben knowing with the strength knee before the name of Jesu assurance of our faith "that name,

CROSS TO CALVARY

How heavy was Your Cross to Calvary, which pained Your shoulder, made it ragged raw! A cruel crown of thorns endeared Your brow. Although blood filled Your tender eyes, You saw the few weeping women grieving for You. There stood the poor, also the weak, the lame. For our great crimes You bore this agony, that pardon we would gain for sins of shame. You murmured not when soldiers drove the nails into Your sensitive flesh. No sharp word escaped Your lips. You thought of our travails, and gave to us Your Mother, which we heard. I go to meet my Christ with our Mary, and carry with You my cross to Calvary.

Sister Mary Terese, O.S.F.

EASTER VIGIL

The forgotten years are shed Upon the edge of this First fearful alleluia.

Here is the forecast of glory, The song tossed tomorrow-ward.

A whirlwind of life-in-death
Throws back the emptiness
Into the chamber of oblivion
As alleluia upon alleluia
Rises, now incautious,
Until the air turns one white sacrament
Of incredible joy.

And here am I who asked to rise with Him.
I shall only dare to kneel
Here on new-gloried time
And cling to mindfuls of silence
After the storm of song is done.

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Sister M. Florian Eggleston, O.S.F. 104

Outline Of A Theology

Of Lay-Brotherhood

Father Bruce Malina, O.F.M.

Undoubtedly there is much about the brother's status that should be considered by priest and brother alike. We often hear and speak about what in our estimation the brothers should do and should be. I have been informed that the religious brothers in the United States find the title "lay brother" practically ambiguous and embarrassing; and in a Washington meeting, these men have decided to employ the title "religious brother." Can we who are not lay brothers blame these men for such action? Is it not true that not only lay people, but also priests and the brothers themselves have but a vague and hazy idea of how they stand in the Church and in the Order?

To clarify the situation in our own minds so as to act the way we think and not think the way we act, let us reflect upon the theological principles which define the lay brother's status. By necessity, unfortunately, the following considerations must be presented in bare outline form, although each point could be made the subject of more thoroughgoing considerations. The situation being what it is, then, we shall briefly consider: (1) Theologically speaking, what is a lay brother in the Church; (2) what is the lay brother's state in the Church; and finally (3) what is the relationship of the lay brother to the Franciscan Order and vice-versa.

I. The lay brother is a lay person in the Church.

The Church (ekklesia) is the assembly or congregation of all people called into the Kingdom of God founded by Jesus Christ (ekkletoi). The basis for our being Christians is a call (klesis) from God. The effective means of our being incorporated into the Kingdom, the ratification of our call, has been the sacrament of Baptism. Furthermore, aside from the divine call at Baptism, some of us have been directly called to a further task in the Church. Those of us who have received the sacrament of Sacred Orders have been "given" to the N. Y., 1959) Bk. 1. "God's People" pp. 7-144: and in the Protestant tradition. Alan Richardson. The Biblical Doctrine of Work (SCM. London, 1958) esp. chaps. "The Proper Work of Christians" and "Vocations in the New Testament" pp. 33-39. Cf. also the outstanding work of Yves M. J. Congar, O.P., Lay People in the Church. A Study for a Theology of the Laity. (Newman, Westminster, Md., 1957): and idem. "The Theology of Religious Women," in Review for Religious. 19 (Jan. 1960) pp. 15-39.

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writes: "For we are fellow workmen for God; you are God's field, God's to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13). apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, Church, as St. Paul says: "And his gifts were that some should be stones. The Church taught, lay people in the Church, have a priestly, the "you" the faithful are passive. The Church is made of living this distinction does not mean that the "we", the clergy, are active and upon; the Church that builds and the Church that is built. However taught, the Church working (a divine work) and the Church worked the letter, St. Paul calls his fellow workers in the ministry "we"; and function relative to the sanctification of the Church. Again St. Paul The call to the priesthood is a call, a commission to take up a direct faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for of cooperating with God in the work of perfecting reality with a view to between two "co-extensive" realities, the Church and the world, a task nature of their vocation.2 Chiefly this function is one of being a bridge prophetic and kingly function in the Church in keeping with the Church, all those baptized, into the Church teaching and the Church technical language. What the apostle intimates is the distinction in the his own way, what the tradition of the Church has declared in more building upon whom the priests of God work. Thus St. Paul states, in the Corinthians, to whom he addresses these words, "you", a field, a building" (I Cor. 3:9; cf. II Cor. 6:1; Mk. 16:20). In the context of building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the Christ's second coming.*

the Church in the strict sense, the clerical order and the lay order are wish to state here is that from the point of view of divine vocations in Church lies beyond the scope of our present discussion. All that I is rather indirect and under the direction of the clergy. task of sanctification; but his work of building up the Kingdom of God Church. The layman is also called to fulfill a function in the Church's individual.5 And the same can be said of the lay person called to the office, and in itself it is not directly involved in the perfection of the functions and not states. The priesthood as such is not a state but an Consideration of these facets of the layman's vocation in the

4 Cf. Congar, op. cit., p. 399 ff.

structured hierarchically; they pertain to the essential structure of the necessary to the Church in so far as she is a society constituted and the two classes, of cleric and layman exist by divine right and are and the laity. And in his Provida mater, the same Pontiff declares that the Kingdom of God consists of a double element," namely the clergy Kingdom of God on earth.7 Consequently, as Pope Pius XII has said, "on earth the structure of

strictly speaking, only two vocations in the Church: that of the clergy trade by God. St. Paul, for example, is called by God to be an apostle he is not "called" to be a tent-maker. Those whom God calls, in the of those called by God for the work of sanctifying the Church, there are directly or indirectly on the building up of God's Kingdom. knows no instance of man's being called to an earthly profession or and total service in the Church (through Sacred Orders). The Bible call to repentance and faith and to a life of fellowship in the Church of religious life. In the New Testament, vocation (klesis) means God's and that of the laity. The New Testament does not refer to "vocation" New Testament sense of the word, are summoned to "work" either (through Baptism) as well as God's call to a life of more or less direct in the modern sense of a secular profession or avocation or in the sense Therefore, considering the nature of the Church as the assembly

elementary orders in the Church, that of the clergy and that of the laity to the Scriptures and the teaching of the Church, there are only two not clerics, they are basically lay people in the Church. Since lay brothers, no matter what religious Order they belong to, are Now on the basis of these truths, we can safely say that, according

constructed, of sanctifying. Yet the Church is not only in the process of building; for, from another point of view, it is built, it is the Mystica Body of Christ, it is holy and spotless. The Church is both the means of Previously we have considered the Church from the point of viev of its being built up, the Church in the continual process of being of life through which people are notified, in the course of history, of th notion of the Church as built, as holy, we can discern in it three state in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she migh water with the word, that the Church might be presented before hin that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of th St. Paul tells us, "Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for he be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27). Now in line with th grace or sanctification and the reality of grace or sanctity. For a fact that the Church is holy. These three states are the religious state 6 Pius XII. "Annus sacer." AAS 43 (1951) p. 27. 7 Idem, "Provida Mater." AAS 39 (1947) p. 116. The lay brother is a lay person in the religious state in the Church

² Cf. Congar, op. cit., chaps. 1-3 of part 2, pp. 112-280.

