COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover for the September issue of THE CORD was drawn by Mr. James Buckley. The illustrations are by Sister Marie Monica, O.S.F. (p. 267) and Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A. (p. 279).

the CORD

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EDITORIAL

Being and Feeling

It is almost a commonplace that our age has rediscovered feelings. In the Church, the rediscovery is perhaps most evident in the contemporary music we often hear at Mass (recently I distributed Holy Communion to the strains of "Feeling groovy" accompanied by the rhythmic stomping of feet), in the popularity of sensitivity workshops, in the obsession with the interpersonal. Then too, we hear talk about "gut-level communication," a "third way," "encountering God in the other." Love, whether of God or of man, has become something literally tangible. Unfortunately, however, the equation has been too often reversed and the touchable identified with the Divine.

We have already written (THE CORD, Feb., 1971) of the encroachment of horizontal relationships on the transcendent relationship that is the substance of the Liturgy. The invasion is also entering the realm of prayer. One student was heard exclaiming near the end of a recent vital, many-sided conversation: "This is religion; this is God." I am sure God was there, but I wonder if it was He that the young man was talking about, for he admitted that he couldn't address Him directly. We religious can fall into a similar trap. We may feel really good after a warm and engrossing group discussion—"Better than any retreat," we say—but we have to remember that like Jesus, our model, we have to say some things to the Father that only each individual can say, of and by himself, in solitude: "Not my will," e.g., "but thine be done."

It is true that feelings which are neurotically repressed can contribute to the formation of a personality that is alcoholic or sexually aberrant. But sensible suppression of feelings is entirely different. It is inhuman, as well

as unChristian, to let the first impulses of anger erupt upon the telephone operator who has cut us off, or the student or colleague who has failed to understand us. And it is silly and inappropriate to let the first impulses of affection issue in action, for compulsive affectivity, which is what surrender to total spontaneity is, is just as inauthentic as stoical passivity. A real person governs feeling by reason. The late Romano Guardini said something pertinent when he reminded us that our feelings are those of a person sickened by original (and personal) sin. As the feelings of a sick person cannot be trusted, so the human feelings of all of us, who have been hurt by sin, have to be tested by reason. The history of the Church bears abundant testimony that spontaneity, far from being next to godliness, is often far removed from it.

The feelings of fondness we experience in the presence of persons of the opposite sex, although they can and often do reveal something of God's own lovableness, are quite easily escalated beyond all measure, as departures from religious and priestly ranks indicate. To look for a psychological intimacy analogous to the marital and expect physical intimacy which is only fraternal, is to misunderstand the psycho-physical character of feelings and to misread human nature. To count on sincerity and religious devotion to suspend the normal working of human psychology is presumptuous as well as naive. To consciously cultivate a close man-woman relationship as a means of holiness is precisely a step the religious or priest has promised not to take. The successes of the saints in such relationships, which they certainly did not pursue as many today seem desperately bent on doing, are no more for our imitation than their superhuman prayers and penances.

The great admiration of our age for feeling must not deceive us. Feelings are a part, not the totality, of our person. God speaks through feelings authenticated by reason and the Spirit—not just through feelings alone.

F. Julian Davies ofm

Saint Francis and the Modern World

Constantine Koser, O. F. M.

Does Saint Francis still have something worthwhile to say in this tremendous transition in which we find ourselves? How do our Franciscan regulations line up with the demands of life in terms of the Gospel and of modern reality? These questions require an answer.

Let us listen lovingly and faithfully to see what the authentic Francis himself has to say to us. Then we shall turn our eyes to the spiritual interpretation and the practices of Franciscan life which the 1967 General Chapter has laid down in our present Constitutions. In this way we shall be able to determine whether, and to what extent, they can be a secure guide for life with God in the Franciscan Order.

Preliminary Observations

Saint Francis lived in a time when the raging waters of transition flooded everything. No current carried him along, however; he was a maker, not a follower, of the currents of change. His life and spirituality attest to this. No one could call them a simple shoring up or restoration of tottering Christianity. They are a vigorous thrust of the Gospel into the mainstream of thirteenth century reality, a thrust at the same time critical and receptive, in accord with the principle: "Test everything; retain what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21).

Francis' movement clings so faithfully to the Gospel and the Church, and has such a healthy understanding of the realities of his age, that it inspired a host of imitators. What Francis thought and said (and above all what he lived) is perfectly in tune with his times, but even more, its validity extends beyond the past into the present and into the future.

This article is an edited version of the third chapter of Father Constantine Koser's book, Our Life with God, *translated by Justin Bailey, O.F.M., and published by the Franciscan Publishers, Pulaski, Wis. See the feature review in our July issue for further details.*

A Man of His Times

We have a commitment to live Francis' life in our day, but we cannot dare to duplicate every detail, or to produce a stereotyped copy. This is not what the return to the sources means. The times are different, the situation is different. He had his own personality, we have ours.

Although Saint Francis lived in a time of profound change and was in fact one of the great sources of that change, he still shared with his contemporaries, innovator and conservative alike, the same age-old vision of the world. We do not. One of the most marked characteristics of our age is that the old world has collapsed. This constitutes a big difference between Francis and ourselves, and we should not lose sight of it.

Furthermore, because all the changes in his era transpired in terms of a traditional worldview, Francis never had to deal with many of our most pressing problems: he never ran into practical or explicit atheism, secularization, desacralization; he knew nothing of radical prejudices in favor of the subjective, of evolution, of purely human values, or of the conflict between horizontalism and verticalism. Sociology and psychology as we know them did not even exist.

We would fail against the truth if we let false devotion and imagined loyalty turn Francis into a super-prophet with knowledge of, and answers to, problems he never heard of. And failing against the truth we would be failing against one of the Poverello's most pronounced qualities: his unshakeable honesty and sincerity.

A Man for Our Times

In spite of this strong restriction, Saint Francis, as his ever-vivid effect on souls attests, continues to be a model for the man of today, and especially for the Franciscan. Notwithstanding, to keep him effective as our model, we must undertake the task of critical and cautious updating. We have to distinguish those of his values which are perennial from those which are not. We have to understand the necessity and the manner of bring-

ing the lasting values into our own scheme of things, and we have to accomplish this properly.

If we have to do this with the Scriptures, and even with the Gospels, it is no wonder that we have to do it with the spirituality of Saint Francis. To do so does not belittle Francis; it is to follow him truly. However, the reasons for doing this with the Scriptures are not the same as for doing it with Francis.

In the Scriptures God adapted himself to the knowledge, mentality and outlook of his chosen spokesmen, even though he knew all that we know today and much more. The accommodation does not result from God's limitations, but from his mysterious, freely chosen plan. It would be ridiculous to say the same of Francis. He was truly a medieval man, a man of his times; he accepted the worldview, the dogmas, the mentality, the attitudes of his times, even though he was outstanding enough to belong to all times. Sometimes misguided filial devotion falsely attempts to "modernize" Saint Francis by applying to him the techniques of scriptural interpretation. But it is false devotion, and in the end it does not convince anybody. Deep down it is disloyal to the Poverello's integrity and humble truthfulness.

To translate Francis in terms of the modern world is a very delicate undertaking. There have been partially successful attempts, and there have been attempts whose results were more apparent than real, and there have been attempts which caricatured rather than translated the Little Poor Man. Mindful of this, we know how delicate a task we undertake, and how great the danger of failure. All the more reason for proceeding with prudent caution, keeping our eyes fixed on reality, on the previous attempts, on what we know of Francis himself.

Although we frankly admit our debt to all who have tried to understand and interpret the Little Poor Man of Assisi, the necessary limitations of this work demand that we keep to Saint Francis' own writings. Actually, however, the few and brief works that Francis has left us do provide all the essentials. He had that "rich poverty" of saying much and saying the essential "briefly and simply."[1] Would that we too, had a bit of the Poverello's rich poverty!

Francis and God

Saint Francis lived in a time of most profound changes, but within the continuing age-old worldview. Granted the truth of this, we still have to realize that the first tremors of the earthquake which toppled this universal outlook were already being felt in Francis' time.

[1] St. Francis, Testament, in B. Fahy and P. Hermann, O.F.M., eds., **The Writings of St. Francis of Assisi** (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1964), p. 69. All references, below, to St. Francis' Writings, are to this edition.

The world of feudal society was collapsing, and along with it the feudalistic expression of life with God was also tottering. The new world was already being born, the same new world which still is being born in our day.

