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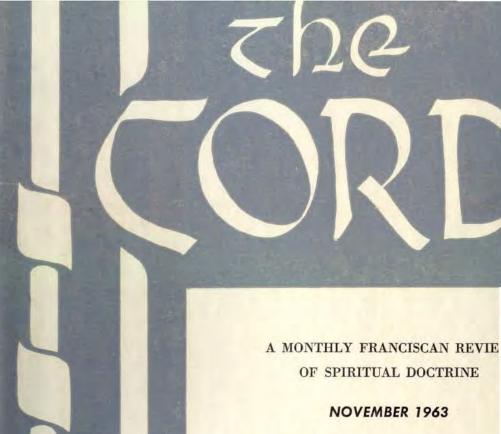
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THE RELIGIOUS VOWS Bro. Benilde Montgomery, (

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REAL LIFE AND LOVE — FRANCISCAN STYLE

Fr. Juniper Cummings, O.F.M.

DO YOU THINK YOURSELF SOMEBOD Fr. John Forest Faddish

THE ECUMENICAL SPIRIT OF SAINT FRANCIS

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SAINT CLARE, ACTIVE CONTEMPI Sr. Mary Thérè

VOL. XIII

NO



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### Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

Last July THE CORD carried an article entitled Wanted: More Critical Catholics, whose author described several dangers attendant upon the current accelerated dialogue between the professional theologian and the ordinary Catholic. One of the sophisms about which the writer warned was "the pendulum effect, wherein one reacts so strongly to any given position as to swing all the way to the opposite extreme."

An example of this effect — one which graphically demonstrates, incidentally, the swiftness with which it can take place seems to us to be observable in the problem which concerns the place of particular schools of spirituality in Christian living.

Describing some of the "mistaken notions in present-day spirituality", Father Louis Bouyer rightfully decried only two years ago "the tendency to favor, nay, even to create out of whole cloth, exaggeratedly specialized spiritualities" (Introduction to Spirituality, Desclee, 1961, p. 20).

The operative words here are "exaggeratedly specialized." Well-balanced theologians have always taken pains to point out that the essential and more important elements of Catholic living are necessarily common to each and every spiritual school which is authentically Catholic. The Reverend author's observation, therefore, is well taken.

On the other hand, it seems to us that in only two years or so, the pendulum has swung, in some minds, to the opposite extreme. There are those today who, tending to minimize the value of schools of spirituality, take a very dim view of even the accidental characteristics of the diverse schools.

In fairness to the proponents of this position, let it be stated that their attitude is not simply reactionary. It is very true that the Church has recently been re-emphasizing the basic societal unity inherent in the Mystical Body of Christ. Concomitantly, spiritual writers have been performing a valuable service to souls by explaining the practical implications of this

unity in Catholic living. The Church's awareness that she is "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people" (I Pt. 2:9) finds current expression in the development of a view of the supernatural life which, transcending accidental differences of spiritual schools, is intent upon the life common to all Catholics. Because this approach to the life of grace is intimately connected in many ways with the Church's worship, it has been designated by many as Liturgical Spirituality.

Certainly, no one who understands the nature of the Church to any degree could think of disputing the existence and importance of Liturgical Spirituality. What we strongly take exception to is the tendency on the part of some of our contemporaries to suggest that the classical schools of spirituality are rendered obsolescent by this broader view.

We hope in future numbers of THE CORD to explore this problem of the coexistence of a common spirituality with those proper to the schools. At present we should like to offer a single consideration which seems to us to lie at the very heart of the matter. In his Encyclical Mediator Dei, Pope Pius XII took care to point out the necessity of personal piety in the members of the Mystical Body (NCWC Text, para. 31), and to urge as a means to it the imitation of the Saints, in whose virtues "there shines forth under different aspects the splendor of Jesus Christ" (para. 167).

It seems to us that the various schools of spirituality, each with its distinctive approach to Jesus Himself, can render a very valuable service to the common, universal Liturgical Spirituality by specifying it for, and accomodating it to, the ever-present individuality which arises from the differences of personality, temperament, and character found in Christ's mystical members.

The Editors

# The Religious Vows: Some Metaphysical Implications

Bro. Benilde Montgomery, O. S. F

fear of ultimate physical annihilation. The reaction of the nervous system to pain is automatic, and affliction, be it mental or physical, is a reminder to the nerves of the ultimate disunity and destruction of the entire organism. It should be obvious, then, that the greatest fear is the fear of death. Certainly this fear is common to both animals and men. A dog wounded by crawling through a fence will suffer pain and react to the situation in a manner not unlike a man injured in the same circumstances. Both will perhaps whimper and automatically withdraw the injured member from the source of injury. Both the human and animal nervous systems are made aware that

We are very harry to welcome to the pages of THE CORD Brother Benilde, of the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn. Brother is stationed at the house of studies. The Brother Columba Reilly Scholasticate, Brooklyn.

Common to all pain is the even a slight injury, a slight ar of ultimate physical anhilation. The reaction of the omen of the eventual complete ervous system to pain is audisunity of the organism.