⁸ Cf. Charles Taylor, "Clericalism," in Cross Currents 10 (1960) p. 127ff.

This is clearly the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas. 4 Sent. 24, 1, 1, 2 ad 4; ibid., 3, 2, 2, obj. 2; and on this question Summa Theologica, Ila-Ilae, qq. 186-189; cf. also A. M. Henry, O.P. edit. Christ in His Sacraments. Volume Six—Theology Library (Fides, Chicago, 1958) Chap. 6, "Holy Orders" pp. 306-345.

means of sanctification, there is an order of excellence among the better and more holy than the married state (C. of Trent, DB 981). three since, absolutely speaking, the religious and celibate states are with the sanctification of the individual Christian. Furthermore, as open to her. All the three states are more or less directly concerned religious, a married man or a single man. The lay woman in the Church man or a single man; and a lay person in the Church may be either a and clergy function. For example, a priest may be a religious, a married three states are theologically and practically compatible with the lay the married state and the unmarried, non-religious state. All these is excluded from the priestly function, but any of the three states are

word "vocation" its broad and all embracing meaning.9 on divine election; vocation to a state in life depends more on human the Church as layman or cleric, theologically speaking, depends more the vocation to a function in the Church. In other words, vocation to to the religious state is a conventional, analogical and equivocal application⁸ since the choice of a state in life depends more on vocations to the married state, vocations to be doctor, lawyer, etc. to the religious state, while it was Luther and Calvin who gave the history of the Church, the monks of old applied the idea of vocation selection (although some sort of divine actual grace is involved). In the individual preference and calculation and conscious choice than does of cleric and that of layman. The use of the idea of vocation relative there are, strictly speaking, only two vocations in the Church, that However from the truths we have considered above, we have seen that Today we hear much about vocations to the religious state.

vocation in the broad sense. the same way as priests who enter religious Orders have a second safely state that lay brothers are lay people in the Church who have their personal perfection. They have a vocation in the broad sense in chosen the religious state, a higher state of perfection, as a means for Now applying these ideas to the lay brother's status, again we can

III. The Franciscan Order and the lay brother.

to put his hand to the plow and not look back so as not to make crooked St. Francis was a young layman when he decided (with God's help)

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attitude still continues in the Order's history and present. Historians attempt to put us in line with contemporary situations: (CC. GG. of culture does not lend to this practice is a fact that results in our calling state that the Franciscan Order is, we have lay people, and priests still speak of Brother Bonaventure and Brother Bernardine of Siena calling one of their number by that title, since all were laymen. This as their father in an immediate and real sense, and found no need of "father." Furthermore, this group of laymen were wont to view God alone treated one another as brothers, called one another "brother." This was canon or priest.) 10 The thing that attracted these lay people was attracted eleven other laymen (Peter Cathani was not a cleric or 1953, Eng. trans. p. 3, 6; also Art. 537). history or tradition of the Order. (Cf. the General Constitutions which each other "brother," "father," and "frater." For this is not due to the themselves lay brothers and clerical brothers respectively. That our joining together for a common goal, Christian perfection,12 and calling ciscan Spirituality,11 all I would like to point out is, that in the religious Sepinski." Though this nomenclature has deeper implications in Franand the Minister General still signs his letters "Brother Augustine it would seem funny, to say the least, for them to address him as younger than the majority of the mature laymen who joined him, and psychologically feasible since Francis, the founder of the group, was St. Francis' attitudes displayed in his word and deed. The first twelve work of his service to God in following Christ. This young layman soon

The attitude of Francis and the first friars that they are brothers in religion¹⁸ in spite of their function in the Church is just one of the

10 Cf. Englebert Grau, O.F.M., "Die ersten Bruder des hl. Franziskus," in Franziskanische Studien 40 (1958) pp. 137-138.
11 By "Franciscan Spirituality" I mean the sum total of attitudes of St. Francis of of Assini as displayed in his words and deeds. Today Franciscan Spirituality is supposed to be found actively and practically in the living Franciscan Tradition. cf. note 23.

12 Practically speaking. Christian perfection means many things to many people.

All I would like to point out here is that the Christian perfection which the Franciscans strive to garner is that outlined in Franciscan Spirituality in the previous

18 "To stimulate reflection on this matter, I permit myself to cite here the two following texts which are hateful and terrible, but important: 'Monks are people Has anyone ever observed real friendship among the devout? But the mote they detach themselves from men, the more they demand of men; and one could say that they do not raise themselves to God except to exercise his authority on the earth. (J. J. Rousseau, Nouvelle Heloise, 6th Part, Letter 8)" cited from Congar. each other, and die without regretting each other. (Voltaire, L'homme aux quarante ecus, VIII. Oeuvres completes, xxxiv, Paris, 1829, 60). 'The love of who bunch together without knowing each other, live together without loving art. Cit., ftnote 22, p. 26. God serves them as an excuse to love no one; they do not even love one another.

⁸ This analogical and equivocal application of the word "vocation" to the use the expression Beruf and Vocatio of men's everyday tasks and stations. It is important to note that they did this as a protest against the medieval use of rocatio exclusively as the call to the monastic life. They wished to destroy the double standard and to shew that God could be glorified in the workaday world." Richardson, op. cit., p. 38: "The Reformers, Luther and Calvin, first began to application of the word "sin" to the traditional trio: original sin, venial sin, and mortal sin. In each case the word "sin" means something quite different in reality. Christian, priestly and religious state is much like the analogical and equivocal

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manifestations of how much the Poverello's point of view bespeaks his layman's mentality. It is a fact that Francis would have nothing of monasticism. He stubbornly rejected the proposal of the Pope, Bishops and priests within his Order to make his ideal over in monastic fashion. As a result, the new-type religious life and religious attitudes he brought into the Church by divine guidance differ much from the clerical and originally lay monastic orders of the past. As I have mentioned, the first friars were adult, mature men. They were not psychologically conditioned by any sort of conventual, monastic life as were, for example, St. Thomas or St. Bonaventure. Hence it was no wonder that they astonished their contemporaries and differed so much

religious state. Consequently lay people, both religious and non-religious, filtered these through the prism of the Gospel, thereby forming a new quite in line with the mature views of the single layman's state and Church, it is historically certain to say that Francis patterned his life as a layman turned religious. Hence of the three states known in the adopt the life of a clergyman of his day. He continued to act and think probably in 1216, eight years after founding the Order; yet he did not not a clerical tonsure.15 However, Francis did become a deacon, most bation of their Rule from Pope Innocent III was a normal haircut and the literati and the clergy of their day. Most of the early friars never community life fashioned out of loving mutual service, without privileges should have found much in St. Francis to illumine their attempt at These laymen become religious, with these attitudes of theirs, won over life of penance (change of heart); large-scale freedom in contact with realms for work and movement for personal individuality and activity; not based upon dispositions posed by others; the widest choice of maintain the right attitudes, the right spirit, by means of self-decision and with the fewest possible precautionary measures; striving to Divine Office); disregard for meticulous scholarly religious knowledge; without great stress or all-embracing interest in external forms (like and concern for inward communion with God in everyday circumstances to exist despite conventualization - we might mention: great success call it their lay spirituality) on the Order - and most of these continue from the monks of their day. became clerics. The tonsure they received upon obtaining oral approlay people; and cheerfulness as a permanent basic frame of mind.14 freedom in the religious formation of the individual's personality and Among the influences of their lay religious attitudes (we would

following Christ in the course of centuries. If they did not and still do not, this may be due to another factor.

