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Order from

THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE

Saint Bonaventure University

Saint Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778

the CORD

Nov. - Dec., 1964
Vol. XIV Nos. 11-12

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

Editor —

Fr. Augustine McDevitt, O.F.M.

Assistant Editor —

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

Managing Editor —

Fr. Ermin Klaus, O.F.M.

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Editorial and Business Offices

THE CORD

Saint Bonaventure, N. Y. 14778

THE CORD is published monthly by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. This issue is mailed as third class matter from the Post Office at Brooklyn, N. Y. 11221.

Cum Permissu Superiorum

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

Editorial

May the Lord Give You Peace!

An editor's column is for talking with his magazine's readers, as one of our faithful subscribers remarked the other day. But when one party talks all the time, a potentially fruitful dialogue turns into a most boring monologue. Most of us could easily listen to Hamlet or Othello soliloquize "for endless ages," but your editor unfortunately lacks whatever it is that Shakespeare gave those two. He wants you to talk back once in a while.

No question, of course, of starting a personal correspondence with each of our 2700 subscribers, pleasant and stimulating as that would be. But your letters would make an intelligent conversation possible on this page, instead of the nice but useless summary of the issue's contents.

Specifically, how about telling us, once in a while, which features you liked, and which you didn't? We aren't about to go out on a limb and promise to get exactly what you ask for; but there are numerous occasions when a choice does present itself. If we knew just what most of our readers preferred, we could easily make a more enlightened choice in such cases. Believe it or not, it is important for an editor to know even such things as whether you prefer columns or solid pages of print such as the one you are reading now. Granted that conflicting requests cannot both be satisfied, unanimous and majority ones certainly can. And will.

This is, after all, your magazine; it does not, thanks be to God, exist as a profit-making venture, but simply to serve the religious needs of its readers. It can fulfill this, its sole purpose, well only if its editors know those needs.

God bless you.

Re-evaluating Franciscan Religious Life in a Changing World

Sister Lenora, O.S.F.

In the summer of 1964 I was asked to give two 50-minute talks at a Thomas E. Murray Course at Lemont, Illinois. These courses constitute a part of the work done by the Thomas E. Murray Training Center, an organization established to re-vitalize the work of the Franciscan Third Order. My first talk was to attempt "A Re-evaluation of Franciscan Religious Life in a Changing Church and World," a rather formidable task owing to the scope of the topic.

The week was attended by a variety of Third Order Regular Sisters and Brothers with great diversity in background. Beginning my talk, I felt as Karl Rahner did in his opening of *The Christian Commitment*. He says, "I think that what I am going to say is, in itself, more or less right. But for this opinion I would not be saying it. But this does not necessarily carry with it the conviction that this right thing that I want to say is the thing which here and now needs saying." I had no way of knowing what progress had been made in individual communities; I felt there probably were great differences, and at the present publication of this paper one year later, perhaps some of the things I have to say are passé. Yet, I doubt that the new millennium has arrived in most communities. The Status Quo, rooted in the fear that we might be off in the wrong direction and therefore displeasing to the Almighty, is quite strong. It will take years of constant vigilance to re-adjust or to root undesirable elements out of our concept of religious life. Perhaps some communities have passed way beyond the bounds of the comments given here. May the Holy Spirit increase their power and vision. To those who have not begun, or to those who are limping far behind: may they have the courage to begin or to accelerate the pace.

Change marks our condition as mortal, belonging to time and matter. Awareness of it fills us simultaneously with poignant grief and buoyant hope. Poets have patterned human responses toward it as meaningful human experience. "Margaret, are you grieving/ Over golden-grove unleaving," Hopkins says. Philosophers have pondered its existence and significance. "No man steps twice into the same river," states Heraclitus, the early Greek philosopher of change. Shakespeare's tragic protagonists point to its inevitability and propound for the most significant moment of change, death, the position "the readiness is all."

Change in the physical universe has become almost too routine to note, but the changes wrought by the impact of man's growth in knowledge, by his creative or destructive response toward the universe in which he lives, touch his life too closely for him to ignore. For the Christian, however, such change undulates like the restless sea against the permanent backdrop of eternity where Life is Being fixed and immutable. It is for him to embrace the world of time and unceasing change, interpreting it in the light of the unchangeable, the immutable in the Church — not, however, confusing

SISTER LENORA, of the Mount St. Francis Province of the School Sisters of Saint Francis, holds a Master's Degree in English from Loyola University. She has been working for eight years with the Young Christian Students. Besides serving on the National Advisory Board for that movement, Sister is presently chairman of the English Department and moderator of the school paper at Madonna High School, Aurora, Illinois.

time and the timeless in the Church.

Because the man of today stands at the cumulative point of time in which all the evolutions of centuries merge, he faces changes that no other man in society has ever had to face nor at the rate at which he must face them. Because of the forces merging humanity in the world, the changes "way out there" still become his to confront.

Changes occur which are in the secular life — therefore, the world. Yet since these changes affect man, they affect the Church since they create social implications for her care and concern. Besides this, changes have occurred in her own temporal life largely set in motion by the changes in the world in which she exists. To enumerate and analyze such changes in the world and the Church would be to attempt the foolhardy. Yet some enumeration of them becomes necessary to set up the context of our examination. Many of these root themselves in the intellectual ferment, the advance of education in our times cutting across the political, social, economic, religious, and cultural aspects of man's life.

Nations formerly dominated by colonialism are forcefully shaking off the domination of imperialistic mother countries. Technological progress links together the nations of the world through closer contact via means of communication. At the same time, mankind huddles together in fear in the face of the possibilities man has creatively unleashed, again through technological progress. His move to outer space and his unleashing of destructive forces that have grave implications for all humanity, lead

him toward the evolving of new political structures that will absorb the dangerous elements of his own creativity while directing the positive elements for the good of humanity.

Technological and scientific advances have also evolved changes in man's material living which he is incapable of assimilating as rapidly on the psychological level, such as the problems of leisure or the aged. This same material progress effects changes in the societal structures of his life — the problems of the Organization Man, the problems of shifting population, and the rise of suburbs. Democratic forces have encouraged underprivileged races and classes to assert themselves, producing acute tension in the areas of race, labor, or even in the continued emergence of women.

In this ferment the Church exists not as a favored class as was her status in a feudal society, but rather in a diaspora situation; that is, as a minority group in a highly complex and diversified society. In it she has had to re-evaluate time-worn traditions and to adjust herself, making herself relevant to the times.

Within the ranks of the Church has emerged an educated and increasingly outspoken, critical body of Catholics who no longer want to accept mediocre Catholic life, who are no longer content with Catholic separatism and ineffectiveness, who are no longer content with authoritarianism, clericalism, formalism, moralism, defensiveness.

At the same time there have been new currents of theological thought — Biblical, liturgical, ecumenical. These have taken into account elements of thought not

emphasized in previous theology— social thought, human freedom, existentialism and personalism. These currents of theological thought have included strong non-Catholic intellectual currents, now accepted.

The Church's response to this has been an officially sanctioned movement spirit-inspired, humanly projected in the person of Pope John, inviting critical, fearless evaluation and adaptation in the light of such evaluation. Franciscans as part of the temporal structure of the Church also very wisely undertake such self-criticism in the ecumenical spirit. It is in this spirit that this present "Re-evaluation of Franciscan Religious Life in a Changing Church and World," was begun.

This re-evaluation it seems would have two aspects; first, a re-evaluation of the basic structure of Franciscan religious life and second, an evaluation of some pertinent aspects of our life in the light of the conclusions we arrive at in the first step.

The task to re-evaluate Franciscan religious life poses problems not readily discernible on the surface for much goes under the label **Franciscan** that could just as well bear another name. Is to analyze the First Order, the same as analyzing the Third Order Regular? Are we evaluating **Franciscan** religious life or something that has posed for it? The present analysis views the problem primarily from the standpoint of Third Order Regular. A basic question here is How Franciscan are the Franciscan Congregations?

This question does not admit of any easy answer, but, if we are to take the long historical view

that the Council has encouraged, we note that the line of descent of the Third Order Regular from St. Francis is indirect, through the Third Order Secular, and that, in comparison to the Orders founded by Francis himself, the life-span of the American Congregations has been very short.

Almost all of the American Franciscan Sisterhoods were founded from Europe during the latter part of the nineteenth century. Their histories are very similar: a small band of good women, either expelled from convents in persecution-ridden countries or simply pious lay women called to do mission work in a new land, came to America on the immigrant wave. Pastors of closely knit national groups, whether they stayed in the urban centers of the East or pushed on into rural areas of the Mid-West, had need of these women to staff charitable institutions for their immigrant flocks and, even more, to establish schools for their children. Sometimes these young Congregations of religious women had Franciscan directors, but just as often a parish priest directed their initial efforts and set the pattern of their religious life. The Franciscan rule was chosen perhaps because of its simplicity, flexibility, and brevity; perhaps of the strong European tradition of Tertiary work with the sick, the poor, and the young. For many years these Congregations served a particular language group, often German or Polish, and shared the separatist mentality that fostered the parochial or ghetto spirit that characterized American Catholicism during those years. Most Congregations today, in varying degrees, have recognized that what

was a strength in the early preservation of the immigrant Church, became a weakness for second and third generation Americans. What was a weakness for the laity was seen to be a weakness also for the Sisterhoods; the gradual shedding of European customs, devotions, and pious paraphernalia (often of 19th Century origin) left congregations more or less thoroughly Americanized but stripped bare of tradition.

It is here that the congregations have made a return to tradition, not the traditions of their 19th Century European forbears, but of their Franciscan roots.

It is here, however, that a certain tension sets in. Close contact with the Franciscan Fathers reveals that Franciscan theology and Franciscan Spirituality are just terms to most Franciscan Sisters. The Sisters' theology has been pre-eminently Thomistic (with a mention of Bonaventure and Scotus as interesting dissenters on certain points), and their spirituality has been a heterogenous sampling from a variety of sources. Many a modern Franciscan Sister would have to admit that her spirituality was formed by the secular Spiritual Director of her Motherhouse, the Jesuit teachers she had in her advanced schooling, the Dominican, Cistercian, and heavily Jesuit spiritual authors she has read, and the assortment of priests with whom she has worked in her hospital, school, CFM, YCS, or other specialized apostolates. Nor is she likely to be particularly attracted to a scholarly treatise on St. Bonaventure's eighteen degrees of humility, or a book on the Franciscan virtues in which the reader is advised to safeguard his (ad-

just sexes) chastity by never looking a woman directly in the face. She is likely to be incensed by a Retreat Master (a Franciscan) who expounds for the whole period of a six-day retreat such negative concepts as if they were the crux of deep religious living. She is more likely to be seen reading the Jesuit *Review for Religious* than the Franciscan *Cord*. In fact, and this comes as a severe blow to some, when she goes back to the life of St. Francis, she is tempted to see the living linaments of her Seraphic Father more in the face of Charles de Foucauld (read the *Spiritual Testament of the Foundress of the Little Sisters of Pere de Foucauld*) with his ideal of the evangelical groups of Little Brothers, or in the countenance of Teilhard de Chardin, with his Incarnational love of the real world. In other words, Franciscan sisters are tending to forge their own concept of Franciscanism, from many sources, but outside the tradition of Franciscan formation the Fathers have had.

Active Franciscan congregations as well as other such congregations of religious women in the Church are in for a period of severe scrutiny by others, including the laity, and by themselves. The Council has brought into open debate a number of issues that were long thought settled or dead. One of these is that of the role of various groups within the Church: the role of Bishops in a given area; the role of the Curia; the role of the Parish; the role of the Laity. What is to be the role of the religious and for us the Franciscan religious?

Right now, the Rule imposes upon the subject a basically monastic

life characterized by the common life: some form of the office in common, a degree of enclosure, emphasis on silence, obedience, retirement, uniformity in externals, monastic garb, and a certain indifference to the kind of work she is doing as long as the intention is pure. At the same time, the Rule also states that the secondary aim of the Congregation is some active, charitable work to be done that was the primary reason for founding the Institute, although it is stated as secondary in the Rule and Constitutions.

While straddling these two ways of life, and finding it increasingly difficult to do so effectively, the thinking, alert Sister finds that contemporary theologians are developing a "theology of the laity" that calls into question her accepted role. The layman, she hears, has the duty, resulting from his status as a baptized Christian, to continue the work of the Incarnation and Redemption in the world by bearing witness to Christ, by rendering Him present, in human institutions. The role of the religious, on the other hand, it is intimated is an eschatological one; he bears witness to the withdrawal from the world and making ready for the Parousia, a witness to the passing away of this world.

