

# the CORD

July, 1972

Vol. XXII, Nr. 7

## CONTENTS

MARY, THE UNIQUE WOMAN .....	194
<i>Guest Editorial by Titus Cranny, S.A.</i>	
THEOPHANY OF LOVE .....	196
<i>Sister Mary Seraphim, P. C. P. A.</i>	
THE CHARMS OF CHASTITY .....	202
<i>Robert J. Waywood, O. F. M.</i>	
TWO POEMS .....	211
<i>Sister Joyce, O. S. C.</i>	
LEGISLATION CONCERNING FORMATION .....	212
<i>Dismas Bonner, O. F. M.</i>	
BOOK REVIEWS .....	223



## COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for the July issue of THE CORD were drawn by Thomas Kornacki, who will be received next month as a novice of Holy Name Province.

the CORD is a monthly review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Editorial Offices: Siena College Friary, Loudonville, N. Y. 12211. Editor: Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.; Associate Editor: Julian A. Davies, O.F.M. Business and Circulation Office: The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N. Y. 14778. Business Manager: Mrs. Joseph Cucchiaro. 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.



## Mary, the Unique Woman

Let us put together several names: Nazareth, Bethlehem, the Temple in Jerusalem, Cana in Galilee, Calvary, the Upper Room, the Book of Revelation. Then let us ask the question: How are these words related? What do they have in common?

The answer is: They relate to the Virgin Mary in a unique way biblically, theologically and spiritually. Mary was the maid of Nazareth who received the message from heaven that she would be the Mother of God. She gave birth to that Son in the village of Bethlehem. When at the age of twelve he was lost, she found him in the Temple teaching the doctors and wise men. She was present at Cana for the wedding feast, as was he. When the vintage ran short she turned to him: "They have no wine." It was a woman's concern for an important part of a nuptial feast. Then she spoke to the head waiter: "Do whatever he tells you."

On Calvary Mary stood by the cross when her Son was crucified. She suffered and died in spirit with him. If he is the "master-martyr" for all the world, she is the mother of all martyrs who gave their lives for God and religion. She is the first member of the Church, not in time but in holiness and excellence; she is the Mother of the Church. She received the Holy Spirit in a special way in the Upper Room at Pentecost.

Mary is the "great sign" which appeared in the heavens as the Book of Revelation tells us—"a woman clothed with the sun." Some hold that this passage does not refer to Mary but only to the Church. We think it does refer to Mary, the Mother of God and the Mother of the Church.

The role of Mary in the life of mankind is supported by the words of Scripture. We have historical facts, but they are not merely details of history; they reveal our Lady's character and her part in the salvation of men. She is a common Mother for all men because she is the Mother of the divine Redeemer who died for all men.

Pope John XXIII was fond of speaking of this dual motherhood of Mary. Thus he stated:

The Mother of Jesus who is our Mother too—oh, how I love to associate these two titles!—is one of the richest sources of our consolation, the richest after Jesus, who is of his very nature light and life. She is rich in comfort and joy and encouragement for all the children of Eve who have become her children through the redemptive sacrifice and will of Christ. This explains the whole world's devotion to the Virgin whom her saintly cousin Elizabeth truly hailed as "blessed" in reply to Mary's confession of humility in the **Magnificat**, which remains the everlasting canticle of mankind redeemed, the song of the past, the present, and the future.

Father Paul James Francis, S.A., who founded the Society of the Atonement at Graymoor, Garrison, New York, was fond of stressing Mary's role in salvation history. He called her "Our Lady of the Atonement" to emphasize her part in the mystery of salvation. Then he added that she is Our Lady of the "At-one-ment," of Unity and Reconciliation. She is the perfect model of man's relationship with God. She prays for the unity of the entire human family after the example of Jesus, who prayed and gave his life "that all may be one."

Father Paul liked to quote the words of Scripture, "What God has joined together let no man put asunder," and apply them to Christ and His Mother. We understand Christ better by knowing and loving Mary. That is all part of the divine plan. Jesus and Mary are inseparable in the theology of the Church and in its spirituality.

The Constitution on the Liturgy from Vatican II sums it up very well in this way:

In celebrating the annual cycle of Christ's mysteries holy Church honors with special love the Blessed Mary, Mother of God, who is joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son. In her the Church holds up and admires the most excellent fruit of the redemption and joyfully contemplates as in a faultless model, that which she herself wholly desires and hopes to be.

