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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

JUNE 1963

THE LITTLE ONES OF GOD Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

THE CROSS IN THE CLASSROOM Sr. M. Roberto, O.S.F.

ST. BERNARDINE AND THE EUCHARIST Roberto Masi

CHILDLIKE OR CHILDISH? Sr. M. Patricia, O.S.F.

VOL. XIII

NO. 6

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A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

Fr. Augustine McDevitt O.F.M. S.T.D.

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Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

The history of the first five centuries of Catholic doctrinal development reflects the series of human reactions to the divine revelation of the unique fact of the Hypostatic Union. The revelation itself is clear enough: the person called Jesus Christ is God and man. But the effort on the part of Catholic thinkers to explain what this statement means, how it can be so, and what its consequences are, represented a long and sometimes bitter struggle in the Church.

If the squalls of modern theological discussion threaten at times to unnerve us, it would be well for us to contemplate the straight and sure course on which the Holy Ghost guided Peter's bark through the tempests of those days.

In the year 451, the Council of Chalcedon defined the true meaning of the revelation: Jesus Christ is God the Word, the only-begotten Son, one Person who exists in two natures, each of which is distinct and complete; He is perfect in divinity and perfect in humanity. In enunciating this definition, the Church pointed out and corrected the errors of both Nestorianism and Monophysitism, the extremely opposed heresies whose tenets cast into clear relief the broad outlines of the Christological controversies which had raged up to that time.

Nestorius taught that in Christ there is duality not only of natures, but also of persons. Jesus is not, he said, a single person who is both divine and human, but two distinct persons living in perfect agreement in one external body, each of whom perfectly possesses his own nature. Accordingly, the human acts of Jesus are the acts only of the human person, and not of the divine; and, as a consequence, the Blessed Virgin Mary is Mother of the human Jesus, but is not the Mother of God.

A reaction to this division of Christ into two persons, Monophysitism is a good example of over-correction. According to this error, Jesus is indeed a single person, but to such an extent that He possesses only one nature (mone — single; physis — nature). This nature, being divine, so absorbed the humanity of Jesus that although He appears human, He is not really a man at all.

One can appreciate the extremely different viewpoints from which these two errors view the Incarnation of Our Lord. In effect, Nestorian-

ism so emphasizes the humanity of Jesus that it denies He is God; Monophysitism so insists on Christ's divinity that it completely destroys His humanity. Both of them virtually deny the possibility of our redemption and participation in the divine life — if Jesus were only man, He could not bring us to God; if He were only God, we should have nothing in common with Him. It is because the single Person Jesus is completely God and completely man that our life of grace is possible.

Despite Chalcedon's decree and the subsequent constant insistence of Holy Mother Church, most of us find it necessary frequently to check ourselves in order to make sure our thinking does not slide from the true explanation of the Hypostatic Union. Faced with the fact that most non-Catholics today incline toward Nestorianism, we must guard ourselves against the temptation of unconsciously embracing Monophysitism. In consequence, perhaps, of having been constantly drilled as children in the truth that Christ is God, we find ourselves sometimes in danger of forgetting that He is also — and to the same extent — truly man.

The Church has presented us with a firm anchor for our thinking in this matter in its doctrine on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. The fact that Jesus has a physical heart of flesh just as we do is a graphic reminder for us that He is a man in every sense of the word, "endowed with intelligence and free will and the rest of the internal and external faculties of perception, sense appetites, and all natural impulses" (Pope Pius XII, Encyclical Letter Haurietis Aquas, May 15, 1956, no. 49 NCWC ed.). An understanding of this doctrine, therefore, is guaranteed to preserve us from following any tendencies which we might have toward Monophysitism. It also serves to keep before our eyes in a very vivid manner the astounding fact that the Son of God is, in a very real and true sense, our brother.

Frequent meditation on the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, as suggested in this Encyclical Letter (no. 71-107) will help us to penetrate more deeply into this mystery, and incite us with the desire effectively to return the love with which that heart beats for us.

The Editors

The Little Ones Of God

Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

able, a sort of malicious practical both everything and nothing. one. Hence the paradox: man is joke perpetrated upon him by no his existence is entirely unreasonalthough he does in fact exist, yet completely senseless universe. And is the most absurd figure in a without a soul, without a future, without a God, without purpose, ness" (Ps. mouth is full of cursing and bitterdescribed by the Psalmist, "their exist. And, like the godless men According to them, God does not reality, and consequently the prinactually lived is the most important sense that his human existence as thing for these thinkers in the truth that if man is everything, into very sharp focus the ancient cipal object of their concern. then man is nothing. Man is everyaries is perhaps to have brought have rendered their contemporatheistic existentialist philosophers The greatest service which the 13:3): man, being

ience. The characterization of counter to all human exper-This pessimistic doctrine runs

> ing for a way to solve and explain able does exist; their very searchof human reasoning. to others the problem of existence reality as totally unreasonable by supposes and upholds the validity implicit admission that the reasonthese apostles of the absurd is an

existence is purposeful. his Creator being all-perfect, man's however, is he absurdly nothing: hence, man is not everything. Nor, exists, so also must God exist; very contingency - that is to say, the uniquely necessary Being: his personal being whom he calls but that he is the handiwork of neither everything nor nothing, has always taught him that he is testify to the fact that his reason demands that since he himself his indifference to existence -God. Contingent man is created by an absolute, eternally existent, The records of man's thinking

little because he is created, great thing both little and great. He is reality of creation: man is someall? The answer to this question is time, because it is based on the also a paradox, but a real one this between being nothing and being where does he stand in the scale very definitely is something. But The creature man, therefore,

> comes from God. intelligent Creator, man's littleness something little; because of what of what he himself is, man is derives from self, and his greatness into existence by the almighty and Brought out of utter nothingness God is, man is something great. because created by God. Because

Divine Revelation

come ineffably greater. And here again, the littleness comes from vocation to grace he has also besmaller before God; but by his original sin man stands even reveals man as both smaller and greatness is bestowed upon him by within man himself, while the showed him to be. Because of the teaching of the latter: the Bible reason, yet the message of the greater than his reasoning alone former illuminates and heightens exorable workings of human is rather more casual than the inteaching us through His revelation ential way. But while God's way of practical implications in an existpoints out to us their important a speculative manner, the Bible profound philosophical truths in point. Rather than teaching us to us, only from a different viewman is verified by God's revelation What our reason tells us about

our lives, the burden of its message divine mysteries ought to exert on is to teach us what bearing the Since the purpose of the Bible

> our lives accordingly. ness will be realized if, rememberherent in our origin from nothing, ing that we are little, we regulate by the goodness of God our great-We may state this in another way: shall keep in mind the littleness infore flim. God will take care of fulknowledge our own littleness be-God as our Creator, we must acgreatness that comes from having is that if we are to attain to the filling the greatness, if only we

fully in the Sermon on the Mount Father, as Jesus taught so beautithe love of a little one for its Christian's relation to God is filial. virtue of littleness to completion by adding a new dimension: the Testament our Lord brings the hand" (Ps. 94:7). In the New pasture and the sheep of God: and we are the people of His ness. "For He is the Lord, our Jewish nation will attain to greatfiding in him completely that the to have in Him: it is only by contrust which Yahweh's people are most frequently by the corporate littleness before God is expressed In the Old Testament, man's

The Franciscan Spirit

although unschooled in philosophy the insight so common to the close God must be that of littleness. And and fundamental attitude before knew what man is worth. With limpid clarity that man's essential friends of God, he understood with Our holy Father St. Francis

