COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The photo of Father Constantine Koser, O.F.M., is by "Foto Lampo," Sante Mondello, Rome. The illustrations for the August issue have been drawn by Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F., of St. Joseph's Hospital, Tacoma, Washington.

the CORD

August, 1971 Vol. XXI, No. 8

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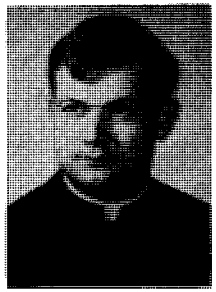
the CORD is a monthly review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Editor: Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., 600 Soundview Avenue, Bronx, N.Y. 10472. Associate Editor and Book Reviews: Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Siena College, Loudonville, 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.

AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



Listen to the Voice of Your Father

The April 1971 issue of *Citta Nuova* published an extremely interesting interview of Pasquale Riwalski, Minister General of the Friars Minor Capuchin. It was then that the brainstorm came; how about an interview with our Minister General, Constantine Koser, for THE CORD? I thought that this would be especially interesting for American friars in view of the forthcoming Extraordinary Chapter and the mass of questionnaires coming forth from the General Curia in recent years—which, I am sure, has caused more than one friar to wonder just what is going on in Rome—and even, what is going on in our General's mind and heart.

The Editor of THE CORD was enthusiastic. I was ready. Now it was a question of securing an interview with Father General, whose schedule was already overloaded with Commission Meetings, Chapter preparations, and visits to our friars in Spain and Yugoslavia.

I prepared a list of questions, wrote a letter requesting the interview, and sent the whole packet over to the General Curia on April 14th. Fifteen days later, on Thursday, April 29th, I had a phone call from Sergio d'Urso, Father General's personal secretary, who told me that the General would see me that evening at six.

I was uncertain as to how the interview would be conducted, and so brought along a tape recorder as well as writing materials. Father General said that he preferred taping the interview, as it would save considerable time. He also stated that he would answer the questions in Italian, as this would be easier for him. He speaks English, of course, but I don't think he feels very comfortable with it. The interview lasted more than an hour, with Father General answering each and every one of the previously submitted questions. But it must not be thought that our discussion was limited to these prepared questions. It took its natural course, as any conversation will, and we got into areas and subject matter not included in the questions I had previously sent him.

Father General, who is only 53 years old, was completely relaxed and at ease during the entire time. He sat back on the couch in his little parlor and intermittently puffed on a cigar. He was absolutely candid, as the reader of this interview will discover, and it was a pleasant hour.

After the interview, of course, came the hard work of transcribing the text from the tapes. Then the translation from Italian into English, always trying to preserve his manner of expression. The text that follows was, of course, presented to Father General for his approval prior to its publication in THE CORD or elsewhere.

What follows is, then, I think, an interesting insight into the mind and heart of Francis' 115th successor. And I am sure that in Father Koser's words and insights there is something for all of us—especially the young friars.

R. S. Almagno
Rome
20/may. 71

Romano Stephen Almagno, friar-priest of the Immaculate Conception Province (New York) is research scholar and librarian at the Collegio San Bonaventura, International Franciscan Research Centre, Grottaferrata, Rome.

§1 *A first question—not really very important—but one which not a few friars have been asking, is why the selection of Medellin, South America, as the location for the Chapter?*

During the sessions of the 1968 Plenary Council, it was decided to convoke and hold, in 1971, an Extraordinary General Chapter, and this in the United States. But a few years later (1970) the American Ministers Provincial felt that it would not be feasible to hold the General Chapter there; and so, in 1970, the Plenary Council studied the question and during the sessions the large seminary at Medellin was proposed as a possible location for the Extraordinary General Chapter.

Medellin has a large and spacious seminary—and you know that we have few friaries, in the Order, which are large enough for a General Chapter. Then too, the climate there—usually between 60 and 70 degrees with little variation—would be suitable to all.

And so, after long discussion, Medellin was selected. And this especially because we had the intention of holding the General Chapter for the first time outside of Europe. Of course, there was opposition, doubts, and reservations; but in the end a qualified majority of more than two-thirds of the Plenary Council, decided to hold the Extraordinary Chapter, to have it outside of Europe and at Medellin. The Province of Columbia has accepted this decision with great enthusiasm, and I hope that all will go well there this coming August.

§2 *Can you give us some idea of the duration of this Chapter? How many friars will be there? And what languages will be used for the papers and discussions?*

At most, the Chapter should last five weeks, although I think we can easily accomplish our work in about four. Of course, the duration of the Chapter depends to a great extent on the capitulars—how long they wish to discuss matters—and on the very organization of the Chapter itself. In order to avoid a prolongation of the Chapter by the introduction of new business, the General Definitorium has—invoking the provisions of the General Constitutions which state that only the General Definitorium can authorize the introduction of new business—closed the agenda.

There will be about 160 or 170 friars at the Chapter: 120 voting members, then the personnel of the secretariat, periti, and the staff (about 20) for simultaneous translation.

As to the papers (documents) of the Chapter: the General Definitorium, after lengthy study and discussion, has decided that these be printed in Latin. This decision was reached, not because Latin is so well known today, but rather because it is practically impossible to do otherwise. The cost of printing the Chapter documents and their synopsis in five or six languages would, indeed, be prohibitive. And so, to simplify matters, Latin has been selected as the official language for all the Chapter documents.

As to the discussions "in aula" (from the floor): English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, and of course Latin will be accepted. We have all the necessary apparatus for simultaneous translation. And the various Circumscriptions have provided for their translators. I hope that all will function as well as it did at Assisi in 1967.

§3 *This Document on Education—what is it all about?*

You ask about the document **De Institutione (On Education)**. During the 1967 General Chapter, the Order was thinking in terms of statutes and norms for the missions, parishes, pastoral work, schools, etc. But since 1967 a lot has happened; and today there is a certain "allergy" to statutes and norms. The response to the questionnaire sent to the whole Order during the preparatory work on this document, revealed a strong opposition to statutes. And some of the friars even felt that nothing at all should be done—stating that the already existing prescriptions in our General Constitutions are enough, if not in fact too much.

I feel, however, that a certain general orientation is necessary. And this, especially in view of the many rather confused experiments so current and popular today.

The Commission entrusted with this work, then, is (in view of the sentiments prevalent in the Order) no longer working on and thinking in terms of statutes and norms. Rather, it has prepared a document which is orientative. It hopes to express a basic common denominator, while leaving open the possibility of pluralism in the various regions of our Order. We hope to have a document on education that will be really orientative and stimulating....

§4 *In other words, guidelines.*

Yes, guidelines. Guidelines that will be stimulating and that will respect the rights and freedom of the various regions of our Order. At least, I hope so.

§5 *And the Document on the Missions?*

The same applies here. Both the General Curia and the Commission entrusted with this work realize that we are in a period of transition. And therefore we are in no way at all thinking of preparing documents "ad perpetuam rei memoriam." Right now, we are intent on establishing these provisional guidelines. In the future we shall see how these should be changed or updated.

§6 *In your Christmas Encyclical Letter, you mention that the Extraordinary Chapter will investigate and evaluate how, to date, the new General Constitutions have been received by the Order. Now, no Minister General, I think, has visited the friars as much as you have—and certainly few in the Order have a better vantage point from which to give an opinion in this regard. How do you feel the new Constitutions have been received?*

To date, the General Curia has received 144 documents from the various Provinces, etc., in response to the Questionnaire that we sent out regarding the new General Constitutions. Of course, the recent mail strike here in Rome has delayed both the arrival (in Rome) and the delivery here (at the Curia) of other responses. Unfortunately, these will not be able to be considered, for today the Commission is completing its collation of these responses and tomorrow it will begin drafting the report for the General Chapter.