Medieval but Open

Francis felt a powerful attraction for feudal life: he wanted to be a knight, he wanted to become a lord. This ambition inspired the dreams of his youth. Yet, in his conversion he broke with his environment, he broke away from the "system" of his day. His "conversion-breakaway" cost him dearly: standard of living, comfort, worldly position, goods, home, family, friends, the security of the tried and true.

But it did indeed put him outside the system and gave him a chance to assume an active role in fashioning the new world. Stripping himself before the bishop of Assisi not only marked a turning point in his life, but also revealed to Francis a whole new world and a new direction, infinitely rich in its consequences, although still buried in the darkness of doubt, anxiety and the dangerous unknown. "There was no one to tell me what I should do."[2] Francis passed from this darkness to the light at the cost of successive conversions. The centuries have only confirmed his way.

Francis' was a new spirituality, a new interior world, a life with God with a new stamp. Seven and a half centuries later there are a lot of things evident to us that were not even dreamt in Francis' day. So very true. All the greater the courage of the Little Poor Man to follow a glimmer determinedly along a vague and untravelled path.

Francis the Realist

Saint Francis' conversion-breakaway also touched upon the "system" of relationships to the extra-sensory world. This does not mean denial of the extra-sensory world, because it does exist. It implies a critical review of ideas, a readjustment, a new vision of reality, a new practical penetration of the world. This work also began in the time of Francis, and we can see it in his teachings, in his life, in his behavior, in his attitudes. He would not admit subservience to any malicious spirits; he rejected many magical practices common in his day. He moved about confidently in the real world, accepting the realities of the world as it is. To go over his life from this point of view is very worthwhile. For Francis shines forth as amazingly modern. That is why so many men today instinctively respect, venerate, and identify with the Poverello.

The **Canticle of the Sun** reveals a man who lives in a real world of sun, moon, stars, earth, wind, fire, men, sin, hatred, love and death as realities; the sun is the sun and the moon is the moon, not just symbols of something else. A modern lesson; no, let us say a **peren-**

[2] **Ibid.**

nial lesson. Let us bring this lesson into our reflections, into practical action, into powerful and courageous living. Then we shall find out just how very liberating, innovative, intense and vivifying it can be in our life with God.

The Hidden God

We have no information that Francis ever suffered from doubts about the existence of God. Every account presents him as secure and safe from any problems in this unpleasant field. Nevertheless, even for him, in his most intimate and most exalted relationship, God was the "hidden God." He went through all the tortures of the "absence" of God.

We know very little about his most intimate experiences. He never described them, as others have; nor does he seem to have confided to his friends on this point. Still, from the way his confidants describe his anguish, his anxiety, his discouragement, his dryness, his doubts regarding salvation, his struggles in prayer; from our veiled information about his sufferings in the stigmatization on Alverna, and not only bodily suffering; from what we know of the sorrows of San Damiano—blind, aching, disillusioned, discouraged, troubled in every way; from what we can read between the lines in the two years he lived after receiving the Wounds of Christ: all this shows that he also had the powerful and profound, the sublime but agonizing experiences that others have named the dark night of the soul, or have tried to describe by using shockingly negative expressions such as "God is nothingness."

Current comment and interpretations of these aspects of Francis' life leave much to be desired in comparison with the facts we know. There really is so much more depth to plumb in the sparse confidences and veiled allusions that have come down to us about this "secret of the King." Saint Francis took to heart his own admonition: "Blessed the religious who keeps God's marvelous doings to himself."[3]

We must meditate, we must try to penetrate the allusions, we must make a real effort to understand the message contained in few, and often naive, words and veiled references. Saint Francis, just as he was, can be our example, our secure guide, our bright light on the "rough road" (Mt. 7:14) of the spiritual climb, even if we begin our journey to life with God in the far-away country of weak faith, or of doubt and uncertainty regarding the existence of God. This, too, is a kind of dark night, a special dark night which God has reserved for the men of our time.

God Made Visible

For Francis, it is Christ who bridges the abyss in the mystery of the "hidden God." The role of Christ in the Poverello's life is many-sided and indescribable in its riches of profound, powerful, vital

[3] Admonition 28, p. 87; cf. Admonition 22, p. 85.

aspects. A case in point is the beautiful expression of the Preface of Christmas: "In him we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see." The theme: "We see our God made visible" is taken up by Francis in his First Admonition. It is a very original exposition in that the Poverello reveals the depth of his own spirituality by linking the mystery of the Incarnation to that of the Eucharist.

He wrote: "He shows himself to us in this Sacred Bread just as once he appeared to his apostles in real flesh. With their own eyes they saw only his flesh, but they believed that he was God, because they contemplated him with the eyes of the spirit. We, too, with our own eyes, see only bread and wine, but we must see further and firmly believe that this is his most holy Body and Blood, living and true."[4]

We may find it surprising that a man like Francis, whom we would naturally imagine to have direct and easy access to God, would look upon Christ and the Eucharist in this way, would reflect one of the common man's approaches to life with God: Christ and the Eucharist as an external support for our affirmation of faith and our access to the Father. It is not for nothing that the saint insists upon using in this same First Admonition quotations which emphasize the experiences of the "hidden God." He cites: "The Lord of lords... who dwells in unapproachable light" (1 Tim. 6:16); "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth" (Jn. 4:24); "No one has ever seen God" (Jn. 1:18). He adds his own commentary: "Since the Son is like the Father, he too is seen by nobody otherwise than the Father is seen, or otherwise than the Holy Spirit is seen."[5]

It is in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist that the path is cleared to the "hidden God." The same thought blossoms again at the end of Francis' life, in his Testament: "In this world I cannot see the most high Son of God with my own eyes, except for his most holy Body and Blood..."[6]

"My God and My All!"

Without starting, as far as we know, from difficulties about the existence of God, but nevertheless passing through mystical nights in his ascent to God, Francis arrived at a most unusual degree of fulfillment of the Great Commandment: to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's mind (Mt. 22:37). In Saint Francis the whole man—all his powers and all his capacities, his body and soul, his intelligence and will, his emotions and affections—everything was absorbed in his life with God.

In the 23rd chapter of his Rule of 1221, Francis encourages his friars: "With all our hearts and all our souls, all our minds, and all our

[4] Admonition 1, p. 79.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Testament, p. 67.

strength, all our power and all our understanding, with every faculty and every effort, with every affection and all our emotions, with every wish and desire, we should love our Lord and God who has given and gives us everything, body and soul, and all our life."[7] We should see the same spirit in the opening words of this long chapter: "Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father, holy and just, Lord, King of heaven and earth, we give you thanks for yourself. Of your own holy will you created all things spiritual and physical..."[8]

Francis and Man

What we fear about life with God and the excuse we make for running away from it is alienation, crushing verticalism, and repression of man and his world. But it is the very life with God, intense and sublime as we find it in Saint Francis, which disproves the fears and refutes the excuses. Life with God makes us more human and makes us find the true depths, the greatest depth, of love of man.

Francis Encounters Reality in God

In the love of God and of Christ —Son of God, Man, Child, Crucified, Eucharistic Bread—Francis found the basis of his respectful and courteous love of Mary, the Virgin Mother of Jesus.[9] In life with God he encountered the angels and saints in a deep-rooted, gentlemanly love.[10] In life with God he met the Church; not the abstract Church, but the concrete: the Pope, the bishops, the priests, the friars, the nuns, the laity.[11]

Francis encountered all men in God. Out of the bottomless lake of the love of God flowed the stream of the Poverello's warmth, understanding, and tender compassion toward his companions, toward those who suffer, toward those who believe, toward those who are still far from God, toward all men. His attitude toward man takes its roots from the Gospel and also from his own experiences in his own times. Yet, seven and a half centuries later, it seems to be more than modern; it seems stimulating and revolutionary! It will never grow old.

Especially revealing is the way Francis faced the old but ever-new problem of obedience and authority. If we read his writings and ponder the episodes of his life we come to realize that, while he considered obedience a virtue limited only by the conscience's relationship with God, his principal preoccupation was with the exercise of authority. He wished it to respect the person,

7 Rule of 1221, ch. 23, p. 51.
8 **Ibid.**, p. 50.
9 Cf. Salutation of the Blessed Virgin, pp. 135-36.
10 Rule of 1221, ch. 23, pp. 50-51.
11 **Ibid.**

to be full of understanding and constructive love, to preserve the liberty of the subject, to seek means of establishing co-responsibility and collaboration without resorting to force or harshness.[12]

Francis and Person-Group Tensions

Being himself a strong and independent personality, as few others have ever been, Francis always esteemed the value of the person, with its rights and singular endowments. His whole life, his whole spirituality reveal profound and loving respect for the human element in everything.

