COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

This month's cover, drawn by Father Xavier F. Simonetti, O.F.M., of Bishop Timon High School, Buffalo, N.Y., depicts St. Francis divesting himself of his last worldly possessions. Returning his clothing to his father, Francis told him, "Now I shall no longer say, 'My father Peter Bernardone,' but, 'Our Father who art in heaven'." — Bishop Guido, of Assisi, then covered him with his mantle.

The illustrations for this issue were drawn by Father Francis X. Miles, O.F.M., of St. Bonaventure University (pp. 266, 274, and 280), and Sister Mary Joanne, S.S.J., of Marymount Convent, Garfield, Ohio (p. 262).

the CORD

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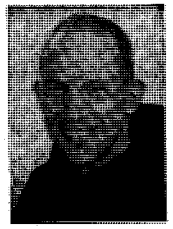
Renewal — Inner or Outer?



What the *National Catholic Reporter* has been shouting from the housetops, Mother Mary Francis has been saying with somewhat more gentleness and subtlety in our pages: the outward life of religious is desperately in need of a thorough-going reform. Mother Mary Francis has placed more emphasis, too, on the inner renewal presupposed by any outward change, if the latter is to be lasting and fruitful.

We do not believe, however, that Mother Mary Francis is suggesting a rigid temporal priority: that the change of heart must be fully perfected before we dare venture any external, concrete reforms.

You are fully as aware as we are, of the wretched failings of so many religious in our day. You know how poverty becomes, in so many cases, a tag for boasting, and a device for getting whatever one wants without having to work for it. You know how chastity becomes an excuse for avoiding people and how in perverted form it produces many crotchety bachelors and fussy spinsters besides the warm, open religious it produces when it is allowed to work its proper effect. You know how obedience can become an excuse for avoiding mature thought and decision making, and how in the hands of many superiors it has succeeded in subverting the New Testament concept of authority as service.

There is no way, short of inner renewal, to cope with all these profound problems. Yet no one will deny that we must simultaneously work out practical revisions in our way of life. We cannot wait for reforms to come from Rome; it has repeatedly been pointed out in the press of late that reforms must come from the grass roots.

On the other hand, we cannot afford to plunge unthinkingly into the execution of every possibility that comes to mind. What is most needed at this time is serious and open communication. That is why we are eager to expand our Riposte column, if only you will meet its challenge and sacrifice some of your time and energy to share your ideas with your confreres. Please, let us hear from you.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, ofm

The Franciscan Ideal of Poverty

Father David, O. F. M. Cap.

In the eleventh canto of his Paradiso Dante describes how Jesus Christ espoused Poverty more than a thousand years before Francis of Assisi was inspired to do the same. From the highest throne of heaven came the Lord of Angels to seek the Lady Poverty, who was shunned and despised by men. He found her waiting for him at Bethlehem. She accompanied him as his loyal bride through life. And when at length his hour of supreme shame and suffering had struck, and he was abandoned by his most trusted friends, Poverty did not leave him for a moment. Even his own blessed Mother could not mount the cross with him, but Poverty did, and held close to him until death.

The conception of poverty as a bride was the most original and daring feat of the genius of Saint Francis. There is a temptation to think it was too daring, that the romantic halo he cast around poverty had little to do with reality. Before passing such a judgment it is only fair to find out what, in plain terms, poverty meant to Francis.

The Meaning of Poverty

From the beginning of Christianity those who have striven to model their lives as closely as possible on that of the divine Master, have seen the necessity of imitating him particularly in his poverty; for poverty was an outstanding feature of his life, and this was not by accident, but by design. He expressly required that those who wished to become his intimate followers should get rid of all their possessions.

Saint Francis' vocation to poverty was born of a desire to follow Christ, to model his life exactly on the life of Christ, to take the words of Christ in their utmost literalness.

To understand why Christ himself chose and recommended a life of voluntary poverty, one must examine two basic reasons for the intrinsic excellence of Christian poverty. The first reason, which was understood by some pagan philosophers before the time of Christ, is that poverty voluntarily embraced brings about a certain liberation of soul. It frees a person from the cares, distractions and temptations involved in acquiring, keeping and managing material wealth — things which our Lord compared to thorns that stifle the word of God in men's hearts, making it fruitless. Saint Paul warned his disciple Timothy that "those who seek to become

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rich fall into temptation... and into many useless and harmful desires which plunge men into destruction and damnation" (1 Tim. 6:9). Saint Francis described voluntary poverty as "the heavenly virtue by which... all impediments are lifted from the soul, so that it can freely unite itself to the eternal God."[1]

Though poverty may make a person materially dependent on others, when voluntarily adopted it makes him spiritually independent. Said Saint Teresa of Avila: "What do kings and lords matter to me if I have no desire to possess their money or to please them?... If poverty is embraced for God's sake, no one has to be pleased save God."[2]

But poverty as a Christian vocation has a deeper meaning, a more positive value than its liberating role. Briefly, it can be explained this way. A person's property is, in a sense, part of himself, an extension of his ego. By giving up his property for the love of God, or as Jesus Christ said, "for my name's sake," he takes an effective means of consecrating himself, his entire person, to God. Saint Francis realized this in a flash when, having renounced his patrimony in the presence of the bishop of Assisi, he declared: "Now I can truly say, Our Father who art in heaven."

This total renunciation of property from a religious motive is indeed a kind of sacrifice of self. The nature of this sacrifice is not understood until one understands the basic meaning of poverty. Do you know what it really means to be poor? Those who are really poor know it well. It means more than merely having nothing. The Book of Proverbs tells us: "The poor man shall be **hateful** even to his own neighbor, but the friends of the rich are many" (14:20). Shakespeare spoke of "the poor man's contumely."[3]

We may think it unfair and absurd that people should be judged or ranked according to their wealth; but in the world that's the way it is. The world regards more what people have than what people are.

> Through tattered clothes small vices do appear;
> Robes and furr'd gowns hide all.[4]

Saint Teresa declared: "For my own part, I believe that honor and money always go together... seldom or never is a poor man honored by the world; however worthy of honor he may be, he is apt to be despised by the world."[5]

Entry into religion is often referred to as 'leaving the world,' a phrase used in his Testament by Saint Francis. By the vow of poverty a religious does indeed leave the world and takes his place, as by right, among those who are the outcasts of this world, or the lowest in the world's reckoning. It was precisely in this sense that Saint Francis wished his followers to be known as **Minores.**

Many a religious will find it hard to believe all I have just said, and there can be two reasons for this. First, the religious may have the good fortune to live among a devoted Catholic people whose judgments on persons and things are not those of the world; or, secondly, in the lives of the religious poverty may not, in fact, shine out as it ought.

The truth is that the place of the religious in the world is among the poor. They must be conscious of this. They must go through the world as poor persons, and wish to be known as such. Anything that obscures this ideal of poverty is a form of infidelity to their vow and a falling away from their vocation.

Foundation of the Order

While there is something absolute and unchangeable about the religious ideals of obedience and chastity, the very notion of what constitutes poverty depends a good deal upon conditions of time and place. And, independently of conditions, there is more than one legitimate ideal of religious poverty recognized by the Church.

Prior to Saint Francis, all religious Orders had corporate ownership of their possessions. The ideal of poverty introduced into the world by him had three characteristics: (a) total renunciation of property, even in common; (b) a consequent dependence on alms; (c) a refusal to accept or use money.

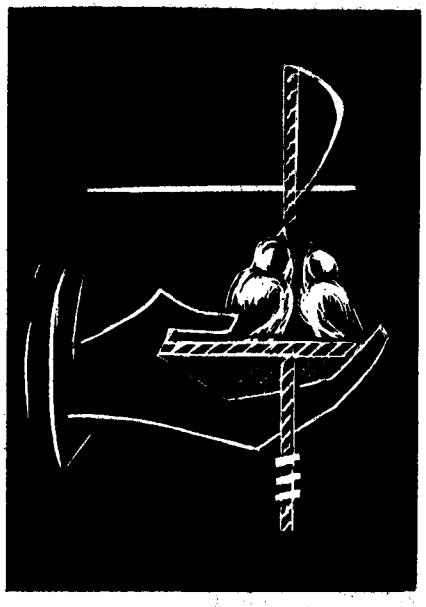
Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches that the chief vow of religion is that of obedience, and that the least of the three is the vow of poverty.[6] In the mind of Saint Francis the fundamental religious vow is that of poverty, which he made the very foundation of his Order.[7] There is, however, no real conflict between his view and that of Saint Thomas. Saint Francis understood poverty in a very comprehensive sense. Whenever he thought of poverty he thought of Christ, and the life of poverty meant nothing less, for him, than a life in imitation of the poor Christ, and therefore included in a sense all the Christian virtues, particularly humility. He used to say: "Know that poverty is the most excellent way of salvation, because it is the way of humility and the root of perfection." "In vain does he utterly renounce the world who keeps in the secret places of his own heart a shrine for his own will."

Loyalty to poverty meant, for Francis, loyalty to Christ, and that is why the ideal of poverty claimed all the allegiance of his chivalrous soul.

Minors?