In general, the Order's thinking is reflected in the response to this Questionnaire on the new Constitutions. Thinking which I am, more or less, acquainted with from my travels throughout the Order and my contacts with the friars.

Now, to answer this Questionnaire many friars read the new General Constitutions for the first time. Some hadn't yet looked at them; others had forgotten all about them. And this, their first contact with this document from the Order, is already an advantage for the Order, in as much as now the new Constitutions have been read and studied more than previously.

Then too, these responses show that the basic ideas contained in the General Constitutions and the Introductory Spiritual Texts (ideas already in vogue before the General Chapter formulated the new Constitutions and Spiritual Texts) are pretty well understood. This doesn't mean, of course, that the Order is perfect in the daily living of these basic ideas found in the new Constitutions and Spiritual Texts.

In a word, then, the basic notions contained in the new Constitutions have been rather well understood and have been notions which have given a certain directionality to the Order during these last years. And I can see—almost everywhere—that these ideas have had their influence.

The knowledge of the individual articles in the new General Constitutions is somewhat less....

§7 *You mean—the particulars of the new Constitutions?*

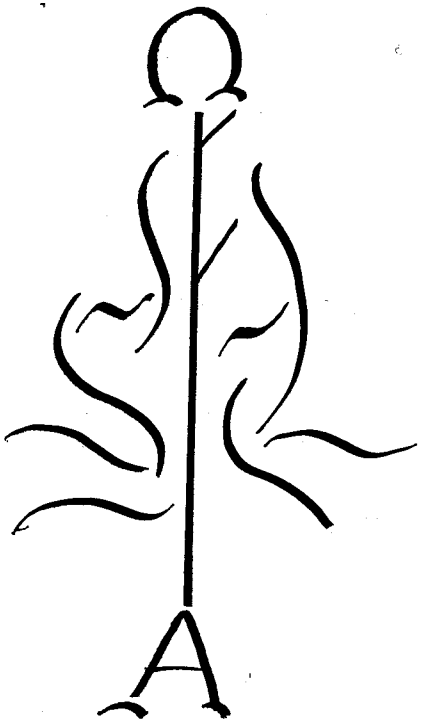
Yes, and of course, there is a certain a priori here. I mean, an a priori thinking which holds that whatever is formulated as an article of law is of little or no value—meaningless. The very opposite is true. For in the Constitutions there is a lot of spirituality. And to maintain that the Constitutions are nothing but legalism is, really, to propound an erroneous opinion. And to maintain such an opinion is to show that either the friar has not read the new General Constitutions, or he has not sufficiently understood them.

I find that, in general, the first four chapters of the new General Constitutions (chapters dealing with our life as friars, prayer, poverty, etc.) are very well understood. The section on "De Regimine" is less well known. And this is perfectly understandable, since the vast majority of friars have little to do with the validity of elections, etc. The majority of friars can, with a real naturalness and even legitimacy, be unaware of these aspects of the new General Constitutions.

§8 *Yes, I guess those particulars are not really germane.*

True. And there is nothing very bad about a friar who says I have not read this section of the new Constitutions and am not even interested in it. It would be quite different—quite another story—were he to state that he is not at all interested in what the Constitutions have to say about prayer or poverty.

So, you see, we really cannot say



that the Constitutions as such are really completely understood. But the ideas within the new General Constitutions are now common knowledge—and these ideas are having a transforming influence in the Order. And the aggiornamento, renewal, etc., that is going on within the Order is due to these basic notions. You see, the new General Constitutions have created a climate, a milieu, and the Order is now living within all of this. This "new spirit" has taken root, even in those areas and among friars where the Constitutions as such are not fully understood.

§9 *Do you think the "new spirit" in these Constitutions has been sufficiently understood?*

Sufficiently understood? Well, in a certain sense, I would say yes. Naturally, we always hope for and work towards more. You see, the Constitutions certainly do not enjoy the same worth as the Rule, the writings of Saint Francis, or those of Saint Bonaventure. Rather, the Constitutions furnish us with a certain expression and reformulation of the Franciscan spirit. And they give the individual friar an aid towards implementing this spirit, **hic et nunc.** Therein lies their worth. At the same time, the General Constitutions are a set of norms for the good ordering and functioning of a society of men, such as is the Order.

But it must be remembered, too, that the Constitutions set out the practicable and not the ideal. This is their value too—this and nothing more.

As for the "new spirit" that has invaded and now pervades the General Constitutions: this "new spirit" needs to be better assimilated and more frequently meditated upon by the friars. I believe that this "new spirit" can activate a tremendous amount of growth in the Order. It is, therefore, deserving of more attention than it has, to date, been given. But despite this need for more reflection on our part, this "new spirit" is here, within the Order and it has had, and is having, a great effect on the Order today.

§10 *Father Philotheus Boehner, the founder and first editor of THE CORD, used to remark that the Rule and Constitutions were the least expression (the minimum) of what is required of a friar in his journey towards and in God. Would you comment on this, please?*

What Father Böhner says is true; if you are looking at the Constitutions from the aspect of the prescriptive.

§11 *Simply as laws?*

Yes, as laws. The Constitutions do not furnish us with the ideal. Rather they affirm that when a person habitually functions under or below this level—well, then, it is rather difficult to say that he really wishes to be a friar. Rather difficult! Our new General Constitutions are, however, geared in many areas to the ideal.

And then too, we must say that not everything in the Constitutions is so binding that were a man not to observe a certain point, one could affirm that he has no sincere desire to be a friar. There are very many options in the new Constitutions. And there are many, many ways of doing things. And precisely for this reason the superior has the right and the duty to grant dispensations. The Constitutions (at least certain aspects of them) are not laws that must be imposed at any cost. No, one must be careful here and distinguish well.

So as regards the prescriptive, the aspect of law, Philotheus Böhner is correct when he says that the Constitutions set out the minimum that is required of a friar. And it is for this very reason, as I have stated, that the Rule and writings of Saint Francis, as well as the writings of Francis' first followers, have much more value and importance than the Constitutions.

§12 *I suppose that Father Philotheus was referring to the Constitutions of his day, which were certainly more juridical than our own.*

Yes, but even there—take for example the General Constitutions of 1953. If you gather together everything that the Constitutions say about what a superior should be... well, there is a lot more spirituality there than is at first apparent. Or, take for example the prescriptions regarding the use of money. These prescriptions have a juridical formulation and dress. But when you try to live those prescriptions, they are transformed into a means of holiness. Am I right?

§13 *Yes, they are legal expressions of a spiritual witness.*

If you observe the Constitutions with a juridical and formalistic mentality, then they are worthless. But if you really try to understand the meaning of the Constitutions and apply this to your daily life, then the Constitutions will be a great help to you. And if this was true in the former General Constitutions, it is even more so now.

Naturally, if you take an article of the Constitutions which states that for validity an election must be held with written ballots.... Well, if you do what the Constitutions prescribe you have a legal election. But this has little effect or influence on your spiritual life. These norms are simply juridical formulas and structures that are necessary for the good ordering of

any society. You don't go looking for spirituality within these prescriptions. But elsewhere, yes. Very definitely, yes.

§14 *Again, Father, in your Christmas Encyclical Letter you listed a number of spiritual norms which should provide a guideline for our renewal. Among these you stress "brotherhood more than authority," "internal more than external religiosity," "voluntary more than enforced poverty," "persuasion more than compulsion," "group dynamics" as a means to shared authority and responsibility, etc. How do you think most friars have accepted or understood these spiritual norms or guidelines?*

Let's look at the question of shared authority and responsibility. There have been serious complaints from and among the friars, that too little attention was given to personal responsibility. And many friars asked for a law, system, and structure wherein there would be more room for an individual to exercise responsibility. All this was done—as is evident—in the new Constitutions.