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well. In Chapter IV of his Rule of virtues. And the greatness? "This God, and expressing it in these ing aware of their littleness before the Friars Minor, he admonished and regulated his life accordingly, truly convinced of his littleness the land of the living." this be your portion, leading into but raised you up in virtue. May made you poor in earthly things, kingdom of heaven; which has brothers, heirs and princes of the which constitutes you, my dearest is that summit of highest poverty in poverty and humility", i.e., bein this world "serving the Lord his friars that they should sojourn God would give him greatness as unmistakably that if a man were and Sacred Scripture, he perceived

message, thereby selecting an apistic of attracted to a particular charactersouls have fallen in love with Jesus. through the Christian ages, many presents to us the entire complex of God, is the exemplar and model proach to Christianity which sets have concentrated upon a particufounded schools of spirituality As men will do, each has been who would be His disciples. Down of virtues to be cultivated by those of all holiness; His gospel message apart: some have emphasized His themselves and their followers lar aspect of Christ and His wisdom, others His obedience, still others His office of Redeemer, and Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word divine Providence have His personality. Those

so through the various schools. It is a most singular thing that when Francis Bernardone fell in love with Jesus he was unswervingly drawn to that virtue which is essential and fundamental to man the creature: he was overwhelmed by the littleness of the Son of God. This is the wisdom of the Poverello; this is the reason why his way is the very marrow of the gospel.

could recite a veritable litany of and great charity; love of Our 14). Poverty is there, certainly, I do not know" (Confessions, 11, it to someone who does ask me, me, I know; if I want to explain nature of time, "If no one asks we are forced to confess, as did members of the Scraphic family. olics and binds us together as distinguishes us from other Cath-Spirit, that elusive quality which trying to isolate a single attitude uality, is a particular approach to, canism, like all schools of spiritbeing Franciscan is, after all, just one came to the conclusion that all the virtues which the good votion of brotherhood . . . One Lady is important; and the de-St. Augustine in regard to the Yet, when we attempt to define it, loves to speak of the Franciscan us to set ourselves the problem of and peculiar expression of, the way good Christian. But since Francisabout the same thing as being a Franciscan strives to practice, until of Christ, it seems legitimate for Every follower of St. Francis

> or virtue which colors and orders Christianity for us. We submit that the radical Franciscan virtue is the imitation of the littleness of

Littleness

persists, therefore, forever. tains me in being. My littleness something only because He suscreated. As I once became someof God's creation, so now I remain thing out of nothing because during the time when I was being been related to God merely once, existence. There is no question, then, of my importance having while I write these words, in me, but also sustains me, even herent in us: God not only created quality of ours is permanently into consider that this creatural this truth, it is important for us order that we may fully appreciate tance lies radically in God. In And, being creatural, its importhing only because God created it. very great at that - yet it is someself is nothing, or of no importance although it certainly is something whatever. It is to say, rather, that creatures. This is not to say that only in relation to God its Creator and, for His sake, to its fellow shared with no one — is important persons - the ego, or self, which is the most intimate part of our we mean the honest conviction that ness? By the virtue of littleness and, as we have seen, something What do we understand by little-

Littleness may be described as a relegation of self to its proper place. The little one of God sees things, especially his own self, in their proper perspective. Just as man is not everything, neither is self the center of his personal world. For him who is little, God and neighbor always come first. The ego never intrudes itself into the spotlight. In a word, the person who is little does not take himself too seriously.

Our Lord Jesus Christ

Himself — the Incarnation, the Father and His fellow men before ably drawn are those in which Jesus most evidently places His mysteries to which he was irresistthem. It is significant that the cis was particularly attracted to office rather than of self. Even so, we have no indication that Franexaltations of Christ's Messianic Sunday. But these events were earth: there were the times when the Transfiguration, and Palm Him; there were the Baptism, and the amazed crowds acclaimed have His moments of glory on virtue. True, our Blessed Lord did is suffused with the beauty of this to the Ascension, the life of Jesus came to know the perfect Model of littleness. From the Annunciation gospel because it is there that he of Christ. Saint Francis loved the is the imitation of the littleness that the essence of Franciscanism We have ventured the assertion

self, His Person, is divine, eternal, sists in the conviction that one's Person. Eternally He possesses divine nature, being in substance relation to God and other men? sider Himself important only in How then, being God, can He con-Persons of the Blessed Trinity. equal in all respects to the other the case of our Blessed Lord. His If this be so, a problem arises in His sake, to its fellow creatures. lation to God its Creator and, for self is important only in its rewe stated above that littleness contruly and completely man. Now, He is truly and completely God human nature. One divine Person. the Holy Ghost; by reason of the the same thing as the Father and Jesus Christ is a single divine the mystery of the Incarnation. leads us straight to the heart of upon a difficulty whose solution Passion, and the Holy Eucharist Incarnation, He also possesses ing the virtue of littleness, we come When we speak of Jesus practic-

The answer lies in the understanding of the fact that in the single Person Christ, two perfect natures are united without prejudice to either, so that the one Person is at one time entirely God and entirely man. That Jesus can consider His human nature itself to be little before God is evident, for it is created. That He cannot consider His divine nature to be little is equally clear, for it is identical with the Father's. Nor can he con-

sider Himself in His divine nature to be little in any way. Our Lord can, however, consider Himself to be little in His human nature, as the true man that He is — He is little before God precisely as Incarnate. He does not, then, consider merely His human nature little, but — since He possesses this nature truly and completely — considers Himself the man to be little in relation to God.

All this may become somewhat clearer if we look at another aspect of the Hypostatic Union. The Blessed Virgin Mary is not only the mother of Christ's human nature. Nor is she the mother, obviously, either of divine nature or of Christ precisely as divine. She is, however, mother of the divine Person Christ in His human nature, as Incarnate. And so she is truly the Mother of God.

A Hymn To Christ

We have observed above that the gospel description of Christ is permeated with the fact of His littleness. But the New Testament text which elucidates this fact most succinctly is the so-called Hymn to Christ found in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, 2:6-11:

Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who though he was by nature God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave and being

made like unto men. And appearing in the form of man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even to death on a cross. Therefore God also has exalted him and has bestowed upon him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.

Concerning this beautiful passage, we should like to make three observations:

- I. The historical centext of the I assage is pertinent here. Attempting to instill into the Catholics at Philippi the spirit of humility, the Apostle urges them to follow the example of Jesus by acquiring the attitude of littleness which shone forth in His Incarnation.
- 2. St. Paul points out that Jesus is both little and great. Without ceasing to be almighty God, He chose to put aside the glory of His divinity (though not the divinity itself), to assume the status of a human slave, and to come by obedien e to death by crucifixion. As a consequence of this, God caused His greatness to shine forth again through the Resurrection and Ascension, and returned to Him the external glory of His majesty as God.

In His Incarnation, therefore, Jesus is the model par excellence both of the littleness inherent in

man by his creatural state, and also of the consequent greatness which God bestows on the man who effectively acknowledges his own littleness. Because Christ chose, even though He is God, to become little as Incarnate, God has exalted Him to a glory exceeding that of every creature.

