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The cover and all the illustrations for the July issue of **THE CORD** were drawn by Mr. James Buckley, formerly a staff member of *Billboard* magazine now a student at the Pan American Art School, New York City.

# the CORD

July, 1970

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## CONTENTS

TOWARD A RECONSTRUCTION OF RELIGION .....	194
<i>A Review Editorial</i>	
EVANGELICAL CATHOLICITY .....	196
<i>Charles J. Curtis</i>	
COME ALIVE: LIFE WHEN IT IS .....	202
<i>Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.</i>	
THOMAS .....	208
<i>Sister Mary Seraphim, P. C.</i>	
EARLY FRANCISCAN SOURCES .....	209
<i>John Pilch, O. F. M.</i>	
LIGHT WITH THE PROMISE .....	218
<i>Randall Holahan, O. F. M. Cap.</i>	
BOOK REVIEWS .....	219



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Toward a Reconstruction  
of Religion

Dr. Fontinell describes his task in this book as "the initiation of a *probe* in the direction of a radical reconstruction of religious truth, morality, God, and religion" (p. 81).<sup>1</sup> He proffers not even a theory, then—much less a definitive synthesis—but only an indication of the direction he thinks we might take. The goal is not revolution, any more than preservation. *Reconstruction* has a precise meaning here, which stresses continuity with the past even while insisting that there is no essential core immune from the reconstructive activity.

There is certainly no dearth of books on today's market purporting to give this sort of direction. At least a dozen have been reviewed in these pages during the past year or so, and still another is reviewed on p. 224 of this issue. Fontinell's suggestions are most closely akin, perhaps, to those of Leslie Dewart and Peter Berger; but this is to say neither that he depends in any way on them, nor that he says exactly the same thing as either of them. Dr. Fontinell has long been an active and articulate spokesman, not only for responsible development in doctrine, but for political and social reform as well. The reader anticipating in this book the same incisive clarity and mature, balanced scholarship that have marked Fontinell's periodical contributions, will by no means be disappointed.

The first chapter is devoted to as fine an exposition as you will find anywhere, of the "pragmatic metaphysics" which has received its most cogent expression to date in the thought of William James and John Dewey. (*Metaphysics* is loosely used, here, as synonymous with "outlook" or "world

view," and the one espoused is thoroughly processive, relational, and in the best sense empirical.)

Quite properly, since epistemology is absolutely basic to any serious effort at reconstruction, the next chapter is devoted to truth, knowledge, and faith. Experience includes both faith and knowledge, which cannot be identified with one another but are nonetheless interrelated in a complex way on which abundant light is cast in this chapter.

The chapters on morality, God, and religion which comprise the rest of the book, combine to show in a compelling and (schematically) comprehensive way the relevance and rich promise of the pragmatic outlook once it is grasped as far deeper and more open than the crass utilitarianism and hedonism with which it has unfortunately too often been identified in the past.

Dr. Fontinell writes as a Roman Catholic, but also as a philosopher, whose observations have a wider application than the concerns of any one group or institution. He makes some applications—e.g., to contraception and to the Church as institutional—but insists that not too much importance be attached to these precisely as specific applications since his primary thrust is generic and global.

There is too great a danger of distortion and oversimplification inherent in any attempt to present in summary form or out of context any of Dr. Fontinell's recommendations regarding morality, God, or religion. We prefer to emphasize, with Dr. Fontinell, the assurance that re-examination by no means implies rejection. We share his optimism in looking forward to a revitalized Christian (world) community which is not afraid to forge ahead toward a fuller and more human existence in sensitive and faithful response to the call of God.

*Toward a Reconstruction of Religion* is not a book for the faint-hearted or for those afraid to think. It is, in our estimation, a book which no one else can afford to miss.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, OFM

<sup>1</sup> *Toward a Reconstruction of Religion: A Philosophical Probe*. By Eugene Fontinell. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970. Pp. 259. Cloth, \$5.95.

# Evangelical Catholicity

Charles J. Curtis

We are living in a time of ferment, turmoil, renewal, and reformation. At the same time it is an age looking toward unity, peace, and understanding. It has become redundant to celebrate the Reformation in our day. With reformation, revolution, and renewal on every hand, there is little spectacular in the celebration of Reformation.

The great need in our day is to discover a sense of world unity, maximum cooperation, and common understanding. We are entering into the evangelical catholic age. I consider myself to be an Evangelical Catholic. It is clear that the Church has many tasks but the present urgency is to discover the meaning of Evangelical Catholicity. This is our present critical and existential task.

## The Foundation of Ecumenicity

Evangelical Catholicity is the foundation for the promotion of Christian unity and the ecumenical understanding of the doctrines of the church. Without catholicity

there will be neither an adequate, ecumenical church nor a complete, ecumenical theology. The Protestant must enhance and cultivate his catholic vision. The Roman, Greek, and Anglo-Catholic must grasp anew and revivify his evangelicity. Evangelicity and catholicity are essential for the future of the one church and the promotion of Christian unity.

Occasionally, through the years, I have been shocked to discover that many clergymen and theologians do not seem to appreciate or understand what the evangelical catholic position implies. At a recent meeting of the Edgewater Association of Clergy and Rabbis in Chicago, of which I am a member, I was dramatically reminded that the evangelical catholic position is not universally understood or appreciated. We had gathered for our regular monthly meeting of Roman Catholic Pastors, Protestant Pastors, and Jewish Rabbis, and were about to hear a presentation by a guest speaker. The speaker was a stranger to most of us, and to provide himself with an orientation he

he asked at the beginning of his speech, "How many in the group today are catholic?" Spontaneously, and without thinking, I, as a Lutheran Pastor, raised my hand along with two Episcopal Rectors and three Roman Catholic Pastors. The other Lutheran Pastors present did not raise their hands, and the assorted Protestants present did not respond. For a moment all was silent, and then a chuckle broke out everywhere in the group. All had realized suddenly both the humor and the seriousness in this situation. Here I was, a Lutheran Pastor who spontaneously considered himself to be a catholic Christian as well as Lutheran in theology and evangelical in spirit, siding with the Roman Catholics and the Episcopalians. This was a natural, spontaneous affirmation of my own deep feeling for catholicity.

The question must be asked, Why do so many Protestants fail to see the essentially catholic dimension of the church? Is it not obvious to all of us as Christians that there is one Holy Catholic and Apostolic church? Are not all of us members of this one and only true church?

## Catholicity

Catholicity is of the essence of the church. In a sense, the essential universality or catholicity of the church is given to it by the Word of God, which is inherently catholic. In terms of the categories of law and gospel this means that the Word of God is both law and gospel. Certainly the church lives by the holy gospel, but at the same

time it cannot live without the law of God, for both are necessary for the evangelical and catholic quality of the church.

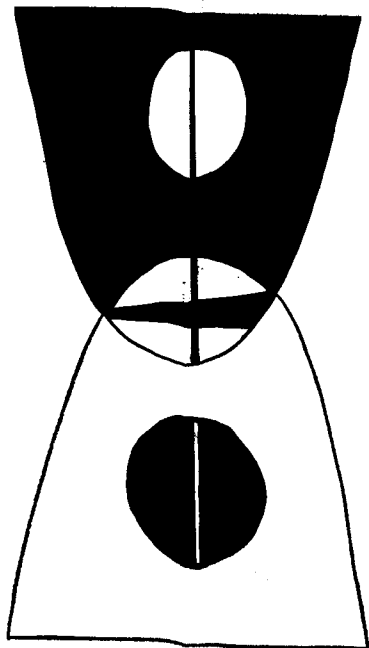
The term catholic in its original Christian use refers to the essential unity and ecumenicity of the people of God. The church catholic is not only the sum total of actual Christian congregations, but also the mystical universality of the whole church. It is a qualitative as well as a quantitative concept.

Qualitatively speaking, catholicity is the object of faith. It points to the incomprehensible mercy of God who through Christ has willed to unite his people in heaven and on earth in the one holy catholic church, the new humanity. Catholicity refers to the ecumenical nature of the universal church which embraces all men in the grace and truth of the Second Adam. It is the expression of the mercy and love of God who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil.

Quantitatively, catholic means widespread and complete. It refers to the sum total of actual existing Christian congregations, and to the sum total of the ecclesiastical doctrines of faith and morals. Cyril of Jerusalem, e.g., thought that he could identify four marks of catholicity: (1) widespread and common as opposed to local; (2) complete in doctrine as opposed to fragmentary; (3) applicable to every man, as opposed to valid for some men only; and (4) mindful of all the virtues as opposed to selectively concerned with only some of them.

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Later, catholic was used as a party label in the struggle against heresy. It then meant orthodox as opposed to heretical.