> The reaction to pain, and ultimately to death, differs in man and in animal, however, just as rational man differs from irrational animal. Because of his nature, an animal can respond to nothing by choice, and consequently cannot respond freely to any agency outside his own organism. A dog's response to a kindly master is more an instinctual act rooted in a need for providing for the organism than a choice on the part of the animal to return his master's affection. A dog can choose nothing but the satisfaction of his own organism. Consequently, when death becomes imminent, that is, when the animal is reminded of death by pain, its organic reaction can only be extreme fear.

Man, however, endowed with reason and free will, is able to respond freely to agencies outside himself. The affection between two people deeply in love certainly involves the satisfaction of an organic need, but it also involves a nonphysical affinity of which mere animals are incapable. We can easily conceive of a wife deliberately choosing to undergo some suffering, not in order to satisfy herself, but to satisfy a need of her husband. We are reminded here of the wife unnaturally repelled by the marriage act, who willingly responds to it for the satisfaction of her husband.

It should be clear, then, that man is able to choose suffering, and by implication, death, while suffering and death remain the object of consummate fear in animals. This does not mean, however, that men are in the habit of willing death and suffering. Quite the contrary! We merely wish to state that man has the ability to will death. Man is still very much controlled by the same nervous system which instills fear into animals, and the dread of suffering and annihilation are common to both.

#### Religious Reaction

Man's ability to react to agencies outside himself has the most profound effects on human existence. The implications

of this reaction, however, have specific significance for the Christian, and most especially for the religious, who by his profession formula has publicly dedicated himself to an attachment to agencies outside himself, namely God and humanity. It is only by an understanding of the metaphysical implications of his profession that a religious can more fully understand the utility of his yows.

To see the implication of the reaction to an outside agency in the religious life, we must first understand the basic conflict which underlies the choice in religious profession. In choosing to relate to God rather than to ourselves, that is, to our own organism, we choose, in terms of that organism, death rather than life. The animalistic and material organism, as we have already stated, acts automatically, and knows nothing of religious dogmas and beliefs. Ideally, in choosing God, we choose union with Him — a union which is possible only when the organism has died. Our whole lives, then should be centered around the moment of death and the subsequent moment of complete union with God. To prepare for this moment, we live a life of mortification and suffering which

react adversely on the organism. The animalistic organism, knowing nothing of the motivation for these sufferings, sees them only as omens of imminent death, which, like the wounded dog, it very deliberately shuns and fears. Thus, the distastefulness of mortification, and thus, the paucity of saints. We are reminded here of the Imitation: "And this is the reason why there are found so few contemplative persons, because there are few that know how to sequester themselves entirely from perishable creatures."

#### Religious Vows

Viewing the vows of religion as the greatest mortifications and sufferings inflicted on the organism, we see that the organic reaction to them will likewise be great. The organic need for comfort and security is checked by the vow of poverty; the organic need for self-satisfaction and reproduction is checked by chastity; and the organic focus on self is checked by obedience. The early Benedictine practice of taking only the vow of obedience is interesting in the light of this discussion, for certainly above all the other vows, it is obedience which is most directly based on a reaction with an outside agency - the submission to God, through the religious superior, of the self-seeking drives of the organism. By obedience alone the whole organism comes directly under the control of an outside agency. It is unnecessary to add that

the religious life, lived according to the ideal, is a constant conflict between the organism fighting for its existence and the spiritual desires for union with God. Like the injured dog. the organism will react violently to the reminders of its own imminent death. These reminders the religious has freely and deliberately chosen to accept. and has in fact surrounded himself with constant reminders of his own death. Each mortification inflicted on the organism is another omen of death, and each omen is reacted against by the organism, so that a cycle is soon set in motion. As mortification increases, the automatic reactions of the organism become more violent until, in moments of near despair, we begin to think that the wounded dog has triumphed over the desire of God.

#### The Saints

It is not strange, then, to read in the lives of the saints that temptation, which is the name we give to the adverse reaction of the organism, in-

creases with sanctity until the stage of mystical union is finally reached. Certainly, Saint John of the Cross' "night of the senses" is related to this conflict, and Saint Francis of Assisi's rolling naked in the snow was, no doubt, rather a jolt to his frightened organism. The triumph over the organism is perhaps most clearly seen in the lives of the martyrs. Their lives were so influenced by the outside agency of God that they chose death rather than life without God. In protecting the organism, that is, in choosing to live, they would have killed the spirit. But the spirit had so conquered the organism that for them, life without God would have been no life at all. Rather than choose spiritual death, they chose physical death.

At the moment of death itself, in an attempt to retain its being, the organism will react most violently. It is for this moment that the religious must properly prepare himself by a life of strict fidelity to his vows. Even in a life of strict mortification, such as that led by Saint Therese of Lisieux, we find that temptation grows strongest at the moment of death. While she lingered for many months in the infirmary at Carmel, Therese suffered the greatest physical and spiritual in the Garden, Our Lord fore-

agonies. These she offered to God, and yet she was able to say, "Last night I was seized by a terrible feeling of anguish. I was lost in darkness, from out of which came an accursed voice: 'Are you certain that God loves you? Has He come to tell you so Himself? The opinion of a few creatures will not justify you in His sight." Because she had lived a faithful religious life, however, surrounded with constant reminders of this very moment, she was able to triumph. Her victory came when, as she died, her love for God, her attachment to the agency outside herself, expressed itself: "Oh, I love Him. ... Dear God, I love You!"