not as a people, i.e. as amorphous, passive and anonymous in the Order. profoundly different in their vocation in the Church, stress the difference friars are about their apostolic business. The result of such a clericalistic and laymen who choose to acquire the attitudes of St. Francis in order emphasis on the hierarchical, clerical structure of the Order,17 which In this way the lay brothers tend to be looked upon as a "mass" and and overlook the uniformity. They view each other as "they" and "we." attitude is that the friars who are at one in their religious ideal, but appendix of the Order, at most necessary to keep house while the priest that we see in the lay brother a simple accident to the Order, an to apply them in their life and churchly function, then the result is causes to be hid from view its life as the fraternal community of priests for its well being."16 Similarly, if clericalism in the Order is the laity a simple accident, an appendix of the Church, at most necessary faithful (priests and laymen), then the result is that we "see in the in the respective histories of both institutions. If clericalism in the Order runs parallel to the position of the layman in the Church Church which causes to be hid from view its life as the community of Church is the emphasis on the hierarchical, clerical structure of the The effects of exaggerated clericalism are quite similar both in For it seems to me that the position of the lay brother in the

The effects of exaggerated clericalism are quite similar both in the Order and in the Church. Both lay brother and layman, having no role to fulfill in common with each other or with the clergy, being rather les administres of the system, tend to fragment, each one dealing with the "Church" i.e. the clergy, or the "Order" i.e. superiors and their priests, about his own private problems, sins or vocation. Sunday Mass often becomes a place where lay people, both religious and non-religious, assemble paradoxically enough for private devotion.

Within the past several years, churchmen from the Pope down to the editors of our Catholic papers, have pointed out the anomalies of clericalism in a positive way. This they have done by renewed (and often new) consideration of the lay state in the Church. Now if the fluctuations of the lay brother's condition oscillate in harmony with the fluctuations of the lay state in the Church, then the present effort 16 Cf. Taylor. art cit., p. 127.

17 Note that the first friars, all laymen, won over the literati and the clerici of their day. As thousands streamed into the Order, the clerici soon took over rule. In 1239, under Haymo of Faversham, the laymen were partly removed from leading offices and partly hindered from entering the Order (Chapter of 1239). From then on, with the advent of conventualization, the ruling clerici exerted the same influence over the Order as did their contemporary pastors and bishops (and Pope) over the Church. Cf. Casutt, art cit., p. 6 ff.

¹⁴ Laurentius Casurt, O.F.M. Cap., "Die Sobne des hl. Franziskus," in Renaissance Gesprache und Mitteilungen, (March. 1954), pp. 5-6.

¹⁵ Idem, Die Alteste Franziskanische Lebensform. (Styria, Graz. 1955) p. 50 ff.

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what the Popes have been saying about the lay people in the Church. recommend that the lay brothers study, take interest in and think about in the ranks of religious lay people. Therefore I, for one, would of the Church relative to the lay state will find eventual repercussion person provided it is in conformity with his state in the Church. For any lay function at all is theoretically open to the religious lay

self-justifying archaism. thought of the Church in line with his end or state and not fall prey to this end,21 the religious layman ought to heed and attempt to follow the more integrally Christian and to embrace more suitable means toward individual religious, priest or layman, strive to be more consistently, and cannot preclude development and progress in culture and civilreading and studying the Bible, Papal directives and sound and solid ization.20 Since what the religious life basically demands is that the lays greater stress on total obedience to the voice of the Holy Father, 19 learning should be content and not strive for erudition. 18 For the Rule in the Franciscan Order, even though the Rule says that those without Catholic literature. I believe that this also applies to religious laymen The Pope urges lay people to gain deeper knowledge of their faith by Now to cite a few examples of what this might mean in practice.

Order which must develop and progress in history in line with its in the Church.22 If this is so for the Church, it holds a fortiori for the Again, the Pope sees the need for and existence of public opinion

- 18 Regula bullata, cap. 10.
- 19 Regula bullata, cap. 1 and 12.

į.

- 20 The Rule is for individual persons, not individual persons for the Rule. Any application of the Rule must take development and progress into account, as for understand the literal meaning of the Rule (i.e. what it states and means to state) courting frustration, especially in view of the fact that relatively few really and it should be clear that any mere literal application of the Rule would be attitudes in the U.S. (molded by capitalism and present-day world situation etc.) interests than the illiterate of Francis' day. Add to this the general cultural therefore the modern high-school educated person will have far different needs and write, that a high-school education is mandatory by law in most states, and example, the fact that most all who enter the Order today will be able to read and
- This is all that St. Francis had in mind when he took up his new form of life. 1953 CC. GG. And theologically speaking, this is the purpose of the religious state in the Church, cf. Congar, art cit., p. 20. that he (and later those who joined him) strive to be a better Christian in the vocation in which he was called: cf. Regula bullata, cap. 1 and 12, and the conclusion of the Testament, "ut melius catholice observemus..." This idea is lost in the interpretative translation to be found in the English edition of the
- quoted by Karl Rahner, S.J., Free Speech in the Church. (Sheed and Ward, N. Y., 1959) p. 14. The first essay in this little book is an elaboration upon the observations of Pope Pius XII relative to public opinion in the Church. Pius XII, "Address to the International Catholic Press Congress," Feb. 18, 1950;

the present day status of religious as intimated by the Popes of based upon these attitudes and outlined in the history of the Order and ledge of the attitudes of St. Francis and the traditions of the Order their function and state (as outlined above) and a comparable knowcomplexes or mere feeling, but upon the principles of sound theology of not base their positive and/or negative criticism upon inferiority attempt to mould public opinion within the Order provided they do and the world situation. Lay brothers, in parallel fashion, should also of other important spheres of their life, like making a living, politics mold this public opinion within the Church provided they have a knowledge of Christianity comparable to the knowledge they have traditions (and not traditionalisms23). Pius XII invites lay people to

