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A GUEST EDITORIAL



Prayer for Unity 1971

Today it is commonplace to ask, Is ecumenism dead—or dying— or in its death throes? Is the ecumenical movement over—a relic of the recent past? What has happened to all the fond hopes of just a few years ago? What does the future hold?

We do not propose to answer these questions directly. Suffice it to say that the religious situation in the world and in our nation has changed much in the last few years. Ecumenism has not come to a screeching halt; nor has it ended with a bang, or even with a whimper.

Ecumenism has moved to a new stage or level requiring more dedicated work and more confident prayer. The short-range hopes of the past were fleeting and immature; they did not give birth to "instant unity." But the longing for unity is still alive among Christians. One reason for hope is the observance of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity during January 18-25.

More than six decades have passed since the modern ecumenical movement originated at Edinburgh in 1910. By more than coincidence the pro-

Father Titus Cranny, S.A., is well known for his innumerable contributions to ecumenism over the past decades. His latest publication, Is Mary Relevant? was reviewed in THE CORD last month.

In 1941 the Faith and Order Department of the World Council of Churches changed their time of prayer for unity from the days before Pentecost to the January dates. In 1965 the Graymoor Friars and the Department of Faith and Order of the National Council of Churches joined together in promoting the Week of Prayer.

It may be asked if the Christian churches as such should be involved in ecumenism. The answer must be an unqualified affirmation. The effort towards unity must be strong and dynamic, it must be concerted and visible. Ecumenism cannot succeed through sporadic effort. As Dr. Visser 't Hooft recently stated: "If one stops looking for unity between the churches, one destroys the ground beneath one's own feet. Instead of entering history, one places himself outside of it. The world will prove too strong for Christians without churches or in churches which they do not take seriously" (Ecumenical Review, Oct. 1969).

The theme of the Week of Prayer for 1971 is taken from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (13:13). Many Christians use this text as a blessing, and Catholics employ it in the liturgy.

It is a truism to say that the Holy Spirit is necessary in the enterprise of Christian unity. Without God's help ecumenism is doomed to failure. But just as surely with God's grace and love it is bound to succeed. The movement has entered upon a new phase of faith, hope, and love. It demands more now from Christians than it did sixty years ago, or even five years ago at the end of Vatican II. Men need to live by faith and all that it implies. They need hope in the future, no matter what structures may crumble. They must love in a way that demands the total giving of self.

There may be a temptation to abandon ecumenism as a kind of religious luxury without importance in modern life. But this would be disastrous. Indeed, ecumenism, social concern, and interest in religious questions are mutually related. No one element must cancel out the other two. If the Christian churches cannot resolve the question of unity among themselves, they can offer precious little to a world wearied by division and bored by pious rhetoric. A divided Christian family is a scandal to the

world and a barrier to preaching the gospel. It is a contradiction in a unbelieving world.

Christians are faced with the problem of disunity, to which a new dimension has been added: that of apathy. People no longer ask how and why Christian unity can be realized, but rather why bother to unite at all. It is easier to remain with the status quo. But this cannot be the position of the concerned Christian.

All Christians must have an interest in and desire for unity. Christ would have it so. He prayed for unity on the night of Holy Thursday; and his sacred prayer and action on that night is the inspiration for all ecumenical prayer and activity: "that all may be one."

Despite difficulties and obstacles Christians must have the spirit of prayer for unity, not only during January, but at all times. For only through ardent prayer and intense desire can Christians become worthy of the gift of unity from Almighty God. The thought of Cardinal Gibbons of Baltimore should become their own: "This reunion of Christianity is the great desire of my heart. I have longed and prayed and worked for it to the best of my poor ability during the years of my ministry. Separation is estrangement, union is love. Gladly would I give my life for this devout consummation."

— Titus Cranny, S.A.

O Christ

You have brothered us with Your Life, Teach us how to live.

Your Love has brought us hope and joy. Teach us how to give.

Your Will shall bring us peace, Teach us how to pray.

You will come again And drive our fears away.

Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F.

Clare and the Holy Eucharist Sister Mary Seraphim, P. C. P. A.

With serene and terrible majesty, Clare stood at the doorway of the refectory of San Damiano, facing a horde of invading Saracens. Before her breast was the Pix containing the Sacred Species, her Lord and sole Protector, Behind her cowered the Sisters, silent in prayer, while they recalled the words their Mother had uttered a few days before, "My sisters and daughters, do not fear because God will be with us and the enemies will not be able to harm us. Trust in our Lord Jesus Christ. and He will preserve us; and I will be your hostage so that no hurt shall touch you; should our enemies come so far, put me before you in front of them."1 Now that moment had come, and the Sisters waited, not without apprehension, to experience the fulfilment of this promise.

Clare dropped to her knees before the Blessed Sacrament and implored, "Lord, look upon us Thy poor servants, for I cannot guard them." Sister Francesca, who was supporting Clare, heard these words issuing "with wonderful sweetness: 'I will always defend thee.' Clare begged further, 'Lord, be pleased also to defend this city,' and again that same sweet voice answered, 'The city will suffer many dangers but will be defended.' "2 And the Saracens departed.

This incident, while being a unique instance, manifests not only Saint Clare's profound faith in the power of her Eucharistic Lord but also that her faith had flowered into apostolic fruitfulness. That such "apostolicity" is the ordinary fruit of genuine devotion to the Eucharist, is wholly in accord with sound sacramental theology. Bernard Cooke has this to say:

If the Eucharist continues Christ's redeeming activity in human history, it must be the principle of all genuine Christian apostolic effort.... In fact, the Christian love that is the heart of all true apostolic work flows from Christ's own love present in the Eucharist.³

Visible fruit as striking as this, however, can flow only from a

¹ From the Cause of Canonization as reproduced in Nesta de Robeck, St. Clare of Assisi (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951), 194-95.

² Ibid., 209-10.

³ Bernard J. Cooke, Christian Sacraments and Christian Personality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965), 162.

Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., is a contemplative in Canton, Ohio. Her monographs have appeared in other Catholic periodicals, and she is a frequent contributor to our pages.

lifetime of profound dedication to the sacramental God. This dedication was a hallmark of Clare's sanctity.

Her first promise of fidelity to a life of joyous poverty was made before the little altar in St. Mary of the Angels, one of the first churches which Francis had restored. Her first weeks in religion were those of Holy Week and Eastertide4 which commemorate in so many ways the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. Her whole religious life revolved around the mystery of the Altar with a burning ardor which she had imbibed from the heart of the Seraph of Assisi himself. Of him, Thomas of Celano had written, "Francis burned with a love that came from his whole being for the sacrament of the Lord's Body, and he was carried away with wonder at the loving condescension shown there."5 Wonder and awe also permeated Clare's devotion. She was filled with awe, it is said, when she approached the Holy Table, for "she feared Him no less hidden in the Sacarment than ruling heaven and earth."6 Yet this fear was that of filial love rather than servility. It transcended the exaggerated respect of her age which urged the faithful to abstain from the reception of Holy Communion through a false sense of unworthiness. She lived on terms of deep intimacy with her

Lord, yet preserved a characteristic appreciation of his inviolable "otherness."

For both Clare and Francis, the Blessed Sacrament was both symbol and source of the inexhaustible wonders of divine love. They realized in wordless revelation that

This is the Eucharistic situation — a man's power of understanding comes face to face with infinite divine truth personally revealing itself to him. A man's power of love is challenged to its depths by the infinite good confronting him as the three divine Persons offer him their friendship. A man chooses identification in terms of Christ and merges his own destiny with Christ's.7

Such a realization led Clare to an insatiable desire for Holy Communion which, however, was rarely satisfied; for in her time Communion was a privilege reserved for a few select feast days of the year. Clare did as much as she dared, and in her Rule she laid down a then-unheard-of number of days on which the Sisters might receive the Holy Eucharist. "These prescriptions (§§ 10-12) on the frequency of Confession and Communion seem rather odd to us today," admits one commentary on the Rule, "but they are evidence of the Franciscan renewal of the use of the Sacraments in an age when the use of the Sacrament was a very rare thing." Clare, then, was in the vanguard of the Eucharistic renewal from which we benefit so fully today.