But what often happens is that responsibility is either not given, or, when given, it is not assumed. This happens all too frequently. But the only way in which a person can assume responsibility is to live it, and take it, when it falls upon him. And yet, often when an individual is confronted with a decision, for which he alone will be responsible—too often, too many of our friars will not assume this responsibility. They reject it....

§15 *They are afraid.*

Yes, they are afraid: they have a certain fear and they look for someone else who will solve the question and assume their responsibility and their duty. This happens all too frequently. What I'm saying is that an individual must assume responsibility. Sadly, too few do. You see, freedom—my personal freedom—is not just having the possibility of doing what I like. That is only convenience. Rather, freedom—my personal liberty—is the possibility of doing that which will in some way perfect and better me. All too often, I'm afraid, rather than moving ahead and bettering ourselves—we settle for the point of least resistance and most convenience.

Let's look at the area of obedience — persuasion more than compulsion. What this simply means is that the superior must try to convince rather than command. But on the subject's part this presupposes a willingness to listen. If the subject will neither listen nor reason, then any manner and means of persuasion is futile. There are always two sides to the situation and two people involved.

You see, each of these guidelines presupposes a certain mutual cooperation. And precisely what makes it rather difficult to put these guidelines into effect, is that they also presuppose and represent a very high level of human and spiritual maturity. I do think that the Order has much work to do and a long way to go in order to achieve the level presupposed by the Constitutions and these spiritual norms or guidelines.

Let's look at poverty. If a person comes and asks me a question regarding liceity in the use of material goods—well, you see the very question is mistaken—it is all wrong. A friar who has freely professed a life of poverty should be asking himself whether or not he needs this thing. If he needs it, fine, no problem. If he doesn't, then the answer is obvious.

The moment a friar who has professed voluntary poverty decides to use every possible thing that comes his way—careful, of course, to stay within the "limits" of his vow—that friar has sadly missed the whole point.

We would do well, each of us, to watch the way we formulate the question. We should ask ourselves, Do I need this or not? If I do not, then forget it. On the other hand, if I need something, then there is no problem. Right?

§16 *Yes, for my work or whatever...*

Exactly. If a friar is studying biology he needs a microscope. And if he intends to do some really original research, or if he is a professor of biology, then this man needs a very good and a very expensive microscope. If on account of what he thinks is the spirit of poverty, this friar is satisfied with a second-rate microscope, then he will be a second-rate biologist. And if this friar should, on the other hand, purchase a very good microscope, this is no luxury. Rather, it is (for him and his work) a vital necessity. Again, if he can use a microscope at the University, and this microscope is a good one, then he has no need of purchasing one for his room or study.

But let's say that this friar's neighbor is a professor of theology, and because the friar-biologist has a microscope, he wants one too. You know how it goes: if he has this, why can't I? Well, we are already far afield from the whole meaning and spirit of the life of poverty. Understand?

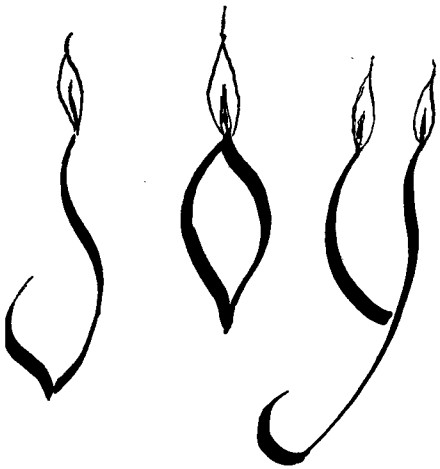
Unfortunately, the situation I have just described is all too common among our friars.

§17 *And what about this forthcoming discussion, in the General Chapter, on vocations in our Order? In one of your norms you state: "There should be more emphasis on unity in the midst of pluriformity than on uniformity." I know that young friars in the United States were particularly happy with this statement. Would you comment, then, on whether or not you feel that young people can find total self-actualization in the Order today?*

Father General hesitated, so I rephrased the question.

What I mean, Father, is that our students want the opoprtunity of truly being themselves. They like that idea, "unity in the midst of pluriformity" and more emphasis on "unity... than... uniformity." For example, our students want freedom in dress and grooming—this means a lot to them.

In my opinion an individual says a lot about himself by, through, and in the means that he selects



for his self-affirmation. The more a person has need of external signs for his self-affirmation, the poorer he is as a person and as an individual. And the opposite is true: the less a person has need of these external signs of self-affirmation, the richer is he, especially interiorly.

Now, it is very normal that during youth, while the maturation process is continuing, there be an acute need of external signs for self-affirmation. Take the example of a young man who has a sports car and drives around making as much noise as possible. He wants to be noticed. An adult, a mature adult, on the other hand, will try to be as quiet as possible. The adult has no need of affirming his personality with noise.

There's something of all this in the spiritual life. In the not too distant past we made the largest knots possible on our cords, wore immense rosaries, etc. These were signs of and for the times and a means of affirmation.

There is, of course, always the need of a certain amount of external signs; for we are, after all, men and not angels. But it is precisely the important element of discretion in the use of these external signs which is the measure of a man's maturity. And so, for these and other reasons, I think that when an Order—our Order—takes these external signs for what they are: that is, that they do have a certain importance but not too much, and that it is not worthwhile engaging in endless discussions on these matters—then I think this is in itself a sign of maturity within the Order itself. And the more an Order discusses the form of the habit, external signs, etc., then... understand?

All this means that, for me at least, unity resides more in the mind, heart, and interior, than in external signs. When I meet a friar who is really mature and who is seriously trying to develop spiritually, then as far as I am concerned, he can do whatever he likes. For really, what he wants to do is to grow in Christ. This is exactly what Saint Francis did with Friar Giles and Friar Bernard: he gave them his blessing and sent them off on their own. Others, instead, need to be helped and held in check; else they will get all mixed up. And this, after all, is the duty and the love of a superior for his friars. A superior must try to know his men. He must allow one to move right on and must restrain another.

Unity does not reside in external signs. When it does, we have only uniformity. Real unity is interior. Conversely, multiformity and pluralism have nothing to do, either, with external signs. Rather these too are interior, and consist in the person's immersing himself in authentic Franciscan spirituality which admits of as many variations as there are friars in the Order.

§18 This, of course, has historically always been one of the characteristics of the Order.

Yes, the point is that one's individuality must be authentic and must never be an imposition upon others. Young people today talk about being terrorized by adult conformity. Yet they themselves are all too frequently very adept in exercising the same pressures. You know, the youngsters who make a racket at midnight as they race their motorbikes through the streets. This is a form of imposition—of pressure, of terrorizing. And so when they scream against tyranny, they know very well what they're talking about, because they've practiced it well. In the Order there's

§19 The same situation.

Yes, the very same situation. Any form of imposition upon others is out of line. If individuality is a characteristic of our Order, as indeed it is—it always has been a discreet and charitable individuality.

§20 You know—better than I—that our Order is not without its prophets of doom and gloom, forecasting that the Order is dying, if not already dead. What do you feel in this regard? I mean, do you think that the tremendous efforts towards a "more seraphic, poorer, and more evangelical life" which you described in your Christmas Encyclical, are signs of continued life and growth?

Well, let's take the case of a seminary professor. A few years ago, the minor seminary was filled to capacity and bursting with life and action. You know: 150 students, a full corps of professors, etc. In a word, all was going well. Now the place is empty—there are only 20 students, etc. This friar certainly has the impression that the world has come to an end... at least his world. Or, the situation of a professor in one of our theologates: there were 50, 60, 70 students and now there are only 5, and these are attending the diocesan seminary. The theologate is empty, the province doesn't know what to do with these large houses, etc. This man, too, is depressed and feels that there has been a real degradation.

