

the CORD

July, 1971

Vol. XXI, No. 7

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COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and all the illustrations for the July issue of THE CORD were drawn by Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A., of the Monastery of Santa Clara, Canton, Ohio.

the CORD is a monthly review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Editor: Michael D. Mellach, O.F.M., 600 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, N.Y. 10472. Associate Editor and Book Reviews: Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y. 12211. Managing Editor: Mrs. Joseph Cucchiaro, The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year; 30 cents a copy.



Our Life with God

I think that there are few times in a man's life when the words of his leader take deep root in his heart. I think that the occasions are rare when a member of a religious order clearly experiences that his superior points the true, sure, safe, and only way to go. I think that it is a seldom given grace to want to follow a direction enthusiastically—unreservedly—precisely because the leader has revealed himself as the servant par excellence.

Recently, I read my Minister General's document, *Our Life with God*.¹ This is not just another book or another exhortation. It is a flashing, penetrating, and moving invitation to me to take seriously again the utter need I have of prayer. I had been slogging along on an ocean bed of semi-concealed negativism, disappointment, and resentful frustration. Usually I was feeling sorry for myself in the demanding work that I do as a Franciscan priest: formation director, teacher, dormitory counsellor, and contrasting the great efforts with my apparent failures. Sometimes I was even disillusioned at the seemingly real lack of spirit and interest in religious renewal on the part of so many people in my Order. I had often said to myself: "What's the use, really?" When I read Father Constantine Koser's *Our Life with God*, I practically shouted, "Of course!"

Father Constantine recognizes that "life with God has always been difficult in a time of trial" (p. 3). Today it is my lot "to live in a time of transition with its side effects: precariousness, doubt, obscurity, hesitation,

¹ Constantine Koser, O.F.M., *Our Life with God*. Trans. Justin Bailey, O.F.M.; Pulaski, Wis.: Franciscan Publishers, 1971. Pp. xi-184. Cloth, \$3.00; paper, \$2.00. Abridged ed. for sisterhood and tertiaries, 144 pp., paper only, \$1.25.

frustration, compromises in many forms" (p. 24). And so I find that often I lose sight of God's presence and action in my life, or I think of him less and less and less. Yet, to live my life with God is the supreme reason why I am a friar; to give me the opportunity to live a life with God in a community of brothers, after the example of Saint Francis, is the reason why the Order of Friars Minor exists.

Yet, as *Our Life with God* brought to mind, I am a modern man—and "modern man does not know what to do with silence and solitude." A life of union with God, Father Constantine points out, "cannot exist without silence, recollection and reflection" (p. 19); yet as a man of the last quarter of the 20th century, I "cannot abide formulas and fixed forms of prayer" (*ibid.*) or any kind of formalism.

It does not occur to me, reminds my Minister General, that "formalism is a quality of the subject rather than of the object" (*ibid.*). My routine prayers, then, are my prayers said routinely. Perhaps... But prayer is so demanding. It takes up, or could take up so much time! Father Constantine replies that "there is nothing more out of date than Christ's own life-style: He emptied himself" (p. 18). Hence "asceticism is a necessary means for prayer. Without its prudent but forceful, consistent, persevering and courageous application, no life with God could ever survive in our heart" (p. 38). Asceticism... it has been a long time...

With a frightening insight into my own personal journey during these past six or seven years—the spirit of cynicism, over-subjectivism, conflicts between individuality and community, humanization and evangelization—my Minister General tells me, "Test everything, retain what is good" (p. 25; 1 Thess. 5:21; Phil. 4:8). The crisis can be overcome. "The power that has conquered the world is this faith of ours" (p. 60; 1 Jn. 5:4).

Nowhere, however, does *Our Life with God* affect me so profoundly as in the second Part, on "Life with God in the Franciscan Order" (pp. 63-91). It was the late Father Ephrem Longpré, I think, who said that a friar was a Franciscan to the extent he was influenced by Francis of Assisi; when Saint Francis no longer speaks to a friar, he is no longer a friar. Reading about Francis, as Father Constantine speaks of him, made me once more feel like a very young man. I saw Francis in love with God. I saw Francis reflecting the common man's life with God (p. 71). I prayed, after

so long an absence, the favorite Franciscan prayer of my youth: "You are strong. You are love, you are peace. You are joy and gladness. You are beauty. You are courage. You are our faith. Great and wonderful Lord." My God and my all (pp. 72-73).

Father General helped me to measure, to model my own prayer after that of Francis. I immediately sensed how far I've strayed. *Our Life with God* renewed in me my adolescent ardor for things Franciscan—it recalled, e.g., the summers I spent as a cleric at the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University: "To love the good means to let oneself be absorbed in life with God and to be good to all men, and, on the cosmic level, to practice goodness and courtesy in all things. This is the heart of Franciscan spirituality, our form of life" (p. 101).

Father Constantine awakened in me, as though I heard about it for the first time, the plea of our General Constitutions for an intense life with God:

The charge of anemic spiritual formation, made by so many friars, cries out for attention, consideration, and action! It is an enormous accusation; it is an urgent challenge to every member of our brotherhood but especially to superiors and those in charge of formation. The defect does not lie in our legislation; it lies in our criminally deficient application of our laws (p. 122).

Father General's "principles for life with God" (pp. 115-19) have something very special to say to me. I now have something concrete to use to determine whether or not my life with God is the supreme conviction in my life.

I don't know what more to say, except that I am very happy to belong to the Order of Friars Minor. I thank Father Constantine Koser for carrying the burdens of its leadership. In the Introduction to *Our Life with God*, he writes that what follows is but a "halting and inept whisper of an effort" (p. ix). On the contrary, he speaks "with flaming words whose flashing effectiveness lift me to the highest pinnacles of the interior life" (*ibid.*). May he do the same for you. *Our Life with God*—it is the salvation of the Franciscan Order.

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Virginity: Mary and the Church

Peter Chepaitis, O.F.M.

In recent years the subject of Mary's virginity has been the center of controversy, the object of study, and the victim of doubt. Likewise, virginity within the Church has been argued about, studied, and—by many individuals—abandoned. There is a connection between these two realities in the contemporary Church and it touches a nerve very close to the heart of the mystery of Christ, incarnate in today's world. This paper is an attempt to probe the meaning of Mary's virginity by placing it in contrast with that of the Church. Each is seen as a virgin in relation to Christ.

The Virgin Mary is a symbol and an image of the redeemed People of God, the Church. "The

early Church saw Mary and the Church as a single figure: type and antitype from one print as seal and wax."¹ Her "Fiat" is echoed by the faith of the Church, her journey to the cross reveals the People of God on pilgrimage, her openness to the Spirit is continued through the Magisterium of the Church of her Son, and her assumption confirms the Christian community's hope of final resurrection. The Virgin's role in our salvation "clarifies Catholic teaching concerning the Church"² because Mary is the essential "symbol of the Church, our Mother."³ The fact of the virginity of Mary is so closely allied to her life and role in man's salvation that she is very often called, simply, "The Virgin." Looking at the Church, what

¹ Hugo Rahner, S.J., *Our Lady and the Church* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), 7.

² Vatican Council II, *Lumen Gentium*, § 54, in Abbott & Gallagher, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: America Press, 1966), 87.

³ Rahner, 4.

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can we discern from this aspect of Mary's life about the nature of the community of the redeemed and about our lives as members of that community?