28 It is important to have a clear idea of the distinction between tradition and In the light of our previous considerations, what all this means

traditionalism. Here are a few differences: continued creation of the Franciscan ideal, Franciscanism in the process of being made. Tradition in the Order as in the Church) is the actual, progressive, living truths and attitudes expressed originally by St. Francis and held by his followers today. something active, like the Roman relay races from which the word has its origin. Tradition is not creative; it represents and manifests for our experience the 1. Tradition is not merely handed down, not merely inherited. Tradere is

and those around us; what we are used to because we are used to it. e.g. the Rule contains traditions; the Constitutions, by their very nature, contain much Traditionalism follows passively the ways we have received from parents

all living and worthwhile attitudes from the primitive to the present. It gives a sense of our own place in time, a sense of the endless-time actuality of labor. It is an apperception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence. Tradition involves a historic sense which must be acquired with great

is transient and insignificant. us in a culture; it merely helps us huddle together with the element in society that Traditionalism has no vital connection with remote past; it does not integrate

3. Tradition is a real, life-giving, living stream that stays alive and endless and constantly renews itself against the death and inertia of convention. Tastes change, attitudes change tradition remains constant, e.g. St. Francis' attitudes (tradition) and the attitudes of later Franciscans (not tradition for the Order).

is mere conformity with a familiar type. e.g. The Scholastic conceptualistic approach to life which is generally repugnant to men of today (this is Father Charles Bulic's Traditionalism is the repetition of what was dead in the last generation. It is the vain effort to perpetuate what is transient and dead in our own generation and

4. Tradition is a deep, living consciousness of the past, the present and their Traditionalism is shut in upon itself and unconscious of whatever is not its

Tradition is always new and original.

Traditionalism is dead, opposed to originality, life and spontaneity.

These ideas come from T. S. Eliot's Essays, and a lecture by Gustave Weigel
S.J., on Traditions and Traditionalism, given at St. Procopius College, Lisle, III.

is this. It is not enough and not fair of an individual lay brother to

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of the laity in the Church.

In summary, then, our considerations of the lay brother's status in the Church and in the Order has led to the following conclusions:

1. The lay brother is a lay person in the Church.

2. The lay brother is a lay person who has chosen the religious state in the Church, the Franciscan religious state.

3. The Franciscan religious state demands of those who adhere to it, that they continually strive to be better Christians, that the laymen in their number strive to meet the demands that the Church of the mid-twentieth century demands of lay people nowadays; and finally that the Franciscan religious state is traditionally and historically most suitable to this demand since most of the basic religious attitudes of St. Francis are those of a mature lay person in the Church.

And in the light of the truths we have considered in the course of this conference, I would ask you to examine your conscience on the following points:

1. Do I base my criticism of my confrere priests or lay brothers on solid reasons, or on my own feeling and whim?

2. Do I strive to understand the Church's teaching on lay people in the religious state, or do I contrive my own opinions, pass them off as true and attempt to direct myself and others according to them?

3. What can I do to further the understanding of the lay brother's status, to encourage young people to embrace this state in the Church for their own perfection and the building up of the Kingdom of God?

obligations to cover his everyday activity. To relax in these obligations

supernatural obligation to worship. If to be a Franciscan means, as St. Francis often intimates,²⁴ to be a better Christian, then should not the Franciscan layman be even more dedicated to his work and worship than is the lay person in the Church but not in the religious state? The lay brother in religion, just as the priest in religion, has general

his family.

Beside his natural obligation to work, the lay person also has a

4. If I am or have been or will be in a position of authority, do I or have I or will I attempt to deepen my understanding of the religious lay state and educate those whom I direct in the proper principles of the Church?

5. Do I attempt to understand the historic bases of Franciscan Spirituality along with its lay foundation and adopt it in my perspective in everyday life either as cleric or layman in religion, or do I continue to fabricate my own ideal of Franciscan religious life and thereby thwart the building up of that which God does not cease building?

25 I received this observation from reading a paper by Bro. Celestine Luke, F.S.C., S.T.D., entitled "The Theology of a Brother's Vocation," to be published soon in the proceedings of the First Annual Conference of the Franciscan Brothers Educational Institute, St. Francis College, Brooklyn, N. Y., May 29, 1960.

keep a job long. And without a job he could not support himself or now and then to sacrifice his time for the good of the company, will not his boss's approval in the excellence of his work, or who is not ready obvious that a layman who is often late for work, who does not meet making due provision for their respective states in life. It should be as much dedication to the chores of life as does the non-religious layman, to do. To say the least, the religious lay person certainly should show it is up to the guardian to tell them every so often what he wants them no general obligations (as the priest has in the Church) and therefore in the Church; while their confrere lay brothers think that they have the latest books, etc., all needed and called for by their priestly function no guardian has to tell them to prepare their sermon, or prepare for class, or write an article for publication, or keep up with news and read it be that their confrere priests take their obligations for granted, and since religious priests are, as we have seen, men with a priestly function privileges, or something demanded by a priest's function in the Church, not have either individually or as a class. Are these privileges really say simply that his confrere priests have privileges which he does "gold-bricks," time wasters and unfaithful to their obligations, while in the Church who have chosen religious life. Or again, some lay he never tells a priest that, or he is afraid to tell a priest that. Yet could brothers might say that their guardian constantly accuses them of being

Undoubtedly much of the sub-conscious and conscious enmity and criticism that exists at present and has existed from the early days of the Franciscan Order between cleric friars and lay friars would disappear if there were a middle group, for example, of lay brothers specially educated to fulfill tasks like teaching in high schools, even 21, above.

or priest in the Church as a function.

would lead to sad results in the Order as would a priest's relaxing in his obligations, lead to sad results in the Church. It is not a matter of finger-pointing at "them" who are unlike "us." It is a matter of realizing the nature of religious life as a state, and the nature of being a layman

"I Am Joseph, Your Brother ..."

Pope John XXIII, Franciscan Tertiary, speaks to his fellow Franciscans

Father Honorius A. Santoriello, O.F.M.

One need not meet Our Holy Father, Pope John XXIII to know that he is thoroughly Franciscan in ideals and in spirit. Just a glance at his written words and a study of his actions convey the spirit of St. Francis. His Encyclicals, directives, messages and allocutions are permeated with Franciscan idealism and his actions, especially his mercy and love for the poor, the thwarted and oppressed, betray him as a follower of the Poverello of Assisi. On the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the Franciscan Rule, April 16, 1959, in the great basilica of Saint John Lateran, by his own admission, he declared to his "fellow"

Franciscans and to all the world his love for Francis when he said:

"Beloved sons, let us add a special heartfelt word to all those present belonging to the peaceful army of the Third Order of Saint Francis—"I am Joseph, your brother." We tenderly love to tell you so. We have been so from our youth of 14 years. On the first of March, 1896, we were enrolled by Canon Luigi Isacchi, our spiritual father and director of the seminary in Bergamo. We like to thank the Lord for this grace which happily coincided with the act whereby we began the ecclesiastical life. We received the tonsure that same year and month. Oh, the serene and innocent joy of that coincidence; third order Franciscan, and cleric on the way to the priesthood. Thus we drew gently from the same source of simplicity that which must accompany us to the holy altar and what we must afterwards give to others throughout life.

