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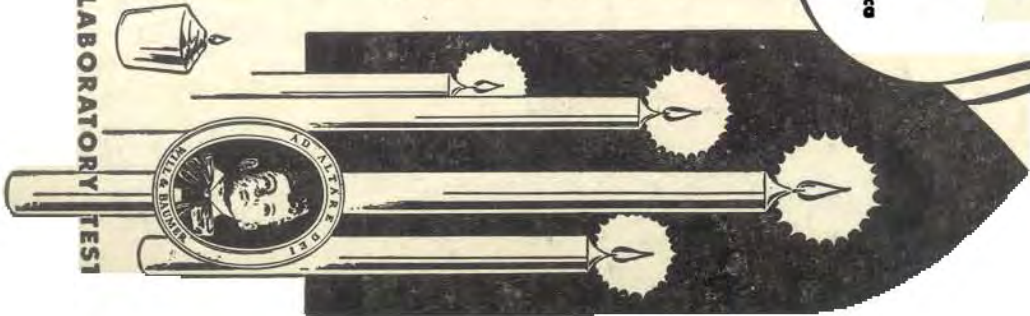
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The CORD

A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW
OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

AUGUST 1963

FAMILIARITY WITH GOD

Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

CLARE OF ASSISI:
WOMAN OF FAITH

Sr. Mary Francis, P.C.

WHAT'S MY LINE?

THE FRANCISCAN BROTHER

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SCHOOLS OF SPIRITUALITY

Fr. Daniel Higgins, T.O.

VOL XIII

NO. 8

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Order from
THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE

Saint Bonaventure University Saint Bonaventure, N. Y.

the CORD

August, 1963
 Vol. XIII, No. 8

A MONTHLY FRANCISCAN REVIEW OF SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE

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THE CORD
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THE CORD
 St. Bonaventure University
 St. Bonaventure P. O.
 N. Y.

THE CORD is published monthly by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Entered as second class matter on Nov. 25, 1950, at St. Bonaventure P. O., N. Y., under act of March 3, 1879.

Cum Permissu Superiorum

Subscription Rates: \$2.00 a year (\$2.50 foreign) — 20¢ a copy

Good Morning, Good People!

May the Lord give you peace!

Habemus papam! With this traditional exclamation the College of Cardinals announced to the Church and to the world on June 21, 1963 that they had elected Giovanni Battista Cardinal Montini as Vicar of Jesus Christ on earth.

Pope Paul VI, the 261st successor to St. Peter in the papacy, continues the visible succession by which universal jurisdiction over the souls of men reaches down from the Lake of Tiberias to Vatican City.

Our Lord's institution of the petrine primacy as the enduring source of unity and the visible foundation of the Church represents a gift to mankind which is both indicative and worthy of His infinite goodness and wisdom. Each Christian is conjoined immediately to Jesus by the invisible and personal bond of grace which is the divine life. But since man lives in an external sensible condition, Christ founded His Church as a perceptible society. The episcopate, and the papacy which preserves it one and undivided, are the source of a second union between the Catholic and his Divine Master — a visible and juridical union mediated by the successors of St. Peter and the Apostles.

At the present time, when a great deal of emphasis is being placed on the inner Christ-life enjoyed by those who love Our Lord, the election of our new Supreme Pontiff may serve to remind us that the external aspect of the Church cannot be forgotten.

While invisible union with Jesus in grace is man's ultimate — and therefore more important — vocation on this earth, one must not forget that it is the will of Our Lord Himself that this union may be fully attained to only by means of visible membership in the external society which He founded and preserves.

Allegiance to the Vicar of Christ on earth in his triple office of teaching, sanctifying, and ruling is an indispensable requirement for full participation in the life of God's grace. Thanks be to God for providing for the continuance of that office in the election of Pope Paul VI.

The Editors

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Familiarity With God

Fr. Regis Marshall, O.F.M.

Familiarity with God was an early disposition with the precocious and lovely Franciscan saint, Colette. As a child she

was already touched with a holy impatience, restlessly longing for the day when she would be united with Our Lord in that sacrament of familiarity, the Holy Eucharist. Meanwhile, during Holy Mass Colette would intently watch her mother, Margaret, approach the communion rail, anxiously wait in readiness, and then affectionately hug her upon her return. With a familiarity that is possible only with the Sacramental Presence, God, the Lord of Heaven and earth, was twice enfolded and doubly embraced. A little meditative drifting on this exceptional scene permits us to see in the mother, Margaret, another Mary, and in the lovable Colette, resting on her mother's breast, the disciple of

love, John, in a familiarity that defies an authentic description.

When God commanded man to "increase and multiply" He thereby "fathered" a variety of families. He brought forth families by blood, national families, the family of the human race, and finally, the last in the series, the communion of saints. The first family, that of Adam and Eve, became at once the original reflection of the mysterious Family that is the Blessed Trinity, and again, the ancestral intimation of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The beauty of creation is primarily a harmonious multiplicity, and never is this beauty more pronounced than in human society, and its basic constituent, the family. On this earth you will search in vain to find a more complementary, a more fulfilling blend than the family and its adhesive by-product, familial love. Since hate disperses and pride isolates, in Hell there is no familial life, only a common misery. Hell, then, must be reckoned a strange, unfa-

Regular readers of THE CORD will be happy to recognize in this article the thoughtful and vivid style of Fr. Regis. A member of Holy Name Province, Father is a Professor of Philosophy at St. Bonaventure University.

miliar place, and we pray that it may remain as such. Heaven, on the contrary, as distant as it may seem, is truly very familiar, for there we find the most intimate and permanent of ties, the bond of pure love. Hence the family can be valued as God's treasured, corporate gift to man, His bouquet, and familiarity, its fragrant, aromatic scent.

Going Too Far

To swallow the proverb, "Familiarity breeds contempt",

without reservation, is to submit the mind to the pains of an indigestive interpretation.

If such an utterance were unqualifiedly true, the resultant conclusions would be absurd. Family life would disintegrate from within. The generative seed would simultaneously be the seed of decay. The imperative, "Increase and multiply!", would be an ineluctable sentence of death. As the ancients once staunchly believed, every newborn would be a repetitious curse. Misery would be highly organized. Eventually we must plainly deduce that in life is there death, and God, our dearest friend, His own immortal arch-enemy. But God exists solely as the supreme Good. Evil flourishes only because it has been pre-

conditioned by the good. Evil is the good mishandled and mishandled. "To be" is our original blessing. "To co-exist" is a bonus. Of course familiarity can breed contempt, but only when co-existence, which makes familiarity possible, has been abused and prostituted. From their golden earrings, so beautiful to behold, the Jews of the Exodus, fashioned a molten calf despicable in the sight of the Lord (Exodus 32:2). There is no blessing which cannot be twisted into a blunder.