Francis was also a group-oriented person. We see him, before his "conversion," a happy-go-lucky and stimulating companion at festivals, an encouraging and comforting friend in prison. After becoming "converted" he attracted, without wanting to, his companions; together with them he began a very singular kind of common life, built upon spontaneity, respect, mutual attention, with flourishes of loving courtesy, and with reciprocal love as the binding force of the whole brotherhood.

This is the way he expressed it in his Rule: "Wherever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family... if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly."[13]

To look out for the rights of the "other," and not of oneself; to take care that each one has room for his own life, for his person, and that each can find security and a welcome in his brother: for Francis this is the one and only basis for societies and groups. This is the one and only basis he desired for his Order. This is Gospel teaching learned and lived intensely by Saint Francis.

A great lesson for all men, but particularly for us Franciscans. So evident is the lesson that even

12 Rule of 1221, ch. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13; pp. 34ff. Rule of 1223, ch. 7, 10; pp. 62-63. Letter to a Minister, p. 110. Admonitions 3-5, pp. 79-80.
13 Rule of 1223, ch. 6, pp. 61-62.

"outsiders" can see it in Francis and love him for it. We must understand that fraternal life springs from life with God. He who walks ever forward on this road will become a man of today, of any "today," no matter how far in the future it lies.

A Brother to All

Within the context of brotherly love for men in God, Francis lived out the tensions between solitude and community in life with God. He felt the tension. The enticement of contemplative life in solitude always tempted him to abandon the apostolic impulse. It was ever a relief to shake the clinging dust of the road from his bare feet as he returned to his life of contemplation. He loved above all else to be alone with God and a few of his brothers in solitude. This always shines forth in his writings and in all the testimonies about him.

Nevertheless, we shall never find any reference in which Saint Francis displays a negative attitude toward life in brotherhood with all men, nor any suspicion that life among men constitutes an obstacle to life with God. He knows that if his life with God suffers from his life with men, it is because he, Francis, has not attained the proper degree of either. And so he flees to the broad spaces of solitude to fill himself with God in order to return and mingle again with men, all men.

The Poverello never knew brotherhood as a merely natural, simply horizontal relationship. Brotherhood for him originates in life with God and always has an ecclesial aspect. His catholicity, that is, his adhesion to a concrete Church which he accepted as being founded by Christ, knew no bounds. His relationship to the Church always colored his relationships with men. In fact, we might say that his relationships with men were an aspect of his relationship with the Church.

Francis and the Church

He accepted and loved the Church just as he found her. Not that he closed his eyes to defects, to stain, to degeneracy in the Church; on the contrary, perhaps no one was ever more sensitive to these things than Francis. Seeing them, he set out to reform them by love, not by ranting and raving, as did so many other "reformers." And his love did succeed in working profound improvements in the Church.

Francis, as far as we know, never manifested any conscious theological ideas concerning the People of God or the Mystical Body of Christ. Nor do we ever hear of his preaching the doctrines of sanctifying grace and incorporation into Christ. He had heard about them, of course, but in the same vague way as most people of his day. What he learned, however, he practiced so intensely that he simply passed beyond the level of theological teaching in his day, and became a living doctrine, a "thoroughly catholic man."

Here again there is a powerful lesson for our times. We have to live our present knowledge of the Church as Francis lived his. We have to improve the image of the Church by our lives until all men see what the Church really is: a splendid revelation of God and Christ to all men. We have to make our own ecclesial lives an invitation to all men for the life with God.

Francis and Prayer

We find the Poverello's prayer life situated at the exact point where the private and ecclesial aspects of personal and group relationships converge. When we say "personal" prayer we usually mean "non-official," or "non-liturgical" prayer. This is mere terminology, but many times leads us into the error of forgetting that prayer is not prayer unless it is personal. Even official, liturgical prayer must be **our** prayer, or it is not prayer at all, at least as far as we are concerned. Francis agreed wholeheartedly with the ancient maxim: "Match your heart with your voice."

Prayer in common, using preestablished formulas, only becomes a genuine expression of the soul after so much personal prayer in the sense of individual communication with God. Still, to pray as God wills us to pray, we cannot eliminate "the others" from our prayer, we cannot expect a "private audience" with God.

In Saint Francis we see intense cultivation of private prayer, but at the same time strong love of official, liturgical, communitarian prayer. He understood that this kind of prayer with its prearranged formulas cannot be true prayer without the nourishment of personal prayer. For this reason he was careful not to overload the day with prescribed common prayers, leaving much time for reflection, meditation, intimate and spontaneous conversation with God. Because he lived intensely with God, he felt no difficulty with the preestablished formulas of the Church, but simply integrated them easily into the mainstream of his interior life.[14]

Francis and Devotion

With his respect for, and sensitivity to, genuine values, Francis avoided the pitfalls of devotionalism while cultivating his favorite devotions. He never forgot to give priority to "the spirit of prayer and devotion." His criterion was never the number nor the length of the "devotion," but **devotion**, which of course means profound dedication to God.

His intense love of prayer never conflicted with his deep-seated respect for work; but at the same time he warned that "the friars... should work in a spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion to which every temporal consideration must be subordinate."[15] Excellent advice today and always.

[14] Cf. the Praises, the Paraphrase of the Our Father, and the Office of the Passion.

[15] Rule of 1223, ch. 5, p. 61.

With his ecclesial leanings and his love for all men, the Poverello always felt himself impelled to work for the good of souls. He never saw any conflict, however, between apostolate and prayer, although he certainly experienced difficulties trying to harmonize the two. Always attentive to the appeal of "the spirit of prayer and devotion," he would return to his beloved solitude to cleanse his soul of any dust which it might have acquired on the highways of the apostolate. Then his zeal for souls would drive him out again to face the apostolic combat with renewed and invigorated love.

The difficulties he met never made him abandon the apostolate for the contemplative life, but he knew he had to make the contemplation stimulate the apostolate. He knew that all true life with God included love and labor for souls, and the difficulties of reconciling the two originate in the one who feels the difficulties. To overcome them one must not choose between contemplation and apostolate but must rise to the level of life with God in which these difficulties cease.[16]

Attitudes of Saint Francis

To be brutally frank: the world has the impression that while Saint Francis is a modern man, his friars are antiquated. Instead of undertaking a useless refutation of this humiliating opinion, let us try to understand the attitudes of our Father, and let us try to be more like him.

Francis' Secret Weapon

Francis gives the impression of being an indisputably modern man by his emotional and affective intensity, by his attention to the subjective, and by his impressive pursuit of certain factors much extolled by the present-day human sciences. Not that he was the precursor of these sciences, nor that he wrote treatises or formulated doctrines. What he did was decidedly, securely, and consistently follow a line with which man identifies.

His spirituality, his thought, his mentality, and his reactions—his attitude and his life were dominated by love. Love was the strong driving force of his life before his "conversion," and so it continued to be afterwards. Converted love, different, purified — but always love. For the love of God, for the love of Christ, for the love of the Eucharist, for love of the Holy Virgin, for love of the angels and archangels, for love of the Church, for love of the saints, for love of men, for love of his friars, for love of the world, for love of Lady Poverty, for love and always for love; love was the law of Francis' life.

It was love, strong, inflamed, living, effective—not merely an "appreciative" love, not merely intellectual and abstract love, rent asunder by theoretical considerations, boiled away in vague good wishes. No! A "loving love," with full intellectual and volitional acceptance, but also with emotions and affections, with "heart." A love which would carry a worm across the road so it wouldn't get stepped on, a love whose heights would light up with its flashing glow the forests of Alverna on the night of the stigmata. Just one love: love of God, the "God, all Good, the supreme Good."[17]

Love Accepts All Good

His love of God identified itself with God's own love, loving as God loves, loving whatever God loves, that is, every being, every good. Through love, he always pronounced his "yes," never "no," before any true value. Watchful love, of course, so as not to confuse the valuable and the worthless. Love which stimulated the mind to distinguish, which pushed the critical spirit to the limit, while maintaining love even in the harshest criticism. Love ever kind, ever tactful, ever understanding, ever humble, ever respectful, ever courteous.