Now, the fact that the phenomenon of our steadily decreasing vocations is a matter of grave preoccupation, cannot be denied. And since I am not a prophet, I have no idea as to how things are going to turn out. Sure, all this is preoccupying. But what I don't believe is that this decrease in Franciscan vocations is caused by an intrinsic lack in the Francis-

can ideal itself. Not at all! I think that Francis and his ideals are today a supremely attractive force in the world—especially for and among young people.

§21 *Yes, Father, but you yourself stated in your recent book,* Our Life with God, *that the world has the impression that while Saint Francis is a modern man, his friars are antiquated.*

We must find the way—not by making propaganda, or by trying to "sell" our "product"—of living our Franciscan Vocation in a manner that will be convincing to the world.

§22 *And yet, Father, whenever one reads about Charles de Foucauld, the Little Brothers of Jesus, Taizé, or Mother Theresa, one gets the impression that the world sees them as the true and the modern Franciscans. Just a few weeks ago,* The Tablet *spoke of Mother Theresa's work in India as a new Franciscan movement. It seems to me—and, I know, to many young friars—that when people see in others qualities that they know are ours and label them as such—qualities which we don't seem to show them... it seems to me that we are in a bad way.*

You're right. And yet the actual and real situation in our Order is that we have many friars, thousands of them, who are living their Franciscan vocation in a way that is convincing for the world. Thanks be to God for that. During my travels I have repeatedly seen how much the world respects and loves so many of our friars. Friars who work quietly, silently in the confessional, parlor, classroom, or at the door. These friars who are in daily, often intimate, contact with the people—and who are admired and loved by them—are very numerous.

That each of us should feel challenged by the labelling of the Little Brothers of Jesus, Taizé, and Mother Theresa's work as "Franciscan," is, I think, a good challenge. But the point I want to stress is that we should not say, "The Order should be like this." For the Order is no one. Rather we should — we must — say, "I must be like this." For I am the Order.

§23 *In other words, the incarnation of the Franciscan ideal in my person.*

Precisely. The moment a friar says, we should do this... that is the time when no one does anything. The friar must understand —each one—that **he must do it.** I must do it. I am responsible for the reputation of the Order in the world. And if I do everything I can, as best I can—then I am already doing a lot. Instead of saying "the Order should," "the superiors must," "the professors and pastors ought"—each friar should say, **I will do this.**

When a friar comes to me and says that he wants to leave the Order because the Order and his community have given him nothing.... Well, did you come to receive or to give? Franciscan spirituality is essentially a spirituality of generosity. The question really is: What did you give to the community? Why do you complain that the Order and the community have given you nothing? And the more the friar complains, the surer am I that he has given nothing of himself to the Order and the community. For even if a friar lives in very difficult and trying circumstances—and he gives his all in that situation and in that community —hard as his life is, he will find great personal satisfaction and at the same time be a tremendous leaven of good in that community.

You see, the question and the problem cannot remain on the level of that which the Order should do. Rather it is what **I** can and must do.

§24 *So we're back to John of the Cross' idea about where there is no love, you put love; and you will discover love.*

The Gospel goes much further. The Gospel obliges me to love my enemies—not just those who are indifferent and cold to me. I am not dispensed from loving the friars, my brothers. And I must love them all — not only those who are indifferent and cold to me, but even those who might want to kill me. And if I try to love them, to love them all—then I am on the right path. Otherwise, I am mistaken.

§25 *Lastly, Father General, do you have any words for the young friars in the United States, regarding their task in the whole effort towards renewal within the Order?*

I want to say that I am pleased with the unrest among young people, and therefore among our young friars. A young man who isn't restless is either already old or dead. Their restlessness doesn't worry me. What does concern me, however, is that this restlessness be applied to something really worthwhile—to something **solid** and **important** for the Church and the Order. I am concerned lest their restlessness and desire for change remain simply on the theoretical level — on the level of We should and The Order ought. I want the young friars to feel and act in this way: **Now is the time for me to do something.** I would like them to reflect upon the fact that I can—I must—I will... act now. But again, this must be geared to something solid and important for the Church and the Order. If our young friars channel their restlessness and desire for change in this way, then I think their generation will be far superior to our own. I have nothing against restlessness.

§26 *Thank you, Father General.*

You're very welcome, Father.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Mohs, Mayo, ed., **Other Worlds, Other Gods: Adventures in Religious Science Fiction.** Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 264. Cloth, $5.95.

Doxology for the Angelus

Glory be to God the Father
For the mighty power
Which He lent the Virgin Mary
As her nuptial dower.

Glory be to God the Son
For the wisdom deep
Which He stored in Mary's soul
For all her days to keep.

Glory be to God the Spirit
For the love most pure
Which He poured in Mary's heart
Evermore to endure.

Glory to the Father God;
Mary was His Child,
Going about her daily chores
Obedient and mild.

Glory to the only Son;
Mary was His Mother,
Who lavished Him with warmer love
Than ever shall any other.

Glory to the Holy Spirit;
Mary was His spouse,
And swept and kept immaculate
His spiritual house.

Glory be the God Creator
In His daughter pure
Who ate her food with gratitude
Seeing she was so poor.

Glory be the God Redeemer
In His Mother all chaste
Who was a virgin and yet did not
Her woman's body waste.

Glory be the God Consoler
In His willing wife
Who corresponded to His graces
Throughout her blessed life.

Glory be to the Father, Son,
As well as the Holy Ghost
In Mary, tainted human nature's
Solitary boast.

Robert J. Waywood, O. F. M.

Myth and Symbol in Bonaventure

Ewert Cousins

Any comprehensive study of myth and symbol in Western culture should not ignore the rich material from the Middle Ages. Too often the logic of the schoolmen, their metaphysical speculations and their scholastic disputations have distracted the twentieth century philosopher from the importance of symbols in the fabric of medieval life. Medieval man lived in a world that was alive with symbols. All about he saw graphic representations of biblical themes: on frescoes on chapel walls, on the capitals of Romanesque columns, on the façade of Gothic cathedrals, on the pages of illuminated manuscripts. Each year in his liturgical cycle he re-enacted the great events of his religious past: the Exodus, the Last Supper, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Knighthood and courtly love provided him with new variations to ancient mythic themes. Allegory flourished in all genres of literature: in the romances, the songs of the troubadours, the miracle and morality plays. Political and military life were ablaze with color and embellished with symbols of power, courage, and fidelity.

*Research for this paper was, in part, made possible by a Faculty Research Grant of Fordham University.

Dr. Ewert Cousins, Assistant Professor of Theology at Fordham University, *presented this paper at the Forty-fifth Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, held April 12-14, 1971, in Pittsburgh. It will appear in the Association's Proceedings, vol. XLV (1971), and is here reprinted with permission.*

Medieval myths were decidedly Christian and were moulded by the political and economic forces of the times. Yet they were deeply grounded in the past. Their roots plunged back into the Roman and Greek era and to the more primitive mythic substructure of the Indo-European world. They were ultimately grounded in the most basic mythical level of mankind. In many respects, the symbolic world of the Middle Ages was like the cathedral of Chartres. In ancient times the area of Chartres was an important Druid center, where ceremonies were held around a well which has been discovered under the cathedral crypt. In the Gallo-Roman era there were venerated at such sacred areas statues of the mother goddess, at times depicted seated with an infant on her knees. Christian legend claimed that before the birth of the Virgin Mary a pagan king of the region of Chartres, under mysterious inspiration, had a statue sculptured of a woman holding an infant and containing the inscription: **Virgini parituraе.**[1] On the site of the ancient pagan place of worship, Christians built a series of churches where devotion to Mary flourished. Through the centuries the structures became more elaborate until in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there rose the great cathedral Notre Dame de Chartres, with its intricate Gothic - Romanesque design, its elaborate stained glass windows, and its delicate sculpture. Like the cathedral of Chartres, the myths and symbols of the Middle Ages emerged from primitive levels and evolved through suc-

[1] Emile Mâle, **Notre Dame de Chartres** (Paris: Paul Hartmann, 1948), 9-10.

ceeding stages until they flowered in the elaborate synthesis of the high Middle Ages.