Probably the most obvious function of Mary's virginity is to show the fact that Jesus is the privileged entrance of God into human history. In the beginning, her virgin openness made God's entrance into history as a man a realized fact. Later it was the same quality which called forth his first miracle-sign at Cana. At the "hour" when Christ gave up his spirit, at the same time (as John's pun hints) giving the Spirit over to man, Mary was present—at the end as at the beginning—open both to the pain of watching her son die and to the command to be the mother of the disciple John who represented the faithful constitutive of the future Church. Saint Augustine has written some very beautiful and perceptive lines which may illumine another aspect of the virginal openness:

More blessed... was Mary in receiving the faith of Christ than in conceiving the flesh of Christ. For to her who said, "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you," he himself replied, "Rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk. 11:27-28). What in fact did their relationship profit his brethren, that is, his kinsmen according to the flesh, who did not believe in him? So too, even the close relation-

ship of mother would have profited Mary nothing, had she not also more blessedly borne Christ in her heart than in her flesh.⁴

All of Christ's miracles, the Gospels clearly show, require faith as a necessary condition. Following his Way meant an openness to whatever discipleship entailed. In fact, this meant a faith that was ready to suffer, to be in doubt, and even to die for the sake of Christ. Mary's virginity is the pre-eminent example of this faith, both in its initial role in accepting the angel's message and as a paradigm for every expression of openness to the Spirit since then. Her life was a pilgrimage to the cross, with only faith to go ahead of her and guide her through the darkness of suffering and doubt. At Pentecost she was with the infant Church, still a virgin, and still open to the Spirit, listening quietly as she saw her son's mission coming to fruition.

The Church, "like a pilgrim in a foreign land, presses forward amid the persecutions of the world and the consolations of God."⁵ The virginal openness which Mary possessed is, in germ, the faith which the Church has and strives to increase. The Spirit who overshadowed her at the Annunciation and filled her at Pentecost is the same Spirit who guides the Church—to whom the Church must listen in obedience as the Virgin did. The world is constant-

ly tempting the Church to be unfaithful to her "virginity," to refuse to depend on God and his promise for the fruitfulness of her apostolate, and, like Achaz in the book of Isaiah, to replace faith with dependence on the "nations" of technology and technique as the force by which she presses forward.

Far from being a negative, life-denying reality, virginity, both in Mary and in the life of the Church, is a positive, creative reality. Some of the most beautiful expressions of this truth may be found in the literature of devotion:

The first step toward fullness, the first aspect of detachment, is emptiness. Not a meaningless gaping void, but a constructive emptiness, like the hollow in a reed—a space to receive and form the piper's breath and to express the song in his heart; like the emptiness of a chalice, above all, like the purposeful emptiness of our Lady's virginity. There was nothing more positive than our Lady's emptiness. In her emptiness God became man.⁶

There are two other positive values brought out very strongly by the sign of Mary's virginity. Besides the poverty of one who is called to accept only God's fullness, it is the sign of a consecration for God's exclusive service, a consecration prefigured by the Old Testament rules of ritual, sexual abstention for priests about



to offer worship, etc., and pointed to by contemporary expressions of celibate living. In Mary's case, however, it is a far more holy sign because it is in closer contact with The Holy. The third sign-content of our Lady's virginity is a pointing to the novelty of the Kingdom which is coming and which will overturn the laws of natural creation.⁷ In the life

⁴ St. Augustine, *De virginitate*, iii, cited in E. R. Carroll, O. Carm., "Mary and the Church," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 160 (May, 1969), 302.

⁵ *Lumen Gentium*, §8, ed. cit., 24.

⁶ William McNamara, O.C.D., *The Art of Being Human* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1962), 13.

⁷ Max Thurian, *Mary: Mother of All Christians* (trans. Neville B. Cryer; New York: Herder & Herder, 1964), 35-36.

of the Church, and of the individual Christian, Mary's virginity makes certain Gospel insights clearer and more cogent precisely by the fact that it is a lived reality in her person (note the three sign values mentioned above). In fact, no man can form a relationship with God, or bring him to others, unless he is in possession of a truly virginal emptiness, a creative emptiness like that in and by which Mary received the Son of Man.

This state is not merely the necessary condition for creativity; it is in a mysterious way intimately united with it. This is revealed in the mystery of Mary's virgin motherhood.

She was not a virgin and yet, at the same time, also a mother. She was a mother and virgin, a virgin mother. Her virgin state, embraced "for the sake of the Kingdom of God," gave her motherhood an apostolic significance. . . . The virgin state of her divine motherhood, viewed as an aspect of this motherhood, serves to emphasize the fact that she became the mother of Christ precisely for the benefit of all men.⁸

Perhaps it is wrong to speak of the virginity of our Lady, or of the Church, or of the individual Christian except as a modifier, so to speak, of motherly creativity. In any case, virginal creativity for the Church, the Christian, and

the Virgin clearly signifies a saving mission to all men, to bring Christ to birth in every human situation.

Mary is at the very heart of the historical event of our salvation. She is at the heart of the Incarnation through her Messianic maternity. She is at the heart of the Redemption as personification of a humanity-to-be-saved.⁹

Our Lady's virgin openness has a truly eschatological dimension. It was from the first embraced for the sake of the Kingdom; and her life bridged the unfolding of this eschatological reality from the culmination of the Old Testament to the new revelation in the witness of Jesus and the Spirit. In the age of the Spirit, Mary's virginity is a testimony to the enduring truth of the Gospel and to the reality of the fullness to come:

In the Church the mystery of Mary's perpetual virginity extends to the end of time, when there will begin for the redeemed children of Eve that eternal virginity, of which our Lord spoke when he said that "in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven" (Mt. 22:30).¹⁰

In the pilgrim state of the Church today, this truth is difficult to accept, especially if it is admitted that contemporary attitudes tend to deny what cannot be seen

(heaven, e. g., and angels) or understood from "natural" reality (virginity). This is one reason why Mary's virginity, a lived reality in an actual person, is so important. She shared the pilgrim state of man and "advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and loyally persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross."¹¹ This perseverance did not terminate with the cross, just as Christ's influence only began with his death. In the person of Mary, the mother of Believers, the redemption of man is prefigured and incipiently accomplished. Her role and stature as the firstfruits of the redemption are expressed beautifully in another devotional work:

She belongs to the new order of creation and becomes for us a symbol of the new man. Mary stands silently now at the omega point of human history, bearing witness to man's transcendent destiny. Her assumption, body and soul, into heaven is the source of our hope for final fulfillment. In her we see the seed of the whole creation risen from the dead. She awaits our coming, she prays not only for you but for all her children and the world in which they live.¹²

Mary, the virgin mother, is an image of the Church. But Vatican II records that

The Church herself is a virgin, who keeps whole and pure the fidelity she has pledged to her Spouse. Imitating the Mother of

her Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, she preserves with virginal purity an integral faith, a firm hope, and a sincere charity.¹³

This faithful discipleship, nourished in steadfast fidelity, blossoms into the creativity of the apostolate commissioned by Christ: "It is his mother's FIAT that will find an echo in the hearts of all who do the will of the Father in following him. And it is precisely of these, his followers, that Christ says that they are in a mystical sense his mother."¹⁴

Just as Mary's virginity was a modifier of her divine motherhood, so the Church's virginity, expressed in her preservation of the faith, for example, exists to make possible a continuing relationship with Christ in the Spirit. The Virgin's initial and continuing receptivity to the Word of God is reflected in the Church, which is—or should be—continually at the service of Christ and his word. Finally, our Lady's virginity is a choice, in full freedom, to serve the Lord and be at his disposal. The virginity of the Church, then, should be her single-minded choice to serve the Lord, unfettered by any alien considerations. This choice is a spiritual one, and all authentic Christians must be "virgins" according to their faith, but as the New Testament gives some evidence (1 Cor. 7: the class of

⁸ Edward Schillebeeckx, O.P., *Mary, Mother of the Redemption* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1964), 82-83.

⁹ Clement Dillenschneider, "The Mystery of Mary and of the Church," *The Marian Era*, vol. 8 (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1967), 103.