During the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the original meaning of catholic was revived by the reformers. The opposite of Protestant is not catholic. To this the writings of Luther and Calvin and other leaders of the Reformation bear eloquent witness. The reformers did not want to found new sects, but sought to reform the Roman Church in the spirit of evangelical catholicity. To emphasize the true and original meaning of catholicity, Luther selects the word *Christian* as a translation of the term *catholicus*, thus hoping to find an expression which will convey more accurately the universal

and transcendent nature of the church. The Church in Sweden preferred the term universal (*almännelig*) as a translation for catholic; and the Church in England did the same in the Canon, although in the Creed Cranmer, in 1549, used the term *catholic*.

### Evangelicity

The term evangelical is derived from the Greek word *euaggelion*, which means "good news" or "gospel." Generally speaking, everything that pertains to the gospel is evangelical. More specifically, the term refers to the central message of the gospel: the redeeming power of God. The "good news" gives us the hope of redemption through the living Christ, who lives in the church, and to whom the Bible bears witness. In one sense, this hope is already realized now, and in another sense it is something which is yet to come.

Evangelicity must not be identified with biblicism, fundamentalism, the so-called Protestant orthodoxy, pietism, or revivalism. It is true that, historically speaking, Evangelical was the opposite of Catholic because the Reformation considered itself as a return to the Bible. Evangelical was used in this sense in Switzerland, Germany, and by the "low church" in England. Today the opposition between evangelicity and catholicity has been overcome, largely by the historical process and the ecumenical movement. We now realize that gospel-centered evangelicity and ecumenical catholicity complement

rather than contradict one another. This realization has, unfortunately, not yet fully penetrated the hearts and minds of the so-called "evangelical" Protestants in a number of sect-type churches. Obviously, the true spirit of evangelicity is perverted when evangelical is used as a party label for certain Protestant groups who falsely claim that their particular doctrines of man's need for atonement for sin, the rebirth of the individual, participation in the experience of personal redemption through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and the revelation of God's grace in Christ, are the only true statements of the essence of the saving gospel. The signs of the times, however, everywhere indicate that in virtually every denomination there is a swelling tide of evangelicity and catholicity which, fostered by the grace of the Holy Spirit, issues into a pervasive and overpowering movement toward ecumenical unity among all Christians.

The evangelical emphasis is rooted in the important insight that the church lives through, and thrives on, the Word of God. The church grew out of the gospel, it produced the Bible, and it has the continuing task of rightly proclaiming the gospel. The catholic vision does not, and need not, mean that the evangelical dimension of the church is overlooked. The one church is both evangelical and catholic. It is evangelical because the proclamation of the gospel to the world is its principal mission. It is one of the marks of the church catholic that it will not permit

anything in its faith and order, as well as in its life and work, to hinder the Word of God. The church exists for the Word of God, and its future depends upon this.

The church cannot be designated as nothing more than a gathering of like-minded individuals of a Christian persuasion. As the object of faith, the instrument of hope, the expression of love—as the Bride of Christ—it is the one holy church which is to continue forever.

In this one holy catholic and apostolic church the Word of God is the self-disclosure of the truth and love of God in the form of a message through which the grace of God is given to us in human form. The Holy Spirit testifies in the church to the authenticity of this message as the very Word of God. The criterion which determines what really is the Word of God is not simply human wisdom, but the Spirit of Christ, who made the apostles living and active witnesses of God in Christ. The same Spirit is active in and through the tradition which comes from them; he grasps and transforms human life in obedience to this Word.

### The Catholicity of the Reformation

The Protestant Reformation is often caricatured as a violent and irrational defection from true catholicity, and as the ardent and truly biblical embrace of genuine evangelicity. The time has come for a reconsideration of this traditional interpretation of the significance of Luther and Calvin and the other

reformers, which is based on the assumption that catholicity and evangelicity, properly and adequately understood, are irreconcilable opposites. The assumption of the irreconcilability of evangelicity and catholicity is, candidly, a false one.

There are signs today that a re-assessment of the stance of Luther is being made both in the Roman Catholic and in the Protestant and Orthodox world. It is to be hoped that this will lead to a truer appreciation of the evangelical catholicity of Luther. For Luther, no less than for Calvin, the pure Word of God is the greatest treasure and advantage of the Reformation movement. Both men knew that Christian life and conduct in this world can never become as pure and holy as the Word of God. Nevertheless, the Word is not in vain. There is a continuous line of holy and upright children of God through the centuries. But this conviction did not lead Luther to embrace the sectarian point of view. Unlike the sectarians, he never lost his living feeling for the catholicity of the church. Neither Calvin nor he ever acknowledge the religious validity of his excommunication by the pope.

Luther was fully aware that the formation of sects can be of detriment to the catholic unity of the church and its faith. When radical sectarians took his forced absence from Wittenberg as an opportunity to destroy religious images and to undertake violent innovation in order to reform the church in a more externally visible and con-

spicuous way, Luther opposed them at great risk to his own life. In March of 1522 he preached for a whole week at Wittenberg, stressing that it is not good to form sects, because this does not serve the catholicity of either the gospel or the one holy church.

Luther emphasizes that to serve God in his church does not mean to form sects separating the holy people from the sinful and corrupt church, but it means first and foremost to teach the Word of God. It never occurs to Luther to deny that the Roman Catholic Church is the church of Christ because, despite his polemics against the papacy, the gospel of Christ was, and is, also in the Church of Rome. There is no gainsaying the fact that Luther and Calvin, the great French reformer in exile at Geneva, Switzerland, were, like so many of the epoch-making spirits in the history of the church of God, to some extent unjust—unintentionally so—to the age in which they lived, as well as to the period of history preceding it.

Modern historical scholarship has made increasingly untenable this unhistorical view of a great leap from Saint Paul to Luther, with an intermediate stop at Saint Augustine. In the old view Luther was not seen in continuity as well as discontinuity with the medieval church. Today we realize that he was not a pure disciple of primitive Christianity, but a creator working with the spiritual material which the church gave him. Until his death Luther never lost the catholic vision of the one church.

He stressed that his section of Christendom, though excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church, nevertheless actually belonged to the one holy church of God, too.

Hence it is unjust and false to accuse Luther of deserting the one holy catholic and apostolic church, and of founding a new one. Luther emphasized that nothing really new had been invented by him and his followers. Even the great and learned Erasmus of Rotterdam, as well as Calvin and Luther, stood up against many cults and practices in the medieval church that

they demonstrated to be decadent innovations of the medieval Roman papacy.

I have tried to emphasize, in the foregoing pages, the compatibility of catholicity and evangelicity, particularly in the light of certain historical factors which may at first seem to indicate an irreconcilable opposition between the two ideals. In a complementary article, to appear next month, there will be greater emphasis on the present—on the more specific implications of Evangelical Catholicity for ecumenism and the Christian life in our day.

## Would You Like Some?

Oracoes Cotidianas, Modlitwy Rodzinne, La Preghiera in Famiglia, Carte de Prieres Familiales, Oraciones para la Familia, Gebetskarte fuer die Familie, Uranithe an Teaglaigh, Family Prayer Card. Would you like some?

Just send a 6 cents stamp with your name and address to Rev. Benjamin Kuhn, O.F.M., St. Bernardine of Siena Friary, Loundonville, N.Y. 12211 and he will send five free copies of the prayer card in any combination of the following languages you wish—English, Gaelic, Italian, French, Spanish, German, Polish, Portuguese or Hungarian. Your name will not be used for any other purpose.

Among the prayers on the card are: morning and night prayers, the Apostles Creed, the Angelus, prayers for the Souls in Purgatory, to St. Francis, of reparation. It also contains the mysteries of the Rosary, a Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity and the Memorare.

Father Ben, who has been conducting a family prayer apostolate for many years, has circulated almost 2,000,000 of the prayer cards.

## Come Alive: Life When It Is

It is difficult to get the spatial and temporal concepts of the present separated for individual scrutiny. Much of what has been written of "life where it is" could be revolved and re-presented point by point from the viewpoint of "life when it is." Where and when are parts of each other. And although we can speak of being present in the garden, we shall also have to speak of being present at 8:30. We need not only to set ourselves squarely in life where it is, but to have an ear sensitively attuned to those highly particular and climactic moments when the ordinary obscurities of earthly living are briefly resolved and life sounds a splendid summons to meet it when it is. That is, when it is inviting us to a new response, a profounder giving, a fuller understanding of our destiny. Unfortunately, we often enough fail to hear the chimes of the present moment for meeting a need or filling a role. And, still more unfortunately, we can fail in this particularly in the spiritual

life, plodding along our dull pedestrian way right past the clock that is sounding the moment of a possible new greatness.

We may need to beware of an earthbound over-prudence which ceases to serve wisdom, just as overeating does not contribute to nourishment. This false prudence seems to be the commonest factor in our failures to read the time of this hour. We can be so preoccupied with the accoutrements of life that, in a real tragic sense, we can fail to have the time of our life.