3. Finally, this Hymn to Christ considers the littleness of Jesus under three aspects, and in doing so provides us with a rather detailed blueprint of what our own littleness should be like. In St. Paul's description of the Incarnate Word, we can discern the expression of Jesus' littleness in His attitude to self, to neighbor, and to God.

littleness is xpressed here as a complete disregard of self. Fully flow over into a glorification of self. ly perfect God — He nevertheless does not permit the awareness to aware of what He is - the infiniteas His very own (v. 6-7). Christ's Josely s. He could by considering not insist that the glory inherent alterably almighty God, Jesus did being human, taking man's nature he assumed the creatural status of self to be of no account. Further, divinity, He approac ed this as so, while not separating self from though He is essentially and unin His divinity be manifest. And Jesus' attitude toward self: Al-

Jesus' attitude toward neighbor: Having now assumed human nature, Jesus undertook the sal-

This was accomplished through the practice of the virtue of obedience to both God and man, which led to His death by crucifixion (v. 8-9). Selflessness turns to others, and becomes generosity. Our Blessed Lord is shown here as the completely generous One, despoiling self of dignity, will, life, even honor itself — for the sake of His fellow

this redounds ultimately to the majesty which is ever His, even er." Even the exaltation of Jesus confess that Jesus Christ is Lord reads: "And every tongue should have given above; the Greek text expressed much more clearly in very last words of the Hymn. It is toward God is described in the ent name "Yahweh" truly belong ority designated by the supereminrecognize that the glory and authselflessly cast aside. All creatures which restores to Him the external fraternity translation which we the original Greek than in the Condominion accordingly (v. 9-11). to Jesus, and acknowledge His that external glory which He had Ascension God restores to Jesus of His divine Son become man. creatures", is the perfect glorifier Jesus the man, "the firstborn of al glory of His heavenly Father. - unto the glory of God the Fath-The attitude of Christ Himself Through the Resurrection how He responded to the littleness then reveals to us through St. Paul Jesus' attitude toward God: God and

of God. As king of all creation He furnishes the perfect example of the way in which all other men are to glorify and thank God for the benefits which He bestows upon them.

St. Francis of Assisi

Disregard of self, generosity toward others, glorification of God—these are the virtues that constituted the littleness which Jesus both practiced and recommended to those who would live His gospel. And imitation of this threefold littleness characterizes the spirtuality peculiar to the Little Poor Man of Assisi.

From the day on which Francis experienced the call to sanctity, he measured himself only in relation to God, and was completely overwhelmed by the comparison: "My God, Who are You, and who am I?" The Testament of our Holy Father is particularly saturated with the humility of "little Brother Francis." Nor did this selflessness remain a sweet and sterile sentiment; it burgeoned forth quite logically into the hard and rigorous practice of actual poverty.

Francis' generosity toward others is epitomized, perhaps, in the choice which shaped the fundamental form of his own life and that of his friars: his selection to the mixed rather than the strictly contemplative life. Everyone who is acquainted with the Seraphic Saint knows the story related in

the name of the Lord!"" with great fervor: 'So let's go - in power, and said to Brother Masseo cis' enthusiasm: "As soon as he translation has nicely caught Franhis response. Raphael Brown's was not a trace of niggardliness in nizant that he was needed, there Saint had his answer, once cogsave and sanctify others. Once the so attractive to him, in order to the life of contemplation which was he should occasionally relinquish Clare and Brother Sylvester that revealed to him through Saint the Fioretti (I, 1, 16), of how God his feet, all aflame with divine knew the will of Christ, he got to heard this answer and thereby

ciscan message. For Francis' ad-Father has invited us to a sharing basic burden is that God our gospel is "the good news", whose The reason for this is that the Jesus in the glorification of God. iately and inevitably to union with gospel leads the Christian immedderstanding and acceptance of the "Preach the gospel," and an untion of that message was simply, formally assigned to the presentavice to those of his sons who were is a direct consequent of the Franassert that the glorification of God Indeed, it is not exaggeration to in his conversation and writing prayer also appears frequently must have permeated his private praise and honor of God which outstanding characteristics. The God was another of Saint Francis' Concern for the glorification of

> Herald of the Great King." of French, he might have dubbed vocation to announce these glad tidings to the world. Had Saint which shall be to all the people" gospel is "good news of great joy nature of Catholic doctrine. His our Holy Father among those who the gospel, a reaction which places was Francis' primary reaction to must be a glorifying of God. This human reaction to news like that in His own divine life through - for he was in very fact "the himself "keryx", and rightfully so Francis dabbled in Greek instead from a clear perception that the legendary joy and optimism spring have understood the kerygmatic Josus Christ; and the immediate (Lk. 2:10). He considered it his

Sons and Daughters of St. Francis

This attitude of littleness — in one's own eyes, toward one's neighbor, before God — is the most great and precious inheritance bequeathed by the Poverello to those who follow in his footsteps. Those who are by God's grace so chosen are called to imitate Francis in his following of Jesus, and invited to become in a very real sense, the little ones of God.

Selflessness: The Franciscan strives never to take himself too seriously, never to place himself at the center of his own world. In practice, the external sign of this attitude consists in the observance,

THE LITTLE ONES OF GOD THE LITTLE ONES OF GOD

for him. God alone exists nec-

attitude, therefore, is eminently

true, observe these recommendthough the Franciscan does, it is erty, chastity, and obedience. Aleither the virtue or the vow of the according to one's state in life, of three evangelical counsels of pov-

with other good Christians, his ations of Our Savior in common God, and to neighbor for God's wish on the part of the Franciscan. sake. In regard to neighbor, selfsomething is essentially related to but he is little because his being He realizes that he is not nothing; self is not a sort of morbid death-Generosity: This disavowal of

occupies himself with building a ness of Jesus. Observance of the sels in order to imitate the selflesscan counters this possessiveness possesses and rules. The Francissmall empire which he alone and everyone only for self, and is possessive; he desires everything all things in relation to self alone of his willing. A person who wills fuses to allow self to be the object his faculties of intellect, will, and gospel counsels represents to him Poverello: he lives by these counthem derives from the spirit of the primary motivation for observing the disavowal of self as object of In the spirit of poverty, he reproblems and difficulties of anyrather than inward, because in his one who needs him. He is not willing to involve himself in the by profession his brother's keeper, as to love." Every Franciscan is stood as to understand, to be loved consoled as to console, to be underobject, seeking "not so much to be embrace it are subject rather than rather than passive, why those who why the Seraphic spirit is active eyes those about him are more tion of the Franciscan is outward The entire psychological orientagiving of one's talents, time, and generosity, a free and cheerful lessness assumes the form of important than self. This explains (if one has them) material goods.

as existing exclusively for his own that his every judgment is made ing their focal point in self, so does not regard all things as findpleasure, comfort and enjoyment. He never views his sense faculties the object of his sense experience. denies self the indulgence of being with littleness of will. a selflessness of intellect. from his own point of view. Rather he strives constantly to achieve In the spirit of obedience, he In the spirit of chastity, he and praising of God, the mighty heart a constant acknowledgment his own littleness calls up in his Franciscan's sincere conviction of One who has done great things

your souls, even though, loving you more, I be loved less" (2 Cor. ly spend and be spent myself for can say to them, "I will most gladothers. Rather, with St. Paul he afraid to be put upon or used by Glorification of God: The

of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual.

both natural and supernatural by a torrent of other blessings merely the first of our Father's gifts to His children. It is followed of all praise! But existence is existence is a good; God is worthy essarily; man exists by God's love:

to live in heaven an everlasting what is left for him but to glorify is little becomes aware of all this, life whose description surpasses which culminate in the chance human capability. When one who of Saint Francis. As our Heay is the special way of the follower Imitation of the littleness of Jesus and imitated this quality in Christ. Little Poor Man of Assisi loved by both word and example. The Son of God taught us this lesson herent littleness. The Incarnate nature. Greatness is the child of to man's fundamental creatural realistic, corresponding as it does a practical awareness of one's in-

Father said, "It is in giving that we are pardoned, and it is in dying we receive, it is in pardoning that

fundamental Franciscan

that we are born to eternal life."