Clare participated whole-heartedly in Francis' personal crusade to renew reverence for the Sacrament of the altar, and this is a legacy which is perpetuated in the Eucharistic orientation of her daughters. Many Poor Clare monasteries have found Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament co-natural with their Poor Clare profession, and it is perhaps to be regretted that many of these monasteries have been asked t relinquish this practice. At any rate, promotion of devotion to the Eucharist among the faithful remains a typically Franciscan apostolate and one in which even the cloistered Second Order can participate.

The hours which Clare spent in the chapel on her knees were noted by her Sisters. One of them remarked, "In the place where the Lady Clare was wont to pray she had seen so great a splendor of light that she thought it came from material fire." Light seemed to radiate from Clare when she prayed and even when she rose from prayer to join her sisters in recreation. Many recount that they rejoiced exceedingly when she came to them from prayer; for a great sweetness radiated from her

ARE ELEVARIST

face, and her words were full of unction and grace.10

The possession of the Sacramental God in her heart filled Clare with delight, and yet it did not upset her tranquil theological sense with unrealistic imaginings. She wrote to Agnes of Prague the following acute penetration of the mystery:

Through the grace of God I am convinced that the most worthy creature, the soul of a faithful man, is greater than heaven. The heavens and all the other creatures could not contain the Creatures his habitation and his throne, and this through the charity of which the impious are deprived. Truth has said, "Who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and we will come to him and make cur abode with him."11

One day shortly before her death, Clare had the happiness to

⁴ Spent at the Benedictine Monastery at Bastia.

⁵ Thomas of Celano, St. Francis of Assisi (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1962), 193.

⁶ Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of St. Clare of Assisi," as reproduced in The Life and Writings of St. Clare of Assisi (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), 38-39.

⁷ Cooke, 175-77.

⁸ Marcian J. Mathis, O.F.M., and Dismas Bonner, O.F.M., Explanation of the Rule of Saint Clare (1964), 47.

⁹ Robeck, loc. cit., 190.

¹⁰ We must remember that these accounts, given by Clare's companions after her death were colored by their veneration of her sanctity; but within these "superlative-laden wrappings," we can easily discern the kernel of genuine truth.

¹¹ From the Third Letter to Agnes of Prague as reproduced in Henri Daniel-Rops, The Call of St. Clare (New York: Hawthorne, 1963), 119-29.

receive the Holy Father himself at her sickbed and to obtain his absolution for all her sins. Commenting later to one of her sisters she said. "O my daughter, thank the Lord God for me, because all the heavens and earth cannot suffice to praise God for me, since today I have received Him in the Blessed Sacrament and have also seen His Vicar."12 Although Saint Clare fully realized the unique honor of the visit from the Holy Father, it is noteworthy that she placed Communion above it in her estimation of God's favors on her behalf.

For Clare, the daily Sacrifice of the Mass was of supreme importance. It could hardly be otherwise, given her deep appreciation of the mystery of redemption and of her personal vocation to participate in spreading its healing fruits through a life of hidden and mystical immolation. Even the characteristic joyousness that emanated from her arose from this union with the Christ of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Louis Bouyer comments on this joy-giving aspect of the Sacrament when he says,

There, once more, is to be found the only true joy, the only joy in which all things can find themselves again reunited and made immortal in an eternal spring, in that incomparable gladness which is found in giving rather than receiving — the joy which is the great secret of God, the great mystery of Christ and of his Cross, of which the Eucharistic song is the proclamation.

From the glowing fount of the Eucharist. Clare derived her unfailing compassion and kindness. Sister Philippa told how she "had especially the gift of many tears because of her great compassion for her Sisters and all those who were afflicted; but especially she wept copiously when she received the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ."14 "More shining and beautiful than the sun, was she," testifies her niece, Sister Amata, "when she came to us from prayer and her words were of an indescribable gentleness."15

This deep sympathy, indeed empathy, with the sorrows and afflictions of her fellow-men grew in Clare's soul as a direct communication of the spirit of her Lord. "To live out the Christ-life means to live with the new vision of faith and the new motivation of charity that come from Christ," observes Bernard Cooke; "nowhere else can the Christian community live this Christian faith and love so intensely as in the Eucharist itself." 16

This theological principle, coupled with the traditional expression, "the Eucharist builds the Church" *explains why Clare could view her enclosed life as one of universal

No one lived with Clare for long before noticing her extraordinary fervor, even those Sisters who entered the monastery after Clare had become a bedridden invalid. According to Thomas of Celano.

Even in illness she was always perfectly recollected in Christ, and always thanked Him for all her sufferings and for this the blessed Christ often visited and comforted her, and gave her great joy in Himself.19

One of the most charming accounts of this solicitude of Christ for his handmaid is the story of the Christmas Eve miracle. Left alone in her cell, while the rest of the sisters gathered in the chapel for Midnight Mass, she complained sadly, "O my Lord God, here I am, all alone with You in this place." ²⁰ The answer God gave

was the now famous story of her miraculous participation in the Christmas Eve services celebrated in the Church of San Francesco.

A more practical result of Clare's devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was her industry in spinning fine linen and making it into corporals for use on the altar. In his Legend, Thomas of Celano writes,

During the severe illness which confined her to bed, she had herself raised up and supported by props, and sitting thus, she would spin the finest linens. From these she made more than fifty sets of corporals and enclosed them in silken or purple cases and then had them sent to the different churches of the plains and mountains of Assisi.21

A beautiful example of the care she bestowed on this handiwork is preserved in the alb which, it is said, she made for Francis.

Through profound reverence for the priesthood, Francis never became a priest, remaining a deacon all his life. This respect for the priestly office rose naturally from Francis' love of the Blessed Sacrament. He wrote:

I desire to fear, love, and honor all priests as my lords, and I am unwilling to consider sin in them because in them I see the Son of God. And this because in this world I see nothing corporally of the most high Son of God except His most holy Body and Blood which priests receive and alone administer to others.²²

apostolic activity. She found the Church and all mankind embraced within the Sacramental Heart of Jesus. By remaining close to that Heart she could effectively aid the Church in its struggle against evil and support all her fellow men through the invisible channels of grace which linked her love with the love of Christ for them. That this is a genuine conception of Clare's ideal of her vocation is witnessed by what she wrote to Agnes of Prague: "I hold you to be a coworker of God Himself and a support for the frail and failing members of His glorious Body."18

¹² Robeck, loc. cit., 196.

¹³ Louis Bouyer, The Meaning of the Monastic Life (New York: P. J. Kenedy and Sons, 1955), 193.

¹⁴ Robeck, loc. cit., 192.

¹⁵ Ibid., 198.

¹⁶ Cooke, 161.

¹⁷ J. M. R. Tillard, O.P., The Eucharist (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1967), 281.

¹⁸ From the Third Letter to Agnes of Prague, in Life and Writings (cf. note 6, above), 93.

¹⁹ Celano, "Legend," Ibid., 39.

²⁰ Robeck, 197.

²¹ Celano, "Legend," loc. cit., 38.

²² Robeck, 94.

Clare, likewise, highly esteemed priests and prelates and even when she felt obliged to differ with them, as she did in the case of the "Privilege of Poverty," she always maintained a charming reverence. Her Order has maintained this spirit of "submission at the feet of Holy Church." 23

The heart of Clare's obedience was, of course, her perception of the humiliation and self-abasement of Jesus Christ, especially as it was manifested in the Holy Eucharist. She lost herself in the radiant light of the sanctuary. If we were to search for the profound reason that light and brightness are always associated with her person, it is to be found

in her intimate participation in the Eucharistic life of her Lord. As J. M. R. Tillard observes,

In the sacramental signs of the Eucharistic meal, the Father gives Jesus to men in this very being of glory, not simply that they possess him statically (in the fashion of which one possesses a precious object) but above all that he transform them little by little into what he is. His glorified flesh blends with their flesh and already (under an invisible mode, since we are in the realm of faith) impregnates them.²⁴

Clare lived for Christ alone; and, all unknown to herself, he shone through her soul and body with glorious transparency... and still does today.