It is at moments such as this that the dignity of man and his distinction from the animals is most clearly manifest. Of all God's creatures, only man can face death with an act of love. Only man can prefer death to life. And only man can choose to die rather than to live in evil.

#### Our Lord

Christ Himself was not free from the combat, and as in all of life. He is our model of virtue and endurance. Praying the almost invincible organism cried out for its own being. At the moment of death, however, the spirit triumphed when Christ willed Himself into His Father's hands.

Just as Jesus, in a manner of speaking, chose death when He chose to become man, so too does every religious choose death on the day of profession. To conquer our material nature and to die in an act of love, to die as only man can die, is the very heart and purpose of our lives as religious and as human beings.

Let this be clearly understood, especially in these days: fathers and mothers of families, those who are godparents through Baptism, and in particular those members of the laity who collaborate with the ecclesiastical hierarchy in spreading the Kingdom of the Divine Redeemer occupy an honorable, if often a lowly, place in the Christian community, and even they under the impulse of God and with His help, can reach the heights of supreme holiness, which, Jesus Christ has promised, will never be wanting to the Church.

Pope Pius XII, Mystici Corporis

### Christian Care for the Dead

Saint Augustine

The care of the corpse, the provision for burial, the funeral ceremonies — all these are rather a comfort to the living than benefits for the dead. Despite this, however, the bodies of the deceased — especially the bodies of holy and faithful persons — are not to be disdained and carelessly disposed of, for their spirits used them in a holy way as organs and vessels for all manner of good works.

If a garment, a ring, or the like be more dear to the heirs according as it was cherished by their forebears, then the very bodies of these forebears are certainly not to be scorned. Our bodies clothe us much more intimately and closely than any garment; for the body, far from being a sort of ornament or help for external use, pertains to man's very nature.

Hence, the dead bodies of the just men of old were cared for with respectful piety, exequies were celebrated, and their burial provided for; moreover, while they were yet alive these just men themselves directed their sons as to how their bodies were to be buried, or even transferred.

When the desire to remember and pray for the deceased is expressed by the faithful who were dearest to them, it undoubtedly benefits those who merited, while yet living in the body, to profit by such things after this life. But even though something might impede the burial of bodies at all, or their burial in sacred places, prayers for the spirits of the dead are never to be omitted.

For all those who have died in Christian and Catholic fellowship, the Church has assumed the responsibility of saying these prayers, even without mentioning their names, in a general remembrance. She does so that those who have no parents, children, relatives or friends to pray for them may receive these prayers from the hand of the one, holy, Mother of all. If it were not for these supplications — which are born of a correct faith and a rev-

This selection, taken from the saint's De Cura Pro Mortuis Gerenda, is used in the second nocturn of Matins in the Office of All Souls' Day. Tr.: T.D.

tertain the notion that anything aids our beloved dead except what we customarily request for them by our sacrifices whether those of the altar, of prayers, or of alms. Now, these things may not benefit all those for whom they are performed, but only those who, while yet alive, make provision so that they will be beneficial. But since we have no way of knowing who these latter are, we should perform these things for all who have been regenerated, so that no one who can and should benefit by these things may be passed over. For it is better that there be a superfluity of these benefits for those whom they neither harm nor help, than that they be lacking to those whom they do help.

Now. performs everyone these things more diligently when he does them on behalf of his own dear ones, so that they may be done just as diligently by those in turn who hold him dear. But whatever care be expended on the burying of the body, it is of no avail for salvation; it is rather a function of being human, according to that drive by which "no one ever hates his own flesh" (cf. Eph. 5:29).

It behooves each one, then, to be as concerned as he can be for the flesh of his neighbor, when the neighbor who bore that flesh has departed. And if people who do not believe in the resurrection of the body do this, how much more ought they who do believe in it so that this sort of care, expended upon a body which is indeed dead - but which is also to arise and live eternally! may also appear as evidence of that faith.

Since that flesh which rose again, and having been restored to life, ascended into heaven, received resurrection and eternal life, this too is promised to us. ... So far, indeed, the whole body has not received this, since the Head is in heaven, but the members are still on earth. It is not the Head alone that is to receive the inheritance, and the body to be left to itself. The Whole Christ is to receive the inheritance, the Whole Christ according to man — that is, the Head and the body.

#### - St. Augustine, Sermo XXII, 10

## Real Life and Love Franciscan Style

Fr. Juniper Cummings, O. F. M. Conv.

For a Franciscan, there is on-velation and experience, asly one real life and love. For a Franciscan, life and love are equivalent. The realness of that love-life is discovered by considering the scheme of things not from the bottom up, but from the top down. If we follow the viewpoint -of - Saint Franc and his theologian Scotus, we find that the supernatural order is more real than the natural. The truth of the oft-repeated slogan that grace builds on nature becomes evident to us when we understand that nature exists for grace.