Love enabled Francis to throw all his lot with the Lord. In Francis love grew in all directions, in all his attitudes, in all his values; it never stopped growing because even Francis was always infinitely far away from the infinite love of God. Love was the true human promotion which made Francis into the most human of God's creatures and heaped him with glory and honor before the face of God and also before all his fellow men.

Let us set out upon this same road of love, with the same guiding star leading us to acceptance of all reality, to affirmation, to sensibility, to discernment of true values and of their mutual interplay. Let us try, let us make a beginning, let us grow. Then we shall be men for today, for any day.

Love Liberates

With the growth of love there comes a development in creative spontaneity. In Saint Francis it was immense, secure, powerful, enveloping, attractive, and ever-victorious. Anchored on the solid rock of true love, on the immense expanse of love, he feared nothing in this world. "Perfect love casts out all fear."[18] He never feared his instinctive spontaneity, for love always kept it in bounds; he never feared norms or laws, because love always turned them into freedom for him. Thus the Little Poor Man was able to be faithful to duty and to law, without becoming a slave to them. He could be spontaneous without being victim to arbitrariness or anarchy, without falling into mediocrity or superficiality.

How far we pilgrims still have to trudge before reaching that level

[16] [We deeply regret that space limitations have made it necessary, in addition to some other, minor, omissions, to omit an entire section, at this point, on "St. Francis and the Universe"—**Ed.**]

[17] Praises, p. 125.

[18] 1 Jn. 4:18.

of love which thus brings back paradise! But let us convince ourselves, and right here and now, that this is really the spirituality of Saint Francis, that this is the road which leads to intense life with God, in universal love and in making the horizontal and the vertical converge. Let us push on toward God courageously, perseveringly, secure in the knowledge that we are moving indeed in the direction of God and of men, without danger of breakdown or enslavement.

Because he had reached such heights of love and of the attitudes which love breeds, Francis could resolve the tensions between person and group, between the individual and society, between pre-established norms and formulas and spontaneity. (This is the reason he could pray so freely, even from the Divine Office.)

Love Preaches, Love Unites

For this reason Francis enjoyed such security while moving in the midst of the enormous crisis in the Church of his time. This is why he could always be peaceful, tactful, meek, courteous with his own and with high dignitaries, with the harsh attitudes of his world, with society; all the time drawing men and institutions into renewed life with God. This is why he could be a Catholic without infuriating those who were not. This is why he could hold dialogue with the Sultan of Egypt.

This is why his missionary zeal could overcome the dangers of fanaticism and imprudent proselytizing, and see that the greatest missionary weapon is love lived in testimony of Christ. He expressed his whole missionary technique in these few words: "The brothers who go (to preach to infidels) can conduct themselves among them spiritually in two ways. One way is to avoid quarrels or disputes and 'because of the Lord be obedient to every human institution' (1 Pt. 2:13) so bearing witness to the fact that they are Christians. Another way is to proclaim the word of God openly, when they see that is God's will. . ."[19] Words as up-to-date right now as when they were written seven hundred and fifty years ago.

It was through this lucid love that Francis discovered the value of the Mass as a source of unity, as "communion." He wrote to his friars: "This is my advice, this is my earnest request in the Lord: that in the places where the friars live, only one Mass a day be said in the rite of the holy Church. If there are several priests in a place, each should be glad for the love of charity to have assisted at the celebration of the other."[20]

Theology tells us just how right this thought of Francis is, that the Mass is in itself, and ought to be in practice, the center of our brotherhood, and how important it is that we find in it our union, our unity, our oneness.

The Church now extends to us the possibility of concelebration, which, of course, Francis never heard of. Let us then rise to Francis' level of ecclesial thinking and use our present-day opportunities to make the Mass become in our lives what it already is by its very institution.

Love Fulfills

It is really surprising and fascinating that Saint Francis could be a revolutionary without being a rebel; that he could accept the new without throwing away the old; that he could choose evolution without rejecting the lasting values of past contributions; that he could go forward without feeling himself held back by steps he had already taken; that he could really listen and enter into dialogue without losing his own identity; that he could understand everyone's position without losing his own correct direction; that he could penetrate more sharply than a needle into the festering sores of his own environment without disdain, without judging, without condemning; that he could appreciate good theology without embroiling himself in useless questions; that he could live in the world without being of the world; that he could freely mingle with men without falling into secularity, and much less into secularism. All this was possible because he loved. "Love and do what you will."

And thus God was for him truly a personal Lord. While immensely appreciative of the person and of the ego, he never forgot that he was a creature. His love never suffered from dizzy spells in which he confused himself with God in love. It was always as a creature that he loved. But at the same time, because he genuinely loved, he never succumbed to the modern virus which makes so many deny God for fear of being reduced to nothing, for fear of "alienation," of annihilation.

Francis found out how jealous our God is, how much love He demands—all our love. At the same time he discovered that God's unspeakably jealous love grants us our true liberty, without subjugating, without annihilating, without excluding. He learned that God wants us to love him and with him all that he loves: every man and every being. In love God frees, raises us up, glorifies us, fills us. He promotes the creature beyond all limits of creatureship.

The Poverello learned in the love of God to overcome pride without renouncing claims to glory in God. In the love of God he learned to distinguish subtly between two things so different and yet so tragically similar: the pride which stupidly imagines it can get rid of God, and the desire for the true glory which comes from serving God, "for to serve him is to reign." Here lies the solution for the most tremendous and most death-dealing problem of modern man.

[19] Rule of 1221, ch. 16, p. 43.
[20] Letter to a General Chapter, p. 106.

Potter

— for Courtney, O. S. C.

As I hand your clay cup, my rarely invited
Sorrow willingly overflows for a wandering
Pilgrim (a bagged-eyed palmer who has traveled
With unglazed bravery on a Greyhound for many
Holy hours to visit an anxious brother) who
Has ended her visit with me.

Your cup molded petty monastic memories
For my premature soul—memories of
The guarded kiss between the holy grill,
The "hello, sister's," the three o'clock
Collation, and the sale-worthy ceramic
Statues of a superstitious Blessed Mother
Lined up on a table in perfect geometrical
Order. The most precious of these memories
Is that of a purely white-dressed young
Girl at her wedding to her only Father, the
Potter.

These Latin-day memories—all of them—
Seep into my overflowing cup and become
Cloistered.

You have impressed a host with your Spouse-fired
Holiness and you made sense only to the sensible—
Those with just a little thorn knowledge.

Yes, you came as you had promised—perhaps
As a hermit if you had had your way—and you
Brought your barefooted past in the form of an
Earthen clay cup.

Albert Haase

Escape into Meaning

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

Over each life looms the dread spectre of meaninglessness. Its mocking laughter echoes across our accomplishments whenever we carelessly part the curtains enshrouding our deeper consciousness. Man fears nothing so much as the touch of this grey hand which withers everything he holds fresh and good and beautiful. Death itself is preferable to an existence which is without purpose or meaning. New dawns can be only a prelude to sickening despair once this wraith floats over a man's destiny. No one is immune to this haunting fear: neither the young who gaze upon a world which daily betrays their dreams; nor the old who look back across a life strewn with the wreckage of their mistakes. The "middle aged" wrestle the demon of despair which rises from their petty projects and acknowledged mediocrity. The "religious" invent various ramparts to stay the advance of this relentless foe. But in some unguarded moment, all of us stare the bitter spectre in the face and have no alternative but between heroic hope or suicide.

Our world is one which is stretched taut between these two poles. Cynicism and realism have stripped the false pretensions from all the former escapes which man once used to evade the ultimate issues of life, of which meaninglessness is the most poignant peril. Man becomes afraid to rejoice in the wonder of life for fear of starting endless mocking echoes resounding from the brassy sky above him. Play becomes for him a frenetic round of "practical" relaxations sought to alleviate the tedium of being. No one wishes to be at home with himself for the very real fear that he will find no one there. What has religion to say to a man who chooses to believe only what his mind can confirm and his hands handle; to a man to whom faith is only one more "escape mechanism" used by the timorous unable to face up the ultimate issues; to a man to whom courage means to succumb to deadening reality with aplomb and brittle gaity?