Mary is united to Jesus and his redeeming activity. She is the Mother of all men as well as the Mother of God. Though Father Paul established the Feast of Our Lady of the Atonement for July 9, we should always think of Mary in her role of salvation and of unity. She is unique as the Mother of Jesus. She is unique, too, as the Mother of men, constantly interceding for their welfare in heaven. Her great prayer is for the unity of all men in Christ.

*Titus Cranny, S.A.*

## Theophany of Love

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

Defining God in terms of love dates back to the declining years of the Beloved Disciple. Saint John, as his physical powers failed, leaned again in memory upon the breast of his Master and spoke the unimaginably few words which summed up all he had ever learned from the Lord: "Little children, love one another. God is love."

Twenty centuries later we are still wrestling with the meaning these words are intended to convey. Like John's own disciples we are tempted to complain that we hear of "Luv, luv, luv" all day long and the refrain is beginning to bore us. The perversion of love which we encounter everywhere we go discourages us from even mentioning the word. But because we cannot deny that Christianity is essentially a religion of love, we must make the effort to separate an all too human conception of love from evangelical **agape**.

Today especially the confusion is compounded because we are moving out of an era that dallied with a purely spiritual concept of charity into an age which believes that every human desire or passion can be equated with the gospel commandment of universal charity. Perhaps this latter development is closer to the truth, but it is still only a faint approximation of the love which Christians are expected to pour out on their fellow man and to return to their Lord. Our love is meant to be like Christ's love. "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another as **I have loved you**" (Jn. 13:34).

Christ's love for us was a love which led to life for all who accepted it. Although it was (and is) a truly human love, it does not share in the "law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:3) which rules in all love that is merely carnal—fleshly. For Christ has delivered us from the

Love gives naught but itself and takes naught but from itself. Love possesses not nor would it be possessed; for love is sufficient unto love.

(Kahlil Gibran)

slavery to our lower nature which holds all of us captive. He does **this**, not by removing us from the flesh but by removing from flesh itself its inclination to evil.

There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh. For the law of the Spirit of the life in Christ Jesus has delivered me from the law of sin and death... By sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, as a sin-offering, he [God] has condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirements of the law [of love] might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom. 8:1-4).

If we are to take what Saint Paul tells us and apply it to the idea of Christian love, we learn that although our love must partake of our fleshly nature, yet that nature is intended to share in the freedom from evil which Christ has won for us. To the extent, then, that the Risen Christ has penetrated our bodily frame, our love will be pure and worthy of the name of Christian. Most of us can-

not claim that our humanity has been irradiated so thoroughly with the Easter light that we can follow its desires without any "fear of condemnation." Much, too much, of what we like to call love bears such an admixture of earthly elements that compared to Christ's love, it appears almost entirely as undisguised selfishness.

We need to permit Christ to deliver us from the law of our own selfishness if we are to exercise the ministry of Christian charity in our world. And we **must** exercise it. It is the one commandment of the Lord and the one true sign by which other men will know that we are Christ's followers. Therefore we must engage in a thorough bit of sifting and sorting of motives and try, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to bring our love into greater conformity with the Love with which Christ has loved us.

The love which Christ bears for us is the very same as the love which the Father bears for him. For if we understand what revelation tells us of the inner life of

---

*Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., is a contemplative nun at Sancta Clara Monastery, Canton, Ohio. Her poetry and her religious meditations have been a regular feature of THE CORD, as well as other religious periodicals.*

God, the mutual love of the Father and Son is one single Person, the Holy Spirit. When that Spirit of inexpressible love brooded over the chaos at the beginning of time, an incredible idea governed his activity. Out of nothingness, he was to produce a mirror of God. From void and emptiness, he was to draw forth an image of the unknowable Godhead refracted in multitudinous beings. What characterizes this Personified Love of God is his total "givenness."

We too are gift, given by the Son through redemption back to the Father. We are meant to be, in some small way, an image of the Love which the Father and the Son share. We will fulfill this incredible destiny only if we allow all that is earthly (sin-prone) in us to be consumed and taken up into the resurrected spirit-life which Christ won for us on Calvary.