No doubt most of us have felt the discomfort and strangeness of our first formal, of the starchiness of newly bought denims, the factory stiffness of a pair of shoes, or the inflexibility of an unused catcher's mitt. The first day in school, that initial sermon or speech, our first trip by plane, were so unfamiliar as to leave us unnerved. Familiarity, and the ease of familiarity, comes with usage, habit, and that "feeling at home". Life has certainly lost much of its savor if we have not gladdened to the lived experience of befriending a person, and enjoyed the creative familiarity that moved from a remote smile to a warm handshake to the inner intimacy of a heart-to-heart alliance. Friends are not bought or sold

except by the parasite or traitor. Friends are gained, friendships formed. And bracketing every friendship is a requisite and residual familiarity. The confidence invested, the trust reciprocally exchanged, the security engendered, are the bud of a wholesome familiarity. Needs anticipated, burdens shared, successes bilaterally enjoyed are its blossoms. And the fruit? A genuine love imitative of God's familiar love for us all.

Adam ill-treated the gift of familiarity by contriving to be like God. As the result of his sin, we have inherited a compensatory world. Light and darkness, sickness and health, life and death, are now the disjunctive portions of our daily fare. The pleasures of the body are relished, but with the prohibitive knowledge that the same body can be racked with an agonizing disease. The blustery winds of a winter's season are tempered with the awareness that they will soon become the soft, gentle breezes of a sun-tanned vacation. Familiarity too is a coin with two sides. Was it not a privileged familiarity mishandled that became Lucifer's downfall? He who was so near to God thirsted for singularity. He got it. Today no creature is more distant from God than he. The

light-bearer, endowed with a tremendous candle power of grace but eclipsed with pride, became the prince of pitch darkness, unable to cast even the weakest of shadows. Lucifer neglected to keep his place, and in his impropriety trespasses the sacred precincts of familiarity. The same temptation besets us. So that we may not succumb, let it be known that an exaggerated familiarity can opiate a sincere friendship by lulling us into a lack of appreciation, stupify us into taking things for granted, and eventually numb our social sensitivity. The tongue that prays can be the same that blasphemes. The Paradise of pleasure was given to Adam to dress and keep. It has since become the strange land whose thorns and thistles we now work by the sweat of our brow. Likewise, an undue familiarity, a familiarity that has been selfishly monopolized and exploited, can reduce a once fibrous friendship to a flaccid companionship, or worse, to a hardened hate.

Francis The Familiar

Destined to live only a short forty-four years on this earth, St. Francis is the saint of youth, a timeless saint, the most familiar of saints, who is

as fresh as nature itself. "No man has seen God at anytime", wrote St. John (John 1:18). On the other hand, no man has seen so much of God in creation as did holy Francis. His familiarity with creatures, whether animal or rational, is a trait recognized by folk of every land. Where he still remains a stranger to so many is in the truth that his familiarity with creatures was the more successful because of his familiarity with God their creator.

St. Francis would not have appreciated the title of reformer. He saw too much of God's goodness and mercy in this world, so much that did not need reform. He preferred to inform men, familiarize them with the generosity of God's extended hand. As the herald of the great King he was bent on trumpeting God's horn, arousing men to a recognition of His gifts, not the least familiar of which is the gift of ourselves. Though he would label us as strangers and pilgrims in this world, the path we trod toward heaven was to be a familiar one, traced by God Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

With amusement we read of the childlike antics of Brother John, "the Simple". So elevating was his regard for Francis

that he would imitate to the very gesture every movement, every word of the Poverello. Nor do we read of St. Francis protesting. Our holy father loved this attempt at a simple familiarity, for it was but a reflection of his own imitation of Christ. The external display of sincere mimicry on the part of Simple John was indeed a refraction of Francis' interior mirroring of the Master. The great Greek mind Parmenides judged all reality to be a oneness, a sameness, a unity; Francis saw in the same reality a family, that beautiful kinship webbed by the paternal hand of a provident Father. He witnessed himself as a member of this family, and with the simplicity of a Brother John tagged creatures with the familiar names of Brother Fire, Sister Death, or Lady Poverty. When it came time to designate the Order he had founded, he chose the most fraternal of titles, "The Lesser Brothers".

And lest St. Francis be stamped as the initiator of a humanitarian cause or branded the expert on fellowship, let it not be forgotten that his familiarity was anchored in a filial dependence on God with a proclivity that spoke of a rare reverence for the Creator. Francis loved family living. As members of his household our

love of God is ever to be a familial love. Our communal allegiance to God excludes the singular, the exceptional, the oblique. Our strength is not simply in numbers, but in an aggregate, collective, harmonious love echoing on earth the praise and prayer of the Seraphic choir in Heaven.

I Have Called You Friends

We all have heroes, be they in sports, literature, politics, or music. With avid interest we follow their progress and familiarize ourselves with their achievements. St. Francis had his hero and that hero was Jesus Christ. He was as familiar with the record that Christ left of Himself in the Gospels as the daily box score or the latest tune is to us. To him the Good News was "too good to be true". But it had to be true because it was so good. The Greeks pinnacled their gods high up in the rarified surroundings of a mountain top. The Romans pedestaled their gods on pencil-plain pillars beyond the reach of men. They were indeed strange and alien gods. But to look down into a makeshift crib and there behold the Word made flesh, God looking up to man, was for St. Francis incredible. Incredible, because it was for him so wond-

rously and obviously the most familiar of truths. Centuries before, after his familiarities with God on Mount Sinai, Moses gratefully exclaimed, "There is no nation so great, that hath gods so nigh to them, as our God is present to our petitions" (Deut. 4:7). What would the patriarch say, now that the same God has been born of the maiden Mary, with the protection of a humble foster father, cuddled by the patient Simeon, driven abroad astride a donkey, presented as the dearest of friends to the poor, the sick, the sinner, ridiculously accused of blasphemy, and finally sacrificed in an ignominious but familiar manner of the day, by crucifixion? How strange the prophecies are in their utterance. How familiar in their evangelical fulfillment. This was the familiarity that Francis grasped in the Gospels, a personal, simplified approach to life, which, if undertaken "without gloss", dispensed with any formal rule. Every word of the Gospels dripped with divinity. The challenge had always been there. Francis was generous and daring enough to accept it. He would meet Christ "in His own backyard", on His own terms. He would repay the familiar love of creatures, loving all

with a Seraphic love, "for the love of God".

As is the way with all professionals St. Francis made sanctity appear an easy endeavor. But Francis was too simple and sincere to deceive. The professional becomes such only after a lengthy familiarity with the techniques of his chosen field. So it was with Francis. Since sanctity is friendship with God, the technique demanded is the knowledge of, the love for, and the service to God. The Poverello recognized the God of the Gospels in the birds, the fishes, lepers, theologians, all of creation. He loved Him with the parental familiarity of a child. He served Him exclusively, without compromise, with his historic vow of poverty.