Symbols not only played a major role in medieval life, but they were reflected upon with considerable self-consciousness. The architects of the great cathedrals employed a type of symbolic geometry in developing their intricate structures. Theologians explored religious symbols systematically according to the fourfold senses of Scripture. Philosophers developed a metaphysics that was so profoundly in touch with symbols that it not only provided a philosophical explanation of symbolic thinking, but affirmed that the symbol was the key to understanding the deepest level of reality. All of reality: the inner life of God, and the created world, is to be understood according to the metaphysics of expression and representation. The divine life is self-expressive; for the Father begets his Son, who is his Image. The Son contains the archetypes of all possible creation; hence the created world—as a whole and in all of its parts—is the expression of the divinity; for it participates in and reflects the divine Image or Word. Thus the world is seen as a mirror reflecting God. Consequently it is not enough that one understand the internal intelligible structure of finite beings or see them as created by the power of God. One must also see them as **reflections** of God, for this is their deepest reality.

This metaphysics of expressionism and exemplarism was derived from Platonism and neo-Platonism, but was developed with distinctly Christian and medieval dimensions. It was Augustine who formulated Christian Platonism for the West, and from him the tradition flowed into the Middle Ages. It accumulated new currents from Boethius and the pseudo-Dionysius; it was developed systematically by John Scotus Erigena and explored with originality by Anselm. In the twelfth century it was cultivated by the Victorines, from whom it flowed into the early Franciscan school in the thirteenth century. Alexander of Hales passed it on to his pupil Bonaventure, who elaborated it into a typical medieval synthesis. To the earlier Augustinian and Victorine traditions Bonaventure brought specifically Franciscan elements: Francis' love of nature, an interest in individual material objects and a sense of the coincidence of opposites. This exemplaristic tradition, which reaches a certain climax in the early Franciscan school, deserves the attention of those interested in myth and symbol. Unfortunately, the predominance of Aristotelian logic throughout the Middle Ages and

of Aristotelian metaphysics in the late thirteenth century—with its emphasis on efficient, formal and final causality—has tended to obscure the strong current of exemplaristic metaphysics that permeated the earlier Middle Ages and provided a philosophical basis for the rich symbolic life of the period.

These two strands—the rich symbolic life of the Middle Ages and its metaphysics of symbol—provide the two poles of this present study. These two poles converge in a remarkable way in Bonaventure. His metaphysics of symbol is highly developed and integrates systematically the richness of a long tradition. It is of more than historical interest, for it can offer resources to the twentieth - century philosopher seeking to formulate the metaphysical basis of myth. On the other hand, contemporary research into symbol can throw light on Bonaventure. His experience of symbols was so rich that even his elaborated metaphysics did not touch all its facets. By bringing the research of Mircea Eliade and C. G. Jung to bear on Bonaventure's symbolism, we can raise certain questions that hopefully can lead to a development in Bonaventurian thought.

In keeping with the medieval ethos, Bonaventure's writings abound in symbols: biblical images such as the tree of life, the Exodus, the journey, the tabernacle, the mountain; philosophical images such as the sun, light, and darkness used to express basic epistemology; geometrical images such as the circle, the center and lines intersecting in the form of a cross. These images are not used as mere ornaments overlaid on a philosophical or theological treatise; rather they form part of an organic whole. They are intimately connected with the grasp and expression of his metaphysics. Furthermore, in dealing with Bonaventure, we can use the terms **myth** and **symbol** somewhat interchangeably. **Myth** often implies a symbol or symbol-system that springs from a deep level of psychic life and which may retain some of its primitive aspects. While it provides a comprehensive vision to conscious life, it tends to remain at least partially buried in the unconscious. The term **symbol** can refer to all representative expressions; it often suggests not a system but an isolated image and one that is less primitive and more self-conscious than myth. Bonaventure's chief images participate in the qualities of both myth and symbol as described here. They emerge from the deepest strata of the psyche and provide a comprehensive vision; yet they manifest a culti-

vated and not a primitive aspect. They are to a large extent present to conscious reflection and are integrated into his abstract philosophical speculation and his awareness of concrete fact.

In the **Itinerarium Mentis in Deum**,[2] for example, Bonaventure has produced a compact **summa** of his own philosophy and theology that is at the same time a compendium of medieval culture. The work takes the reader on a journey from the external world into the depths of his psyche and to a reflection on the nature of God. It includes a metaphysical analysis of the material world, an epistemological probing into sensation, memory, intellect, and will, and a speculation on God as Being itself and as self-diffusive Good. All of this is conveyed through two major images: (1) the ascent of the mountain where one analyses the image of the six-winged Seraph in the form of the Crucified—the vision that Francis had on Mount Alverno when he received the stigmata; and (2) the symbol of the tabernacle of Moses, which the reader enters in successive stages until he penetrates to the Holy of Holies. In addition, Bonaventure uses many other symbols, such as light and darkness, the passage over the sea, the ladder and the mirror. All are blended into an organic whole and convey to the reader both the primordial power of the mythic level of the psyche and the more cultivated quality of self-conscious symbols.[3]

It is not surprising that beneath this powerful and intricate use of symbols Bonaventure has developed a most articulate metaphysics of symbol. As Gilson says:

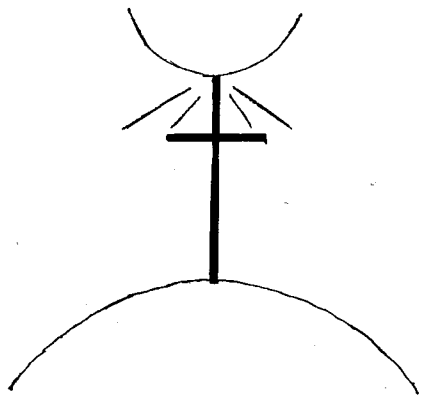
> Far from being an accident or an adventitious element, St. Bonaventure's symbolism has its roots deep in the very heart of his doctrine; it finds its whole rational justification in his fundamental metaphysical principles, and it is itself rigorously demanded by them as the only means of applying them to the real.[4]

What are these metaphysical principles? They are two: the principle of expressionism and that of exemplarism. That these two principles are at the core of Bonaventure's metaphysics is succinctly stated at a key point in his most mature work:

> This is our entire metaphysics: emanation, exemplarity, and fulfillment: to be illumined by spiritual rays and to be led back to the highest reality. And thus you will be a true metaphysician.[5]

For Bonaventure the true metaphysician is the one who traces all created things back to their source—through exemplarity to the divine emanation or expressionism. Through the principle of exemplarity one is led to the principle of expressionism at the core of the divine life itself. It is here at the center of the divine life—in the principle of expressionism—that we find Bonaventure's ultimate basis of symbolism. For Bonaventure all symbolic thinking and all symbolic reflection within creation are grounded in the expression of the Word by the Father.

Bonaventure has a dynamic notion of the divinity. He views the inner life of God as consisting of self-communication, self-diffusion, self-expression. In the **Commentary on the Sentences,** he describes the Father as **fontalis plenitudo**—fountain-fullness, or the one who



as source is pre-eminently fecund.[6] He applies to the Father a principle derived from the **Liber de Causis:** the more primary a thing is the more fecund it is.[7] Since the Father is most primary, he is most fecund. In his fecundity he eternally generates his Son, who is his perfect Image. The Son, then, is both the Image of the Father and his Word through whom he expresses himself in creation.