Now they who are according to the flesh, mind the things of the flesh, but they who are according to the spirit mind the things of the spirit. For the inclination of the flesh is death, but the inclination of the spirit, life and peace. For the wisdom of the flesh is hostile to God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be (Rom. 8:5-7).

As Christians then we are to be "according to the Spirit." Our love must be "spiritual" in the sense that it is Spirit-informed. Such love springs only from the depths of the person who has opened himself in prayer to the living God. All of us, in our deepest center, are in constant communication with God; but only those who bring this unconscious reality into their

awareness can operate in a truly Spirit-informed manner. The love which they display bears a sharp distinction from a love which arises from solely natural good will or kindness.

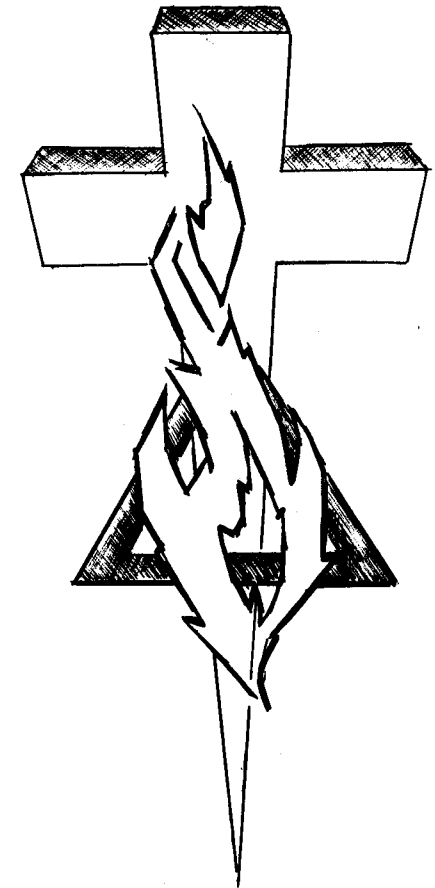
A true Christian lover never seeks to possess the object of his charity, for he instinctively regards the recipient of his affection not as an object but as a person of inviolable rights and dignity. His attitude is one of "looking up to," for he is intimately aware that the Lord himself is within his own deepest center looking out and upward towards his creation. The mystery of divinely inspired loving emanating from his own human heart creates a profound humility in the person who experiences it. He knows his own shallowness, for he is aware of its being transcended by a love of such might and strength that he, in all truth, does not know to what limits it will take him. In fact, he fearfully surmises that it will take him to death... on a Cross... which is where it took his Master.

Although we are counseled to look at the Sermon on the Mount as the charter of Christian love, we will fail to grasp its full significance if we do not also correlate our study of its message with how our Lord lived what he taught. He said, "Give to everyone who asks of you, and from him who takes away your goods, ask no return" (Lk. 6:30). What were the men of his day asking of Jesus? In their deepest desires, they were seeking life, light, happiness. These things he was willing to give them in full-

lest measure, but (and this is noteworthy) he did not—in fact could not—bestow them on the terms laid down by his contemporaries. No earthly paradise was to be established for those whom the Lord gifted. He would not lift his followers out of poverty, prejudice, or pogroms. He would give to each who asked him life—yes, undying life—but only at the price of a daily death to selfishness. He would give them light which would conduct them through the dark valley of death, but which would not exempt them from experiencing the fearful gloom which shrouds the sad history of the human race. He promised happiness that would never disappoint, but only if they would forget all about their quest for pleasure and consider first the joy of their fellow man.

This, then, is Christ's "way" of loving. It is a way that far transcends our inevitably carnal understanding of love. Jesus alone lived love. The rest of us are barred from doing so by our radical insufficiency and need which makes us graspingly selfish to our last breath. Our only hope lies in this, that Christ consents to come and live his own life of love in anyone who will receive him. That is the glory of the saints. Christ lived so wonderfully in them that he overflowed their native smallness to such a degree that they became as large as the universe in affection and activity.

Their love became so permeated with the Spirit that the limitations of the flesh no longer checked its coursing to fulfillment. To in-



vite the boundary-breaking Christ to step into our lives requires radical courage but not blind foolhardiness. We can know, at least in outline, what we are bargaining for if we attentively read the Gospels. God does not abuse our human intelligence and free will when he asks us to open our lives to him.