#### Hypotheses

When Duns Scotus uses hypothetical conditions in his theological speculation, he does so not in order to describe some never-never land, but rather to throw light on the correct essential here-and-now condition of things. Our knowledge of life as gained from both re-

sures us that there would never be a natural order if there were no divine, no natural love if there were no supernatural. The old question, "If Adam had not sinned, would there have been an Incarnation?" was not a merely hypothetical question to the Franciscan theologians; they were concerned, rather, with explaining the priority of intention actually existing in God's mind eternally regarding the Word's assumption of creatural human nature. The hypothetical question of Adam's fall, viewing the problem as it

God does is certainly done in a reasonable manner. Now, when any intelligent being wills reasonably, he wills first and foremost that thing which best accomplishes the purpose he has in mind. Everything that is, exists because God wills it to be. God necessarily wills the good which He Himself is; on the contrary, it is by a com-

pletely free decision, as Vatican

I tells us, that God has created

does from another angle, serves

only to clarify the answer to

the question of divine intention.

So it is with grace, All that

An outstanding Franciscan theologian, Fr. Juniper is a member of the Province of Our Lady of Consolation, of which he is Prefect of Studies. He is Guardian of Our Lady of Carey Seminary - College, Carey,

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The lover adds to the beloved,

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is the theology of the real pur-

pose of our existence. This is

theology is Christocentric, lovecentered. Jesus exists because God wills to love and be loved by a creatural nature, by one who exists outside the Blessed

Trinity. And He so wills because He is infinite, divine Love. So real and so intimate is the union of divine and human nature in the Person of Jesus, that the Word Incarnate fulfills this divine willing, and fulfills it in a most perfect man-

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cause Christ is.

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through this eternal beatitude

of loving God forever in heav-

en that God's own glory is best

creatures" (Vatican I. Dei Fiever, we are dealing with crealius, Ch. 1). Now, the greatest tures, we can speak of them thing God can impart to a having causality, for they are creature is eternal beatitude. themselves effects. From what everlasting happiness in union we have said above, then, we with God. This means that as can delineate the causality of far as man's good is concerned, creatures as follows: the final the ultimate reason for creation cause, i. e., the end or purpose is eternal beatitude. This reaof the supernatural order, whose son, however, is secondary besupernatural order, as we have cause it concerns creatural man: pointed out in the first part of it is subordinate to the reason this article; and the final cause which concerns God Himself. of the supernatural order, who Since man's everlasting haplife is called grace, is the glory piness manifests God's perfecof God and of Christ, through tion, it follows that the ultimate the blessedness of the gracified reason for God creating is this creatures who comprise the manifestation; and the maniwhole Christ. festation is properly called glo-God is altogether sufficient ry. Therefore, in the eternal in and for Himself. Everything act of creating, the ultimate which exists outside of Him is purpose or intention in God's created for His external glory. mind is His own glory. Secon-So God wills His glory in all darily — and ordered to this of His works. In outlining the ultimate purpose — is the hap-

but not causality. When, how-

causality of grace, Duns Scotus borrows a sound philosophical principle enunciated by Saint Thomas and other Scholastics, and verified by human experience: "Whoever wills in an orderly manner the end and those things which lead to the end, wills first and foremost the end itself, and then other things which are willed for that end." Applying this principle to the economy of grace, the Subtle Doctor states that God first

wills the eternal blessedness, or

achieved. Then God wills grace ness. for anyone glorifying God in heaven forever is not the will of the creature, nor grace not even the grace of perseverance — but simply God's eternal decree — on which these things depend, that such a soul

would be given everlasting

#### Predestination

blessedness.

This brings us to the problem of predestination, and the question of why some souls are saved, while others are damned. Without destroying their nature, God could have rendered all men incapable of sinning: Jesus, who is truly man, is impeccable; Mary, was de facto impeccable. Saint Thomas says that "God wills to show forth His goodness in those whom He has predestined by way of mercy's pardon, and in those whom He reprobates by way of justice's punishment. And this is variety of degrees in predes-

will." for that soul, since it is through grace that a creature comes to Scotus qualifies this notion beatitude. And then God wills somewhat. He does not assert that soul's free will, intellect, that acceptance or rejection and the other things it will use depend upon the good or bad in the attainment of blesseduse of grace by individuals as foreseen by God. His position The first reason, therefore, is, rather, that this good use of grace by the free will of man

glory, or a soul, since it is the reason why He elects one

holding that the supernatural use of free will depends on the divine will. The Subtle Doctor does not, however, accept Saint Thomas' explanation that the goodness of God is shown forth through mercy and justice. For God could manifest His good-

ness by glorifying men even if

there were no merit either in

themselves or in anyone else;

is foreseen precisely because

God wills and preordains this

good use. In this, he follows

Saints Thomas and Augustine in

to glory, and reprobates oth-

ers.... But why He chooses these

for glory and those for repro-

bation lies only in His divine

and He did not do this. Moreover, according to the Thomistic view it would seem to follow that God permits evil in order to punish it. The reasoning proposed by

Saint Thomas is not, however, without value or beauty, even as analyzed by Scotus. For as a matter of fact there are a

tination, e. g., that of the humanity of Christ, the singular decreeing of the Blessed Virgin, the determination of the unbaptized who die before reaching the use of reason, and the like. In all these instances. we see the goodness of God in His merciful love. He is merciful and loving to all creatures because He wills the salvation of all and gives to all sufficient grace.