FOREVER BEGINNING

Francis was always in formation. "Let us begin again," he would say to his brothers, "because up till now we have done nothing." This was his way of rebuilding and renewing his brothers and himself with the impatient zeal and the divine discontent brought on by the sunrise of another day of holy excitement. Rousseau once said of Christians that they are forever beginning. He must have known Francis' spirit well.

Frederick McKeever, O.F.M.

(From a homily delivered at the 1970 Provincial Chapter)

On Celibacy

Richard Penaskovic, O.F.M. Conv.

Celibacy is a burning question today. This should not surprise us. The genuine deep and profound questions of life — love, peace, freedom, God — can never be solved once and for all, but need to be continuously re-solved. As a theme, celibacy is as wide, mysterious, and open-ended in its implications as both man and life itself.

discussions concerning Many celibacy are frightfully one-sided. The positive side of celibacy seems, oftentimes, to be lost sight of. Some people glorify marriage, proclaiming it is as the path for all to follow. In my opinion, marriage is not a sine qua non condition for personal fulfillment, as some of my friends would have me believe. What about those people who do not marry because of economic or sociological reasons? Are they all unfulfilled people, leading empty lives?

It is difficult to argue in favor of celibacy nowadays. We are faced with a certain gut reaction against celibacy and against the proponents of it. Part of this reaction may conceivably have been

²³ From the Rule of St. Clare; cf. ibid., 170.

²⁴ Tillard, 279.

Father Richard Penaskovic is a member of the Province of the Immaculate Conception, Order of Friars Minor Conventual. While completing his requirements for the doctorate in theology, Father is teaching at St.-Anthony-on-Hudson, Rensselaer, New York.

brought about unawares by the Pope himself — ever since Vatican II, when Pope Paul tried to put the damper on the very discussion of the issue of celibacy.

The public discussion of celibacy in the Church creates an entirely new atmosphere or climate. Psychologically, it creates a different situation than before the twentieth century, when usually only an enemy of the Church questioned celibacy. To gain some perspective on the question, it is necessary to search the Scriptures.

I. The New Testament

The basic texts are Mt. 19:10-12; Lk. 18:29-30; 1 Cor. 7; Rev. 14: 3-5; and 1 Tim. 3:2. The German exegete Josef Blinzler argues that Mt. 19:12 is not concerned with celibacy, but rather with "unfitness for marriage." The words of Mt. 19:12 may be so paraphrased: some people are unfit for marriage by nature, others through human intervention, while still others have made themselves unfit for marriage for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

The basis of Blinzler's interpretation is this: viz., that the kingdom of heaven is a gift of God which overwhelms a person detaching him with irresistible force from all worldly things. Whoever is caught up with it can no longer direct his mind to preserving this life, toward family ties, or to posterity. In this context, "unfitness for marriage" appears neither as renunciation, nor as a heroic sacrifice, but as a necessary result, in the practical order, of the decision to become a whole-hearted disciple of Christ for the sake of the kingdom of heaven.

A similar idea is found in 1 Cor. 7. Paul seems to be saying that anyone who devotes himself to the kingdom of God must not allow any earthly ties to distract him. Only such freedom from earthly cares makes it possible for the individual to dedicate himself entirely to God. According to 1 Cor. 7:7, one must have a special charism to embrace celibacy. This charism allows one to integrate sexuality into one's life without marrying.

Another classic scriptural reference to celibacy is Rev. 14:3-5:

There in front of the throne they were singing a new hymn in the presence of the four animals and the elders, a hymn that could only be learnt by the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the world. These are the ones who have kept their virginity and not been defiled with women; they follow the Lamb wherever he goes: they have been redeemed from amongst men to be the first-fruits for God and for the Lamb. They never allowed a lie to pass their lips and no fault can be found in them.

In this passage the prophet describes his ideal of the perfect Christian community. The description is concerned, not with those who have renounced marriage, but with those who believe in Christ and have remained steadfast in the faith despite the oppression of the last days. When reading Rev. 14:3-5 one should not think about celibacy, or abstinence from marriage, but of freedom from all impurity, especially sexual misdemeanors which were so widespread in the pagan world of the day.

*

The words in 1 Tim. 3:2: "... the bishop must have an impeccable

character. He must not have been married more than once...," indicate that celibacy is not a requirement which Paul makes of candidates for a Church office. No argument against celibacy, however, can be deduced from this passage. Paul is only laying down the minimum requirements. He is not portraying the ideal representtative of the community in 1 Tim. 3:2.

It would be too tedious to analyze each of the basic scriptural texts relative to celibacy, but we might sum up the texts by saying that the New Testament confesses the renunciation of marriage to be a genuine and holy possibility for a Christian to work out his existence. Although no connection between virginity and a Church office can be established from the New Testament, celibacy does lie in the line of counsels which Christ and Saint Paul give concerning virginity.

II. A Rationale for Celibacy

The celibate renounces the average path of human development and chooses another way. There are at least two possibilities open to him: he finds alternate means of developing which will perform the task normally accomplished by the married state, or else he does not, in which case he remains an undeveloped human person.

The celibate does not renounce love; he does give up conjugal love. The benefits of the married state are derived chiefly from the experience of love. These benefits consist in a maturing process that goes from a self-centered at-

titude toward one in which the interests of someone else find first preference and identity. It is not the object of love that is responsible for the maturing process; it is the love itself.

There must be genuinely human, affective love in the life of the celibate. It must engage the whole person; it must be an experience as deep and as intense as that of the married person, and cannot be simply a cool affair on the intellectual level. Far from being a washed-out surrogate for marriage, celibate love should make the world go 'round. The love of God must be the celibate's whole life, since (through his own choice) there is no one else. The celibate cannot afford to let the love of God grow cold within his heart. Absolutely nothing else under the heavens can possibly take its place. The celibate must burn into the fleshy part of his heart these words from Psalm 37: "Make Yahweh your only joy, and he will give you what your heart desires."

Look at what we have. We have a man desiring a close, intimate union with God, so much so that he chooses to have this union substitute for the union with a wife that most men have. Such a man presumes that God will admit him to such a union and acts accordingly. He omits the normal road most men travel and reaches out to touch something so terribly high — or rather, he finds himself touched and held fast by the Most High.

This is either the height of folly, or it is something more than human in its origins. A man is invited to abandon the normal route of personal fulfillment (marriage), and to place in God his profound confidence for attaining full manhood and maturity. He is invited to a close, personal union with God and to all that this implies. It would be true to say, then, that celibacy is a sexually valid and fulfilling mode of being-inthe-world: at least as fulfilling, although in a different fashion, as marriage.

An objection: Does married love demand the physical and sensible presence of the beloved? Yes, it does. But this is not an absolute requirement. Otherwise conjugal love could not endure during the prolonged absence of the other person. It suffices if the beloved is present in memory and in the imagination. For the celibate. God's presence is had at least by faith but also, as so many contemporary philosophers of religion are stressing, by a unique kind of experience. Better, 'faith' must itself be understood in far more than the strictly intellectual sense



often attributed to it. God's presence is not only kept before the celibate's eyes by the sensible world of creatures viewed in the light of faith and the word of God; but it is also true, unless one arbitrarily restricts the meaning of 'experience,' that the celibate enjoys the experience of God's presence. And more than anyone else, he ought to find it necessary to deepen that experience. No doubt that the celibate's type of love is more difficult than the married man's, since man always remains bound to the visible and sense world. The point is, however, that even as man remains bound to the sensible world, he transcends it; or religion itself would be essentially illusory.