Man today pauses on the doorstep of an unpredictable future and trembles to raise the knocker for fear he will enter only a house of mirrors—a house which has no

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Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., is a contemplative at the Monastery of Sancta Clara, Canton, Ohio. Sister has contributed both poetry and essays to various religious periodicals, including the Review for Religious *and* Cross and Crown. *Her series of articles on Saint Clare was concluded in our July issue.*

windows looking beyond itself. Can we who call religion our "profession" brazenly approach this individual, thrust a crucifix into his hand, and announce, "Here is your answer!"?

Why not?

We have tried just about every other approach without resounding success. Why not try this one? Our sophisticated and non-theistic contemporaries have laughed such an answer to scorn; and, supinely, we have joined them. We have taken the crucifix down from the front rooms of our rectories and convents, removed all vestige of the Way of the Cross from our churches, and embarrassedly tried to explain literature of past ages with a blase "That belongs to a more juvenile era." No wonder the world is willing to treat us as "good fellows" to our faces while scorning us behind our backs. This scorn is the last remnant of the secret, scarcely dared hope that we, at least, might have the answer which people know, by experience, has been discovered nowhere in this wide world.

The scorn is often well merited. Take, for example, what we have done with Teilhard de Chardin. Here is a man whom these people might really understand and accept; yet we have taken his legacy and watered it down to a weak and sterile celebration of material goodness. We have distorted his message by uprooting it from its pregnant matrix of faith and hope and supernatural love, thereby minimizing some of his deepest convictions, such as the following:

> We can now understand that from the very first, from the very origins of mankind as we know it, the Cross was placed on the crest of the road which leads to the highest peaks of creation. But, in the growing light of revelation, its arms, which at first were bare, show themselves to have put on Christ: **Crux inuncta.** At first sight the bleeding body may seem mournful to us. Is it not from the night that it shines forth? But if we go nearer we shall recognize the flaming Seraphim of Alvernus whose passion and compassion are **incendium mentis.** The Christian is not asked to swoon in the shadow, but to climb in the light, of the Cross.[1]

Why do not we Franciscans shake off the shackles of our "humility" (fear)? Why do we not proclaim in the language and to the men of our century the glorious folly of the Cross? The fire which our King came to cast upon the earth was precisely the searing brilliance of defeat flowering into triumph. Saint Francis blushed in the flame of the crucified Seraph, and the glow which lit the night sky of Umbria kindled a thousand fires which girdled the earth. The fuel to sustain such a flame is that of passion—the passion of men and women daring enough to take Love at His Word. That is, men and women who will allow themselves to be seized by the Spirit and configured to a luminous likeness, a vibrant fellowship with the crucified Word of God.

[1] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, **The Divine Milieu** (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), 79.

The Cross contains the only fully viable answer to the appalling emptiness of success and the heart-rending decisiveness of death. Life as we know it has always been beset by suffering, injustice, and the other tragic consequences of man's inhumanity to man. To the men of our age who have the courage to grasp the "wrongness" in all this and express their anguished "Why? To what purpose?", we must present the paradox of the Cross.

Before Calvary, death and all the calamities attendant on human life were truly meaningless. It is the tremendous lesson of Golgotha that these very negations now have a meaning and possibility of fruitfulness commensurate with the limits of the universe and beyond. Christ did not die on the Cross so that Christians might have a more humiliating time of getting to heaven. He did not choose to follow a path of diminution and failure so that his followers would be forced to do the same if they would be his disciples. Christ Jesus rather entered upon the mortal necessities of our sin-ridden existence in order to take what was really meaningless and give it a supreme meaningfulness. He chose death, which until then had been the definitive end of all human hope, in order to make of it an instrument of life. Life had no value until its greatest enemy had become its perfection and crown. Death has become not only a "gateway" to life but the very **condition** of it.

Life, which before had been a purposeless succession of empty days, suddenly becomes a progressive growth into immortality. All the passing goodness of the world attains its full value only in view of its ultimate goal. As long as a man will persist in setting his sights so low as to view only the things of time, he will be brought up short before their emptiness. His own capacity will be condemned to frustration as long as he seeks to fill it with the sands of time. Inevitably they will sift through his open fingers as he reaches for yet another finite idol.

Paradoxically, as soon as a man willingly sets created things to one side of his pathway he will be endowed with a lyrical joy in their goodness, usefulness, and purpose. As means to an end the passing things of this world are never to be despised. No one better than a Franciscan knows this. He or she is a person who has held infinitesimal seeds of hope in his hands and with reverence, profound and awe-stricken, has scattered these minutiae of life wherever the dark earth has been open to receive them. They are the ones who willingly kneel in wonder at the procreative power of a man and woman and behold the life they engender as something beyond the possibility of evaluation. Life should be held in the hands of a Franciscan as something of surpassing worth, the object of endless thanksgiving.

A Franciscan should be the person who has "escaped into meaning" and seeks to draw all mankind and a transformed universe after him. This means that he has beheld the paradox of the Cross

and allowed it to attain its full development in his own life. Why can we not preach convincingly to our age of its only source of meaning? Because, all too often, we have not really found that meaning for ourselves. We have run from the spectre of meaninglessness instead of facing its challenge with the daring of Calvary. We have been satisfied with partial answers, well worn and time-tested theories whose shallowness has only become increasingly apparent with the years.

We must learn to look into the depths of things; to penetrate the cellars of the King where the best wine has been stored until now. The children of this generation display genius in harnessing the secrets of outer space; and should we, the children of light, employ less ingenuity in exploring the more exciting realm of "inner space"? Before us stretch possibilities which extend far beyond the borders of the stellar reaches. Only we must be willing to obey the laws that govern our search even as the aerospace giants submit to theirs. We must meet the supreme test of courage by willingly descending into the abyss of diminution and death, believing that we are, in truth, pursuing the course of life in all its fullness. This means that we will stand as a shocking sign of contradiction to the men of our times. But if we express in our lives the wondrous joy that the "promises set before us" offer, these will not turn from us in disgust. They will gaze in fascination as the moth about the candle flame. The "wiser" among them will, of course, recognize us as the deadliest enemy to their chosen course that Christianity can offer, and they will hound us to the brink. But the brink will be that of their, not our, despair. For their very persecution will have enabled us to demonstrate ever more clearly the truths for which we live and joyously die.

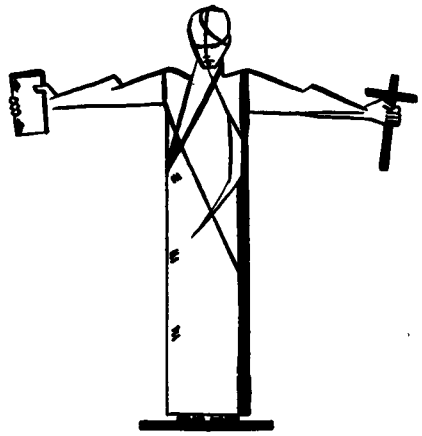
> The Cross has always been a symbol of conflict, and a principle of selection, among men. The Faith tells us that it is by the willed attraction or repulsion exercised upon souls by the Cross that the sorting of the good seed from the bad, the separation of the chosen elements from the unutilizable ones, is accomplished at the heart of mankind. Wherever the Cross appears, unrest and antagonisms are inevitable. But there is no reason why these conflicts should be needlessly exacerbated by preaching the doctrine of Christ crucified in a discordant or provocative manner. Far too often the Cross is presented for our adoration, not so much as a sublime end to be attained by our transcending ourselves, but as a symbol of sadness, of limitation and repression.[2]

The preaching of the Cross, then, requires creative rethinking in terms of the men and ideals of our age. It also demands that we denude ourselves of all self-deceit and self-seeking in order to view the Cross as it really is—not as we would wish to have it. We cannot think up a "meaning" and then decide it is the Christian conception of the Cross. We must, instead, so humble ourselves as to accept the fullness of revelation with all its seeming contradictions and paradoxes and implore God in ceaseless prayer to grant us enough intuition of his intents so as to preach his message without distortion.