Christ's message of love cannot be summed up merely in peace and brotherhood, although many today write and act as if that was all

there is to the mystery of Christianity. Brotherhood among men implies the Fatherhood of God. Without it universal fraternity is a myth. But what do we know of the Father? Christ walked onto the face of the earth to give us one glorious piece of news: "The Father himself loves you! More than that, he wills that you share in his own happiness." The way to that beatitude is shown to us by the Son of his love.

Christ was, and still is, willing to give it to anyone who asks it of him; but, as we have noted before, he will do so only on his own terms. When Jesus said that if someone takes our goods or even presses our person into his service, we are to ask for no return. He didn't. His message was taken from him and distorted. His miracles were attributed to Satan. His goodness was abused, and his body was unjustly condemned to scourging and crucifixion. At the last his pitifully few personal possessions passed to other men at the roll of dice, and he died robbed of his reputation and the right to an honorable burial. He asked for none of these things back. Why? Because he had given them for us. This is what love means when Jesus speaks of it.

Love which is merely of the earth cannot comprehend this dimension of divine charity. But we who claim to be Christians and to love as Christ loves—dare we also claim ignorance? "You, however, are not carnal but spiritual, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of

Christ, he does not belong to Christ" (Rom. 8:9-10). These can be frightening words if by them we mean that if we do not love (or at least strive to do so) as Christ does, we do not even belong to him. His Spirit and ours know not communion. We have nothing in common!

For whoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . The Spirit himself gives testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God. But if we are sons, we are heirs also; heirs indeed of God and joint heirs with Christ, provided, however, we suffer with him that we may also be glorified with him (Rom. 8:14-17).

To be the kind of lovers Christ envisaged that we would be, we must be continually acting under the influence of the Spirit. This means that all our desires and apostolic works are thoroughly "Spirit-ualized." The supernatural radiance which will then permeate our endeavors will not be apparent to us, but it will be unmistakably so to those who come into our orbit. They will experience the liberating effects of being loved without being possessed. Whether they verbalize their experience or not, they will become aware that love is sufficient unto love. They will see us seeking with such eager joy someone to whom we may give our love that they will not doubt that love is a stronger force than all the hate and evil in the world.

We know that spirit supersedes matter in its power to penetrate and act. Love which has its roots in the Spirit-life within a baptized soul surpasses any other kind of

love in its life-giving efficacy. With God, love is synonymous with life. For God "to be" is to be love. By the gradual revelation made to man through centuries of wondering contemplation, we have come to know something of the secret life of the Trinity. We have learned that the Father, in beholding himself, pours out such an ecstatic Word of Love that it becomes a Person like unto Himself. This Word, so much like the Father that only his Sonship distinguishes him, exults in this life-giving love to such an extent that the reciprocal joy of Father and Son breathes forth Love Personified. The circle is complete. Love has given totally of itself, has been received utterly, and has been expressed to perfection in a self-creating life of Three Persons.

We who call ourselves Christian have been inserted into this Mystery in such a way that it breaks out of itself into the world through us. We wonder how such a mighty power can be so inexpressibly gentle that our fragile humanity is not shattered by it. This is the mystery of the divine "respectfulness." God so esteems the freedom which he himself gave to us that he will not overwhelm us with even his own loveliness! He leaves with us the power to decide when and to what degree his love will be operative and redemptive in our own lives and in the lives of others. The universe is a cosmic pageant written on the motif of life-giving love, but we are free to refuse to sing in harmony with the divine score and can prevent the breath of the

Spirit from playing upon our instrument. He will draw glorious melodies from our soul only if we invite him.

We may ask ourselves, "What is this thing, still so new on earth, which we call love?" It is that which emanates from the secret recesses of the Godhead and upholds all things "mightily yet sweetly." It is that which animates every atom of creation causing it to hold together, to increase and multiply. Everything good, holy or noble springs from it as from its native element. Love is that immense power which never goes down in defeat for, the good it inspires survives every catastrophe. When the world comes to its crashing end, love will leap from the avenging fires to purify and reanimate all things in beauty, splendor and peace.

Love partakes of the attributes of God. It is eternal, undying, knows all things, performs all deeds leading to life, creates, sustains and ennoble every human person in the world.