In these days, when all traditional beliefs and attitudes are being looked into and questioned, the ideal of religious poverty has not escaped unnoticed. The instinct for possession is not only good, we are told, but necessary for the development of the human personality; and to thwart it is contrary to the natural structure of human psychology. And haven't the popes themselves taught that private property is not only in keeping with the natural law, but even an indispensable means to

1. **Fioretti,** ch. 12.
2. **Way of Perfection,** ch. 2.
3. **Hamlet,** III, 1 (Folio ed.).
4. **King Lear,** IV. 6.
5. **Way of Perfection,** ch. 2.
6. **Summa Theologica** 2-2, 186, 8; 187, 7, ad. 1.
7. Saint Bonaventure, **Legenda Maior,** 7.



human freedom and dignity. In short, does not the vow of poverty condemn religious to be "minors" in a sense never intended by Saint Francis?

This reasoning is as fallacious as are similar arguments against the other two vows. The motive behind the free renunciation involved in all three vows is not a conviction that what is renounced is evil or useless. In each of them something good is sacrificed for something better. To doubt the wisdom of this sacrifice is to doubt the wisdom of the divine Master who gave the invitation to it.

Incidentally, when it is said that private property is good, a certain condition should be added: provided it is held and used in accordance with the designs of the Creator. As Thomas Merton said,

> As soon as we take [created things] to ourselves, appropriate them, hug them to our hearts, we have stolen them from God. They are no longer his, but ours. And then they are seen in a new light: they are seen in reference to ourselves, as if we were the first cause and last end of their existence.[8]

No one ever saw more clearly that did Saint Francis the inherent goodness of everything made by God. And no one ever understood so well how this good is blighted by the corruption of the human heart, how creatures, instead of leading men towards the Creator, can lead away from him, how material things, instead of serving man's true needs, reduce him to a state of servitude.

Through poverty, on the other hand, Francis attained to a relationship with creatures similar to what existed in the Garden of Eden, where man was lord of material things instead of their slave, and used them with divine wisdom.

In the Book of Deuteronomy (11:24), we read of God's promise to the Israelites: "Every place your foot shall tread upon shall be yours." A eulogy of poverty attributed to Saint Francis explains, "To tread under foot is to despise. Poverty treads all things under foot, therefore she is the queen of all things." In his Rule, Francis declared that poverty makes the religious "heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven," which is reminiscent of the first beatitude of the Sermon on the Mount.

It is not denied that well-regulated possession and administra-

8. **The Silent Life** (Dublin, 1957), p. 30.

Although the Franciscan Order is usually described as mendicant, its economy does not rest exactly on a basis of begging.

tion of property helps to develop human personality, promotes maturity, and fosters responsibility. But, as experience in the world teaches, these qualities are engendered even through management of property not one's own. In fact this situation makes for a healthy interest combined with a still more healthy detachment.

It often falls to religious to be managers of material goods in a big way. Saint Benedict taught his monks to treat as sacred all the articles entrusted to their care or given for their use, because they all belonged to God.[9]

The Table of the Lord

Although the Franciscan Order is officially described as mendicant, its economy does not rest exactly on a basis of begging. The intention of Saint Francis was that the friars should endeavor to support themselves by work, any kind of work that was not incompatible with their religious life. If their work proved insufficient to support them, then they should "have recourse to the table of the Lord, asking alms from door to door."

It is true, however, that Francis did not look on begging with aversion, or as a necessary evil when there was no other means of subsistence. He was much more averse to striking a bargain for wages. Indeed he wasn't worried as to whether the wages came or not — he had other motives for working: "for good example and to avoid idleness."

His usual attitude to begging is explained by his unusual supernatural vision. He was keenly conscious of God's supreme dominion over everything and of his providence. Alms given out of charity were to him a gift coming from the bountiful hand of God, and he accepted the gift all the more gratefully because he knew he was thus giving the highest expression to his beloved poverty.

There are, of course, various categories of beggars, and some are more deserving than others. Francis was willing to admit that his friars not only had genuine claim on the charity of the people, but could even appeal to some kind of justice when seeking alms. When our Lord sent his apostles "without purse or wallet" to preach the gospel, depending on the good will of the people for their support, he said that "the laborer deserves his wages." And Saint Paul told the Corinthians: "If we have sown for you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap from you carnal [or material] things?" We are beggars that bring riches to many" (1 Cor. 9: 11; 2 Cor. 6:10).

But Francis never pressed that point. When looking for material help from the people he appealed only to the love of God.

He knew well that begging is humiliating. In fact Saint Bona-

9. **Rule of Saint Benedict**, ch. 31.

venture says that in begging one reaches the lowest degree of self-abasement and contempt of the world.[10] For this reason Saint Francis admonished the friars when questing for alms not to be ashamed, but to remember the Savior who chose to live on alms for our sake.

The Sacrament of Evil

If Saint Francis had a mistrust of all forms of wealth, he had a positive hatred of money, which a biographer of his called, with penetrating accuracy, the "sacrament of evil." For money, like a sacrament, is in the nature of a sign. It is not wealth, but it gives control over, and is the most strident expression of, wealth. In money is found, in concentrated form, all the spiritual dangers of real wealth.

> Money [said Cardinal Newman] is a sort of creation, and gives the acquirer, even more than the possessor, an imagination of his own power, and tends to make him idolise himself.... Even when his conduct is most disinterested and amiable (as in spending for the comfort of those who depend on him) still his indulgence of self, of pride and worldliness insinuates itself.[11]

More than real wealth, money tends to monopolize all the affections, to the exclusion of even God himself. "Where your treasure is, there is your heart too." One cannot serve God and mammon. In an entirely special way money stimulates avarice. The desire of other goods is normally related to, and limited by, their utility; but money can be desired for its own sake, and there is no natural barrier to limit this desire. As Juvenal said, "Crescit amor mummi, quantum ipsa pecunia crescit" — the more money a person has, the more his love of money grows.

The thirteenth century saw the beginnings of the overwhelming tyranny which today money exercises over the lives of men. Francis sensed its demoniac power, and this explains his uncompromising attitude towards it. For the servants of God, he said, money is nothing else than a devil and a poisonous serpent.[12]

Ever since he died his followers have been under criticism for the way they have carried out the ideals of their founder. The critics have mostly been persons who never tried it themselves. Franciscans would be the first to admit their own shortcomings; but they also maintain that in putting into practice the ideals that have been entrusted to them there must be a certain necessary adaptation to reality. In this process of adaptation they have ever been under the direction of the Holy See, to which Francis himself always looked for guidance and approval.

As long as the friars remained a simple fraternity, having no fixed training centers or educational institutions, they were able to subsist in the primitive economy of the middle ages without the use of money. That this sort of life could not last scarcely needs proving.

Already in the first century of the Order the popes relaxed, for specific cases, the precept forbidding money. At the present day in all the provinces of the Order money is used with dispensations, which are never given to individual friars or to the friars in general, but only to the superiors, who may authorize their subjects to use it in their name when necesity arises, for example when travelling. In some provinces the friars use vouchers instead of money, so as to avoid even touching that which Francis so much feared. Even today, in some parts of the world, a familiar sight is the Franciscan brother going around with a sack collecting alms in kind.

The good friar uses money only when he has to, and then with reluctance, as something that does not belong to him. When he is finished with it he hands back what is left to his superior, glad to be again without purse or wallet, in keeping with the words of the divine Master.

10. Saint Bonaventure, **De Mendicitate.**
11. **Parochial Sermons.** Sermon on danger of riches.
12. 2 Celano 68.

"YOU ASKED..."

Q. I read about two theories in regard to a gathering of priests in monasteries, at retreats or conventions, etc.: (1) that one community Mass with the priests all receiving Holy Communion, gives just as much honor to God as if each celebrated Mass individually; (2) that priests attending a Mass in a situation as mentioned above, are to be compared with the faithful lay people who are present at the Mass, that a priest attending a Mass cannot be said to be offering the Holy Sacrifice in the same manner as the celebrant. Which of these opinions is correct?

A. Pius XII is cited in **Worship** (March, 1965), pp. 170-171, in favor of the second opinion you have mentioned. Priests do not act in virtue of their ordination when they attend another priest's Mass, but rather in virtue of their Baptism; they therefore participate in the same way as the lay people that are present. The contemporary tendency of priests to do this, has its explanation in the symbolic nature of the Mass as a banquet that manifests and effects the unity of the People of God. They are certainly to be commended if they do this in addition to offering their own Masses; but not if they omit, on this account, their own celebration. In the circumstances you mention, they can and should emphasize the symbolic aspect, not by participating but by conce'ebrating. In concelebration, each priest does offer a Mass (and may accept a stipend for it). One may, finally, conceive of a situation in which there are not adequate facilities for each priest to offer Mass, nor for concelebration. When so compelled by necessity, priests certainly should participate as fully and as actively as possible in the community Mass, but without any implication that they are thus offering God the equivalent of the individual Masses they would otherwise say.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

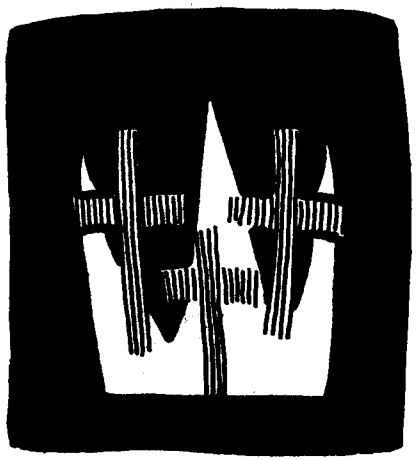
Marginals on

Perfectae Caritatis — III

Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.