If this is the way the two modes of life are to shape up, the Sister will find her work increasingly identified with the work of the laity — one who works for the transformation of human society by acting in that society under a basically baptismal mandate. Her (admittedly short) tradition has been to do this in education and social work. Will this continue to be her apostolic means when the

Catholic school system, if it is to survive at all, seems to be moving in the direction of lay control? Will this continue to be her apostolic means, in Catholic hospitals, Catholic orphanages, Catholic organizations, when the current thinking seems to call into question the whole idea of parallel Catholic institutions of this type? Should the Sisters leave "works in the world" to the maturing layman and withdraw into a more monastic way of life, or should she move into new areas of witness in the world, departing even more drastically from the traditional monastic spirituality upon which her Franciscan rule is grounded? Where is her position? The issue is a crucial one.

If being in possession of one's own identity decides the potential effectiveness of a person's human activity (his ability to love wholly, etc.), it would seem reasonable to suppose that if religious communities discovered their identity within the Church, and the individual sister also discovered hers in that framework, the result would be greater effectiveness of their work individually and collectively in the Church and the world. Continuing the position of straddling will only leave the individual and community fatigued and broken and the total effect scattered and ineffectual. A decision is imperative.

To make such a decision will entail a considerable amount of vision and above all, honesty in cutting much historical, theological and psychological fog in arriving at a conclusion, and considerable **Christian fortitude** in carrying it out. A principle which we teach the youngsters in di-

recting them toward maturity is "accept yourself, be yourself." This might have something to do with a mature spiritual outlook in this matter also.

The exalted nature of the contemplative life where man, as it were, almost looks directly into the face of God has been set up in tradition as the most perfect life; somehow the fact that the active life entangles us in the dirty business of this world leaves it in some level of our conscious or subconscious mind somewhat tainted. The contemplative life in its strict form certainly is an exalted state, but as anyone knows who has looked into the life at all, the quotation, "Let those who can take it, take it," is very applicable here. One definitely must have healthy psychic equipment to be able to follow this call, and it would certainly not be everyone who is in a convent today.

The active life which, while being rooted in the development and maintenance of a deeply spiritual life, essentially orientates to God through the fulfilling of the needs of Christ in the Church will be the type of life attainable for most people who enter religious life. The crucial point of decision, it seems, lies in determining the nature of our life as monastic or active and therefore fundamentally lay. If we are to accept the latter, active communities will have to follow through the implications as they reveal themselves through thoughtful evaluation, reach conclusions, and sustain them in their practice of training members for the apostolate.

This problem completely transcends the snobbery of "thought camps" and childish competition

of whose ideas are better. Teilhard de Chardin points to the sincerity present at the root of the dilemma involved here, and of the deep need to come to the proper answer. He writes, "But there is a category of mind (known to every spiritual director) for whom the difficulty takes the form and importance of a constant and paralyzing perplexity. Such minds set upon interior unity, become the victims of a veritable spiritual dualism. On the one hand a very sure instinct, mingled with the love of being and their taste for life, draws them toward the joy of creation and knowledge. On the other hand a higher will to love God above all else makes them afraid of the least division or deflection in their allegiances. In the most spiritual layers of their being they experience a tension between the opposing ebb and flow caused by the attraction of the two rival stars we spoke of at the beginning: God and the World."²

Chardin also suggests the usual answers to the problem. Some choose the totally religious response; some, the totally human, and still others attempt the process of straddling. Chardin sees all these solutions as dangerous, their end products all equally bad—distortion, disgust, and division respectively. It is the latter that individuals who have assumed the direction of community ascetics often inflict on members.

In order to continue the present analysis it becomes necessary to take a stand. If the decision can be accepted, what follows can likewise be accepted. The result will be dialogue. If the decision cannot be accepted, the reader's position will be dialectic. Either posi-

The Son of God assumed a human nature to himself. In it, he overcame death through his own death and resurrection; in it, too, he redeemed man and remolded him into a new creation. By communicating his Spirit to his brothers, Christ called them together from all nations and made them mystical components of his own Body.

Vatican Council II,
CONST. ON THE CHURCH,
n. 7.

tion should make for valuable thinking.

While realizing the complexity of the problem and recognizing the leaning toward falsehood inherent in oversimplification, we take the position (with some reservation) probably most ably, or at least most militantly held by Cardinal Suenens, who has certainly become the spokesman for what many religious in the past had agonized in all sincerity into a silent philosophy generally at odds with the authority of their religious communities.

As we have seen, the re-evaluation of "Franciscan" religious life in a changing world and Church calls into question the whole basic conception and orientation of that life. The method will now be to develop some basic concepts which would seem to make the religious most effectively what he or she is supposed to be. This will necessarily call into question approaches which have been used in the past under the name of Franciscan but are too often Franciscan only in the sense that Franciscans have used them.

To make that life most effectively what it ought to be, we need to root it in a healthy doctrinal approach which becomes meaningful in the context of such a religious life properly orientated. Isolated teaching of a dogmatic system, albeit neatly arranged in a proper outline, can be utterly atrophying. What follows only suggests my meaning; it does not pretend to be exhaustive.

In effectively orientating the young apostle (religious) toward her mission in the Church it would seem that the ascetic pendulum would have to swing from "hate the world" to "love the world." If in our mission to redeem men, we come to them with the supercilious position that sees them as rooted in the "much of this world," second-class citizens who just have not been called the way we, who already breathe the ethereal air of heaven, are, and who are nobly overcoming ourselves in reaching out a hand to the poor wretches of the worldly kingdom — what hope have we to show them the face of Christ, to be His Witness and effectively draw them to the vision of God. Their answer might well be in their terminology, "Nuts, my bread or beer is much more real and inviting." An immediate, impenetrable, psychological barrier has been set up. How silly to be spending valuable time knocking it down (if possible) when it need not have existed at all!

Most of us will probably have to admit that this type of literature was propounded for our private reading so that it was miraculous if one could resist having some reflexes as a result of it. Can anyone forget the endless cycles of reading *The Imitation of Christ*?

While the intent here is not to minimize any positive insights that may exist in the book, it can be categorized as one of the negative elements making up our so-called Franciscan way of life, but which is more Jansenistic than Christian, placing more emphasis on avoiding sin than living the exciting reality of Christianity. The intent here is not to call into question the sincerity of the author of the *Imitation* or of those who directed the religious training of the past. There is a strong historical element present here.

In holding up as desirable the incarnational approach, Christ's paradox, "love the world and hate the world" is not to be denied. However in resolving the paradox, we must develop the kind of mind that interprets the challenging paradoxes of the Christian life in the interests of the Church, not in terms of our own safety. In our concept of spiritual life let us accentuate the positive (even if we do not entirely eliminate the negative). Too often we have had recourse to the negative position as the safer position, but as Walter Ong, S. J. points out, the safer position is not always the truer position.³ Working out the more daring position in balancing out the tensions of the paradox with the weight of responsibility inherent in the use of human freedom, the individual is truly embracing the Cross in his life. (What an implicit document in courage the *Spiritual Testimony of the Foundress of the Little Sisters of Pere de Foucauld* becomes in this light).

To love the world rightly, one must have at the core of one's attitude toward it, the perpetual

cognizance of the awesome truth that "the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us." By this love-act Christ forever took the world unto Himself and made it holy, and every Christian who wishes to be Christ incarnate (and does this not have a Franciscan sound) must do the same. Christ became enfleshed, subject to the exigencies of time and place. To achieve this taking the world unto oneself and being responsible for its redemption (it means taking unto oneself the weight of the agony in the garden as well as the beauties of the world) as Christ was, posits anything but the easy way. As Father Geaney so aptly says speak of the Incarnation and its relation to the Christian Apostle: "Christ's first approach to the world, therefore, was to identify Himself with it. This is the first missionary principle. Whoever is to carry the message of Christ to man must gladly bear the stamp of his times. He must identify himself with its culture, wear its garb, make the aspirations of its people his own. He must will their salvation, but never in a vacuum, apart from the real lives of the people. Prayer must precede, accompany and support his work, but never can it be used as an escape or refuge from the cares of his times. He must embrace these cares with the words of Our Lord, 'For this was I born, for this I came into the world.'"⁴ The sad fact is that Francis' love of the world has been too often sentimentalized and his form in sacred art reduced to a bird perch.

The truth of the Incarnational and therefore redemptive aspect of the world lends direction to one's whole life. For those who

have not read what Teilhard de Chardin has to say about it, the reading of *The Divine Milieu* is recommended.

Flowing from the truth of the Incarnation, the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ follows beautifully. Christ extended Himself in space and time through those who share His life. He redeemed (the Redemption has taken place once and for all) yet it takes place perpetually in the Christian's completion of the redemption. Christ's life flows through all (the doctrine of Grace); any sin (mortal or venial) on the part of the member hampers the free flow of healthy life in the Body. How much more meaningful spiritual doctrine becomes when propounded always in terms of the central orientation of our lives than when it is a bare-boned dry outline of spiritual truth, drummed in, in terms of its negative implications, rather than the marvelous positive challenges implicit in the doctrinal heritage of the Church. Yet, how many Franciscan communities have done the latter under the name "Franciscan"?

The doctrine of the Mystical Body reaches full expression in the Church (Christ) worshipping the Father — with dignity and beauty. A liturgically orientated piety follows logically with emphasis on the Eucharist (communion — unity — brotherhood) lending meaning at the deepest level for our living in community as religious. Nor is this to be seen as isolation or done with the idea of re-instating the ghetto. Rather through such community living the subject develops through mature, person to person (I-Thou),

community encounters which prepare him for his charitable, apostolic encounters in the larger community of mankind. This it seems is a sane piety consonant with the most essential direction of our lives — the apostolate. Yet how liturgically oriented are Franciscan communities? This is merely a question to be answered honestly by each community. Obviously the answers will vary.

If our spirituality is socially oriented, what a fruitful source of contact and evangelization the sacred liturgy performed beautifully becomes. One has only to have experienced the full response of student groups at YCS meetings or parishes where this has recently been done to comprehend how meaningful this experience potentially is in the lives of the laity. Nineteenth century spirituality with which we have been too often, and too long, afflicted, conceived of the Eucharist as a kind of spiritual tranquilizer whose effects the I selfishly savors — He feels good! How much more disturbing and meaningful it becomes to realize that if I cannot turn to my brother who is beside me and say in all love "Peace be to you" (the "mote"), I am not worthy to receive the sacrament in which we are all ONE. Social? Yes! But far from succumbing to the fear of too much emphasis on the social to the detriment of the individual, the concepts of the Mystical Body and the Eucharist enhance the sacredness and individuality of my fellowman here as they are to reverence mine, and I become holy through Christ and my concern for Him in others. The celebration of the Eucharist makes us most aware of the social dimension of

Christianity. The Christian logically brings to the altar his problems of race, labor, alcoholism, dope exploitation and on and on.

Another problem existing in religious life labeled Franciscan which does not develop apostles giving witness in the world is an approach toward formation which results in emotionally immature human beings who are hardly capable of surviving, to say nothing of "restoring all things to Christ." As Father Pacific has said, "Religious can settle for nothing less than a mature personality, anything less would be to settle for needless handicaps, or would imply that there is some mysterious virtue in being neurotic or immature."⁵ Perhaps this too is harsh reality that it takes courage to face, but when we look around in our houses and see so many human beings psychologically maimed,⁶ turned in on self rather than out to the great demanding concerns of Christ's world, we find ourselves asking for the justification of a life that creates cold insensitive people instead of warm, real human beings. If it were only one or two, we would perhaps safely blame human freedom which failed to respond to right means, but with so many, it behooves us to go back to the roots of religious training. Perhaps (and again we do not want to oversimplify) the reasons for this lie in not having had an incarnational approach to holiness, with its great reverence for the human nature that Christ sanctified. A false, Jansenistic angelism that deifies self-denial as an end instead of a means has been substituted for too long.

Modern advance (change) in

psychological studies would prove most beneficial reading for directors and directresses without any detriment to a theology of holiness. Let us examine a few concepts.