¹⁰ Rahner, 22.

¹¹ *Lumen Gentium*, §58, ed. cit., 89.

¹² Michel Quoist, *The Meaning of Success* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Fides Books, 1963), 247.

¹³ *Lumen Gentium*, §64, ed. cit., 93.

¹⁴ Rahner, 71.

widows), this choice can be fleshed out by individual Christians. The celibate religious life (and the celibate priesthood, if it is freely chosen) are thus an integral part of the human expression of the Church's virgin openness in faith to the Lord for the sake of his kingdom. Like Mary, the celibate

religious bears witness within the Church to the truth of the Gospel and the Kingdom to come. In this sense, his or her life style fleshes out Mary's continuing role in the Church. It is a life style which is essential for a fully human birth of Christ in today's world.



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Glory!

Hans Bertsch, O. F. M.

When I say your name, I can only strip away my pretension, let my love flow to you and your love in turn saturate every fiber of my being. It is then, trembling with awe before the immensity of another, that my deepest respect is whispered to you. And the glory that is you speaks. In the loneliness, with the separation, you alert our world that you reach to the ends of the earth.

The Lord said to me, "You are my servant Israel, in whom I shall be glorified." While I was thinking, "I have toiled in vain, I have exhausted myself for nothing"; and all the while my cause was with Yahweh, my reward with my God. I was honored in the eyes of Yahweh, my God was my strength (Is. 49:3-5).

We have seen his glory. We call him Father, and he calls us Son.

And he has said we are his glory. God comes to the aid of his own. His glory becomes his saving act. The God of the covenant uses his glory to save his people. His glory is his power at the service of his love and his fidelity.

Yesterday I sat at a desk writing for eight hours. The sheets of paper blurred and stuck, the ink was blotting, and my mind boggled before the references I had to correlate. So I walked into the garden of my friend's house and picked a small flowering twig from a plum tree. The blade-shaped leaves were small, valiantly thrust around the tender white flowers. Each flower had five petals, thin and soft, surrounding a myriad of delicate, erect stamens, clustered together.

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Isaiah wrote:

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of Yahweh,
the splendour of our God

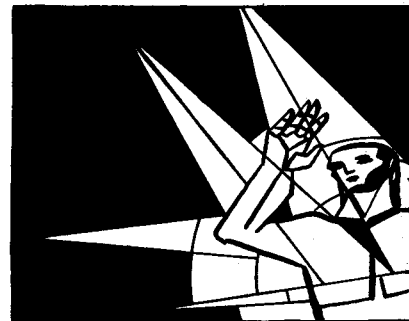
(Is. 35:1-2)

When my friend came home, I gave her the flowers from her garden—no words spoken except for her name and my name. The haze this morning did not obscure the freshness of our kiss. What we gave each other outlasts one brief moment. Our gift is of yesterday's glory, today's breath, and tomorrow's newness. I say we to her; in the same instant I say you—the other. That she is other—apart, distant, unique, gives me the strength to speak of our closeness and presence. In saying the name of my beloved, I have been graced with glory. At the

moment of greatest otherness, we are most truly joined. I love and am loved, and I transcend the distance of what I am not.

Moses said, "Show me your glory, I beg you." And the Lord said, "I will let all my splendour pass in front of you, and I will pronounce before you the name Yahweh. I have compassion on whom I will, and I show pity to whom I please. You cannot see my face," he said, "for man cannot see me and live." And Yahweh said, "Here is a place beside me. You must stand on the rock, and when my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft of the rock and shield you with my hand while I pass by. Then I will take my hand away and you shall see the back of me; but my face is not to be seen" (Ex. 33:18-23).

The glory of God is now. He shows and he hides; we call him distant, forgetting that if he were not so totally, absolutely other, we could not approach him. When he shows us his glory, his power, transcendence and distance witness that he who cannot show his face is closer to us than the blood through our body. Glory shines in that absence-in-presence. In otherness is the we.



It is then we know who we are, and we become—named with the glory of God, just as his identity is in his name. El Shaddai, the Mountain God, has become Yahweh, who is. Outreaching, powering, serving to love. Look up. "Let us leave the surface and, without leaving the world, plunge into God. The future of the earth is in our hands" (Teilhard de Chardin). Do we have the exuberance, the present adventure, to ask ourselves how we shall decide? Can we reach out and touch glory? Look up: our brother lives. Glory is radiant, bursting, overflowing, inundating from out of the depths we are not. On the parted lips of our deepest love; the anguished cry of an innocent child napalmed

and bombed by our greed and blindness; on the millions of dead bodies put through the hell and inhumanity of the concentration camp; on the pink bud of the rose, the harsh cacophony of the storm; on the lull of the ocean wave before it spends itself out on the shore; on the touch and the smile that raises the worn-out back to life; on the mutilated black of a people who have risen from slavery to degradation; on the broken and the whole, the poor and the rich: we have seen his glory. As we are for the other, is his glory. From farthest absence grows the closest presence. Look up.

The stars alone speak;
the wind is hushed —
and the night air
gently raises my head.

What my eyes see and
what I hear,
in the midst of such loneliness,
is You—the yes
and the love,
the smile and the glance—
and all I can say
—quietly—is,

"You, gift, wonder of brightness—
You, you, joy, song of yourself,
You, beyond all, you."

Clare and Francis

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

In the year 1212 a clandestine friendship was developing between an itinerant preacher of the Gospel—a poorly clad man in his early thirties—and the eighteen-year-old daughter of a noble family in Assisi. Scandal was an ever-present danger, though both observed the utmost circumspection to prevent discovery. "He visited her and she more often him. Only a lone trusted companion accompanied the girl when she left her paternal home to hold secret meetings with the man of God, whose words seemed to her afire with God."¹ Romance glimmered and gleamed on the horizon as Francis Bernadone pursued "this noble prey"² and Clare grew to "commit herself wholly to the guidance of Francis."³ Into the

volatile mixture of the deep human attraction which sprang up between these two refined souls, dipped the lighted torch of the Spirit of God. The flame that flared to a white heat in the heart of each seared and purified them even to sanctity. Ever since, the world has probed the mystery of their friendship, seeking to discover the humanness in it and at the same time secretly hoping to find an even greater manifestation of the divine. Francis and Clare have not disappointed it. The purity of their mutual affection, founded as it was on unshakable loyalty and fidelity to their Lord, was never tarnished by the inherent weakness of our human condition but rather burnished by it to a fine luster.

¹ 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), 21.

² *Ibid.*, 21.

³ *Ibid.*, 22.

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When did Clare and Francis first meet? Although both grew up in the same enclosed city-state of Assisi, it is unlikely that they met as children, for Clare was of the nobility while Francis Bernadone was the son of a merchant. But by the time Francis had begun to gather a few brethren, Clare must have been quite familiar with his disturbing career. Very little else would have occupied the gossips of the city when this rash young man flung his garments at his father's feet, renouncing his patrimony on earth in order to insure one for heaven. As news reached Assisi of the marvels of good produced by his preaching in the other cities and towns of Umbria, the citizens of Assisi began to change their opinions of Francis' eccentric ways. He was invited to preach the Lenten sermons in the Bishop's own church of San Rufino. Clare and her family must have seen and heard him there and shared the impression which he made on all those who came in contact with his vibrant personality. "He preached penance to all with great fervor of spirit and joy of mind, inspiring his hearers with his simple words and

his greatness of heart. His words were like a burning fire, penetrating the inmost reaches of the heart."⁴ Clare's heart, which later events would abundantly prove, was kindled to a life-long ardor. It was as if all the secret motions and desires of her spirit had found their object. From then on the undivided strength of her character pursued only one end—the ideal which Francis preached and lived.