Religious who are sincerely at work at the business of interior renovation will be religious receptive to the ideas of others and thus equipped to take their part in that "effective renewal and adaptation (which) demands the cooperation of all the members of an institute" (P. C. 4).

It may be necessary to recall to ourselves that cooperativeness is not an infused virtue but an acquired art. For everyone, its acquisition will entail such predictable hardships for fallen human nature as the practice of humility and meekness. For some, the acquisition will call for spiritual yeomen's work. But Vatican II is quite unequivocal about declaring that there will be no effective renewal or adaptation without this full cooperation. Superiors need not only to evoke cooperation among their subjects, but to practise it themselves in their relations with their communities. While cooperation already defines itself etymologically as the work of all together, it devolves in a special way upon the superior. It would be something of a tragedy for her to think herself exempt from what it is her duty to promote: the working of all together.



Our generation is specializing in discussion. But whether we are specialists **at** it is a question we shall have to ask ourselves. The two are not the same. It might be helpful to investigate some of the hazards in group discussions, dangers which either produce a tiresome sputtering-out of energies or, much more insidiously, render an apparently vital and animated discussion completely ineffective. Perhaps the commonest of such hazards is a deficiency in the art of listening.

More effective for the death of a discussion than the grosser expedients of interruption, contradiction, or floor holding, is the simple mental dialing out of views which do not coincide with our own. One could venture the opinion that it is better to be argumentative when one's personal views are challenged than impervious to challenge. Most of us prefer a hothead to a highhead. To listen requires humility, for the thesis basic to listening is that others may quite possibly have something of value to say, something from which we can profit. It presupposes a belief that I have not cornered the market on ideas. It retires me from the rostrum to the student assembly.

The art of listening is essential to the musician, the poet, the scientist. It is absolutely requisite to the Christian. And if the attitude of the learner and the listener is proper to all religious, it ought to be particularly characteristic of the Franciscan religious. Without it, family resemblance to the little seraphic listener of Assisi will be difficult to recognize. Saint Francis listened to God, to the Church, to his peers, to his subordinates. He became so adept in the art of listening that he even set up communication with lower creation. He was "for the birds" in a decidedly different sense than we give to that phrase today. Francis was, in fact, "for everybody," and was able to be so precisely because he listenend to everybody, just as he listened to everybody because he was for everybody. In the end, one of the most respectable Franciscan legends gives us to understand, he even spoke Wolf rather well. Surely he is an inspiration for us who may not be empowered by God to tame ravening wolves but who may still be able to fill up a heartening measure both of ecumenism and of inner-circle understanding by learning to listen to and to learn from growls which, after all, are not specific to quadrupeds.

Radical to any availing renewal and adaptation is attentiveness to God. Invoking the Holy Spirit is not an accepted prefatory Church usage in the sense of being a routine spiritual hors d'oeuvre before the practical menu of affairs. Maybe we need to consider this, to be realistically and practically conscious of our need to be led, guided, and inspired by God. In an age of much professional counselling, the Holy Spirit remains the Paraclete, the Counsellor, Francis of Assisi had his own future neatly mapped out, his course all charted. He became a universal and enduring figure as Saint Francis rather than fading out historically as a small town knight of no extra-familial significance to anyone, primarily because he learned how to listen to God and to shape his life by God's instructions, even though this entailed a complete reshaping of his own ideas and plans.

A superb listener, as superiors are presently warmly (and sometimes heatedly!) encouraged to be, Francis also provides inspiration in another area where superiors are currently urged to operate: the risk area. After listening to God and taking counsel, St. Francis was willing to risk making a mistake. He was not afraid to do the wrong thing so long as he was honestly trying to do the right thing. He knew that God is adept at bringing divine success out of human failure, and Francis was always prepared to do the best he could in the way he understood it, not being the type of man to spend his whole life taking barometric

pressures and waiting for the proper weather conditions in which to turn in a flawless performance. His faith and energy created its own weather. In the end, he created a whole new climate for Europe in the later Middle Ages, and even penetrated the Orient.

When the voice of God told Francis to "go and rebuild my Church which is falling into ruins," the saint listened carefully and heeded the voice. That he got the message all wrong was not only all right, but has given the rest of us meditation "material" for our lifetime. There is field for piquant speculation on the divine humor of God beholding Francis stumbling along with his stones, sweating and straining, singing between-times, "rebuilding the church." There are few things more lovable in a superior than his well-intentioned and admitted mistakes. Similarly, there is at times something almost detestable in the cautiousness of the worldly-prudent who may never do anything right because they are too afraid that they may do something wrong.

It is only when superiors strive to be virtuoso listeners to God that they will be equipped to "take counsel in an appropriate way and hear the members of the order in those things which concern the future well-being of the whole institute" (P. C. 4). What is "an appropriate way"? Is it not a manner à propos to others, rather than to oneself? Here we touch on the second hazard of group discussions, though we shall want to say more about the first. It is the danger that the superior may be, and quite indeliberately, achieving the unhappy paradox of freezing a discussion by the warmth of her own views.

This danger will be most imminent in a united and happy community. It will be a perennial threat to the community situation in which the superior is as warmly loved as she is deeply respected. Religious, particularly religious women, may have less difficulty in responding to the summons for free opinions with complete candor when they feel personally remote from the superior than when they have a great affection for her. The superior who is fortunate enough to have a loving and devoted community must take particular pains to foster openness. It may be necessary for her to withold her own opinion on certain points until she has heard the opinions of her subjects, not because the religious are immature children unable to form independent opinions or to pass personal judgments, nor again because their affection for the superior has created a hothouse atmosphere and one in which all the plants are vines, but for the simple and wholesome reason that we are all influenced in our judgments by regard for those we love, and the most spiritually refined are usually so influenced the most.

Wholesome, not weak, is the attitude, for example, of the superior who adjusts her plans, tempers her ideas, and delays certain objectively desirable actions to accommodate the spiritual and intellectual condition of the community. "He dawned upon the people, He did not take them by storm," writes Caryll Houselander of Christ. However, the superior must still be at pains to see that love's natural deference does not degenerate into intellectual paralysis. A strong-minded and warm-hearted superior may naively suppose that she is affording her community an opportunity for frank and open discussions of customs, revisions, or some other area of adaptation and renewal, when actually she is only providing an opportunity for the religious to tell her all the reasons she is right. Likewise, the religious can become almost totally unaware that they are really not thinking at all, but only waving flags for the status quo. There may, happily enough, be excellent reasons for cheering a particular status quo at the moment, but we ought never to do this automatically, much less by reflex. Do we not all know something of the situation where a group discussion amounts to the superior saying, "This is what we have always done"; and the community crying: "Hurrah!" This is what we shall go on doing," and the community responding with cheers? "Hurrah" is a delightful vernacular form of "alleluia" and the oftener it can validly be cried in a community, the better. But it must be an intelligent response, not a reflex grunt.

If a superior is aware of this kind of hazard in group discussions, she can insure against subjects becoming ditto marks either of herself or of one another by insisting that they give reasons for their views. If she gives out a list of points for discussion beforehand, it would be better not just to ask: What do you think about this?" but to query: "**Why** do you think so?" Not, "Should this common act of penance be retained?" but "**How** do you consider this penance is effective right now?" or "**Why** is it ineffective?" Not, "Should we abolish this usage?" but "What place do **you** feel this usage has in our communal witness to Christ? Could it be revitalized?"

Similarly, the superior could give practical testimony of her sincere openness to suggestion and prove the accessibility of her judgmental listening talents by sometimes expressing her pleasure that her subjects have been able to change her own opinions by the excellence of their invited judgments and the validity of their reasoning. If in these and other ways she honestly labors to create and maintain an open atmosphere, she will not only be able to exercise her listening powers to her own and the community's great advantage, but will receive the happy reward of witnessing the suicide of criticism.

When religious have pragmatic proof and existential knowledge that their intelligent and respectfully submitted opinions are always and truly welcomed by the superior, even though it is to be understood that she may not always be able to accept them or act on them, there is simply no reason to be critical, except in the case of the unhappy few who may have become addicted to criticism as a permanent mode of self-expression. However, more insidious than the mentality which impels

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a superior to bring down a verbal fist on all whom she considers non-conformists, is the kind of closedmindedness which cannot seriously envision the possibility of opposing opinions, or at least of their having any worth.

It is beyond question that there are today superiors who are serenely sure they have the pulse of their communities, whereas they actually have the pulse of only one section of the community. We may think we know the mind of our whole community — did we not give all the religious every chance to speak their minds? — when, not having allowed for the type of mind which is especially susceptible to paralysis either because of uneducated affection or timidity, we actually do not know the mind of quite a number and might be amazed if we did.

