## COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for the June issue of THE CORD were drawn by Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F., of St. Joseph's Hospital, Tacoma, Washington. Sister Barbara Marie is a student corresponding with the Famous Artists School in Westport, Connecticut.


# the CORD

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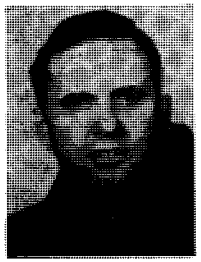

# The Catholic-College Identity Crisis

How does a Catholic college identify itself as "Catholic"? Like the not uncommon Catholic layman who feels adrift because of the abandonment of Friday abstinence, Lenten fasting, novenas and similar devotions, the Catholic college finds itself at sea because of the disappearance of compulsory Mass attendance, required theology and philosophy curricula, and a heavily Catholic faculty.

The quest for identity seems to go off in two directions. One course leads the college to define itself in terms of its being a college: a corporate body dedicated to the pursuit of truth and knowledge. Its status as "Catholic" would then flow from the presence of a dedicated band of Christians on the staff and from an atmosphere that is Christian. Tht other direction taken by the quest for identity involves emphasizing the capital *C* in "Catholic" and fighting the uphill battle to preserve the structures that have traditionally characterized the Catholic college, from obligatory retreats to a rather strict separation between the sexes. (It might be observed, in the latter connection, that this separation is not a mere survival of an older cultural pattern, but tends to find its justification in experience.)

The quest for identity will be successful if the Catholic college does preserve the warmth, the spirit, the *joie de vivre* which has made our campuses recognizable different; if it does intelligently modify and replace structures which are no longer viable in this generation; if it does remain Catholic with a capital *C*. This means being loyal to the pope and to the deposit of faith. Such loyalty does not mean total inflexibility, but as Hans Kueng recently observed in an interview on his book, *Infallibility*, there is a line one does not cross, doctrinally, and retain the name "Catholic."



Positively expressed, the loyalty here envisioned means the confident proclamation of the gospel and of reason's capacity to find most of the important answers to the most important questions. To claim to know all the answers is, of course, not only triumphalistic but ignorant. But to claim to know only a very few answers is (while less offensive) a betrayal of Him who dwells in light inaccessible and has enlightened every man coming into the world with the twin lamps of reason and faith.

*J. Julian Davis Jr.*

## Fulfillment

Unless the seed die,
  It remains alone.
Instead of living growth —
  Bare as a stone.

Unless the winter die,
  Earth remains cold —
Barren—unfulfilled —
  Bringing pain untold.

Unless our ego die,
  It cannot be free
To become the person
  It was meant to be.

But if it die to pride
  It will rise to see;
Its death was but a birth
  Into eternity.

**Sister Barbara Marie, O. S. F.**

# A Place in the Son

Robert J. Waywood, O. F. M.

The question purportedly sending current sales of sleeping pills sky-high, as to whether life exists on other planets, is one that the philosopher and theologian, not the scientist, must answer. Though I possess only rudimentary data—and that fast fading into the nebula of golden highschool memories—on the subjects of astronomy and biology, I **am** certain of a few facts which imply that the existence of life, let alone intelligent life, outside of earth is a thin probability that only prodigious scientific advancement and hundreds of decades will, if possible, thicken into alarming likelihood. Just now, my position is hardly **au courant.** What with the sacred cow of science chomping ever larger swaths of the nation's greenery, with a pathological impatience towards the past seizing the race, with a frenzied flight to fantasy and the occult becoming Western man's favorite indoor sport, and with an apparent conspiracy to denigrate mankind going forward relentlessly these last decades—what with all this chorus of opposition, mine will be a small, helpless voice—the whine of an old fogey.

Let me start by dispatching with the implications of some time-honored scientific facts about the cosmos and life; facts, I say, that whittle down considerably the chances of finding a man on the moon and that flatten the edge of enthusiasm on the part of science-fiction votaries.

From my past dabblings in astronomy, two pertinent facts loom as clear and as solid as the sunrise. One tells us that a solar system such as ours is, if not unique in the universe, at least an oddity. An article I wish to quote in this connection is, I confess, altogether popular in style; but the author is so obviously unprejudiced, the observation so categorical, and the subject still so far beyond the reaches of empirical science that the quotation, I think, retains its force:

> Our solar system may be regarded as unique, or nearly so; indeed, it is probably a freak. This assumption is based on considerable knowledge of the life and death of stars—of their evolution, and of the likelihood that an occurrence which may have brought our planets into being could ever have been repeated. The likelihood is small (Kendall Baird, **Astronomy for Everyone**).

The other fact is able to be more empirically established and will doubtless be entirely verified in the near future: besides the earth no other planet in our solar system is provided with anything anywhere approaching the conditions necessary to support organic life. The one orb that may be excluded from this generality is Venus, for which there remains a flicker of hope for its habitability.

Observe that none of the foregoing remarks are calculated to disprove the existence of extra-terrestial life: they are intended merely to shrink such a possibility to reasonable proportions and to cool the heated imaginations of today's popular scientists.

What about life? I am seized with something short of delirium when I hear the absurd shibboleth, "life as we know it." Any day now I expect to overhear our modern relativist mention "noses as we understand them" or "bananas such as they are," and other fastidious qualifications. All human knowledge is admittedly imperfect; and we are prepared to gag the next ninny who says, "Cogito, ergo sum" in the middle of his sentence. Recently I read a stellar article by Dr. Charles de Koninck, professor of philosophy at Laval University, entitled, "Is the Word 'Life' Meaningful?" It was with some hesitation that I dipped into the article, contained in a formidable journal called **Philosophy of Biology.** But my reward was a rebirth of faith in the professional philosopher. In his monograph Dr. de Koninck patiently and patently, with critical acumen and almost poetical illumination, proves that pigs is pigs or, more precisely, that live horses are not dead horses. He lays down a lucid principle—it should be engraved in gold and placed in the vacuum chambers of the Department of Weights and Measures—that worthwhile definitions need not await the clarification of the most obscure and exceptional species for formulation. Whether the microbiologist consigns the protein molecule to the quick or to the dead, we still have a pretty clear idea of what physical life—or its absence—is.

We ask, is there organic life, the basis of which is protoplasm, on planets other than earth? The answer is emphatically, "Very unlikely." For just as the absence of water and atmosphere on the moon and the presence of abysmal cold and pure ammonia gas on Jupiter preclude the hypothesis of organisms on those respective spheres, so too the likelihood of life on other planets in this or any solar system to be discovered will be similarly trimmed down. It is

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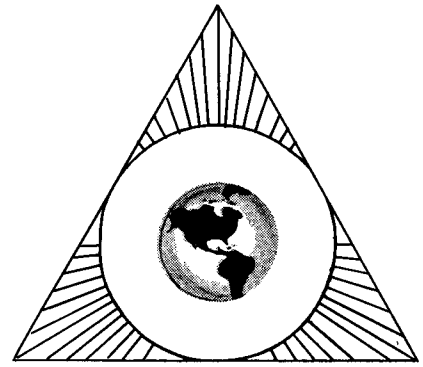
important in this context to realize a fact grossly ignored by the popular scientist though incessantly assumed by the professional: that the physical laws obtain throughout the universe. Thus, only on the assumption that elements burning in the sun might undergo spectroscopic analysis identical with such elements aglow in the Bunsen burner, could the scientists conclude to the existence of the inert gas helium, a commodity discovered only sometime afterwards in Texas oil wells. Although this or that element may be missing from a stellar body because its tremendous energy transmutes heavier elements to lighter), there are now and ever, here and everywhere, no more than ninety-eight stable elements, with more or less fixed valences, of which matter is constituted. And if the basic laws of nature are so ubiquitous and constant, efforts to discover non-organic life, let us say, fabricated of silicon molecules (structurally much like carbon) — on other hypothetical planets, cannot but be as successful as those to find or synthesize such a form of life in our mundane laboratories: that is, unsuccessful.