At the Last Supper, with a familiarity that shocked Peter, Christ stooped to wash the feet of the Apostles. With the same familiarity Christ eagerly waits to wash and bathe our sin stained souls in the sacrament of Penance. Only once did Christ reveal Himself as the Messiah, and that during His familiarities with the women at the well, the evangelical version of "This Is Your Life". To the man and woman of faith He reveals Himself daily as the Savior at the familiar conse-

crating words of His priest. And in one of the most beautiful familiarities in the Gospels, Jesus appears to Mary Magdalen after the Resurrection. Mary knows not that it is Jesus. A single word does it, "Mary!" No sooner has Christ spoken when Mary excitedly responds, "Rabboni!". She knew. Yes she knew, as every pious soul does, that in every Holy Communion one can converse familiarly with God to his heart's content.

How bitter is the revelation when, he whom we suspected of being our confirmed enemy, was really the most loyal of friends. How tragic will be the day of judgment for those who culpably sold God short, who just did not bother to go and "see this word which has come to pass" (Luke 2:15), who did not even identify Christ as the carpenter's son, or at least discern, as did the belated centurion gazing on the expired Christ, that "indeed this was a just man" (Luke 23:47). That God was so intimately present on earth under the familiar form of bread and wine will not diminish their woes. Why, the literal familiarity of it all! "I am with you all days" (Matt. 28:20). And the literal bluntness! "He came unto His own and His own received Him not". The tabernacle can be the loneliest place in town.

The Franciscan Family

"Wheresoever the Friars are and meet other Friars, let them show that they are members of the same family, and frankly expose their needs one to the other" (*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 6). The more people have in common the more familiar they should be. To worship the same God, to be alive to the joy and grief that the same God died for all, to acknowledge the image of God implanted in each soul, these are the essentials of a lasting familiarity. Reverence for the individual as a creature of God is the basic law of all human relationships. As Franciscans our familiarity, in addition to these accepted ideals, flows from the Gospels and their most familiar expression, St. Francis of Assisi. Since it is a familiarity with all that is good, Jesus Christ, it can never be vacillating, suspicious, or scheming. Franciscan incentive will ever be derived from Christ's tender and familiar love for souls. Thus, wherever we Franciscans are and meet other Franciscans we should so conduct ourselves as to "neither dispute and contend in words, nor judge others, but show ourselves gentle, peaceful and modest, mild and humble, speaking modestly to all, as is becoming"

(*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 3). How edifying is the rallying spirit of the Franciscans on the occasion of a bereavement! How comforting this familiarity! How jubilant the gathering of Franciscans on the date of feast or anniversary! How rewarding the association! And how encouraging is that familiarity that urges a reluctant subject to approach a superior knowing that he will be received "lovingly and kindly and with such affability of manner as to lead them to speak and treat with them as would masters with their servants" (*Rule of the Friars Minor*, Chap. 10). Such a familiarity promotes peace of soul, that peace which hovered over Bethlehem on the night Christ became familiar with us. Such a familiarity within our household prompts us to invoke, on the threshold of another, the Franciscan blessing, "Peace be to this house". Such a familiarity is internally prepared to greet any stranger with the fraternal salutation, "May the Lord give thee His peace".

Caricatures

The dandelion is a beautiful flower which, so often failing to keep its place, does harm to a well dressed lawn. So too, unkempt familiarities can easily

degenerate into hypocrisy, pharisaism, or deception. In order to obtain the paternal blessing from the blind stricken Isaac, Rebecca deceived her husband by surreptitiously introducing her favored son, Jacob. Thinking Jacob to be the familiar Esau, Isaac granted his blessing. The beautiful Susanna was falsely accused by two lecherous judges of indecent familiarities with them, until the prophet Daniel rescued her. Familiarities that sprout particular

to God, can so readily become tread-mill prayers. And the Word of God so familiar in the reading and preaching at Sunday Mass, the spoken word, our choicest relic, the work of art nearest to life, carved out of the breath of life itself, inspired by the Holy Spirit, which should be listened to as sincerely and piously as it was written, can become the dull and drowsy pattern of a drizzly rain.

friendships, cliques, and factions, can disrupt the organic tranquility of a community or society. How often does not the atmosphere of familiarity germinate the off-color story or im-proper joke. "Letting one's hair down" is often letting God down. An over-familiarity with the merchandise of this world can smother an otherwise fresh, air-conditioned, "feeling" of God's omnipresence. Our attitude toward the state which should be the most familiar of all, the state of grace, can be regarded as indifferently and neutrally as the air we breathe. The *Angelus* so familiar in the ringing can leave us as impassive as does the droning of an aircraft overhead. Those familiar primitive prayers of our lives, the Our Father and the Hail Mary, instead of forming a spiraling, cyclical ascent

Great men have always been known for their sociability. Aloofness and inaccessibility are characteristics of the proud, who are great only to themselves. Between heaven and earth there is no wall, but a gate. Christ evidently revealed His greatness when He told us, His sheep, "I am the door" (John 10:9). To remain a stranger to Christ when He died pleading for friendship, to give Him the cold shoulder when He mercifully shouldered His cross even for His enemies, is a heartless posture, not unfamiliar today, and perhaps explained ultimately by misdirected familiarities.

To be familiar with God on earth is to be confident of His friendship when the time comes to leave it. Surprises in heaven there will be, for "eye hath not seen nor ear heard: neither

hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (I Cor. 2:9). However, heaven will not be a total surprise. It is in heaven that we will exchange familiarities with Christ. Happily we will recall our past conversations in prayer. The recollection of our former meetings arranged by the exhortations and examples of a St. Francis will add warmth to our permanent friendship.

And what of the countless receptions we held for the Holy Eucharist? And in our chats with His Holy Mother He was never left out of the discussion. No, heaven will not be a complete surprise. Heaven will not be a renewal but an enrichment of our friendship with Christ. Heaven will welcome us with the joy of a nativity, rejoicing in the new addition to the family. There we will be forever grateful for the familiarity that viewed creation through the eyes of a St. Francis, with inquisitive wonder of a child, with a familiarity that never saw the same flower twice, was inspired anew at every sunrise, and with every prayer solidified our friendship with the same loveable, benevolent God.

Pope John XXIII of grateful memory has been universally heralded as the familiar pope, the pope of the people. Imbued with a family spirit, the Holy Father revolutionized society by inspiring its citizens to revere and respect each other with a familial love. Such spiritual warmth could only have been sparked by one who himself was enkindled with a divine familiarity. "What matters in life", he feebly said just hours before his death, "follows the sense of the Gospels, mildness, goodness, and charity", as though he were prompted by the Saint of Assisi. After his death a venerable friar reflectively remarked to me, "He had all the people in his pocket." This was so true, only true because first of all he had God in his heart. Sanctity is touching. Men everywhere have felt the passing of the pope of the people, the man of God. Because of his Holiness (with a small "h" too), and despite current racial tensions, people have become more familiar with God. May this oft sought and recently found familiarity grow brighter and warmer, as the ascending sun, even to the high noon of our lives, our familiarity with God in heaven.

Clare of Assisi: Woman of Faith

Sr. Mary Francis, P.C.C.

If there are false connotations of words, there are also false connotations of saints. Sometimes Clare of Assisi is betrayed by both. For she was an idealist and a saint; or, more precisely, she was in a preeminent degree what every saint must be: an idealist.