Saint Francis of Assisi was always sensitive to life when it is. He answered its immediate chime with ardent enthusiasm. And certainly in his case it was no small thing to continue responding to the quarter hours of his destiny. Young and moneyed, loving and lovable, he was acclaimed "king of youth" by his Assisian peers. But then the first manifestly great moment of his life sounded. And it surely needed an acute spiritual ear to hear the chime of God's invitation

of poverty and minority in that welter of wealth and ambition.

For those of us who are his followers, it is altogether too terrifying to envision what our own lives would be in the present hour had Francis not responded to the imperious summons to spiritual greatness in that hour of his. Yet consideration of a present and completely personal freedom to fail to respond to a like imperious summons to greatness in one's own life at this hour is not less frightening but only less obtrusive on one's consciousness.

Francis must have seemed an unlikely enough prospect for the role either of individual beggar or founder of a company of mendicants. He had an obvious charm for giving, but he had yet to discover much less to explore his capacity for receiving. Right in the very heart of his singing and prodigal spending, he was invited to become listener and receiver. God merely suggested that Francis reverse his entire life's orientation, turn his whole values system upside down and inside out, exchange plenty for penury and popularity for contempt—and this in one fell swoop. One could envision the possibility of a young man's declining a suggestion like that. At least, one would certainly sympathize with a young man asking for a year to think it over. Or, surely, a month. It only sounds like prudence. But God is not honored by the false prudence of men. And the prudence of the saints so easily passes for insanity among men.

For the saints are those who hear life chiming when it is, and reply neither: "Let me think it over" nor "Wait till I check the time with the operator." They simply reply, "Here I am, Lord! Your servant hears."

The marvelous thing about this kind of listening is that even when we do not understand what we hear we can still understand what is said. That is to say, even when we get the message wrong, we are still right because we recognize the sound of life when it is and make the best response it is possible for us at that moment to make. Witness Saint Francis again, newly "converted" to the Lord, waiting upon His Will, listening to His Word. "Francis, go and rebuild my Church," the voice of God said from the crucifix before which Francis was praying, "for you can see that it is falling into ruins." Saint Francis listened and got the message—all wrong. And it does seem in the unfolding story of the Assisian saint's life that God went out of His way, rather, to exemplify to us poorer listeners that what is important is listening to God even though we do not quite follow what He is saying. What is important is responding to what we hear even if we have not heard correctly. God spoke of the sophisticatedly tottering spiritual edifice of the Church which Francis was to rebuild with the strength of his simple gospel living. Saint Francis understood God to mean the crumbling material edifice of the nondescript little church building he was in.

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*Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., author of Spaces for Silence, A Right to Be Merry, and other works on Franciscanism and spirituality, and contributor of poetry and essays to various periodicals, is Abbess of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Roswell, N.M., and Federal Abbess of the Poor Clare Collettine Federation in the United States.*

And so he immediately responded to the invitation as he heard it. He started "rebuilding the church which he could see was falling into ruins."

He begged stones, hauled them, set them into the weakened walls of the little church. Even as Francis, having got the thing all wrong, was right with God for having listened and responded as best he could, so could the prudent ones of this world be wrong with God for having got the thing right and failed to respond.

For there is another way that situation could have been dealt with. A commission could have been set up to study the situation. What was the history of the deterioration of the Church? Blame the cause! Who was responsible for the state it was in? Arraign them! What policies had erred? Denounce them! Was it possible to rebuild this Church? Set up committees to explore the possibilities. Should we not build a new Church instead of pattering about filling in the chinks in this old one? We know more about architecture now anyway. It never would have fallen into ruins if it had been built in a different style. Why waste time on a tottering structure? Or why, for that matter, build a new Church? Let's just sit out under the sky and celebrate the end of the Church and the beginning of enlightenment. Far more entertaining in any case to exhibit these crumbling walls to witty tourists than to sweat under the effort of building. And somewhere during the protracted bur-

den of investigating the reports of all the subcommittees and studying the findings of the area directors, the clock has stopped chiming. We have been unaware of life when it is.

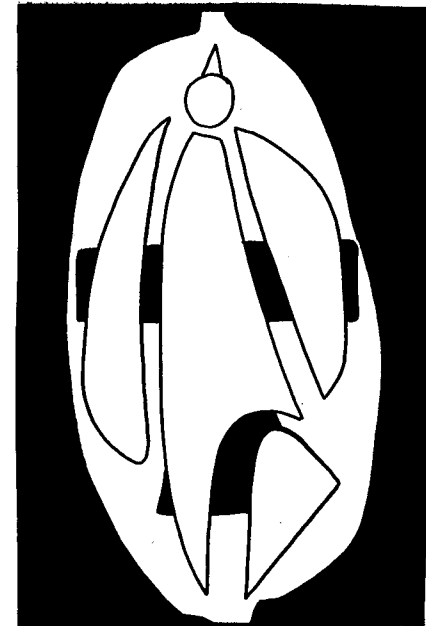
"I'll do it—sometime" has signed the abortion permit of many a spiritual life. Someday we shall get around to listening to God when He speaks. Only the message He had for us will already have been spoken.

Our Lord evinced an almost admiring affection throughout the New Testament for persons attuned to the hour. Even when they responded with highly unconventional urgency to the opportunity of the moment, He approved their alertness with miracles. There was the palsied man and his friends who were not to be deterred from drinking from the very Fountain itself of living water simply because circumstances made it inaccessible. How one would like to have heard that conversation as they planned their manoeuvres! But, for that matter, it does not require much imagination to reconstruct it. "We've simply got to get to Him while He's here." "Absolutely impossible. They're thirty-deep." "How about the back?" "Forty-deep!" "What about the roof?" "Man! A paralytic on the roof? Come on, now!" "Listen! It's now or never..." And soon, the sound of rough, eager fingers turning back the tiles, the puffing, the laborious snorts, the indignant cries from within the house, the creaking of the litter as it de-

scended and there was made the most dramatic entrance ever made (Mk. 2:3-5).

What could anyone do with such an enterprising fellow with palsy but love him? What could Christ possibly do but heal him? But does not everyone respond to the urgency of the hour when it concerns one's personal gain? No, not too frequently, when there is involved incurring the inevitable disapproval and indignation of the crowd, the risk of seeming a fool. Too often singular greatness is esteemed of less value than conventional mediocrity. And often enough it is judged preferable to drink from the mob's stale canteens than to step out of line and choose the living water. The hemorrhagic woman whose touching faith is recorded by Matthew (9:20-21) responded to opportunity when it was, at the price of personal humiliation. The blind man of Mk. 10:46-48 heard the chime of the priceless moment only through the rebukes of a crowd which included some members of the first hierarchy. There is a certain price to pay for living life when it is, even as concerns reaping personal rewards. For the much more comprehensive rewards of personal donation, there is a higher price to pay.

When Saint Francis hauled stones to repair the church he thought needed rebuilding, there were those who threw pebbles at him. But, as we have observed, even when Francis was hearing imperfectly he was responding with all the adequacy then possible to him.



And it was precisely this which made him an adequate responder to God's actual invitation to restore not a church building but the Church's soul.

We are sometimes so encumbered with considerations of foreseeable practical difficulties that we cannot be practical about present reality. We waste so many moments of life explaining to God why His Will cannot be done, why His designs are not workable, why His invitations are ill-timed. It was, after all, perfectly obvious in the thirteenth-century complex of worldliness and evil that one little man could not turn a whole social tide. If Francis' physique did not render him outstandingly qualified for the trade of stone masonry, his prestige as a theologian was scarce-

ly such as to make him the obvious choice for a leader in ecclesial and social renewal, either. However, God is not hampered in His plans by our natural limitations, but only by our failures to respond when He calls.

The greatest decisions of men are made in the inner court of the soul, that same area where men's greatest wars are waged. The low voice of the Spirit of God heard in that inner court has power to lure a man out of the haven of ease into the surging waters of suffering, out of the limelight of worldly fame into the hot and blinding light of the desert, out of the comfort of routine into the uncharted dark jungles of faith. It can seem pleasanter not to listen, but in the end it is heart-breaking and life-destroying not to have listened.

It is an easily penetrable paradox that we must live by an unscheduled schedule. A life is most perfectly planned whose plans are most amenable to being upset. How clearly the paradox is proclaimed in the life of our Lady! From her earliest years, her life was carefully planned, and planned entirely for God. Apparently, just so that He might upset her plans.

She planned to be a servant and was summoned to a much more arduous destiny of service as mistress of the world. She decided on obscure virginity. She was invited to inexplicable maternity. She accepted the responsibility of parenthood and was told her Child had left her because He had to attend

to His Father's affairs. There could be few more consoling sentences in the Scriptures for us fumbling creatures than that which tells us that our Lady did not understand what He said to her (Lk. 2:50). But she listened and responded. She went back down to Nazareth to continue issuing domestic orders to this divine Son of hers whom she did not understand but to Whom she listened and in Whom she believed.