The fact is that the existence of extra-terrestrial life hasn't begun to be proved, and its possibility is a matter of sheer hypothesis. Despite the accomplishment of space flight and persistent (but sporadic and highly dubious) reports of UFO's, the subject of other worlds in the universe, to be realistic, should have about as much urgency for us as it had for the Neanderthal Man.

If the scientist must honestly be silent on the subject, or content with the most modest speculation, what can the theologian say? Until now he has been rather reticent, for lack of divine revelation, if not of human interest. Since the days of scholasticism, he has given a laconic affirmative to the possibility of other worlds. But I believe that now that science has pushed the question to the fore, we can shed some light on it by applying a few theological deductions elaborated by one of the brightest luminaries of the Middle Ages—The Subtle Doctor, John Duns Scotus. His teaching about the absolute predestination of Christ has, I think, a relevance hitherto undetected on the question of whether life exists elsewhere in the universe. The relevance, I admit, is only oblique. But before introducing his doctrine, I should for the sake of clarity enlarge here on a previous assertion.

I have mentioned an apparent conspiracy afoot to denigrate or abase mankind. What I mean is that for the past fifty years scientists, at least those of the second magnitude, seem to have made it their bounden duty and unwritten law of the game to play down the importance of man in the grand scheme of things. I can recall reading the record of a symposium held at M.I.T. in which one of the panel claimed that, for all his touted rationality, one virulent school of viruses could wipe man out in two weeks, given advantageous conditions. And I heard an astronomer on television refer to this earth as a sixth-rate planet in a fifth-rate solar system in a fourth-rate galaxy. With more perverse abnegation than an Indian fakir, they have chanted, "Thou hast made man a little higher than the angle worm." One of their most cherished memories, which they can hardly refrain from alluding to, is the apocalyptical day when Galileo Galilei deflated the Continental ego by demonstrating with lenses and cosines that the earth rotates around the sun—with the implication that the Yahweh who made the sun stand still was a bit of a medicine man and that the Bible was about as reliable as Bullfinch. The fact of the matter is that hardly anyone on the Continent gave a hoot about heliocentricity (and they still don't), though they had every reason to rest assured that man was made a little lower than the angels—whatever the mechanics of the cosmos proved to be.

The reason for this parenthesis is that I wish to lead up to a line of argument that seeks not so much to disprove the existence of extra-terrestrial life as to show that scientism's self-abasement is uncalled for (and in the light of mere human accomplishment in art as well as science, most uncouth); that there are good theological grounds for exalting mankind; and that it is highly probable that the whole sidereal



universe might be one cosmic playground for the romping of human intelligence, if not of human limbs.

According to the theological dedeductions of Duns Scotus, the Divine Mind conceived of making a creature, endowed with intellect and will, composed of spirit and matter, the show-piece of creative power, so that the Second Person of the Trinity might assume that creatural nature and thereby both diffuse God's goodness without and return adequate glory to the Creator. The rest of creation was, as it were, an afterthought, a backdrop for this overriding Divine Comedy. Here I wish neither to substantiate the thesis nor to enlarge on its details. I simply want to observe that the dignity of the rational animal, in the light of this doctrine, receives an awful rocket-thrust upwards. Not even dreaming of the Incarnation and its implications, the Psalmist rightly exclaimed that God had created man a little lower than the angels. Those of us living anno do-

mini, if we grasp the significance of the Incarnation (It's almost like Shakespeare becoming a dog to relate to his inarticulate pet), can shout it to the stars: "Thou hast lifted earthlings above the archangels!"

In short, I cannot see why, if God so favored humankind as to plan the Incarnation from all eternity, it is hard to believe that he might furthermore coddle us with a few million galaxies. If God so loved the world that he sent his only-begotten Son into it, I, for one, refuse to be obsessed with or cowed by my physical proximity to other primates. And if the strolling Carpenter, who said one day, as if over his shoulder, "Before Abraham came to be, I am," is, as Saint Paul avers, "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," and "for him were created all things in the heavens and on earth, things visible and things invisible"—then I cannot but consider the existence of life on other planets not only improbable but sadly inconsequential. I am aware that a few way-out theologians would steal Christ's thunder and perversely suggest, on no grounds whatever, incarnations of other Persons of the Trinity, peopling the stars with a dozen Blessed Virgins. But only "itching ears" will, I think, attend to their lunacies.

It may be a sign of weak-mindedness on my part to boggle at astronomical figures (like those of the national budget). Yet I really suspect that something healthy in my mental constitution makes me recoil in disbelief every time some science popularizer floats a smokescreen of numbers around the latest dubious theory of biogenesis, evolution, or cosmology. His strategy, as one of my friends expressed it, seems to be: when in doubt, add a few dozen zeros. I feel most in touch with reality when dealing with finite things at close quarters. Maybe this penchant for the parochial, this congenital instinct for the cozy, makes me so ecstatic about that moment in time when a weak cry broke the chilly stable air, and the House of Bread became Heaven on earth.

## APPENDIX

The foregoing article, although written ten years ago, has for one reason or another never been published. Despite subsequent developments in biology and space flight, not a word of it has proven invalid. But I find the essay needs an appendix for three reasons. First there are those above-mentioned developments that need comment. Second, some of my observations, such as those on helium and the physical laws, may sound a bit cryptic. And third, the article reads like a familiar essay and may demand some logical charting for the more sedate reader.

Logically speaking, what I tried to convey was this: that scientific data regarding the existence of extra-terrestrial life is, to say the least, inconclusive; that the probability of such life is not to be conceded on the ultra-relativistic (but stubbornly popular) belief that somewhere, sometime, somehow anything can happen, the physical laws being endlessly and radically amendable; that no mere Lilliputian arrogance or Gargantuan prejudice blinds man to the notion that he shares the cosmos with would-be Andromedans; and that Christian revelation claims for mankind a far more singular and incredible distinction than that of being the sole heirs to creation; namely, that of including among our number the Creator.

What of helium and the natural laws? Unless scientists rigorously assume the ubiquity and stability of physical laws, they can move on to no new knowledge. For example, let us say that the element helium could register one spectroscopic profile on Monday but a measurably different profile on Tuesday: the scientist could never be sure that helium was or was not present in some quantity of gas under analysis. If helium or hydrogen or carbon did not yield a consistent spectroscopic profile, scientists could never seriously conclude to the presence of these elements, as they most assuredly do, in the sun as well as in other stars. Sometimes one can come upon a stray fact of science that dizzies the imagination and may coax the mind to believe anything is possible, that next week might see all our encyclopedias reduced to gibberish. Thus Robert Ripley may have us doubting our senses when he gravely informs us thas somewhere in the universe a cubic inch of material weighs 3000 pounds. Before we put the torch to our Britannicas, however, we should realize that this revelation is no more alarming than the old chestnut about things weighing in on the moon at one-quarter their terrestrial avoirdupois. Jupiter's mass and hence its gravitational pull is enormous by earthly comparison, and a cubic inch of metal that weighs a few ounces earthside could tip the scales a ton if it were spirited away to Jupiter.

How about the latest accomplishments in biology and space research (there is still no need to seriously consider UFO visitors and radio signals from the beyond)? Although biologists have succeeded in making a DNA molecule replicate itself, the laboratory synthesis of life ever remains "just around the corner" of Life's science editor's imagination. And rocket probes to Venus and Mars, as well as remarkably sterile samples of moon rock, have wielded nearly fatal blows to any expectation of locating extra-terrestrial life nearby. Before we pin our hopes for habitability on some far-flung unknown planet, consider two things. First,

there is not the smallest shred of evidence that there **are** any other solar systems; and, second, we probably haven't enough fuel (even atomic) on earth to send a manned space ship to our closest stellar neighbor four light-years away.