What does that word too often connote in popular speech? Is it not the impractical dreamer, the poet sitting with chin propped on his fist and sighing at the harsh realities of life even while he longs to escape into a shadow-world of perfection? How often the phrase, "poets and dreamers," is tossed about with a kind of supercilious if indulgent pity for those who cannot face the rawness and roughness of actual life and so withdraw into unreality. A dreamer is presumed by some to be one who will not admit that life frequently involves nightmares of the soul and heart and mind. An idealist is supposedly a refuge from reality. And while

they admit that dreams and ideals are tolerable and even salutary for the young, and should not be wholly abandoned by adults, practical men of affairs know that dreams and ideals will obviously require considerable adjustments for those of middle years.

In the end, what such people mean by an "idealist" who persevered as such into mature years, is someone who did not make the prescribed adjustments, that is, compromises. Clare of Assisi would qualify for them as one of that species. And her cloistered life would probably be summed up something like this: caught up into the first romantic glamor of the Franciscan movement, she rushed from her castle home, shut herself up in a poor monastery where harsh realities could not reach her, and sighed her way to Heaven!

Truth to tell, Clare was not the popular false connotation of an idealist, but an idealist in the true meaning of the word: she was a woman who regarded reality as essentially spiritual. How superficial all this talk of the mutual exclusiveness of idealism and re-

To commemorate the feast of Our Holy Mother St. Clare on August 12, Sr. Mary Francis, of the Poor Clare Monastery in Roswell, N.M., has composed this moving tribute.

CLARE OF ASSISI.

alism is. Who is actually equipped to cope with hard reality except the idealist? Once the shining ideal is obscured, the pressure of the teeming realities of life becomes coercive. Reality unilluminated by the idealism that hopes against hope and believes in the humanly impossible can only lead to frustration. In the end, only the idealist can survive reality, the kind of idealist Clare was.

If the connotation of Clare for some is that of remoteness from reality, the true meaning of Clare is faith, that supreme faith which is the glory of a woman. It is faith alone which gives strength to deal with present realities. And this is where woman is endowed by nature above man, as man is endowed by nature above her in speculative reasoning.

Grace builds on nature, and it is the nature of woman to have faith: faith in man who has been set above her and whose helpmeet she was created to be, faith in God who made her so to be. This is evident in the life of any normal woman outside convent walls.

The modern equivalent of the suffragist may argue for equality of the sexes in all things, and even hasten to point out her superiority and dominative powers. But she is not the nor-

mal woman who knows that a certain kind of subjection is her glory.

The greatness of a man can usually be measured by the kind of woman who loves him. Often it is the faith of the woman who loves, that discovers and then sustains the greatness of the man. A woman consecrated to God loses none of her natural womanly qualities; she only rediscovers them on a higher plane. Men conceive ideals. Women make ideals practicable. Men dream great dreams. Women clothe dreams with life and cling to them with faith through all vicissitudes. Stubbornness of faith is one of God's most magnificent gifts to the nature of womankind.

St. Francis of Assisi conceived the ideal which has come to bear his name, the Franciscan ideal. When it seemed in some degree to fail among men, it consistently and persistently succeeded among women. If it wavered elsewhere, it worked at San Damiano. And when Francis himself seemed to waver, heart-sick and weary with compromise and gloss, he went to Clare and rediscovered himself in her. For this is what she always was: the mirror of Francis' first ideal, first faith, first dream.

It is all very romantic to think of wealthy young Clare dazzled by the novelty of Francis' preaching. Complete poverty and evangelical simplicity would have had the natural attraction of opposites for a high-minded girl whose life was steeped in luxuries and the complexities of a feudal society that was beginning to totter. The difference between Clare and many other young girls who might have felt the same attraction is that Clare had the faith to cling to her belief in the Franciscan ideal and make it a conviction.

Eloping, even into the cloister, has its romantic appeal, too. But it was, externally speaking, a rugged honeymoon. Clare had. It is a different matter to theorize about the cluster of possessions than really to get clear of them. The rough robe Francis threw over her shoulders did not feel like the satin robes she had worn before, even though she had sometimes had a hairshirt under them. However much she prized it, it was hot. It scratched her fine skin. It weighed on her. And her hair! — what an act of faith that was! Surely no man could completely understand this. Perhaps the shaggy-haired girls of today do not much understand it, either. But medieval Clare of the long

golden ropes of waving hair, that sunlight of hair which was the glory of the Lombard women of Italy and her own outstanding natural possession. . . .

There is no irreverence to God who made the heart of a woman to accommodate His words to such a doffing of hair; in a sense, "greater love has no woman!" And we can be reasonably sure that St. Francis cut off that beautiful silk by the great fistfuls with quick and complete inexpertness.

What did young Clare of the cropped head and mean robe have to sustain her ideal? Faith. Absolutely nothing else. She had no convent, no community, no rule. She was quite an unique kind of foundress. But she had unlimited faith in the ideal of one small friar and his great dream. Never, from the shearing of her lovely hair until her last breath, did that faith waver.

Relatives pleaded and relatives stormed. Friends reasoned and reminded. But Clare was that kind of idealist who is not embarrassed by reality but who lifts reality out of the dust and informs it with the ideal. We need such idealism, we whose reality lies in a different dust, — the dust of comfort and compromise.

When the beginning was made and the influx of sub-

jects began, Clare's faith was tested and threatened on a new front. It is obvious that the legislator who sets down in her rule that contemptuous subjects shall take bread and water on the floor in the refectory for as many days as they continue obstinate, who reminds her daughters that worrying and fretting over the sins and faults of their companions only hinder charity in themselves and others, and who sternly cautions against envy, detraction, dissension and division, had met some of humanity's more inglorious specimens. If she had set herself to live in a dream-world, she could never have so calmly legislated for the nightmares of religious life. Yet, she kept her faith in her daughters as she kept her faith in God.

In the close confines of the cloister where human nature finds no prefabricated substitutes for its defects and where its poor miseries are all too obvious, love comes to a crossroads sooner or later. It can only be faith which will turn love down the right road of that womanly compassion which is rooted in humility and self-knowledge, and steer love away from that other road of self-righteousness which can even degenerate further into a kind of cynicism. Faith pre-

served Clare from the peril of ceasing to expect great things of people because people sometimes appeared very small indeed.

There must occur for every idealist a period of crisis in which ideal and reality confront each other. The tragedy would be to agree to a peaceful coexistence by which would be meant that the ideal becomes escapism from the reality, a kind of twilight walk down which one wanders on brief excursions from the hard truth of things. How often Clare must have experienced what we often call by the misnomer of disillusionment, but which is actually only the labor pains of the ideal bringing forth its fruit, the ideal persisting in reality and fastening on the essential spirituality of things.

Clare knew how to be so gentle as to roam about the little monastery of San Damiano on cold pre-midnights to make sure her sleeping daughters were adequately blanketed. Yet, she had the sternness that could rebuke the nun she misraculously cured of a trout ailment with the very realistic reminder that if the nun did not change her line of conduct some worse ailment was likely to befall her. Here is the love

of a woman strong in faith, loving the "black but beautiful" which we, too, must love, and which we also are.