Erich Fromm, in his penetrating study of love, *The Art of Loving* points out the inability of human beings to move out to another human being unless he has discovered fullness of his identity, a process which Dr. Goldbrunner calls Individuation. The accomplishment of this process is crucial if we are really to live first of all, a community life, for the strength of community living (which is for the sake of the individual, by the way) depends on the extent of the individuation of the members. T. S. Eliot wrote in "The Hollow Men," "We are the hollow men/ We are the stuffed men/ Leaning together/ Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!/ Our dried voices, when/ We whisper together/ Are quiet and meaningless/ As wind in dry grass/ Or rats' feet over broken glass/ In our dry cellar."⁷ This condemnation of the lack of individuation and man's consequent inability to communicate all too often exists in our communities where for every good reason it should not exist.

By accepting the terribly demanding task of letting young people find themselves, we pave the way for strong community. If they are not allowed to discover their real selves we create the circumstances in which they will too often end up subconsciously hating themselves — truly a fertile soil for mental breakdown.

In his discovering of identity the normal person would discover his talents and would sanely develop

them. It is true that in religious life "one hands oneself over" in obedience, and talents are developed in the framework of religious life. Yet what a healthy outlook a community would manifest if it sought to develop the natural talents of its members first for the healthy maturing of the individual and then certainly for the good of the Church and humanity. In the past, false concepts of pride and humility (holiness is again the excuse) were engendered in the young because talents, particularly cultural and intellectual ones, were considered dangerous. In some situations one could almost have ended up cursing God for giving an intellect for all it did toward ministering to the psychological need of acceptance.

In regard to the development of intellect perhaps Franciscans need some re-evaluation. Here direct reference is made to the First Order whose members often fulfill the function of our retreat masters. It cannot be denied that Francis had a fear of the intellect, that he frowned on profane study because it might mean nurturing intellectual pride. Here again, let us face facts. St. Francis was not God; he was very much a human being and as such certainly capable of incomplete perceptions or even errors. Perhaps, too, he was hammering at a heresy of the time. Just because he is our founder, does not mean we have to take as our motto, in loyalty to a mistaken notion of Franciscanism, "Francis, right or wrong." Where would women be if everyone had accepted as infallible truth Aristotle's and after him, St. Thomas' interpretation that women are essentially inferior beings. The na-

You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth.

— Acts 1:8

ture of the apostolic work of religious communities necessitates effective professional preparation and intellectual development as essential for sisters' spiritual maturation. Beyond this justice demands such preparation. Appointing sisters to work for which they are ill-prepared is not only exploitation, it is dishonest.

Sister Maureen, N. D., has commented most appropriately on this situation. She states: "There is a rather prevalent fear that sisters will be less 'spiritual' if they develop professionally; or that humility will decrease as they grow intellectually. These notions are structured around pietistic thought patterns which are illogical and unsound. A moral virtue does not depend for its existence on the presence or absence of learning. Rather an educative process that increases a person's knowledge of truth and goodness by the same token, increases a likelihood of his conscious adherence to that truth and goodness."⁸ Intellectual work has in it great potential for generating humility as any one knows who has really wrestled with an intellectual problem or written a research paper. Beyond this it is in our intellectual nature on the natural level that we share in the likeness of God. As for menial tasks, there is nothing in them to insure the automatic transmission of humility. Yet re-

treat masters seem to assume that snide remarks about academic degrees or about the development of the intellect are appropriate conference fare on humility. It is not only retreat masters, however, who are guilty of this. This type of attitude can easily be projected through community practice.

Another area of religious life recognized by more avant-garde thinkers as having tremendous relevance to not developing the mature personality in religious life is obedience. It would be impossible at this point to venture a whole positive theology of obedience. However, Franciscan Communities have failed here as have many others. The negative, incomplete concept that has caused more than one hectic struggle in the growing religious (luck if it did) is St. Francis' description of obedience in the image of the corpse. Without attempting to be facetious, it can be said that this is deadly, and to its rigid adherence can be ascribed the death of more than one vital apostolic personality. Error has been in lack of balance in emphasis. Because Francis said it, all too many Franciscans have held it up as an ideal of living in the spirit of Francis. To study the aspects of obedience in all its complexities in the light of a newer more complete theology, the work of R. W. Gleason *To Live Is Christ* might be referred for per-

usal.

The aspect of obedience which becomes particularly pertinent to the apostolate is the apparent paradox of initiative versus obedience, since in the apostolate, going forward depends so much on the initiative of those involved. Again we have labored so long under the concept that to be blessed in obedience means offering up the painful aspects of refusal, or that giving the subject a hard time is of the essence of the superior-subject relationship. Without denying the merits of the virtue of faith needfully exercised in such a situation, it can be submitted that such situations are not the rule. To obey does not imply in its essence, tension between superior and subject. The subject may with wonderful, creative initiative suggest, and the superior bless with "go ahead," and the work proceeds in holy obedience.

For complete discussion of the creative, healthy personality as the only valid end-product of our religious training (at least ideally speaking), as the only type of person capable of handling the apostolate effectively, read Sister Marian Dolores's excellent analysis in *Creative Personality in Religious Life*.

What has been said thus far has necessarily been cursive suggesting only some aspects of Franciscan religious life that have been lived under the title *Franciscan*, again emphasizing that these false or semi-false concepts do not constitute the essence of a theological Franciscan life.

What then are we to say ultimately about Franciscan religious life in relation to a world

and Church in the throes of change? What should be the Franciscan response in the face of change?

To this question we answer, "Above all, do not fear change." Fear, seems to have been the response in the face of all too many, resulting in a rigid conservatism masquerading under the holy title of a virtue no less eminent than a cardinal one — *Prudence*.

Let us re-examine that virtue and discover that it has nothing to do with "saving your skin." At the same time remember that Fortitude is a cardinal virtue, also; and that the free choice implicit in change for which one has to bear the weight of responsibility is not for the fainthearted.

Open yourselves to the life-giving breath of the Spirit — this is the age of the Holy Spirit. The Church herself has opened the way for an open, honest re-appraisal of her traditions. Can we presume to be better, holier than she? This would hardly be a real Franciscan response. If there is one quality that can be claimed as pre-eminently Franciscan, propounded by Francis in word and example, it is attunement to the mind of Holy Church. It would be pathetic if Franciscans remained the voice of dissent in the face of change when the Church's keynote today is adapt, if Franciscans were to the Church what Birchers are to politics and international life.

Perhaps those of us in the Third Order Regular could turn to the members of the First Order to develop a vigorous spirituality rooted in a reexamined and re-directed theology discussed not only in abstract principles but one that comes to grips with a true concept

of the Church as belonging to eternity and TIME. Too often we have been repelled by the nauseating image of the little fat friar of our cheap statuary who is ignorantly but joyfully unaware of the problems of the Church. Would that such an image were reduced to oblivion. Yet such images are after all not created in the abstract. They have roots in reality.

The theology presented to us would be Christ-centered; it would be fully cognizant of the total Gospel message; it would be rooted in a study of sacred scripture; it would see the world in the light of the Incarnation; it would have a correct social dimension—viewing the Christian's fundamental dimension as witness; it would have a proper orientation toward the laity. As a result of such sensitivity to change and right orientation to change, Franciscans would be in the forefront of creative theological and biblical studies.

Proper emphasis on **human** (international) interest would find friars or brothers and sisters in the forefront of psychological studies as closely related to the theological.

As a result of the correct social direction in such a theology we would soon find Franciscans of all kinds deeply, rightfully involved with social problems of the Church concerned with those changes in society that will bring about social justice for all men. This must come.

The social aspect in books on Franciscan spiritual life has been notably absent. Examination of the table of contents of four reasonably large, representative works on Franciscan spirituality revealed no

MOVING ?

Please tell us.

From the supernatural viewpoint, this Franciscan mobility of ours is a wonderful thing. But when it comes to such practical considerations as mailing out a magazine, it can cause a considerable added expense—unless you give us your new address in advance. Three weeks' notice will save us ten cents on every magazine. Thank you.

significant reference to a spirituality which is directed toward the work of the Church. It is just spirituality in the abstract. Any valid spirituality finds its direction outward. Francis had it; Franciscans must become much more aware of it.

In developing an attitude toward changes in the world and the Church in relation to the salvation of mankind or solving the problems of social justice, it becomes imperative to take a long, hard look at the world of men, not failing to use all the natural disciplines at our disposal, particularly history, sociology, and economics and psychology. This means intense, intellectual discipline. The problems of our times with all the crosscurrents of complexity posit anything but naivete. We have to know to be of use to man in the world today or we may do more harm than good. There are many possibilities; let us cite one example. The race question quickly comes to mind.

To help solve the race question today it is not enough to have good will and Christian love toward the Negro. One cannot approach the Negroes as St. Francis

approached the birds. To be of help one has to have an insight into the psychological nature of prejudice, the effects that long years of prejudice have had on the Negro, the sociological structure of the area in which we could be of help. The list could go on. In a word, we must be informed.

Another significant aspect of change is the speed with which we should adapt. While deploring superficiality and oversimplification, we must get intensively on the move. A realistic view of the world shows that if Christians do not solve the problems of the world in the name of Christ, other right-intentioned people (sometimes outside the Light of Christ) will. Marx and Communism constitute an all too-appalling example. The evangelical efforts of Protestants in Latin America is another. Too often Christians come in when the field has been taken and shake frustrated fists at the victors when they should have

been there in the forefront of action in the first place. Our frustrated, childish fist-shaking and feet-stamping will get us nowhere.

It is true that as Father Geaney says, "Change within the Church must always be made in the spirit of obedience," but he goes on to say, "It is now the obedience and docility of the pioneer who with boldness and creative initiative makes his thrust into the unknown and presents his findings to authority for approval before another thrust is made."⁹

If Franciscans adjust themselves thus realistically and courageously to all aspects of change, a virile image of Franciscan life will emerge in the Church, not in a childish concern to be the best, but in a selfless activity side by side with all the other strong spiritual forces moving outward hopefully, joyfully; wonderfully sure that **He comes** and the world will be His because we have (with Him) restored it.

FOOTNOTES

1. Karl Rahner, *The Christian Commitment* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963), p. 3.
2. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), p. 20.
3. Walter Ong, S. J., *American Catholic Crossroads* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), p. 156.
4. Rev. Dennis Geaney, *Christians in a Changing World* (Chicago: Fides Publishers Association, 1959), p. 5.
5. Rev. Pacific Hug, O.F.M., "Forming the Religious Sister in Her Entirety," Speech delivered at the Franciscan Sisters Educational Conference, 1963.
6. Let the meaning of "psychologically maimed" here be clearly understood. By this is not meant people on the verge of break who are under psychiatric care. Rather we would mean those whose healthy response toward daily life is wounded or made ineffectual because of a lack of "wholeness" in the personality structure.
7. T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men," *The Types of Literature* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1955), p. 262.
8. Sister Maureen O'Keefe, S.S.N.D., *The Convent in the Modern World* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963), p. 126.
9. Geaney, *Christians in a Changing World*, p. 9.

Franciscan Pioneers in Mexico

Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M.

III. THE CHARACTER OF THE INDIANS AND THEIR CONVERSION BY THE FRIARS

"No nation was better prepared or more ready for conversion than the Indians of New Spain." Mendieta puts this statement down as expressing "infallible truth." He said he lived with them some forty years and knew the Indian character. He analyzed that character in this way:

1. The Indians were peaceful and gentle and never quarrelled. The cause of their natural meekness was a want of strong feelings and too much sluggishness. The Indian took his time in doing things. But it could be also that this meekness had been acquired, for the parents taught their children self-control in the days of their paganism. Among the Indians the greatest fault was to become angry. And Mendieta adds: "Nothing scandalizes the Indians more than to see the religious quarrelling, (after the vice of the flesh), or to see them ruffled when they scold. The Indians will accept correction and penance, and even whip himself. But if the Indian sees that the friar is impatient and angry, then he begins to grumble and complain." Father Martin, the first superior, used

to scourge himself before punishing the Indians with the lash.

2. The second natural trait of the Indian is his simplicity. On account of this he was often deceived by the Spaniards. When they first arrived, the Indians thought the Spaniards were gods from heaven, and the horse and the rider were one being. Mendieta adds: it didn't take the Indians long to find out that some of the Spaniards were greedy human beings. The Indians also thought that vessels of glass were more precious than vessels of gold.