What Scotus contributes here is an elucidation of the notion of reprobation. He states that predestination to glory finds no reason for its existence in the predestined creature prior to the predestination. Reprobation. however, is different; in it the demerits of the one reprobated are foreseen. Since to reprobate is to damn, it would not seem to be consonant with God's goodness and justice for Him to reprobate without taking into consideration something in the creature which demands it. Therefore, reprobation is willed by God because of a reason existent in the creature himself. namely the final sin as foreseen by God. Thus, Scotus teaches a negative reprobation. That is to say, the reprobated creature is not willed as predestined, but the will to damn is, as it were, only subsequent to the final sin as foreseen.

The Franciscan doctor adds that it is not surprising that the process of predestination and reprobation should be different, because all good must be attributed principally to God, while evil, on the contrary, is ours. Thus, for God to predestine creatures to glory without any reason inherent in them illustrates His goodness; His damning them results only from their own final mortal sin, an evil for which they alone are responsible. Here again, then, Scotus emphasizes the great love of God for His creatures.

#### Predestination of Christ

It is in his delineation of God's eternal decrees by reason of the order of their intention (not, of course, by reason of chronology, since God wills in a single, eternal act) that Scotus emphasizes the point that we made in the beginning of this article, scil., that nature finds the reason for its existence in the supernatural, Although in the order of execution grace builds on nature, yet in the order of divine intentions nature is ordered to grace. In regard to creation of things other than Himself, God primarily wills predestination, and the whole order that leads to it, the end of which is perfect beatitude. Afterwards, as it were, He ordains in an ordered manner Karl Barth, claiming to depend those other things that lead to this end, some proximately, others more remotely: grace, faith, merit, and the good use of free will. This delineation gives us a truly supernatural, and hence realistic, view of the scheme of created things. First things are considered first; it is because of the clarity of his perception of this that Scotus has been called by many the Doctor Ordinis.

The employment of this same logic has led Franciscan theologians to find in Revelation what is surely their most characteristic and basic doctrine. scil., the absolute predestination of Jesus Christ, Arguing that in the ordered will the last thing to be executed must be the first thing to be intended by him who wills, they state that God, who creates for His own glory, must primarily will that creature Who most perfectly glorifies Him, scil., Jesus, the Word Incarnate. The decrees whereby all other things are created are intentionally subordinate in God's will to the effective willing of Christ.

This doctrine seems to be coming more and more into the Church's consciousness, and has attracted even those outside the Church.

The Protestant

on the Scriptures alone, can

By the Word the world exists. A marvelous reversal of our whole thinking! Don't let yourselves be led astray by the difficulty of the time-concept, which might well result from this. The world came into being. it was created and sustained by the little child that was born in Bethlehem, by the Man who dies on the cross of Golgotha, and the third day rose again. That is the word of creation. by which all things were brought into being.

In another place the same writer states

Before the world was, before heaven and earth were, the resolve or decree of God exists in view of this event in which God willed to hold communion with man, as it became inconceivably true and real in Jesus Christ.

Saint Francis de Sales, who embraces the opinion of the Franciscan school, writes:

Man is the perfection of the universe, the soul is the perfection of man, love the perfection of the soul, and charity the perfection of love.

And a contemporary Jesuit theologian, Karl Rahner, asserts in the Scotistic vein:

God wishes to communicate theologian Himself, to pour forth the love which He Himself is. That is the first and the last of His real plans, and hence of His real world too. Everything else exists so that this one thing might be: the eternal miracle of infinite love. And so God makes a creature whom He can love: He creates man.

#### Conclusion

In the present article we have pointed out some of the highlights of the Franciscan approach to the theology of grace.

We have attempted to show that the general tendency of the seraphic doctrine is to emphasize the reality and preeminence of the supernatural order, and the mysterious depth of God's love which brings it into existence. Grace is, indeed, the real life and love. The person who considers God's grace thoughtfully and prayerfully cannot help but hear, arising from the depths of his own being, a hymn of praise to God's glory, a song of thanksgiving for His wonderful gifts to man.

God comes out to meet us, and his desire is to set up in us a new universe of life, light and love, so that we may be able to make our way towards the depth of his being and intimacy with him, to speak to him as our friend. That is the mystery of the elevation of our nature by grace, and that is why we call this new life supernatural. It transforms, imbues our whole being to make it proportionate to an end hitherto unknown to it, one which goes beyond our nature. God raises us up. rather as the artist uses an instrument to make it produce what by itself it would be incapable of — joy, sadness, prayer. Something beyond its own power acts through the instrument: it is a human heart that touches the instrument and the effect produced, being on the plane of its cause is a human effect. If divine grace comes down into me, I shall no longer be in community only with the things of earth and with men, but with the divine Persons, with all that is deepest and most hidden in the heart of God.

- Charles Journet, The Meaning of Grace

### Do You Think Yourself Somebody?

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

One of our great Franciscan spiritual writers begins a book he wrote with these thoughtprovoking words: "In paradise there are many saints who never gave alms on earth; their poverty justified them. There are many saints who never mortified their bodies by fasting, or wearing hair shirts: their bodily infirmities excused them. There are many saints, too, who were not virgins: their vocation was otherwise. But in paradise there is no saint who was not humble" (Cajetan of Bergamo, O.F.M .Cap., Humility).