Finally, just about the only two considerations that may form the basis of any argument for the existence of life elsewhere in the universe are highly questionable. First, the laws of probability, say some scientists, make it appear reasonable that, given the vast number of stars in the universe, and assuming that some have solar systems, and considering the enormous number of possible planets, chances are that a million earth-like orbs are out there somewhere. Laws of probability notwithstanding, this line of thought seems to me only thinly varnished wishful thinking. I will begin to take it seriously the day I am shown congruent snowflakes, counterfeit fingerprints, or identical twins who are really identical.

According to another consideration, if only the denizens of earth tenant the universe, then much of creation seems a prodigious prodigality, a meaningless waste—squandered, one could add, on a curiously dim-witted and depraved species. But remember—even on this very planet

*Full many a gem of purest ray serene*
*The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear.*
*Full many a flower is born to blush unseen*
*And waste its sweetness on the desert air.*

Furthermore, man's breath-taking technology may eventually penetrate the whole cosmos and invest it with meaning. And, perhaps the most important of all considerations, the Incarnation itself redeems man of his insignificance, just as the Redemption can rescue him from his depravity. Anyone familiar with God's prodigality in the spiritual realm, at any rate, will hardly balk at the sight of his prodigality in the physical universe.

Let those who will, gaze at stars and guess about life on other planets. I know that my Redeemer liveth and that right here on **terra firma** I have a place in the Son.



# Contemplative Religious Life Today—II

Mother Mary Francis, P. C. C.

Because religious have, over the course of centuries, come to be held, and, sadly, sometimes to hold themselves as a superior species of Christian humanity, it seems to some necessary now to maintain that religious have no reason to exist at all, and that far from being a superior species of Christian, they are not even Christians at all. If some contemplatives, perhaps many contemplatives, have understood withdrawal from the world as turning one's back on the world, it would not be surprising that the world should turn its back on them. The fact is, however, that some contemplatives are now energetically turning their backs on themselves. And we may need to recall to ourselves that if self-complacency is repulsive, self-contempt is subversive. The psychological sadism to which the latter leads paralyzes all efforts toward a true renewal.

To admit that one may have lived according to some false values in the past need not generate a compulsion to maintain that one has no value in the present. It is not necessary to append to an act of contrition for mistakes of the past a declaration that one is oneself a mistake of the present. It is healthy to feel embarrassed about artificialities. It is strange that we should feel embarrassed about sincerity. At a time when so many are confused and unhappy, one need not be apologetic about having convictions and being glad in them. We do not repair possible inauthenticities of the past by concocting artificialities of the present. We may have been unwilling to admit we had problems. Now we are afraid to admit we are contented. If we once feared to disagree, now we are nervously fearful if we agree. We can become so unauthentic as to hide the reality of our happiness lest we be branded as being "out of it." Out of what? It is good to be "with it" only if we have clear ideas about what it is we want to be with.

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In a changing world, we grow ashamed about having unshakable principles. In a tortured era, we are self-conscious about our joy. In the end, we may have to call in a psychiatrist to find out why we do not seem to need a psychiatrist. If the contemplative is a sign of the uncertainty of earthly life, if she is a question mark of death written across life, this is possible only because she has convictions of certainty and because with Saint Paul she "knows in whom she has believed" (2 Tim. 1:12). Thus she also knows in **what** she believes and what is appropriate to her belief.

The qualities which should characterize the efforts of contemplatives to renew themselves in their way of life are the same qualities which must be characteristic of anyone's engagement in a profound renewal of life. The first of these is already found in the title of the conciliar decree on religious life—that is, when the title is properly translated. Frequently, it is not. What the Council Fathers asked for and what the Church hopes for is not haphazard adaptation but the appropriate renewal of religious life. There is our first characteristic: appropriateness, specific authenticity.

Obviously, we cannot achieve an appropriate renewal unless we understand very clearly what kind of thing we are renewing. We cannot search for a face whose features we do not know. One does not return to an ideal which one has not yet conceived. Nor can we wait for next year's postulants to enter and explain to us what our life means. How can they bring their wonderful fresh insights to something which is not much in sight when they come? What shall they contribute to an amorphism? However, if we are not equipped to make an appropriate renewal of our life by reason of lacking a clear understanding of our life, then it is not likely that any postulants will be entering next year in any case.

Let us not be ashamed to have convictions. In the Constitution on the Church Vatican II has reminded us that religious families are expected to "give their members the support of a more firm stability in their way of life and a proven doctrine of acquiring perfection" (§43). One can be open to new expressions of truth only if one recognizes the truth through possessing it. Certainly no one possesses the whole truth. All should be forever seeking the fullness of truth. But we can properly seek only what we know. To seek already implies some knowledge of a goal. We look for something or for someone. We do not merely look. And so we may discover a need to repudiate a popular misconception of the hour which is to equate receptivity with a complete lack of conviction, so that the epitome of openness is held to be the absence of principle.

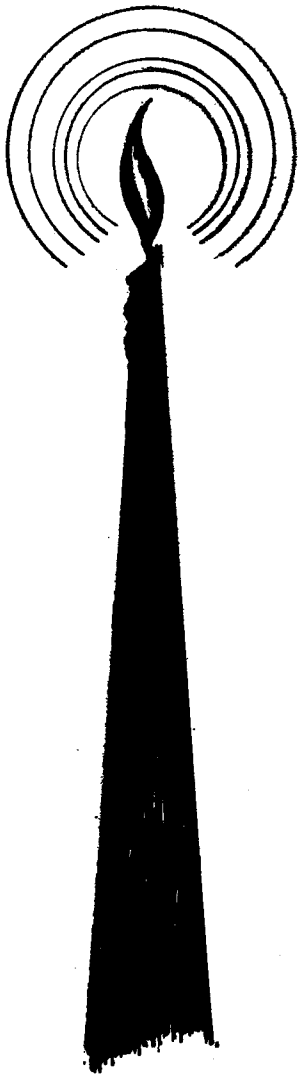
Karl Stern reflects that "the intellectuals have learned to say 'No!' so elaborately and in so many different ways, they can no longer say, 'Yes!'"[1] Sometimes contemplative religious have conditioned themselves to say, "Yes!" so immediately and to such inappropriate proposals that they can no longer say, "No!—it is not for us."

In proposing the contemplative religious life as a question mark upon worldly values, we have already accepted it as a sign of contradiction. The contemplative need not be afraid to be this kind of sign, since she is totally dedicated to the worship in spirit and in truth of a God who was himself "a sign of contradiction for many in Israel" (Lk. 2:34). In our enthusiasm for recognizing the signs of the times, we may hesitate to take a stand against some of the signs we recognize. This would be already to have lost the opportunity to fulfil our vocation in being ourselves a sign of the times. As Father Karl Rahner put it in a letter to the Carmelites of Beek, Holland (March 19, 1968), "Don't ever forget this: contradiction to the spirit of the times is often the most modern thing, and is an absolutely indispensable service which one must perform for his contemporary world." If we have courage to reject in our times whatever is inappropriate to salvation, we should be able to reject what is inappropriate to the authentic renewal of our contemplative religious life.

Certainly religious renewal is a gloriously positive affair. It is by no means a negative closedness. If we say, No! to inappropriate adaptation it is only that we may reserve love's energies for a more full-throated and full-hearted Yes! to all appropriate exercises of renewal. And this returns us to our point of departure on the characteristic of renewal: appropriateness. We must know what we believe before we can enlarge our belief. And, after all, we know that no one is so eager to listen to and profit by suggestions for improvement of her manner of living as the one who has the clearest vision of what that life is, and who is as willing to die for that vision as to live in it.

The test of appropriateness, once the vision has been caught, is very forthright and simple. Whatever deepens for the contemplative the worshipful love of her life would have to be appropriate. Whatever enriches her silence and solitude (emphasized so powerfully in Section II of the 1969 Instruction on the Contemplative Life) develops her prayerfulness, illuminates her withdrawal, matures her humanity, enlarges her mind and heart for the loving adoration of God and compassionate love of men, is at once manifestly appropriate for her and an establishment of her kind of witness in the Church. It is not at all difficult to sort out the appropriate and the inappropriate, and to separate them.