St. Anthony Of Padua

by Pope John to the Most Reverend Basil M. Heiser, Minister General heralded by the letter Franciscalis Familia (Jan. 16, 1963) addressed of St. Bonaventure's transferral of St. Anthony's remains to the basilica there. The beginning of the celebration on February 15 was solemnly close the four-month celebration of the Seventh Centenary On June 16 the Conventual Franciscans at Padua, Italy will

plement the pastoral decrees of Lateran Council IV (1215), the charity. And, noting that St. Anthony's preaching had helped to imis ordered primarily to prayer and good works. He also urged modern Pontiff declared that imitation of our confrere's holiness will undoubted-Franciscans to continue St. Anthony's apostolate of peace, justice, and The Holy Father observed that in our Antonian tradition theology

ly aid Vatican II in its desire to renovate and rejuvenate the Church

She often staggers her way mentally

sometimes with not enough sleep.

as best she can, hoping God will

understand, through

morning

THE CROSS IN THE CLASSROOM

The Cross In The Classroom Sr. M. Roberto, O.S.F.

The complex and disturbing

the Cross by a religious as Pro-

allows the members of His Mystiligious if her vocation is to come demptive suffering for souls in cal Body to cooperate in His reprehensible in its totality, Jesus is aware that, in a mystery incomto its full flowering. A religious must be squarely faced by a reeffects of the attack of suffering vidence presents the Cross to her is very great, it is also very mystermystical Christ which is also the greater glory of God and the greater perfection of holiness and richest happiness, but means not only her own greatest While the richness of suffering

sufferings cannot be seen by her, of the fact that the results of her part of her suffering. Yet in spite ligious herself. This darkness is appear to be a good to the rea religious is suffering may not ious and often very hidden. What

other Christians, is Christ present

in the world today. Because she

danger of eternal damnation. She

knows that she herself, like all

seeing the result of her sufferings Christ on her own and other souls. given an occasional faint hint that While the explicit comfort of help, courage, and edification to her example is a real source of is often denied her, she may be those around her.

who has given herself up totally

in the life of a consecrated virgin, ian. It can have a special fecundity fruitful in the life of every Christ

suffering, in His redemptive to use her as a cooperator, by ever use He wishes. God may want to God to be His tool for what-

Passion. The willing embracing of

must be prepared for the Cross

in its many aspects.

The Cross can be abundantly

evil, always bitter and bloody, is encounter with physical and moral evil in the world around her. This is Christ, she must confront the

the Passion. Therefore a Sister

lovingly embraced, the touch of faith tells her that they are, if

of an individual's free cooperation Value of Suffering natural value of suffering was understood by the saints. The value The very real, if invisible, super-

> of the supernatural value of suffering in the joyfully mortified lives happily find implicit recognition ligious in her convent may also fed body with a discipline. A rethe confessional beating his underherself to blood. It was known also some of his rare hours outside to the Curé of Ars when he spent horrified her mother by scourging

> > offering of the Holy Sacrifice

important act of the day, her prayer, meditation, and the most

mind of the religious the ineffable souls of others, there lies in the of the Sisters with whom she lives fering for her own soul and the Beyond the richness and suf-

out time, to put it mildly, for a

Her lunch hour is spent with-

leisurely meal, since she must soon

under innumerable pressures. is going to teach, she finds herself classroom. Even if she has had begins a hard-pressed day in the through a speedy breakfast, and of the Mass. Then she hastens

time to prepare the material she

obedience, His Passion, Death, and in the climactic acts of His earthly privilege of cooperating with Him Jesus, and her joy in the unmerited happiness of her identity with

teaching religious lives on a very details of her life sandwiched into crowded time schedule, with the demanding. In most instances the porary society is dreadfully religious teacher in our contemand other more interior spiritual parently uncaused humiliations, physical pain, mysterious and apmain themes are work, failure, she gradually learns that the unsuspected by a young religious, of suffering are for the most part The active workaday life of the While variations on the subject

rings are brought in for an all-

grips her when two plain gold unexpressed the emotion which time and courage she must leave to. For example, for lack of both striking needs cannot be attended

tunity for the guidance or counselwithout offering them the opporshe must often send pupils home

ing they need. Sometimes even

of work which duty demands. The merely means a change in the type ing a release from work pressures, the school day, instead of bringin her schoolroom. The close of be out on the playground or back

religious teacher suffers because

planation, "These are my mommy's school gold drive. The rings are accompanied by a little girl's ex-

help on the part of a student is don't love each other any more." Usually the evidence of need for

don't want them, because they and daddy's wedding rings. They

a highly pressured package. She usually rises hours before dawn,

was evidently known, for example, in the redemptive work of Christ St. Catherine of Siena who

St. Francis of Milwaukee, Sr. M. Roberto

A member of the School Sisters of

is an English teacher presently on leave of absence from Alvernia High School in Chicago.

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comes a period of prayer, and then school duties. After various and cannot avoid. other activities which the Sister sumed by parish devotions or some period free, the time is often conmost earnest efforts to keep this creation. In spite of a superior's followed by a few minutes of resupper. crowded compulsory activities must start on her round of afterof the extracurricular. She herself bus or to the after-school meeting because of the plain lack of time. an adequate response to them, silent pleas go by without making grets having to let innumerable less dramatic, but the Sister re-The student must hurry to the Supper is theoretically

Multiple additional duties may crowd into the evening recreation period. Some of these may be the training of parish or school groups, work with various religious clubs, or the important work with the C.C.D., either by personally acting as a catechist or by training adult leaders to catechize.

Pain of Failure

In some cases, failure is second in importance as a source of suffering. While the causes of pain in the life of each individual Sister differ, failure is frequently the beginning of much soul-suffering and much exterior opprobrium. Failure may sometimes be a very real failure to meet the demands of a given job. In other cases it may

ecclesiastical superiors. or by one or the other of her varstudents with whom she must deal, schedule, by the large numbers of difficulties of a given classroom ing parents, by the necessary ed by the interference of demand. abundantly diverse, may be causbear on her. These pressures, pressures which are brought to one or more of the various parent failure may be caused by personality of the teacher. Apcaused by real deficiencies in the is the same. Real failure may be ed. In either case, the interior pain scientiousness of the Sister involvcause of the sensitivity or conmeasuring up as "failure" only bebe only an apparent failure, ious religious, educational, or

faith, in darkness. her with, "Sister, I just want you away from the sacraments for a light and hope. The seventh grad-Occasionally, she is given a little student are having any good effect penances she offers for a certain certain whether the prayers and greatly from her failure to as-Her hope must usually feed or But such positive evidence is rare Holy Communion this morning." to know that I was able to go to long time may actually approach er whom she knows to have been A teacher may sometimes suffer

and with love.

Failure has a further effect. When a Sister fails, she is forced

ing severe failure, a Sister realizes that it is only by the actual experiencing of her own weakness that her pride and egoism can begin to be rooted out. She sees that failure is the touch of the loving hand of God as He attempts to free her from the pitiful prison of her self-sufficiency. Since she is a creature of free will, she can be liberated by failure only if she embraces it both with resignation

Power of Failure

For her own survival in the dark tunnel of failure, a religious is

to seek the will of God, not for any of the natural satisfactions which usually accompany the performance of duty, but solely because it is His will. She has probably always dreamed of doing great things for God, but when all her efforts result in failure she must abandon her own designs and look

beyond the obvious rewards of success to rest in the Giver of all success. She realizes that God, Who, after all, does not need her small efforts, is more glorified by her freely-given cooperation with His designs, even for her own failure, than by her small transitory triumph.