If men at any stage in history had need of this important Christian virtue, it is we who live in this twentieth century, the century of some of mankind's greatest achievements. For man, using the intellectual endowments given him by his Creator, has mastered many of the elements — has even ventured into space — with a marked degree of success and

still greater hope for the future. Wonderful though these achieve ments are, they should evoke in all men sentiments of the most profound humility.

This must certainly have been the thought which entered the minds of our astronauts as they soared through space. They must have been impressed by an awareness of their own insignificance as compared to the vastness through which they were travelling at such a rapid pace. Moreover, this consideration must have engendered within them that spirit of humility necessary for one engaged in such a formidable task.

But not only do astronauts need this spirit of humility. We can all stand a good dash of it in our lives. For the whole scale of values has somehow been perverted in our world, and even we who have followed Christ have often succumbed to its allurements. How dissimilar is our scale of values to that of Our Lord!

Our Attitudes

We pride ourselves on our birth and status. Yet Christ,

Besides being Assistant Editor of this review, Fr. John, of the Holy Name Province, preaches retreats throughout the Eastern United States. even though He is God, emptied Himself of all save His undying love. Born in a stable, He spent His life in poverty and dependence upon others, without feeling that it was unbecoming to His status as the God-Man.

We pride ourselves on our family, its position in the community, and the like. Yet Jesus grew up in the poor home of a peasant.

Some of us are proud of our profession, or our social position. "Since I have a Ph. D.." we declare, "I couldn't think of doing this menial task." We make a fetish of degrees, and feel that anyone who has none is not worth the ground he stands on. Yet Christ had no degree; nor did He mind the rash thoughts others had of Him because of His lack of them. Look at the Temple; see Him among the doctors and learned men of His time. They were amazed at His wisdom. In His public life, were there not those who asked, "'Where did he get all this?', and 'What is this wisdom that is given to him?', and '... Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon?'" (Mk. 6:2-3)

How many of us pride ourselves on our distinguished and influential friends? We single them out, not so much for themselves, but because of what association with them will do for us.

In our association with others, we choose to move in high social circles. We fail to realize that we are followers of Him who found His delight in the homes of publicans and sinners.

We are swelled with pride at our abilities and personal achievements, as though we ourselves were responsible for them. We fail to think of our humble associates whose sacrifices made these achievements possible. But most of all, how seldom do we even give a thought to Him who said, "Of myself I can do nothing" (Jn. 5:30).

Many of us are so subtle in getting our own way in things. Although we would be the first to deny it, deep in our hearts we know this is so. Yet Christ said, "I seek not my own will' (ibid.).

We are filled with ambition, ever trying to climb higher and higher. Only by assuming positions of responsibility do we feel that we will fulfill ourselves. How different we are from Christ, who said, "I am in your midst as he who serves" (Lk. 22:27).

#### Christ's Example

Let us look in on our Redeemer on the last night He was to spend with us before His death. In the Cenacle He had gathered the Apostles, His chosen ones, His loved ones, to observe the feast of the Passover with Him. It was a weary group that made its way to the upper room that night. All was in readiness: not only the meal, but the water jugs, basins, and towels, which in the East served the same purpose as our lavatory. One must wash before a meal. The Mosaic Law required it, but so did a sense of comfort and a concern for hygiene. Not only were the face and hands to be washed, but the feet as well. Tramping about on the dirty, hot, and dusty roads in sandals left one in real need of a foot-bath.

Normally it was the task of a servant to wash the feet of the guests. Perhaps Christ and the Apostles could not afford to hire a servant for the night, or it may be that the Master wanted to spend this night in the intimacy of his chosen ones. Anyway, that didn't matter so much. Any one of the Apostles would be only too happy to do this service for the others.

But the Twelve were of a different mind. They were not so eager —not one of them.

Nobody went for the basin. They looked at one another with that "Who do you think I am?" attitude. Peter undoubtedly felt. "I can't lower myself to this task, After all, I'm Number One in this group. next to the Lord. The others wouldn't look up to me if I did." So he just stayed there and waited. James and John were just as convinced that it wasn't their job either. They considered themselves to be in the "inner circle". Hadn't they witnessed the Transfiguration. and received numerous other favors which the others had not received? "We'll wait this one out," they thought. Philip and Simon the Zealot felt just as tired as the rest, and they didn't budge. Nor did it enter the mind of even the self-effacing Andrew to cover up for the pride of the others and undertake the task.

As they sat there, Jesus arose, took off his outer robe, picked up the towel and basin, knelt down, and washed His Apostles' dirty feet. He went from one to the other, even to Judas.

Call this an acted parable, or a sermon in deed; call it whatever you will. But don't say that Christ was merely acting here. He wasn't! Never was He more serious than at this moment. His purpose is evident even though He is God, emptied Himself of all save His undying love. Born in a stable, He spent His life in poverty and dependence upon others, without feeling that it was unbecoming to His status as the God-Man.

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Call this an acted parable, or a sermon in deed; call it whatever you will. But don't say that Christ was merely acting here. He wasn't! Never was He more serious than at this moment. His purpose is evident priests; it was to their directives that he conformed both himself and his enormous apostolic activity. "In everything and above everything," relates Celano, "he considered it his duty to observe, venerate, and follow the faith of the holy Roman Church, in which alone is salvation to be found."