For the rest, since infancy our eyes were familiar with the

For the rest, since infancy our eyes were familiar with the convent of the Friars Minor at Baccanello, in the rolling plains of Lombardy where we were born and grew up; it was the first complete religious "unit" we knew: a church, modest friary, a campanile, and round about humble friars who spread through the fields and modest homes an air of simplicity totally ingenuous, so readily reminiscent of Saint Francis and his sons. May we be permitted to say that, after our long journey through the life of the world, and having encountered so many noted accomplishments of learned, illustrious and holy men who have brought honor to the Franciscan Order and to the Church of Christ in the name of the Seraphic Saint of Assisi, nothing is so sweet and delightful to our soul as to return to Baccanello, to that innocence, that meekness, to that holy poverty of the Church and of souls.

And it was amidst these memories that this humble Franciscan Tertiary-become-Pope in the footsteps of Innocent III, of

Nicholas IV, and down to Leo XIII, far from discarding the simple way he came to know in youth, but rather savoring it now more than ever—it was amidst these memories, we repeat, that last Sunday in St. Peter's we tasted the unspeakable joy of raising to the altar a new saint of the Church, St. Charles of Sezze, humble lay brother of the Friars Minor, whose grace, purity, simplicity and inspiration developed a brilliant crown of heavenly gifts and superhuman glory here below for our encouragement, example and protection."

encouragement, example and protection."

After making known his place in the Franciscan Family and proclaiming his love for it, he proceeds to set forth the reasons for the need of the Franciscan ideal in the modern world. He also gives a directive to Franciscans on how they personally might supply this need. In an earlier document, dated April 4, 1959, commemorating the

"Because of the amazing technical progress which is being made in the modern world it is easy for men, puffed up by foolish pride, and thinking themselves sufficient unto themselves, to fall into atheism, or to cease to observe the law of God. Thus deprived of the spiritual sun, they are in danger of falling into an icy winter of the soul. What could ward off this great and everthreatening danger to souls, and offer some hope of a brighter future, better than a return to earth of St. Francis, through the ministry and good works of his followers? Oh that he would come back to this world, where his memory is still so cherished, and raise his voice to recall sinners to penance and charity; to persuade them to turn their minds to higher and better things, which they shall surely find.

better things, which they shall surely mud.
That this can be done is our sincere conviction, and it is surely in accordance with the Will of God. But to bring it about you must do your best, you must strive more and more, to remain always faithful to the Apostolic See, as your rule prescribes, and as you have been in the past; to observe with all zeal your rule and your respective Constitutions; to preach the word of God with all your traditional fervor—at the same time taking care, when necessary, to adapt it suitably to the needs of the present day. Apart from preaching, your whole life should be itself a sermon: everything in your behavior should be a living example of solid faith, of modesty, continence, and sincerity."

But Our Holy Father doesn't stop here by just making an eloquent plea

the Franciscan way of life as crystallized in the Holy Rule. Again in his allocutio at the Lateran he states:

"The great, immense, variegated Franciscan Family is like some wondrous ship which plows the ocean. It possesses three firm anchors, which protect it in its sailings. These make fast the

to Franciscans for a more perfect observance of their rule and life that they might bring the Franciscan Message to the modern world!

He goes further. He proceeds to explain clearly and to sum up succinctly

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life, and a truly masterful plan for attaining, through the collective force of all the sons of St. Francis, the most cheering results in the effort toward religious and social renewal."

He begins then to extol the three great virtues of Poverty, Obedience writing of Saint Francis and the beginning of his work, had offered to the world a most perfect handbook of a holy religious words tell all and sum up the great rule which Pope Innocent approved: "poverty, obedience, charity." The two assidnous, devout writers—Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure—in extensive, solid conquests in every weather and under every threat of the heavens, earth and sea. The substance of Fran-ciscanism lies in this faculty of defense and conquest. Three

inject his Fatherly concern for his Franciscan children when he cautions great means "toward religious and social renewal." Yet he is careful to and Charity, as the distinctive ornaments of Franciscan glory and the

them about the dangerous pitfalls. Of Poverty, he says:

"O Holy Poverty, what wealth as a counsel, as a vow. The same will find all." the author of the Imitation of Christ says, 'Give up all, and you can be said of poverty of fact and poverty of spirit. The four great Franciscan Families, the Friars Minor, simply so-called, the Friars Conventual, the Friars Capuchin, The Third Order and the serene joy of Poverty. It is a perfect realization of what Regular, have produced much good and timely writing on the idea, form, and exercise of poverty. But more interesting than doctrinal exposition is the living illustration of the advantages

But he is also careful to add to these words of praise some words of

caution:

"It can happen, it is true, that in the exercise of this fundamental virtue of Franciscanism, riches may abound by virtue of poverty become dangerous, even to the point of engendering confusion in the realm of ideas and in daily practice. everything, even in the physical world, which indiscretion can itself, even material riches; and there may seep into the soul by reason of, 'paupertas in divitis abundavit' a sense of owing

the Holy Church as an important virtue in the shaping of the Franciscan character: There is, then, need of discretion and moderation . . ." He continues to explain the benefits of Obedience and submission to

"Of great significance in the holy rule approved by Pope In-nocent, besides poverty, is obedience: to the bishop, and particularly to the Bishop of Rome. 'Submissive and subject always at the feet of the Holy Roman Church,' according to the expression of Saint Francis. The history of the Church, the Holy Church. And how much disadvantage and desolation there is to weep and lament as a result of following alone or examined without animosity, provides the most detailed documentation of how much of the success of the life of the religious orders depends upon obedience, pure and simple, to

> which are great stumbling blocks to "obedience, simple and pure": But here again he is quick to warn of the dangers of pride and ambition collectively, the road of insubordination and indiscipline.