III. A Difficulty

In every life, be it married or celibate, there are — after all is said and done — certain elements which cannot be integrated. That is to say, there is a point in everyone's life where there is only naked fidelity. The more one tries to remove those elements which cannot be integrated, the more difficult that life is to bear.

In married life, the day-to-day routine, children, one's occupation, the tensions involved in living at close quarters with one person: one or all of these may present difficulties which cannot be simply solved or eliminated. If the marriage is to last, these tensions and difficulties have to be simply borne. This often demands true grit.

There are also certain elements in the celibate's life which do not admit of integration: the lack of a deep, one-to-one relationship with a beloved, the sacrifice of not having children and one's own home.... What is the celibate to do? It seems to me that those elements which cannot be integrated must be looked at squarely and then offered to God. Then the celibate must throw himself down on his knees and beg God for his grace to bear the load, especially the loneliness.

Almighty God, then, is present in the negative elements found in the life of everyone. These negative elements, which cannot be done away with, belong to and are an essential part of our life none-theless. Perfect happiness cannot be found either in marriage or in celibacy. Here on earth, we have to content ourselves with the fact that every symphony, of necessity, remains unfinished.

IV. The Celibate Community

The celibate community exists primarily to give support to the individual celibate: viz., to help him remain faithful to his call — to God. It is not absolutely necessary to belong to a celibate community in order to remain celibate; but it helps — we all need the sense of belonging, the security that comes from knowing that we don't have to do it on our own. In moments of spiritual doldrums, it is a relief to be associated with others whose virtues make one's own look 'mini' by comparison. In moments of despair it helps to have one's spirits raised by another person (instead of having to resort to other types of spirits). In short, the whole world knows that real solitariness (not at all the same thing

as solitude) is hell, and that togetherness makes for happiness.

It is patently clear, at least to me, that there is a glaring need for a community life that sustains and refreshes the human spirit. Each member of the celibate community supports the other. Because the celibate community is supported by the capabilities of each of its members, it need not place an intolerable burden on any one lonely man.

May not all the problems of our society be summed up under the heading, "lack of community"? The hardening of class lines, racism, and nationalism are all symptomatic of a lack of community. The words of W. B. Yeats ring true even as far as married life is concerned: "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold."

The purpose of celibate communities is this: to demonstrate community existence in a technological and bureaucratic world. It is a demonstration made by free adults in a relationship other than the marriage bond. These communities might function as a model for society, furnishing insight for the solution of such problems as the generation gap.

If celibate communities, as we now know them, dwindle (not to say, disappear!), something similar will have to arise. Our society badly needs a diversity of small social groups. Their significance can be far out of proportion to their size. A handful of dedicated men can work wonders. No great work was ever done by a system. Celibate communities constitute a leverage of social change in a world where social leverage is utterly indispensable, but often lacking.

Charism: Corporate and Individual

A Position Paper

The mystery of charism may be described as one of the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit which are bestowed upon all Christians, individually and communally. These gifts enable Christians to share with Christ in spreading his redemptive work among their fellow men. These gifts are assigned, not on behalf of the Christians who receive them, but for the service of the Church. Charisms range from the simple and ordinary to the more outstanding and extraordinary. Charity, an ordinary charism, is the greatest gift (1 Cor. 13:1-3) and the sign of unity (1 Jn. 3).

Religious Life as Charism

Religious life is a charism. It is a grace to live the gospel in a special way. Such a charism is ecclesial and communal in its nature and in its mission. It is communal, for the gift of self to God

is manifested by the membership of the person in a religious congregation. It is ecclesial, for it includes a visibly approved covenant in faith with the visible Church as concerns both the individual religious and the religious congregation. The religious enters upon a hierarchically authenticated way of life. The congregation is sent by the Church to give witness to the presence of Christ in the world through prayer and apostolic action. Historically, this modality of official approval has become a constituent of religious life as a charism among God's people. Since hierarchical authority gives the religious congregation its social form and structure and fosters (but does not create) its corporate: charism, the religious congregation cannot stand in fundamental contradiction to the visible Church.1 "The congregation exists not only for the individual members, nor for its own welfare, but also it exists within the framework of the Church as integral to the mission given her by Jesus."²

By the free public profession of the three evangelical counsels, which are indeed charisms, religious are public signs of what is inherent in the sacramental grace of baptism for all Christians. Their profession is a special consecration to the living of the fulness of the Paschal Mystery. Simultaneously and reciprocally (Col. 1: 24), the gifts of the counsels both sanctify the religious and benefit the whole Body of Christ. By the charity to which the counsels lead, they join the religious to the Church and to her mystery in a special way: that is, the public life of the counsels commits religious to the ministry of the Church in harmony with the charism of the particular congregation to which they have freely joined themselves.3 Vatican II decreed that each congregation clarify its corporate spirit as embodied in the charism of its founder. Such interior renewal must always be pre-eminent, even in the promotion of exterior works. To fail in this is to risk the loss of the identity or even the existence of the congregation.4

The Charism of the Community

The charism of Saint Francis, which the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family has continually bestowed upon it by the Holy Spirit to share and to render to the Church, is this: the discipleship of Jesus Christ in the pursuit of the fulness of charity by living the gospel in fraternity and littleness, marked by a Eucharistic fellowship within a religious congregation.5 This charism is the shared corporate value for the sisters. The delineation of this charism in the Rule of the Third Order of Saint Francis inspired the Foundress, Mother Mary Xavier Termehr, in consultation with her followers, to identify with Saint Francis in his vision of the discipleship of Jesus Christ.6 With the approval and the assistance of her bishop, Mother M. Xavier gave a definitive course to the expression of this charism in the writing of the first constitution for the community. She was concerned about the spirit of Francis, for she sought copies of constitutions from various Franciscan communities of religious women for her study and inspiration.

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ Karl Rahner, The Dynamic Element in the Church (New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), 73.

This eloquent statement of the ideals of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family (Dubuque, Iowa), has evident application to every institute of religious. It was prepared by Sisters Ruth Agnes Ahlers, Ruth DeWitte, Ronald Dirksen, Kathleen Grace, Marie Therese Kalb, Joan Losey, Mary Ann Nacke, Frances Ruden, Clotilde Wierich, Mona Wingert, Lenore Ostdiek, and Mary Patrice Rochford, the Chairman of the Congregation's Commission on Charism.

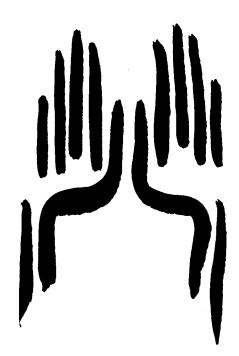
² Go to My Brethren, "A Spiritual Document for Apostolic Franciscan Women" (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1969), 52. Hereafter cited as GMB.

³ Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, §44 (hereafter cited as GS). This and all other conciliar statements are cited according to the version of Walter M. Abbott, S.J. and Joseph Gallagher, The Documents of Vatican II (New York: America Press, 1966).

⁴ Vatican Council II, Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, §2 (hereafter cited as PC).

⁵ Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family, Like Prophets (Dubuque: Mt. St. Francis, 1968), 6-7 (hereafter cited as LP). Cf. GMB, p. 48.

⁶ Sister M. Eunice Mousel, They Have Taken Root (New York: Bookman Associates, 1954), 71.



When her work was completed, the constitution for the new community gave expression to the charism of Francis through goals and norms consistent with the community's and the Church's needs in that time and situation.