3. The third natural trait of the Indian is his poverty. The Indian is content to be poor. He has no desire to hoard. His food of corn bread and chili suffices. He wears an old blanket, made of a thousand pieces. Saint Francis in his poverty did not equal the poverty of these Indians. Their hut contained a grinding stone and some old kettles and pitchers; some slept on a mat but most of them slept on the ground. When the Indians saw the patched habits of the friars and their poor and penitential way of living, they were won over at once. There were indeed

some rich Indian chiefs but they were few in comparison with the many poor. "It is certain that God did not create nor does He have in the world a people more poor and content with poverty than the Indians, more free of greed and avarice, the root of all evil; none more generous and liberal with the little they do have" (Mendieta).

4. Their humility is shown in many ways. Just to mention one: the great lords who sweep the church consider it an honor. All the Indians, too, when speaking to a friar, take off their hats and throw it on the ground.

5. Their obedience rivals the obedience of novices in religion. They do not know how to say no. The Indian obeys even the negro and the most lowly. To all his answer is: "Mayhui" — "O. K."

6. The patience of the Indian is beyond belief. He never complains. If the mayor orders him to leave home and work on his farm, the Indian goes. Then the alderman has him work for a Spaniard for a week. A church celebration is coming and he is ordered to cut branches from the trees in the mountains. He is to carry the luggage for a traveller. Some one sends him ten or twenty leagues with letters. Then the viceroy or bishop comes to town and he is to decorate the road. Fences and platforms for the fiesta are to be put up and all that he does without a

complaint. Even his field of corn and vegetables the sheep and cattle of others graze upon. The shepherd takes away his son; the ox-cart driver steals his daughter, and the negro runs away with his wife. He is forced to go to the mines where he is beaten and mistreated and says nothing. Through the persuasion of a priest, he is, nevertheless, willing to pardon the one who offended him. He dies in resignation to God's will and says: "Padre, we know that we must die. Are we not to take the way that pleases our Lord and God? Here I am, may thy holy will be done." The Indians live and die detached from the world.

These traits of character helped the Indians to become good Christians. Some of them showed such contempt for the world and a desire to follow Jesus Christ that they wanted to become religious. Mendieta writes: "I have favored as much as I could those who came in piety and good will, but there are others who are of the opposite opinion, since some never conform, no matter how good the plan is. That which has disturbed me and still does is the terrible inhumanity . . . of depriving a whole nation of living a religious and spiritual life." The Indians were not admitted in any of the religious Orders but Mendieta favored their admittance as tertiaries to serve the friars. "When they ask to live among

us, they should not be rejected."

It was a wise decree of Mother Church not to admit to religious Orders those who were descended in the fourth degree from pagans. The Indians of New Spain were unfit to command, but they were ready to obey. When they had authority, they became proud and conceited. But as subjects they were the best in the world. "I have in my province fifty thousand Indians," writes Mendieta, "and the whole province is like one huge monastery."

When the first friars came to New Spain in 1524, the boys were the first ones to be converted. A school was built next to the monastery in Mexico City and years later as high as one thousand boys attended. The first lessons taught the boys the sign of the Cross, the Our Father and Hail Mary, the Creed and Hail, holy Queen in Latin, for the friars did not know the Mexican language. Later they translated the doctrine in verse into the Mexican language, and the boys and soon also the adults were singing the verses at all times: the prayers, the articles of faith and the Commandments of God. "The Mexican language is not less elegant and precise than the La-

FATHER BENEDICT'S series of articles on the history of the Franciscans in Mexico, of which this is the third part, is currently appearing in four consecutive issues of THE CORD.

tin and I even think it is richer in expression, in derivations and in metaphors," Mendieta wrote many years later.

The boys were allowed to teach the adults, for they were adept at learning and had such good memories that having heard an instruction or a sermon once or twice they could repeat it with such good grace and sureness and effectiveness. Mendieta remarks that the Indian boys seemed to be more mentally alert and more vivacious than the boys of Spain and other countries. But when the Indian boys grow up, they lose their vivacity because of laziness and drink. When Mendieta came to New Spain in 1555, he learned the Mexican language in a short time and preached to the Mexicans fluently, though when he spoke in Spanish, he betrayed his natural impediment of stammering. For one of the uncultured languages of the Indians he used an interpreter. The boy would wear a surplice and "repeat what I had said with such authority, energy and spirit, that I felt envious of the grace which God had given him." The boys went to various parts of the land and taught the Indians the Christian way of life. They made known the places where idols were hidden and helped the friars in destroying the pagan temples. Some Spaniards accused the friars of rashness, for they feared the Indians would revolt. But Mendieta

writes that they were moved more by envy, since they saw the friars masters of the situation, who by their daring broke through the power of Satan's idolatry. It took the friars about two years to abolish the practices of paganism. Often the Indians would hide the idols beneath the crosses which the friars erected on the roads and hills. In one place a large cross was set up and lightning struck it. The cross was replaced and again lightning struck it. This happened a third time. Then the friars began to dig beneath the cross and found idols hidden there.

The boys were sent to their home towns to teach their parents and friends. The Indians of the town would gather together on certain days to hear the boys just as the natives did in towns where the friars had their monasteries. What the Indians learned, passed from mouth to mouth throughout the land.

One of the boys, recently baptized Cristobal, tried to convert his father, an Indian chief. But he, incited by one of his wives, who was jealous, beat the boy to death and killed also his mother. This happened in 1527.

When the friars came to town to convert the natives, they were always well received. They began to instruct at once and baptize the children. The Indians accepted the teachings

of the friars, for they saw what saintly lives they lived. The Indians brought their many idols before the friars and the chiefs smashed them to pieces, destroyed the pagan temples, and raised crosses and fixed the site for building a church. The Fathers assured the natives that they would return and baptize them all. Then they went on to the next town and did the same there. Indians from neighboring towns would come to the friars and ask them to come to their town. They would ask with great insistency, for they would say: "Have pity on us"—an expression the Indians used when they really wanted some thing. Often the Indians followed the friars from town to town. They would beg for baptism, getting down on their knees and raise their folded hands on high. Some received baptism in tears.

The story is told of a mother in Tuxcedo who was baptized, carrying her unbaptized son on her back, as is customary with the Indian mothers. Mother and son spent the night in the patio in front of the temple of the idols. The devil came and took the boy by the hand, saying that he was his because he was not baptized. The mother, greatly frightened, called upon the Name of Jesus again and again, and held on to the boy with all her strength lest the devil carry him away. When she called upon the Name of Jesus in a loud voice, the

devil let go of her son. When she stopped calling for divine help, the devil returned and tried by force to take the child from her. This he did three times, when the mother of the child, still calling upon the sweet Name of Jesus, left that terrible place. The next morning she brought her boy to church to have the friars baptize him and sign him with the sign of the cross. With this the persecution of the devil ceased.

In Mexico City a son of Montezuma asked for baptism. Since he was ill, the friars went to his house. He was brought in a chair and as the priest was reading the prayer of exorcism, the sick man and the chair on which he was sitting began to shake violently. The bystanders judged that the devil was leaving.

It was a sight worth seeing, Mendieta writes, to see the Indians coming together to hear the word of God, the old and the young, the sick and the healthy, from all the surrounding territory. "Whoever considers all this with the clear eyes of faith, with zeal and love and with a Christian heart, will see how the holy Gospel is fulfilled to the letter in these Indians; the weak and the blind and the outcast God compels them to come to his supper, which is prepared for the elect, leaving outside many who had been invited, for they excused themselves because of the cares and the greed for things of this

world and they have become unworthy."

The girls were also trained in schools taught by devout women who came from Spain. Mendieta writes that he was superior of a monastery in a town with over three hundred marriageable young ladies, who taught each other in Christian Doctrine with the greatest sincerity and modesty imaginable. One can see how different these Indian natives are from our Spanish people and from the natives of other countries, and how differently their character is to be molded. Those who do not understand the Indian character, do harm because they do not have the correct approach. There were many examples of devout and dedicated women among the Indians, and many young ladies preserved their virtue against many difficulties and even against physical force.

One of the remarkable things that followed the conversion of the Indians of New Spain was the great attachment they showed the friars. They begged them to stay in their towns. One reason was their fear of the devil, who held sway over them for so many years. But the Indians also wanted to be instructed and become good Christians. The kindness of the friars won their hearts. When a chapter was held by the friars, the Indians would come with their gifts of birds, bread and fruit, honey and fish and

other products of the land. When the Indians were given friars to stay in their town, they were beside themselves for joy. They swept the roads and scattered flowers about and as the friars entered their town, they began to sing and dance. If they had not built a monastery, they lost no time in building one. In six months the monastery, made of rough stone and mortar, was ready.

Some Indians came to the chapters in Mexico City more than twenty times with unbelievable perseverance. They wanted friars for their town and were tireless in seeking what they desired so ardently.

When the news reached a certain town that the friars would be taken away because of a scarcity of priests, the Indians went at once to Mexico City and spoke with such anguish of heart to Father Provincial that he could not restrain his tears. "Why, Father," the Indians said, "do you wish to leave us? Are we not your sons, for you baptized us and instructed us? You know how weak we become when there is no one to speak to us and strengthen us and tell us what we are to do to serve God and save our souls." The Indians spoke with such feeling that they could melt hearts of stone, wrote Mendieta.

When the monastery in Suchimilco was made a residence, subject to the monastery in Mexico City, ten thousand In-

dians, who feared they would lose their friars, marched to Mexico City, and there in the monastery church, kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament or lying prostrate, they cried and wept and beseeched our Lord not to allow the friars to leave their town. Each Indian poured forth his prayer from a heart that was deeply troubled. The Indians were crying and shouting at the top of their voices. Some of them besought the intercession of the Queen of Heaven; others called upon Saint Francis and others invoked the help of the holy Angels. The Spaniards who were in church were amazed at what they saw and heard. How close these Indians were to our Lord and the Saints!

The Indians of a town who lost the friars of Saint Francis because of changes made, wrote many letters to Father Provincial in which they poured forth the grief of their riven hearts. "Our beloved Father! what sins so grave, what evil so incurable have we your sons committed? What ingratitude are we guilty of or in what have we offended you? True it is that we are wicked, weak and cowardly and as a nation we have little education and do not succeed in doing things right but what we ought to do we fail in every time. If God had given us greater talents, we should not need the Fathers to act like mothers. . . . If you do not have friars at present who

can reside in our town, do not be troubled. We are content if you visit us from time to time. Give us one of your habits and it will give us hope that some day when you have more priests you will have pity on us."

The Indians built the large churches and monasteries throughout New Spain with such willingness and joy as if they were building homes for themselves. They provided the vestments and silver chalices and ornamentations for the churches. The friary of Saint Francis in Mexico City, which houses about one hundred friars, is still maintained by the alms of the Indians. In 1572 the Indians brought on All Saints Day five thousand loaves of bread, four thousand candles of white wax, twenty five gallons of wine, and fruit, meat and eggs. Mendieta cites individual instances of generous almsgiving and concludes the chapter with these words (he is always concerned lest the chapters become too lengthy): "I conclude this chapter by saying that since the Indians were so generous in almsgiving, they must have been good Christians and did not feign Christianity."

The Indians had Masses said for themselves and for their deceased and after Mass they would gather around the priest to kiss his hand. Since the Indians are so many, the priest, Mendieta notes, can exercise patience. Some friars were un-

willing to do this and were the occasion of the Indians losing their fervor and devotion. Often a mother would place her infant at the feet of the priest saying Mass and leave the child till the end of Mass. "Many times this has happened to me and never has the infant cried or caused trouble but has remained there like an angel" (Mendieta).

The Indians have great faith in holy water. The sick would often drink it with such fervor as if it were a medicine that could cure every disease. Also, every Indian had his rosary and scourge. They lashed themselves frequently (and still do during Lent). They have no delicate skin nor many clothes to take off. The friars when chanting the midnight Office could hear the Indians outside on the patio, applying the scourge, and the friars gave thanks to God for such fervor. Many Christian Indian women in the pangs of childbirth asked for the cord of Saint Francis with great faith and devotion. "During the forty years I have seen this remedy used," writes Mendieta, "I have never known the cord to fail." Blessed candles were used with faith and reverence in times of illness and during storms. On Palm Sunday each Indian brought his branch from the trees so that the patio looked like a forest of trees. "I can say truthfully that the most pleasant sight in my life was to see in Tlascalala the two pa-

tios of the church filled with natives holding branches in their hands." But these holy customs, Mendieta remarks, have been lost to a great extent, due to the mingling of the Indians with the Spaniards and with the people of other nations. The first fervor of the Indians all too soon faded away.