Then there was the great trial, the very life-and-death struggle of her Rule. Clare who so completely typified the Franciscan ideal had to live by a quasi-Benedictine rule for many years. She never fought against the authority that imposed it, but neither did she supinely accept it as ultimate. Rather, she persisted in faith. "I know in Whom I have believed!" cried out St. Paul. St. Clare made that same wonderful act of faith. She knew. She believed. And so she lived on and suffered on, as women through the ages have known how to suffer and love and believe through wars and fam-

ines, through betrayals and deflections, through humiliations and defeats. God evidently prized Clare's faith very highly, for He chose to reward it, which was really to end it, only two days before her death. Clare was prostrate on her deathbed when Innocent IV sent her his *Solet Annuere*, the Bull confirming her own Rule. Absolute poverty was at last reenforced by the authority of Rome. The primitive Franciscan ideal was saved for the Second Order. Faith was crowned and triumphant. And so Clare died. She had fought the good fight of faith and had kept the faith. The course she finished was the course of lifelong faith. Therefore shall her daughters rise up and call her blessed!

LUX MUNDI

Dear Jesus, help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with Thy spirit and life; penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.

Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel Thy presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me, but only Jesus. Stay with me, and then I shall begin to shine

as Thou shinest; so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus, will be Thou who shinest through me upon others. O let me thus praise Thee, in the way Thou dost love best, by shining on all those around me. Give light to them as well as to me; light them with me, through me. Teach me to show forth Thy praise and Thy truth. Amen.

Cardinal Newman

What's My Line?

The Franciscan Brother

Fr. Giles P. Bello, O.F.M.

We live in an age when the serious Christian is being challenged to examine his individual contribution to the building up of the Church. The Franciscan Brother is no exception to this general examination of conscience; he too seeks a clearer definition of his role and work in the Church. What follows are a few random observations on the life and work of the non-teaching brother of the First Order.

In delineating the vocation of the Franciscan Brother it is necessary first to consider the role and mission of the Franciscan Order as a whole. I believe that it is only in such an Order-wise perspective that the brother's vocation can be seen in its proper setting.

Living and Doing

What is the particular contribution of the Order of St.

Francis to the Church? In underriding the distinctive features of Franciscanism it seems obvious that we must abstract for the moment from the individual works in which the Order has engaged in the past seven centuries. Even a cursory reading of early Franciscan literature suffices to establish that fact that the Order's peculiar contribution did not stem from the distinctiveness of its labors. Preaching, ministering to lepers, home and foreign missionary work, the rebuilding of churches, teaching — all fields of endeavor were tilled by the early friars. Subsequent history and the present wide range of activities indicate that our reason for existence in the Church does not hinge upon the particular type of work in which the friars are engaged.

What, then, specifies and differentiates the Franciscan contribution to the Church? What justifies our canonical existence as a distinct religious order? Are we not correct in maintaining that the Church

Fr. Giles is particularly well qualified to write on this subject; he is director of the Brothers' Training Program of the Province of the Most Holy Name, in Croghan, N. Y.

has granted the followers of St. Francis canonical existence because she expects of the Order a particular form of life? It is the Franciscan way of life that justifies our existence as a distinct family in the House of God. *Living the life* remains our specific Franciscan role in extending the kingdom of God.

Franciscanism is basically a *living* rather than a *doing*. When the living of the Franciscan ideal holds first place, the *doing* comes naturally and vigorously. Indeed Franciscan living is intended to color all our works, permeating them with the spirit and approach of St. Francis. Thus even the activities of Franciscans will be speak a certain distinctiveness.

Distinction for distinction's sake is, of course, vanity and nonsense. However, to reduce all manner of working for the Church to a common denominator is to undermine the value of the various approaches to gospel living sanctioned by the Church for valid and profitable reasons. If the Franciscan manner of working for the extension of the Mystical Body differs in no way from other approaches to the same goal, then the Franciscan spirit is not sufficiently alive and influential. Franciscanism must

be the heart and soul of our apostolate.

Everyone will agree that certain basic evangelical patterns must characterize all apostolic efforts. But individual efforts will differ somewhat according to the ideals, the points of emphasis and the approach of the laborer. The living of the Franciscan form of the religious life provides the motivation and drive required for all forms of Franciscan activity. The genuine success of Franciscan works is directly proportionate to the fervor and seriousness of Franciscan living. It would seem that this point bears emphasis in our present-day efforts to live the Franciscan life and extend the kingdom of God.

The Proper Balance

The stress on Franciscan *living* rather than *doing* should not be taken as an excuse for inactivity and sluggishness in an age that demands energetic and effective grappling with present evils and problems. The Franciscan charged with the care of souls cannot bury his head in the warm, comfortable sand of indifference under the pretext of fidelity to religious observances. The living of the life was never intended to be a cloak for tena-

city to the status quo or unwillingness to keep pace with developments beneficial to both religious life and the apostolate. Franciscanism has always proved itself capable of adapting to "places and times and cold climates". This traditional mark of adaptability, the willingness to incorporate more effective means to cope with modern exigencies, the readiness to experiment in an effort to make the Good News more relevant and influential — such qualities must never be sacrificed in the name of pseudo-zeal for Franciscan living.

It would seem that greater harm to Franciscanism is inflicted under the banner of *doing* rather than that of *living*. The fast pace of modern living, the activist society in which we live, cannot fail to have its influence on religious life. The shying away from the more contemplative aspects of our life in the name of increased activity can dissipate our energy at its very source. The fascination of external works, if not moderated, can exercise a powerful attraction and produce an energetic worker. But how much is the activist really producing for the kingdom of God? The activist draws no

strength from the Franciscan life, for he gradually comes to the point at which he regards the living of the life as a considerable handicap to his activities. The extremist who looks askance at the vestiges of "medieval practices" does not merit refutation. But more refined and better canonized versions of the same viewpoint are sometimes heard. The Heresy of Action has not yet breathed its last.

Living the life cannot fail to be relegated to the familiar back seat in such an evaluation. And once the life goes, the basic reason for the community's existence likewise goes the way of all flesh. Franciscan *living*, animated by the "spirit of holy prayer and devotion", still remains our primary contribution to the Church and the soul of the Franciscan apostolate.*

Divine Vocations

What has all this to do with the Franciscan Brother? In my opinion, a great deal. The brother has been called to the Franciscan life. He professes the same Rule, lives the same common life, enjoys the same spiritual benefits as his brother-priest. The Franciscan Rule and life is the common possession of both friar-priest and

friar-laic. If the living of the life is the fundamental contribution of the Order to the Church, then both priest and brother are equally bound as friars to extend the kingdom of God in this distinctive Franciscan manner.