In the **Itinerarium** Bonaventure applies a principle derived from Anselm to the pseudo-Dionysian notion of God as self-diffusive Good:

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[2] Bonaventure, **Itinerarium Mentis in Deum**, in **S. Bonaventurae Opera** Omnia (10 vols.; Quaracchi, 1882-1902), vol. V, 295-313.

[3] For a study of the symbolism of the **Itinerarium**, see Sister Lillian Turney, C.D.P., "The Symbolism of the Temple in St. Bonaventure's **Itinerarium Mentis in Deum**," unpublished doctoral dissertation (Department of Theology, Fordham University, 1968).

[4] Etienne Gilson, **The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure**, trans. Dom Illtyd Trethowan (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 205.

[5] Bonaventure, **In Hexaëmeron**, coll. I, n. 17 (V, 332); unless otherwise noted, the English translations of Bonaventure are my own.

[6] Bonaventure, **I Sent.** d. 27, p. 1, a. un., q. 2, ad 3 (I, 470-72).

[7] **Ibid.**; cf. **Liber de Causis**, prop. 1. On the sources of Bonaventure's notion of fecundity, see Luc Mathieu, O.F.M., "La Trinité créatrice d'après saint Bonaventure," unpublished doctoral dissertation (Faculté de théologie de l'Institut catholique de Paris, 1960), 29-36.

> Behold, therefore, and observe that the highest good is unqualifiedly that in comparison with which a greater cannot be thought. And this good is such that it cannot rightly be thought of as non-existing, since to be is absolutely better than not to be. And this good exists in such a way that it cannot rightly be thought of unless it is thought of as triune and one. For good is said to be self-diffusive, and therefore the highest good is most self-diffusive.[8]

The absolute self-diffusive nature of God requires that there be a diffusion that is absolute, actual, and eternal. Could creation satisfy this demand? Bonaventure answers in the negative; for creation is limited, like a mere speck before the vastness of the divine fecundity. Hence we must look within the divinity itself. Through revelation we learn that the demands of the divine fecundity are met by the mystery of the Trinity, in the generation of the Son and the procession of the Spirit.[9]

In Bonaventure's view of the relation of philosophy and theology, revelation can bring to greater consciousness a principle that is grasped only vaguely prior to revelation. Hence the revelation of the dynamic self-expressive nature of the divinity in the Trinitarian processions brings to greater realization the principle of the absolute self-diffusiveness of the Good. The significance of this expressionism for a metaphysics of symbol is profound. It means that at its deepest level—within the dynamics of the divine life itself—reality is self-expressive and symbolic. The Son is the expression of the Father; the Father is not knowable in himself, but only through the Son, his Image and Word. As Logos the Son is the principle of intelligibility, but as Image and Word he is not merely a self-contained principle of intelligibility, but the expression and manifestation of the Father, who is silent ground and generative power. With this expressive base within the divinity, the symbolic nature of creation and the function of symbolic thinking are solidly grounded. Since all created things share in the Son, they are symbolic expressions of the Father. Hence symbolic thinking, in its most authentic form, is not a second-best mode of grasping reality, but a penetration of its most profound metaphysical structure and dynamics.

From this divine expressionism flows the principle of exemplarity. In expressing the Son, the Father produces in the Son the archetypes of all that he can create. Bonaventure states: "The Father generated one similar to himself, namely the Word, coeternal with himself; and he expressed his own likeness and as a consequence expressed all the things he could make."[10] Hence it is through the Word that creation takes place, and creation — grounded in the expressiveness of the Word—reflects back to the Word and ultimately to the Father. This theme runs through Bonaventure's writing and is expressed in both technical philosophical terms and images such as the book, the mirror, and light shining through a window. For example, Bonaventure states:

> ...the entire world is a shadow, a road, a vestige, and it is also "a book written without" [Ez. 2:9; Ap. 5:1]. For in every creature there is a shining forth of the divine exemplar, but mixed with darkness. Hence creatures are a kind of darkness mixed with light. Also they are a road leading to the exemplar. Just as you see that a ray of light entering through a window is colored in different ways according to the different colors of the various parts, so the divine ray shines forth in each and every creature in different ways and in different proporeties; it is said in Wisdom: "In her ways she shows herself" [Wis. 6:17]. Also creatures are a vestige of the wisdom of God. Hence creatures are like a kind of representation and statue of the wisdom of God. And in view of all of this, they are a kind of book written without.[11]

Bonaventure divides creatures according to their degree of representing God and classifies them in a descending scale: likeness, image, vestige, and shadow. Shadow refers to a general reflection of God; vestige indicates the reflection of God's power, wisdom, and goodness; image refers to rational creatures and indicates the presence of God reflected within subjectivity in the memory, understanding, and will; likeness refers to the rational creature transformed by grace.[12] Of special interest here is Bonaventure's notion of vestige, since he applies vestige most extensively to the material world and it is the material world that has most direct bearing on myth and symbol. In the **Itinerarium** Bonaventure contemplates the material world as vestige. After a general consideration that visible things reflect the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, Bonaventure embarks on a detailed study of the sevenfold

[8] Bonaventure, **Itinerarium Mentis in Deum**, c. 6, n. 2 (V, 310); Eng. tr. P. Böhner, O.F.M. (Franciscan Institute, 1956), 89. Cf. Anselm, **Proslogion**, cc. 2-5; pseudo-Dionysius, **De Caelesti Hierarchia**, 4.

[9] Bonaventure, **Itinerarium**, 6, 2.

[10] Bonaventure, **In Hexaëmeron**, coll. I, n. 16 (V, 332).

[11] **Ibid.**, XII, 14 (V, 386).

[12] Bonaventure, **Itinerarium**, cc. 1-4 (V, 296-308); **I Sent.**, d. 3, p. 1 (I, 66-80).

properties of creatures: their origin, greatness, multitude, beauty, plenitude, activity, and order. In each case he sees the reflection of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God.[13]

Although Bonaventure's analysis is detailed and profound, I believe that it leaves untouched a major aspect of his own symbolism. It does not uncover the specific nature of the very symbols he uses throughout his writing. Are his own literary and mythic symbols —such as light, darkness, the tabernacle and the mountain—vestiges? From one point of view, they are; but in my opinion this point of view does not exhaust or pinpoint their most significant function. If we bring to bear on Bonaventure's symbolism the research of Mircea Eliade and C. G. Jung, we may be able to complete the picture.[14] Both Jung and Eliade have studied extensively the type of symbol that Bonaventure uses in his writing. For example, Eliade has studied, especially in primitive peoples, the symbolic meaning of sacred space, and specifically of the holy building or temple. By taking into account a vast array of data, Eliade can isolate the common elements and indicate that the temple and its holy precincts are an elaborated form of the more primitive and universal symbol of the center.[15] In the same vein, but dealing within the psyche, Jung can describe the function of symbols for interior life and the process of individuation. Jung indicates that there are certain basic patterns or archetypes such that certain symbols seem to have the same meaning for men throughout time and space. Hence the inner way and the center of the soul are often described by the symbol of entering into a holy building or temple and discovering the center which is simultaneously the center of the soul.[16]

To analyze Bonaventure's symbolism against this background is highly interesting, but for our present concerns we are more interested in the metaphysical implications of such data. The data studied by Eliade and Jung have a common presupposition: that material objects and their varied configuration have a direct bearing on one's spiritual and philosophical awareness and development. Independently of the rational analysis that Bonaventure does of material objects, certain objects — such as light, water, temples, mountains—have an immediate, non-reflexive meaning for man's spirit. This meaning follows certain patterns and dynamics, such as those explored by Jung and Eliade. The goal of this is man's spiritual self-realization, or from a religious perspective his journey to God. If this is the case, then the material world provides resources for spiritual development that are enormously powerful and fruitful. This seems to indicate a much closer interpenetration of matter and spirit in the area of symbolism than Bonaventure articulates. Yet this interpenetration of matter and spirit is quite in harmony with the major structure of Bonaventure's metaphysics and theology. I have argued elsewhere that the most basic logic operating in Bonaventure's thought is that of the coincidence of opposites.[17] The interpenetration of matter and spirit in symbol and myth, then, would be a further instance of the universal logic in Bonaventure's system. Furthermore, from a theological point of view, this interpenetration of matter and spirit would harmonize with Bonaventure's notion of Christ as center of the universe. Just as Christ the mediator integrates the human and the divine through matter, so the symbol functions in terms of man's spiritual development.[18]

If Bonaventure's thought is thus extended as a result of contemporary research into symbolism, it can provide not only additional resources for understanding the role of symbol in medieval life, but also possibilities for contemporary philosophical probing of the nature of myth and symbol.