It frequently happens that a woman attains to greatness in the natural or supernatural order because she has built her life upon the ideals of the man she admires. Her capacity for sacrifice and persistent effort, her loyalty and trust, allow her to reach the heights of heroism, once the man has shown her the way. This is particularly true of Clare. It is impossible to think of her apart from Francis. Her union with him was so complete and harmonious, her mind and heart so like his own, that it is difficult to know how much was conscious imitation on her part and how much natural endowment.⁵

Clare and Francis were alike in their flair for the dramatic, as well as in their delight in symbolism. If Francis had shocked the

⁴ Thomas of Celano, *St. Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1962), 14.

⁵ *The Life and Writings of St. Clare* (see note 1, above), 118.

townspeople by his radical repudiation of his father and his father's house, Clare electrified them no less by her midnight elopement. On the morning of Palm Sunday, Clare had appeared at High Mass, radiant as a bride dressed in her finest array (at Francis' request, we are told⁶) and that night followed the moonlit path



and after God her only consolation and her support.”⁸ The sparks which hitherto had leaped back and forth between their two hearts united in a single flame. This steady light would burn undimmed by death or years throughout the centuries of the Church to come. The ideal which they lived and symbolized has an especially relevant message for us today.

Many are asking whether or not warm and deep friendships between consecrated men and women are possible or desirable. The categorical “no” of less than thirty years ago has given way to a more thoughtful “maybe”. The examples of canonized saints are cited, as well as the statements of many psychologists that association with persons of the opposite sex is necessary for full and harmonious development of the human personality. One of the weaknesses in the argument which points to the saints as examples that the love of God is not incompatible with genuine love for persons of the opposite sex is simply that they were saints. One might, however, reasonably pose the question, “Was their manifestation of friendship so pure because they were saints, or did they not rather become saints through the strength and encouragement afforded by this friendship?” In the lives of Francis and Clare there is evidence that each achieved eminent sanctity, not in

spite of the other, but because of the other. This is more clearly manifested in the case of Clare than in that of Francis; but it is worth recalling that in the last years of his life, Francis turned to Clare as the only trustworthy support to guide him through the darkening clouds surrounding him. As the light of his personal vision seemed to dim, he turned to her who held faithfully aloft the torch of his primal inspiration. For Francis, Clare had become his Lady Poverty personified. Clare, however, always felt herself to be his spiritual daughter, often styling herself his “Little Plant.”⁹ After his death, Clare feared to betray the trust given to her by Francis, “her father and guide.”¹⁰

The happiest time of Clare's life was the early years at San Damiano when Francis and his brethren came frequently to visit and encourage the Sisters of the young community. With a nostalgic note, Clare wrote in her Testament,

The blessed Francis perceived that we were weak and fragile of body, but that nevertheless neither hardship, poverty, work, tribulation and ignominy, nor the contempt of the world, in short that nothing of all this made us retreat. Rather he saw that all these things seemed to be unutterable delights, after the example of his friars and saints. Indeed, he and his friars often remarked this and rejoiced greatly in the Lord.¹¹

Francis indeed marked the peace and joyousness of the little community, but he also noticed the cheeks of his friend growing paler and thinner with each visit. When in answer to his query Clare related her fasts and penances, Francis was deeply concerned. Rarely did he exercise the power to command which he knew Clare had given him but on this occasion he spoke his mind most firmly. Clare was to pass no day without taking a specified amount of food, nor was she to sleep on vine branches or without a pillow. And later, as the first signs of her long illness made their appearance, he gave her strict orders to sleep on a straw mattress and use a feather pillow. This solicitude of Francis toward Clare extended to all of the nuns at San Damiano. He did all in his power to further their spiritual well-being, coming often to preach in their little chapel or sending some of his learned confreres to deliver theological discourses in their presence; for he knew the delight Clare took in learned sermons. “Though Clare was not versed in letters, she delighted to hear the sermons of learned men, believing that the kernel of doctrine lies within the shell of words, and this she would discerningly attain and enjoy with relish.”¹²

In the later years, Francis withdrew his presence little by little from the Sisters, as if he sensed

⁶ Celano, “Legend of St. Clare,” loc. cit., 22

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ St. Clare, Testament, in Henri Daniel-Rops, *The Call of St. Clare* (New York: Hawthorn, 1963), 137.

⁹ Ibid., 136.

¹⁰ Ibid., 134.

¹¹ Ibid., 136.

¹² Celano, “Legend of St. Clare,” loc. cit., 44.

that Clare had thoroughly imbibed his ideal and now, under God's direction, would make it uniquely her own. Francis' modest retirement before the secrecy of God's action reminds one of the humble reverence of Saint Joseph in face of the mystery of Mary. But even more forcefully does it remind us of Saint John's ringing cry, "He must increase, I must decrease!" Francis then yielded the guidance of Clare's destiny directly to the Spirit of God, knowing somehow that he was no longer to be the intermediary of His action. Having led Clare to the altar, he left her there in growing companionship with the Eucharistic Lord.

If we were to judge by this that the friendship between Francis and Clare had cooled, as did some of his companions, we would be far from the truth. Nor would we be correct in believing that their intimate relationship had now become an obstacle to their union with God. It seems more true to believe that as each of them advanced in mystic union with the Lord of their hearts, the bonds between them deepened and grew more spiritual. Many of us have experienced the thrill of meeting an old friend and finding a deepened familiarity which had imperceptibly grown, in spite of many years of separation. The roots of Francis' Little Plant were interwoven with the roots of his own being, both buried in the Heart of the Crucified. It is obvious

that Clare felt no hurt by the ever-lengthening periods between Francis' visits. Some of the other Sisters and Friars, however, saw it differently. By employing a number of persuasive arguments, they prevailed upon Francis to invite Clare and some companions to dine with them at the Portiuncula. Francis agreed, considering how much joy it would give Clare to revisit the place where she had first had her hair cut and had offered her vows to the Lord. As the author of the *Fioretti* records, the little picnic became a rich spiritual banquet, symbolic indeed of the one spirit which united Francis and Clare.

Francis' own words made clear his feelings about Clare and her sisters.

Do not believe that I do not love them perfectly. For if it were a fault to cherish them in Christ, would it not have been a greater fault to have united them to Christ? Indeed, not to have called them would not have been a wrong; not to care for them once they have been called would be the greatest unkindness.¹³

Francis chose to act with circumspection in regard to Clare because of his concern for providing an example to his brethren. Monasteries of the Poor Ladies were rapidly springing up, and naturally the nuns looked to the friars for spiritual guidance. While Francis did wish that a fraternal union exist between his brethren and the Sisters, he clearly realized the scandal and possible abuses which

might result from ties of too intimate a nature. In one of his characteristically categorical statements he declared, "I command that only unwilling and most reluctant brothers be appointed to take care of them [the Sisters] provided they be spiritual men, proved by a worthy and long religious life."¹⁴

After repeated urgings by his Vicar, Francis once went to preach a sermon for the Poor Ladies. For a long time he stood silently before them, then he sprinkled ashes about himself and upon his head, slowly reciting the *Miserere*. With no further word, he left. Needless to say, the Poor Ladies were at first astonished but then profoundly moved.

As Francis grew feebler, he seemed to carry the image of Clare's bright fidelity to their ideal of Lady Poverty in his mind constantly. During the last months of his life, as he was moved about from place to place, he would compose songs or poems and send them to Clare. It was while lying in great pain in a rat-infested hut in the garden of San Damiano that he poured out the wonderful "Canticle of Brother Sun." Doubtless Clare was among the first to hear it. Even on his death bed, Francis' thoughts turned to Clare who he knew would grieve deeply at his departure. Searching for some way to

comfort her, he summoned one of the brothers to "go and tell Sister Clare to put aside all sorrow and sadness, for though she cannot see me now, yet before her death she and her Sisters shall see me, and have great comfort through me."¹⁵ Clare received the message silently and though her tears continued to flow, her heart grew warm within her at the thought of this final delicacy on the part of her most beloved friend. After Francis' death Clare clung tenaciously to his ideal, defending it against any encroachment of so-called human prudence or ecclesiastical beneficence.