The congregation must constantly receive the charism of Saint Francis with openness and submission to the Spirit, with fidelity and authenticity. Over this free gift, continually bestowed, it will never have absolute control or right of disposal. But, even though the inherent orientation of the congregation is fixed, the manner of implementation of the charism is not. The goals and norms, which express and implement the

charism, must vary according to times, needs, and situations. An enlightened review, adaptation, retention, innovation, or rejection may be undertaken, e. g., with life styles and apostolates. Go to My Brethren, "A Spiritual Document for Apostolic Franciscan Women," explores the nature of the charism of Saint Francis. Like Prophets, the interim constitution for the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family, suggests contemporary, viable goals and norms as manifestations of this charism.

missioned community Every within the congregation is a unit enfolding and unfolding the charism of Francis. Every missioned community shares also in the essential goals and norms of the entire congregation. Every missioned community renders service to the Church through gospel living in fraternity and littleness, marked by a Eucharistic fellowship. Rooted in the baptismal vocation. Franciscan religious living is basically charismatic. It nurtures a life centered on the person of Jesus Christ and is essentially characterized by love.

Fraternity or Gospel Brotherhood

Fraternity or Gospel Brotherhood is a way to the discipleship of Jesus Christ through love.

1. It suggests a gathering together founded on the universal and all-embracing love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because it gives a sign of the

brotherhood God desires to establish among all social classes,⁸ it can never be a closed club.⁹

- 2. It suggests a relationship of being together in the name of Jesus. All desire to know Jesus Christ, to apply gospel values to everyday life, and to re-invent a line of conduct on the basis of communal existence.10 All endeavor to cultivate a positive attitude about each sister's potential to grow in the Christ-life and "to recognize the diversity of gifts which enriches the oneness of the many."11 All wish to be cordially hospitable and cheerful, sharing what they have with good taste. Whatever service is received by the sisters is accepted in faith and with gratitude as coming from the Lord.
- 3. It suggests a diaconal structure, 12 oriented to love. The sisters love, serve, and obey one another with a dedication to keeping the oneness of the community. 13 Unanimity is promoted by shared values. Unless the forceful persons practice restraint and the

reticent are encouraged to give expression, there is no unanimity. Necessary for this harmony are kind, resolute persons who have a sense of humor. Although no one person can be related in depth to many others, everyone should share with all to at least a reasonable extent. Dialogue demands utter honesty and a sacrificial spirit, both of which necessitate prayer.

4. It suggests small, flexible groups. Creating community among the sisters through the expression of the charity of Christ in tangible ways is the first duty of the fraternity.14 "Those who are without such allegiance are using the convent for a hotel."15 By membership in the fraternity, the sisters acquire the right to be always welcome and the responsibility to devote themselves to the happiness of one another. They seek to grow into warm, loving women. As was the pilgrim-life style of Christ with his apostles and that of Saint Francis with his followers, so too the sisters pray, eat, and relax together. This

⁷ lbid., 86; for an account of the influence of the Friars Minor upon the congregation, see 71, 98-99, 222-23, 243, and 247.

⁸ LP 17; GMB 50; cf. Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., Obedience, Authority, Government (West Chicago: Christ the King Seminary, 1969), p. 1 (hereafter cited as S-OAG).

 $^{^9}$ Collective Pastoral Letter, The Religious Woman in Our Day (1969), p. 13.

¹⁰ GMB, 50.

¹¹ LP, 17.

¹² Diaconal structure: This is a structure oriented to service in the community. No one seeks power. Everyone devotes himself to the others. (The noun 'deacon' means 'servant' or 'minister.') Cf. Lk. 22:28.

¹³ LP, 9.

¹⁴ Jeremiah (Michael) Crosby, O.F.M.Cap., Bearing Witness, "The Place of the Franciscan Family in the Church" (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966), 120. Cf. Ernest Larkin, O. Carm., "The Place of Prayer in Community," Renewal through Community and Experimentation (Canon Law Society of America, 1968), 61. Cf. Anselm W. Romb, O.F.M. Conv., The Franciscan Charism in the Church (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1969), 65.

¹⁵ Romb, 64.

. . . not only man, but all reality, animate and inanimate, is linked with Christ.

they do, not as a provision for common life and common exercises, but as a means to communion with Jesus Christ and with one another. As Christ manifested his love for all men in kenosis¹⁶ by laying down his life, so too the sisters who are dedicated in love to the diversified membership of the fraternity grow in selflessness and humility.

- 5. It suggests a humble reconciliation with God and with one another in Jesus Christ in answer to the divisiveness which may exist within the community and in the world at large. Differences and traumatic experiences occur. Each sister has her weakness, the burdens of which the other sisters must carry (Gal. 6:2) in faith and with love. To each sister and to all others whom they meet, they give greetings of joy and of peace.
- 6. It suggests that not only man but all reality, animate and inanimate, is linked with Christ (Eph. 1:9-10). In fraternity, the sisters have the privilege to receive, to use, and to give responsibly the gifts of creation. Beginning with faith in the world unseen, the sisters not only abstain from the abuse of this world,

but they encourage the fulfillment, conservation, renewal, and inventive use of and delight in the riches of the universe.

Littleness or Gospel Poverty

In fraternity, the sisters manifest their love for Jesus Christ and for all men, especially for the poor of this world. Gospel poverty is an essential feature of this fraternity.

1. It suggests the charism of poverty in fact and in spirit.17 The charism of Saint Francis presents the ideal of living among the economically poor as voluntarily poor in fact. 18 Jesus Christ exemplified and counselled this way of life.19 Ideally, "the Sisters' choice of clothing, housing, and recreation all bear the mark of poorfolk, for the Gospel's sake. These external expressions of Gospel poverty are evaluated by members of the community, personally and communally, for honesty to the charism of St. Francis and for meaningfulness to the people among whom they live."20 Voluntary material poverty, for the sake of the Kingdom, rids the sisters of pride and creates an inner

- 2. It suggests a willingness to be the least and lowliest. The happiness of Franciscans in the apostolate is not founded on their environment. If they can do their work reasonably well, there is support for their own growth. Strong religious transcend the conditions and clientele, the physical anguish, the temporal insecurity and dependence of the apostolate which divine Providence ordains.22 They enter into the mysteries of poverty and self-emptying.
- 3. It suggests a responsible participation in earning a livelihood for the sisters. Everyone works according to capacity and in obedience to one another, not for personal gain or disposal, but on behalf of the congregation. By the concrete evidence of a joyous financial support, justice and love are manifested toward the retired sisters, the ill, and the nonsalaried sisters.23

It suggests the needed mobility to diffuse gospel living in fraternity and littleness, marked by a Eucharistic fellowship, through corporate and personal witness prompted charism of obedience.

among all men. The sisters are conscious of the eschatological dimension of the Christian life, of pilgrimage toward the Kingdom. They are not attached to fixed abodes, to towns, to recreation to friends. Mobility allows for new expressions of Francis' charism in response to needs, times, and situations. Mobility gives insight into the handiwork of God and of man in creation, evoking praise, joy, and thanksgiving from the sisters to the Lord. "Mobility is not anarchic, for it presupposes obedience."24

5. It suggests being missioned and available to render possible the services of Franciscans bound to Christ in unrestricted love. Possessing Spirit-originated apostolic charisms joined to the Spirit-

emptiness or humility before the Lord. Humility disposes them for the charism of wisdom. Whereas the congregation maintains a high level of aspiration toward the ideal of the anawim21 and toward that of perfect kenosis (the will to have nothing but the Lord). the person freely chooses her own concrete response.

¹⁶ Kenosis means 'emptying'; i.e., 'self-emptying' or 'self-effacing.' Cf. Phil. 2:6-8.

¹⁷ PC, §13.

¹⁸ Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., The Franciscan Charism, Pamphlet I, Third Part (West Chicago: Christ the King Seminary, 1969), 23-24.

¹⁹ Cf., on the counsels of Jesus, Mt. 4:18-20; 6:19-21, 25-34; 9:9; 19:21; 27-28; Mk. 10:28; Lk. 12:14-21; Ac 2:44-45. On his example, cf. Lk. 2:7; Mt. 8:20; 11:29; 20:28; 21:5; 25:45; Jn. 13:12-13.