The hazard for the timidly silent in a group discussion is often created more by a vehemently outspoken few than by the superior. Who has not witnessed discussions in which two or three jeeps devour the little volkswagons on the first half mile? It is a very good thing to have strong opinions. It is an excellent thing, however, to be able to express them in an "I look at it this way" manner rather than in a "This is the way it is" fashion. It is a very practical possibility that a small group of persons will give an impression of a united opinion simply because there are too many mere auditors in the group and silence is accepted as consent, whereas it is actually sometimes impotent disagreement. And sometimes no one would be more surprised to discover that this silence is **not** consent than the vigorous "speakers." The art of listening which we have so praised in this marginal has nothing to do with paralysis.

It is imperative that the superior rectify situations like this if we are to have really functional group discussions which avail for the "future well-being of the **whole** institute" (P. C. 4). She can do this in several ways. One is to draw out the views of the timid beforehand in personal interviews, and then herself create an opening wedge for them in the group discussion. A simple "What about looking at it this way?" from the superior during the meeting can be a kind of "sacramental" for a reticent religious unable to make her own wedge, but able to function and contribute in the wake of such charity.

"What about looking at it this way?" The superior herself may not see it this way at all, but she clears a path for the timid who do and who often have a surprising contribution to make once they are empowered to make it. Such a method is not to form a discussion but only healthily to condition it in favor of the retiring who are not temperamentally equipped to fend for themselves in this region. The superior ought also to make it a point to provide as many soapboxes at a discussion as there are religious present. Some she will even have to give a helping hand to mount the thing. The leapers she may occasionally have to help down.

If there is an unfairness to subjects in their not being able for one reason or another to express their opinions in a group discussion, this situation has another dimension of unfairness. It is in

the direction of the superior who thinks she knows the mind of her community, but does not.

Saint Francis went to some lengths to draw out the timid, as is witnessed in the case of Brother Rufino. That he was willing to accept the counsel of his subjects to the very realistic extent of changing his mind appears repeatedly in his life. While the incident of the meal with Saint Clare is rejected by some scholars as legendary, its persistence in Franciscana seems to indicate truth by allegory if not by actuality. We are told that Francis, determined not to be a party to the repast, heard the voice of his friars and then himself made a decision, which was to follow their advice. It is a significant comment on the saint, too, that the friars showed no hesitation in speaking their views to him. The superior who considers it a weakness in authority to admit a change of opinion, shows that she is very unsure of herself, her subjects, and her position.

To be jealous of an authority image is already to be unqualified to be a servant which is what a superior is meant to be. Saint Francis never changed his ideals, but he rather frequently changed his mind. And he was much given to seeking counsel, from God in prayer, from the Scriptures, from his companions. Although we sometimes tend to confuse our ideals with our ideas, the two are definitely not the same. Perhaps we might even say that loyalty to ideals is best serviced by openness to new ideas. It can happen that a stubborn tenacity to our opinions, coupled with a convenient deafness to the views of others, testifies to the basic unsureness of our own position. If we are really certain of the validity of our stand, why do we arch our mental backs when it is questioned?

There are few things more frustrating in life than talking to a person who is determined not to listen, who may even have a sense of dedication to nonlistening. And how much is lost because of such situations! For, whether it be from vehement though charitable opposition from within or from bitter and uncharitable opposition from without, we can always learn something from our opponents, provided only we know how to listen. If nothing else, we can at least learn to suffer patiently with Christ, and this is already a tremendous service toward the "well-being of the whole institute."

It is unfortunate that the very group discussions which are designed to dissolve tensions and strain, to promote openmindedness, are instead sometimes remarkably successful in erecting tensions and strain and in manifesting closemindedness. Where there is unwillingness to listen, one may suspect that what purports to be firmness is actually merely stubborness. And stubborness is only a highly specialized form of weakness.

No normal person likes to be mistrusted. We may need to assess the calibre of our discussions to discover whether we are not so woefully deficient in tact at times as to give the impression that we consider any opinion other than our own a direct assault on the good of religion. Certainly there is much to deplore in certain current writings on the religious life,

and one can scarcely be impressed by the splendid logic of certain modes of "thought" enjoying an ephemeral popularity at present. But surely we need not parade our own opinions like a rifle-bearing sentry in the circle of community discussions. Such an attitude can all too easily degenerate into sarcasms, the language of immaturity, and eventuate in something akin to harangue. It would be a happy service to clean out the verbal snipers' nests in many papers and periodicals today and replace them with adult discussion columns. In the measure that we perfect the dark art of diatribe, so do we unfit ourselves for Christian encounters by which we learn and grow.

Group discussions will have to be characterized by a palpable trust in one another if they are to be availing. Of course, that will necessitate excluding from them those who have been at some pains to demonstrate their lack of commitment to the common ideal. Such exclusion is an office of charity to all concerned, though the door for re-entrance should always be left standing wide open, inviting a change of heart.

That blessed counselling of superiors and servicing of one another which group discussions should provide is a means of enlightenment. But we must expect that light is always going to give off a little heat. And the brighter the light, the more heat is generated. This is nothing to fear or even to suspect. It is only when a discussion gets acrid or scorching that we know we have a defective lighting system. Or maybe have blown a spiritual fuse. A bit of heat and even a puff or two of generative smoke is perfectly normal.

The story is told of the Italian opera company at rehearsal. The baritone insisted that the soprano over-sang in their duet; the soprano said the baritone couldn't read. The tenor flew into a fit of impatience over the endless repetitions of the duet. The director flung out both arms and pleaded with the sorpano: "pee-ah-nee-eesimo, pleeese!" his dark brow wrinkled with anguish and his Italian eyes full of the facile tears of the stricken Latin. The soprano stomped her foot. The baritone turned his back. The tenor paced the stage. But after the prescribed measure of tears had been filled up by the director, it all came right somehow. At any rate, the few bewildered and alarmed spectators who had been admitted to the rehearsal survived to watch the performers and the director conclude the stormy evening by falling upon one another's necks and departing in high spirits for an ample spaghetti dinner.

The most interesting thing about this story is that it is true. Let superiors and discussants expound its parable, each to himself.

Saint Augustine:

The Restless Human Heart

Lester Bowman, O. F. M.

> Above all the Church knows that her message is in harmony with the most secret desires of the human heart when she champions the dignity of the human vocation, restoring hope to those who have already despaired of anything higher than their present lot. Far from diminishing man, her message brings to his development light, life, and freedom. Apart from this message nothing will avail to fill up the heart of man: "Thou hast made us for thyself," O Lord, "and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee.[30]

It is significant that the Council quotes these famous words of Saint Augustine in the context of the Church's desire to bring the gospel to atheists. The atheist has long heard the language of Christianity, be it scholastic or biblical, and has found it meaningless to him. It failed to relate to what he knew was real, and so he judged it unreal.

Saint Augustine meditated deeply on the very real experience of Christianity. And in his writings, especially the **Confessions** and the **De Trinitate**, he expressed that Christian experience from its roots — "the most secret desires of the human heart" — to mystic heights. The Council's reference to him might be a reminder that this deep experience too is an integral part of the living Christian tradition: something to be pondered and developed no less than things biblical and liturgical.

"Thou Hast Made Us for Thyself"

"Thou hast made us for thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee."[2] For Augustine, the common human experience of restlessness of spirit, of dissatisfaction, of frustration, is tied up intimately with our destiny to share the life of God. It is something of a call, drawing us to seek rest in God.

But why should Augustine make this connection? Might it be — as some might charge — that he is really running away from the anguish of human life, hiding like an ostrich in a soft and gentle God? Or is there really an organic link, a fundamental connection between the experience of restlessness and our call to share God's life?

Augustine recognizes something in man that reflects God in a real way, and points to God as a sign.

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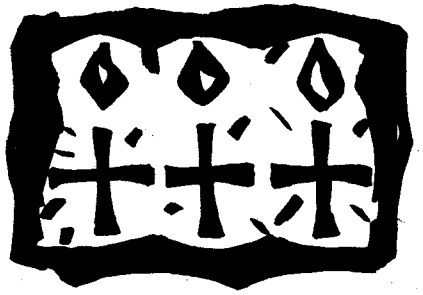
1. **Constitution on the Church in the Modern World**, #21. Quoting St. Augustine. **Confessions**, I, 1.
2. **Confessions, I, 1. Trans. F. J. Sheed. (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1943)**, p. 3.

He calls it the image of God in man. Human consciousness itself is to Augustine an image of God. It is something of an image in that the interrelated activities of the mind reflect the Trinity: The mind remembers itself, understands itself, and loves itself.[3] Now, in Augustine's thought memory is the whole soul as conscious of itself and of other things: it is our basic self-consciousness.[4] Understanding is like reflex consciousness, the mind comprehending and forming concepts. Then in human consciousness — the basic awareness of self, self-recognition, and self-affirmation, there is an image of God, at least a remote one.[5]

But the soul reflects God and points to him primarily "by the very fact that it is capable of him, and can be a partaker of him."[6] Augustine has in mind that the soul is essentially "able to use its reason and intelligence to understand and behold God."[7] But his meaning goes deeper. It is not merely that the human mind can have God as just another one among its many objects. Rather he is different, unlike the changeable things in such experience: "You are the Lord God of the mind, and all these things suffer change, but you remain unchangeable over all."[8] Human consciousness reflects and points to God in that it is capable of him, and capable of him as the unchangeable being, as Lord of the mind itself.