In her Testament, written it is said in imitation of Francis, Clare unequivocally states her devotion to the ideals of Francis, particularly with regard to poverty. The profound reason for this fidelity was that she felt that God called her Order into existence through his servant Francis, even before the first of the brothers had gathered around him. She took great pleasure in recounting the episode where Francis prophetically announced that the tumble-down church of San Damiano, which he was then repairing, would some day be the "dwelling of Ladies whose fame and holy life would glorify the Heavenly Father throughout his holy Church."¹⁶ It was with total devotion that Clare accepted this divinely appointed vocation fixing

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Nesta de Robeck, *St. Clare of Assisi* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1951), 74.

¹⁶ Daniel-Rops, *The Call of St. Clare*, 134.

¹³ Celano, *St. Francis*, 198.

thus "the anchor of her soul."¹⁷
"The certainty that God had called her through Francis together with her inexpressible reverence for the holiness of the stigmatized saint made it simply impossible for Clare to turn aside from the form of life he had given her."¹⁸

While Francis was alive, Clare had exercised her womanly ingenuity in providing him with the little "extras" which only a feminine heart can devise. When still living at home, she had sent food and alms to the brothers, and after her seclusion at San Damiano, she continued to offer the passing brothers the hospitality of the little monastery. On one occasion, she even cured a brother of insanity, after Francis had sent him to her. When the stigmata in his feet made walking almost impossible for Francis, Clare devised some padded sandals which enabled him to rest his weight upon his feet with considerably less pain. She even acted as an

oracle of God for him when he was in doubt about the true path which his vocation demanded of him. To do what she could for her father in Christ was supreme happiness for Clare. And for Francis, the memory of Clare was only pure joy. He loved her truly, for she was the only one who had never betrayed in the slightest detail his beloved ideal of Lady Poverty. Francis' chivalrous soul courted the lovely Lady Clare, and she in turn found him the knight ever noble and strong. The love between them urged them on to ever greater heights. When Francis' spirit flagged, he looked to Clare. And she, strong in his protection, walked courageously along the path of high holiness. Neither would have been complete without the other. In God's plan, it was only together that they would attain their goal.

Though lovers be lost, love
shall not,
And death shall have no
dominion.

(Dylan Thomas)¹⁹

¹⁷ *The Life and Writings of St. Clare*, 24.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁹ M. L. Rosenthal & A. J. M. Smith, *Exploring Poetry* (New York: Macmillan, 1957), 712.

To Be a Franciscan

is to be an heir to the spiritual joy
left by St. Francis:

Joy in the realization that the Infinite,
Lovable Trinity will never cease to be;
Joy in the knowledge of the Goodness
and Mercy of the Father;
Joy in the redemptive Love of the Incarnate Word
for us, His children;
Joy in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
Who renews the face of the earth;
Joy in the wondrous universe,
offering its daily praise to the Creator;
Joy in the unique Masterpiece of the Trinity,
become our Queen and our Mother;
Joy in our share of Bethlehem's Mystery:
the Blessed Eucharist;
Joy in our weakness and utter dependence,
which merits for us the Divine Mercy;
Joy in our trials, sufferings and afflictions,
which destroy self-love and unite us to
the Infinite.

Sister Barbara Marie, O. S. F.

The Women in His Life

Robert J. Waywood, O. F. M.

Recent suspect scholarship notwithstanding, it is safe to maintain that Jesus Christ was not married. But he probably would have made an excellent husband. Far from being a misogynist, our Lord seems to have been a religious leader uniquely concerned with the fairer sex. He moved among women comfortably, understood them thoroughly, gave his attention to them frequently, and evoked their feminine virtues exquisitely.

In a poignant scene from *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, Swedish star Max van Sydow perfectly captures this easiness of spirit Jesus displayed at close quarters with women: Mary pours out the jar of precious nard on the Lord while he sits unperturbed at table, as if it were the most natural thing in the world to receive such

an anointing from a devoted female admirer. His public life began and continued with woman-kind at his elbow. He squired his mother to a bridal party. He did not disdain to cool the fevered brow of Peter's mother-in-law. He did not cross the street when he saw the middle-aged widow of Naim coming. He stroked the pale hand of Jairus's daughter. He did not recoil from the touch of the woman with a hemorrhage. He invited the stooped woman in the synagogue to ask for a miracle. He eyed the poor char-woman dropping her pence into the temple almsbox. He condescended to haggle both with the mother of James and John (having previously given Zebedee rather short shrift) and with the forward Canaanite woman. In short, as far as commerce with women is concerned,

Jesus had all the poise of an encyclopedia salesman.

But our Lord's familiarity with women went deeper; he seems to have known what they thought about and how they felt. So many of his analogies and parables reveal a handy familiarity with the ways of woman. Witness his empathetic account of a woman about to give birth, or the authentic details of bread-making, house-cleaning, and bridesmaid preparations. The domestic arts of sewing and cooking posed no mystery for him—with his hand-made tunic and his skillet of fish. The Mary-Martha episode reveals his insight into two distinctly feminine characteristics—preoccupation with details (as opposed to "thinking big") and orientation to persons (rather than to ideas and ideologies). Accordingly, Jesus neither asked Martha to quit her culinary chores nor chided Mary for practically doting upon her Guest. And if tenderness, compassion, and condolence be womanly qualities—or at least features of the feminine side of man—Jesus not only understood them but unabashedly indulged in them. He

dandled little children; he pitied the sick, the sorrowful, and the hungry in the crowds of auditors; he openly cried over the death of Lazarus and the doom of Jerusalem. He not only "knew what was in man," as Saint Luke avers; he also realized what was in woman—what, as the old saying goes, "makes her tick."

More than being gracious in the company of women and knowledgeable of their temperament, Jesus often went out of his way to attend to ladies in distress. Weary though he was, he started the conversation with the woman at the well, patiently exchanged formalities with her, parried her theological small talk, and at length drew out the guilt that had been festering in her conscience. He rescued from a legal stoning and all but pampered a woman who had been discovered in the act of adultery. He endured a mild scolding from Martha, on the occasion of her brother's demise, and took great pains to allay her desperation. At the risk of ruining his reputation and earning another enemy, Jesus eloquently defended, even extolled, the re-

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pentant woman who had stolen into Simon's supper party. And, as mentioned above, Jesus rallied to Mary's support in the face of Judas's hypocritical protest over the squandered ointment. Such gallantry would easily entitle him to a place at King Arthur's round-table.

But beyond answering woman-kind's needs, our Lord actually showed his need for women in his grand scheme of salvation. Obviously, he depended upon a woman in his birth, infancy, and childhood. Yet, even in his public career, our Lord relied on and evoked various feminine virtues of the women in his life. Before demonstrating this proposition, it is well to consider some of the more evident strengths of the distaff side.

Child-bearing and domestic duties have always tended to make woman less gregarious than the male of the species; and whereas

man's masculinity is accentuated in groups such as an army or a caucus, femininity suffers somehow seen en masse, and women's conventions, like women's basketball teams, can function with ludicrous inefficiency. Reserve and recollection seem to come easier to women than to men. Probably for familial reasons too, women are more strongly motivated by loyalty to persons, whereas men are more frequently obsessed by ideas and schemes. Traditionally in families the mother embodies tireless mercy, and the father's role calls for the meting out of justice. Husbands are often notoriously oblivious of birthday dates, relatives' addresses, and family agendas, while wives are scrupulously considerate in these as in many other small household details. The proverb about women's work being never done and the cliché about the paterfamilias's pipe and slippers point up the female's superior resilience.