²⁰ GMB, 35; cf. PC, §13.

²¹ Anawim: The humble place complete confidence in God (Amos 2:7). Poverty in fact, renunciation, and suffering lead to the Kingdom: Lk. 4:18; 5:11; 6:20-9:23, 62; 12:13-21, 33; 16:9-31. Poverty of spirit is also a way to the Kingdom: Mt. 5:3-12.

²² Romb, 68-69.

²³ LP, 22, 26; cf. PC, §13.

²⁴ S-OAG, 2.

the sisters are sent into the world as ecclesially commissioned persons. Each new commitment involves being sent anew. With unselfish dedication, the sisters announce the Good News, teach all men by example and by word, comfort those who are ill, heal the moral sources of a fractured society, use the gifts of creation with charity, and make visible community in Christ. They are completely expendable for the Kingdom and for the needs of mankind.

Eucharistic Fellowship

In the lives of the sisters, both Gospel Brotherhood and Gospel Poverty are marked by a Eucharistic Fellowship. This Eucharistic Fellowship further enhances the other two elements.

- 1. It suggests that religious benefit the whole Body of Christ and the particular diocese in which they live by prayer, by penance, and by the example of their lives. In accord with the character of their congregation, they also enter vigorously into the external works of the apostolate.²⁶
- 2. It suggests that "community in Christ is created, fostered, and shared by fidelity to the celebration of the Eucharist, to private prayer, and to reflective reading of the Word of God."²⁷ The sisters teach by example how to join

community living with prayerful solitude. They manifest through witness how the Eucharistic community becomes an apostolic community. Out of the praying community set afire by the Eucharist, evolves the apostolic community for the sake of the Kingdom.

- 3. It suggests that the charism of gospel living in fraternity and littleness, marked by a Eucharistic fellowship, cannot be actualized by Franciscans without metanoia.²⁸
- 4. It suggests that when a crisis arises on any level of life, the sisters assume the responsibility for appropriate forms of penance and vigil.
- 5. It suggests that prayer life should give expression to the charism of the congregation: the concepts of Gospel Brotherhood, Gospel Poverty, kenosis, conversion, and pilgrimage; adoration and atonement; exultation over the presence of God in his gifts of creation; anguish over the world's wounds; local apostolates and needs; optimism about the potential of each sister for the Christlife; and reconciliation and peace among the sisters.

The Charism of the Individual Person

As disciples of Jesus Christ through a life of love, the members of the congregation recognize certain salient facts regarding the

- 1. They recognize that each sister is a unique and inimitable person of singular value. In response to the call of the Spirit, she enters the congregation. The charism of Saint Francis - his gift to the community, gives direction in value and in goal to the individual's participation in the charisms of poverty, of unrestricted love for Jesus Christ, and of obedience. Since these values are her internalized orientations, the sister chooses freely to become an evangelical and ecclesial woman within the Franciscan community. "Unless this is the case, she will never develop a sense of bond with the community."29 She chooses freely to request the privilege of bringing her personal charisms into association with that of the congregation, so that her personal gifts may be realized and more freely expressed. She asks voluntarily that her personal charisms be empowered within. through, and by the charismatic thrust of this Franciscan congregation. As a result of development, of the grace of God, and of her cooperation, she is strong enough to support the corporate charism and its apostolic manifestations with her special talents.30
- 2. They recognize that the congregation should learn to perceive, to test, to strengthen, and even to unveil charismata. The human spirit of the Franciscan sister

- "should develop in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense." Her human spirit demands respect and enjoys a certain inviolability, always recognizing the rights of other persons and of the congregation. She should, therefore, be encouraged to become, within the ambit of the grace of the corporate charism freely chosen, what nature and grace have indicated.
- 3. They recognize that charism involves suffering, and suffering is itself, in turn, a charism (2 Cor. 4:7-13).
 - It is painful to fulfill the tasks set by the charisma and at the same time to endure within the one body the opposition of another's activity which may, in certain circumstances, be equally justified. Each one's charism is always limited and humbled by the gift of another. Sometimes it must wait, until it can develop, when that of another is no longer needed. The maximum use of everyone's personal talents is not always possible in view of the common good. These painful facts must be viewed soberly as an inevitable consequence of their being a community with many gifts....32
- 4. They recognize the authenticity of the individual charism to be revealed in the fact that the person so endowed bears humbly and patiently the in-

gifts bestowed by the Spirit upon each individual member.

1. They recognize that each sisstolic com
ter is a unique and inimitable per-

²⁵ Cf. Thomas Dubay, S.M., Ecclesial Women, "Toward a Theology of the Religious Life" (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1969).

 $^{26\} Vatican\ Council\ II,\ Decree\ on\ the\ Bishop's\ Office\ in\ the\ Church,\ \S33.$

²⁷ LP, 11-13; cf. GMB, 58-61.

²⁸ Metanoia means 'conversion' or 'penance.' The Christian does penance when he seeks to put on the mind of Christ. Note the coupling of 'renewal' and 'penance' in the Documents of Vatican II—e.g., LG §15; SC §9; AG, §13.

 $^{^{29}}$ Michael Crosby, O.F.M.Cap., Franciscan Charism (Pulaski, Wis.: Franciscan Publishers, 1969), 42.

³⁰ Romb, 68.

 $^{^{31}\,\}text{Vatican}$ Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, §59.

³² Rahner, 77; cf. Crosby, Franciscan Charism, 7.

evitable sorrow of her charismatic endowment. She does not become embittered. Her inner psychological and spiritual growth should be enhanced rather than thwarted, if misunderstanding and excruciating frustration are received in faith as a participation in the kenosis — the self-effacement of Christ. Those persons who are consistently incapable of enduring such suffering ought not to remain in religious life. Nor should those remain who are unfit for the joyful burden of obedience.33

Balance: Corporate and Individual Charisms

1. When a person is admitted to the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Family, the sisters accept her as an individual, with her specific charisms. This acceptance is both a privilege and a challenge for the congregation. It is a privilege to have this person among the other sisters for the service of the Church. It is a challenge to supply an atmosphere of loving trust and support to this person, and to allow her the flexibility necessary for the maturation of her charisms within the larger context of the corporate charism. Incorporation of the person into the congregation presupposes prayerfilled dialogue.

In counter-balance and because every charism is by its nature both social and ecclesial, the individual person assumes a privilege and a challenge. Hers is the

privilege of bringing her charisms into full relationship with the corporate charism in the service of the Kingdom. Hers is the burden of presenting her charisms to the listening congregation for acceptance. Thereafter, hers is the challenge of actualizing the potential of her charisms within the context of the corporate charism.34 By listening and responding in love, the congregation helps create the situations wherein both the corporate and the individual charisms can be shared with the people of God in joy and in peace.

- 2. The sister has joined the congregation freely in terms of its existing apostolic manifestations of the corporate charism. She is voluntarily an evangelical and ecclesial woman. She recognizes that changes in the expression of the corporate charism develop in response to times, needs, and situations through dialogue, general chapters, and other processes within the congregation, the dioceses, and the Church as a whole. Divisiveness is not of the Holy Spirit; it should not be present among the sisters.
- 3. The apostolic placement of sisters is based on their abilities and interests, preparation, and experience; and, in the context of the congregation's needs, it involves taking into consideration their individual charisms. Whenever a sister expresses the desire to fulfill a charism, those in authority dialogue with her. The love of the sister for the congregation and for all the people of God

- 4. To further the work of the Church, the individual sister should share in, with, and through, her local community. She needs the support and the love of others, a positive feedback to her ego. Her needs should be met through her friendship with Jesus Christ and through the resources of the community. This will help her to respond in faith should she be called to frustration of talent for love of the Lord.
- 5. The sisters, in genuine partnership, give and receive the support, encouragement, and assistance which characterize an apostolic team. Together, they assess the needs of their local situation and determine the goals and plan of action, balancing the dynamic tension between individual initiative and community witness.
- 6. Every genuine Franciscan life serves the religious congregation and the Church. Unrecognized goodness, even charismatic goodness, is found abundantly in the

Church. More is being done in the service of Jesus Christ than appears in the pages of newspapers and histories of religious communities. Can it not be a charismatic goodness to serve patiently in teaching, counselling, nursing, or domestic tasks, praying with charity and asking nothing else of life?36 A sister's gifts need not be extraordinary. In fact, extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use.37 It is the charismatic features of the congregation as a whole which must be of striking character. These charismatic features serve the Kingdom in the following specific ways.