The true message of the Cross will actually be in harmony with what is deepest and best in contemporary culture. It will speak of a meaning and value to be found in pain and suffering; it will challenge the idealism of our youth to ignore difficulties while in pursuit of their goals; it will reveal a rich hope to those who see death only as the final joke in a life of frustration. To express it in Teilhard's terms:

> In its highest and most general sense, the doctrine of the Cross is that to which all men adhere who believe that the vast movement and agitation of human life opens on to a road which leads somewhere, and that that road **climbs upward**. Life has a term: therefore it imposes a particular direction, oriented, in fact, towards the highest possible spiritualization by means of the greatest possible effort.[3]

We can make such a revelation to others only if we have experienced in ourselves that crucifixion and resurrection occur at the same moment and are inseparably conjoined so as to make only one reality. In the Gospel of Saint John, as Professor W.D. Davies admirably points out,



> The shameful death is the elevation of Jesus. Two things meet in the cross. It is the point in history where the Son of Man, who came from above, stooped most; here he descended to the lowest parts of the earth—to the isolation and degradation of crucifixion. But it is also the point in history at which the Son of Man is raised up from the earth to return to his Father. For John, the crucifixion is the glorification of Christ; the lifting up on the cross is his going to the Father, his Ascension. The redemptive act of ascent through descent is achieved in the cross.[4]

Today's religious-minded person will not have difficulty in accepting diminution if he can see it as a means to final resurrection. Suffering for the sake of suffering surely is meaningless to him; but suffering for the sake of mediating

[2] **Ibid.**, 76.

[3] **Ibid.**, 77.

[4] W. D. Davies, **Invitation to the New Testament** (Garden City; N. Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 491.

life can be viewed as not merely desirable but supremely attractive. We all experience the inborn desire to attain to that which is beyond our powers. Realistic thinking quickly brings us to accept the fact that we must submit to Another who is greater than ourselves in order to be brought into the fullness of life for which we crave. That such a submission may entail a "loss" on the material level of our existence we are willing to expect, since we have learned that there is more to life than the body —more to happiness than mere pleasure. The law of love is giving —giving not just what we have but what we are. Even apparent failure can be integrated into this law if we really accept the entire meaning of the Cross as it dominated our Lord's life.

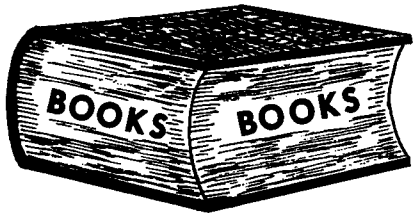
> By the crucifixion and death of this adored Being, Christianity signifies to our thirst for happiness that the term of creation is not to be sought in the temporal zones of our visible world, but that the effort required of our fidelity must be consummated **beyond a total metamorphosis** of ourselves and of everything surrounding us.[5]

The preaching of a true theology of the Cross can, then, be seen as the one adequate answer to the anguished question of our day. It is the one completely real and livable solution to the quest for meaning which haunts our world. The American scene presents a picture of a rich and complacent society sick to death of its own affluence and wounded in the center of its moral being by the conscious acceptance of the meaninglessness of everything. How often do we not read in our papers of men and women who seemingly have everything, and yet are driven to suicide by their own inner emptiness. Such events stand as grim testimony to the inadequacy of riches, of success and power, to fill the inner spirit of man.

I do not think it is presumptuous to propose that we Franciscans have a grave responsibility to the men of our generation. Our heritage of freely willed poverty and the literal imitation of the Crucified impose on us the duty of mediating the paradoxes of Christianity through our lives and through our words. Perhaps our most eloquent testimony and the most salvific force of our Order will arise when we have become the lowest of the low—the poorest of the poor. This will occur only when we have entered freely into the isolation and loneliness, the misunderstanding and helplessness of our crucified Master, and have passed through the Cross into resurrected Life.

> Happy are those of us who, in these decisive days of the Creation and the Redemption, are chosen for this supreme act, the logical crowning of their priesthood; communion unto death with Christ. . .[6]

[5] Teilhard, 78.
[6] **Ibid.**, 80.



Contemplative Prayer. By Thomas Merton. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image Books, 1969. Pp. 116. Paper, $0.95.

Contemplation in a World of Action. By Thomas Merton. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. 384. Cloth, $7.95.

Reviewed by Father Vianney M. Devlin, O.F.M., Ph.D. (University of London), Assistant Professor of English at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

Ever since his student days at Columbia in the '30s, Thomas Merton had a deep, abiding interest in prayer and the nature of the contemplative life. It was an interest that led him into the Trappist monastery in 1941 and eventually to Thailand where he met his death in 1968. He spent his twenty-seven years as a monk avidly reading Scripture, the Church Fathers, the Spanish and Rhineland mystics, and other treatises on prayer and contemplation. After the enormous success and widespread popularity of his autobiography, **The Seven Storey Mountain**, there came from Gethsemani Abbey many essays, books on prayer and the contemplative life. Merton never lost that initial commitment to prayer that so captured him as a young man, and the two books reviewed here give further proof of the development of Merton's insights into the nature of prayer. They witness to a maturity in thought concerning the contemplative life and its active relationship to man in the twentieth century.

Thomas Merton was passionately aware of the serious problems of the twentieth century—of our acute need for contemplation and solitude. He was ardently committed to such contemporary issues as the peace movement, Black Power, and the capitalist dilemma—but these commitments far exceeded mere political interests. They were intimately linked with his perception that America must cultivate in its soul the grain that is the word of God, and that the cultivation in question called for an authentic life of prayer and an earnest desire for solitude. In one respect Merton

might be regarded as a twentieth-century Thoreau.

It is astonishing to reflect upon that vast amount of reading that Merton did. In addition to the great Church Fathers and masters of the spiritual life, he was also conversant with writers such as Heidegger, Sartre, Maritain, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, Malcolm X, the Zen masters—the list is almost inexhaustible. I am told that amongst his remaining literary estate there were found brief notes and essays covering some three thousand subjects! But more astonishing than his wide reading was his ability to relate what all these writers were saying to his own insights on prayer and contemplation. He was, indeed, an integrated man.

Of the two books, **Contemplative Prayer** is perhaps the easier to read. In it Merton selects certain passages from Scripture and from writers in the long tradition of Western contemplative spirituality, comments upon them, relates their message to contemporary problems. This is no dry treatise or manual of prayer; it is an exciting, vibrant insight into the existential problems facing a person who attempts to pray in the twentieth century.

Although written for monks, **Contemplative Prayer** was intended by its author to reach a wider audience: "Though few have either the desire for solitude or the vocation to the monastic life, all Christians ought, theoretically at least, to have enough interest in prayer to be able to read and make use of what is here said for monks, adapting it to the circumtainly, in the pressures of modern urban life, many will face the need for a certain interior silence and discipline simply to keep themselves together, to maintain their human and Christian identity and their spiritual freedom" (p. 19).

Throughout the book one senses Merton's impatience with dry, narrow-minded treatises on prayer: "... in meditation we should not look for a 'method' 'or 'system' but cultivate an 'attitude,' an 'outlook': faith, openness, attention, reverence, expectation, supplication, trust, joy. All these finally permeate our being with love in so far as our living faith tells us we are in the presence of God, that we live in Christ, that in the Spirit of God we 'see' God our Father without 'seeing.' We know him in 'unknowing.' Faith is the bond that unites us to him in the Spirit who gives us light and love" (p. 34). And for those of us who have been attempting to pray for some time, there is the hopeful and comforting insight: "One cannot begin to face the real difficulties of the life of prayer and meditation unless one is first perfectly content to be a beginner and really experience himself as one who knows little or nothing, and has a desperate need to learn the bare rudiments. Those who think they 'know' from the beginning will never, in fact, come to know anything... We do not want to be beginners. But let us be convinced of the fact that we will never be anything else but beginners, all our life" (p. 37).
stances of their own vocation. Cer-

Contemplation in a World of Action is a much more technical book but nevertheless lively and pertinent for those who are not members of a

monastic community. In it Merton attempts to indicate what the monastic life should provide: a special awareness and perspective, an authentic understanding of God's presence in the world and his intentions for man. Over and over again the author stresses that our first task is to be fully human and to enable the youth of our time to find themselves as men and as sons of God.

In 1961 Merton was given permission to live in solitude in a hermitage on the property of Gethsemani Abbey. In his solitude for which he had thirsted for so many years, Merton reflected upon the eremetical life and its significance for the modern monk —and by extension, for contemporary man. Of particular interest to readers of THE CORD is a chapter entitled "Franciscan Eremitism" [This essay first appeared in THE CORD 16:12 (Dec. 1966), 356-64—Ed.]. After tracing the eremetical movement within the Franciscan Order, Merton concludes: "The eremitical spirit has always had a place in the Franciscan life, but it is not the spirit of monasticism or of total, definitive separation from the world. The eremitism of Saint Francis and his followers is deeply evangelical and remains always open to the world, while recognizing the need to maintain a certain distance and perspective, a freedom that keeps one from being submerged in active cares and devoured by the claims of exhausting work" (p. 267 [363]).