can be a gateway to holiness. God may use failure as one means of

not yet very convinced, that failure

has ever read about the value of failure. She remembers reading,

forced to cling mentally to all she

makes the natural ego, so proud Physical Pain

course, an effective means, but it

the purification necessary before we can be permitted union with

Himself, the All-holy. It is, of

easier to bear than a succession of suffering is physical pain. The on the heroic. Actually, she is strain. Patience, humility, silence, small afflictions which allow one, extremely painful, is probably serious illness, while it may be complete prostration caused by quite probably not a heroine. The constitute a continual drain on a pain-presssures of minor illnesses handicapped, to remain more or field of personality. defensive play for control of the ly making a determined strong original and personal sin, is simpnatural ego, deformed by both to a Sister in pain to be bordering and unfailing charity may appear human relations under a constant Sister's sociability, and keep her less on the job. The continual Another common source of

more grace-filled moments follow-

sleep; if left in placid peace, it rises to carry on the deadly com-

and self-sufficient, suffer a bitter death. Worse still, the death of the proud ego is only a simulated

bat with renewed energy. In the

Pain has the psychological advantage over some types of suffering in that it usually bears the clear label "The Will of God." There may, nevertheless, be something of an apparently human element in its cause. A too-heavy work

THE CROSS IN THE CLASSROOM

load for a Sister, or a lack of concern, imagination, or experience on the part of a superior, may contribute to the pain which goes with a physical weakness. Usually, however, superiors are eager to do whatever they can to help preserve the physical welfare of the Sisters in their charge.

thought process. effect these pills can have on her room, because of the beclouding when she must remain in the classstand. She learns to be wary of the taking of strong pain-pills ence the need to sit down at her is no longer physically able to desk while teaching because she teaching duties. She may expericlassroom, handicapped in her still, while able to remain in the ought to do to increase her physical health, a Sister may find herself have dutifully done all that they After a Sister and her superiors amount to help eliminate pain. doctors can do only a certain But loving superiors and good

In addition to a sick Sister's trials in the classroom are the added burdens of her convent life. Her well-intentioned and virtuous, but normal and healthy, Sisters cannot imagine why she is unable to carry the burden she was originally assigned, or to bear her fair share of the additional duties abundant in convent living.

Thronghout all trials a sick Sister is expected by students, other lay people, and her own Sisters to be a model of gracious-

ness, sweetness, affability, and charm. When she is on the rack of physical pain she realizes with striking clarity that these virtues are an order that she can fulfill only with God's powerful help.

Mysterious Trials

Closely allied to the sufferings of physical pain, occasionally by a cause-and-effect relationship, are the multiple humiliations which often descend on the soul pursuing perfection.

contamination. motives, whence she is shunned as a possible source of spiritual being engendered by the basest Sisters suspect her every act of entirely superfluous, factor in her edly secondary, although not an a holy and conscientious, and therefor some unknown reason, her purification. Or she may find that, spiritual writers becomes a deciduntary self-annihilation urged by various faults. In this case the volundertakes the extirpation of her fore very thorough, superior actions in which she had only the best intentions. She may find that severely corrected by superiors for A Sister may find herself being

Similar to humiliation in their power to root out pride and self-sufficiency are the various ideological conflicts which a Sister may encounter. These can include real or imagined conflicts with superiors or other Sisters, factions in her religious house, the decisions

of a pastor whose methods she cannot understand, or the opinions of an anti-clerical or anti-religious parish. Perhaps her strongest defenses in these conflicts are prayer, humility in regard to the accuracy of her own judments, and a very careful observance of charity in both thought and speech.

Deeper Suffering

are inadequate. The time-honored spiritual journey, so that the landbring about a turning point in the candor, and simplicity. She obeys whom she has confidence, she reto have a good director, one in in this crisis is with her spiritual place for the Sister to look for aid the accustomed modes of travel scape is no longer familiar and what she asks of her is actually self to question whether or not veals herself to him with courage, director. If she is fortunate enough him absolutely, not allowing herfor her greatest spiritual advant-Suffering can accompany or

Sometimes a confessor who has assumed that his direction was not desired can be encouraged to give spiritual counsel by a discreet question. In any case, God is eminently faithful. While it is a great thing for a Sister to have the conscious support of being clearly under the direction of a holy and sensitive priest, if this is not possible she reflects that God can

and will supply her spiritual needs.

causes for, those periods of medimake whatever effort is within her of spiritual dryness she must issitudes is prayer. Therefore, a ing religious in her spiritual vicness which flooded her meditation a bleak desert. The giddy happiawake, her prayer often may be Granting that she can remain tation which she bobs through in regrets, and attempts to avoid the power to pray well. She deeply ly attempt to pray. Even in times Sister knows that she must seriousand unknowing dryness. She is apcan be replaced by an unfeeling periods during her novitiate days a state of semi-consciousness. of the spiritual journey, to be can permit prayer at some stages parently unable to contact God solute Master by every title, wishes as in all His other dispositions of God and adore His will in this humble herself peacefully before She learns by experience that God she to complain? to keep her in this poverty, who is her life and affairs. If God, ab-If this is the case, she can only another source of bleak suffering. The only sure refuge of a suffer-

Still, since God is incredial, even the prayer of a religious immersed in spiritual darkness may sometimes be illumined by flashes of light. Through her prayer, she may be able to verify the claim of the saints that suffering often marks God's special invitation to

the soul to give its attention ex-clusively to Himself. A Sister sees from its customary mediocrity. to lift her life sweetly, if forcibly, that God has Himself reached down

Suffering Moves Outward

and Ascension. glory in the Passion, Resurrection, son and her life, of the mystery of Christ's love and delve into the inexhaustible riches of His public life. She attempts to was devoted to the exterior work tion of Christ's earthly activity She recalls that only a small porto fulfill the will of His Father. ience, His ever-present eagerness poverty, and especially His obedobscurity, His life of work, His and out of formal prayer, Jesus' the son of God. She ponders, in work, the lifting up of man to be long to share more fully in Christ's sole preoccupation. She begins to His concerns become the Sister's Now, Jesus and His interests and

Holy Trinity. Christian is caught up into the sonship, and that the baptized tion to holiness is a vocation to She begins to see that every voca-Christ is the perfect Son of God. life as a Christian, the fact that of the reality most basic to her expand. She gets a slight glimmer God's designs for her begins to Gradually, her understanding of

plation of Christ on the Cross, she realizes that His glory is a necseparate herself from the contem-While the religious can never

> not allow her to doubt that her because of it. to bloom into a greater richness life here and in eternity is meant passion is to flower, but faith does not yet know into what her own son which is the Church. She does Holy Spirit, and the magnificent up of man to God. But the Passion growth of the mystical Christ-perthe Ascension, the Descent of the Since the Fall, the redemptive is followed by the Resurrection, Passion must precede the lifting essary outcome of His obedience.

best possible structure of her perby providential circumstances, the in limits imposed on her activity peace, she begins to build up, withpleasure. Secure in this refuge of filial embracing of the divine good souls, utter self-surrender, and a an intense love of God and of suffering world, a peace shaped by Peace gradually descends on her

The Mystery

her present life. consciously centered in the Mass, forming her present person and cipation in the Passion becomes Christ's mystical members, now permeates her life. Her own partisince the Fall, the necessary prethe total mystery of Christ trans-Passion is carried on today in lude to our sonship and that the But the fact that the Cross is,

Jesus gives himself totally to her. The Mass cries out to her that

> creature that she is, of cooperating edience may mean suffering, but unto death. Like Christ's her obthis is her only means, poor God - obedience, in spirit, truly attempts to unite more perfectly her identity with the Savior, she in God's action to draw her to be by way of her obedience to Like Christ's, her immolation must her own immolation with His. Now, experiencing in a new way

sumed. As a religious she has, of of the Mass. Old Testament knowby the taking of the vows. course, made herself a holocaust which the victim was totally con-Lolocaust, the Temple sacrifice in standing, and she remembers the gesture toward that self-creativity herself, which is her only possible ledges flicker through her underby God at the desired Offertory She makes the total offering of

a prelude to, a more glorious life. place in herself, she sees that this my glory." Knowing that she Supper, ". . . that they may see prayer to His Father at the Last that a spiritual death must take death. While the religious knows Sister shares Christ's mystical The religious remembers Jesus' eath is the candition of, but also Then at the Consecration the