We are so ready to believe, once we understand. Our Lady's listening is there to teach us that unless we believe we shall never understand. Unless we hear and respond as best we presently can to the sounding of life when it is, we shall never fathom our own destiny, but be left puddling about in our shallow determination to construct our own timepiece of destiny. Opportunities to serve, to give, to solace spring up like small flowers on our path, and we are sometimes too occupied with the business of living to be conscious of life's occurring. Yet it is truly a fearsome thing to be too busy to be alive.

To return to Saint Francis (and what can you do, once you have encountered that burning little man, but keep on returning to him)—he set out, alone, on one of the most grandiose programs of renewal the Church has ever witnessed, one that was to inspire rich men to give all their wealth away, celebrities to scorn their fame away, young girls to fling the shining hair of their heads away—and all

God will not ask me tomorrow  
to achieve today's secret greatness.

these exuberant flings were as mere tokens of the gay donation of the heart to God. For carrying out this comprehensive plan, Francis had no blueprint save his own listening heart which always heard the sound of life when it was striking. There is a kind of vastly carefree air about the whole affair.

Having heard and responded to God's invitation to change his whole life's direction, he set out with literally nothing to do literally everything. What was literally nothing? A profounder nothing than a wardrobe consisting of a tunic and a rope belt and no shoes for his feet. It was that rich nothingness of the uncharted way toward a certain goal. It was that absolute poverty of the totally dedicated listener to God, the splendid poverty of the little ones who live by the word of God and whose only covetousness is in their sweeping desire that God's desires be fulfilled. When this kind of metanoia is achieved in a man's own life, he becomes a fit instrument of renewal in society, for only then is he freed for listening to life when it is.

The gold-crusty leaf gyrating on this particular October breeze will not return to perform again its exquisite dance of death when I have found time to watch it. The old man sick and lonely today will

not chime his need out to me during his burial service next week when I will have made room for him on my schedule. And God will not ask me tomorrow to achieve today's secret greatness.

Ours is an era of much bemoaning of the times. But these times are the only times we have, so we might as well live in them. Why, after all, agree to be just an automated digit in the cosmic census when one could be daily coming more alive? "Your lives must redeem the times" was the magnificent challenge to the early Christians. Looking at today's headlines, checking the plots of today's motion pictures, and scanning today's world horizon gives rather clear indication that these times could certainly do with some redeeming. But—we? Our lives? The glorious answer that is sounding right now is: yes!

It is neither in whimpering wistfulness for the past nor in neonic abstractions of tomorrow that a man comes alive to himself and in God. We do well when we sufferingly deplore the lack of peace in the world. However, we do better to recall that the basic approach to world peace is to establish and maintain an atmosphere of peace in one's own heart right now. After that, one may be fit for larger commitments to the cause of world peace, such as living in peace with



one's cousins down the block, or being patient with that irritable clerk.

God is in the now of my life. It is altogether a pity if I am not there with Him. When God says to me whatever is my equivalent of that word of His to Saint Francis, "Go and rebuild my house," I can only respond by hauling whatever stones are at hand to put in whatever chinks I find in me and my situation today.

We accumulate some odd expressions along our earthly way. "How to deal with life." "We have to face life." Shall we, then, "deal" with life like a foeman? Like a business transaction? Shall we face life as though it were an adversary, a hazard to be hurtled? Life is not to be dealt with, as though it were something outside us. It is not to be faced; it is within us. And the only way to experience it is to come alive, here and—now.

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## Thomas

Sister Mary Seraphim, P. C.

Bruised because I  
Stumbled at the  
Cross,  
Poisoned in the  
Marshes of human  
Reason,  
—what was, is not,  
what was promised,  
shall never be—  
Unless I see . . .  
And put my hand . . .  
Shaken  
Though this reed,  
He did not  
Break.  
Light with the promise  
God and the Virgin the  
Saints and you.  
Blest by Honorius  
in a one time darkness

## Early Franciscan Sources

John Pilch, O. F. M.

In a recent book Cajetan Esser appears to have revived and redefined an approach to the study of Franciscan origins that has been neglected for too many years.<sup>1</sup> Already well known for his insistence on studying the writings of Francis himself (Rules, letters, and Testament) according to the canons of solid literary criticism, Father Esser here suggests considering eye-witness testimonies (especially non-Franciscan) contemporaneous with the primitive age of the Order.<sup>2</sup> The only Franciscan sources of this period which he will admit to be of value are those unmarred by incipient misinterpretations of the Franciscan ideal due to partisan interests in the Order. The entire first chapter is dedicated to

an enumeration, description, and identification of these basic sources which guide the study in the remainder of the book.

This article is merely an attempt to report parts of this first chapter as a necessary guide for further solid Franciscan research. Time did not allow for a polished and complete translation, but the substantial accuracy of what is here reported can be guaranteed.

Since very soon after the death of Francis internal dissention over his ideals began to revage the Order and consequent "Franciscan" writing more often than not reflected partisan and not primitive understanding, Esser feels it necessary to restrict research to sources such as are not likely to be infected

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<sup>1</sup> *Anfänge und Ursprüngliche Zielsetzungen des Ordens der Minderbrüder* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1966). . . [Ed. note: For full documentation, see the translation soon to be published by the Franciscan Herald Press; omissions for present purposes are indicated in these footnotes by ellipsis.]

<sup>2</sup> Unless there are more recent editions of individual works, one should use the critical editions of H. Böhmer, *Analecta Franciscana*. . . (Quaracchi, 1885ff); and L. Lemmens, *Opuscula S. Francisci*. . . The problem is treated from another point of view by Armando Quaglia, O.F.M., whose work was later taken up critically by L. Casutt, O.F.M. Cap., in *Die älteste franziskanische Lebensform*. . . (Graz, 1955); but cf. p. 4, n. 3, of this present book (*Anfänge*. . .).

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by these partisan concerns. For this reason he suggests a study of the documents emanating from the papal curia under Pope Honorius III (1216-1227) and written either about or to the friars, prior to 1230, when they petitioned the curia to intervene in the affairs of their Order.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, he suggests study of non-Franciscan sources such as royal chronicles, archives, etc., insofar as they can shed specific light on the primitive period of the Order. Only in recent times is more attention being paid to this study.

Of special value and interest are some statements in the "Martyrium quinque fratrum Minorum apud Morochium" (Jan. 16, 1220), written by an eyewitness who lived near the friars in question but was not a member of the Order.<sup>4</sup>

And above all, Esser encourages a closer study of Leonhard Lemmens's *Testimonia Minora saeculi XIII de s. Francisco Assisiensi* (Quaracchi, 1926), which he feels has still not been adequately appreciated and utilized.

The point here obviously is to examine reports contemporaneous with and relevant to the origins of the Order. In the case of sources which originated within the Order but were not contemporaneous with Saint Francis, Esser prefers to study such as are not concerned

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Bullarium Franciscanum*, v. 1 (Rome, 1795ff).

<sup>4</sup> ... a rather valuable recent edition is that of H. de Roeck, O.F.M., in *De normis Regulae O.F.M. circa missiones inter infideles (Studi e testi Francescani)*, 19; Rome, 1961, pp. 5052. Jordan of Giano tells us that Francis read an account of this martyrdom and forbade it to be read by others. But we have no indication that this is the version he forbade.

<sup>5</sup> For a different view of the *Vita Prima*, cf. F. Debeer, O.F.M., *La conversion de saint François selon Thomas de Celano* (Paris, 1963).

with problems on observing the Rule (therefore, prior to 1230), or those unaffected by this problematic, or those written before the urge to accommodate the Order to a cloistered-monastic pattern became deeply entrenched. He enumerates eight such sources.

1. Brother Thomas of Celano's *Vita Prima* of Saint Francis, 1228. Though it highly praises Pope Gregory IX, who as Cardinal Hugolino was intimately connected with Francis and his work, it nevertheless presents a rather accurate picture of the beginning of the Order (even if sometimes concealed in the learned author's heavy rhetoric). For it was composed at a time when the first stirrings of internal problems in the developing Order had scarcely begun to break through. Besides, one must not overlook the fact that in his prologue, Celano clearly indicates that he will strive to narrate "what he himself had heard from the mouth of the Saint, or from credible and trustworthy witnesses." His report for this reason deserves greater attention than it has been receiving in recent times, especially since the appearance of the still basically unproven thesis of Sabatier.<sup>5</sup>

2. The "Legenda s. Francisci ad usum chori," written by Thomas of Celano, c. 1233.<sup>6</sup> Insofar as the material is concerned, this *legenda*

adds little to what was recorded in the *Vita Prima*. Nevertheless in many statements it is more precise and clear, with the result that the testimony which may have been blunted by the rhetoric of *Vita Prima* becomes quite unequivocal here.