[1] Karl Stern, **The Pillar of Fire** (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1951), 277.



Then, it is characteristic of a profound and enduring renewal that it be sincere. It will have to be honest enough and energetic enough to eliminate all those spiritual and cultural accretions of the years which have at best obscured and at worst obliterated the true aspect of the founder's charism which is ours to share. For Franciscan contemplatives, the words of Alice Meynell offer a ready case in point:

*The Lady Poverty was fair,*
*But she has lost her looks of late,*
*With change of times and change of air.*
*Ah, slattern! she neglects her hair,*
*Her shoes, her gown, she keeps no state,*
*As once when her pure feet were bare!*[2]

A sincere Franciscan contemplative would have to renounce all that fetters Francis' lovely Lady Poverty, and honestly labor to restore in her own spiritual and temporal way of living that "slender landscape and austere," where the discerning poet rightly reminds her that Lady dwells. Where accumulations of devotional prayers and practices have cluttered the slender landscape of contemplative prayer, she will have to disclaim the clutter. In the same way, if the striving after perfection has come to mean an isolated, self-centered existence, she will have to hold out her arms in love to the needs of her sisters, the needs of the world and begin again to learn that perfection is only the fullness of love. She will then make the simultaneous discovery that when one is occupied with love, one is no longer thinking about perfection. "My occupation? Love. It's all I do."[3] The mystery of the community of love is developed in Section V of the 1969 Instruction mentioned above, where the witness value of a firmly established society is accented, and its attraction for men of today expressed in a splendid sentence: "...a community which in view of its continuity and vigor, confirms the validity of the principles upon which it was founded" (§3).

To have caught the true vision, to recognize what is appropriate to keeping the splendor of the vision, to have vitalizing convictions about the tradition established by the founder, is a very different, even a sometimes quite opposite affair than clinging to traditions. Some traditions established and handed down through centuries remain vital to every generation. Many others do not. We need sincerely to recognize the latter and repudiate them, not with contempt for the meaningless but with the deference and respect for what was once very meaningful and without which we could have nothing on which to build anything meaningful in the present.

Only out of a sincere personal searching, selection, and rejection can come any availing communal searching, selection, and rejection in order to achieve the sincerest presentation of the original charism in the present milieu. One of the noticeable rewards of this sincere appraisal and action is a renascence of simplicity. And so the third characteristic of contemplative religious renewal that we want to consider here (there are other characteristics, but they are largely contained in our selected three) already emerges with the second, simplicity out of sincerity.

Just to live religious life on its simplest level is a tremendous challenge. Complexities are so obscurantist that of themselves they disavow our living really appropriately and sincerely. They take over the scene. They blot out the sun. It will often be extremely difficult for religious in the active apostolate to get and stay free of the complexities which their very apostolates engender. Who does not sigh before the challenge of living very simply within the administrative structures of a large modern hospital or today's university? Cloistered contemplatives have no such built-in problems. If there are complexities in their way of life, it is not because they must be there but because contemplatives have brought them in. And how can the religious in the active apostolate look to her contemplative sister for the assistance of love and prayer in her very real and complex problems if that same contemplative sister is fabricating complexities of her own?

Everything in the contempla-

[2] Alice Meynell, **Collected Poems** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1913).

[3] John of the Cross, **Poems** (tr. John F. Nims; New York: Grove Press, 1959).

tive's life must be evaluated by the standard of simplicity. "Simply be what you are; God will take care that your light shines before men."[4] A curious mistake of our times appears in some contemplatives' apparent disbelief that God will do this, in a certain agitation to carry their light out of the cloister and themselves hold it before men. The trouble with this seems to be that the light quickly, even almost immediately, goes out. It is the love, the prayer, the compassion, the penance of the contemplative which must go out to men, not her physical presence. When the contemplative is occupied only with "simply being what she is," she has a lifetime task which grows ever more challenging, more engaging, more blessed with the years.

In this simplicity of being and of living, the contemplative religious' prayer is seen as an abiding presence to Love; her study as meditative, not academic; her work chosen and executed only as expressive of her dedication, whether it be the art of woodcutting or the art of cooking, the work of creative writing or of hoeing, the labor of musicology or of sweeping. It is safe to say that the contemplative who does not move with simple grace and coordinated ease from the choir to the scriptorium to the soil is malfunctioning. It is good for her to work with the earth, to sweat in the sun, to coax new life from the soil in order to offer her liturgical worship more availingly, her private prayer more fruitfully, to think more clearly and profoundly.

The whole history of the contemplative life testifies that its high points of spiritual and intellectual creativity were always achieved when it flourished most notably in poverty and very simple labor. Contemplatives will not need worldly diversions as long as they work with the soil. A deep renewal is at least as readily achieved in the silent garden under the sky as in air-conditioned hotels' workshops. This is by no means to cast aspersions on workshops which are often helpful and occasionally necessary, but only to say that for contemplatives, air-conditioned workshops may prove themselves best in subsequent sun-drenched fields. The life of the contemplative even as a sign of contradiction is a simple and silent sign, not a strident one. The question it continually raises is only the unvocalized question of its simple being. But the silence and the simplicity are mysteriously heard by men so continually and so evidently that Isaiah's invitation seems for this newly uttered and in this specifically fulfilled:

> Sing with praise, barren city that art childless still; echo thy praise, cry aloud, wife that wast never brought to bed. Make more room for thy tent, stretch wide—what hinders thee?—the curtains of thy dwelling place; long be the ropes, and firm the pegs that fasten them. Right and left thou shalt spread, till thy race dispossesses the heathen, peoples the ruined cities (Is. 54:1-3).

And the "firmer the pegs" of the contemplative tent in this glorious era of renewal, the more clearly will its simple questioning sign be recognized and its silence heard.

Renewal achieved out of an educated intuition, that is, a prayer-informed and experience-proven intuition, wrought out of humble and courageous sincerity, and sustained in simplicity will fulfill the expectation of Vatican II that the contemplative life be the expression of "an outstanding sacrifice of praise," and that which "inspires the People of God by example and lends luster to that People by its holiness" (**Perfectae caritatis**, §7).

As for any present prophets of doom against the contemplative life, they will eventually experience that "no weapon that is forged against thee shall go true; no voice that is raised to condemn thee, but thou shalt give it the lie" (Is. 54:17). For there is no weapon that can do anything but glance off a breastplate of simple love. It is the contemplative's universal compassion for men which gives the lie to condemnations simply by gathering them into her heart.

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Francis climed a high mountain to listen to God. He started at the beginning in imitation of the Creator and reintroduced Genesis to a confused generation. He spoke of and to the earth, the heavens, the sea, the sky, the animals and birds of the air. That's how the Father began, and Francis would sing that song of creation once again and re-people the world with people of God and re-establish all things in Christ in whose image the new man was made. Francis moved from the lofty mountains to the lowly hillsides where on one Christmas eve he built a shelter and peopled it with the real symbols of that first cave-like shelter in Bethlehem. And wonder of all wonders, everyone of the real people of God's creation saw and felt the Real Presence of the newborn Christ that starry night. Francis did not have to run off to tell his brothers the wonderful things God revealed to him that night; they all shared the good things of this Real Presence.

**Frederick McKeever, O.F.M.**
from a homily preached at
a provincial chapter liturgy

[4] Pope Paul VI, Letter to the Abbot General of the Cisterian Order of the Strict Observance, December 8, 1969.

# Clare and Penance

Sister Mary Seraphim, P. C. P. A.