I believe that a consideration of this kind helps to put the brother's vocation in proper focus, since it points up the fact that our brothers have a definite part to play in announcing the Franciscan message to the world. By living the life our brothers share in this indispensable and principal Franciscan contribution to the Church of God. Only the activist would question just how substantial a contribution this is. St. Francis certainly would not. Let every brother understand and appreciate his role in this primary apostolate of maintaining the fervor and vigor of Franciscan religious life.

While every friar is bound to live the life, the vocational work of priest and brother will certainly differ. The priest's

activities will center around the exercise of the powers of Holy Orders. St. Francis would permit no one to minimize the surpassing excellence of these sacramental works, their efficacy being divinely preserved from the dust and cobwebs

that threaten merely human actions. Moreover, the bearer of these priestly powers, though he be a vessel of clay, would always be a primary object of Franciscan reverence.

The friar-priest's sacramental activities are essentially directed toward others. Hence, his necessary contact with the souls whom he must serve. The vocational work of our brothers does not have this necessary orientation to the active apostolate. Certainly the apostolic responsibilities of Baptism and Confirmation must be shouldered by our brothers. Certainly many opportunities for good are presented to the spiritually alert brother in his contacts with the faithful. Certainly the preaching of a good sermon in the traditional Franciscan way — no words necessary — remains an important outlet for his apostolic awareness. Nevertheless, these contacts will not have the same frequency or apostolic urgency as those of the friar-priest.

Traditionally our brothers have worked at the manifold tasks required for the smooth functioning of everyday life in the friary. Manual labor has formed the major part of the brother's vocational work. While it is true that the Constitutions of the Friars Minor

afford a range of vocational opportunities in which our brothers may engage their talents, most of these occupations continue to center around the maintenance and efficient running of the friary.

You sometimes hear it said that our brothers should be trained to undertake more secular and office work, thus relieving a greater number of friar-priests for more strictly priestly work. This observation has much merit and must be judged, of course, according to the abilities of the individual brother and the actual needs of the Provinces. Needless to say, decisions of this kind must come from provincial superiors.

Likewise the comment is occasionally made that the talents of our brothers should be utilized in lending a more direct hand in the lay apostolate. In an age when repeated exhortations are heard to enlist serious Christians in the ranks of apostles, the brother justifiably asks himself, "Am I somewhat relieved of my apostolic responsibilities by reason of my religious profession?" The brother understands that the basic apostolate of prayer and good example are powerful channels for his apostolic sense. But in view of present emphasis, is there not some-

thing more he might contribute? Again, the extension of this possibility depends on several factors, the ability and willingness of the brother, provincial needs and policies.

Values

But let not such comments regarding "new frontiers" of the brother's work, worthy as they are, be prompted by a spirit of disdain for the manual occupations of the friary. The occupations in which so many brothers have engaged with great supernatural profit in the past are not to be despised. It is through the sanctification of the humble details of ordinary work that many brothers of the Order have won their place in the sun.

Is it not a flicker of worldliness that prompts one at times to underestimate the value of the simpler occupations of life? A life that ordinarily attracts little attention, a life without splash or much public acclaim, seldom to make the headlines — no thinking person would say that such a life cannot be pleasing to God and productive of holiness. On the surface there was nothing very extraordinary about a humble Jewish Maiden, a group of shepherds, a carpenter's shop, fishermen, bread and

wine. The traditional pattern of a brother's work puts him in excellent company. A humble, simple life of dedicated labor, hidden with Christ in God, is certainly a life worth living.

Perhaps one superficial reason why this life is not attracting the number of candidates it deserves is that element of splash and glamour, which is an accidental note in other forms of the religious life, is at a minimum in the brother's life. People in the world see more purpose in the life of a priest or teaching brother or sister. But to devote one's life to what seems to be a series of hidden and lowly tasks — this is where they draw the line. Such thinking, of course, is not overly penetrated by faith and is reminiscent of another short-sighted individual, who once complained about the apparent waste of some precious ointment. A life given to God in the religious state is never wasted; nor are there any trifles in God's service. St. Teresa would say, "God walks among the pots and pans".

The writings of St. Francis abound with exhortations to humility and subjection. This was a dominant theme in the formation which the first friars received from St. Francis himself. Brothers, by reason of

their life and work, have a better opportunity to foster and preserve this traditional mark than do their brother-priests. This point is beautifully made in the liturgy of the brother Saints of the Order. Unless the eye of faith is keen, the value of a hidden life of humble labor will never be seen in its proper light, nor will its powerful contributions to the Church be properly appreciated. It is only when faith grows thin that dissatisfaction and unrest creep into a brother's thinking on this score.

Priest and Brother

In religious institutes composed of both priests and brothers a certain amount of comparison is reasonable and inevitable, I suppose. Comparisons are good when they promote mutual understanding. As the thinking brother considers his brother-priest of the Order he must have some appreciation of the burdens, tensions and pressures of priestly responsibility. The fulfillment of a priest's vocational duties is certainly more taxing and demanding than the brother's. People in the world sometimes have little understanding of the daily commitments of the average priest. But such misinformation should not be

found in the cloister. The plea is not for sympathy, just fraternal understanding.

Fraternal understanding, however, is a two-way street. The thoughtful friar-priest holds in high esteem the vocation and work of his brothers. He looks upon the brother as a collaborator in the apostolate, backing up his priestly activities and helping to make them fruitful by his prayers and supernaturalized labor. Many a priest has drawn inspiration and renewed enthusiasm for the interior life from the piety and dedication of holy brothers of the Order.

The friar-priest is grateful, too, for the many burdens which the brother assumes in order that the priest might devote his efforts to more specifically priestly work. The details which keep the average priest at his desk when he could be out visiting the sick or taking the census is becoming increasingly numerous and burdensome. I suppose we will come to the point at which we will utilize the talents of our brothers in this area more in the years ahead.

This point, however, of relieving the priest for more directly priestly work can be overemphasized. This is not the main reason why a man comes to the Franciscan Brother-

hood. A man comes not to relieve a priest, not to be a carpenter, a tailor, a general maintenance man, nor any other brand of worker — that's all secondary. A brother comes to give his life to the service of God in the wonderful Franciscan manner. The particular way in which he employs his talents is a secondary consideration. The brother is first the Franciscan religious whose primary work is *living the life*. It is the duty of every superior to make sure that the brothers of his community have the opportunity to live the life as outlined in the Rule and Constitutions. A well-regulated and full community life is the mainstay of the brother, for unlike the friar-priest, he does not draw from sacramental ministrations the motivation and support so beneficial to growth in the religious spirit.

Correspondingly, it behooves the brother to show by his dedication to the life and his spirit of Franciscan service that the confidence and respect of his superiors is not misplaced. By bearing witness to the finest of Franciscan living, every brother can foster respect for his vocation and do much to offset any misinformation or utilitarian thinking regarding his life and work. The humble, hard-working

brother, in whom the "spirit of holy prayer and devotion" sparkles, is one of the glories of the Franciscan Order. Who can measure the spiritual contribution which holy brothers have made to the Church and Order by living the life and

* Acknowledgement is made to the excellent work of Fr. Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., *The Order of St. Francis*, trans. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969). A note of thanks is certainly due to Fr. Ignatius Brady for his continued work in making the writings of Fr. Cajetan available in English.