> hopes that she can aid other memcontact which she makes. acterize her every action and every Self-forgetting charity should charback to the Christian community. its richest color. All the power of bers in their ascent. At the Eucharship in the Mystical Body, she Father. Conscious of her memberbeing led by the religious is pershares Christ's sonship, she knows the Eucharist in her life must flow istic banquet this hope takes on Christ, she is ascending to the meated with this reality. With The fabric of the life of suffering comes to her as the Risen Savior. that she will also share His glory. In Holy Communion Jesus

and more effectively what she really is, the presence of Christ in wishes to become more consciously The Eucharist is clear proof to the Christian that God is a God of our contemporary society. Holy Communion, the religious love. Having received Christ in

of the most stupendous joy. suffering can be a special mark of love, suffering can be the vehicle good grace, to meet Love with fact that if she is able, by God's God's love. She experiences the work is a singular privilege, that concludes that to be asked to share in a special way in His redemptive the crucified Savior, the Sister Looking always at the glory of

ST. BERNARDINE AND THE EUCHARIST

St. Bernardine And The Eucharist

Roberto Masi

which had so cruelly divided the consequent m' ral and disciplinary was ill: religious ignorance, with wise physician. Christian society made it clear that the wounds and Italy. His astonishing success soon preaching in northern and central that St. Bernardine began his Church. It was in that same year to the deplorable Western Schism, vidential design. Let us place his the saint of Siena, fulfilled a prodation of Church unity, especially Siena was to exert for the consolisuasive preaching of the Saint of influence the assured and per-Mother Church. What beneficial of divisive factions tormented Holy threats of heresy, and the presence people, neglect of the sacraments, irregularities of both clergy and by the schism had found in him a lacerations inflicted on the Church Colonna as Martin V put an end In 1417, the papal elevation of Odo preaching in its historical context. Bernardine, like all the work of The eucharistic preaching of St.

ity, unity, and virtue. Christian people to a life of charin order that he might incite the point he concentrated his effort, his preaching; on this precise had recourse; to this he directed was to this that St. Bernardine for the venom of division. And it of charity", was the best antidote sacrament of unity and the bond ing! The Holy Eucharist, "the by means of his eucharistic preach-

the Holy Eucharist: he used to of importance to these sermons on es. Our saint attached a great deal and in the vernacular - various ed St. Bernardine's fruitful courscession which customarily concludof communion and the solemn proparation for the general reception Holy Week, thus serving as a preusually during the last days of the Blessed Sacrament were given of preaching; the Lenten talks on saint toward the end of his course were generally delivered by the ment of the Altar. These sermons discourses devoted to the Sacramons, however - both in Latin find in the collection of his serconcerns the Eucharist. One does there is no work which specifically Among St. Bernardine's writings

say that the time in which he

of harvesting the fruits of the entire course of sermons. precious, because it was the time spoke of the Sacrament was very

entire eucharistic theology of St. theologize scientifically, but to was, as a matter of fact, not to be par icularly valuable. His task speak of so many things here; of the Blessed Sacrament, and the external appearance of the of revelation to untrained people, he explained the highest mysteries to examine the manner in which present doctrine to the people. It contributing anything of importheologians without personally classical theology of the great that St. Bernardine follows the the like. Obviously we cannot manner of eucharistic presence, presence, transubstantiation, the Bernardine of Siena: the real to trace the development of the application to Christian spiritual and pointed out their practical will be of great interest to us, then, tance, such a study would not furthermore, in view of the fact Eucharist, Holy Mass, the effects It would be interesting indeed

Transubstantiation

transubstantiation? For our saint untrained minds of so many of his skillful preacher present to the ly — even of this mystery. He took did speak - and rather extensivelisteners the sublime mystery of How, for example, did this most

ed in the Eucharist. analogical method of theology. in accordance with the classical examples from natural changes, found and difficult change until through instances of more proforms of change, he proceeds Beginning with the more simple he arrives at that which is effect-

so very numerous. Listen to this! not understand the details." other things. In all these processes metals, as well as rocks and many gold, silver, copper, and other time. The earth naturally forms springs up again in its own good when the seed is dried out, it leaves, flowers and fruits; and there?" asks the saint. "They are tellect is overwhelmed, but does you see natural change. The in-The earth generates grass and "How many natural changes are

behind it." you do not understand the reason see the change very clearly, but becomes lucent. Again, you can and though dark by nature, it is hard by nature, it becomes soft; that which is brought about by is cold by nature, into the fire, heating. "If you put iron, which it becomes hot itself; though it A more profound mutation is

So you see generation in nature, of the egg remained unchanged. and yet the external appearance yond appearances. "From the hen's ting of life, which goes well beis the change found in the begetegg you will see the chick born, Deeper still, continues the saint,

Italian which appeared in L'Obsservatore Romano, March 2, 1960, with those permission we print it. The translator is Thomas Donnelly. This is a translation of an article in

but you do not understand the intimate process entailed in it." St. Bernardine's object in all this is to point out that there is mystery even in natural change; and the more profound the change, the more difficult is it for us to understand it.

Continuing in this line of thought, the saint states that there is a fourth type of change, which he terms incorporation. This is the assimilation of food, by which a living being is nourished.

the soul is lost and assimilated into sea." So also, concludes the saint, again, and yet it would be in the rich insights. He speaks, for inwhich St. Bernardine brings many they become united in a single will. God by means of His love. would it go? It would not be seen were cast into the sea, where love: "If a little drop of wine Himself which God effects by His stance, of the assimilation into This is a concept, by the way, to formed into the beloved, so that which a person who loves is trans-A fifth change is the one by

Eut all these changes, great and wonderful as they ..re, do not exhaust the infinite power of God. There exists yet another change, which is higher than all, mysterious and most holy. This change is greater than all the others, which are but shadows in comparison. It is the unique change wherein the substance of bread is transformed into the body of Christ and wine into His blood,

see," declared the saint, "not one wonder of wonders!" remain the same. And this is the to the priest. But the appearances the words given in charity and love into His blood - by the power of the bread into his body, the wine changed into the body of Christ ed"." And in response, the crowd than all the five I have mentionthe Consecration, a change greater which the priest brings about at listeners: "Come now, all of you! Then the great preacher urged his compared to this one in greatness." of those natural changes could be remain intact. "As you can readily while the external appearances change is that great; it is the one roared back: "The substance is Everyone shout loudly: 'Only one

The Real Presence

of a mirror which, broken into entire in every part. To illustrate rather profound manner. Nor is this, he gives the classic example Host, the body of Christ remains the fact that when one breaks the among his listeners, he insists on some difficulties in this matter His presence. Having encountered Host, and of how He can multiply Christ can be contained in a small presence - of how the body of substantiation to the people in a presented the mystery of transhe any less precise when he speaks have said above, St. Bernardine As one can see from what we them of the eucharistic

> of the people had expressed anxiety to break the Hosts into smaller when the priest had been forced image as many times. Perhaps some or even six Hosts, the holy Sacraally to receive one or two or three Saint insists: "If you were accidentto receive it. In this regard the particles in order to give Holy many fragments, reflects the same Host and in every part of each is completely present in the entire eleventh part of a Host. For God if you had received only the you - no greater or no less - as ment would be the very same for Communion to all who had come in each part of your person." in your whole person and complete Host, just as your soul is present

a small vessel and a large one, and of each Host?" By way of an completely, even though they be the same liquid fills each vessel fill each of them up to the brim. a series of examples. If you take answer, the preacher brings forth be entirely present in every part listeners, "can the body of Christ separate and of different size. will differ according to the position you pierce a tub with many holes, the whole mirror showed. Or, if completely the single image that many parts, each part reflects Again, if you break a mirror into it flows from. In much the same same water, no matter which hole and size of the holes, but it is the the flow of water out of the tub way, the body of Christ is not "But how," asked the saint's

multiplied in the Blessed Sacrament.

and the manner of Christ's presence a manner which was simple, but also describe how he used to speak in the Holy Eucharist. We could theology, viz., wansubstantiation particular points of euchanistic Bernardine's treatment of two them was wonderfully nourished so that the life of Christ within standable to the untutored people, cult subjects pleasantly underiasm that rendered the most diffigiven with a devotion and enthus-And always his instructions were precise and theologically solid. to the people of other truths in We have been stressing here St.