With both Saint Francis and the Bishop against her, Clare surrendered. She would accept their command that she let no day pass without taking some food. To make doubly sure that their orders were observed, the Bishop and Francis informed the other Sisters of San Damiano that, from now on, their Abbess would eat at least one-half a roll every day, including Friday.[1] The Sisters rejoiced, for Clare's fasting had been such "that they were made sad and lamented over it" and even, as Sister Pacifica later confessed, "shed tears over it many times."[2] Unable to continue such an obvious penitential practice, Clare had recourse to more secret ones. It is said that she possessed three different types of hairshirts which "she wore in most secret fashion in order that the Sisters should not reprove her for doing it.[3] Even in this pious deception, Clare was thwarted, for as soon as she became ill the Sisters spirited them away. This solicitude of the nuns of San Damiano for their abbess was rivaled by the tender concern which Saint Clare displayed for them.

"Though Clare afflicted her own body with these hair shirts, she was most merciful with the sisters, for whom she would hear of no such penances, and most willingly gave them every consolation."[4] Clare remained quite firm in her purpose that the sisters should not give Brother Body too much reason to complain and thereby diminish their ability to grow in service and mystic love of each other and their Spouse. One notable exception to this rule was made in the case of Sister Agnes, a young sister who, after observing Clare wearing a cilice of knotted horse hair, asked to try it. Surprisingly Clare permitted it. But as Thomas of Celano records, "she so quickly succumbed to such harshness that after three days she gave it up more readily than she had cheerfully asked for it!"[5]

Why was Clare so drawn to extremes in this matter of corporal penance? Her usual moderation and common sense seemed to vanish to such an extent that in less than ten years her health was completely broken, and she contracted an illness which confined her to bed until her death, twenty-nine years later.

The answer can be found in Clares overwhelming desire to belong entirely, body and soul, to her crucified Lord and also in her lively sense of the unity of the Mystical Body. She lived, loved, suffered and rejoiced permeated by the conviction that all she did would have repercussions on the life of the entire Church. Hers was an apostolic love born in a clarity of vision which, as foundress of a penitential Order, she possessed in plenitude. Thus she could see no contradiction between the moderation she urged on others and the abandon with which she chastised her own flesh.

For Clare, mortification was not a burdensome duty, but the privilage of sharing with Christ in his sacrificial Love.

> Christian sacrifice, which is a participation in the mystery of Christ's own sacrificial death and resurrection, is a process of making sacred the entire context of human living. This is the most radical meaning of the word sacrifice: "to make something sacred."[6]

Given their lively sense of reverence for all creation, it is small wonder that Francis and Clare sought to sanctify everything they did or discovered so that it could be offered, purified and renewed, to the Father. One of the elements of renunciation is the desire to make reparation for the abuse of the good things of the earth by personal absention. No morbidity pervades this attitude. Rather, a great and ever expanding appreciation for all that God has made good springs up in the hearts of those who stand back a little and view each individual good thing in its relationship with the whole. Today's world, which complains of so much fragmentation, needs persons who have a wide vision, persons who value things not for what they can

[1] From the Cause of Canonization as reproduced in Nesta de Robeck, **St. Clare of Assisi** (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951), 183.

[2] **Ibid.**

[3] **Ibid.**, 187.

[4] **Ibid.**

[5] Thomas of Celano, "The Legend of St. Clare of Assisi," in **The Life and Writings of St. Clare of Assisi** (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), 31.

[6] Bernard J. Cooke, **New Dimensions in Catholic Life** (Wilkes-Barre: Dimension Books, 1968), 65-66.

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get out of them but for what they are in themselves. These are the liberated individuals who can judge rightly with regard to all other persons, things, and events.

> Without penance to clarify the vision, creation cannot but be seen out of focus. Once penance has come in, and the light of prayer has been brought to shine upon the created order, the soul can appreciate the value of sharing Christ's passion with others, can welcome opportunities for suffering, can want to show compassion to the members of Christ's mystical body.[7]

For Clare as for Francis, penance was an exigency resulting from their personal call from the Lord. Because this desire sprang from a genuine sharing in Christ's submission, humility accompanied it.

Far from exacting a harsh regime from her sisters, Clare sought out little ways to care for them, "serving them at table, washing their feet, and giving them water for their hands and performing all the humble tasks in the nursing of the infirm."[8] At night she would even rise and "cover them against the cold."[9]

Though she was abbess, whenever "she gave any command to the sisters, she did so with much fear and humility and nearly always hastened to do herself what she ordered to others."[10] No wonder the sisters loved her! Her concern extended to more than their bodily needs, for "whenever she saw any sister suffering temptation or tribulation she would call her secretly and with tears console her."[11] Even her reproofs were given "with much grace and gentleness."[12]

That Clare's fasting was regulated by her obedience to Francis and to the Bishop was a sign of the authenticity of the love which inspired it. Another "satisfactory proof" of authenticity in the area of penance, Dom van Zeller points out, "is to be found in the words addressed by the angel to the women on the morning of the Resurrection: 'You seek Jesu of Nazareth who was crucified'."[13] To all who knew her, Clare's outstanding feature was this singleness of purpose which sought out her Lord with the skill of a trained archer. "We must clearly understand what the moving force and real power of her Christian mortification was. It was paschal joy."[14] We have already seen how joy overflowed from this

[7] Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B., **Approach to Prayer and Penance** (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 266-67.

[8] From the Cause of Canonization, de Robeck, 184.

[9] **Ibid.**, 187.

[10] **Ibid.**, 184.

[11] **Ibid.**, 213.

[12] **Ibid.**, 222.

[13] Van Zeller, 251.

[14] Bernard Häring, **Acting on the Word** (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1968), 158.



ascetic woman. Anyone who came into her radiant presence perceived its influence. No, Clare's asceticism never caused her to be grim or gloomy. "For all her mortification, she preserved a joyful, cheerful countenance, so that she seemed either not to feel bodily austerities or to laugh at them."[15]

Clare's taste for penance was coupled with her love for poverty. She saw them as two handmaids sent to bring erring mankind back to the recognition of the heavenly Father. She well understood that

> Christ's redemptive activity in his Passion, Death and Resurrection made mankind radically capable of answering the call of the Father, but each individual at the same time needs to become continually united with and immersed into this redemptive activity of Christ in his own life in order to actually make his passover from self to the Father in Christ.[16]

The true Christian, then, "has an abiding need for continual redemption from self to Christ, born of an enduring sense of his own weakness of self and a lively conviction of his dependence upon his heavenly Father."[17] Clare did not sleep on vine twigs, maintain a year-round Lenten fast, and afflict her flesh because she felt herself to be of superior strength or superhuman. Rather, she felt keenly her own powerlessness to accomplish the purpose to which she had been called. She wrote in her Testament about those who "walk that way for a time but of the few who persevere to the end!"[18] She experienced the same fear that her very flesh would betray her as it did her father, Francis; like him, she undertook to ensure its complete submission. Alexander IV wrote of her, in the Bull of her canonization:

> That she might grow strong in spirit by conquering the flesh (for one becomes stronger through overcoming his enemy) she chastised her body .... In the kingdom of piety she reared a tower of rigid abstinence, in which a generous supply of spiritual nourishment is to be had. She was the princess of the poor, the duchess of the humble, the mistress of the chaste, the abbess of the penitent.[19]

This strong woman knew (by sad experience) that "our flesh is not of brass nor is our strength that of stone (Job. 6:12). Nay, we are frail and subject to every bodily weakness."[20] And she wrote to Agnes of Prague,

> Therefore, most beloved, I beg thee to refrain wisely and prudently from any indiscreet and impossible austerity in the fast-

[15] Celano, "Legend . . .," **loc. cit.**, 32.

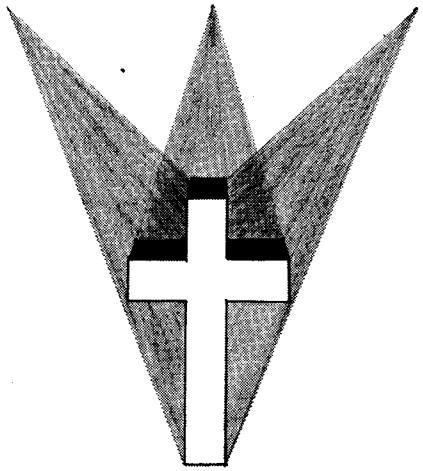
[16] William F. Hogan, C.S.C., **Witness in Weakness** (North Easton: Stonehill College, 1968), 14.