Augustine is driving at something deeper than a sort of exclusively intellectual knowledge of God. He says that any rational creature is so constituted — by its very nature — that it cannot be the source of its own happiness. It must turn its own changeable being toward the unchangeable good if it is to be happy. Otherwise it is miserable.[9] The mind's capability of God is not something a man can take or leave. He needs God for his own happiness.

Even more than happiness is involved. Augustine counsels us not to place our hope in men, for "a man is something as long as he clings to Him by whom he was made a man. For if he drifts away from Him, man is nothing, along with the ones to whom he clings."[10]

3. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 8, 11. **The Fathers of the Church,** v. XLV Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1963), p. 426.
4. **Confessions, X, 17, 26. The Fathers of the Church, v.** XXI (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1953), pp. 285-86. Cf. note 55.
5. **De Civitate Dei,** XI, 26. **The Fathers of the Church,** v. XIV (New York: Fathers of the Church, Inc., 1952), p. 228.
6. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 8. p. 426.
7. **Ibid.,** XIV, 4. p. 418.
8. **Confessions,** X, 25. Sheed, p. 235.
9. **Epistola** CXL, 23. PL 33, 561.
10. **Enarratio in Psalmis,** LXXV, 8. PL 36, 962.

By sin, that is by trying to get along without God, "we have willed to become nothing."[11] Man's very **being** is at stake: his capability of God means that he must know or relate to God if he is to be even himself.

The soul loves itself, and its inmost drive and urge is to maintain its own **being.** But Augustine sees a paradox in this fundamental drive. "For although the soul so loves itself that, if the alternative is proposed to it, it would rather lose all that it loves less than itself than to perish, yet by abandoning Him who is above it — with whom alone it can preserve its strength and enjoy his light — ... it has become so weak and so dark that it has unhappily slipped away even from itself into those things which are not itself and to which it itself is superior."[12] The soul clings to itself, to its own being. But it cannot maintain anything like an authentically human existence if it abandons God, for it would lose the ground of its changeable self and of all the changeable things of its experincee. It would fail to recognize the one reality that is not empty, and be immersed in things that are in themselves inadequate and even meaningless. The soul must leave itself and its concern for its own security and preservation; it must turn its own changeable being toward the unchangeable good if it is to be happy[13]

The soul that fails to ground itself in God becomes impaired and disfigured as the image of God.[14] The image of God in it is worn away and corrupted by sin as if it were rubbed against the earth, that is, worn away by earthly desires.[15] That means that the person loses his true perspective, and fails to respond to or even recognize his own deep need for God. The person fails to recognize the restlessness of heart for the call that it is, and tends to forget it, escape it, in being busy with the world. The soul loses its orientation to God and becomes immersed, even drowned: "It has unhappily slipped away even from itself into those things which are not itself and to which it itself is superior, through the affections it cannot control, and the delusions from which it sees no way to return."[16] Apart from God, apart from grace, man forgets that he is capable of God, meant for God, and deludes himself by an exclusive dedication to things that have no real meaning apart from God.

Yet even in the midst of the escape and distraction of exclusively earth-centered activity, there remains the gnawing call of God. "Yet it remembers [is conscious of] the Lord its God.... it is re-

11. **Sermo** XXII, 9. PL 38, 153.
12. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 14, 18. P. 436.
13. **Epistola** CXL, 23. PL 33, 561.
14. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 8. p. 426.
15. **Sermo** XC, 10. PL 38, 566.
16. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 14. p. 436.

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minded that it should turn to the Lord as to that light by which it was touched in some way, even when it was turned away from him."[17] The distracted heart cannot completely escape the restlessness and emptiness that are the sign of God's call.

So it is that God has made us for himself. "Fecisti nos **ad te.**"[18] That is, in a sort of inner motion or tension toward God. The restlessness of heart, the misery of emptiness, have the value of a sign of that inner search, of the "most secret desires of the human heart."[19] "Man desired to leave the one by whom he was made. God allowed it, as if saying, Let him desert me, and let him discover himself, and his misery will prove that he is capable of nothing apart from me."[20]

"Restless Till They Rest in Thee"

The experience of the dedicated Christian is something of a paradox. By the undeserved mercy of God, the just have been called out of the sinful condition resulting from Adam's sin,[21] as if brought from misery and ruin to the firm living structure of the Church.[22] In a sense, membership in the Church is the practical mode of fulfilling man's capability for God in this life. Augustine prays for Arians: "Let them become what they are not so that they may preserve what they are: that is, let them become Catholics, so that they may preserve their being men. Lest the creature of God perish in them, let the grace of God come."[23] But Augustine is not thinking so much of a mere legal belonging to the Church as an institution. He sees that just as we are together in sin because we are members of Adam, so we cannot be reborn and live unless we are members of Christ and conformed to Christ.[24] In other words, the deep need of the human soul is already fundamentally fulfilled through being incorporated into Christ.

But there remains more. The renewal of the image of God dulled and disfigured by sin is accomplished gradually, with the help of grace, by a day-to-day conversion from exclusively temporal interests to awareness of the divine.[24] And the process will not be complete until the person reaches heaven: " 'But we know that, when he appears, we shall be like to him, for we shall see him as he is' (1 Jn. 3:2). Hence, it is clear that the full likeness to God will then be realized in this image of God when it shall receive the full vision of

17. **Ibid.** XIV, 15. p. 440.
18. **Confessions,** I, 1. PL 32, 661.
19. **Church in the Modern World,** §21.
20. **Sermo** XXVI, 2. PL 38, 172.
21. **Ibid.,** 12. PL 38, 177.
22. **De Praesentia Dei. Liber in Epistolis** CLXXXVII, 10, 33. PL 33, 845.
23. **Sermo** CXXXIX, 4. PL 38, 772.
24. **De Praesentia Dei,** 9, 30. PL 33, 843.
25. **De Trinitate,** XIV, 17. p. 441.
26. **Ibid.,** XIV, 19. p. 447.

him . . ."[26] Then, "its desire will be satisfied with good things, with unchangeable goods, with the Trinity itself, its God, whose image it is."[27]

Therefore, while grace is for the Christian already a fundamental fulfillment of his capability for God, he is by no means dispensed from the common restlessness of heart, from waiting for full happiness. In this life he is being conformed to 'God through grace, through the charity worked in him by the Holy Spirit, and so he is saved from mixing himself up with exclusively earth-centered concerns.[28] And yet, since this is inevitably incomplete, the Christian will experience that restlessness of heart, dissatisfaction, and emptiness that are the sign of his capability of God. But his task is to recognize that experience for what it is, the call of God, and respond to it. He lives in faith. He is spurred by the experience of his own emptiness to place all his hope in God, in an act that must be called adoration.

> When, therefore, we contemplate His image in our very selves. let us, like the younger son in the Gospel [the prodigal son], return to ourselves, rise and seek Him from whom we have departed by sin.[29]
>
> Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is thy power, and of thy wisdom there is no number. And man desires to praise thee. He is but a tiny part of all that thou hast created . . . . thou dost so excite him that to praise thee is his joy. For thou hast made us for thyself and our hearts are restless till they rest in thee."[30]

27. **Ibid.,** XIV, 14, 20. pp. 438-39.
28. **De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae,** I, 13, 23. PL 32, 1321.
29. **De Civitate Dei,** XI, 28. p. 233.
30. **Confessions,** I, 1.

Riposte:

In Defense of St. Francis

In response to the riposte, "Christ's Risen Manhood" (THE CORD, July, 1966), I think it is only fitting that someone clear up the idea as to where the stress is to be put on the humanity of Christ for Franciscans. Sister M. John Hartmann, O.S.F., says that we must put our stress "on the resurrected, divinized humanity of Christ."

To understand fully our life in the Risen Christ, we must also realize to what extent the Sacred Humanity lived by the Holy Spirit. Durrwell tells us, "It is natural that our life in the glorified Christ should be seen in the framework of the action of the Spirit, since Christ in His glory lives by the Spirit. The whole work of justification, and all the manifestations of the divine life, take place at once 'in Christ' and 'in Spirit'" (p. 215). But "The Spirit, who invaded the bodily humanity of Christ at Easter, is for mankind a force of incorporation into the Son of God; he effects our salvation by grafting our humanity into that of our risen Saviour." The dynamic element gives the Church a share not only in the **being** of the paschal Christ, but in the very **action** whereby he died and rose again.

At the root of everyone's life in Christ and in the Spirit there is to be found a death and resurrection "with Christ": a permanent participation in the act of redemption. After baptism, the contact with Christ's death is preserved, for instance through the sufferings the believer undergoes at the moment of his own death, in the labors of the apostolate, and indeed, at every moment of life: "With Christ I am nailed (perfect tense in the Greek, an act which continues) to the cross" (Gal. 2:19).