The solution to all the world's problems is so simple. Saint John wrote it many centuries ago: "Little children, love one another." The solution is so simple because it is so radical. It will come about when and only when Christians begin to live the love which is their inheritance. "Now you have not received a spirit of bondage so as to be again in fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons, by virtue of which we cry "Abba! Father!" (Rom. 8:15).

## The Charms of Chastity

Robert J. Waywood, O.F.M.

As we saw in last month's conference, the vow of chastity is a subject involving notions that are largely legal and negative—ideas that are quite objective, limited, and more or less traditional. The virtue of chastity, which the vow assumes, protects, and fosters, is a more poetic and positive matter—one so rich and subtle that it allows of only partial and personal treatment. Now, a person doesn't have to be a marksman to take a shot in the dark. So however ineffable the subject or inadequate the writer, I would like to try to analyze the charms of the virtue of chastity. First, I propose to examine the life of Jesus to show how he practiced and preached chastity in its highest degree; and then I would like to probe the essence of the virtue that underlies and rises from the vow.

According to immemorial traditions in the Church—traditions that the New Testament implicitly supports and in no way impugns—

Jesus was born of a perpetual virgin (Mary), reared by a life-long virgin (Joseph), and baptized by a professed virgin (John). Jesus entrusted his Virgin Mother (who had no other children to care for her) to an Apostle (John) who is reputed to have been a life-long virgin and who recorded a vision of the Lamb of God leading about a train of male virgins in heaven (Rev. 14). Furthermore, Jesus was slavishly imitated, in life and in death, by an Apostle who was a self-confessed virgin (1 Cor. 7). Throughout his public life Jesus moved freely among women<sup>1</sup> and was readily approached by women of ill repute. Nevertheless, the Master's enemies, who accused the man of irreverence and intemperance, never so much as hinted a charge against Jesus of sexual immorality. The Galahad from Galilee could hardly have induced the self-righteous vigilantes to drop their stones if he were living in a glass house.

<sup>1</sup> See Robert J. Waywood, O.F.M., "The Women in His Life," *THE CORD* 21 (1971), 214-17.

*Father Robert J. Waywood, O.F.M., is an Assistant Professor of English at Siena College, Loudonville, N. Y.*

Nor can we, by an odd twist, fault Jesus for not preaching what he practiced. First, the Lord was adamant in his teaching about marital chastity. He astounded his disciples by transcending even the well known precept of Shemmal, the conservative moralist who allowed divorce only on the grounds of adultery, and by insisting upon the absolute indissolubility of marriage (Mt. 19:3-10; 1 Cor. 7:8-9). He forbade lascivious desires and rigorously cautioned custody of the senses (Mt. 5:27-30). Then again, Jesus championed the innocence of children when he sternly threatened their would-be seducers (Mt. 18:6); he flatly rebuked the Apostles for shooing away these prototypes of celestial citizenry (Mt. 19:14). And on a number of occasions Jesus spoke in defense of fallen women who had regained their innocence by heartfelt repentance. Finally, our Lord invited anyone who by special vocation was so inclined, to pursue the Kingdom of God by foregoing the support and satisfaction not only of his present family (Mk. 10:29-31), but also of his potential family (Mt. 19:12). Jesus had himself become "a eunuch for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven" and was a living testimony to the eschatological doctrine he later enunciated: "For at the resurrection they will neither mar-

ry nor be given in marriage, but will be as angels of God in heaven" (Mt. 22:30).

The unprecedented chastity Jesus propounded by his words and works to "an unbelieving and adulterous generation" is inextricably bound up with three fundamental features of his sacred mission in the world: his loving availability, his prayerful apartness, and his life-germinating death. The Son of Man had no place to lay his head... or his heart. His whole public life was merely a succession of visits, a series of guest appearances, a sequence of encounters: at Cana, Capharnaum, Sicheim, Gerasa, Bethsaida, Jericho, Bethany, Jerusalem, and Emmaus. From sun-up till well into the night Jesus was available to the sick and the seeker; he was all things to all men. Without domestic roots and free from familial ties, Jesus could make his mission an endless itinerary. Transient though he was, he left in his wake a chain of spiritual bonds among those who, having heard and performed the will of the Father in Heaven, had become by supernatural adoption Christ's brother, sister, and mother.