The Eucharist a Memorial of Christ's Love

vincingly than the Blessed Eucharboth the love and the Passion of a pledge and a remembrance of of love, it is in a very special way love will mount a horse, joust, do one loves ardently within, one manifests itself externally: "When ist? Love, observes our saint manity more beautifully or conproves the love of Jesus for huing of man's redemption. What love for men, evident in His willsermon themes was God's great Christ. One of St. Bernardine's acts. A young man who falls in ly love are manifested by external an evident sign. Human and worldshould demonstrate that love by If the Eucharist is a sacrament

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battle, and engage in similar things comp for his love. And men who love ual f worldly glory, or money, or power Go

ings by external acts."

will reveal their respective crav-

The love of God likewise expresses itself externally. It does so in a very particular manner in the Most Holy Eucharist, which is the supreme demonstration of a love without limits. God has done all things through love, in a truly terrifying crescendo: the creation of the world, the creation of man, the Incarnation, and finally the Most Blessed Sacrament, which is the very climax of God's love in which, as it were, He rests and is pleased.

He took flesh, having become our still not united with God. But after of man was not enough; man was of the entire universe at the feet notice here that even the placing might be united with God . . . Now, until the end of the world man Blessed Sacrament for it, so that His companionship, He left the that the soul of man might enjoy came into the world. And in order noble soul of his. And He gave made it for man. Then He created But after Adam sinned, Jesus for the purpose of generation. Adam, and infused into him that than you can imagine. And He him the company of the lady Eve, ion times more beautiful and great so great. Nay, it is a hundred millas you can see, is so beautiful and "God created the world, which

> companion, He left to us this spiritnal food."

in the most Holy Eucharist. Passion; and finally, as our Food, Father; as a holocaust, in His our Master, in His preaching; as Brother, in obedience to the ates us to the divine life; as a His life; as a Father, who regenera Light, in the example of His by conforming Himself to us; as exclaimed St. Bernardine: the human nature; as a companion, given us Himself! Jesus has been given to us as a son, by assuming things of the world, the angels, the saints; and finally, He has God has given us everything

A Memorial of Christ's Passion

and persuade them by reason of faithful, arouse their love, convince memory of the Passion of Our the love of sacrifice. the heart of Jesus, so enflamed by Lord should incite the piety of the was St. Bernadine's desire that the votion to the Passion of Jesus. It every opportunity to promote deoughly by our saint, who seized doctrine, is discussed quite thormoving subject, rich in piety and ial of the death of the Lord. This is a remembrance. It is the memorthe Passion of which the Eucharist ing the Passion, so it is especially of Christ's love, then just as this love appeared in its fulness dur-If the Eucharist is a memorial

"How," he exclaims enthusiastically, "can the soul which receives

ence sweetness, seeing that He died do you receive the body of Christ? and suffered and was crucified in with your mouth? No; it is resuch a bitter way? If you think ceived with the heart, with the out of love, the thought of that love will be so great that it will belly, but with the spirit."

is important to make a good conall the corners of your conscience, receiving Holy Communion one nardine exhorted his listeners as and prayer." And one time, Berto receive the Lord by mortification fession, and to prepare your soul and set everything in order." "It broom," he said, "sweeping out of conscience. "Go about with a should make a good examination teaching, the saint held that before that you prepare yourselves for I must depart from you now. When follows: "My brothers and sisters, this next Holy Communion by go-I have left, make sure, all of you, ing to confession." In accordance with the common

After you have made your confession, urged the saint, go to the altar with the most ardent desire of receiving the hody of Christ; with the most urgent zeal for the glory of God; with the most reverential fear in the face of this tremendous mystery; with most ferwent thanks for this immense gift; with the highest praise for the mystery of God; with most profound humility in the conviction of your own nothingness; with a keen appetite to taste the sweetness of God.

such a bitter way? If you think on the fact that Jesus was crucified out of love, the thought of that love will be so great that it will be pleasing to you. Our Brother Giacopone puts this idea into verse for you when he says that 'the soul's feeling should declare: Lord by your love and Passion, show me the manner of the Incarnation in which You became man in order to manifest Your love'."

Holy Communion

munion. He insistently urged pareven of dying before his time. "And therefore," he warned the receive Communion when they ents to see to it that their children devoted naturally to Holy Comdine's eucharistic preaching was served the Saint, runs the risk of municate once a year in accordance should. He who does not comincurring divine punishment, and with the law of the Church, obone else." to die so that she can marry some love you, and that she wants you that is a sign that she does not to make your Easter Communion, "if your wife does not get after you men who were listening to him, The best part of St. Bernar-

St. Bernardine also took great pains to point out and explain the dispositions necessary for the worthy reception of Holy Commun-

Fruits of St. Bernardine's Preaching

In view of the religious situation around the middle of the fifteenth century, one can only be amazed — as were Bernardine's fellow preachers — at the rich results of his preaching. A vastly increased frequency in the reception of Holy Communion was perhaps the most evident result of his work; possibly it was also the most important, implying as it does a complete renewal of the Christian life.

mons which he preached at Florreceived Holy Communion. In one miracles in great number, espec-"This preaching was followed by ence in preparation for Easter, receiving the Blessed Sacrament. nessed huge crowds of people during his sermon courses he witthing to see." Sunday, which was a wonderful received the Sacrament on Easter place, thirty thousand or more had not been communicating have than five hundred thousand who attending the holy services, more Sacrament. I believe that, after those sermons on the Blessed ially during the six years after 1424, he writes the following: Speaking of the eucharistic ser-The saint himself tells us that

There is an interesting note to be added here. When St. Bernardine preached his Latin lenten discourses, he seems to have been influenced by the tradition which permitted reception of Holy Communion rather rarely. But in his

sermons in the vernacular, relying at is were on his own good pastoral sense, he urged everyone to receive Holy Communion many times a month. The records of his sermons show that he preached this at St. Mary of Avigliano in 1440; and we know that while at Perugia, he had thirty young men receiving Communion every week.

some years later, the poison of constituted a divinely provided eucharistic revival of the fifteenth newing the Christian life of the to the Blessed Sacrament and represerve the Church in Italy from render the poison ineffective, and powerful antidote which would cover that the devotion to the filtration into Italy, it was to dis-Protestantism would attempt an insects were beginning to exert the Hussites and other heretical barrier against the pressure which born of the Western Schism, and to the reuniting of the factions Sacrament contributed a great deal reawakened love for the Blessed century. It is conceivable that this of our saint served to reinforce the people. The eucharistic apostolate dine exerted in stirring up devotion well understand the importance of neglected in those days, we can Holy Communion was very much had helped to arouse was the Blessed Eucharist which our saint from beyond the Alps. And when the influence which St. Bernar-If we keep in mind the fact that

Childlike Or Childish?