First, they are a sign of "the force of Christ and the boundless power of the Holy Spirit within the Church."38

Second, they are a sign of the gospel message; that is, of charity through discipleship of Jesus Christ in fraternity and littleness marked by a Eucharistic fellowship.39

Third, they are a sign "tha convinces and leads to faith, by which the Church is recognized as a work of God.... The charismatic element in the Church i not only an object of faith bu by its plentitude and enduring presence and its perpetually re newed vitality, it can be a mo tive of faith."40

Fourth, they are a sign tha

and the processes evoking change are factors in such a decision. "The charismatic element in the sister's apostolate is subject to the same testing as that of other charisms. She is no exception (1 Thess. 5:19-21)."35 The dynamism of tension within the congregation, caused by the necessary exercise of restraint by superiors and the inevitable enthusiasm of visionaries, promotes vitality and balance. A harmony can be assured by the Holy Spirit. In all things Jesus Christ must be served in charity.

³³ Rahner, 78; cf. Romb, 69.

³⁴ Obedience: LP, 4, 6, 9; GMB, 39-47, 52. Cf. Michael Crosby, O.F.M.Cap., The Call and the Answer (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press 1969), 141, 143, Cf. also notes 36 and 37, above.

³⁵ Dubay, 59. 36 Rahner, 65.

³⁷ LG, §12.

³⁹ LP, 6-7; GMB, 48. 38 LG, §44.

⁴⁰ Rahner, 68; cf. Rom. 12:7-8; 1 Cor. 12:8, 28-29, 31; Lk. 3:1-8; 14:1.

God became man to make men brothers, and they constitute an eloquent appeal to fraternize the world.⁴¹

Fifth, they are a sign "of the unbreakable link between Christ and his Spouse, the Church."⁴²

Sixth, they are "a sign of Christ contemplating on the mountain, announcing God's kingdom to the multitude, healing the sick and maimed, turning sinners to wholesome fruit, blessing children, do-

ing good to all, and always obeying the will of the Father who sent him."43

Finally, they are a sign of resurrection.44

Through openness and submission to the Holy Spirit, who continually bestows the gift of the charism of Saint Francis, the congregation gives expression to sign through charity in fraternity and littleness, marked by a Eucharistic fellowship.

42 LG, §44; PC, §12.

43 LG, §46.

44 LG, §44.

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source of: Rom. 1:11; 1 Cor. 7:7; 12:11; 2 Cor. 2:11; 9:8.

purpose of: 1 Pet. 4:10; Rom. 5:15-16; 6:23; 11-29; 1 Cor. 1:7; 1

Tim. 4:14; 1 Cor. 12:7; 14:12; Rom. 12:4-5; Eph. 4:4; 12-13; Ac. 2:12.

types of: Rom. 12:6-8; Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 28-31; 1 Cor. 13

charity the greatest); 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 28-31; 1 Cor. 13 (charity the greatest); 1 Cor. 13:8-11 (charity is eternal, other charismata are temporary); 1 Cor. 14:1-25 (relative value of charismata); 1 Cor. 7:7 (state in life is potential charism, a call to the service of the Kingdom).

test of: 1 Thess. 5:12; 19-21; 1 Cor. 14; 1 Cor. 12:1-3.

religious life as: Rom. 5:5; 6:11; 12:4-8; Mk. 10:28; Mt. 19:21; Lk. 10:39, 42; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 2:21.

individual: Rom. 1:11; 12:3, 6; 1 Cor. 7:7; 12:7; 1 Pet. 4-10; 2 Cor. 4:7-12; Col. 1:24.

balance: Lk. 12:32-33; Rom. 8:28; 12:7-8; 1 Cor. 12:4; ž, 12-30; Eph. 4:12-13; 2 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 14-33; 12:8-28, 31; 1 Thess. 5:12, 19-21; 1 Cor. 13:1-8; 14:1.

Community: Ac. 2:42; 4:32; Mt. 18:20; Rom. 12:4-8, 10; 13:10; Jn. 13:35; 17:21; Gal. 6:2.

Counsels: Mt. 7:20, 25; 8:20; 16:24; 19:12; 21-25; 29, 34-46; 20-28; Lk. 14:26; Jn. 3:17, 4:34-35; 5:30; 10:14-18; 1 Cor. 7:32-35; 2 Cor. 8:9; Jas. 2:5-16; Phil. 2:7-8; Heb. 5:8; 10:7; Rom. 8:1-13; Eph. 4:13; Ps. 39:9.

Prayer: Mt. 6:15; 14-23; Rom. 12:12; Phil. 6:18; 4-6; Col. 3:16; 4:2; 1 Tim. 3:1-2; 8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 9:14; Eph. 6:18; 1 Jn. 5:16; 1 Thess. 2:18; 3:10; Rom. 1:10; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:19.

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⁴¹ GMB, 50.

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In the Valley of the Mekong. By Matt J. Menger, O.M.I. Foreword by H. Ross Perot. Paterson, N. J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970. Pp. viii-226. Cloth, \$5.50; paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Raphael D. Bonanno, O.F.M., pastor and superior of a sprawling urban-rural parish in Ceres, Goias in the interior of Brazil where he has been a missionary for eight years.

Father Matt Menger, having spent thirteen years as a highly qualified missionary in Laos, here gives us the fruits of his experiences "in the Valley of the Mekong" in autobiographical form. He traces his steps from Texas to Rome to Laos to the U. S., and back to Laos. In 31 action-packed chapters, he describes life in Southeast Asia among pagans, in conditions of wartime and peace, in joy and sorrow, slowly trying to build a new Christian civilization integrated with Laotian customs. It is the story of one man of a group of Oblates of Mary Immaculate trying to stem the tide of Communism — or better, trying to turn the tide towards Christianity. This book shows history in the making, by one of its makers. For example, Fr. Matt, as an eye-witness at times, talks of Dienbienphu, the Battle of the Plain of the Jars, and Prince Souvanna Phouma's government. He shows honest, good, little people trying to make a little, good, honest progress in life. At the same time he reveals how big, important people

maneuver seven coups d'état in inner government power-struggles. Life in Laos may be lackluster for a diplomat's wife, but it is never unexciting for an American missionary.

Although his book is full of episodes and reads rapidly, the author pauses once in a while to reflect and ponder the facts. This is where Menger reveals himself. His personal comment on the type of paganism that would ostracise a mentally retarded girl because she had an "evil spirit" shows a pastor's concern for his people in the throes of diabolical superstition. His chapter on the attitude of other Americans in Laos was a sharp contrast with his own spiritual motivation. His sections on the mentality of the people as regards marriage, children, evil spirits, pagan legends, honesty, courage, ignorance, and Oriental courtesy, reveal Menger as the very interested observer.

The author includes many Laotian phrases in his book, such as Khoun Pha (priest); these give an "otherworld" aspect to the story, which is right, certainly, since Laos is so very different from what we know in North or South America. Menger is trying to communicate the existence of another world, another people, another mentality; and the language of that world can help this communication. One could wish he had dwelt more on key words of the Laotian language and their full connotations to show more clearly the mentality of the people - words such as God, mother, loved one

home, impolite, thief, and even a swear-word or two to show what they detest.