"The principle of all Christian existence is this constant participation in Christ's **death** and **resurrection**. . . . The Church does not appear as merely a static entity, indentified with the being of Christ in glory: she is transformed into Christ in his redemptive act, in the **death** which brought him into that glory" (p. 221).

Life in the Risen Christ, then, means that the Christian is dead to all selfish demands that would hinder his life of union with Christ — a life governed completely by the Spirit. As for this death of self, Durrwell says that "it is only in principle, no one has yet wholly left the sphere of the flesh, and some are **far too slow** in quitting it" (p. 229). The paschal mystery does govern our lives, but, and this is a point that seems to be somewhat overlooked by many, it is a law of death and resurrection. At this point, can we not say that Francis, who emulated the crucified to the actual physical resemblance of his wounds, also participated in the life of the Risen Christ to its fullest? Because Francis strove always to be completely dead to self he shared in the paschal mystery as few others have even to this day.

It is not for us to sit back and think that such a complete renunciation is only for the greatest of God's chosen saints. No; we must become involved in our own personal witness as members of the mystical body and also as followers of St. Francis. "In order that the body of Christ may be built up in us, each of us must reach the high point of free activity where we join our Saviour in his supreme perfection, in love" (p. 227).

But the perfection of love consists in giving, and since the redemptive act is yet to be accomplished in us, the same Spirit that led Jesus into the desert and to Calvary, will also lead us to a fuller realization of the paschal mystery and even to Alverna's heights, where with Francis we will realize in varying degrees the perfection of love.

Sister Povera Clara, O.S.C.

The Three Vocations

Claude Kean, O. F. M.

On one of our Lord's many missionary tours through Galilee, there occurred three episodes that biblical commentators call the "Three Vocations." Saint Luke records them in the ninth chapter of his Gospel. Whether they occured on the same day, or whether Saint Luke grouped them together merely for their similarity, is uncertain. In either event, they throw considerable light on the meaning of a religious vocation.

I.

The first episode involved a Scribe, an ecclesiastical lawyer. At Capharnaum that day, Christ had wrought spectacular miracles: he had exorcized demons, he had "cured all their sick." He was, therefore, the excited talk of the town. As he and his Apostles were at length leaving, a Scribe overtook him, and volunteered eagerly: "I will follow you wherever you go." This man's "vocation" was not Christ's idea; it was entirely his own idea.

Why did this Scribe wish to attach himself to Christ? Probably out of self-interest. He, like all of his sect, expected the Messiah to be a military leader, who would break the Roman hold on Palestine and restore the nation to Jewish rule. Christ seemed to carry the credentials of that Messiah. The Scribe, with canny investor's instinct, would join the vanguard of Christ's movement, so that he might later share its rewards — a position of political power and wealth.

Christ's answer quickly deflated whatever false expectations the Scribe entertained. "The foxes have dens," he said, "and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." No power or wealth lay in store for his followers, but humility and poverty. His kingdom would be not of this world. His path would lead not to a throne, but to a cross.

Now, our religious vocation, unlike the Scribe's, was not our own idea. We did not judiciously survey all possible vocations, like a housewife surveying melons at a market, and then conclude: "I'll take **this** one." We did not invite ourselves to religious life. Christ invited us; by implanting in us the desire for religious life; by equipping us with the physical, mental, moral fitness requisite for it; by inducing our religious superiors to accept us in his name. "You have not chosen me," he plainly declares, "but I have chosen you." Precisely why he chose us, only he knows. Perhaps Saint Paul touches the answer when he humbly admits: "He chose us, having mercy on us."

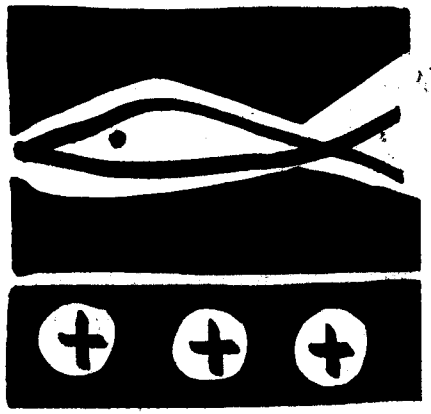
To what manner of life did Christ call us? Certainly, not to a life of cushioned comfort, gilt-edged opulence, round-the-clock pleasure, pressed-down-and-running-over affluence. He did not call us to Gracious Living. Christ called us to imitate him, and to imitate him as he was: the Christ

of the poverty of Bethlehem and Nazareth, of the fasts on the mountaintop, of the prayers in the desert, of the dusty roadways, of the aching labors; the Christ of the bloody sweat, of the thorn-gashed brow, of the cross-torn shoulder, of the nail-pierced hands and feet. Not the Christ of Tabor, but the Christ of Calvary. His invitation to us reads clearly: "Deny yourself as I denied myself; drink the bitter chalice — as I drank it; take up your cross — as I took up mine; and follow me." Saint Teresa of Avila summarized it graphically: "You came here to die for Christ, and not to have a good time for Christ."

Francis Thompson would have us believe that modern life (presumably for its stress and strain, its rush and roar, its smoke and sirens, its fallen arches and tired blood and jangled nerves) is "its own mortification"; is, in and of itself, "a handsome asceticism." The wintry winds, he opines, now substitute fully for the anchorite's lash and hair-shirt of old; the general dyspepsia (with **Tums** the vade mecum of the wayfarer), for the black fasts of yesteryear. To a degree, perhaps Thompson is right. Perhaps we really are but weak, wan copies of our rugged, red-cheeked ancestors in religion. Perhaps modern soft living really has unfitted us for the rigors of their lives — as the Church's largesse today in disciplinary relexations would seem to indicate. Yet we do stand in need of salvation and sanctification. And though we may have weakened, the world and the flesh and the devil alas, have not. They must still be met by daily, vigorous, oldtime mortification. The religious life still means heroic self-denial. Even Thérèse of Liseux, the saint of the "Little Way of Perfection," slept on a board in a cell utterly unheated in the winter.

So, though we give glad ear to Thompson's poetry, we shall give no ear to his spiritual direction. Nor shall we heed the voice of modern psychiatry, with its grim warnings against inhibitions and repressions, its dire predictions (if the warnings go unheeded) of neuroses and psychoses. We shall heed only the voice of Christ, who still prescribes to those who would follow him, "Deny yourself"; and who, under eight headings, promises that those who inhibit or repress the wayward urgings of human nature will be not neurotic or psychotic, but "blessed."

Self-denial, then, is still a synonym for the religious life. It is written into every line of the religious rules and constitutions. It motivates the vows, the precepts, the early rising, the chapel exercises, the table fare, the periods of silence, the prescribed work, the numerous restrictions. And the religious who conscientiously observes his Rule and Constitutions



need not worry whether he is measuring up to the demands of his religious vocation. He definitely is.

Yet experience proves that this corporate or communal self-denial is not enough: it must be supplemented daily, even hourly, by private, personal self-denial; by mortification of the mind and the will and the senses. Such mortification strengthens a religious in self-mastery. It is the tapping on the brake of the moving car that enables the driver to round safely a curve, to descend safely a hill, to stop safely at a stop-light or a train-crossing. He is ever in complete control of his vehicle.

With its constant self-denial, religious life is hard on our fallen nature. "If you want to be perfect" — that is Christ's challenge; and, surely, there is nothing more perfect than perfection, and nothing more painful to congenital imperfection. To force our warped human nature into the perfect pattern, by pressing, hammering, wiring, bolting, hurts us; for we are not dead boards, but live people.

II.

There could be no doubt about the vocation of the man in Saint Luke's second episode. Christ himself accosted him and said: "Follow me." But the man hesitated. "Lord," he answered, "let me first go and bury my father." His request seemed reasonable. Yet Christ charged him: "Let the dead bury their dead, but do you go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

Had this man been an only son, with his father's funeral depending on his supervision, Christ, the Author of the Fourth Commandment, would have told him: "Go, bury your dead." But evidently there were other sons who could discharge this office of filial piety — sons who had not received the divine call. Should the called son return to his home, he might become hopelessly entangled in the settling of his father's will, and so forget Christ's invitation. The service of God, Christ insisted, must take precedence over all human affairs.

"If any man love father or mother more than me, he is not worthy of me": that is Christ's rigid standard for his followers. The love of God comes first, the love of parents comes after it. Nor may the love of parents in any way interfere with the love of God.

See how carefully Christ maintained this order in his own life. When Joseph and Mary, after three days of sorrowful search, found him in the Temple at Jerusalem, he, twelve years old, expressed surprise at their concern for him: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" His mother did not understand his words, yet she questioned him no further. "She was content," writes Father Prat, S.J., "to let him live his own life, fulfill his own destiny, without a shadow of selfish interference."

Recall a similar stand that Christ took later on in his public life. He was teaching in a house

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at Capharnaum one day. So crowded was the house that the Apostles could not even eat in peace. Someone squeezed his way through the crowd and announced to Christ: "Your mother and your brothers are outside, wishing to see you." They had come from Nazareth in concern for his safety; for they had heard of the Pharisees' plotting against his life. Perhaps they could persuade him to come home, at least until the storm-clouds had disappeared. Answering his informant, Christ queried: "Who are my mother and my brothers?" Then, gesturing towards those surrounding him in the room, he answered: "Behold my mother and my brothers. For whoever shall do the will of God, he is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." By these words Christ did not disclaim his relatives; but he did teach that bonds of the spirit are above bonds of the flesh — the same lesson that he taught to the man in Saint Luke's second episode.