On the principal feasts of our Lord and his Blessed Mother and on the patronal feast of the church the Indians celebrated with great solemnity and rejoicing. They decorated the church with branches of trees, roses and flowers of various kinds, which grew in abundance. The day began with the friars chanting Divine Office at midnight and when they finished about two o'clock, the Indians were already in the patio, ready to begin their dances and songs in harmony with the feast. The Indians would never miss the Matins and midnight Mass on Christmas. The cribs they put up were admired even by the Spaniards. On the feast of Corpus Christi the Indians marched in procession with the Blessed Sacrament. The men were on one side and the women on the other. A thousand arches were counted along the way, six feet high, covered with branches and flowers of various kinds and colors. Some two thousand clusters of flowers were also counted and Mendieta makes the remark: "It was something remarkable." Many statues were carried. A few boys, neat-

ly dressed, danced before the Blessed Sacrament.

The procession began with the sound of trumpets and kettle drums and the ringing of the bells; musical instruments were played on the roof of the church. Banners of silk waved in the air. The celebrant was accompanied by acolytes, Indian boys dressed in red cassocks and white surplices, wearing a crown of rich feathers on their heads. Six boys carried very beautiful gilded torches. On these festive days Vespers were sung with the organ alternating with musical instruments with a solemnity heard only in cathedral churches.

Mendieta writes that simplicity of heart is very pleasing to the Lord and when the natural simplicity of the Indians was touched by grace, then some Indians were so simple and pure that they did not know how to sin. They never complained or scolded or become impatient. "I am not talking from hearsay but from personal experience." At times the Indians saw a Child in the consecrated Host or our crucified Redeemer in great glory; also they saw a globe of fiery flames above the Blessed Sacrament, and a crown of gold resting on the preacher's head, and similar sights. Many wonderful things happened but no where does Mendieta mention the apparitions of our Lady at Guadalupe in 1531. Neither did Motolinia mention them in his His-

tory, which he finished in 1541.

In the beginning the Indians did not have a special interest in Saint Francis. Often a frost came around the feast of Saint Francis (October 4) which froze their corn and vegetables and so they called Saint Francis "the cruel one." Mendieta adds: "Since our Lord has been served during the past years, the cold weather did not come, due to the intercession of Saint Francis, and so the Indians began to call Saint Francis 'the good man'." Among the many favors the Indians obtained through the intercession of Saint Francis a certain remarkable miracle is recorded. Ascensio, a boy of seven or eight, belonged to a family devoted to Saint Francis and the friars. When the friars passed their home, the family would go out

and greet them and invite them to share the little they had. The boy took sick and in spite of fervent prayers to Saint Francis and visits to the church, the boy Ascensio died early one morning. Many natives saw him cold and rigid and dead. Still the parents kept on praying. That afternoon the body was about to be carried to church; the parents were invoking the aid of Saint Francis with great faith when suddenly the body began to move. The bystanders were frightened. The shroud was loosened and the boy came back to life. When Brother Pedro de Gante and other friars arrived at the scene, they found the boy alive and well. This miracle was made known throughout the territory and the Indians were strengthened in their faith.

CROSSES

The man who lays down his life for his friends

Carries a cross of clay,

For smiles, praises, and gratitude

Make light each step of the way.

But the man who lays down his life for his foes

Shoulders a cross of stone.

For he carries by far the heavier cross

Who carries his cross alone.

Anthony Meyers, O.F.M. Conv.

ADAM MARSH —

THE FIRST FRANCISCAN MAGISTER REGENS' AT OXFORD

Sister Mary Anthony Brown, O.S.F.

To state that this member of the Order of Friars Minor was the companion of St. Anthony; the counselor, confidant, and rebuker of an English King; a steadfast friend of Simon de Montfort; a spiritual director of many — including an earl, a king, a queen, and a countess; an adviser to Parliament; an esteemed associate of bishops and archbishops; a benefactor to the poor; the champion of repentant sinners; and a major influence upon the renowned Roger Bacon, is to furnish but an incomplete list of the achievements of Adam Marsh.

Background

Adam Marsh (Adam de Marisco/Maresco), drawn by a desire to imitate the poverty of the Poor Man of Assisi as he saw it practiced by the Little Brothers in England, sought and gained admittance into the Order of Friars Minor at Wor-

SISTER MARY ANTHONY is a professor of philosophy at St. Bonaventure University; she has contributed several scholarly articles to Franciscan publications.

cester.² There would accrue to him all manner of activities and manifold relationships.

It was a comparatively new Province that received him. Blessed Agnellus of Pisa and his eight companions around 1224 had come to England and had settled at Canterbury.³ From the start the Brothers had been well received (except for some trivial initial incidents), because of their zeal and their warm concern for others. They shunned ostentation, avoided excessive use of material things, and labored with a self-sacrificing love to spread the Good News of the gospel to all regardless of class or state in life. Gifts of food, land, woolen cloth, and all manner of alms came from sources that included both noble and commoner.⁴ The dedication of the friars to the spiritual and temporal welfare of the people whom they had come to serve resulted in their immediate popularity and in a prompt expansion in the number of both houses and subjects.⁵ Such ardent zeal attracted Adam Marsh to seek the Franciscan way of life in exchange for that of a diocesan

priest, in which he was already renowned and successful. Marsh entered the Order is uncertain, but authorities advance dates between 1230 and 1236.⁶ Most likely it was between 1230 and 1232. He was not young, then, when he entered the Order, but "senex et litteratus."⁷

That he was "learned" as well as "mature" is understandable when we consider that he was already the recipient of a Master's Degree from Oxford before becoming a Franciscan religious. He had had the rare privilege of being the student of Robert Grosseteste, a friend of the family.⁸

In addition to the pursuit of studies at Oxford, Adam Marsh devoted his energies to a study of theology. After becoming a follower of St. Francis, he was selected to be the companion and secretary of St. Anthony of Padua and the two Brothers studied Scripture at Vercelli for about five years.⁹

It is to the credit of the English friars that they sought to advance studies and to prepare properly for an apostolate which required both unction and intellectual proficiency. From the outset, Blessed Agnellus of Pisa had been anxious that those destined to direct others be properly informed themselves. That is why he had sought out Robert Grosseteste, the most famous English scholar of the time, and begged him to instruct the friars.

The teaching services of three other secular masters of renown did much to assure the quality of the formation of the intellectual life of the English friars. Fortunate indeed were the student-Brothers to have these lectors when they did, because, as so frequently happens, these learned pedagogues were transferred, before long, from their teaching positions to administrative ones in the episcopal residence. Besides Robert Grosseteste, who became Bishop of Lincoln, these four outstanding masters included Master Roger of Wesham, later Bishop of Coventry; and Master Thomas Wallensis, afterwards Bishop of St. David's in Wales.

Other graduates of Oxford besides Adam Marsh who came to the newly formed province included Brother Ralph of Colebrook, Brother Eustace of Normanville, and Brother Thomas of York. The first of these had been a Regent in Theology at the University of Paris. As a Franciscan novice he was sent to Oxford to continue his studies; later he presided over the school of theology there. Brother Eustace was a wealthy noble, the Chancellor of Oxford, who had degrees in arts, law, and theology. The English Province, evidently, drew to itself some most capable scholars who, together with their famous masters, did much to advance studies within the Order to a high level of excellence.

Adam's Friends at Oxford

Adam himself enjoyed such fame as a scholar that his services were sought by the University of Paris, where he was to succeed the legendary Alexander of Hales. But Adam's friend and teacher, Robert Grosseteste, exerted his considerable influence and was able to secure Adam's services for Oxford.¹⁰

The two savants were thus able to continue to share their talents at the same institution of learning. Not only did they have something in common in the realm of studies, but they went to the Council of Lyons together. Such was the respect accorded them that their suggestions for furthering scholarship throughout the Franciscan Order were heeded and put into effect. Grosseteste's regard for Adam and the friars as men of learning led him to bequeath his extensive library to them.

Another Oxford friend and close associate of Adam Marsh was Thomas of York. It is to Adam's letters, in fact, that we are indebted for most of our knowledge of Thomas' life and accomplishments. It is interesting to note that although the two Brothers were fast friends, Adam nonetheless prevented Thomas' appointment as lector on the grounds that he was too young. This, however, apparently caused no permanent rupture in their friendship, for we have records attesting to the mutual

respect that continued between them.

Adam's circle of friends also included Gregory of Bosellis, a remarkable scholar whom Adam would have liked to see succeed himself at Oxford.¹¹ Certainly to be included among those Adam admired, too, is Simon, Earl of Montfort, who was active at the time in political endeavors designed to further the rights of the common people.¹² The King and his nobility, naturally, opposed Simon's efforts, and the friars (including Adam) were to some extent drawn into the controversy by their close ties of friendship with the Earl. So deep, in fact, was this relationship that when Simon was killed at Eversham, the Friars provided spiritual suffrages and a burial plot; they even upheld the miraculous character of some events in the life of their friend.¹³

Adam attracted scholarly friends because, of course, he too was so outstanding in the realm of learning. But he had more than mere knowledge; he had, besides, the rare ability to discern the particular talents of each student and to direct the neophyte scholar into the field for which he was best suited.¹⁴ Although the list of his students casts glory on the master, none was as remarkable as Roger Bacon, upon whom Adam had a truly profound influence.¹⁵ It may be stated without fear of contra-

diction that Oxford's reputation for academic excellence among the universities of the time, and the impressive number of important scholars found there, were due precisely to the erudition and ability of its faculty, including Robert Grosseteste, Adam Marsh, Thomas of York, and later Roger Bacon.¹⁶

Adam Marsh's Intellectual Legacy

Only a brief examination can be made here of the philosophical doctrines held by Adam Marsh. In keeping with the Augustinian tradition, he taught that the intellect knows supersensible truth solely by divine illumination and by means of this the image of truth is reflected upon the knowing faculty. Just as the eye needs physical light, so the mind needs the divine Light to know whatever transcends the realm of the physical. It was a pivotal point in Adam's outlook, that light was the most fundamental active constituent of material things and the source of all their activity. Marsh was not alone in holding this; on the contrary, he shared the view with Bartholomeus Anglicus, Thomas of York, Alexander of Hales, Robert Grosseteste, and St. Bonaventure.¹⁷

Another doctrine that occupied the attention of the great Oxford trio (viz., Robert Grosseteste, Adam Marsh, and Thomas of York) concerned the plurality of souls in man. Their

writings do not, it is true, develop this theory to any great degree; but their influence on Roger Bacon and his contemporaries is incontestable. These, in turn, played a developmental role in the doctrine which reached its fullest expression in the writings of John Peckham and was, in that developed form, so resolutely opposed by St. Thomas Aquinas.

Interesting and important as these philosophical doctrines were, they were not what made Oxford refreshingly different from the other great universities of the time (Paris, Bologna, Padua, etc.); nor are they the legacy for which Adam Marsh is particularly remembered. Rather the original contributions of the University at Oxford and of Adam Marsh lay in the field of natural science. Just as the care of the sick led to the science of medicine, so too did the inquiry regarding creation tend toward a study of the physical sciences. The Oxford scholars of Marsh's time had embarked upon a search into the cosmos with a new spirit of independence from ancient opinion and with a greater regard for experience, experimentation, and freedom of thought. These departures opened up new areas of study because they freed men from the encompassing, oft-repeated opinions which were often without scientific merit and were usually erroneous as well. Such trail-blazing fostered the intel-

lectual spirit and fervor for which Oxford became famous.¹⁸

Not only was Adam Marsh competent in philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences, but his ability in mathematics led Roger Bacon, his student, to remark: "There have been found some famous men such as Robert, Bishop of Lincoln, and Friar Adam Marsh and some others who have known how by the power of mathematics to unfold the causes of all things and to give sufficient explanation of (them)...¹⁹

Influence on Contemporary Society

Adam Marsh has been called one of the most influential men in the England of his day. His endeavors extended to affairs parochial, political, and even international, thus gaining for him the respect of others as a man of many talents known throughout Europe.

Not only did he give freely of his knowledge to Robert Grosseteste when they both lectured at Oxford, but after the latter had become Bishop of Lincoln in 1235, he served him faithfully and competently by the practical advice he offered. He was sought, too, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who set a high value on his

advice. His presence was required at Parliament in Westminster.²⁰ The Queen, as well as others of her court, begged him to give them the benefit of his spiritual advice. Despite the well-merited censure he had drawn from Adam, the King himself claimed that he could not do without the friar's counsel²¹ and begged him to treat him as a father would his son.