3. The oldest biography of Saint Anthony of Padua, called "Legenda Assidua," which was composed by one of his confreres soon after his canonization (1232). Notwithstanding occasional flights of rhetoric, it nonetheless sketches historical truth for the most part. The author intends to narrate only what he himself has experienced or has learned from eye-witnesses. His narrative about the life and work of the Saint and his Order are of especial value for us, since everything relating to the inner life of the Order is narrated entirely without prejudice.<sup>7</sup>

4. The "Vita beati Fratris Aegidii," which was probably written by Brother Leo, after Giles' death in the years between 1263 and 1271.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Both Legends can be found in *Analecta Franciscana*, v. X (Henceforth: AF.).

<sup>7</sup> This has been edited by Léon de Kerval, in *Collection d'études et de documents sur l'histoire religieuse et littéraire du Moyen Age*, v. V (Paris, 1904), 23-114. Cf. also S. Clasen, "Antonius, Diener des Evangeliums und der Kirche," *Wissenschaft und Weisheit* 23 (1960), 54-55. (The former work, henceforth: *CollEtDoc.*).

<sup>8</sup> An edition can be found in L. Lemmens, O.F.M. (ed.), *Documenta Antiqua Franciscana*, v. I (Quaracchi, 1901ff.), 37-63 (Henceforth: *DocAnt-Franc.*).

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Regula s. Clarae*, I, 3; *Testamentum s. Clarae* 11; *Benedictio s. Clarae*.

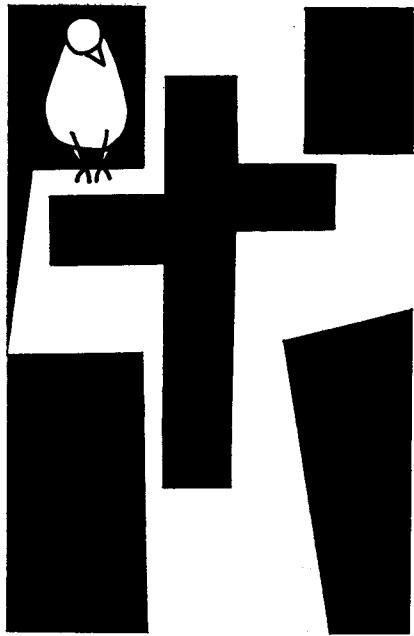
<sup>10</sup> Cf. Nesta de Robeck, *St. Clare of Assisi* (Milwaukee; 1951); I. Brady, O.F.M., *The Legend and Writings of St. Clare of Assisi* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y., 1953).

<sup>11</sup> See Böhmer, in *CollEtDoc.* VI (Paris, 1908). Written before 1262, this chronicle is the testimony of a man who lived through the development years of the Order in Italy and then settled in Germany where the problem was not as acute...

As is stated in the foreword, this *Vita* intends to reveal Giles as the "Brother of great contemplation" and consequently places special emphasis on his mystical experiences. Nevertheless it is done in the framework of his concrete life. The testimony can be clearly read even in this special literary form, and its allusions are quite valuable.

5. The biography and writings of Saint Clare of Assisi, the "little plant of the late Father Francis," as she calls herself with pleasure.<sup>9</sup> Clare had herself traversed the way of life modeled by Saint Francis and lived quite close to the development of his Order. She had accepted his spirit deep within herself and had preserved it at its best. Her witness therefore has great value and it would be highly appropriate to attend to it.<sup>10</sup>

6. As a contrast to the picture that appears from the sources already named, two of the oldest chronicles originating within the Order can be called to witness: that of Jordan of Giano,<sup>11</sup> and the



"Tractatus de adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam," by Thomas of Eccleston.<sup>12</sup> Again, both these Chronicles have been for a long time almost entirely neglected in Franciscan research. Perhaps this was so because their presentation of the life of the Friars Minor and of the development of their fraternity basically differed from that contained in the later "conflict" writings of the so-called *Mirror of Perfection*, which also since P. Sabatier and his bold theses was considered to be the only correct view.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, generally known as "of Eccleston," wrote his Chronicle ca. 1258/59. A. G. Little edited it in *CollEtDoc*. VII (Paris, 1909) and again in 1951 at Manchester. He spent 26 years gathering material, and some of his narrative seems to have been drawn from eye-witnesses and from documents, though in general he seems ill informed about the history of the Order.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Werkbuch zur Regel des h. Franziskus*, ed. by the German Franciscans (Werli.W., 1955), pp. 131, 216, and *passim*.

Both Sabatier and all who followed him, however, overlooked the fact that in the *Mirror* literature the "quaestio iuris," as it was described at the beginning of the 14th(!) century, was placed pointedly in the foreground. Both of the chronicles under consideration speak unreflectively about the life of the brothers, as it actually took place in the first decade of the 13th century, and therefore about the "quaestio facti." And the facts can make a big difference in any judgment. Besides, one can't deny that everything which the first friars in Germany and England so matter-of-factly performed in their obvious idealism must necessarily lie within the range of development immanent to the Order. Otherwise one must accept the impossible conclusion that the Franciscan ideal in its migration beyond the Alps was strongly changed.

Upon further reflection these chronicles increase in significance among early Franciscan writings. The rules of the Friars Minor do not "rule" everything that actually was "ruled" in those times in the Order's day-to-day existence.<sup>13</sup> The writings of Saint Francis, including the definitive Rule for his Order, all bear an "occasional" character and quite properly never encompassed everything. The *Vitae* by preference describe the actual life

of their "hero." The later "legendae" are unfortunately too often swayed in their choice of material by the factional allegiance of their authors. For this reason the testimony of both these chronicles, which preserve full and concrete lives, are quite valuable. They really round off our knowledge in many respects.

7. Two letters of Brother Elias are also to be listed among the Franciscan sources. One was written in 1225/26 to the Friars Minor of Valenciennes,<sup>14</sup> and the other was written after the death of Saint Francis to the "minister of the brothers" in France,<sup>15</sup> and could equally well have been sent, in similar form, to all the provinces of the Order. Thus Bihl also calls it the "Epistola encyclica de transitu s. Francisci." Because the letters still belong to the "primitive period" of the Order and relate to concrete facts, they can be seen as relevant here.

8. The "Sacrum Commercium beati Francisci cum domina Paupertate," originating most probably c. 1227, is adduced not so much because of its early date, as because of its being a first, unprejudiced reflection by the young Order about itself.<sup>16</sup> Unfortunately this valuable

writing, which gives such eloquent testimony to the spirituality of the still young Order later underwent many misinterpretations, which as a result aroused the suspicions of historians especially regarding its origins. Today one can say that this work is a quite faithful interpretation of Francis' thought and intention—one which must be carefully studied alongside the heretofore named sources regarding the primitive period of the Order, and which can correct these sources in certain areas.

To be sure, in the investigation of individual problems we must also consider non-Franciscan sources. From this vantage point one can examine both the writings of Francis and the sources just described. Only in this way can we be certain that relevant questions are posed and answered without prejudice. And only in this way can any possible development be placed in clearer perspective.

The majority of these non-Franciscan sources can be found in Lemmens' *Testimonia Minora*. Esser examines a number of them individually, and assigns them special alphabetical designations to facilitate their citation later in his own work. It might be well fo

<sup>14</sup> *Testimonia Minora*, 85-86 (Henceforth: TM.). Its authenticity has been defended by M. Bihl, O.F.M., in *AF*. X, p. 525, n. 3 (Cf. also F. van den Borne "Nabeschouwing over de Rondzenbrief van Broeder Elias," in *Sint Franciscus* 6 (1962), 74-75.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *AF*. X, 525-28; also the introduction: LV ff.

<sup>16</sup> Esser bases his conclusions on the critical edition (Quaracchi, 1929) and refers also to his own "Untersuchungen zum 'Sacrum Commercium beati Francisci cum Domina Paupertate,'" *Miscellanea Melchor de Pabladura*, v. (Rome, 1964), 1-33.

future research in using these same sources to adopt the same method of citation.

A. The Chronicle of the Premonstratensian Prior Burckhard of Ursperg (d. 1230).<sup>17</sup> He became acquainted with the young Franciscan movement during a journey to Italy in 1210 and described it mainly on the basis of the experience gained at the time. His testimony is especially valuable among the earliest eye-witnesses.

B. The "Legenda de passione sancti Verecundi militis et martyris."<sup>18</sup> Its unknown author expressly called upon eye-witnesses for the two pericopes which directly concern the earliest history of the Order.

C. The "Vita Gregorii IX," which was written c. 1240, most probably by a Curia functionary (John of Campania?).<sup>19</sup> With great caution Lemmens states that he believes a certain (perhaps this one) "Joannes, apostolicae sedis notarius" was the one who had written a "Vita s. Francisci" of ambiguous value. Be that as it may, it should come as no surprise that this Curia official reveals the merits of Cardinal Hugolino with regard to the Friars

Minor as highly prized and valuable. We must occasionally correct him by the statements of Gregory IX himself.

D. The "Historia pontificum Saronitanorum et Spalatensium."<sup>20</sup> by the archdeacon Thomas of Spalato, who on August 15, 1222, was present at a sermon of Saint Francis in Bologna, bears eloquent testimony about it and its effects.