[17] **Ibid.**, 15.

[18] St. Clare, Testament, in Henri Daniel-Rops, **The Call of St. Clare** (New York: Hawthorn, 1963), 140.

[19] From the Bull of Canonization, in de Robeck, 107.

[20] From the Third Letter to Agnes of Prague, **Ibid.**, 95.



ing which I know thou hast undertaken; and I beseech thee in the Lord that by thy life, thou praise God, and render thy reasonable service to him and let thy sacrifice be ever seasoned with wisdom.[21]

At another time, answering Agnes' question concerning the practice of fasting at San Damiano, Clare wrote, cautioning Agnes that "for the weak and infirm, Saint Francis admonished and bade us have as much thoughtfulness as we could in the matter of food."[22] This charity Clare constantly put in practice in the governing of her own community. Addressing the future superiors and nuns of her Order, Clare wrote in her Testament: "Love one another with the charity of Christ, and let the love which you have in your hearts be shown outwardly by your deeds."[23]

Clare had little use for that love which existed only in thought or desire. What she wished to practice and urged others to grow in, was the delicate concern for others which is the refined fruit of Christian mortification.

> From the truly Christian viewpoint, all ascetic practices that do not result in greater willingness to serve and greater sensitivity to the needs of other are untrue to life and bypass life. Willingness to serve is an ascesis, and this willingness to serve must be manifested in community.[24]

The concept of penance today is closely linked with this ideal of service of the brethren. Instead of seeking out opportunities to mortify natural inclinations through self-imposed asceticism, modern man seeks rather to respond most fully to the needs and demands of others, with a concomitant forgetfulness of self. Today we do not indulge in heroics in the matter of fasting, disciplines, and hairshirts; instead we cultivate an attitude of humble, hidden service which, incidentally, does more than a hairshirt to wear down the "rough edges" of our prideful nature. Perhaps the asceticism of the seventies will not be so "measurable" but its fruitfulness can equal, if not surpass,

[21] **Ibid.**

[22] **Ibid.**

[23] Testament of St. Clare, version in **Life and Writings** (cf. note 5, above), 86.

[24] Häring, 155.



the physical rigorism of past ages. But we should not altogether discard the concept of bodily austerity. If we are really to grow in the demanding school of charity, we will find it necessary to have a nature which is supple and docile to the least breathings of the Spirit. This we will not have if we are accustomed to indulge all our legitimate appetites to satiety. Strength of will and firmness of purpose grows only from a self-controlled and reason-directed nature, one which knows how to accept suffering and to profit by it. To attain such self-mastery, corporal austerity is a must. Clare recognized this, especially after her illness, and although she modified her radicalism in regard to penance, she did not abandon the basic concept but ordained a balanced regularity of mortification in her Rule.

So that later generations would not turn this exquisite balance of penance and charity into a caricature and cite her example of mortification as justification for their views, Clare composed a moderate, indeed compassionate chapter in her Rule regarding fasting. She expressly enjoins that "the younger and the weaker sisters and those who are serving outside the monastery can be mercifully dispensed as it shall seem good to the Abbess."[25]

"It is of interest to note that, although Francis followed a middle course in his Rule in regard to the obligation of fasting, Clare made this practice much more strict, prescribing that the sisters fast at all times. The reason for this greater strictness on her part may easily be gleaned from the fact that, since the nuns did not bear the strenuous bodily burdens and labors of the apostolate, they wished to compensate somewhat for the lack of external apostolic activity by a greater severity in penance. Thus they intended to cooperate with the more active works of the friars by supporting them in a spiritual way."[26]

For Clare, then, penance—no matter how hidden—had an apostolic orientation. One example of her faith in this reality occurred at the time that the city of Assisi was under siege by the armies of Vitale d'Aversa. "Trusting in the power of God, Clare called together the sisters, and ordered ashes to be brought."[27] After sprinkling her own head and those of her sisters, she asked them all to spend the day in prayer in chapel. "During that day of prayer the sisters fasted on bread and water, and some of them ate nothing at all."[28] The following dawn revealed the encampment of the enemy deserted, for d'Aversa and all his troops had departed.

[25] Rule of St. Clare, in **Life and Writings** (cf. note 5, above), c. III, §8, p. 44.

[26] Marcian J. Mathis and Dismas Bonner, O.F.M., **Explanation of the Rule of St. Clare** (1964), 41-42.

[27] From the Cause of Canonization, de Robeck, 195.

[28] **Ibid.**, 211.

Daniel-Rops analyses this efficacy of consecrated penance thus:

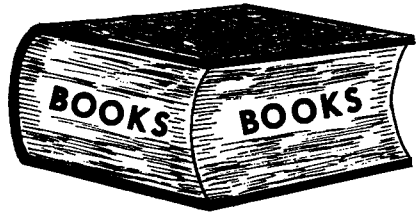
> The Christian is not a man alone; it is not by selfishness and isolation that he accomplishes his vocation. All things unite and pour forth again; each one is great only by virtue of others. This splendor which Clare, in her cell, pursued through vigils and penances was exactly that which shone on the face of Francis when addressing crowds, standing on a public square. It is exactly the one which penetrated souls through the subterranean path of remorse and forgiveness. The silent prayer of a thousand communities, prisoners of their vows, works more effectively than all sermons to restore souls.[29]

Alexander IV was to write of her: "While Clare in the seclusion of her solitude broke the alabaster vase of her body, the whole building of the Church was filled with the fragrance of her sanctity."[30]

[29] Daniel-Rops, 80.

[30] From the Bull of Canonization, **Life and Writings** (cf. note 5, above), 106.






**Open Your Hearts.** By Huub Oosterhuis. Trans. David Smith; New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. Pp. 112. Cloth, $4.50.

*Reviewed by Father Vincent B. Grogan, O.F.M., secretary to the Minister Provincial of Holy Name Province.*

The blurb on the dust-jacket informs the reader that Oosterhuis "summons men to rethink old and ordinary truths in a new language, especially as that new language invigorates and transforms the liturgical experience." If this is the author's intention, he certainly has succeeded. The question remains, though: can the majority of men be satisfied with the rather stark simplicity resulting from this "rethinking"? The author advocates, e. g., the abolition of all valuable appurtenances of worship—marble altars, gold ciboria—to be replaced by wooden tables and woven baskets containing ordinary bread, not the unleavened kind.

Oosterhuis analyzes the inherent meaning of sharing the Eucharistic Bread, and he uses this analysis as a springboard for developing his concept of a person. You are a **person** when you **share** other people's lives, if you are granted a role to play in the happiness of others. This brief introductory chapter is pivotal to a proper appreciation of the remainder of the book, for the twin notions of "sharing" and "person" seem to be the thread that unifies his entire work. The verb "seems" is used advisedly, as I found it difficult to distinguish a precise theme. In this same section, the author initiates a beautiful comparison, on the one hand, between Christ as the grain of wheat that dies to give life, and on the other hand, a wage earner who struggles to support his family and thereby day by day gives of himself till death.

The ten Prayers of Thanksgiving or canons are relatively brief and direct; in general, they follow the structure of the four authorized Mass canons: introductory prayer of praise (corresponding to the Preface), institutional narrative, anamnesis (prayer of offering), and con-

cluding acclamation of glory (similar to the minor doxology). Three of these canons, though, lack words of consecration; another has everybody reciting the consecratory paragraph. And the last of these canons is quite mystical and questioning in tone.

The chapter devoted to the origins and the reality of prayer is the best in the book. All prayer, according to Oosterhuis, is but a variation of the single theme of love, of death, or a yearning for peace. The author describes prayer as an attempt to make the concept "God" meaningful to the person praying. Who is this person, God; what are his relations to me and mine to him? How can a person be led from speaking of God to speaking of my God?