Both these books—testament of the late Thomas Merton—are warmly recommended for their wisdom and insight into the nature of prayer and contemplation.

Secular Holiness: Spirituality for Contemporary Man. By Paul Hinnebusch, O.P. Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1971. Pp. 258. Cloth, $6.95.

Reviewed by Father Richard Weber, O.C.S.O., professed monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, principal collaborator for the Bulletin de spiritualité monastique, *and contributor to numerous periodicals, including* Thought, Review for Religious, *and* Collectanea Cisterciensia.

Here is a long and involved study of "holiness," and an attempt to define its essential characteristics and basic principles for today. It should be made clear from the start that this book had its origin in a series of lectures given at the Graduate School of Theology, University of Notre Dame. This volume, like the two previous books by Hinnebusch: **Prayer: the Search for Authenticity** and **Dynamic Contemplation: Inner Life for Modern Man** (Sheed & Ward, 1969 and 1970), works toward an authentic spirituality for our time.

The message and content of the book are all inclusive. Hinnebusch insists on the need for the simultaneity and total interpenetration of the "secular" and the "holy," a vital communion with God in which the totality of daily life is given meaning and form by a living faith. The problem comes in the use of the language employed in communicating the message. On page after page we find words like ontic, christic, moral holiness, secular holiness, sacralization: the mediation of holiness, and so on. Perhaps the most over-worked word in the book is "righteousness." It is

only after struggling through sixty-four pages that we find the author's own definition of what he means by "secular holiness": "Liturgical worship is completed in spiritual worship. We call it secular worship rather than spiritual worship, to bring out more clearly that it embraces the totality of man's secular life in the everyday world. With the aid of sacred or liturgical worship, his entire life becomes secular worship: God worshipped in man's secular activities as carried out in righteousness. **This** is what we mean by secular holiness" (p. 64).

It is at this point that it becomes clear that these are simply lectures to graduate students in thelogy. One also wonders about the subtitle—**Spirituality for Contemporary Man.** It would seem that something like **Spirituality for Contemporary Theologians** would have been a better choice. This is a book by a theologian for theologians.

However, if we do struggle through all 258 pages, we will find a generally excellent biblical exegesis and orientation. Hinnebusch endeavors to highlight the spiritual doctrine expressed in **Gaudium et Spes,** The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Of particular interest in this area are the author's conclusions about the ecological crisis that is currently plaguing modern man. Rather than approach the problem on sociological or economic grounds, Hinnebusch, in chapter 25 (pp. 218-30) speaks of "reverence for the earth and the holiness of work." This reverence is essentially a biblical concept, and many biblical passages are marshalled to the service of this concept—especially from the Old Testament. When the author treats of the holiness of work, he says that "secular holiness requires that we always produce the best quality in everything we do. Shoddiness is next to ungodliness. It makes us unlike the God who does all things well. 'He has done all things well,' they declared concerning Jesus (Mk. 7:37). And of Yahweh, Moses sang: 'The Rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are justice; a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he' (Deut. 32:4)" (p. 225).

This biblical approach would seem to be the book's redeeming factor. When the author states in the Preface (p. v.) of his book that his "purpose has not been to solve in the last details the problems of holiness in action, in the inner city, for example, or in politics, or in married life," we would do well to take his statement seriously.

On Being Involved. By Adrian van Kaam, C.S.Sp. Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1970. Pp. 104. Cloth, $3.50.

Reviewed by Father Roy M. Gasnick, O.F.M., M.A., (English, St. Bonaventure University), Provincial Director of Communications for Holy Name Province.

On Being Involved, the latest psychological probing by Adrian van Kaam into uncharted areas of Christian spirituality, is a slim but helpful book. It is addressed to those pursuers of renewal in the church and world who so often wind up with physical and spiritual debilities: hypertension, ulcers, one-sidedness, decline in prayer life and loss of contact with God.

The book's sub-title, "The Rhythm of Involvement and Detachment in Human Life," indicates the two poles of contemporary spirituality; van Kaam holds most strongly that the one without the other leads to a spirituality of frustration.

On the one hand he holds that contemporary man cannot evolve in his Christian life unless he is wholly **in** and **with** the situation which defines his existence: "To be wholeheartedly with people, nature, and my task fosters spiritual growth. Not to be there means that I may grow less, or not at all."

On the other hand involvement for so many of our contemporaries leads to blind acceptance of the new and even the bizarre, to the espousal of empty but "with it" slogans, and to a fanaticism for projects and systems. "Such attachments," says van Kaam, "obscure [one's] perceptions; they sever him from the whole reality and its divine source. It is only when a man distances himself that he can attain a comprehensive view of things, at once involved and detailed."

While acknowledging that detachment and self-discipline are not popular in our times, van Kaam holds that, without them, involvement all too often moves into erroneous or harmful directions while spiritual life becomes dissipated. "Each man has to respect his own pace," van Kaam states; "if he constantly oversteps his pace, except for emergency situations, he violates his reality. He refuses to accept the limits which God has set to his life."

The author's wry dictum—"God may also speak in an ulcer"—is a gentle, concrete reminder to Christian man today to find his pace in detached involvement. It is good to be so reminded by so eminent a counsellor.

Christ Present and Yet to Come: The Priest and God's People at Prayer. By Joseph M. Champlin. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1971. Pp. xiii-242. Paper, $2.50.

Reviewed by Father Vincent B. Grogan, O.F.M., former secretary to the Minister Provincial of Holy Name Province, who is now pursuing graduate studies in Canon Law at the Catholic University of America.

The entire American Church—clergy and laity—God's People of the title, should be indebted to Father Champlin for this book, in which a theological background of the various rites is judiciously combined with practical implications and applications. To a great extent, this publication represents a compilation of the author's numerous presentations to clergy in all parts of the country on the revised liturgical rites, over the past few years.

Father Champlin's qualifications are a felicitous combination of twelve years' pastoral experience in the Syracuse Diocese, and official responsibilities as Assistant Secretary of the Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy for the past three years. To the readers of Catholic newspapers, his name is undoubtedly familiar, as he has authored a weekly column on the Liturgy. Father offers a balanced, up-to-date approach to the challenges and the demands of contemporary liturgical renewal in America.

In the opening chapter, entitled "Attitudinal Changes," he sets the tone for the entire work. He contrasts the past emphasis on the rigidity of the Liturgy and the consequent emphasis on the priest as celebrant, to the disregarding of the congregation entirely, with the present stress on the role of the congregation and their active involvement and equally indispensable role, thereby somewhat eclipsing the celebrant's function. Then the author wonders aloud whether in the future a happy medium can be achieved, in which the priest as celebrant of the Liturgy will indeed be master of the situation, eliciting intelligent participation from his congregation. In other words, the Liturgy would truly be a joint effort.

Father Champlin, wisely realizing that the priest's role is so vital in promoting the liturgical restoration, devotes several chapters to the qualities of a good celebrant. The spirituality or lack of it on the celebrant's part will influence his congregation. He must then be a man of prayer, able to understand that his offering of the Mass is a prayer. Fewer minute rubrical details now allow the celebrant to engender this prayerful

attitude at the Liturgy. A priest, furthermore, should be a man of faith, able to appreciate that salvation-history is reenacted in the present, during the Liturgy. In this chapter especially, the author reveals his moderation. With so much stress today on the priest as a man for others, he must likewise "be a believer in the Other—Christ." And while striving to render the Liturgy as meaningful as possible, the priest must realize and teach others to realize that liturgical rites will not always provide us with complete emotional satisfaction—something, I think, which needs saying today! A chapter on the priest's role as shepherd, preacher, and celebrant will, I am certain, add fuel to the continuing debate on full-time vs. part-time priests.

Subsequent chapters discuss concrete applications for the celebrations of the Liturgy—the priest's attitude toward the very general rubrical guidelines, the place for the reflection of the celebrant's personality in the rites, and the demeanor of the priest as president of the worshipping community.