E. The "Chronicon Montis Sereni" is by an unknown Premonstratensian from the Lauterburg Monastery near Halle in the then archbishopric of Magdeburg.<sup>21</sup> In his narrative, which covers the years 1224/25, he describes the appearance of the friars in the district of Magdeburg. Since he is a member of an older Order, his statements have special importance; for if he is unfavorable to the rise of the "newer Orders," he must strive to make as objective an evaluation as possible.

F. A letter which James de Vitry, at the beginning of October 1216, while in the port of Genoa just prior to his crossing over to Palestine, wrote to his friends in the region of Liege.<sup>22</sup> His narrative depends entirely upon his personal

experience in Umbria, 1216. Because he observed the religious movement in the North, he had a special eye out for its form of manifestation in the South. He had a congenial interest in the Order.

G. Another letter from the same author, written to Damietta in Feb.-Mar., 1220, has often been edited in such a way that editors of the Franciscan Order side-stepped a passage in the first part which is unfavorable to the Order—claiming it to be presumably a later interpolation. The edition of Huygens is our preference.<sup>23</sup>

H. Chapter 32 of the second book of James de Vitry's *Historia Orientalis*,<sup>24</sup> written from 1219 onward, essentially on the basis of experiences which the author had previously gathered in the West (c. 1216). In all probability it was to have ended after the important Battle of Damietta (Sep. 8, 1221).<sup>25</sup>

HS. Two sermons which James de Vitry preached as Cardinal for the Friars Minor.<sup>26</sup> As H. Felder has noted with good reason, these sermons were probably preached shortly after 1228. Even though

they bear the typical characteristics of medieval sermons, one can nevertheless draw from them a correct and valuable judgment on individual questions.

J. The "Rhetorica antiqua" of the Bolognese Cuoncompagni, which was completed c. 1220, contains two brief narratives that are important for Franciscan studies.<sup>27</sup>

K. The Chronicle of the Cistercian Monk, Alberich of Troisfontaines, which extends to 1241, makes some important statements about the new Order.<sup>28</sup>

L. The *Chronicon Normanniae*, also called the *Annales Normannici* (-1259),<sup>29</sup> whose unknown author narrates in connection with Honorius III some data about the Friars Minor, strongly delineating their difference from older Orders. Since it is not well disposed to the friars, its statements have an importance all their own.

M. The Chronicle of Roger of Wendover (d. 1236), a monk of the English Abbey of St. Alban, whose narratives were absorbed with insignificant changes by Matthew of

<sup>23</sup> TM. 80. Huygens, 131-32, thinks the disagreeable text is primitive, and not an interpolation.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. H. Grundmann, *Religiöse Bewegungen im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1935 [rep. Hildesheim, 1961], p. 165, n. 35.

<sup>25</sup> Anal. 102-06; TM. 81-84.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. H. Felder, O.F.M.Cap., "Jacobi Vitriacensis Sermones ad Fratres Minores," *Analecta Ordinis Minorum Capuccinorum* 19 (1903), 22-24; 114-22; 149-58. . . G. Schreiber, *Gemeinschaft der Mittelalters* (Münster i. W., 1948) calls Vitry a "gifted observer of the canonical and monastic life of his environment" (402), "studies his material from good basic sources" (403) so that he can "point out quite clearly the normal environment." His observations are very important.

<sup>27</sup> TM. 92.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 19-20. Note that this chronicle is truly contemporary, insofar as it was written from day to day while the events transpired.

<sup>29</sup> TM. 20-21.

<sup>17</sup> TF. 17-18; cf. the editor's critical remarks, 16-18.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* 14, and especially 12-13.

<sup>20</sup> H. Böhmer, *Analekten zur Geschichte des Franziskus von Assisi* (2nd ed., Tübingen, 1930), 106 (Henceforth Anal.); cf. also TM.10. . .

<sup>21</sup> TM. 18-19.

<sup>22</sup> The entire letter was edited by H. Böhmer, Anal. 94-101. Lemmens (TM. 79-80) merely treated a brief section of it. Our preference is the newer edition: R. B. C. Huygens, *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry* (Leiden: Brill, 1906), 71-78. A. Mens, O.F.M.Cap., *Oorsprung en Betekenis van de Hederlandse Begijnen—en Begardenbeweging* (Antwerp, 1947), p. 245, n. 78, believes on good grounds that in the summer of 1216, Vitry could well have met Francis personally at Perugia.

Paris, a monk of the same abbey, into his own "Chronica maiora." Both narratives obviously are not eye-witness reports, but as Lemmens quite rightly maintains, they are drawn from oral reports.<sup>30</sup> Yet one must in each case carefully examine their statements. As members of an old Order, they were closed to the new kind of Franciscan movement and treated it with definite bias. The work is tainted, moreover, by an anti-papal tendency because the authors sided with the Guelph Otto IV. This explains their sharp animosity against Innocent III.<sup>31</sup>



N. The "Chronica de gestis regum Angliae" (-1300), by the Augustinian canon Walter of Gisburn (Yorkshire).<sup>32</sup> In many instances this author depends upon the narrative of Thomas of Celano, but he still has some statements peculiar to himself which can be of value.

O. The "Liber epilogorum in gesta Sanctorum" of Bartholomew of

Trent, O.P.<sup>33</sup> He was a contemporary of Saint Anthony of Padua, whom he had seen and known. His work, which originated in the years 1243/51, reveals a dependence upon Celano's *Vita Prima*, even to the choice of words; but there are some independent statements worthy of note.

P. The liturgical readings in the Breviary of the Order of Preachers from the year 1254.<sup>34</sup> They have as their basic foundation the still undiscovered legend about Saint Francis, "Quasi stella matutina," by the apostolic notary Johannes (?)—cf. C, above.

Q. The "Gesta Senonensis ecclesiae" (-1264) of the monk Rocherius, who as Lemmens thinks, followed the oral tradition more closely.<sup>35</sup>

R. The famous and widely read "Legenda aurea" of the Dominican James of Voragine, whose origin Bihl places between the years 1265 and 1280.<sup>36</sup> This *legenda* adds nothing essentially new to its source, Thomas of Celano, but some few sentences do contain important information.

S. The so-called "Legenda s. Francisci Monacensis," which was written c. 1275 by an unknown

Benedictine monk in Bayern.<sup>37</sup> It is especially important because its author occasionally makes revealing comparisons between his Order and the Friars Minor.

T. The "Legenda choralis Carnotensis," from the 13th century, was written for the use of the choir in the Cathedral of Chartres.<sup>38</sup>

U. Under this symbol are included all the official documents which A. G. Little has edited.<sup>39</sup> They all stem from the first half of the 13th century, and both by reason of form and content, they cast notable light upon individual questions deserving of serious investigation.

V. Official documents from the reign of King Henry III of England (1216-1272), which J. S. Brewer has assembled.<sup>40</sup> These also cast an occasional light of such nature upon our research, that one can only regret that they are not more numerous—especially that such records have not come down to us from other lands as well.

W. A sermon recorded by Otto of Cheriton in 1219.<sup>41</sup> In it he brings to the text of Mt. 6:24 (No man can serve two masters...) an ex-

ample from the life of Saint Francis. M. Bihl, who edited the text, claims that Otto was personally acquainted with the Friars Minor, and that his testimony therefore deserves a special place among the *Testimonia Minora*.

All these testimonies are valuable because they contain no admixture of those petty considerations one finds complicating the writings of the late 13th and 14th centuries, and which we find difficult even today to escape. In them, as in all the other testimonies of the 13th century, one finds no citations, nor any use whatever of the *Specula perfectionis*, the so-called *Legenda antiqua*, or the many other "legends" except those of Thomas of Celano, Saint Bonaventure, and the "Quasi stella matutina." From this Lemmens draws with strong assurance the conclusion that these latter belong to the 13th century whereas the former are compilations of the 14th.<sup>42</sup> His argument certainly deserves greater attention in the solution of these very difficult questions than it has hitherto found.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 26-32.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. E. Brem, *Papst Gregor IX. bis zum Beginn seines Pontifikates* (Heidelberger Abh. zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, Heft 32—Heidelberg, 1911), 21. In any event, Matthew wrote not more than a year or two after the events he describes.

<sup>32</sup> *TM.* 23-24.

<sup>33</sup> *AF.* X, 540-43; cf. also *LVI* ff; *TM.* 63-65.

<sup>34</sup> *AF.* X, 533-35; cf. also *LVI* ff; *TM.* 57-60.

<sup>35</sup> *TM.* 32-33; also 26f.

<sup>36</sup> *AF.* X, *LXXXIII*f; the text is on 681-93.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* X, 694-719; cf. also introd., *LXXXIII*ff.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* X, 538-40; cf. also introd., *LVI*ff.

<sup>39</sup> *CollEtDoc.* VII (Paris, 1909), 165-76.