The author provides a thought-provoking explanation of the "Prayer of the Faithful" at Mass: he asks, briefly, whether we are really willing to take the needed steps to achieve all those glorious goals for which we so piously ask God—peace, justice, etc. Likewise, Oosterhuis interprets in a novel manner the ageless axiom that God always answers our prayers though not necessarily in the manner for which we had hoped.

Included in the book is a Protestant Easter Eve Service that is used in Amsterdam. I found this to be of high quality, endowing that liturgical Vigil with a compelling sense of drama through the utilization of lights, alternating choirs, dialogue between lector and congregation.

The last chapter, entitled "The Second Language," is the vaguest of all. It apparently concerns the real meaning of language itself. The author divides language into two types: the clear, concise, exact language used, e. g., in science; and the language of emotion or feeling that seeks to express what really cannot be said. Frankly, I failed to fathom the full import of these particular pages, perhaps because this was my first encounter with Oosterhuis.

The choice of certain words—either by the author or the translator—could cause some apprehension or misunderstanding among readers of this book. "Myth," e. g., is the description applied to certain scriptural events of both the Old and the New Testament. Secondly, "Table Prayers" is the title of the chapter on the ten canons. A few typographical mistakes—repetition of the same word—are also noticeable.

If you are tuned in to the contemporary existentialist or personalist philosophy, then this book is for you. But my reaction upon reading it is that the ordinary lay person will not be attracted to it. Its appeal seems mainly for clergy and religious who are au courant with Dutch thinking today. And as you may have guessed by now, that is definitely not "my bag."

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**The Faith Eternal and the Man of Today.** By Jean Cardinal Daniélou. Trans. Paul Joseph Oligny, O.F.M.; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970. Pp. vii-111. Cloth, $4.50.

*Reviewed by Margaret Hogan, M.A. (Phil., Fordham University), a free lance writer and mother of three residing in East Windsor, N.J.*

In this work Cardinal Daniélou addresses himself to the basic problems confronting the contemporary Christian. The fundamental questions concern "... belief in God, the transcendence of Christianity as opposed to other religions, the foundation and content of faith in Christ, and ... the development of faith in theology and mysticism" (p. v). His responses to these problems were first offered in a series of conferences for lay people. Herein lies one failing of the book: an oral presentation directly set down on paper loses its dynamism and at times becomes wearisome for the reader.

Daniélou sees the need for the modern Christian, submerged in our scientific culture, to examine critically and intellectually the faith that he has received. Such intellectual examination should not only reveal the rational basis for belief in God and the Creed but should also serve to direct man to develop a proper humanism in the realization of what man truly is and whence his freedom derives.

Daniélou points out the history of the experiences that take man from a natural knowledge of God to a supernatural knowledge of God. This history indicates that there is a solid basis from which man can affirm what he believes. The first experience is the universal human experience of God. This is the personal, inner encounter that every man has with God. The proper response to this encounter should be the affirmation of the existence of an objective and transcendent reality. Concomitant with this affirmation is the recognition of a rule or measure other than oneself. And it is here that man first rejects God.

The second experience is the movement of the great world religions toward God. On this level, the religious man makes sacred the important moments of life and the great forces of nature. These are the religions indigenous to the particular races. They are part and parcel of the cultures that express them.

The biblical and Christian experiences are revelations. In this they are distinct from the other religious traditions. They spring not from the well of man's creative intellect but from an intervention by God—a needed intervention in the face of evil. They not only posit the existence of God but reveal to man something of God's nature. Christianity holds claim to something more than revelation: viz., reclamation. "Jesus Christ is at the same time ... God-Savior and Man-Saved" (p. 73). The race of mankind takes on a new humanity with a supernatural destiny. Most interesting in the account of the revelation of Christ is the marshalling of historical fact to support the foundation of faith.

The culmination of the movement toward God is found in man's longing for union with the absolute—the authentic mystical experience that ends not in nothingness but in plenitude.

The approach that Daniélou takes throughout is an intellectualist one. And for this he offers and need offer no apology. For all that he asks is that man reflect upon his actual experience of reality and recognize in that experience the truth that supports his faith.

But either Daniélou's reflection upon reality is somewhat shortsighted, or his actual experience of reality is somewhat limited as evidenced by his occasional male chauvinism. When he defends certain religious practices, e. g., which some theologians consider impure expressions of religion, the examples he uses involve only women: the old lady telling her beads and the worried mother lighting a candle. And again, when he contrasts religious sentimentality with intellectual acceptance of the gospels, he notes admirable belief without religious sentiment—especially in men. Notwithstanding, the book is well worth reading.

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**Introduction to a Philosophy of Religion.** By Alice von Hildebrand. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970. Pp. ix-178. Cloth, $6.95.

*Reviewed by Father Evan Roche, O.F.M., Ph.D. (Phil., St. Bonaventure University), Professor of Philosophy at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.*

This little book is just what the author claims it to be. She begins by showing how philosophy of religion should be distinguished both from natural theology and from religion itself. She succeeds from the start in establishing the legitimacy of the distinct discipline now known as the philosophy of religion, by showing that religion and its experiences do lend themselves to philosophical analysis.

The subject then is developed in a natural and logical way. Separate chapters deal with the relationship of religion to culture, to humanitarianism, to morality and the like. Such subjects as sacredness, revelation, faith, adoration, prayer, mysticism, and cult are examined in the light of basic philosophical principles.

The author draws heavily upon the works of outstanding authors yet without breaking the continuity of her own theme and its development. The notes are conveniently placed at the end of each chapter. Readers who are familiar with the writings of Dietrich von Hildebrand, the author's husband, can gather something of the thrust of the present book. Unsurprisingly, the one von Hildebrand quotes the other with complete approval throughout: for, as we are told on the jacket of the present volume, she has become his best collaborator.

Among other authors favorably and frequently cited are William James and Soren Kierkegaard. This reviewer gained many fresh insights with regard to the thinking of these two men in particular. Mrs. von Hildebrand treats them both favorably and sympathetically, yet manages a rather incisive criticism of Kierkegaard for his distrust of the communion that can and should exist between men. Martin Luther and Immanuel Kant are treated critically but fairly.

The contents of the present book are consistently good and sometimes excellent. This reviewer was greatly impressed by all the views of the author. She shows a solid understanding of both philosophy and theology. Her faith in a living and personal God shines out on every page. She speaks of prayer and worship not as an outsider but as ons who knows such matters from daily experience. Nevertheless her treatment is always scholarly and objective.

Her book, then, could have been and perhaps should have been excellent and deserving of unqualified praise and endorsement. It is a shame to have to report that a work so fine in content and so helpful and uplifting in the many insights it affords the reader, is marred throughout by so many flaws in style and technique.

The author writes in English, but English is obviously not her native tongue. She needs a collaborator or editor to check all of her sentences from the standpoint of style. There are also indications that the book was published in haste or without sufficient care. The notes at the end of each chapter are sometimes inconsistent and often incomplete. A careful and thorough reworking of the book prior to publication could have removed these many annoying flaws.

The value and strength of the work's content more than balances these weaknesses. It is suggested that the reader try to overlook the faults so noticeable to a reviewer. The re-reading of sentences lacking in clarity or elegance will be worth the effort. Because of its content and the substance of its scholarship this book is well worth reading.

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**Origins of the Franciscan Order.** By Cajetan Esser, O.F.M. Trans Aedan Daly and Irina Lynch; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970. Pp. xii-289. Cloth, $12.50.



*Reviewed by Father Cyprian Lynch, O.F.M., formerly secretary of the editorial board at the Academy of American Franciscan History (Washington), now superior of Holy Name Friary, Lafayette, N.J. Father Cyprian has contributed numerous scholarly essays to* Americas, *the* Catholic Historical Review, *and the* New Catholic Encyclopedia.