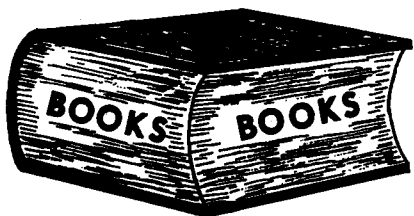


Men, finally, find compromise and procrastination much nearer to hand than women, who are ever pressing toward the ideal: hence the saying about who stands behind every great man. Idealism, unselfishness, considerateness, mercy, loyalty, and recollection—all seem to be endowments more likely, though not exclusively, to be found in women.

Thanks to the Virgin Mary's reserve and recollection, the awesome secret of her Son's identity was kept till his "hour" had come, and the endearing secrets of his origin and growth were retained and related in due time. It is worth noting for a third time the other Mary's instinctive splashing of the spikenard on our Lord's head, as well as her matutinal march to the tomb with embalming spices, as instances of feminine unselfishness. Thanks to his Mother's sensitivity and concern, Jesus was cajoled into performing his first public miracle at Cana; and Mary together with other woman relatives and friends evidently dogged the steps of Jesus and his disciples to "look after them" with considerate devotion. In his Passion Jesus provoked, appealed to, and esteemed the merciful regards of Veronica and the Daughters of Jerusalem. And look at those disheartened figures around the Cross—they were all, with one exception, women—women loyal to the Master to the end. As for women's idealism, Jesus' conception was conditioned by a

young girl's uncompromising commitment of faith—a practical faith he later praised by calling that one blessed who hears the word of God and does it. But even in the least promising of females, Jesus delved for and discovered woman's yearning after the absolute. Yes, to a woman as gross and jaded as the village tramp at Jacob's well, Jesus addressed some of his most sublime revelations about grace, prayer, and the spirit of God. And with all the naive enthusiasm of a girl with a new doll, the trollop danced around the town, introducing all and sundry to the Man who "told me all I've ever done," the Savior of the world.

The importance of women in the life of Christ finds reverberations in the history of his Church: half of the canonized saints are women; the great preponderance of members of religious orders and congregations are women; and Catholic wives everywhere are protected from the so-called rights of divorce, abortion, and birth-prevention. No wonder the Church is referred to as a She! Really, neither our Holy Mother Church nor our Lord, in whose life women—particularly his Mother—played so large a part, leaves even the Women's Liberation movement many grounds for complaint. For, truth to tell, Jesus, as a religious founder, uniquely stressed the distinctiveness, the dignity, and the dearness of women in the universe.. and beyond.



Blessed Are You: Beatitudes for Modern Man. By Charles Murphy. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971. Pp. 110. Cloth, \$4.50.

Reviewed by Father Robert J. Woodward, O.F.M. Father Robert, whose article on the women in our Lord's life appears elsewhere in this issue, teaches English at Siena College.

In the Gutenberg Galaxy (or Caxton Cosmos) it is a natural law that books are made for publishing houses, not publishing houses for books. The presses must keep rolling, and writers must keep the manuscript coming. Manuscript can be literate without being literary; discourse can be rational and yet want coherence; insights can be novel yet far from ingenious; and phrases can be "relevant" without being revelatory. Such, I am afraid, is the manuscript Father Charles Murphy has supplied Herder and Herder for their Sisters Book League series.

Apparently, **Blessed Are You** is a redaction of a clutch of sisters' conferences on the Eight Beatitudes fetched up to fill the bill. One can distinctly hear the riffing of the sermonizer's file cards in the offering: "Anatole France used to say that people in love never bother about talking about it"; "Simone Weil called equality a vital need of the human soul"; "Puritan daughters were named Purity and Chastity, though there is also one recorded instance of a weary father naming his daughters One More Time, and yet another Faint Not."

I could hardly find it in my heart to be censorious of fervorino fodder, having perpetrated dozens of pieces of such ephemeralia myself—if, I say, if Father Murphy had not published same, heedless that scripta manent, and if he had not revved his motor so noisily in his introductory chapter, wherein he chastens the reader to ready his soul for the upcoming "epiphanies." Section two of the introduction is a crazy-quilt of allusions to other epiphanies on the part of C. S. Lewis, the Taoists, Karl Marx, and the disciples of Jesus Christ. (The sentence referring to the epiphany Jesus' death occasioned displays a modifier dangling as evidently as the Victim: "Seeing him on the cross, their eyes opened.")

So, slight though it is, I feel obliged to take the book to task. I shall do so obliquely by exposing how one goes about lucubrating a really "with it" set of sisters' talks and burnishing them up for a book series.

First, you keep a little thought diary, jotting down pious intuitions that strike you while scanning the newspaper or browsing through a best-seller. You note it down, for instance, that there is a mind-staggering parallelism between Saint Vincent de Paul and Van Gogh: both were individualists, both had religious involvements, and both had the same first name. Then you search the Scriptures to fasten onto some unpretentious and fairly elastic framework for your musings—say, the Beatitudes. While parsing the latest, arresting new version of these dicta, you become aware of a fresh supply of whimsical insights, which does not utterly replace trusty and time-worn reflections on these old spiritual chestnuts. Last, you gather all the theological "in" concepts to spruce up the discourse, like charism, epiphany, environmental, ethics, diaspora à la Karl Rahner, encounter, eschatology, pacifism, and racism. And lo! the conferences begin to write themselves.

"How blest are those who know their need of God; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs" can be made a big umbrella for your meditative meanderings. You can embroider on the term "need" the whole history of the wandering Jews and the panorama of the Third World (This is called having your cake). And then you can hark back to the old translation "poor in spirit" and gesture to venerable nostrums—shades of Job and Saint Augustine—about poverty of spirit (This is called eating your cake too).

"How blest are the sorrowful..." will allow you to play around with the kinds and value of suffering.

Here too you may traipse the borders of contradiction, averring, "It is unfortunate that so much about religion seems to be shaded over in sorrow," that "suffering is something that belongs in the Old Testament," that "Jesus did not talk much of suffering, except in the last days," and that only a weird "kind of father takes pleasure in seeing his children punished, deprived of a good time"—all this in one breath; and in the next you assure your poor "good sisters" that "in bearing [suffering] we are to find its meaning and thereby escape it [sic]"; that Jesus "suffer[ed] the little children to come to [him]"; that he "had spent his entire [New Testament] life fighting suffering"; that spiritual dryness is, oddly enough, a heaven-sent suffering which offers "a very special and personal moment in love"; and that "suffering leads to a fullness of love, 'a fullness beyond measure'—given to us by a Man who suffered for us beyond measure." Such double talk the beleaguered sisters may find confusing, but it will keep them on the edge of their pews.

This, then, is the way to go about elaborating a provocative and relevant series of religious conferences. Once you have the hang of it, you can fool around with etymologies such as that of the word "gentle" in "blest are those of gentle spirit," not failing to broach the non-aggression concept of "meakeness" in the old version. You can opt to enlarge on the "hunger" bit of "those who hunger and thirst to see the right prevail," and lard the discourse with hagiography (Saint Vincent de Paul) and a large bouquet thrown to your favorite angry young man (Vincent Van Gogh). You can take a whimsical approach to "blest are those who show mercy" and demonstrate how to forgive is to have an active imagination. You can take "pure" in its strictest sense as used in "blest are those whose hearts are pure," and give some garbled ex-

planation that provokes but evades. In the talk on peacemakers, you can drub the Church for its pre-Vatican II political machinations and promise a brighter tomorrow. "Suffering persecution" can be stretched to embrace the phenomena of racism and environmental mayhem. Right on.