Schools of Spirituality

Fr. Daniel Higgins, I.O.R.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your souls" (Mt. 11:29). In the words "learn from me" our Divine Lord clearly invites us to a certain understanding of Himself. We are to acquaint ourselves with the Son of God through personal investigation; we are to go directly to Jesus, examine His life, His manner of acting, and especially His way of thinking. He said,

Knowledge of Jesus

In this endeavor we are helped to a certain degree by others, but the main burdens rest upon ourselves. Moved first by the grace of God, using the talents He has given to us, and employing the Christian instruction we may already possess, we should familiarize ourselves with the Holy

In this article Fr. Daniel discusses the reasons behind the existence of schools of spirituality, and outlines some of their tendencies. The author is stationed at Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Scriptures, particularly the New Testament. The writings of the Apostles and Evangelists comprise our main textbook in the course of learning about our Redeemer. This is no easy task, but it is well worth the effort; "... you will find rest for your souls."

We should constantly keep in mind that a theoretical knowledge of Christ and His teaching must fructify into a practical realization of Christian principles, in order to be really beneficial. A law school presupposes the practice of law. A sincere consideration of Christ should lead to a theocentric life, one centered in God. The great difference between the school of Christian spirituality and other types of school is that it requires a lifetime matriculation. Like any good teacher, Jesus avoids leaving us with generalities. He says "learn of me", and later on tells us very definitely, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Mt. 16:24). The general knowledge we acquire from Scripture and Tradition, from the theologians and saints, together with whatever personal spiritual direction we receive — all this erudition remains sterile and dry unless we put

it into practice. Christ gives us the opportunity and the choice. He knows that many will know of Him or about Him, but will never come to Him because they neither take up the cross nor love it.

We are children of our times; knowingly on occasion, in many instances unconsciously, we behave in accordance with our environment. Even in our relationships with God and the things of God, we show certain characteristics which are accentuated by our everyday living in a materialistic atmosphere. Yet it was in a very real and actual world that Christ was born, lived, and died. It is precisely here on this earth that we are placed to work out our salvation. However, a point worth consideration in this context is the effort required in order to avoid the infectious attitude of systematization developed in us because of the extreme orderness of modern living. From electric computers to push-button coffee machines, we are given quick answers and neat service with the least bit of work or waiting. Would it be a surprise someday to find a nice shiny push-button machine conveniently placed in the chapel or church, which would readily cough up an ef-

fective meditation, with or without second point? Needless to say, we know that prayer, and more especially Christian

spirituality in general, comes with effort and struggle. There are schools, there are systems, but it would be gross oversimplification to even think of an easy, clear-cut, and automatic way to union with Christ.

There is nothing automatic about thirty-three years spent in expectation of a cruel agony and ignoble death. Yet the joy and peace of a heart united to God make all things bearable, and even ease the rugged way leading to the summit of Christian perfection. As someone has poignantly observed, "The Christian is not asked to swoon in the shadow, but to climb in the light of the cross."

Aspects of Christianity

Spirituality is a science. A science may be defined as any department of systematized knowledge; or again, it may be said to be a certain art or skill. Christian spirituality, which deals with the things of the spirit, may be defined as the science of the saints. A specific type of spirituality is "an organized system of principles and convictions, as well as certain pious practices which convert these convictions into

action, and into habits promoting the dutiful service of God".¹

The spirituality of all Christians must be essentially and basically the same. However, the Church, acting in the name of God, allows for differences in regard to the way in which people may serve God and do His work. "God is always the same, but His light is very differently reflected in the various individual temperaments and the schools of thought that have emerged throughout the ages, forming, as it were, a rainbow of many colours."² God distributes His graces and talents according to His divine plan. The light of divine grace shining through the prism of human activity is refracted into diverse rays. After the refraction the same light exists, but it is broken into various shades and colors, and thereby disperses the darkness.

Different schools of spirituality have arisen down through the centuries because one or the other aspect of the life of Christ or His message was emphasized. All the essential elements of Christ's gospel must be found in any Christian school, because they are contained in the source itself — the revealed word of God. "The differences of these vari-

ous systems stem mostly from the doctrinal, theological and especially the philosophical system of the respective spiritual families, their conceptions of God and of Christ, of grace, nature and sin."³ The acceptance of the entire life of Christ and His complete doctrine has to be present in the life of every true Christian. But since Jesus is perfect and man is imperfect, the latter has the capacity to imitate the former only to a certain degree. It is precisely the imitation of one or more particular aspects of the life of Christ that inclines His followers to select a specific type or school of asceticism. We may conclude, therefore, that different spiritual systems give prominence to various truths of the Christian faith.

Diverse Views

There are a variety of vocations in the Church, as well as a variety of ways by which God leads individual souls. The aim of all Christian schools and systems is union with God, but the way this is brought about will vary with each school.

Evangelical life has passed in the course of history through a variety of external forms. All of them, in so far as the

Church approved them, have been practical applications adapted to successive and varying epochs, of Jesus' way of life which the Church, "always true to herself" faithfully preserves and perfects.⁴

Christ's "good tidings" were spread by both St. John and St. Paul. John was particularly intimate with Jesus, as title "the beloved disciple" and his place at the Last Supper clearly indicate. In his writings he contemplated the Logos and envisioned the apocalyptic wrath of the Lamb. He reached such spiritual heights in his Gospel that tradition has assigned to him the symbol of the eagle. Paul, the townsman, was a fiery missionary whose words are like peals of thunder. He had an untiring interest in the Christian communities of his time, which not only prompted much travel but surely was part of the reason for his delving into the mystery of the identity of Christ with His Church. Still, Paul's many activities were the result of his sublime realization that "Christ lived in him". Thus we see already present in the infant Christian family a diversity of minds and temperaments, together with the preservation of a strict adherence to the teachings of Jesus.

During the early ages of Christianity, the beginnings of a theory of the spiritual life came into existence with the writings of the Fathers. In the West, Cassian (†435) sums up in his *Conferences* the important spiritual teachings of the first four centuries. His writings about monastic life during those times became a source of material for subsequent writers on the spiritual life. St. Augustine (†430), although never drawing up a detailed rule for the monastic life, did leave in his writings a store of general ascetical principles which were later to influence Benedictine spirituality. In the East, St. John Climacus (†649) in his *Ladder to Paradise* (in Greek, *Klimax*, whence his surname) set down a summary of ascetical and mystical theology. Dionysian spirituality, which takes its name from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. 500), was based on a rigid and virile asceticism. Contemporaneous with the Fathers were the hermits, the precursors of monasticism. They considered the solitary life as part of the normal life of the Church, and left the world, so to speak, in order to find God.

After the early Christian

martyrs, who stand as witnesses for all ages to the truth of Christianity, comes another class of spiritual heroes, those who bound themselves for the love of Christ to perpetual continence — the celibates and the virgins. The early writers praise this ascetical practice above all others. These virgins became the Church's first social workers; they had charge of widows and orphans, took care of the infirm, relieved the poor and distressed.