In addition, he acted as Papal commissioner,²² and he represented his Order in provincial matters. His letters testify to his constant concern for the poor, and he earned great renown as a competent and understanding confessor.

Adam saw clearly the dangers inherent in the secular pursuits in which he and many of his religious Brothers had become involved. Understanding that such endeavors could lead to a relaxation of religious discipline and impede the spirit of recollection, he advocated that such duties should be shunned as much as charity permitted, lest they lead, ultimately, to loss of vocation.

Adam Marsh, *Doctor illustris*,²³ was buried at Lincoln beside his friend and teacher, the Bishop of Lincoln. The seeds he had sown were to bear abundant fruit in the work of his brilliant pupil, Roger Bacon.

1. Raphael Huber, O.F.M. Conv., *A Documented History of the Franciscan Order 1182-1517*, Milwaukee and Washington, 1944, p. 818: "Adam Marsh (de Maresco) about 1247 opens the long list of Franciscan *Magistri regentes* . . ."; Edward Hutton, *The Franciscans in England 1224 - 1538*, Boston and New York, 1926, pp. 126, 127. In this reference the first Friar lecturers are likened to tutors having no official status except what personally belonged to Adam Marsh; cf Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 129, where it is stated that Brother Ralph of Colebridge (the successor of Adam Marsh) and his successors were the first Regent Masters in Theology at Oxford belonging to the Order; Herbert Holzappel, *The History of the Franciscan Order*, trans. A. Tibesar and G. Brinkman, Teutopolis, 1948, p. 220: This author notes that Adam Marsh began the long line of Franciscan *Magistri Regentes* in 1247.

2. Father Cuthbert, O.F.M. Cap., *The Chronicle of Thomas Eccleston, De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, London, 1909, p. 24.

3. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

4. Patent Rolls Henry III, ad an. 1232, m. 7; Close Rolls, ad an. 1233, m. 6 and ad an. 1239, m. 10.

5. Father Cuthbert, O. F. M. Cap., *op. cit.*, xiii. Approximately thirty-two years after the arrival of the first Friars, the English Province numbered forty-nine houses and about 1,242 Friars.

6. Father Cuthbert, O. F. M. Cap., *The Romanticism of St. Francis*, London, 1924, p. 132, n. 1. Here the year 1232 is proposed as the proper one. E. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 88, "There (Worcester) certainly Adam de Maresco was received not later than 1230." Luke Wadding, *Annales*, ad. an. 1230 indicates that Adam Marsh was in the company of St. Anthony of Padua at the Chapter of 1230 held at Assisi. *Monumenta Franciscana*, I, ed. J. S. Brewer, 1855, holds that the year of Adam's entrance is 1236.

7. Raphael Huber, O.F.M. Conv., *op. cit.*, p. 815, n. 10 quotes Edward Luard, *Rolls Series V*, 619.

8. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

9. *Ibid.*

10. A. G. Little, *Grey Friars in Oxford*, Oxford, 1892, p. 67; p. 137; Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

11. AF I, 235, 238, 256, 269; R. Huber, *op. cit.*, p. 841.

12. *Mon. Fran.* I, ed. Brewer, lxxxvii; AFH, pp. 389-447.

13. *Miracula Symonis de Montfort* in Rishanger's *Chronicle*, Camden Society, pp. 87, p5 ff.

14. Huber, O.F.M., Conv., *op. cit.*, p. 825; A. G. Little, *op. cit.*, p. 134; Father Cuthbert, O.F.M. Cap., *The Romanticism of St. Fran.*, pp. 190-235.

15. D. E. Sharp, *Franciscan Philosophy at Oxford*, London, 1930, p. 9.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

17. R. Grosseteste, *Hex.*, f. 146 v and r.

19. Bacon, *Opus Maj.*, ed. Bridges, I, p. 108; AFH XIX, p. 810. p. 330.

19. Robert Bacon, *Opus Maj.*, ed. Bridges, I, p. 108; AFH XIX, p. 810.

20. Hutton, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Mon. Fran.* I, ed. Brewer, lxxxv.

23. Father Cuthbert, O. F. M. Cap., *The Chron. of Thomas of Ec.*, p. 23. In this place Doctor Illustratus is given; Holzappel, O.F.M., *op. cit.*, p. 231: Here Adam of Marsh (Doctor illustris) is written.

True and Lasting Goals

Sister M. Thaddine, O.S.F.

We have become fast friends now, haven't we, dear Sister in Christ? You have been such a good listener that it's been a joy talking to you. Remember when we first met, and we spoke about the basic need to be loved, the factors that make the consecrated ones of God similar to and yet so different from people on the other side of the convent gate? We talked about our humanness, our bodies, our personalities and our milieu. We took note of our appetites, our senses, our intellect, our will. We saw how perfectly Almighty God has fashioned us — the wonders which he performed to bring us into being and the goodness he continues to bestow upon us so that each breath, each step, each heartbeat follows another because he sustains us.

Sister dear, be honest! What we have discussed together, you and I, you have already known and heard time and a-

gain and as before you will let it jog you into action for a short while and then you will forget and sink into your exclusive rut as before. Forgive me, Sister, I speak from experience!

There is something else though, something vitally important for you to remember. None of us like to dwell on the unhappy or unpleasant things of life, do we? We love to retain and preserve in memory the beautiful, pleasing, joyful moments that we have experienced. We try to escape from pain, fear, pettiness and sorrow. Even nature plays a part in helping us escape from pain, for when pain is such that the human body cannot endure it, the individual experiencing the pain becomes unconscious, thus obliterating it. This is true too, but in another way, when someone feels mental anguish. If the mental anguish becomes unendurable, the mind flees from the reality of the situation and escapes into a world of unreality and fantasy. Well, dear Sister, you had best face up to it. There will be days when you will feel a tremendous pressure of loneliness in

SISTER THADDINE is Superioress at the psychiatric division of St. John's Hospital, Springfield, Illinois. This is the last in her series of six essays for religious Sisters currently appearing in THE CORD.

the religious life. There will be days of unrest, of unhappiness. You will see your friends with their families seemingly exuberant and happy in their happy wedded state with their children around them and your arms will feel uncomfortably empty. You will feel your passion trembling and stirring, seeking, rebelling and there will be times that you will fall in combat. Yes, dear Sister, despite it all you still wear a garment of flesh; a body of matter which like a magnet will draw unto itself those material things of the world through the doors of the senses — those subtle hungry and treacherous sentinels forever seeking to feed the mind.

There are other factors too, Sister. How well you know that God instilled certain appetites within your nature so that you could continue to live and so that the world of human beings would go on. When woman surrenders her life and herself to her chosen mate, from this entire giving of self, new lives blossom forth. God gave to the human beings he had designed the privilege of creating a body, but he reserved for himself alone the imparting of the soul of life — the spark which makes the mass of flesh breathe, pulsate, and live.

Yes, yes, you, Sister, feel these gnawing appetites. Your senses, too are at work, just like those of all your Sisters. You feel the need to love and

to be loved. Can you imagine a world devoid of love? But you have learned to love the Creator of Love — you have learned to love Love itself! God has been good to you, Sister. He picked you out from many. Always remember that a vocation to the religious life is something most precious. God picked you out — but it was not because you were better, prettier, or more intelligent than many others. Sometimes it fairly takes your breath away, doesn't it, Sister? You wonder why he even bothered, don't you? So many of your friends had much more to offer than you, didn't they? And yet God selected you! We shall someday understand his wondrous ways.

Today, dear Sister in Christ, multiple changes are taking place in the world about us. Concepts of religious life, too, are undergoing a face lifting, as it were. To the middle-aged Sister (who incidentally Father Bassett, S. J. in his book the "Noonday Devil" says is anywhere between the ages of eighteen and eighty), shifting gears is not as smooth as it appears to be to the so-called "New-Breed." Changes in the routines of daily living are occurring, rules and customs so deeply ingrained that they are almost a blend of the essence of the nun, are being modified. The Sacred Liturgy is being revamped. TV and newspapers have made their entry into the

cloister. So much is happening so fast that the poor old Sisters haven't caught up yet — are overwhelmed and sometimes even shocked. But they are hanging on tightly, Sister. They're made of the best of material and they can take it. They're the ones to whom you owe your convent buildings, schools and hospitals, Sister, so don't be too hard on them.

It often happens that the fear of the unknown becomes frightening. It is like walking into a dark room in which you thought you knew the furniture arrangement only to find that someone has changed things about. You grope and you stumble and you bump into things until you find the light switch . . . and then how relieved you are. Then you can laugh. There is something exciting and healthy about change, Sister. Help your hand-picked-by-God Sisters to recognize how essential changes can be to their well-being and life. Your Sisters, in turn, will help you to see how wonderfully God has planned all of these changes which seem to have been precipitated by his Servant, the humble little peasant Pope John XXIII, for the closer unity of Christians. We must hear again these words "See how those Christians love one another" and in our convent walls we must live the words, "See how these Sisters love each other."

We Sisters live within a

structural framework, namely our religious life; our vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience and the goals and aims of our specific community. It is by performing the works of our community that we exercise, through dedication, our vows. There is not a doubt about it, dear Sister, that in the exercise of our life of dedication through our work, we will encounter and expose ourselves to heartaches, frustrations, evils and fears that we will sometimes feel are unsurmountable. We will find out to our chagrin, Sister, that we are not gods but creatures of God. We are creatures made of flesh and blood and inundated with passions and appetites; learned, acquired or inherent. We dream dreams, and we have ambitions.

We will discover that we can never hope to know all things, that our appetites and our hopes and our desires will never quite be satiated, that we shall sometimes fail and that there will always be some whom we shall never please. You see, dear Sister, we are human beings, you and I.

You seem bewildered, Sister. I hope I have not confused you. But if I have, let me try to sum up all I have been trying to tell you during our little discourses. First of all, dear Sister, you are alive and that is to your credit. Because you are alive and because you are a human, you have certain qualities, certain characteris-

JESUS, REVEALER OF THE FATHER

Sr. M. Rose Cecilia, O.S.F.

tics that make you YOU. You have strengths, you have weaknesses. You have an intellect which is enlightened by your senses. Your intellect, like the IBM machine which we mentioned before, Sister, collects the data, and your will processes it; that is, it makes choices. Your choices of will shall reflect many things. It is somewhat of a cycle. It will reflect your strengths and your weaknesses, and it will also strengthen you or weaken you. Yes, dear Sister, many things will determine your choices. These will be somewhat conditioned by factors beyond your control (inherent) and some under your control (learned and acquired). It is here that you begin, Sister. Religious life is not easy. You have already learned that. It is like a constant swimming upstream. But once you've gotten in step, religious life is IT. Now you say, Sister, that everyone is preaching that you must love and you feel cold. You feel cold as a fish in water. Love, Sister, doesn't have to be a feeling (although it will in time be just that and *more*). Begin with the little things, Sister. Your Sisters, for instance, those hand-picked Sisters of yours. Give of yourself to them. Never be selfish with them. You see, Sister, God is there in

each one. They should come first with you. Then, give of yourself to those who need you. God lives in them also. He lives in the poor, the indigent, the sinner. You have so much, Sister. You have so very much. Just think, you are the spouse of the Creator in whom is all beauty, all truth, all goodness.

So give of yourself generously. Introspection too, will lead you to knowledge of yourself, your strengths, your weaknesses. Once you know these you can be on the lookout for ways and means to strengthen your weaknesses and utilize your strengths. Learn to know yourself. You will be more forgiving of your Sisters when you recognize your own faults. Remember just these few basic principles: 1) know yourself; 2) all behavior has meaning; 3) accept people as you find them, not wishing to make them over to suit your fancy. Then too, Sister, you must love. You are a *product of Love*. Love keeps you living every day — Love sustains you — and just think Sister, you have Love right in your heart! Perhaps we'll meet again some day, dear little Sister — in the meantime — you have a tremendous task and a most rewarding task — that of loving Love and being loved by Love. God bless you.

"He who sees me sees also the Father" (Jn. 14:9). Christ is the Light of the world. St. Augustine tells us that Light need not prove its existence; it needs only to shine. Since Christ receives his brightness from the Father and shines forth from him and co-exists with him, it is evident that in him we see the Father. St. John tells us this too: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1).