In spite of the nearly killing pace of the apostolate, not once did the Master appear in public emotionally harried, mentally distraught,

or even physically depleted. No doubt his uncanny stamina and aplomb were due in great measure to the intervals, long or brief, that Jesus regularly devoted to solitary prayer, wherein he recouped spiritual and even bodily strength by partaking of that incorporeal bread to which he occasionally alluded. But such composure amid the hurly-burly of his public life was patently abetted by the personal detachment inherent in his celibate status, as were his very opportunities for prayerful retreat. Like the sacraments Jesus instituted, his virginity both signalled and effected the sacred apart-ness, the unprofane otherness of the Anointed. Accordingly, he who was all things to all men, was simultaneously in the world and not of it.

Neither the advocates nor the opponents of virginity will deny that the renunciation of sexual fulfillment in marriage is at least a minor crucifixion—a morbid and masochistic one in the eyes of some, to be sure. Now, from the prophecy of Simeon onward, the shadow of the Cross loomed across our Lord's life. The aforementioned visits of Jesus were all only watering stops in his march toward Calvary. Before the Man of Sorrows actually foretold his Passion and Death, he had projected the Crucifixion every time he summoned men to conversion and discipleship with the unusual idiom: "Take up your cross, and follow me." At times he expressed the formula for salvation paradoxically: "He who will lose his life for my sake shall

find it." His most graphic, most cogent appeal to mortification—one that again anticipates his Crucifixion—is couched in a metaphor of vegetative reproduction: "Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit" (Jn. 12:24-25). Thus we can see in view of our Lord's understanding of renunciation, especially that existential denial involved in complete chastity, his life was filled with not only the foreknowledge but also the foretaste of his redeeming Death. Biologically sterile (for the sake of the Kingdom), Jesus became the mystical Seed that was planted in the earth for three days and sprang up as the living Vine on Easter morning. This Vine has mounted to heaven and will ultimately provide passage, to alter the figure a bit, for every man-jack of us who will ascend to the Father's mansions. In life-germinating death alone do we see the full significance of the virtue of chastity so prominent in the biography of Jesus.

Down through the centuries *anno domini*, thousands upon thousands have successfully imitated Jesus in his fruitful renunciation of marriage and sexual satisfaction: parish priests, contemplative nuns, tireless missionaries, teaching sisters, diligent monks, inconspicuous lay-brothers, telephone operators in lay institutes, nurses in private vows, and myriads of devout sons and daughters and parents-without partners who have resigned themselves to serving their parents and children in virtual virginity. Their

lives have not been negative and unproductive. A power has gone out from them. Of each of them it can be claimed, as Tennyson said of Sir Galahad: "His strength is as the strength of ten because his heart is pure." And it remains for us to see what essentially constitutes this beneficent and positive virtue of chastity. To my mind, chastity is a composite virtue, an organic blend of three interrelated qualities of soul: viz., compassion, innocence, and idealism. To my way of thinking, moreover, each of these three qualities has two distinct, shining facets.

To show the intimate connection between chastity and compassion, I would first like to collate two passages of Scripture. In delineating the Suffering Servant, Isaiah wrote: "If he shall lay down his life for sin, he shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in his hand. Because his soul has labored, he shall see and be filled. By his knowledge shall this my just servant justify many, and shall bear their iniquities" (Is. 53:10-11). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews obviously had this description in mind when he remembered the Redeemer who had been both High Priest and Victim: "For we have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tried as we are in all things except sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:15-16). As we have already seen,

by virtue of his virginity, Jesus had a constant reminder and foretaste of his Passion. His habitual compassion—manifested to the point of open weeping on the occasion of the funeral of a widow's only son, the bereavement of Martha and Mary, and the preview of Jerusalem's destruction—not only issued in his Crucifixion but also sprang from the forepangs of that crucifixion involved in his practice of chastity. Only a fellow sufferer can genuinely sympathize with the suffering; all others are to a certain extent simply Job's counselors. The tender-heartedness of the chaste is almost proverbial. It explains why the doleful race of Irish hasten to take their problems to the local dominee, even if he be addicted to "the crayture." It explains why priest-chaplains can strike peace into a panicky fox-hole. It explains why religious sisters are such a welcome sight at the graveside of "an athlete dying young." It explains why stipends for Gregorian Masses are regularly dispatched to Benedictine and Trappist monks. It explains, finally, why Catholics and many non-Catholics instinctively head for the nearest convent or rectory when smarting from "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune and the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to."