<sup>40</sup> *Monumenta Franciscana* (London, 1858), 613-22.

<sup>41</sup> M. Bihl, O.F.M., "S. Francisci parabola in sermonibus Odonis de Ceritona an. 1219 conscriptis," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 22 (1929), 584-86. The parable can also be found in earlier Franciscan sources: 2 Celano 16; *Legenda trium sociorum*, §50. Odo, however, puts it into a wider framework. Cf. the critical remarks by Debeer, *op. cit.*, 265ff.

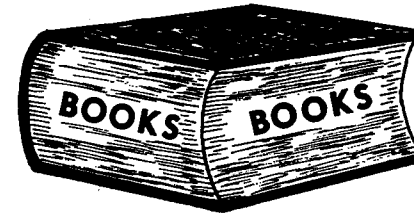
<sup>42</sup> *TM.* 26, 101f.

## Light with the Promise

On the occasion of my father's profession of vows in the Capuchin Order

He  
blest  
obedience and  
poverty and  
chastity—the  
lights astringent  
to soft world  
God's peace to vanity  
was spoke by Christ  
And peace incorporate  
to us by Church  
the light—obedience and  
Poverty and chastity—  
Proclaim a death and life  
Mystic, real,  
They wait and are a  
Jesus-peace from vanity  
They wait as the signs  
of the end  
and of the start

Randall Holahan, O.F.M. Cap.



*Living in Hope.* By Ladislaus Boros, S.J. Trans. W. J. O'Hara; New York: Herder & Herder, 1970. Pp. 127. Cloth, \$4.50.

*Reviewed by Father Howard Reddy, O.F.M., a member of the Continuing Education Committee of Holy Name Province. Father Howard holds a Master's Degree in History from St. Bonaventure University and is working toward a Doctorate in Religious Education at Catholic University.*

Father Boros refers to his collection of essays on hope as meditations, and it is a precise designation. This is not to say that the book is theologically undernourished. On the contrary the author's range and depth of theological reflection is almost too extensive for adequate treatment in so slender a volume. For this reason the book will be better appreciated by those who have some familiarity with his earlier writings and with the current discussion on hope by Rahner, Moltmann, and others.

There are in this book four sections of unequal length. In the first, Father Boros presents some very brief reflections on man's future, man's soul, death, and resurrection. As food for thought these chapters provide rich but sparse fare. The author writes, "Heaven must be understood essentially as an infinite dynamism." Again, "Man has a soul but at the same time has to make a soul for himself." He offers what he calls a "hazardous" opinion that the resurrection of every man occurs straightway at the moment of death. The reader who is not familiar with the

current state of theological discussion on these matters will find Fr. Boros' notes thin and perhaps confusing, if not unsettling. In this section, too, he repeats his well known "final option" theory on death in which he holds that at the moment of death every human person encounters the risen Christ in full clarity and reflection and has the opportunity to make a final, definitive choice for Christ or against him. He counters the objection: "Why lead a Christian life now if everything depends on the final option?" by observing that there is no other criterion of the honesty of one's wish for final conversion than sincere conversion now. He adds, "I must practice by many small decisions of my life for the great and final decision in death." This final option theory, which is not original with Fr. Boros, is fascinating, but many theologians think there is in fact little evidence to support it.

The next section, twice as long as the first, lives up to its designation as meditations on Christian hope. To wait in hope is the vital element, the fundamental personal attitude one should have in life. For the Christian, thinking hopefully must involve the risk of asking questions, of being able to fall silent in the face of mystery and of learning how to respond to God in and through finite and imperfect human relationships. The measure of true hope consists in whether one has an authentic spirit of martyrdom. Christian hope prompts us to become detached from this transitory world not by abandoning it but by plunging ourselves even more recklessly into responsibility for the world precisely because in hope it is impossible ultimately to fail.

The author reflects, next, on the problem of suffering and finds that for Christians living in hope suffering remains real and hurtful, yet provides a new possibility of understanding, of endurance, of patience. Even though helpless in the face of suffer-

ing, hope causes anger to give way to compassion which is a far more positive and fruitful response than is generally imagined. It is, moreover, only in suffering that one can reach the limits of the human reality and so pass through to the life of God. Finally, reflecting on the future of hope, Fr. Boros probes the words of Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven and uncovers here many compelling concepts not often discussed by theologians or preachers.

In the third and shortest part of the book, the author hardly more than lists several recent developments within Catholic life and thought that promise to foster new health and vitality in the Church. A new intellectual honesty and humility, personalism, a new vision of Jesus and of the Church, and a new experience of fraternity among the faithful will all make it possible to speak to the man of tomorrow. Unfortunately, the discussion here is altogether too brief to do justice to these important questions.

In the last section of his book, Fr. Boros discusses creation and evolution. It is clear that evolution is a fact and that the Genesis accounts of creation have to do with the fact of creation and not with historical and scientific sequences of events. The teachings of Pope Pius XII and the Biblical Commission when properly understood permit us to affirm the homogeneity of the human race in its origin from a single species even though the race may have achieved hominization at different times and in different places. In this reviewer's judgment this distinction is nice but probably beside the point. It does not explain man's common inheritance in original sin which the Pontiff was primarily concerned to defend, since there would be no question of sin prior to hominization. Although scientists today generally favor polygenism (that the human race descends not from one but from many pairs of 'first parents'), theologians have

yet to work out a really convincing explanation of the doctrine of original sin that is consistent with that concept. Fr. Boros correctly declares that Pius XII left the matter open, but his own reflections in this book do not really touch on the vast complexities of the issue. He is more successful in presenting a concise and good resume of the evolution theories of Teilhard de Chardin.

The book closes with an interesting description of the new kind of man the technological era is producing. He will be task oriented, professional, dedicated, sober, self-disciplined, group conscious, and cosmopolitan—in short, calm, cool, and confident. Fr. Boros admits this is an incomplete picture, and it is. One notable element he might have discussed is the problematic whether technological man will know how to celebrate festivity in a fitting human way.

But this last question points up, in a sense, the difficulty with the whole book. The author presents in much too cursory a fashion many profound theological speculations. And yet the book's great merit lies precisely in this brevity which will attract readers. One cannot read this book without beginning to ponder deeply questions not usually asked but which come to the very heart of what Christian hope is all about.

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**Being Together: Our Relationships with Other People.** By Marc Oraison. Trans. Rosemary Sheed; New York: Doubleday, 1970. Pp. 168. Cloth, \$4.95.

*Reviewed by Father Stephen T. Ernest, S.V.D., a doctoral candidate in philosophy at Fordham University.*

The main theme of Fr. Oraison's book is that the individual person is formed at all stages by his relationships to others. Man's personal being is quite literally a "being-together."

Nowadays this theme is practically a truism in psychology (and philosophy also, for that matter) but some reflection on the history of either discipline shows how we had to go through many, often trauma-producing, detours before arriving at an appreciation of it.

One general variation of this theme, occurring throughout the book, is that there is a radical tension in man between returning to a past "wholeness-with-another" (terminated at birth when the child has been taken from the mother's womb) and advancing to future experience, in which man achieves individual fullness through his relationship with others. The paradox of this radical tension is that one must remain separate if he is to achieve wholeness. If one were *per impossible* to "return to the womb," it would be his death as an individual person. Yet even the advance to the future, the only direction one can take for survival, is itself an attempt to retrieve that feeling of "prenatal wholeness." This radical tension operates on all levels: examples can be found in the contrast between seeking security in the past and adventure in the future, or in the age old tensions between structures and experience, individual and community.

In the Introduction Oraison mentions that while we admit the primary importance of relationships for personal growth, we seldom give this much further thought. Meanwhile the various sciences have given us tested tools and methodologies, and the book is an attempt to take advantage of their results and outline the various factors and characteristics of our "being-together."

Chapter One, "But Who Are 'Other People?'" describes the awareness of the human "not-I" as a *sine qua non* of individual personality; and Chapter Two extends this descriptive analysis to the "Multiplicity of 'Others,'" discussing our relationships throughout their gamut—from the fleeting to

the enduring, the superficial to the profound.

Chapter Three, "Progressive Elaboration of Our Relationships," may be a bit more technical than the rest of the book, but is not overly so for the average reader. Here Oraison outlines the various stages of personality development and the quality of the relationships involved, from the pre-natal to post-adolescent maturity. Great importance is attached to the physiological factor and the role of affectivity and the subconscious. Conflicts and aberrations arise when problems in any of these stages are unresolved.

Chapters Four and Five, on "What Happens in Relationships: Problems and Pathology," and "The Relationship of Absence," deal with the dynamics of presence and absence respectively. Elements in any relationship of presence are conflict, desire, aggression, sexuality, and distance. Oraison's treatment of the absence-relationship elaborates the factor of distance (to be maintained in any relationship), but goes on to examine the effects of permanent absence, especially death, on relationships and their dynamics.