"We saw in our younger days an ancient picture on the wall of a splendid church built in the 14th Century. It depicted the steadily the strong branches. Others, fired with ambition and impetuosity, were falling miserably. so-called tree of Saint Bonaventure. Some friars were climbing

Often secret ambition and pride end in disaster. As says the author of the *Imitation of Christ*: 'So often we ask what a man has done. We are less concerned about knowing whether he has the spirit of obedience, of poverty; whether he be gentle, devout, interior. Nature often fails. The spirit of obedience sings always of victory.' (III, 31)" whether he be rich, strong, handsome, clever, a good writer, a good singer, or a good workman. We do not inquire whether he has gone about his efforts in the spirit of obedience.

not merely in word but in action. And so he continues: tolate." He does so with great reason since he fully understands that Father equates Charity with "the spirit of Catholicity and the Apostobservance of the Franciscan Rule or the living of the Franciscan life, Franciscan Charity, Franciscan love of God and neighbor, is fulfilled and that virtue is Charity. It is interesting to note that Our Holy And finally, he comments on the last of the three great virtues in the

"What shall be said of the third and fundamental characteristic and the Apostolate which Saint Francis presented to his con-temporaries and left as a most precious heritage to his sons, as a precept of the rule which, 'the Lord Pope Innocent, a of every good brother of Saint Francis: the spirit of Catholicity glorious man, learned, eloquent, zealous after the things of

of the love and of the kingdom, totally spiritual, of Jesus crucified, Savior of the world." would be developed in the course of another seven centuries for the diffusion of the knowledge and the triumph of the name. map out a plan for winning innumerable souls, and which justice,' on mature reflection approvad and blessed? St. Bonaventure in his 'Legenda Major et Legenda Minor,' this rule of a large scale missionary apostolate, which meant to dedicates moving passages to the story of the preparation of

But he is also quick to give a gentle admonition:

"The rich literature, both past and current, which collates the glorious deeds, often stained with blood, of the Franciscan Missionaries ought not simply provide laurels for the heirs of such a glorious past to rest on. Rather it should provide encouragement, especially at this time, to strive for even greater

have the unique privilege of learning and knowing that with him we In these comments of Our Holy Father on things Franciscan,

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have not only the Visible Head of the Church and the Vicar of Christ on earth but also in him we have a living expounder of the Franciscan Way of Life!

"Beloved brothers in St. Francis, to us, to you, and to all we repeat the great admonition which comes down to us; this is a great Rule we commemorate: this is the way which leads to life, to blessing and to glory. Alleluja, Alleluja!"

SOURCES:

Docum nts given to Ministers General by Pope John XXII. April 4, 1959: Allocutio of Pope John to Franciscans at Lateran, April 16, 1959: Translations contained in Franciscan Herald and Forum, July, 1959:

Paterna Allocutio Summi Pontificis, Acts Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, Ad Claras Aquas,

Paterna Allocutio Summi Pontificis, Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, Ad Claras Aquas, Florentiae, An. LXXVIII, Fasc. IV, Julii-Augusti, 1959. pp. 182-190.

AN OLD EASTER HYMN

Our Risen Lord, the world acclaims,
The tomb He has forsaken.
His might divine He now proclaims,
From death all power's taken.
No rock, nor seal, nor binding chain

Behold, O Christians, how the Lord Hell's tyranny has broken. Ile once was pierced by sorrow's sword, His wounds are vict'ry's token. He has confirmed His words and deeds,

E'en unbelief rebels in vain,

Before Him all must bow.

Can Christ imprison now;

By rising glorified.

Before the Father He now pleads,

For all for whom He died.

Enthroned at the Father's right,
He rules as King supernal;
And strengthens us with His own might,
To win rewards eternal.

No threat of death shall henceforth take From us our faith again;

Our love and fealty none can shake —
Our goal we must attain!
From the German, by Marion A. Habig, O.F.M.

Franciscan Extremists

Sister Mary Anthony Brown, O.S.F.

A cleavage of opinion among men applies equally to Saints as to sinners and this fact is also evident in regard to the interpretation of things Franciscan and non-Franciscan. Following the death of the founder of Franciscanism, a vigilant minority, hoping to keep intact Francis' aims, drew more and more apart from those brothers holding the common doctrines of the Order at large, until the extremists held positions which eventually brought censure not only on themselves but upon the Order in general.

The history of those adopting radical views in regard to the interpretation of certain doctrines falls quite naturally into two periods; the first, from the earliest discord to the Generalate of St. Bonaventure, and the latter, from that time up to the cessation of the strife by John XXII.

During his lifetime St. Francis vigorously refused to accept any established means of support, any private dispensations, and any but the poorest, most solitary hermitages. In this initial period the poor man of Assisi and his followers enjoyed a harmony of interest but upon his death divergent opinions developed. Some brothers wanted to exchange cold caves for comfortable convents and begged-sustenance for beneficent bequests. On the other hand, there were those who sought to retain the spirit of St. Francis in these matters, while still others even endeavored to exceed the Poverello. It must be kept in mind that those who manifested singular traits were always a minority. But, despite the fact that the reformers never attained a majority, the reconciliation forms an interesting facet in medieval history in general and in Franciscan history in particular.

When the Franciscan family was in its infancy, the early zealots, such as Brothers Leo, Angelo, Masseo, Bernard, Rufinus and Egidius, were protesters against lax excesses rather than an organized group manifesting a concerted, violent effort to effect the policy of the entire body. The aspects of their activities have been passed on to us in an abridged fashion due to the enactment of the Chapter of Narbonne convoked on May 23, 12601 to collate and to compile in a

1Archivum Franciscunum Historicum, Periodica publicatio trimestris cura PP. Collegii D. Bonaventurae. Ad Claras Aquas prope Florentiam (Quaracchi, presso Firenze), VII, 477; P. F. Ferdinandus Delorme, O.F.M., "Diffinitiones Capituli Generalis O.F.M. Narbonensis (1260)", AFH, III, 491-504 and XVIII, 511-24.

single volume all previous accounts relative to St. Francis. The decree for the suppression of earlier works and the acceptance of the Bonaventurian product was repeated at the Chapter of Paris held in 1266.² Despite the curtailment in regard to the early documents, we do have sufficient information to realize that the first period was mild when compared with the following division which was characterized by schism and rebellion in divergent groups in such scattered areas as Provence, Ancona, Umbria, Tuscany, Naples and Sicily.

One of the most numerous, but perhaps the least well-known groups of Franciscan zealots was to be found in France. Here in the region known as Provence, it was not novel to find rebellious political and religious groups, for in this locale in the thirteenth century occurred the savage conflict with the Albigensians which took so many lives and which destructively laid waste acres of once fruitful plains. Also, it was here that heretics of several varieties sought refuge in the domain of Raymond of Toulouse during his sovereignty and thereafter when the same lands were taken over by Louis of France.

In addition to the adoption of radical political and religious positions, the people were ever wont to seek the new and the unusual in intellectual pursuits be they in connection with scholasticism or humanism. It was likewise in this geographic region that the troubadours found a ready hearing. So, to follow political, religious or intellectual discourses, the people gathered in humble dwellings as well as in massive castles, in fruitful fields as well as in peaceful monasteries. Hence, it is readily understood why extremists of every sort, including Franciscan Spirituals, were at home in shops and vineyards and why they did not confine themselves to small gatherings in isolated hermitages as was the case in other countries. Already a fairly numerous group of lay members called the Beghines had a sort of community of interests, and these ardent lay people united themselves to the Franciscan Spirituals in Provence.