Sacred as is the tie that binds a son to his parents, it still admits of limitations. Thus, if a son enters marriage, God directs that he "shall leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife." He will, of course, still love and revere father and mother; but he will owe his first allegiance henceforth not to them, but to his wife; and in any conflict between their interests and hers, he will side with her, the wife of his bosom. Thus, too, if a son enters religion, the Son of God directs that he shall leave father and mother, and cleave to Christ. He, too, will still love and revere his parents — indeed, with an undivided human love unknown to a married son; but he will henceforth belong not to them, but to God. In his religious life, God will ever hold first place; his parents, after God.

Good Catholic parents fully realize all of this, and are careful not to cast their shadow in any way over their son's or daughter's religious life. They do not imitate the Tipperary mother whose grown son, Mickey, (the story runneth) received, for unusual sins confessed, an unusual penance from the parish priest: a pilgrimage on foot to a hilltop shrine in the neighborhood — with peas in his shoes to give a penitential feeling to his travels. The priest happened to be on hand as Mickey descended the hillside, walking easily, smiling, whistling. "Ye left out the peas!" Father charged. "O no, Yer Riv'rence," quoth Mickey, "that I did not. But, since Yer Riv'rince didn't prohibit it, me darlin' mother first boiled them down fer me!" Knowledgeable parents will not attempt, in false kindness, to "boil down" into innocuous nothings the rigors of their child's religious life — by frequent shippings of sweetmeats and habiliments and room furnishings and health gadgets and recreational novelties and the latest in all creature comforts. Nor will they demand that their child in religion write them daily, or phone them weekly, or rush to their bedside whenever a minor ailment lays them low. "The Lord gave, the Lord took away," they will say, and they will let the Lord keep what he took.

The Council of Trent solemnly warned churchmen of its day to rid themselves of "all merely human concern for brothers and sisters, nephews, and blood relations, which has become a hotbed of many evils in the Church." Those evils in the sixteenth century were only too evident; the stultifying of the priestly life and labors; the turning of the priesthood into a family cash-register. Those evils have, thank God, disappeared. The only faint vestiges of them at all discernible today, and only in rare cases, are "momism," where the housekeeping mothers of pastors protect too solicitously the health of their sons; and (to coin a term) "relativism," where flocks of sundry relatives of pastors inhabit rectories, illustrative of the Gilbert and Sullivan chorus, "We Are His Sisters and His Cousins and His Aunts."

Our religious life is designed to safeguard us against all intrusions of relatives. Our contact with them through visits is restricted. And so should be our correspondence with them, restricted by the demands of our Father's business. What, after all, have either we or they to write about? Passing events that even in their occurrence mean so little, and that once past mean nothing at all. On our part, it is weather, feastdays and fastdays, appointments and assignments, routine work and prayer — hardly vivid narrative. On their part, it is weather, comings and goings, summer plans and winter projects, fluctuations of the health of relatives. On both parts it is largely chitchat, no more meaningful than the chirping of sparrows. There is of necessity, let us admit it, a wide chasm between our lives and theirs, our interests and theirs; and for both us and them, to project our voices across that chasm calls for much strained shouting — much exaggeration, much forced enthusiasm. An occasional interchange of notes to report that we and they are alive and normally active — is that not enough? Or must we regularly engage in correspondance —to relatives, friends, even casual acquaintances — that in volume vies with the output of the President of the Standard Oil Company?

Of course, if we assume unto ourselves the direction of relatives and friends and acquaintances in all matters material and spiritual, we shall need constant script. Like the traffic-director in the control-tower of an airport, we shall be busy telling Flight 201 to take off from Runway 1 (persuading a brother to enter the Marines or the Franciscans); telling Flight 302 to land on runway 2 (persuading a cousin to terminate her engagement to a bibulous fiancé); telling Flight 403 to circle overhead till further notification (persuading a friend that now is **not** the best time to sell his house or to invest in steel). We should, however, do both them and ourselves a worthier service if we quit the tower, and let them run their own affairs. (They will probably do so anyhow). The best service that we can render them is a service from afar — the service of our prayers. We shall leave them and their lots in God's hands. They will be in good keeping there.

"Let the dead bury their dead": on the surface, a hard injunction, but in reality a divinely wise, necessary one, if we are to answer our religious call to "go and proclaim the Kingdom of God."

III.

Saint Luke's third episode concerns another man who, like the

Scribe, offered himself spontaneously to Christ. "I will follow you, Lord," he volunteered; "but let me first bid farewell to those at home." Had the idea of following Christ seized him suddenly — like a sneeze? If not, why had he not previously said goodbye to his folk? If his "vocation" came so suddenly, might it not as suddenly depart?

Our Lord answered him: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of heaven." Ploughing is hard, hard work. Anyone at all, even the frailest, can put a hand to the plough in the cool of the morning and turn over a sod or two; but it takes a hardy man to keep to the plough through the growing heat of the day, cutting straight furrow after furrow, till all the acres are done. And Christ demanded that His ploughers keep to their plough.

Probably most religious, at some point in their careers, are tempted to quit the plough. Certainly, this temptation is normal to novices after the novitiate has lost for them its novelty. Their dissatisfaction, however, is usually no more lasting than a headache; a brisk walk, a good night's sleep, will rid them of it. Sometimes, though, the temptation to quit comes quite late in religious life. Sister or Brother or Father has grown weary in well-doing, weary of the same old straight-furrow routine of convent or monastery, weary of asking childlike permissions to do this and to get that, weary of being taken for granted in efforts and work and accomplishments. Saint Paul's admonition to Timothy is the prescription that such a religious needs: "Revive the grace that is in you." Revive it through intensified prayer, through vigorous efforts to return to the first fervor, through perhaps a general confession. Then take a deep breath, and grab hold of the plough again.

Is there in Christ's metaphor of the plougher any hint of the so-called "temporary vocation" for which nowadays we hear an occasional and earnest apology? Does Christ refer to an itinerant laborer hired to plough for a specified time, then free to move on to other work elsewhere? Or does he refer to a man whose permanent vocation is the farm and the plough? The traditional answer has been that a vocation — to marriage or to religion — is a call to a life, not to a period of a life. True, the Church does prescribe that, ending the novitiate, a religious take temporary or simple vows: to assure both the religious and his superiors of his vocation, of his ability to lead the religious life. But once a religious takes final or perpetual vows, are the vows not meant to be precisely that: final, or perpetual?

It is no secret that the records of many (if not most) religious communities today indicate many defections from religious life, some of them defections after long years in religion. Undoubtedly, in unusual cases, unusual reasons have warranted some of these defections. But what of the others? We do not judge — but we do wonder. We wonder, despite the heart-on-the-sleeve autobiographies of some who have defected, whether it can possibly take any religious eighteen or twenty or more years to discover, "I have no religious vocation" — just as we should wonder if, after that many years, a wife turned to her husband and said, "George, I have discovered that I was never meant to marry." Would both of these discoveries not be delayed action at its most delayed?

This much we know: that it is possible to lose a vocation (Judas did that), and then to conclude that one never had a vocation. It is possible, through infidelity to religious vows and general neglect of religious life, to forfeit the happiness of religious life; and then to reason: "If happiness is a sign that one is in the right berth, I'm in the wrong" — and to leave. What a religious of this sorry sort needs is, not a change of life, but a change of heart. With the guilt-conscious King David, let him pray: "Create a pure heart in me, O God, and a resolute spirit renew within me."

We are grateful to Saint Luke for his report of the "Three Vocations." For they have underlined for us three basic truths about our own vocations; that our religious call is from Christ; that it is a call to a life of self-denial; that it is a call to persevere "unto the end."

BOOK REVIEWS

The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer. By Joseph Jungmann, S. J. Staten Island, N. Y.: Alba House, 1965. Pp. xx-300. Cloth, $6.50.

Critical readers of Catholic books related to theology are quickly learning the importance of dates. In many cases the determination of a book's vintage year as pre-council or post-council is a strong indication of its value for today's reader.

But then there are, in the Church, prophets — people whose insights are in part the cause, not the effect, of the Council's positive direction. The quiet Tyrolean scholar, Father Joseph Jungmann, is such a prophet, and a book of his recently published in our country indicates how much the prophet's voice has been heard in the conciliar halls.

The Place of Christ in Liturgical Prayer was originally published in German in 1925. It was revised for a 1962 German edition, and the present work represents the first English edition. Alba House, the publisher, is to be congratulated for making available to the English-speaking world a work of such obvious merits. Its main thesis is that the Arian heresy, in denying the divinity of Christ, caused such a reaction emphasizing Christ as God as to change the direction of liturgical prayer and of Western piety in general.

In liturgical prayer the change can be seen quite clearly by noting what happened to the doxology so prevalent in the liturgy. Until the fourth century the prayer of praise had been directed to God "through Christ" or "through the Son in the Holy Spirit." However, toward the end of the fourth century almost

without exception in the East, praise is offered to God "with the Son, together with the Holy Spirit."