(One cannot, incidentally, use Oraison's thesis as an argument against the solitary or contemplative life. While admitting that pathology may be behind many attempts at this kind of life, we must admit history's clear indication that such a vocation can—paradoxically—establish genuine relationships of a quality beyond the ordinary. Clinical evidence cannot be cited to deny in toto the human success of such vocations.)

The concluding chapter, "Relation to the 'Other' Who Is God," tends to the more "philosophical" genre. Both individual man and collective humanity must deal with the concept of an "Other" seen as encompassing the universe. The response may be acceptance, denial, or non-concern; but whatever the response, one is de-

manded by the dynamism of personality. Our situation-in-time forces us to face the possibility of an "Immense Other in some relation to us in time, yet 'holy Other' outside of time. Accordingly there is no direct experience of this "Other." Following this is a treatment of the various religions in terms of psychological dynamics and a consideration of the tension between experience and structure.

I imagine that professional psychologists could criticize some of the specifics in this book; I frankly do not have the background to know one way or the other. I also suspect that much of the technical material could just as easily be found in any elementary textbook. However, to my mind, all this does not derogate from the book's value for pastoral activity. It is undeniable that an appreciation of the dynamics of relationship is an absolute necessity for maximal effectiveness in the apostolate.

Oraison makes no claim to an exhaustive treatment, and even if one grants the elements of superficiality in that the book deals with only general aspects, still there is enough of detail, examples, and applications to make this a very worthwhile book—especially so in its emphasis on the role of the unconscious, inarticulate yet felt in all our activity. One can question details: e.g., whether God is all that distant, or whether the analysis of the "look" is a bit overdrawn. But Oraison himself offers much of this as only tentative suggestions, and while he does present cogent arguments, our reservations do not have to be stumbling blocks to a general acceptance of his work.

Fr. Oraison has shown himself in the past competent in both the psychological and the pastoral, and in providing a new perspective of the manifold dynamic processes operative in all our encounters no matter how brief, he has given to us priests and religious a fresh approach to much of what we are about and should be doing.

**Discerning the Spirit: Foundations and Futures of Religious Life.** By Donald L. Gelpi, S.J. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1970. Pp. xvi-329. Cloth, \$6.50.

*Reviewed by Father Celestine O'Callaghan, O.F.M., professor of mathematics at Siena College. Father Celestine is engaged in retreat work with Sisters this summer.*

On first looking into Gelpi's "Discerning the Spirit" I felt as if each word were one inch long and each sentence one inch thick. It may be ponderous because it is all about the foundations of religious life and has chapters on gratuitous sharing, unrestricted love, service, the Christian Community, and the prayer of involvement. While at times he seems to promise some 'far out' approach to the life, he balances such promises with a convincing restatement of the traditional teaching. With his many references, with his discussion of every modern problem, the author offers a very complete outline for the study of the religious vocation.

In the best chapter, the one on celibacy, or as he calls it, "unrestricted love", the writer very clearly develops the concept of freely chosen celibate love in the light of married love.

The villain of the book is manual asceticism which is best described as the caricature or religious life that one sees in the more saccharine movies about saints. Possibly the writer has in mind books that derive from Alphonsus Rodriguez, the grandfather of many a manual.

The account of the manual concept of obedience is overdrawn. It seems to be a description of the vow that we, non-jesuits, always suspected was the jesuitical theory of obedience. One of the problems of obedience has been, and still is, "selective" obedience whereby each one, superior and subject, chooses the laws that he will obey.

The section on Christian community is well done but I wish that he had been more forceful on the obligation of religious, not only to love one another, but to show it in daily living, for community life is more than a First Friday Club.

I would recommend this book to all those interested in the religious life today.

**Youth Asks: Does God Still Speak?**

By Andrew M. Greeley. Camden, N.J.: Nelson, 1970. Pp. 94. Paper, \$1.50.

*Reviewed by Mr. Thomas Gaffney, a recent graduate of Holy Cross College.*

**Youth Asks: Does God Still Speak?** is an informative account written by Andrew M. Greeley, in which the author does not attempt to give a clear answer to the question of the existence of God, but rather provides the material from which this question may be both asked and answered in the light of one's personal experiences.

The author begins his text with what might be termed a brief historical approach to the God question and proceeds from the eighteenth century Age of Myth to the twentieth century Age of Science. He briefly describes the three approaches to the question, that is the theistic, the atheistic, and the agnostic philosophies. In dealing with the agnostic approach it is pointed out that it is essentially one that lacks any total commitment, and Father Greeley logically deduces that the true agnostic does have a faith commitment, even if it is in his own philosophy, and hence nullifies his whole approach.

The following chapters are more or less warnings against the pitfalls that the young adult will encounter in his process of Christian maturation and his hopeful acceptance of an ultimate Absolute.

Throughout the text the author approaches the God question in the terms of the 'graciousness of being', or in other words, the ultimate meaning of life itself. It is easy to see in this day and age the logical conclusions that may be drawn from the question of the reality of life itself, for if the mature Christian were to deny the reality of life, he would then deny the graciousness of life and hence would be denying the basic existence and meaning of life itself. For one to deny that being is gracious would also be the denial of the graciousness of a God.

The only major fault that can be found with the author is his constant referral to an acceptance of faith in terms of a 'leap'. In my opinion no one as yet has satisfactorily explained the term 'acceptance of faith' and Father Greeley also appears lax in this area. He claims that faith "is a leap of the total human personality—a commitment of one's person to an ideology and not merely the acceptance by the mind of a series of academic propositions." Faith, as he points out, is much like love, yet, when he terms the acceptance of faith as a leap into total commitment, it sounds as ambiguous as asking the new groom the exact moment he fell in love with his spouse. Faith is indeed an acceptance and a total commitment, yet, like love, it is something that is built upon and added to without knowing the process that is being evolved. I sincerely believe that the only time one knows what is exactly meant by a gift of faith is only after a person has lost that total commitment, and desires once again to grasp it.

Andrew M. Greeley has written a text that will help the maturing Christian bridge the gap from the Baltimore Catechism days to the time when he must accept the meaning of his own personal life and, hence, personally answer the question of the ultimate meaning of being.



**Sex and the Mysteries.** By John Haffert. Washington, N.J.: Ave Maria Institute Press, 1970. Pp. 284. Cloth, \$5.95.

*Reviewed by Father Nicholas Tinney, O.F.M., a former missionary to Mexico and member of the retreat band of Holy Name Province now at Holy Cross Friary, Bronx, N.Y.*

**Sex and the Mysteries** is not a book to be read in a short time. It is meant to be piked up daily and read slowly and meditatively. Haffert does not propose to instruct but rather to stimulate. His language is simple. His thesis that the manifold problems occasioned by the abuse of sex can be successfully met by the prayerful and proper recitation of the Rosary is stated and re-tated with firm conviction. To anyone who would scoff at this proposal the author would most likely retort that the critic of the Rosary may have recited it but rather poorly and improperly—with consequent fruitlessness.

Haffert presupposes his readers' awareness of sex and its abuses. To him the mysteries of the Rosary are truly Christocentric Scriptures. He holds that no other activity (except the Mass) is more capable of keeping the Life of Christ before the People of God and motivating them towards the imitation of Christ, perfect antidote for the poisons of unbridled sex.

The book contains a special chapter and many passing references to Pope John XXIII, not the legendary but the real man. There are many excerpts from the *Journal of a Soul*, the diary of the beloved Pontiff, who every day prayed the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary despite his heavy schedule of daily duties.

Haffert wrote the Joannine chapter, "Confessions of a Pope," while three men for the first time in history were reading from Genesis as they circled the moon. The reviewer was reading this same chapter while many Rosarians were rattling their beads for the three crewmen in Apollo 13 upon learning that the lunar landing had to be aborted and great fear was expressed for their safe return to the good earth. Astronaut Jack Swigert gave thanks on national TV for the many prayers to which he gave great credit for their successful splashdown. Apollo 13's ascent was joyful, the explosion and abortion sorrowful, its safe return glorious.

**Sex and the Mysteries** was written with an eye to a general reading audience and yet with chapters individually meant for religious, for the married, for the post-adolescent single, and for youth. If the reader believes that grace is priceless, and the reading of this book does impel one toward this great gift of God, then it would be impossible to set a fixed value on this publication.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

Evely, Louis. **The Scandal of the Cross.** Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1970. Pp. 40. Paper, \$1.50.

Moore, Dom Sebastian. **The Experience of Prayer.** Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1970. Pp. 40. Paper, \$1.50.

O'Meara, Thomas F. **Holiness and Radicalism in Religious life.** New York: Herder and Herder, 1970. Pp. xi-157. Cloth, \$4.95.

Streiker, Lowell D. ed. **WHO AM I? Second Thought on Man, his Loves, his Gods.** New York: Sheed & Ward, 1970. Pp. xxxii-216. Cloth, \$4.50.

Tracy, David. **The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan.** New York: Herder and Herder, 1970. Pp. xv-302.