Sr. M. Patricia, O.S.F.

What is there about a child, that Jesus should tell His Apostles that they must become "like little children?" The twelve chosen ones had been arguing as to who would obtain the highest place in heaven. They were seeking their own glory and honor, forgetting that their heavenly Father would provide.

He beheld the qualities necessary the sand by the side of the road, desire for honor, glory, or riches; little one happily playing there in ing his happiness in simple things, for by his nature he was as yet Heaven. This small child had no for entrance into the Kingdom of the smiling face and noted the detached from such things. Finda friend. As Jesus beckoned to him confidence; to a child, everyone is childlike qualities of trust and his head, the Savior looked into he was. When the little one raised he was quite content to be what the child came forward, unaware that he was being chosen to serve Certainly, as Christ saw the

as an example of humility and total dependence upon God.

who wishes to gain entrance into were directed to every one of us to become childlike; His words childlike. You just want to be not particularly interested in being become childlike? Perhaps the you are of such a mind, you should development into full maturity. If adult, or that it hinders one's childlikeness is not natural for an normal, the implication being that thought occurs to you that you are Heaven. But how can we adults are understood as Our Lord meant thing but immaturity when they by the term childlike denote anyconsider that the qualities implied Christ asks not only His Apostles

Childishness

There is, however, a great difference between childlikeness and childishness. The sight of a tot throwing himself into a tantrum on the floor, crying because he is not able to have his own way, gives us a good example of childishness. This same trait can be seen in an adult who, unable to get his way, refuses to compromise with another, but echoes the childish statement, "If you won't do what I want to do, we won't do anything at all,"

Sr. Patricia is a member of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis (Peoria, III.). She is also something of an authority on Seraphic childlikeness, being Assistant Mistress of Novices. We think that you will be impressed, as we were, by some of Sister's rather original insights into this victue.

or, "I have decided the matter, and my will must prevail!" The inability of an adult to compromise on certain occasions, when it is the only way to peace and real proof of love for our neighbor, is a sign of childishness.

not so that we may turn to self-pity and pains, and pains, lack of success, step they have taken into that state, state of life frequently regret the of others. Self-pitying adults in any neighbor, or because his lot in life to make atonement for our sins, and loneliness in order to help us He gives us misfortune, suffering resignation and cheerfulness. For promised to those who suffer with joy, nor the reward that God has and complain that their responsiexample, are less than that of his very bitter because his wages, for childish self-pity; he can become adult finds it difficult to overcome part of growing up. An immature concentrating it on one's self is individuals in the world. Learning themselves the most misunderstood and then to resentment against reasons they have for gratitude and bring themselves to think of the and sorrows. Naturally they cannot to bear. They spend most of their bilities are too heavy for anyone is so much more difficult than that to have pity for others instead of children by sulking - considering Childish self-pity is shown in

Oftentimes childishness is manifested in adults by the inability

> ciple. Frequently the expression is because we love God. not because we love prayer but our efforts, for we will go to pray will and intellect. God will reward the guidance and influence of the done by subjecting our feelings to being ruled by them. This can be to rule our feelings instead of we felt like praying. We must learn would be said if we waited until like praying. Very few prayers we will to pray, not that we feel unstable. What is important is that feeling, because feelings are too prayer-life cannot be based on just don't feel like praying." Our heard, "I cannot pray today; I to subject their feelings to prin-

Our Seraphic Model

he developed this quality of childinexpressibly low and unworthy mility was his own opinion of of all men. though he was the most unworthy had greatly favored him, even God. He was convinced that God came from God and belonged to because all that was good in him himself. He considered himself so is. The depth of St. Francis' huenough to view himself as he really from ambition, and realistic A child is by nature frank, free acteristic of a child is its humility. likeness in his life. The chief charturn to St. Francis to consider how Naturally, as Franciscans we

St. Francis was captivated by the example of the lowliness of Christ,

who though He is the Lord of glory, lived as one of the least of men, and embraced with special affection the poor and downtrodden of human society. St. Francis sought to imitate this humility of Jesus by loving helpfulness toward others. This type of humility, which he wished his followers to strive for, was the willingness to be concerned with those whom no one bothers about.

a particular type of work. Nothing one finds the mistaken notion that us from our fellowmen. Too often and contempt that may come to ness to bear with the humiliations life, by having our heart in readimake this imitation part of our ciscans, we shall also strive to and poverty of a beggar. As Francontempt associated with the life St. Francis accepted the shame and to follow Christ more closely, hands of men. Therefore, in order and willingly accepted from the and humiliation that He received ored to imitate was the contempt humility which St. Francis endeavand concerned only with self, floors all day may be preoccupied who washes dishes and sweeps titude toward it. For instance, one ent fields of work lies in our at produces pride. The value of differ of more noble ventures necessarily make those who perform them in menial tasks can automatically humility is associated with doing whereas one who is engaged humble, any more than the pursuit Another aspect of Our Lord's

> ing. It is this attitude of giving to accept all God. menial task assumes tremendous striving to be accounted as nothpractice forgetfulness professional development value when we use it to glorify For even the lowliest and most than all the riches in the world. that brings more joy and happiness that gives one a peace of mind self-esteem in any accomplishment, is due to Him, and of not seeking God in all things the glory that in intellectual formation reproaches of self,

Obedience

submission to the will of the superobedience was to render perfect Church and one's superiors, St. obedience that our Divine Redeembased his life on the example of will through holy obedience. He heavenly Father. St. Francis sought this childlike approach to his gospel, St. Francis learned to take promise. From the study of the trust and confidence in whatever will of another. His concept of means to be dependent upon the eral of the Order, he devised a at all times. Even as Minister Gen-Francis sought to live in obedience us through His representatives, the Since God's will is made known to er showed His Father. St. Francis to be a child of God by doing His his mother and father say or accepted God's will in everything. A small child has complete

ior out of love for God. St. Francis wishes his followers also to make themselves a holocaust of love through obedience.

Supernatural Motive

responsibility. A mature religious ity, these religious comply because or the desire for peace. The obeymay be born of mere routine habit, reasonable to us. Or our compliance may be moved to obey because to manifest His will. Again, we motivation be supernatural. Somewho has a proper understanding of an inability to face personal religious who have such a childstitute truly religious obedience. ing of a command from any of the thing commanded the medium which God is using instead of realizing that this is a consideration of the good or bad frailty to found our obedience on it is important that our basic Seeming never to arrive at maturpresentation of the genuine virtue. ience is reduced to a crude reof their superiors that their obedish dependence on the directions motivation is that found in those these natural motives cannot conpersonality traits of our superior, times we are tempted by human merit of obedience for our actions, A more subtle form of natural In order that we may obtain the seems

of the true meaning of obedience will be able to make decisions in emergency situations, while yet respecting the authority vested in a religious superior.

universe a reminder of its Creator. see in the order and beauty of the spirit of the world, which fails to How different is this from the constant care of the great God. because they share in the love and creatures, animate and inanimate, of God. St. Francis loved all men are united in the Fatherhood brotherliness of St. Francis! All of our lives, and extend to all the into those who cross the pathway we could only have this insight folk the quality of goodness. If recognized in each of the townshis greeting was sincere, for he ing, "Good morning, good people," people. When he walked into the tiny town of Poggio Bustone sayalways saw the better side of In childlike fashion, St. Francis

Using the many examples of humility and complete trust in God which St. Francis has given us, we should endeavor to develop these childlike qualities in order to become worthy of reception into the Kingdom of Heaven. If we can get ourselves to see in the events of our life — both the joyful and the sad — the pattern of God's love, we shall have taken a big step towards a childlike attitude to God.

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