This unique union, which surpasses all earthly relationships, was manifested by Christ himself when he said: "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30). It is impossible, therefore, to know Christ without at the same time arriving at the knowledge of the Father. This is what our Lord meant when he told Philip, at the Last Supper, that anyone who looked upon him saw also the Father. In this statement is implied a

SISTER M. ROSE CECILIA obtained her Master's Degree from St. Bonaventure University in 1954; she is now at St. Agnes Annex in Philadelphia. In this article, Sister furnishes abundant theological insight into our Lord's relationship to his Father: as the Son of God, Jesus is the Father's perfect revelation of himself.

community of nature. Christ possesses one and the same nature as the Father, together with the same power, wisdom, and knowledge. Moreover, the circumincession of the Persons is also contained in this citation: whoever sees the Person of Christ sees also the Person of his Father. Jesus himself added to his reply to Philip the significant question: "Do you believe that I am in the Father and the Father in me?" (Jn. 14:11).

According to St. Irenaeus Christ is the Revealer; for St. Augustine, he is pre-eminently the Way which leads to God. Why, it may be asked, does he have to be the Revealer and the Way? The answer is simply that the Father is so majestic, so transcendent, and his Fatherhood so sublime a mystery, that only the Son can know what the Father is.

The Fatherhood of God in Non-Christian Religions

There is abundant evidence that both primitive people and savages applied the title of Father to God. The same is true of the Greeks and Romans who had a somewhat filial attitude toward Zeus and Jupiter. The Stoics sometime likewise referred to their "first prin-

ciple" —which they considered responsible for all the order in the world, as — "Father." But these heathen peoples never used the term in direct address to the god in question because their fundamental attitude was fear of the anger and envy of their gods.

The Chosen People, on the other hand, had a warmer, more personal concept of God's Fatherhood. As a man carries his son, the writer of Deuteronomy explains, so God carried his Chosen People through the wilderness (Deut. 1:31); and according to the same sacred author, God reared the Israelites during their wanderings in much the same way as a man rears his son (8:5). Malachia has God "complaining" because his sons did not honor him properly as their father (Mal. 1:6). For the Psalmist, God is the father of orphans who owe him a hymn of praise (67:5-6). And Jeremia conveys God's wish that his People call him "Father" (Jer. 3:19).

From the Old Testament, the Jews of our Lord's time had culled a certain limited notion of God's Fatherhood. But the word *Father* did not, of course, have the full, true meaning that was later to be revealed by Christ in his life as well as his teaching. Their concept of God's Fatherhood was of a juridical and national nature.

It was juridical in the sense that even though the prophets and the psalmist hymned the

love and mercy of God, the Jews as a nation trembled before Yahweh. They served God in fear and trembling, and their fulfillment of the Law of Moses was observed with this concept in mind. Added to this idea of God as Father, moreover, was the thought that his love and care were restricted to the Chosen People alone; theirs was a narrow, nationalistic approach to the Fatherhood of God.

Current Conception of God's Fatherhood

Today there are at least four different conceptions of the Fatherhood of God. The Jews, first of all, still say that God is a Father whose interest is restricted to those who have become his sons by the covenant of circumcision. Some Christians, secondly, recite the Our Father with a limited appreciation of their words' implications. In the third place are those who believe in the divine Fatherhood but look upon it as a merely abstract attribute of God. And finally, there are those who, illumined by the Holy Spirit, realize the full, profound meaning contained in the name *Father*. Only the last group truly see and grasp all that our Lord revealed about his Father: the goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness of God who wishes to grant us a share of his life and make of each one of us his own adopted son.

This last is the concept of God's Fatherhood which we shall consider here: it is the only fully Christian understanding of it, which is thoroughly rooted in the teachings of Scripture itself.

From the foregoing let us conclude that, whether we look at the common title of *Father* as applied to God as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, or whether we regard the title as a special one implying spiritual adoption, we certainly must affirm that God is in truth a Father. But more than this: we can state that God's supernatural Fatherhood is related to his natural fatherhood as light to shadow, as being to nothingness. For by grace one is raised to an altogether new dignity: he is made a child of God in a totally new sense. The new life received in justification bestows upon human beings the power to become sons of God, if only they have faith in him and are born of him (Jn. 1:12; 3:5).

Jesus as God's Self-Revelation

In light of this Christian concept of God's Fatherhood, let us now look at Christ who is the most concrete and the greatest objective revelation of God. His greatest work, according to St. Hilary, was to bring us to a knowledge of his Father (*De Trin.*, III). This perspective is, of course, common to almost all the Apostolic Fathers: Christ's mission is not reducible

to a juridical redemption, but includes the role of enlightenment as well.

It is true that the divine attribute of goodness, mercy, and loving-kindness had been revealed by God previously. One need only refer to Old Testament history where in the primitive, the patriarchal, or the Israelitic period he will find incidents depicting these attributes (see, e. g., Gen. 2:8; 2:18; 3:15; 4:6; 7:14; 6:8; 18:32; 2 Kgs. 12:13; 24:14, etc.).

It was in the very garden of Paradise though, that a merciful God spoke first of forgiveness and hope, even before pronouncing his sentence of punishment for Adam and Eve. In this eternal design of sending his own Son to restore a broken and bruised human race to his friendship, God reveals to us a masterpiece of his fatherly wisdom and love. The Word, then, manifested his Father's love simply by becoming incarnate. This very act proclaimed God's love because he "so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that those who believe in him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (Jn. 3:16).

He came that we may have life — life in the Father, in unity with the Holy Spirit, as his sons. This was the great design of the Father's love. From all eternity he had but one Son by nature; yet in his goodness and love he willed to possess other sons by adoption.

Christ came to reveal the deepest secrets of the Father and to confirm our faith in that Father's love. St. Augustine exclaims in one of his sermons (47 *de temp*), "How, I ask, is it said to be impossible for man to love — to love, I say, a beneficent Creator, a most loving Father?"

Christ, then, is truly the Way and the Door to the Father. When he became man, the Word made God visible through his human nature; he expressed God's perfections in a language clearly understandable to our minds. Jesus, in both word and action, manifested that wisdom of God which no one could confound — that power of God which held all the people in awe — that goodness of God which is untiring and constant — that patience of God which was tried by both Satan and the men he had come to redeem — that love of God which was generously given so that we might have life — that mercy of God which was so great a stumbling block to the Scribes and the Pharisees, but which forms the very foundation for Christian hope.

How Did Christ Reveal His Father's Attributes?

In Christ all the eternal attributes of his Father became known through his human nature. Love, however, seems to be the single attribute Christ was most pleased to reveal.

Each miracle in turn reaffirms the goodness and mercy of God our Father. The miracle at Cana the curing of the blind, the lame, the dumb, the restoring back to life of Lazarus and the widow's son — all these give clear evidence of the Father's infinite love being manifested by the Son.

Since the Lord's tenderness and mercy reflected the infinite tenderness and mercy of his Father, one finds an outstanding and forceful example of what divine mercy is when one contemplates Christ's meeting with the woman taken in adultery. This occasion portrays God's goodness and mercy to such an extent, in fact, that it was suppressed in several manuscripts of the Gospels: it was scandalous even to some early Christians! But the passage is authentic; the Holy Spirit took care that it be included in the pages of Scripture precisely for the solace of countless thousands — millions — of sinners who would read its loving message. Infinite mercy stoops to misery! Jesus was renowned for his mercy and kindness. The scene which his enemies had set up as a snare for him, was thus converted into an expression of his essential spirit of love. There was no violation of the Law; justice was sublimated by mercy.

It can truly be said that all our Lord's actions formed a continuous, progressive revelation of his Father. His teach-

ings likewise show that he was filled with the thought and love of that Father. St. John's Gospel alone mentions the Father's name as spoken by Christ 116 times, and in his opening discourses to the people, recorded as the Sermon on the Mount, he used the same name no fewer than seventeen times. He himself claimed to have "come in the name of my Father" (Jn. 5:43). How expressive, then, are the first and last recorded words of our Lord, which are directed to the Father in whose name he had come: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk. 2:49); "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

Christ's Teaching on the Fatherhood of God

The inspired teachings of Jesus contain these three examples which will serve as evidence that he also taught the Fatherhood of God as a specific doctrine: (1) the messages contained in the Sermon on the Mount, (2) the Our Father, and (3) the parable of the prodigal son.

Our Lord taught this Fatherhood from the very outset of his apostolate. In his opening discourse to the people, which was his Sermon on the Mount, he used the loving title *Father* often. The setting, manner, and procedure he used were all conducive to the exposition of

his mission. Let us look at each in turn.

The Sermon on the Mount

Christ turned to nature because it always spoke to him, as it would later to St. Francis of Assisi, of the infinite goodness and bounty of his heavenly Father. Thus, on this occasion, he was to use the most beautiful pictures of the wondrous world of nature: life in the open fields, trees in fruit (or barren), the lake and the fishermen's nets — in order to deliver to men the first of his joyful messages: God's Fatherhood. He used his Father's work to raise his hearers to his Father!

His manner was that of a teacher and a master simply because men did not know the essential note of love in his relation to his Father. He first taught God's Fatherhood, as Archbishop Goodier remarks, by manifesting God's power within him (*Jesus Christ Son of God*, 1947, p. 51).

When he found himself free, for the time being, of the strain caused by his carping enemies, he would release the expressive love of his overflowing heart and pour out as a majestic symphony the light he had brought into the world. In the very first measures are heard the clear, basic themes which are resolutely and immediately proclaimed in the Beatitudes. Then he slowly and prudently

developed the idea of the New Law — a transvaluation, as it were, of human values. According to St. Thomas, this Sermon contained within its scope the entire perfection of the Christian way of life. This development led naturally and smoothly into the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God. The New Law of love was, after all, based precisely on the concept of God as an infinitely loving Father. "Your Father in heaven, who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil, and sends rain on the just and the unjust" (Mt. 5:45) — this sort of characterization struck the keynote of the entire New Law.

As a rising sequence, Jesus proclaimed: "Your Father knows that you need all these things" (Mt. 6:33). Throughout the Sermon, the love and providence of God abound everywhere — from the sparrow on the roof-top to the Lily in the field. Even the very hairs of a man's head are numbered. "Be not anxious," is the substance of Christ's advice; "your Father knows and loves."

With fresh emphasis, counterpoint then appeared to give variety: "Therefore, if you, evil as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him" (Mt. 7:11). Bossuet says, in this connection: "Will he who feeds the servants forget the sons? Could he who remembers

the animals be insensible to the wants of his children?" (*The Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 133 f.).

His masterful lesson completed, Jesus then confirmed and exemplified its message on God's love and providence by his own actions. From the first moment of his apostolate, he left all and placed himself under his Father's care. "The foxes have dens, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head" (Mt. 8:20).

The "Our Father"

Having instructed the people in the doctrine of God's Fatherhood, it is not surprising that Jesus exhorted the people to pray in this manner: "Our Father . . ." This was, as St. Augustine remarks in his commentary on the passage, a new form of prayer. Nowhere in the Old Testament is there any instruction or invitation for the Chosen People to say "Our Father," or to pray to God as to a Father. Always through the Old Testament God was to them a Master; and they were servants. (It is true, of course, that the prophets pointed out that, had Israel been more faithful, God would have been a Father to him).

The fittingness of the address, "Our Father," can be readily seen from the facts of creation, providence, and our Redemption; but added to these is the

supernatural care God has expressed in his relationship with us. The supernatural order, with its grace of filial adoption, is certainly the primary aspect of God's Fatherhood. It sounded insistently and clearly all through our Lord's teaching, from his first addresses to the people to his last words on Calvary. His disciples, too, received explicit instructions about the supernatural love of their Father in heaven. Theirs was to be a life of contradiction and trial because the servant could not be greater than the Master. But like their Master they were to be calm and fearless in all their difficulties, for their Father, who numbered even the hairs on their heads, would be with them to care for and protect them.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

The Father is a loving Father, and his love is a merciful one. The classical teaching of our Lord on this mercy is embodied in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk. 15:11-32), which is actually the last in a triad of parables illustrating the same attribute of divine mercy. The strayed sheep and the lost drachma are, as it were, preludes to this most moving of the three comparisons. And it is the most moving of the three precisely because of the father-son relationship it uses. It is often referred to as the pearl of the Gospel parables.