Menger's pastoral program is also interesting. He builds edifices in order to build or form people. He seems to have the pastoral objective of making the Church a tangible and intangible presence among the people: tangible, with orphanages, schools, and chapels; intangible, with formation courses in catechism, manual arts, and reading and writing.

The book is undoubtedly fascinating reading. But it raises certain questions. Why, for example, did Menger write? Did he tell his story as a legitimate appeal for funds and help, as his address on the last page of the book might indicate? Or did he write to get off his chest so many events and experiences accumulated in his busy life? This latter, I don't think was his reason. Or did he see a new local Church rising like a phoenix out of the dving embers of a pagan civilization and, overwhelmed by the vision, feel impelled to tell what he saw? This could very well be his reason for writing.

Another question. Was, or is, Menger a successful missionary? This question is ten times more difficult to answer than the first on his motives for writing. What are our criteria to judge a missionary's success or failure? Being Americans, we tend to judge by positive, practical results. But this is only half the picture. The missionary task of the Church is to prolong the mystery of the Incarnation in space and time. One part of this work is seen; and the other, unseen. "The essential is invisible." Therefore our human judgment will always falter in this field. Only God can truly judge a missionary.

Another and final question. How does Menger's journal rank with other great missionary journals like the writings of St. Isaac Jogues, a Fr. Louis Hennepin, or a Junipero

Serra? These men wrote famous letters or journals because they looked at the new world with eyes of the ancient, catholic faith. They were about the work of the Incarnation, being lived and suffered in a definite time and place. By writing of their deeds of everyday life, these famous missionaries revealed themselves as giants of faith and of humanity. So we return to our final question: How does Menger on the Mekong rank with the other greats? This I won't presume to answer for the reader. He should read Menger himself and arrive at his own conclusion. At the very least, it will be an exciting experience.

The Religious Life Defined: An Official Commentary on the Second Vatican Council Deliberations. Edited by Ralph M. Wiltgen, S.V.D. Techny, Ill.: Divine Word Publications, 1970. Pp. 135. Paper, \$1.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., a member of the philosophy department at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y., and Associate Editor of this Review.

"This book is for the most part a translation of an Official Commentary on the chapter about Religious in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church" (p. 3). The Commentary in question is that of the conciliar Doctrinal Commission.

Besides detailing the votes on the various drafts of the Dogmatic Constitution, and explaining replies to qualifications submitted by the phalanx of 679 Fathers who rallied to the defense of a more traditional view of religious life than the first draft had in mind, the Doctrinal Commission's efforts, as translated by Father Wiltgen, amount to a commentary on the five paragraphs of the Dogmatic Constitution devoted to Religious.

Father Wiltgen's role in addition

to translator is that of corrector of the Abbott-Gallagher translation, which is found to be notably deficient in two or three spots, mildly deficient in several more. His most penetrating observation, in my opinion, was his correction of footnote 217 in Abbott-Gallagher, which distorts the purpose of the document in treating of the exemption of religious.

The Religious Life Defined is a misnomer, for the work does not do that, nor does it treat of the Decree on Religious Life, as one might be led to expect from the title. The publication in English of the Doctrinal Commission's commentary does make available some more official texts and remind the reader of the danger of arguing from translations in too literal a fashion and of the need for a living guide to the meaning of the written word. Religious Life Defined, however, seems to be a book for libraries of religious houses, rather than for the bookshelves of ordinary religious.

Religion, Language, and Truth. By Leslie Dewart. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970. Pp. 169. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., editor of this Review.

Leslie Dewart's contribution to the contemporary debate on theism is doubtless well known to the reader: Like man himself and everything clse cosmic and cultural, religious doctrines too are a part of the evolutionary process and must be transcended. This is true, at least, when such a step is indicated by unmistakably real and linear developments in other fields bearing on religion; and this applies most urgently of all to human knowledge of God.

In this expanded series of lectures, first delivered under the aegis of the Portland (Ore.) Christian Lectureship, Dewart makes the same

point once again but with proportionately more stress than usual on the nature of language as the basic premise of his argument. Chapter One states his thesis that the contemporary crisis in Catholic thought stems from deep-seated differences in the very way in which people lcok at the world — their ideals of knowledge and truth — rather than being simple disagreements on specific religious or doctrinal questions within a single, common outlook.

Chapters Two and Three are the speculative core of the book, in which the author argues, respectively, for a "functional-syntactic," rather than a "structural-semantic" understanding of language; and for a theory of truth as cause rather than effect of the mind's conformity to reality. Language is, in other words, the matrix of thought rather than its expression; and truth is primarily the construction of a self-transcending, successful and (if I have understood Dewart correctly here) contingent relationship between the self and the now-distanced world. What Lonergan, among others, never seems to have understood, is that the traditional insistence upon the mind's conformity to reality is, far from being denied, emphatically presupposed in this newer and richer interpretation of truth.

The remaining three Portland lectures are applications of Dewart's epistemological position to religious questions of paramount importance: faith, authority, and the knowledge of God. Doubtless not all will agree, but I think that the author says a good many eminently practical and sensible things in these lectures.

A seventh lecture included in this volume was originally given at the First International Lonergan Congress (St. Leo, Florida). Dewart first establishes that Lonergan belongs very much to the "Tradition," which Dewart takes to include

practically everyone from Parmenides to the present, when at last a revolution has been made possible by man's emergence onto a new threshold of self-realization. Then he criticises both the procedure and the substantial content of Lonergan's work in light of his own speculative positions.

There is a bit of editorial carelessness very evident at certain points in the book, as well as a minor point of content here and there on which one might like to dwell if there were space. Does it make any difference, e. g., whether one calls reality "process" (with Whitehead), or "relativity" (as Dewart suggests)? The point is that a single cosmos marked by internal relations is in process. Or does Dewart want to go out of his way to avoid making friends in any quarter whatever?

Of much greater importance, however, are two fundamental questions which come to mind now that Dewart has published this series of lectures which (other than further detail here and there on his theory of language) marks no real advance over The Future of Belief and The Foundation of Belief. Both questions envisaged have to do with the positive elaboration of Dewart's alternative to the "traditional" expression of the Christian vision.

I for one am prepared to grant the validity of Dewart's critique of that tradition; but by now I would hope to see something more definite and positive suggested as an alternative. The first question, then, is this: What metaphysical structure does Dewart presuppose in opposition to a doctrine of substance? The closest he comes to stating it is his suggestion, surely insufficient, that "reality as such is relativity" (89n). Nor would I want to minimize the importance of historicity, upon which Dewart places such stress; but it is

legitimate to ask what it is that he sees as historically unfolding.

The second question is complementary to the first. Besides asking Dewart for a more specific and positive characterization of the world, I would ask him for the same originality concerning his understanding of God. Granted that God is poorly conceptualized as the supreme being, as first cause, etc., just how - positively - would Dewart have us conceptualize him? (The refusal to conceptualize must, for the philosopher, be translated into the positive affirmation of "objective" indeterminacy, which I would unhesitatingly accept, if only Dewart would stop hedging and state it).

How, moreover, would Dewart ask us to understand the divine activity vis-à-vis the world? The sixth lecture of this book takes us no further than The Future of Belief (1966). actually, in which God is said to be "present," and in which the divine activity is implicitly limited to "providence." In this lecture, to be sure, there is a more incisive repudiation than formerly of 'providence' as traditionally understood. Dewart now rejects explicitly the notion of a primordial divine plan for creation; but the time has come, it would seem, for Dewart to state plainly what he does hold, regarding both God's intrinsic reality and God's activity relative to the world.

I think that a good many people are waiting for the answers to these questions. Dewart has done such a good job with the preliminary, negative phase of his task that we ought to be willing to await with some patience the fulfillment of the promise revealed in his critique. Even in the interim however. I would suspect that the publication of 169 pages of lecture material in no appreciable way transcending The Foundations of Belief, may pry loose \$5.95 from very few pockets.



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