[13] Bonaventure, **Itinerarium**, 1, 13-14 (V, 298-99).

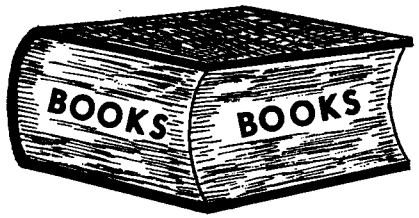
[14] For an application of the research of Eliade and Jung to Bonaventure's symbolism, see my study, "Mandala Symbolism in the Theology of Bonaventure," **University of Toronto Quarterly**, XL (1971), 185-200.

[15] Mircea Eliade, **Patterns in Comparative Religion**, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958); **The Sacred and the Profane**, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1959).

[16] C. G. Jung, **Psychology and Alchemy**: vol. XII **The Collected Works of C. G. Jung**, trans. R. F. C. Hull (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953).

[17] Ewert Cousins, "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of Saint Bonaventure," **Franciscan Studies**, XXVIII (1968), 27-45; "La 'Coincidentia Oppositorum' dans la théologie de Bonaventure," **Etudes franciscaines**, XVIII (Supplément annuel, 1968), 15-31.

[18] On Christ as center, see Bonaventure, **In Hexaëmeron**, coll. I (V, 329-35). If one were to emphasize this incarnational and Christocentric approach to symbols, he would have to develop a doctrine of creation that would give the same emphasis to the incarnate Christ that Bonaventure gives to the eternal Logos.



Prophetic Intervention in the History of Man. By Evode Beaucamp, O F. M. Trans. Paul Garvin. Staten Island, N. Y.: Alba House, 1971. Pp. xvii-230. Cloth, $4.95.

Reviewed by Father Thomas E. Crane, Professor of Sacred Scripture at St. John Vianney Seminary, East Aurora, New York.

It is especially gratifying and reassuring to find a solid and reliable discussion on the prophets by a biblist who has already demonstrated his expertise in previous works. Such is the case here. Beaucamp, who has already given us other works pertaining to other OT topics, here gives a fine introduction to the principal prophets of Israel. Although he omits to mention the less well known prophets, we find him treating at length Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the second Isaiah. In addition, he offers an introduction which provides a sort of theological background for the preaching of the prophets—i. e., the fundamental principle, as he calls it: the personal covenant relationship between God and the people of Israel.

Beaucamp follows the methodology of contemporary exegetes in interpreting the biblical passages according to the original sense proper to the minds of the respective authors. He does not exegete in the strict sense of the term; rather he comments on the theological content and implications of the prophetic oracles. For this reason the book is not a first introduction to the prophetic literature; rather it presupposes that the reader is already familiar, for the most part, with the biblical text and with the principal lines of exegesis. Beaucamp follows in general the mainstream of contemporary Catholic exegetes. Thus his book serves as a most rewarding aid to review and summary of the prophetic tradition.

The author continually emphasizes the recurring theme of God's self-manifestation in the historical vicissitudes of Israel's historical experience. Thus the title could also be "Divine Intervention . . ." since this is the principal lesson that Beaucamp sees in the prophets' preaching. Concomitant with this, of course, is the lamentable record of infidelity which the chosen people builds for itself. This study contains an extensive treatment of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's preaching of the New Covenant as a supreme act of God's mercy towards his people.

There is no need to attempt artificial criticism of a work which shows such obvious competence. Frequent references to Islam indicate that Beaucamp has done some special study of it. The last chapter—on Israel and Christianity—seems, however, to lack the clarity of the rest of the book; and the chronological table at the end omits the prophets! The translation is generally smooth, but it is puzzling that the translator (or author?) spells the divine name "Jahveh" in clear contrast to the prevailing "Y(J)ahweh." Since this occurs on about every page, it is difficult to appreciate, if not downright annoying. Aside from this single noticeable exception, the translator uses the CCD (NAB) version for the biblical passages.

The book is most worthwhile, and will be rewarding, especially as a sort of "refresher" course on the prophetic tradition. This reviewer recommends it highly.

The Dark Night of Resistance. By Daniel Berrigan, S. J. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. vi-181. Cloth, $5.95.

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

The allusion in the title of Father Berrigan's latest book is just what it appears to be, and I think it is perfectly apt. Doubtless many will be scandalized by the sustained parallel between John of the Cross and contemporary resistance to military and economic tyranny. One would think, however, that the number of such readers is rapidly diminishing as the breadth of administrative duplicity and legislative incompetence becomes clearer.

Dan Berrigan's tone has, by the time he has gotten to the writing of **Dark Night,** assumed a certain stridency that some may take for the holier-than-thou stance of an **illuminatus.** I remain more firmly convinced than ever, to the contrary, that his voice is that of a true prophet. To the charge that his criticism is bitingly negative and devoid of practicable alternatives, I would reply simply that it is not encumbent on the prophet to furnish political blueprints.

To outline the contents of **Dark Night** is surely superfluous at this stage; beyond the fact that St. John's own mystic poetry serves as framework, one need record only the impression that these chapters form but another page in Dan Berrigan's on-going diary. They were written during the author's period "underground," prior to his recent arrest; and, although both prose and poetry often reach impassioned heights, the reader should not expect the sort of refined style possible only to an author with sufficient time and leisure to rework his manuscript.

Such considerations could not matter less in the present context, of course, where passion and not elegance is the keynote. I sincerely hope that **The Dark Night of Resistance** will have the wide audience it deserves, and that it will help to provide at least some spark of light in what has really become, in America, a very dark night indeed.

Authority and Rebellion: The Case for Orthodoxy in the Catholic Church. By Charles E. Rice. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 252. Cloth, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., associate editor of this Review.

By and large this book is a rather non-polemical, reasoned plea for (1) the acceptance on the part of Catholics of Pope Paul's "Credo of the People of God" and "Humanae Vitae"; (2) the resolute action of the bishops in ensuring loyalty to these magisterial pronouncements in the pulpit and in the classroom. The author, a lawyer-teacher, sees

the current troubles in the Church as springing from two roots: the rejection of authority and the widespread absorption by Catholics of "relativist and secularist principles of theology and philosophy" (p. 57). He details the harms caused by these trends in the areas of respect for life, ecumenism, liturgy, clerical life, Catholic schools, and church-state relationships. In each instance, he carefully sets forth the balanced position of the magisterium's orthodox teaching and contrasts it with the unorthodox views of extremists of all ilks. Professor Rice takes pains to reject the "liberal-conservative" dichotomy in favor of the "orthodox-unorthodox" division when speaking of matters of faith: e. g., those subjects treated in the Credo of Paul VI. (He does allow the aptness of the former designations, however, with regard to such matters as support of Cesar Chavez, welfare legislation, etc.—i. e., matters accurately described as those of "policy."