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Francis' primary goal and constant objective was to live the gospel to the letter — without gloss, without interpolation, without compromise. Nor would he allow himself to be deterred from the realization of this bold ideal by the superficial notions of innovators, who were influenced more by their own personal and arbitrary interpretations than by the weight of authority and tradition.

Once he had committed himself to being "always subject and submissive at the feet of the holy Church," Francis entrusted himself without reservation to the tender and gentle authority of this spiritual mother of his. He also acknowledged her as the indisputable and authentic teacher to whom Christ had confided the deposit of truth and the purity of faith. It is this submission that clearly distinguishes him from the promoters of heretical movements, who operated without the Church, outside the Church, and against the Church.

His love for the Church included, as in a single embrace, all her members: her visible head the Pope, successor to Saint Peter in the Roman See; the bishops, successors to the Apostles and rulers of the dioceses; priests and the lay faithful; it extended even to those who, because of either apostasy or adherence to error, are actually separated from the Church.

"He venerated priests," attests Celano, "and nourished the deepest love for the entire ecclesiastical hierarchy." At the very beginning of the Rule of the Friars Minor he pledged that "Brother Francis promises obedience and reverence to the lord Pope Honorius and to his successor's canonically elected. and to the Roman Church." And in that spiritual farewell which is his Testament, he renews the promise, thereby warmly attesting to what his doctrinal conviction and his practical life had been. "Afterwards," he wrote, "the Lord gave me, and gives me still, on account of their order, such faith in priests who live according to the rule of the Holy Church, that even though they should persecute me, yet would I have recourse to them."

Francis' obedience and submission to the Pope, bishops, and the clergy are evident and indisputable traits of his spirit. Both his writings and his manifold activities set him apart as a man who was indeed catholic and completely apostolic. It was with the Church, through the Church, and in the Church, that he developed his life of faith, holiness, and action.

Saint Francis' apostolic zeal is evident in the Order's daring missionary endeavors, whose works have withstood the passage of centuries and the repeated onslaughts of non-Christian and anti-Christian ideologies. And even here the Assisian struck a note of originality by preserving freedom of movement from place to place, and by refusing to limit the Order's committments to any particular type of work.

Envisioning the apostolate not as an ordinary sharing in the care of souls, but as a dynamic mission of vast proportions, Francis shared the viewpoint of the Apostles. The Franciscan endeavor, unbounded by territory, was to be as

wide as the world iteself; its purpose was the intensive betterment and sanctification of the faithful, and the diffusion of Christ's message to the infidel. The internal element of the Apostolic ideal had become typical of monasticism; to this, Francis joined the external element: an open approach to all men, without distinction of class or race. And he realized this vision of his with the verve of a knight of Christ and the enthusiasm of a herald of the Great King.

During the days of the present Ecumenical Council. Saint Francis reminds us through his writings, and especially through his life and works, of the importance of fidelity to the Church, the Pope, the bishops, and priests. We feel certain that the spirit of the Poverello, the Herald of the Great King, is present at Vatican II. His message of brotherliness, throbbing with Peace and Good, is a prolonged and undying echo, giving witness before the world of the indefectibility of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Roman Church - the Church of Jesus Christ.

but am full far short and wide therefrom. Which thing I perceive by the other loves that I have had of Thy creatures heretofore. For such as I sincerely loved, I loved them so that I seldom did forget them. They were ever in my remembrance, and almost continually my heart was occupied with them, and my thought ran upon them as well absent as present. Specially when they were absent, I much desired to have their presence, and to be there where they were, or else my heart was never in any right-

ful quiet.

Help me, most loving Father, help me with Thy mighty

grace. For unless Thou wilt of Thine infinite goodness relieve

me, I am but as a lost creature. Thy strict commandment is that

I should love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with

all my mind, with all my power. And this I know I do not,

Thee. For I keep Thee not in my remembrance, nor bear Thee in my thought, nor occupy my heart with Thee so often as I should. But for every trifle that cometh to my mind, I let Thee slip and fall out thereof. And, for every fantasy that stirreth in my heart, I set Thee aside, shortly forget Thee.

But alas! my dear Father, I am not in this condition towards

I know, most gracious Father, that Thou art here present with me, albeit I see Thee not; but Thou both seest me and hearest me, and no secrecy of my heart is hid from Thee. Thou hearest that I now ask Thine Holy Spirit, and Thou knowest that I now pray for and am very desirous to have the same.

beseech Thee to give Thine Holy Spirit unto me. Wherefore, unless Thou wil disappoint the promise of Thy son Jesu, Thou canst not but give me this Holy Spirit. So, by this means I shall be fully relieved of that my misery, whereof I complained unto Thy goodness at the beginning.

Lo! dear Father, with all the enforcement of my heart I

Thy most Holy Spirit, He shall make me to love Thee with

all my power, for He is the author of all good love, He is the

very furnace of charity, and He is the fountain of all gracious

Wherefore, dear Father, I beseech Thee to shed upon 1 heart Thy most Holy Spirit, by whose gracious presence I m be warmed, heated, and kindled with the spiritual fire of chari

and with the sweetly burning love of all godly affections, the I may fastly set my heart, soul, and mind upon Thee; and the

I may love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with

affections and godly desires.

my mind, and all my power. Amen.