The story is familiar enough; what is of interest here is the action of the father, who is a figure of the infinitely kind and merciful God: the father "ran and fell upon his neck and kissed him" (Lk. 15:20) in what Marmion calls an authentic portrait of the heavenly Father. The Scribes and Pharisees murmured against Christ's attitude toward sinners, and it was for that reason that he used the parable — to show the extraordinary goodness of our Father who forgets all the ingratitude, all the baseness of the prodigal, who remembers only that his son "was dead."

This parable, then, assures us that the loving-kindness and mercy of the Father is unbounded, free, and infinite. It is not hyperbole. The father in the parable is only an image of our merciful Father; and the portrait is correspondingly dim and pale in comparison with the reality to which it alludes. In the parable, the father awaits his son's return, but God never loses sight of the sinner: he follows him, solicits him by grace, and leaves nothing undone to bring about his return. Francis Thompson appropriately calls him "the Hound of heaven."

Jesus confirmed the teachings of his apostolate even to the close of his earthly life when he said to the people: "My teaching is not my own but his who sent me" (Jn. 7:

16). He came in the name of his Father, and the whole of his life was directed toward the revelation of that Father. His mission of teaching men may well be summed up in the words, "Come to the Father," which were heard over and over by St. Ignatius of Antioch, like a murmur of living water at his heart's depth. These words, "Come to the Father," echo on every page of the Gospel.

"There is an impression abroad that devotion to the Blessed Mother is being soft-pedaled by the Vatican Council as if it would be a block to the unity of Christians.

"Nothing could be further from the truth, and Pope Paul fittingly climaxed the last session of the Council by giving Our Lady the new title, Mother of the Church.

"God chose her as the means of His coming into our world, and we can find no better way of coming to Him than through her, no better way of being one than as her children.

"The main meaning of Mary for us should be that she is totally and entirely human, not divine but one of us. In the splendor and dignity that God conferred on her, we can catch the true heart of the Christian message . . .

"When we call her Blessed Mother, we see our own blessedness. When we call her Mother of the Church, we see the Church as Christ continued in the world, bringing God to man and man to God as she did and does."

Fr. CHARLES F. X. DOLAN, S.J.
Speech to Mother of Mercy
Retreat League, Buffalo, N.Y.
May 2, 1965

The Religious, a Victim with Christ

Sister M. Marcia Stobnicka, F.S.S.J.

Religious life means union with the slain and risen Christ. Even more urgently than the layman, the religious must be drawn to the liturgy, must center his life around the sacrifices of Jesus Christ and through it attain his fulfillment as a human being as well as a religious.

In fact, according to Pius XII, all the elements in the liturgy of the Church "would have us reproduce in our hearts the likeness of the divine Redeemer" (Mediator Dei). Before him, St. Pius X had similarly found in liturgical participation the key to a universal restoration in Christ. Now, by virtue of his vows, the religious must take a special interest, and must live a special involvement in, this "restoration." Let it be noted at once that the Latin used by Pius X himself, "instaurare omnia in Christo," is a traditional but erroneous term signifying a much broader reality expressed in the Greek *anakephalaiosis*, of Eph. 1:10. The motto of the saintly pontiff really means **to place all things under their head, Christ.**

Union with Christ in the sacramental re-enactment of his passion, death, and resurrection: this is the privileged means at the disposal of the religious for the accomplishment of his goal. It is in that timeless action, that piercing of the temporal by the eternal, that the religious himself is most ef-

SISTER M. MARCIA teaches religion and languages at Immaculate Academy, Hamburg, N. Y. She holds a master's degree in theology.

fectively assimilated to his head and thus enabled to transmit the life he receives to others, to draw them as well to the Fountain of Life. The liturgy, as Guardini puts it, "creates a universe brimming with fruitful spiritual life and allows the soul to wander about in it at will and develop itself there" (The Church and the Catholic, 177).

In the liturgy, as in a school of sanctity, a religious life is enabled to reach full fruition by drinking in holiness at its principal source: by taking an active part in the Mass as the day's center, in the Divine Office as the extension of the Eucharistic Celebration, in the cycle of feast and fasts which hallow the year, and in the sacraments which enable us to encounter the living Christ acting in his Church.

The Mass, Sacrifice of Christ and the Religious

It would be difficult to imagine any better way of uniting the religious (as an individual as well as in the body of his community) to Christ, than the Mass. By this we do not mean "the Mass" simply as objective sacrifice, but rather a full and wholehearted participation in it, in the spirit of Vatican II and the recent liturgical decrees.

Sacrifice, like prayer, has been an everyday occurrence enshrouded in a historical background. The simple and strikingly unified Canon of apostolic times and the first Christian centuries has become clouded with accretions of

various national origins and is only now in the process of being restored to its primitive simplicity. Yet this is not to say that it has ever lost what is really essential to it. It was at the beginning, and never in the course of its history has it ceased to be, the signature of Christ to the Charter by which he founded his religion.

It would be useless to begin a study of the Mass with an a priori definition of sacrifice and then attempt to show how the Mass fits such a notion. For the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is distinct from all other sacrifices. It certainly has features in common with them, but this is for reasons quite opposite to those usually alleged. The Mass has not borrowed anything from Jewish religion, from pagan religious or the natural order; on the contrary, it is rather these latter that have borrowed, if one may put it thus, from the Mass. Natural and Jewish sacrifices, to the extent that they were commanded or accepted by the God of nature, reflected something hidden in his mind which he intended from the first to manifest more perfectly in the one true Sacrifice which the Son of God himself would offer to his Father.

Mediator Dei is a definitive explanation of the sacrificial character of the Mass; it considers the Eucharistic Celebration to be the Sacrifice of Christ, of the Church, and of the Christian. For our purposes, this last notion—the Mass as the Christian's sacrifice, is most important. To understand better the teaching of **Mediator Dei** on the subject, it will be helpful first to see the errors against which the encyclical was directed.

First, the Mass is no mere empty

commemoration of Christ's passion and death, but a true and proper act of sacrifice. The High Priest, by an unbloody immolation offers himself as a most acceptable Victim to his Father, as he did on the Cross. The priest is the same Jesus Christ, and the minister at the altar represents him. Likewise the Victim is the same divine Redeemer in his human nature with his true Body and Blood.

In the second place, Pius XII definitively rejects the notion that the priest alone offers the Mass and the laity are merely devout and approving spectators: "Now it is clear that the faithful offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest from the fact that the minister at the altar, in offering a sacrifice in the name of His members, represents Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body; hence the whole Church can rightly be said to offer up the victim through Christ."

It would be wrong to assume that this means that the faithful have the priestly power to perform a liturgical rite: "What the priest does personally by virtue of his ministry, the faithful do collectively by virtue of their intention." As Clifford Howell, S.J., has so well explained in *Of Sacraments and Sacrifice*, this means that the word offer has two quite different senses: one being "to consecrate," and in this sense the priest alone renders Christ present on the altar as a victim; and the other, a simple offering of the Victim already present, together with all that one is and has; this is performed by both priest and faithful.

Precisely because the priest places the Victim on the altar, he offers it to God the Father for the glory of the Trinity and for the

good of the entire Church; the faithful share in this action in a twofold way: by offering the sacrifice **through** the priest, and by offering it **with** him.

No idea could be more opposed to the true spirit of the liturgy than the supposition that we can bring to the altar some sacrifice of our own, complete in itself, which we ourselves have made prior to our meeting Christ at the altar.

The priest's act of consecration is necessarily oblation; it is impossible for him to consecrate and yet not offer. The people's offering is not done the same way; they do not do it by any external rite but "by uniting their sentiments of praise, entreaty, expiation, and thanksgiving with the sentiments or intentions of the priest, in order that in the oblation of the Victim, those sentiments may be presented to God the Father also by the priest's external rite."

The third point of the encyclical, which contributes to the proper understanding so essential to our enlightened participation in the Mass, is the presentation of the Holy Sacrifice precisely as a sacrifice of each of us as an individual. "In order that the oblation by which the faithful offer the divine Victim in this sacrifice to the heavenly Father may have its full effect," the Pope insists, "it is necessary that the people add something else, namely, the offering of themselves as victims."

Infinitive though it is in value, the objective Sacrifice of the Mass will not guarantee an empty hell at the end of the world. Its efficacy **must be applied**, must have subjective fulfillment, for it to be of any use whatever to the individual Christian or religious. And by far

the best way, the most effective means of applying it to the individual is for him to take an active part in it as he attends it. Such participation makes his faith more ready to work through love; it makes him more devout; it consecrates him more perfectly to the furthering of God's glory; and, above all, it conforms him as perfectly as possible to the slain and risen Christ.

The priest, then, is especially empowered to celebrate the Mass. But this Sacrifice is a constant reminder to all religious that there is nothing more important in God's eyes, nothing more precious than their sharing in that priestly act. The very prayers framing the Sacrifice incite us to contrition (a disposition fundamental to holiness): "I confess to almighty God . . . Take away from us, O Lord, our iniquity . . . Lord, have mercy . . ." They urge us to surrender ourselves utterly to God: "In a humble spirit may we be received by you, O Lord." They express perfectly the adoration we creatures owe to our Maker: "We praise you, we adore you, we glorify you . . ." They frame in fitting terms the gratitude we must feel toward so generous a Benefactor: "We give you thanks for your great glory . . . What shall I render to the Lord for all he has rendered to me?" And the proper parts of the Mass outline a complete program of sanctification as they place Christ before us in the Gospels or carry the Apostles' message in the Epistles.

Just as the liturgy, under the guiding hand of the Church, creates an awareness of the sublimity and profundity of the Mass, the Franciscan school of theology too, in its own way, lends a certain in-

sight and penetration of its own to our contemplation of the Sacrifice in which we share. It is Saint Francis himself that reminds us of our duty to partake with the greatest possible devotion and dignity in the Eucharistic Celebration:

I entreat you all, brothers, to bring all the reverence and all the respect you ever can to bear on the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom whatever there is in heaven and on earth has been appeased and reconciled to God almighty (Letter to the Chapter General).

In the same letter, our holy Father emphasizes that Christ is the chief priest on whom the whole efficacy of the Mass depends, yet he does not fail to add that "All the rest of us must see to it that our activity in the Mass be directed toward him" and that, if anyone acts otherwise, he acts as a traitor.

Missing Mass was, for St. Francis, an unardonable negligence:

It is a great pity and pitiable weakness that you should have him thus present and still be interested in anything else in the world. Let everything in man halt in awe, let all the world quake, and let heaven exult when Christ, the Son of the living God, is there on the altar in the hands of the priest (ibid.).

Thomas of Celano declares:

Every fiber of Francis' heart was aglow with love for the Sacrament of the Body of Christ, and with exceedingly great wonder he would marvel at the loving condescension and the condescending love of the Lord. If illness prevented him from going to Church, he would assist at Mass spiritually, as indicated by his words: 'If I cannot be present at Mass, I adore the Body of Christ in meditation and with the eyes of the soul, in like manner as if I were present at Mass (2 Cel. 201).

The influence of St. Francis and his Order in the development of the Latin liturgy is well known. Although the Canon was already fixed by the thirteenth century, the Friars Minor are responsible for the insertion of eighteen prayers which today comprise a part of the Ordinary of the Mass. Of particular importance is their formulation of the order, or sequence of the various parts of the Mass. By adopting the Missal of the Curia and by constantly seeking a uniform and devout celebration of the Eucharist, the followers of Saint Francis were most influential in stabilizing and enriching the liturgical setting of the Mass. According to Father Thurston, S.J., in the Catholic Encyclopedia, "The determining influence which established the arrangement of parts, the selection of Masses, etc., with which we are familiar in the Roman Missal today, seems to have been the book produced during the latter half of the 13th century under the Franciscan auspices and soon made popular in Italy under the name "Missale secundum consuetudinem Romanae Curiae" Article, "Missal," vol. 10, p. 356).

The teaching of the Church and of her historians and theologians, as well as the whole tradition of our Franciscan heritage, leaves no doubt as to the importance of the Mass in our life as religious. The schematic considerations presented in this article will have accomplished their purpose fully if they have succeeded in even intimating the crucial significance for Franciscan religious life, of an enlightened and eager implementation of the liturgical reforms which have been and are yet to be given us by the Church.

All things "were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

(Col. 1:16-17)

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Michael D. Mellach, O.F.M., Translator, Editor
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