Among the appropriate means of renewing religious life enjoined by Vatican Council II first place is given to a return to the original inspiration behind each order. **Perfectae caritatis** urges religious to give loyal recognition to the spirit of their founder and the goals and traditions which constitute the heritage of their community. Compliance with this injunction necessitates a prayerful re-study of the origins of every order and congregation. Efficacious renewal cannot be based on pious platitudes half-remembered from novitiate days. When exact knowledge of the facts surrounding the beginnings of a community is lacking, there is real danger that its members will invent a history to substantiate ill conceived personal opinions. A careful reading of the English translation of Cajetan Esser's **Anfänge und ursprüngliche Zielsetzungen des Ordens der Minderbrüder** (Leiden-Cologne, 1966) will protect Franciscans from this danger.

Within a decade of Saint Francis' death a wide spectrum of opinion had evolved on such fundamental questions as the ideals of the founder, the original purpose and structure of his order, and the interpretation of his rule. Parties formed and almost immediately began to grind out literature designed to vindicate their positions on disputed points. By the middle of the fourteenth century a goodly quantity of such polemical writing was in circulation. In the study under discussion Father Esser utilizes only early non-controversial sources, principally the works of eye-witnesses of the primitive Franciscan movement and contemporaries who were not members of the Order. He chooses to ignore later controversial writings whose proper evaluation would require a separate multi-volume work. Some readers will question this methodology, but none will fail to be impressed by the erudition displayed by the author in its use.

The book's purpose is clearly stated in the Foreword: "... to treat anew on the basis of the most reliable sources and to bring to a satisfactory conclusion the thorny and complex problem of the early history of the Franciscan Order" (p. v). Thorny and complex problems are not easily laid to rest. As recent a work as Bishop Moorman's **History of the Franciscan Order** (Oxford, 1968) clearly illustrates that the fourteenth-century sources are not completely out of favor and that the Sabatier tradition is far from dead. Given the temper of our times, it is unlikely that some investigators—even those who rank above the level of popularizers—will cease to view the "Franciscan question" as other than a classic example of charismatic - vs. - institutional confrontation. Our author's presentation of an alternative interpretation is indeed persuasive, but he should not anticipate its immediate and universal acceptance.

Among the relevant questions examined in the light of the earliest sources are the following. Did Saint Francis intend to found a religious order in the canonical sense, or did he envision a loose unstructured brotherhood designed to renew the Christian life among his contemporaries? Were his original ideals unduly modified by agents of the Roman Curia? Precisely how did the early fraternity differ from existing religious orders? Was the primitive Order a continuation of the popular medieval poverty movement or a reaction to it? To what extent was

the "institutionalization" of the Order the result of internal abuses? What meaning did penance, poverty, and apostolate have for the original companions of the founder? In what did their prayer life consist? How did they understand and exemplify **minoritas** and **fraternitas**?

All of the questions are of vital interest to anyone concerned about the renewal of the Franciscan way of life. Father Esser's treatment of them will provide enlightenment—and some surprises—to traditionalists and revisionists alike. In a review of the original German version of this work Father Sophronius Clasen wrote that it merits recognition "not only as a historical study but as a guide in the **aggiornamento** of the Order today" (**Wissenschaft und Weisheit** 29 [1966], 159). This reviewer is in full concurrence with this judgment.

This volume cannot be classified as leisure reading. It treats a heavy subject in a quasi-monographic manner. The translation retains a Teutonic flavor in many places. Readers may find distracting the recurring superfluous use of the word "already." Some inconsistency will also be noted in the Anglicization of proper names: why James of Guise, but Jacobus de Voragine? The clumsy system of annotation employed is nowhere adequately explained. In some cases documentation is supplied in the notes which appear at the end of each chapter; in others, numbers and letters are inserted within parenthesis after quotations in the text. In view of the book's price readers might expect more diligent editing.

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**The Christ: A Study of the God-Man Relationship in the Whole of Creation and in Jesus Christ.** By Piet Schoonenberg, S.J. Trans. Della Couling; New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. Pp. 191. Cloth, $8.50.

*Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., Ph.D., Editor of this Review.*

I have long considered Father Schoonenberg to be one of the most original and reliable theologians of our time, and this latest of his works to appear in English translation tends to confirm that opinion. **The Christ** is actually two separate essays, but the unity of theme and viewpoint is so evident that the value of each essay is enhanced by their juxtaposition.

The first of the two essays, on "God or Man: a False Dilemma," may be considered introductory to the second both by reason of its brevity and by reason of its simpler and more fundamental content. Schoonenberg here presents an updated version of his inaugural lecture at Nijmegen. The reader unfamiliar with his earlier publications will find this a convenient general statement of his viewpoint and a succinct summary of his major positions. The basic point stressed is that the divine and the human spheres of activity are not commensurate nor, therefore, competitive. As in **God's World in the Making** (Duquesne U. Press, 1964), Schoonenberg's framework is an evolutionary continuum embracing both creation and salvation history. Extensive development is wisely avoided, as the author is content to refer not only to his own fuller treatments but also to most of the best work in the field: that of van Melsen e. g., of Hulsbosch, and of Baltazar.

The application, development, and real originality in the present work come in the second, much longer essay on "God and Man, or God in Man." It scarcely needs to be said, no doubt, that this is not grist for the casual reader. It is serious and technical theology which requires for full intelligibility a real familiarity with the proceedings of several early Councils—especially Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. At this level, the extensive use of Latin and Greek (often untranslated) ought not to be considered a literary drawback.

As Karl Rahner has observed, Chalcedon was not a conclusion but a beginning of the exploratory journey into the mystery of Jesus. Certain naive conceptions of "orthodoxy" notwithstanding, it is actually very difficult to tell a priori precisely what is and what is not strictly required as propositional affirmation by the deposit of faith. I hope to see much more discussion of Schoonenberg's thesis in the months and years to come, for it looks extremely promising. It is, briefly, that revelation affirms nothing about the immanent Trinity save what we can deduce from the "economic" Trinity revealed in salvation history; that, therefore, we need not view the Incarnation as the assumption of human nature by a pre-existent second "Person." Schoonenberg suggests, on the contrary, that the only "Person" in Christ is the human one (anhypostasia of the Word). Since, moreover, enumeration is meaningless in an affirmation of the divine "in addition to" the creaturely, it is better to speak of the unique plenitude of presence than of the divine "nature" supposedly juxtaposed to the human in Jesus.

The rest of the essay suggests, all too briefly, an extremely attractive re-thinking of many long vexed questions regarding Jesus' earthly, historical life: questions centering around his human knowledge and will. His glorified life is discussed both as continuous and as contrasting with his earthly life; and, in Teilhardian fashion, the Parousia is presented as immanent as well as **epekeina**. Schoonenberg occasionally adverts, both implicitly and explicitly, to the many points of contact between his own and the traditional scotistic Christology. May we hope that some contemporary Franciscan theologians will, in dialogue with his fruitful suggestions, resume something of their glorious heritage? Personally, I feel that the Plotinian approach to God as the ineffable One (recently exploited only in certain fecund aspects by Dr. Robert C. Neville) supplies some important categories for dealing with the early stages of Schoonenberg's argument; cf. Neville's "Creation and the Trinity," **Theological Studies** 30:1 [3/69], 3-26).

Were the translator's and the editor's work commensurate with that of the author, I would raise no question whatever about a price of $8.50 for a book which furnishes 191 pages of really seminal and provocative thought. **The Christ** abounds, however, in every conceivable stylistic defect: omission of words, unintelligible sentences, misplaced phrases, badly chosen words, and misprints—none of which, I earnestly hope, will deter the reader well grounded and seriously interested in Christology from buying and savoring the book.

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

Beaucamp, Evode, O.F.M., **Prophetic Intervention in the History of Man.** Tr. Paul Garvin; New York: Alba House, 1971. Pp. xvii-230. Cloth, $4.95.

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