Christian monasticism comes clearly to the fore with the tendency to control and regulate the daily life of the celibates. Those who preferred to live alone became the first anchorites or hermits, among whom the most famous are St. Paul of Thebes (†341) and his disciple, St. Anthony (†365). St. Basil (†379) considered community life to be a higher form than that lived by the hermits, and from his time the latter declined in importance.

However, the life of the virgins and the celibates in primitive times, and that of the monks later on, was the privilege of the few. This minority was greatly outnumbered by the thousands of believers whom necessity or choice bound to life in the

world. These made up the Church at large, and

In them, too, ran the same supernatural life, fed from the same sources which nourished those especially consecrated, and producing in the activities of ordinary human life the same superhuman fruits. For these Christians, too, the gospel — an institution and a belief — was also a way of living, a code of conduct based on a teaching, and nourished through a cult.⁵

Later Developments

During the Middle Ages the principal schools of spirituality were the Benedictine, the Dominican, and the Franciscan. The Benedictine school stressed affective and liturgical piety. The rule of St. Benedict had been one of the most important civilizing influences in the Western world. The Dominican school, which united contemplation and liturgical prayer with the sacred ministry, and the Franciscan school, which is noted for its evangelical simplicity, also left their profound mark on the Church, and on society at large. All three of these schools continue to develop in modern times.⁶

Between 1300 and 1380, the German school of mystics brought forth much specula-

tion on Christian mysticism. John Eckhart, O. P. (†1327) is considered the founder of this school. The Flemish school (Gerard Groot, Thomas à Kempis, and the Brethren of the Common Life), closely associated with the German, concentrated on practical mysticism. Shortly afterward, the Carthusian school produced various teachings on the ascetical and mystical life.

During the Middle Ages as always, there were individuals who were not connected with any particular school of spirituality. For example, St. Lawrence Justinian (†1456), the first Patriarch of Venice, was outstanding as an untiring reformer of religious orders and for his practical piety.

In the sixteenth century, with St. Ignatius Loyola (†1556), we have the beginnings of a new era and what we might call new schools of spirituality. The Ignatian school, following in the footsteps of its originator, gives emphasis to an active, energetic spiritual life aimed at personal sanctification and apostolic work. One can readily observe the influence of this school of thought on later institutes and societies which were fired with the same enthusiasm and fervor as were the followers of Saint Ignatius.

Numbered among the so-called new schools are the following: the Carmelite school, following along the spiritual paths of its predecessors, teaches the supremacy of God and the nothingness of man, while emphasizing the apostolate of prayer and sacrifice; the school of St. Francis de Sales, which emphasizes the extension of devotion and sanctity to every state of life; the French school of the seventeenth century, which stresses a personal assimilation into the mysteries of Jesus. Included in this last group are the Fathers of the Oratory, St. Vincent de Paul, and the Sulpicians. Many of the founders of these more recent schools, like St. Francis de Sales and St. Vincent de Paul, are known for their mildness; yet they were no less virile than the early ascetics, and never took the spirit of sacrifice out of piety. One of their great contributions to the Church was their success in bringing the spiritual life out of the cloister and back into the world.

The Situation Today

Opening the present-day Code of Canon Law, we see laws and regulations laid down for the various types of life found in the Church. Included in the wide selection of vo-

cations are clerics, religious societies of common life, secular institutes, and the laity. Also treated are groups known as associations of the faithful in general, and those of the faithful in particular. Two examples of the general type of associations are the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and the Sodality of Our Lady. Included in the associations of the faithful in particular are the Third Orders Secular and various pious unions organized for some work of religion or charity. The life pursued and the works performed by these myriad groups are all infused with a definite spirit, and all are motivated by the desire to give honor to God and to save souls. Followers of Christ must realize that Christian perfection is possible and necessary for all of them. Did not Christ tell us, "Be ye perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48)? And Saint John admonishes, "He who is just, let him be just still; and he who is holy, let him be hallowed still" (Apoc. 22:11).

Providential circumstances, differences in outlook, or a great leader have grouped souls under one banner or another. Yet,

We must never forget that the end, the way, and the

means show much less divergence. All men must unite themselves more closely to God by following the way of His Son, namely the denial of self, by prayer and the sacraments, by avoiding evil and practicing virtue. Thus coming back to identical practices, the various schools avoid being blocked off from one another by serious barriers.'

The teaching of the following two articles, found in the Rule of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis of Penance, is essentially contained in all systems of spirituality:

The great sign and aid to the love of Christ is the frequent and indeed the daily reception of the Most Holy Eucharist, which is at the same time a sacred banquet and a memorial of His Passion. Let it therefore be the care of religious souls to visit devoutly the Lord Jesus remaining with us under this wonderful mystery; for this is the inexhaustible Fount of all good (Chap. III, art. 7).

The proof, however, of the love of God is the exercise of charity towards our neighbor; hence, in the true disciple of Christ charity towards his

neighbor must shine forth; every word should be useful and honest. In order that charity may abound in deeds, it must first abound in the heart (Chap. III, art. 8).

The practice of these counsels should not only be found in the lives of Third Order Regular Franciscans, but should be carried out by sincere Christians the world over. This has to be, for they only rephrase the teachings of Christ and His Church.

A wholesome attitude toward the diversity among the schools will show us that they do not oppose each other, and that all schools are capable of producing sanctity. Of course, accidental elements of one school should not be transferred arbitrarily to another. Trappist silence should not and could not be practiced by one who is an active missionary, the daily plan of a professional social worker is much different from that of a person in the teaching profession. Still, the gospel can and must be applied in each of these circumstances by sincere Christians; all will have the opportunity of practicing Christianity, but each must do so in the surroundings in which he finds himself. It is worthy of mention here

that the effects of the many schools and systems of spirituality are seen very clearly today among the laity. No longer are the sanctuary and the cloister considered the only places for prayer and dedication to God; the market place is throbbing once again with a similar spirit, as it did when the Savior of mankind preached to the milling throngs.

Christ came into the world, and to the world He gave salvation. In every land, among all peoples, His gospel is capa-

ble of being lived. Men of quite dissimilar personalities and psychological make-up have the opportunity of putting into effect the doctrines of Jesus, each according to the individual gifts of grace and nature given to him by his Creator. We do not become holy by destroying our personalities, but by using them in our quest for the possession of God. An ever-provident God designed it this way. An ever-grateful people will respond until the end of time to this plan of salvation.

1. Valentine Breton, O.F.M., *Franciscan Spirituality* (Chicago, Franciscan Herald Press, 1957), p. 7.
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4. René Carpenter, S. J., *Life in the City of God* (Trans. John Joyce, S. J.; N. Y., Benziger, 1959), p. 77.
5. Philip Hughes, *A History of the Church* (N. Y., Sheed and Ward, 1949), vol. 1, p. 145.
6. Adolphe Tanquerey, S. S., *The Spiritual Life* (Tournai, Desclée, 1930), pp. xvii ff.

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