Commentary on the postscript will allow you both to swell your sheaf of conferences to book-length proportions and to drag in a word or two on love, into which all eight beatitudes may very logically be distilled (what cannot?).

Doubtless my expose has proved somewhat of a parody of Father Murphy's well-intentioned contribution to the St. Thomas More series. But it is not so very exaggerative; and rereading his introduction, I can still claim that he asked for it.

Mary: Our Blessed Lady. By Albert Joseph Hebert, S. M. Jericho, N. Y.: Exposition Press, 1970. Pp. 96. Cloth, \$4.00.

Reviewed by Father Pius Abrahams, O.F.M., a student of Mariology, and a member of the Albany Marian Center.

Father Albert J. Hebert, a religious of the Society of Mary, is included in *The International Who's Who in Poetry* for 1970-1971. The present book of poems is divided into eight chapters, an envoi, and a title index—a total of ninety-six pages. Some forty of the poems have appeared in noted Catholic magazines such as *America*, *Our Lady's Digest*, *Review for Religious*, and *St. Anthony Messenger*.

Father Hebert has a crisp, clear command of poetic style, form, and imagery. Care and attention are imperative in reading and re-reading this work. One is fascinated at the beautiful figures with which poems are woven into garlands and placed at the Madonna's feet.

Underlying all of his poems is a deep conviction that Mary is most fair, that she should be loved and honored. Combined with this theme is the message that no matter how we sing Mary's praises, they will always be inferior to what she deserves and to what we owe her. "To what Dantean and Davidic heights should I aspire/thinking, seeking to praise you, O Lady/and in my hands only a broken lyre" (from "Our Lady and a Broken Lyre").

Echoing Francis Thompson's "The Hound of Heaven," Father Hebert composes: "Fair Huntress, in your white and blue/chaste more, a billion times more chaste than Diana/and in your fire, vibrant, nobler, far more beautiful!/ how can I, why seek I to escape your loving hunt for me/ the wounds of your love-claimant arrows/ as I have done so many, many yesterdays/ and yes, the messages of all your sorrows?" (from "Our Lady the Huntress").

Mary: Our Blessed Lady is recommended to all who seek to love Mary more—particularly those who enjoy the genre of poetry.

The Third Peacock: The Goodness of God and the Badness of the World. By Robert Farrar Capon. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 119. Cloth, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Peter F. Macaluso, Assistant Professor of History at Montclair State College and Adjunct Professor of History at St. Peter's College, Jersey City.

Father Capon tackles those many unanswerable questions and does it well. Much of what he is doing, he says, is "sightseeing, not proof," but the tour is well worth it. In the middle of it all, he even has the reader join him for lunch—one might expect this from the author of *The*

Supper of the Lamb (cf. *THE CORD* 19:10 [10/69], 314).

For the author, creation, from start to finish, occurs within a Trinitarian bash and is filled with the apples of God's eye. "No wonder we love circuses, games, and magic; they prove we are in the image of God" (p. 14).

So much for the reputation of God "as the original Good Guy." God, however, cannot be gotten off the hook for the existence of both natural and moral evil. If evil is assignable to the freedom of all creation that too has to be blamed on God. Capon insists that we face up to the facts. He substitutes the third peacock on the left for the traditional snake in the story of the Fall; but the mystery explains nothing, except freedom and risk.

The Lisbon earthquake of 1755 was God's fault simply because he made the earth the kind of thing it is. However, "there is no badness (natural evil) except by virtue of the goodness which compete with each other in the several styles of their freedom" (p. 37).

The problem is that so many explanations involve God's doing too much or too little. Evolution, history, or Divine Plan are, however, descriptive and not deterministic categories. Capon suggests that "what we really feel the need of when we talk about the evolution of man is precisely the one thing physical science cannot supply: a final reason for it" (p. 61). The reason or word that lets you have both a free world and a successful God, that does the least damage and does the job is *desire*. God "doesn't make the world; he makes out with it" (p. 57).

The particularism of modern science refused to ask sweeping theological questions and presented us with only a silent, mindless universe in which man is utterly alone. The medieval universe, to the con-

trary, was a friendly, rational, desiring—and desirable—place. It was a universe run by desire for the *summum bonum*.

After presenting us with a "warm and toasty" universe, creation's Love riding forth upon the Virgin's fiat, Capon proffers an interesting digression on the role of the theologian. The theologian does not claim that he understands, but that he delivers. He "tries to come to an appreciation of his data, not to an explanation; to a knowledge, not of what they mean, but of how they feel" (p. 71). "We arrive... not as the bearers of proof, but as the latest runners in a long relay race; not as savants with arguments to take away the doubts of the faithful, but as breathless messengers who have only recently spoken to Peter himself" (p. 72).

With half of creation always on the rack, the question remains, whether risk or freedom could ever be worth this badness. But the beauty of the concept of a desiring universe is that it is personal, not mechanical; it sees God not as doing something but as being someone fetching; not a divine watchmaker, but a divine lover. As the Scotist school of Franciscan theologians suggested, the Incarnation is not dependent upon sin. "This opens up the possibility that the Word in Jesus was not so much doing bits of busy work to jimmy things into line as he was being his own fetching self right there in the midst of creation" (p. 90).

As regards Christ, "it was his presence, not the things that he did, that made the difference." Might not Incarnation be his response, not to the incidental irregularity of sin, but to the unhelpable presence of badness in creation?" (p. 91). "He knows the home truth that grief and love-making are only inches apart" (p. 93). Further, "Jesus is neither other than, nor a reversal of, what the Word does at all times

throughout the fabric of creation. He is the mystery of the Word himself in the flesh. His cross, therefore, is no accident; it is the sacrament of the shared victimization by which he has always drawn all things to himself" (p. 94).

Capon answers the argument that the whole business is just an elaborate game of wishing-will-make-it-so; with how do you know that this elaborate game of wishing-will-make-it-so is not the divine device for clueing us in on what, in fact, really is so?

God has not left us to our own guesswork about the spiritualities he was up to (creation and Incarnation); he had to provide us with a few materialities. Here we have a plug for organized religion—the Church and its principal function as the sign of the mystery of the Word.

One final note: "We do both ourselves and the world a disservice when we imply that ethical strictures, if followed, will make all men glad and wise. What they need to hear from us is that the Word loves the world enough to join it in its passion" (p. 110).

Christ Is Alive! By Michel Quoist. Trans. J. F. Bernard; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 168. Cloth, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., a member of the Philosophy Department at Siena College, and Associate Editor of this Review.

Michel Quoist is one of our popular spiritual writers today. He is the author of the best-seller *Prayers*, and more recently, *The Meaning of Success*. Both books achieved deserving praise and popularity; and *Christ Is Alive* has many of the qualities found in them. This is a book on Christian spirituality, but more specifically, it is in-

tended as a new spirituality for our times. In the foreword to the book Quoist asks his readers to be sure they read that section of the book (since many simply skip forewords) in order to understand his approach and method. Therein, he explains that (a) he does not intend his book to be all-comprehensive, but rather selective—utilizing reflection only on those aspects of the Living Christ which need clarification particularly for modern man; (b) the church he writes about is the Body of Christ, realized and sanctified in her members, and not the institutional church as such; and (c) this book is not so much the fruit of long, reflective study, as an observation on his own life and that of others—and the results of those observations. "I wish to write nothing but what has been lived," insists Quoist. Finally, the author studiously tries to avoid a technical or theological language; ordinary lay Christians were asked to help him in this effort by checking the text before its publication. It is for the ordinary reader he intends the book, and it is not a book he envisions being read by priests and religious only. And the tone of the book is one of optimism; hence the title: **Christ Is Alive!**

Quoist believes that today's Christian must translate the eternal love of Jesus into the actions of modern man. And so the spirituality of today will differ and must be renewed by the Church; charity in action must be kept in line with the age we live in. In the light of questions man keeps asking today, and especially through the existential agony of the young asking, "What is the meaning of this life?" Quoist attempts to bring us a practical spirituality for the 70's. He feels strongly that the Church has failed to assimilate itself into the great mass of workers; in many ways he feels that there is a real threat of revolution in our midst. And he wonders whether the mod-

ern world is indeed "allergic to Christianity." These are strong questions and observations, to be sure. But they are honest and forthright, and we cannot take the approach of the ostrich as we have so often done in the past. The author makes an honest effort to bring forth a relevant and up-to-date spirituality for us, trying to explain the Christian as a "whole man," prey to sin and suffering, poverty and abuse, and not so spiritualized that the world has little or no effect upon him. On the contrary, it is in the world and through it that man works out his salvation, and a spirituality for him has to be drawn with him as a secularized creature.