Although the defensive measure resulted in no change in Catholic doctrine, this alteration of liturgical prayer made less clear the living on of Christ in glorified humanity.

In popular piety the most obvious change was the almost total disappearance of Christ as mediator. Once that happened — when proper attention was not given to the fact that we have access to the Father through Christ and when men saw in Christ only God concealed in the appearance of humanity, Christ became remote and other mediators were sought to fill the gap.

In this book Father Jungmann makes past history of daily relevance in understanding both liturgical prayer and personal devotions. However, this is a book by a careful scholar and is not meant for the dabbler or dilettante.

— **John E. Corrigan**

OUR REVIEWERS

Father John E. Corrigan, who has published some significant monographs in the field of Liturgy and Sacramentology, is Assistant Pastor at the Church of Christ the King, Silver Spring, Md.

Mrs. James F. McCarthy, who is associated with Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart, is a housewife in White Plains, N. Y.

Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., is the editor of this review.

Who is Jesus of Nazareth? Ed. by Edward Schillebeeckx, O. P., and Boniface Willems, O.P. Concilium, Dogma Series, vol. 11. Glen Rock, N. J.; Paulist Press, 1966. Pp. 163. Cloth, $4.50.

The title of this book is well chosen; for today more than in the middle ages and the recent past, we have to ask in all seriousness, "Who is Jesus of Nazareth?" Progress in biblical thought as well as in speculative theology leads the contributing authors to give some important and stimulating answers.

Part I, "Articles," has treatments of (1) the contemporary return to a functional Christology — by Yves Congar, (2) recent developments in the modern attempt to find the historical Christ beyond the kerygmatic Christ — by Joseph Bourke; (3) that long-misunderstood mystery of Christ's "kenosis" — by Piet Schoonenberg; and (4) the biblical basis of resurrection-theology — by José María González-Ruiz. Of these, I think Schoonenberg's is the most original and stimulating (though all the articles are competently handled).

Part II, "Bibliographical Survey," contains articles on Christ's Knowledge (a refreshingly frank reinterpretation by Engelbert Gutwenger), Christ's Kingship (a magnificent vindication of Scotistic teaching on our Lord's absolute primacy, by Helmut Riedlinger), and on the Idea of that Kingship (a historical appreciation of its evolution by Olivier Rousseau, which I feel omits some significant entries in what purports to be a bibliographical treatment).

The final section, "Documentation Concilium," by Herbert Vorgrimler, deals expertly with "The Significances of Christ's Descent into Hell," following mainly along the lines of the theology of Rahner and von Balthasar. (Not that the author himself has not been active in this field).

Even those who do not feel inclined to subscribe to the **Concilium** series as a whole, should give serious thought to acquiring this valuable anthology on Christ, the heart of our knowledge, our faith, our strivings, and our whole existence. The reader will be rare indeed, who does not derive important new insights from these highly competent and illuminating studies. Particular rewards are in store for those who may not suspect the wide implications of our Lord's descent into hell for the rest of theology. Readers of

THE CORD, so many of whom are Franciscan, will be deeply pleased to find these pages so much that is due to the long unrecognized originality of the Franciscan school of theology.

Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.

Life and Light: a Guide to the Theology of Karl Rahner. By Donald L Gelpi, S. J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966. Pp. xiv-301. Cloth, $6 00.

It is hard enough to write a guide to the theology of St. Thomas, with seven centuries and innumerable commentaries helping to place his thought in perspective. That Father Gelpi has done so masterful a job in providing a guide to the most profound thinker of our own age is, to me, nothing short of astounding. This is not the generalized sort of appreciation one usually finds in "guides," but a really systematic, detailed, and comprehensive study written in clear and concise English.

There can be no question that this book has been badly needed; the name of Karl Rahner is on everyone's lips these days, and his influence on the deliberations of Vatican II makes it imperative that a competent and readable guide like this be accessible to every educated Christian.

Karl Rahner is widely thought of as a "theologian's theologian," but his prodigious technical contributions are only half the story (the half, however, which is the main concern of this book). To appreciate Rahner's real significance, one must know something of his life: of the man's approachableness, openness, availability for pastoral assignments, and profound, personal concern for the spiritual renewal of the Church and of each individual Christian.

If the reader bears in mind this human and priestly concern of Rahner's as he follows Father Gelpi through the complicated structures of Rahnerian thought, his reading will be fruitful indeed. Perhaps "thematic" might have been a better word than "systematic" as a description of this study. Eleven chapters (well indexed) trace the organic development of Rahner's thought on themes which have by now become rather well known here, though up to now they have not, perhaps, been really understood and appreciated in the fullness of their coherence and practical significance.

What comes through amazingly well in this guide is the very attitude itself of the great theologian, who is never content to repeat the formulas of the past but, while remaining wholly faithful to them, seeks to unveil something of their meaning and interrelationships.

Father Gelpi is perhaps excessively modest in claiming that his book is "nothing more than a study aid for the average American undergraduate student in theology" (xi-xii). This book will place many, many people in his debt.

— **Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.**

Saints and Sanctity. By Walter J. Burghardt, S.J. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965. Pp. 239. Cloth, $5.50.

For you who are concerned with translating the directives of the Council into your own life, this inspiring book about the saints' lives and your own search for perfection is the answer, one long needed. Father Burghardt, author and speaker, professor of Patrology and Patristic Theology at Woodstock College, has written a book linking the saints' struggles for sanctity with our own. With a single exception all chapters were originally delivered orally: on radio, in churches, universities, one at a penitentiary. Of special significance are the saints within Father Burghardt's own field of research, the Fathers of the Church. saints up to now just names met once a year in a missal. A few chapters make special seasonal spiritual reading: St. Andrew, St. Nicholas, St. Lucy and St. Thomas the Apostle for Advent, St. Mary Magdalene for Easter.

The author believes the saints of yesterday have much to say to contemporary man. Aspects in their lives "illustrate in striking fashion

certain principles or facets of Christian spirituality that are permanently valid, that have a relevance transcending persons and places."

For acquiring this sanctity, "oneness with God," we find here solutions varied, timely, always pertinent. For the frustrated, "as his God-centered life is thwarted by evil," is suggested, "a faith that looks beyond my little world to God's plan for His world." For the prisoner — "you share two perfections that are God's: you have the power to know and you have the power to love." For the Irish American — "It would be tragic indeed if the creed and the culture which your fathers carried to these shores were to be imprisoned here. It would mean that St. Patrick is your hero but not your model." For those seeking knowledge — "In no phase of human living will your knowledge be thoroughly human, nowhere will it be authentically Christian, unless it is impregnated with love: love for God's creation, for God's people, for God Himself." For every man wanting to be alone with Christ for a while — "Your oneness with God will be a soundless protest against a culture with so little time for God. And contemplation and protest both may profoundly affect the small world, the little acre, God has given you to transform."

— **Eleanor McCarthy**

God's World in the Making. By Peter Schoonenberg. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1964. Pp. ix-207. Cloth, $3.95.

Evolution and Philosophy. By Andrew G. van Melsen. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1965. Pp. 208. Cloth, $5.50; paper, $4.75.

These two books are pioneer efforts in their respective fields. True, much had already been written by other scholars, and these authors themselves call their works "outgrowths," "syntheses" of their earlier work. But syntheses are of paramount importance in the transition of ideas from scholarly circles to society as a whole. Neither of these books is written in a popular style; both demand acquaintance with their fields and assiduous effort as well. But the rewards for such effort are many and rich.

Neither book, actually, duplicates the excellent work of R. J. Nogar, in **The Wisdom of Evolution,** or of P. G. Fothergill, in **Evolution and Christians** (1963 and 1961 respectively), as R. T. Francoeur seems to do to some extent in **Perspectives in Evolution** (1965). For the basic facts and scientific ramifications of evolution, the reader will have to look elsewhere (although there is of course in each case a bare minimum of explanation).

The special merit of these books is the authors' competent treatment of specific problem areas, which are then brought into focus in a synthetic way. **God's World in the Making** is a theological treatise that examines with impeccable acumen and methodology the origin of man, salvation history, marriage, work, and eschatology. (The average reader may prefer the equally accurate and pointed, but less technical treatment of A. Hulsbosch, **God in Creation and Evolution** [1966].) **Evolution and Philosophy** first draws a remarkable picture of man as a scientizing animal, then deals expertly with these key scientific and philosophical concepts: matter, life, casuality, and history. The closing discussion of "perennial philosophy" is excellent; would that its wisdom could be assimilated by all the extremists at both ends of the ideological spectrum. Certainly Christian philosophy and theology both need recasting (and not merely a terminological one), but this prodigious task cannot be accomplished at the expense of all that has been and continues to be true and valid in traditional Western thought.

Both books are adequately indexed and attractively presented (though **Evolution and Philosophy** uses rather small type on a large page) as volumes 2 and 19 in the Duquesne Theology and Philosophy series. Together they form a most valuable contribution, for which we are deeply indebted to Duquesne University.

— **Michael D. Mellach, O.F.M.**