NOTE: The above prayer was composed l Fisher, Bishop, Cardinal, and Martyr, while improver of London in 1534. In the next year the scholarly prelate was beheaded because he refused Henry VIII to be head of the Church.

### Saint Clare, Active Contemplative

Sr. Mary Thèrèse, O.S.C.

sanctity. They are the modern

thinkers who fail to perceive

the wisdom of those ancient

words of Scripture, "All the glo-

ry of the King's daughter is

within..." (Psalm 44:14). This

is not to deny the genuine value

of the labors of those heroic

persons, both lay and religious,

who spend themselves unceas-

ingly in our schools, hospitals,

Their activity is indeed sancti-

fying, for it is the manifest ex-

pression of the love of God that

daughters would like to sup-

pose him, when he wrote that

she was the victim of her

institutions.

charitable

Man's recent plunge into space is, to date, the crowning accomplishment of a century of phenomenal achievement. One wonders what future historians. with their fondness for apt titles, will call this era of the atom and the astronaut. It might well be termed "The Century of Activity". Our modern world has raised human efficiency to such an exalted position that man's method of evaluation is often unduly influenced by such materialistic questions as, "What can it do? How well and how fast can it do it?" It is not uncommon to find ourselves applying such standards even to our fellowmen, as, consciously or unconsciously, we measure their worth in terms of I. Q.'s and manual skills.

almost synonymous with progress, and there are those who would link it similarly with

burns in the depths of their hearts. Even our neo-pagan world, although it does not recognize the Divine Force which animates their lives, is quick to appreciate the selfless devotion which they exemplify. What, then, is the place of the contemplative order in the Truly, activity has become Church of the twentieth century? Just what are cloistered religious contributing to the progress of mankind? Perhaps a present day devotee of Saint Clare of Assisi was not as poorly informed as her spiritual

and

With truly Franciscan simplicity, but determined conviction, Sr. Mary Therese explains the relevance of contemplation to our own times. Sister is stationed at the Monastery of Saint Clare, Greenville, S.C.

times. He would have us believe that Our Holy Mother Saint Clare, inflamed with missionary desires, was compelled to limit her activities to the narrow confines of the cloister because in the thirteenth century a more active form of religious life for women was unthinkable. This leads the reader to reflect how very different the life of Saint Clare might have been had Divine Providence placed her among the saints of our "Century of Activity". With no medieval restrictions to hamper her zeal, what motherly advice would she give her devoted children? Would it be to tear down the enclosure walls, to leave the silence of the cloister, and take up the missionary cross in every nation the world over?

We, who strive to live according to the spirit of Our Holy Mother Clare, answer with a resounding, "No"! Indeed the saint was aflame with missionary zeal, and this is the precious legacy which has enkindled the heart of every Poor Clare for the past seven hundred and fifty years. Saint Clare was an ardent disciple of the great Saint Francis, and no one knew better than the Poverello the tremendous power of a life of prayer and penance. It was only after much deliberation that Our Holy Father Francis determined to forego his own desire for the purely contemplative life. He realized that the will of God compelled him to go among his brethren as their father and model. But he realized, too, that his friars would never be sanctified in their activities and reap a rich harvest of souls for Christ without the aid of constant prayer and sacrifice. This was the commission Francis sublime gave to his first spiritual daughter, Saint Clare, and to all those who should come after her, desiring to share in this hidden apostolate of love. They were to be the ladder joining earth with heaven, imploring from the bountiful heart of Jesus grace for the just and mercy for sinners. Today the Poor Clare is as acutely aware of her mission in the Church as were the first barefoot nuns of San Damiano.

True love admits of no limits; thus the love of Our Holy Mother reached out to the whole world. No suffering of soul or body escaped the allembracing scope of her prayers. Clare was no stranger to activity, yet hers was an intense activity of soul which vitalized her every word and deed, setting the stamp of the infinite on even the most hum-

ble actions of her life. How well she brought to fulfillment that promise of Ecclesiasticus. "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds" (Eccles. 35:21), for many and wonderful were the miracles of grace God wrought at her intercession. Only heaven will reveal to us the innumerable souls saved by Our Holy Mother's ministry of love and reparation. There, where she is eternally immersed in the ceaseless activity of love, Saint Clare watches over her spiritual daughters with maternal care. Her dauntless spirit walks among us still, as we harken to the words which she so often addressed to her Sisters, "Oh, my beloved Sisters; oh, children blessed for all eternity, listen to me, listen to the voice of your Mother". The eager young postulant, behind whom the enclosure door has just been shut against the pleasures of the world, can take to herself the gentle reminder,

"Many are called, but few are chosen, and in the end everyone shall receive according to his works." The radiant, whiteveiled novice clasping her reception crucifix to her heart, knows well that "Sufferings are light; glory is infinite." The newly-professed nun, with the vows of religion fresh upon her soul, can proclaim with Our Holy Mother the joyful words, "We have promised things, but greater still are promised to us." And all of us, who day by day live out our lives of labor and of love, can find our inspiration in her sweet command, "My Sisters, while we have time, let us do good." For seven hundred and fifty years, unseen and unheralded, the daughters of the virgin Clare have sought to keep alive the spirit of their mother. This is our vocation in the twentieth century, and in every century, that the actions of all men may be governed by the loving hand of God.

### UNIQUE ...

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