The strength of the book is in the cases against abortion and contraception, and situation ethics, where the authentic magisterial pronouncements (many of which have been ignored by so-called "Catholic" moralists) are set forth plainly, and the observations of non-Christians in support of these are added —e. g., Ghandi's condemnation of contraception and Rabbi Herberg's attack on moral relativism and secularism. Strong, too, are the author's presentation of genuine ecumenism and his various proposals (tax credits, vouchers) for aid to Catholic education, aid which would be clearly constitutional.

The description of the state of Catholic education at every level, and the reminder that some Catholic parents may be obliged in conscience to withdraw their children from Catholic schools to insure their being given an orthodox Catholic education is alarming and, I believe, should be. The author's attack on the parochial-school bureaucracy is, however, too facile; and his stance aganst sex-education seems tortured. The real difficulties in Catholic education today are highlighted, I think, by the fact that the catechetical material recommended by the author is precisely the material not recommended by (e. g.) the Diocese of Albany. Diocese-to-diocese consultation is surely needed.

The chapter on Liturgy is clearly aimed at the opponents of the new Mass, and Rice does a nice job in showing that the orthodox position is acceptance of it. He is not hard-line enough, in my opinion, in this regard; for in principle recognition of papal authority with **de facto** insistence that he reverse his views is to me an unorthodox stance with regard to liturgy as well as with respect to contraception.

Two excellent points made by the author should have been developed more fully: (1) that "non-infallible" does not mean "uncertain," and (2) that the duty to preach the gospel is prior to any obligation to leave people in "good faith."

Authority and Rebellion (the book is not as triumphalistic as its title might imply) is a genuine contribution to Catholic thought and life. It is worth reading.

The Challenges of Life. By Ignace Lepp. Trans. Dorothy White; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Image Books, 1971. Pp. 200. Paper, $1.25.

Reviewed by Father Robert Waywood, O.F.M., M.A. (English, Catholic University of America), Assistant Professor of English, Siena College.

Ignace Lepp, noted author of **The Depths of the Soul** and numerous other influential works, regarded this book under review as his most important literary production. It is certainly his most ambitious. For in this work Father Lepp, filled with years of clinical experience in depth-psychology and steeped in existential literature, both ancient and contemporary (from Augustine to Sartre), attempted before he died to distill his encyclopedic lore and to prescribe a cure for the soul-paralysis of modern man.

In fourteen closely reasoned chapters, Father Lepp elaborates his thesis: the benumbing perplexities of twentieth-century life can be met and mastered only when man has been galvanized by freely committing himself to a life-long vocation, realistically accepting the temporal, cultural conditions of his existence, passionately abandoning himself to society's concerns, and fearlessly facing the unforeseeable vicissitudes of his and mankind's future.

Each chapter, a veritable bolus of thought, not only pieces in the terms of his proposition but also verifies, in strikingly original contexts, practically the whole Decalogue. By continually displaying a close conversancy with and a deep empathy toward "outsiders" such as Hegel, Heidegger, and Sartre, Father Lepp escapes the pontifical posture. By regularly registering concrete instances from recent European history, especially those surrounding the Second World War, and from his own private life, particularly regarding his friendship with Teilhard de Chardin, he rescues his writing from tedious abstraction. And by consistently invoking salient words from his favorite life-philosophers, Augustine, Pascal, and Kierkegaard, as well as the catechistic lives of spiritual giants, like Saint Francis and Ghandi, he redeems his argument from subjectivity.

Admittedly, as mentioned above, the author has only **attempted** a solution to today's existential problems. The chapters of his book are very much like essays (attempts). None of them makes exactly engrossing reading, in this reviewer's opinion; they obviously belong to De Quincey's category, "literature of knowledge," not "literature of power." (And this, despite what seems an excellent and idiomatic translation from the German.) Like such literature, the book is fated to be improved upon and even replaced, as is not the case with most of the other selections that have been republished as Image Books. Where there may be some room for improvement, I would now like to pinpoint.

Prescinding from the prosaic, even prolix, expression in the work, I found the chapters uneven in content-quality. Chapter XIV, the last, on the "last challenge" of death, is penetrating and original, whereas Chapter XII, which extols life propelled by a grand passion, barely escapes self-contradiction, belabors the obvious, and sounds cranky and arbitrary. Throughout the work Father Lepp tantalizes the reader by raising soul-rocking, sophisticated, up-to-date quandaries and brusquely answering them with creaky, orthodox platitudes. Also, the critical reader is left with a vague malaise over the author's competency; for the arguments are drawn almost exclusively from theodicy, rational psychology, and traditional Christian ethics—not from anthropology, sociology, or depth-psychology, the domains of Father Lepp's professional training. Finally, the author seems to be compulsively impatient with all forms of moral mediocrity: pragmatism, compromise, conformity, indecision, half-heartedness —reminding me, painfully, of a naive retreat-master with his spiritual nostrum that went, "Take one step past mediocrity, and you've got it made."

CORRECTION

Through mechanical oversight, the final two reviews last month were attributed to the wrong reviewers. Fr. Julian Davies reviewed **Come Blow Your Mind**; and Fr. Theodore Cavanaugh, **Christ Is Alive!**

Some, like myself, have come to learn that a smidgen of compromise and a soupçon of non-availability are indispensable for survival, and have opted to pursue a holiness-in-the-humdrum path to sanctity.

Infallible? An Inquiry. By Hans Küng. Trans. Edward Quinn. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 262. Cloth, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father Joseph T. Keely, O.F.M., a member of the Theology Faculty of Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

By the time this review sees the light of the printed page, the amount of reviews of Hans Küng's book, **Infallible? An Inquiry,** will have surpassed the total number of pages in the book to be reviewed. This says something about the interest generated by the book, but not necessarily about the contents of the book or the reviews, for that matter. It comes as a welcome relief that a theologian of Küng's stature would finally lock horns with this touchy problem once phrased by Pilate as "What is truth?" Who can, indeed, tell another what is, absolutely, the truth?

The book has great possibility in that it does ask some very fundamental questions. It fails in some of its fundamental approaches, however; Küng seems to me to take an approach that nearly destroys any real, practical teaching role in the church. It is important to note the word **practical** here, however, since there is no evidence of a theoretical move to impugn the teaching role of the Church. As John L. McKenzie most aptly points out in his review of the book, one wonders if there is a difference between infallibility and indefectibility. There are some other questions, too: e. g., an epistemological one raised by Küng's first chapter—Can one know the truth, and how is this done? I feel that this question must be answered affirmatively as to its first part, after which the second part can be discussed in light of various theories. But this does not seem to be Küng's position.

In certain places, such as pp. 90ff., I wonder if we are not in a problem of historicism. Can a doctrine be affirmed and the historical facts surrounding the event presented to demonstrate why this was a most fortuitous time for such action—and yet the reason for the affirmation really be something fundamentally different? In other words, are we moved by historical determinism? Is the Spirit held to this? The problem of faith seems to be lodged in this whole book. Surely I do not impugn the faith of Küng—but his reasoning leads me to want to distinguish faith from knowledge quite sharply even while admitting the "reasonableness" of faith.

Perhaps the most important of the many questions raised by the book is that of the use of the Church's ordinary teaching function. This has, as Küng more than implies, been abused. How can one go further in assent to truth in a church that may be losing its own credibility? What the church has affirmed over the centuries ought to be classified in two main categories: doctrine based on clear understanding and teaching based on faulty understanding. But who wants to admit that?

Infallible? An Inquiry has, at any rate, brought to the fore an important topic and one of especial interest in an ecumenical age (assuming that the latter is more than a passing fad). Küng has done a great service in lending his theological expertise to the subject. Not that he answers the question, of course—but he does help the reader move forward in some small measure in the quest of his faith for understanding.