The book has been divided into three parts: man and his relationship to Christianity; Christ's own relationship to Christianity; and Christ and his relationship with the Christian. And so it is, God, Christ, man, and the universe are all one world, and the Christian in this world has an obligation not only to save his own soul, but to save the world as well. This, I think, is the main thrust and the value of *Christ Is Alive!* Quoist is not the first to bring out this aspect of spirituality so important for us to understand; as a matter of fact, it is a very Franciscan and a very Christocentric idea; but he is one of the few modern writers to bring it out with such sincerity and clarity—and he pleads urgently for a hearing. Quoist is sure that Christianity, by means of a new spirituality, holds the answer to all the problems that beset men today. Here he emphasizes the Christian obligation of charity in its highest degree. Christianity and the new spirituality Quoist offers it will be successful since it satisfies man's needs and fulfills his destiny by encountering and living Christ.

Christ Is Alive! is called a new spirituality for our times. Today's Christian will not live as yesterday's Christian. He must not! Man's

search for God takes place in daily experience and must, then, be renewed constantly, even daily. To live in Christ entails affirming one's commitment to man's own creative task, that of building a better world. Quoist is convinced there can be no authentic spirituality without genuine concern for others; physical suffering, hunger, social injustice, and the other ills plaguing society are the concern and responsibility of the true Christian. It is deplorable that certain Christians are acquainted only with the historical Jesus. To Quoist it seems that this is the spirituality of Christianity in the age of adolescence. And we shall never be able to know the authentic Christ without knowing all his members.

This is not a book to be taken up and devoured in one reading. It is a serious book on today's spirituality, and it will induce much thought and discussion. There is no mistake that it offers new facets and approaches in a fresh and readable style. The material within it deserves more than casual confrontation. Quoist is in complete accord with the teachings of the Church; but he seems to hope that the Church will move more quickly and decisively in the approach he takes: a reconsideration of the relationship of God and man to the Church, and to one another.

Come Blow Your Mind with Me. By Andrew M. Greeley. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 235. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Theodore Cavanaugh, O.F.M., Assistant Pastor at St. Anne's Church, Fair Lawn, New Jersey.

It is Father Greeley's thesis that American Catholicism has seen too much "mind-blowing"—that it is right time to get off the kooky li-

turgy, sensitivity, anti-structure kick and set about building durable structures in the Church that can capture the thrust of Vatican II and root the Church firmly in the contemporary world. In the first part of this collection of essays, Greeley sees Americans yearning for the sacred, the mystic, the transcendent—precisely at a time when enthusiasms run wild in the Church is casting off vestments, underplaying the role of the saints, and apeing a scientific, rationalistic outlook that has disillusioned today's Americans. In general, American Catholics stop doing something when everyone else is starting it (and vice versa). In the second series of essays, Greeley argues that the Church is struggling to shake its own immigrant tradition and the styles such a tradition encouraged—and, at the same time, to put into practice the pattern of coresponsibility and cooperation in governing which Vatican II has urged as a replacement for the feudal patterns which the Church followed for centuries. With regard to the American Church, Greeley is more the sociologist than the social observer, citing research studies indicating that the American Catholic has caught up economically with his WASP brothers, and that Catholic schools are doing a pretty good job doing precisely what we want them to do. The chapter on Catholic education is a must for Catholic educators, most of whom—I agree with Greeley here—are filled with an irrational self-hatred and have accepted out of the air much foolishness about the nature and value of Catholic education: that it is divisive, e. g., losing support, not reaching the poor, needlessly duplicating the work of the home.

Each of the essays stands on its own. I confine my remarks to just a few of them. Greeley's earliest

article on religion on the Catholic college campus seems to have been prophetic, or perhaps creative of the present informal, scantily-structured character of Catholic life on some if not most of our campuses. The essay on leadership in the Church and the fantasy about the Papal Press Conference are, I submit, too harsh on our leaders, and, in the latter case, too romantic, too mind-blown. The critique of sensitivity is strident, and undoubtedly the work of a man who has seen others hurt—perhaps even himself been hurt—by it. Someone had to tell the faddists that inexperience is a disqualification for dealing with the human psyche, and that interpersonal encounter (nude or otherwise) doesn't produce instant wholeness.

One area where Father Greeley and I have to part is in the area of sex. Greeley regards the Church as failing to recognize the Freudian revolution, and claims *Humanae Vitae* to have been a disaster for the Church. The fact that he put his almost hysterical criticism of Pope Paul in the book's introduction, almost deterred me from further reading. With regard to the Freudian revolution and its significance, I suggest that he, not the Church, is suffering from the guilt complex (p. 159) over Manicheism, and that *Humanae Vitae* is one of those facts which the long run shows to have been charismatic.

Come Blow Your Mind with Me has the usual Greeleyan limpidity, and wit, though a little more of the sensational and bizarre than one expects from a moderate (e. g., the pot Mass described on the rear jacket). It's a book well worth reading, despite the author's faults—most grievous to me being his uncharacteristic and regrettable assault on the papal stand on human life.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Berrigan, Daniel, S.J., *The Dark Night of Resistance*. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. vi-181. Cloth, \$5.95.
- Champlin, Joseph M., *Christ Present and Yet to Come: The Priest and God's People at Prayer*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1971. Pp. xiii-242. Paper, \$2.50.
- De la Potterie, Ignace, S.J., and Lyonnet, Stanislaus, S.J., *The Christian Lives by the Spirit*. Preface by Yves Congar, O.P., tr. John Morriss. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. xii-284. Cloth, \$6.95.
- Devine, George, ed., *New Dimensions in Religious Experience*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. xii-317. Paper, \$3.95.
- Drouin, Francis M., O.P., *The Sounding Solitude: Meditations for Religious Women*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. 156. Cloth, \$3.95.
- Hansen, Warren G., *St. Francis of Assisi: Patron of the Environment*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971. Pp. ix-73. Cloth, \$4.95.
- Klauder, Francis J., S.D.B., *Aspects of the Thought of Teilhard de Chardin*. North Quincy, Mass: The Christopher Publishing House, 1971. Pp. 151. Cloth, \$4.95.
- Meyer, Ben F., *The Church in Three Tenses*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. xii-174. Cloth, \$5.95.
- Meyer, Charles R., *A Contemporary Theology of Grace*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. vi-250. Cloth, \$6.95.
- O'Connor, Edward D., C.S.C., *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1971. Pp. 301. Cloth, \$5.95; paper, \$1.95.
- O'Flaherty, Vincent M., S.J., *Let's Take a Trip: A Guide to Contemplation*. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. 177. Cloth, \$4.95.
- Rice, Charles E., *Authority and Rebellion: The Case for Orthodoxy in the Catholic Church*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 253. Cloth, \$5.95.