The General Chapter held at Lyons commencing on July 13, 12478 elected John Burdalli of Parma (1209-1289) as Minister General and this event was considered propitious by the Spirituals in Provence because the new General was one who sought to enforce a life of poverty and strictness. However, his enactments did not receive the full commendation of these strict French brothers because the General held that a life of strict observance and poverty is still possible to those who pursue intellectual endeavors which were frowned upon by the Spirituals. History tells us that the Order flourished under the 2Archiv fur Literatur und Kirchengeschichte des Mittelalters, Denifle and Ehrle.

3Annales Minorum, Lucas Wadding, editio secunda, III, 171; ALKG, VI, 30.

through fear and might and was represented by the Old Testament; the message that there were three ages corresponding to the three and over nation and tribe and tongue and people," were to involve of being a follower of Joachim of Flora. This personage was a Cistercian arose a relaxation of discipline. In addition, John of Parma was accused take on the additional duties of Apostolic Legate to Greece (September among the Spirituals of Provence. asceticism. All of these notions were to be found in varying degrees of original interpretations that partook of prophetism, mysticism and From these basic points there developed, as time passed, all manner was the one of the Holy Ghost characterized by an all-pervading love. the next was the age of the Son; and the third period, yet to come, Persons of the Blessed Trinity: The first was the rule of the Father many even to the cost of their lives. From this passage Joachim drew having the eternal gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, XIV, 6: "And I saw another angel flying through the midst of heaven, teachings which developed from a forced interpretation of Apocalypse Abbot who wrote and preached the "Eternal Gospel". His extravagant 1248), but because this office necessitated his absence from Italy, there direction of John of Parma up until the time when he was obliged to

A further impetus was given to the French extremists when at the General Chapter held at Assisi in 1304, Gonsalvus of Vallaroa, the Provincial of Castile, was named General. Among his early pieces of legislation was the confirmation of his predecessors' enactments calling for a strict observance of the rule and for the forbidding of fixed sources of income. Those convents possessing vineyards were admonished to sell or to destroy them if they were used for the purpose of gaining revenue.

One of the most complete and factual accounts of the zealots of Provence is to be found in the writings of Angelo of Clareno, who was himself a Spiritual belonging to another land. He writes at length about strict brothers in Provence, except during the years 1317-1318, when he himself was called to Avignon for examination by John XXII in regard to his own extreme positions. From this writer we gain insight into the character and activities of Peter John Olivi whom the French Spirituals considered to be their leader, or in most instances their "saint". Born in Serignan in the Diocese of Beziers, France around 1249, Olivi entered the Franciscans at approximately twelve years of age. After studies at the University of Paris, he returned to his native land where he became renowned as an exemplary religious and a brilliant theologian. He was held in such repute that when Nicholas III was composing the Decretal Exiit (1279), the opinion of Olivi was

was regarded as the representative of the Spiritualist movement in Provence. Up to this time the zealotic movement had been more or less nebulous, but about this time, it was commencing to take on a more specific and a better defined proportion. Olivi's notions of poverty tended to be extremely rigid for it was his belief that the followers of St. Francis were permitted only those temporal goods which were absolutely necessary. These and other beliefs of his were spread throughout the Order by means of his writings. His literary output was extremely copious and among his writings many passages were regarded by some as doubtful and finally at the Chapter of 1282 held at Strasbourg, the was accused of heresy. In 1283 in order to settle the controversy, the General, Bonagratia went to France. He ordered that all of Olivi's writings be collected and submitted to him.

of his writings was taken up in the course of several Chapters of the about or preached upon which were not strictly orthodox. The question and obtained pardon for any doctrines which he may have written commission's findings, signed the letter which became known as the thirty-four propositions as doubtful but included only twenty-two a life less rigorous than that advocated by Peter John Olivi. 6 Bongratia General was instigated by the members of the Community who favored the Chapter of Montpellier held in 1287. Order and finally there came the day when he received approval from before his General and the Doctors of Theology from Paris, he sought septem sigillorum litterae and sent it to his confreres.6 At Avignon, in the letter which was sent to Olivi. Olivi humbly concurred with the Middleton to examine the suspected works. The commission selected summoned a commission of seven under the guidance of Richard vast proportions. From Wadding we gather that this order of the of Bonagratia he submitted all of his works, which by this time were of of Olivi and not because the work itself was heretical. So at the request the stringent order had been motivated by a desire to test the humility Ascoli who was General at that time. Later this General admitted that been declared suspect and it was burned at the order of Jerome of new to him. In 1278, a tract of his on the Blessed Virgin Mary had The Franciscan theologian readily acquiesced for censure was not

Matthew of Aquasparta, the General, sent Olivi as a teacher to Florence and later an obedience from another General. Raymond Gaufredi, placed him in Montpellier as lector. Although Olivi enjoyed *ALKG, III, 416; AM, V, 108.

5AM, V, 390.

8ALKG, III, 433

⁷Analecta Francescana, Quaracchi 1885-1928, III, 419.

success both as a teacher and writer his followers in Provence were persecuted afresh. In 1270, at the command of Nicholas IV, Raymond Gaufredi was forced to investigate the activities of the Spirituals of Provence, who refused to accept the material comforts which came with the increasing prosperity of the group, but who steadfastly clung to their lofty ideals of self-sacrifice and utter rejection of things material and their use. The examination of the affair was handled by Bertrand of Cigoterio who undertook his assignment with acute fervor and who delivered his findings to the Chapter held at Paris in 1292.8

Before this assemblage, Olivi defended his followers and publicly proclaimed that the followers of St. Francis in general were only obligated to observe the type of poverty that had been advocated by Nicholas III. Those friars whom Bertrand of Cigoterio found culpable were brought before the Chapter for reprimand.

Throughout his life Olivi had always been particularly careful to give full reverence to the Pope, and he severely censured the Spirituals of Italy who were negligent in this matter. Just prior to his death he renewed his pledge of obedience to the Pope, and made a public act of Faith.

For many years after his death this friar, whom the Spirituals of France held to be a "saint" and to whom they attributed miracles, was the subject of discord and in 1308 the unrest caused by his followers was sufficient to cause his grave to be destroyed. Deventually the Spirituals departed so radically from the Community that, as a disciplinary measure and not because of false doctrine, the General Chapter of Lyons held in 1299 ordered Olivi's works burned. Since even this act did not fully suppress the recalcitrant mendicants, a more forceful act was issued wherein there was placed a ban on Olivi's works and this remained in effect until the time when Sixtus V examined them and lifted the ban because he found nothing against orthodox doctrine.

The Spirituals of Provence enjoyed periods of persecution and times of peace after the death of Olivi. In the year 1309, the court physician to Charles II of Sicily, Arnold of Villanova, succeeded in having the King espouse the cause of the minority group and the ruler went so far as to direct the Minister General to effect the cessation of persecution of the French Spirituals. The King intimated that if his request was not honored he would appeal to the Pope.

Support was likewise given them by the burghers of Narbonne and finally their cause was sufficiently strong to prompt Clement V

8AF, III, 376. 8AM, V, 378-9. 10AM, V, 380.

to appoint a commission to investigate their grievances and to attempt to discover any abuses needful of correction. To guarantee the Spirituals protection from those opposing them within the Order while the investigation and the judgment of the case was in process, the decree Dudum ad Apostolatus was issued on April 14, 1310.