The vernacular Liturgy has brought home to celebrant and laity alike the pivotal importance of verbal communication. This concerns not only the reading of the Scriptures, but also the proclamation of the various prayers of the Mass and the preaching of the Word of God. The author treats these subjects in three chapters; but so essential is communication to successful liturgical celebration, that I wish he would eventually publish a book on this topic alone. To summarize his position on this point: the celebrant's whole physical bearing and his gestures convey meaning to the congregation whether or not he is aware of the fact. (Hopefully, every priest in America will read this and take it to heart.)

Chapter thirteen presents the crux of the entire liturgical renewal: intelligent planning of the various rites —Sunday and weekday Masses, administration of the Sacraments, etc. The keynote of the revised liturgy: flexibility and adaptability, demands this preparation, utilizing the resources available and the concrete situation of one's parish. In this regard, I like the author's definition of quality liturgy: that liturgy in which "each person with a special function to fulfill does it well."

Part Two of the book is, in my estimation, most valuable. For the first time, we have under one cover pertinent suggestions for renewing those sacramental rites most frequently administered: Baptism, Penance, Matrimony, and the Sacrament of the Sick. Particularly interesting are Father's comments on improving reception of the Sacrament of Confession, whether celebrated privately or as part of common Penance Service, and also his observation that this Sacrament, despite some current attempts to the contrary, should not be confused with or incorporated into the penitential rites of the Mass. Father Champlin buttresses this position with a salient quotation from John Quinn's article in **Worship** (May, 1968): "The structures of the two sacraments are different. Perhaps penance might be likened to the shepherd seeking the lost sheep and to the prodigal son returning home. But the eucharist is the father celebrating with his son the meal of reconciliation."

I know that priests in parochial situations will welcome the author's ideas on a meaningful administration of the Sacrament of the Sick and the celebration of the hope-filled Funeral Liturgy.

In short, this book is visible proof of a balanced, intelligent approach to the whole field of liturgical renewal. Father Champlin's concrete pastoral experience, coupled with his obvious grasp of theological and liturgical principles, enables him to present his ideas in a moderate way, avoiding the Scylla of merely external change and the Charybdis of unsound renovation. Equally valuable are the extensive footnotes provided.

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should prove as popular as the author's earlier work on marriage: **Together for Life**. Let us hope that Father Champlin's return to his diocese to assume a pastorate will not herald the end of his literary endeavors on behalf of liturgical renewal in America.

The Thought of Rudolf Bultmann. By André Malet. Trans. Richard Strachan; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. vii-440. Cloth, $8.95.

Reviewed by Father David Bossman, O.F.M., M.A., Doctoral Candidate in Biblical Literature, St. Louis University.

André Malet holds doctorates in theology and the arts and is professor of philosophy at the University of Dijon. He has written books on St. Thomas Aquinas (1956), John Calvin (1962), Baruch Spinoza (1966), and another work on Bultmann and the Death of God (1968).

The present book is a translation of **Mythos et Logos—La pensée de Rudolf Bultmann** (1962). Part I, "Bultmann's Categories," enunciates the principles underlying Bultmann's thought: the relation between subject and object, the ontic and the ontological, history and historicity, precomprehension and self-comprehension. Part II, "Bringing the Categories into Play," applies the principles to the Christian understanding of God, his work, his word, and the relation of Christianity to humanism and to other religions. Part III, "Theology and Ontology," studies Bultmann in relation to Heidegger, Jaspers, and Barth. The author concludes with a sympathetic evaluation of Bultmann's contribution and, finally, with a call for Christian unity based upon a demythologized revelation which unmasks the cultures and traditions as "schemes of natural man" with which "Christians wall themselves in from each other" (p. 433).

The book has its problems. References to the original sources, e.g., are not always given; and the difficulties stemming from the use of doubly translated texts are not always obviated. On the other hand, Malet has given us not only a useful anthology of Bultmann's writings that illumines and defends the latter's work. He has clearly demonstrated the remarkable consistency of Bultmann's thought through his long writing career—a consistency heretofore only noted by commentators. On this score alone, the book must be judged a valuable contribution.

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

Reviewed by Father Robert Waywood, O.F.M., Assistant Professor of English, Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

The book under consideration is an anthology of thirteen excerpts from science fiction, gathered in view of their religious implications by the Religion Editor of **Time**, Mayo Mohs, a knowledgeable Roman Catholic and long-time Sci-Fi afficionado. If the work were a movie made for TV, I would confidently assign it the two-and-a-half stars such fare usually earns. If it were one of my students' "creative" compositions, I would instinctively grade it C-plus—and hasten to add that C-plus was a decent, yes, a gentleman's mark. Judging the work as a whole and for what it purports to be (religious, scientific fiction), I can say with assurance only that the collection is partially successful. I cannot say whether the unevenness unavoidable in almost any anthology or the narrowness of con-

vention implicit in a sub-sub-genre of literature practically doomed the book to imperfection.

However exotic the art form, Mohs has served up a veritable smorgasbord of specimens: cosmic poetry (a short excerpt from Ray Bradbury's **Christus Apollo**), a novelette (**Prometheus**, by Philip Jose Farmer), a reverie (**Soul Mate**, by Lee Sutton), a prophecy (Damon Knight's **Shall the Dust Praise Thee?**), an allegory (**Evensong**, by Lester del Rey), a tale of terror (John Brunner's **Judas**), a fantasy (**The Quest for Saint Aquin**, by Anthony Boucher), a "blackout" (**The Nine Billion Names of God**, by Art Clarke), a biblical parody (Nelson Bond's **The Cunning of the Beast**), a parable (Henry Kuttner's **A Cross of Centuries**), and three slices of futuristic life (**The Word to Space**, by Winston Sanders; **The Vitanuls**, by Brunner; and **Balaam**, by Boucher). Unfortunately, the variety in kind is matched by variety in quality.

Some of the offerings are delectable; others are quite indigestible. Their palatability depends completely on the successful concoction of three ingredients: religion (whether it is theological and thematic or merely cultic and peripheral), futuristic science, and fiction, with its plot-character-setting construction. The selection I found the most enjoyable was Sanders's **The Word to Space**. Its probability of plot and characterization suffered the least from theological axe-grinding and extrapolation clap-trap: a Jesuit seismologist comes to the aid of a radio-telescope technician and by pointing out the inconsistency of their theology to scripture-spouting outer-space creatures, foments a revolution on their planet which overtopples the fanatical theocracy, thus allowing their scientists to start comparing notes with Earth's men-in-white.

Worthy of honorable mention on the same score are Clarke's **The Nine Billion Names of God**, which pits the other-worldly wisdom of Tibet against the agnosticism of IBM servicemen; and Brunner's **The Vitanuls**, which imaginatively vindicates Hinduism's doctrine of the transmigration of souls. But other offerings do not go down so easily. Some border on the theologically repugnant, such as **A Cross of Centuries**, with its highly ambiguous concept of immortality and exaggerated anthropomorphism; and **Soul Mate**, with its confounding of moral responsibility and its none-too-successful literary attempt at interpenetration of personalities. One story, the longest, an excerpt from a novel, I found disgusting to imagine even though it was adorned with rich characterization and elaborately underpinned with hard scientific data. It concerned a venturesome missionary disguised as a bird and sent to reconnoiter on a planet inhabited by avi-primates, one of whose eggs is growing on his chest! This caricature of Prometheus-Christ teaches the birdmen speech, and he is eventually deified by them. Bradbury's poetry excerpt proposes a thesis worlds apart from my own convictions on the matter: the replication of the Incarnation throughout the universe (see "A Place in the Son," THE CORD, June, 1971).

In short, I recommend this unusual anthology with reservation: it will be found, even by devotees of science-fiction literature, not an unmixed blessing (that retails at $5.95). If Mayo Mohs is not to be roundly applauded for the execution of this anthology, he should be vigorously saluted for its conception. He is one of the few commentators to have glimpsed the natural convergence of revelation and science in the omega point of the imagination.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Kucharek, Casimir, **Byzantine Slav Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom: Its Origin and Evolution.** Allendale, N.J.: Alleluia Press, 1971. Pp. 836. Cloth, $9.75 (pre-pub.)

Meissner, William W., **The Assault on Authority: Dialogue or Dilemma?** Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1971. Pp. 320. Cloth, $7.95.

Nouwen, Henri J. M., **Creative Ministry: Beyond Professionalism in Teaching, Preaching, Counselling, Organizing, and Celebrating.** Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1971. Pp. xxi-119. Cloth, $4.95.