The Spirituals were determined that their cause be triumphant and their rebellious spirit was diametrically opposed to the spirit of conciliation and peace of John of Parma and Peter John Olivi. The spokesman for the Community was Alexander of Alexandria while Raymond Gaufridi and Ubertino de Casale, representing the Spirituals, accused the Order of various abuses. Ubertino drew up twenty-five charges against the Community in connection with the Rule of St. Francis and the Exitt qui seminat of Nicholas III. A rather weak reply was returned by the Minister Gonsalvus, Bonagratia of Bergamo and Alexander of Alexandria. Long and contentious was the debate between the two factions which finally ended in a debate between Raymond Gaufridi and Bonagratia of Bergamo.

The Spirituals' grievances concerned what they considered laxities in the Community, but the Community interests skillfully diverted attention from these issues to eight propositions that they found unsatisfactory in the writings of Olivi. We may here recall that previously the contested articles had numbered thirty-four and twenty-two! After the breach had lasted almost three years, Clement V in 1312 issued the bull Exivi de Paradiso which in turn was made a canon of the Council of Vienne which was then in session.¹¹

This turn of events was indeed encouraging to the Spirituals because it was directed against the very luxuries and abuses opposed by them. Because the canons of Clement V were not published until the reign of John XXII, they may well have undergone considerable revision in the interim. At any rate, Angelo of Clareno together with other Spirituals considered that the decretal permitted them to live apart from the Community. However, it is most unlikely that Clement V ever considered schism within the Order, and although some zealous brothers mentioned and even threatened schism no such drastic event took place.

The harmony was short lived, however, for the Spirituals persisted in their singular views which caused a rupture between them and the Community. Hoping to promote peace, Alexander of Alexandria who was now the General, permitted the Spirituals to occupy the convents at Beziers, Narbonne, and Carcassonne, and he further stated that the superiors would always be personae gratae.

11ALKG, III, 15.

The death of Clement V and Alexander of Alexandria left the Papacy and the highest position in the Franciscan Order vacant for about two years. During the interregnum the Spirituals feverishly sought to strengthen their position, and about one hundred and twenty of them from Provence and Narbonne met to dissolve connections with the Order and to promote the erection of independent foundations. The aid of prominent laymen from Beziers actively promoted their cause. Finally, by force they drove those brothers who opposed their views from their convents, framed their own constitutions, elected their own Guardians and other officials. They even went so far as to reject the form of the habit then in vogue and adopted their own version which was considerably shorter and less full.¹²

and the others seeing how his examination was proceeding knew that they could expect little sympathy regarding their actions. Some were night before the Pope's residence. On the morrow, their spokesman munication to come to Avignon. Sixty-four appeared in that city, but the brothers of the Order were approved by the Pope who appointed of determination and the General's plans to restore uniformity among and Michael of Cesena became the Minister General. Both were men the common welfare. were recalcitrant, were turned over to the secular judges and were was given a scrutiny regarding the number of habits in his possession, avoiding the hospitality of the members of the Order, they spent the the Pope, the rebellious men were summoned under pain of excomin their radical activities when in 1316 John XXII was elected Pope burned at the stake in Marseilles on May 7, 1318, as being dangerous to were eventually sent before the inquisition at Marseilles. Of them, four given to the inquisition of Provence for examination and twenty-five The orders of Bertrand were disobeyed and when he reported this to harmony among the friars, especially those of Beziers and Narbonne. Bertrand of Tours, the provincial of Aquitaine, to effect peace and However, the Spirituals of Provence and elsewhere were checked

This event marked the initiation of fierce persecution, and burnings of the stubborn dissenters took place in Beziers, Narbonne, Lunel, Montreal and Carcassonne where over a hundred died at the stake. Other efforts to stamp out the Spirituals included the opening of the graves of Spirituals long since dead and the scattering of their bones; some were imprisoned for life; some were inflicted with corporal punishment; some were given severe penances.

Equally determined to struggle for what they held as right, the Spirituals flourished by bringing forth all manner of extreme interpre-12AM, VI, 223.

martyred Spirituals were held in deep veneration; the guide and norm Olivi's Transitus Sancti Patris. of their conduct they drew from a thoroughly inaccurate version of Chost over whom the resurrected St. Francis was to reign; the the Anti-christ; Olivi was revered as the Enoch of the Age of the Holy tations of the works of Joachim of Flora. John XXII was regarded as

finally to their extinction. fewer in number until, as happens with most such undertakings, their for over-strict Franciscan observance these brothers became more and more extreme and instead of being the facet of the Church destined to very singularity and unusual measures led to their natural decline and last until the end of the world, as they held, they became fewer and disobedient religious were to be regarded as heretical. In their Romana made it clear to the faithful that these rebellious and Finally, three bulls Gloriosam Ecclesiam, Quorumdam and Sancta

BOOK REVIEW

THE WOUNDED

HEART. Saint

Sezze, Franciscan

Brother.

lived to Seraphic Patriarch.) Francis used, Saint's own than once by the familiar ring of the spirit of holy prayer and devotedness, that his spirit. Charles, perhaps, would be styled the living model of Franciscan obedience, a true-life example of the power of that virtue. In him, as well, unwittingly) so carefully and lovingly written by the Tertiary Raphael Brown, he is struck more But as one reads the full-length biography secret technique of a (which this humble lay-brother Saint so Saint in his own way followed his Seraphic Father and faithfully reflected Franciscan." The same title might equally be used for a similar study of Saint Charles wrote a delightful essay on Saint Bernar-dine of Siena under the title "The Perfect By Raphael Brown. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1960. Pp. xxii-180. \$3.50. The late Father Agostino Gemelli once Sezze, find the perfect flowering of the letter in the spirit of the the perfect Franciscan. Each words, an echo (probably) of the very words Saint especially in his Admonitions real Franciscan life. 턌

An English translation of the Saint's

Charles to begin with the account which Autobiography is in the makingwith the many graces God gave this humble man that He might confound the of those sections already published in Italian. But it would be rather advisable for one who wished to know Saint great struggle to overcome self, together with the many graces God gave this ament and temper, his temptations, his himself saw him, with his strong temperresult is no sugar-coated Saint, for and numerous studies made by Franciscan scholars in the last three decades. The sources, the autobiography, the spiritual writings of this man "taught of God," Mr. Brown has drawn from first-hand peasant boy from Sezze as he

portrayed in this volume.
IGNATIUS BRADY, O.F.M. extraordinary graces of prayer that Charles received, but all can imitate his truly "Absolute love of silence, detachment and humility, values which the world despises, but which alone count for anything before God," these are the lessons (says Pope John XXIII) which Charles Franciscan in this biography. Few will be given the has for our day, lessons aptly illustrated virtues, which are