If one studies this fire-tried compassion at work in each of the two sexes, he will discover that it assumes two distinct complexions. For want of a more accurate word, I would call male compassion tenderness tinged with chivalry, which

the dictionary defines as "the qualities of a knight, such as courage, nobility, fairness, courtesy, respect of women, protection of the poor, etc." What Lacordaire so eloquently said of the priest's vocation (which applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to lay brothers) is redolent of the galant's code of life:

To live in the midst of the world without wishing its pleasures; to be a member of each family, yet belonging to none; to share all sufferings; to penetrate all secrets; to heal all wounds; to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers; to return from God to men to bring pardon and hope; to have a heart of fire for charity and a heart of bronze for chastity; to teach and to pardon, console and bless always—what a glorious life!

Speaking for myself, and from over twelve years of experience in the priesthood, I can affirm that many people with problems, especially ladies in distress, regard men under vows as knights errant to whom they may have recourse anytime and anywhere in almost any emergency. My unofficial ministry has brought me into homes for unwed mothers, women's prisons, swanky apartments, flop-houses, store-front churches, and A. A. meeting places. My gallantry has cost me here and there a wrist-watch, some collect-call expenses, many hours of chauffeuring, two transistor radios, bus fares, hotel expenses, many hours of counseling, and some sleep-robbed nights—the list is not exhaustive. Sometimes "What a glorious life" has an ironic ring for me and my fellow friars. Compassion in women

religious, on the other hand, is mingled with what I can only call motherliness. Naturally, the apostolates of many sisters call for and in fact evoke maternal compassion: kindergartens, orphanages, old-age homes, hospitals, asylums for the mentally ill or retarded, clinics, leprosariums, parochial schools, colleges, catechism classes, and social work (all still vivid evidence, in her post-conciliar age, of one of the four marks of the Church—holiness). But over and above these obvious exercises in motherliness, there are many subtler and more informal instances of maternal concern on the part of women in vows, such as among Poor Clares and other contemplatives who day and night avert God's righteous indignation from his sinful children and among all the big-hearted "good sisters" to whom relatives and acquaintances, particularly the menfolk, turn for prayers and consolation in "impossible cases."

Innocence is the next component of chastity to be considered. Now, just as the virtue of chastity is something more than the absence of lust, so too is innocence, in my opinion, more substantial than a lack of guilt, as the first dictionary meaning would have it. We all loosely concede that when children metamorphose into adults, they generally lose something; and I contend that one cannot speak of losing a lack of something without considerable violence to the language and the mind. And so, assuming a rather self-evident relatedness between innocence and chastity, I prefer to explore first

another dictionary meaning of the term and then to elaborate an original but reasonable explanation of the nature of innocence.

If ever movies were eternally worthy of a GP rating, surely such are *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Pinocchio*, and *The Wizard of Oz*. Whenever these masterpieces are re-released, flocks of families press to the box offices as if on a pilgrimage. Parents are in hopes, I suspect, not only of reliving with their children an experience of innocent enjoyment but also of inculcating in them and recapturing for themselves the distinct joy of innocence. But what is this innocence? Certainly it is not ignorance of evil. For no more grisly villains or macabre ogres could be imagined than the wicked queen who bade her henchman bring back Snow White's heart in a casket or the fiendish marionette (Stromboli) and man-eating whale (Monstro) or the wicked Witch of the North and her winged apes. The precise moral and the decided strength of these productions is that in them the world's most patient and potent evil agencies are consigned to their rightfully inferior places and viewed in true perspective against the backdrop of benignity and blessedness. In this respect, innocence consists not so much of freedom from contagion with evil as of a conviction that evil shall not vanquish good, that sin is a temporary aberration, that vice and virtue are plainly opposed, that the former eventually only serves to exercise the latter, that the heart may rise above eve-

ry sordid circumstance, and that the whole menacing Mystery of Iniquity may be ultimately reduced to a sniveling bogeyman. These are the certainties of an artless mind, an incorruptible, single-eyed outlook that sees God standing in the wings of the universal stage. It is also the mind of the pure of heart and the vowed virgin. As children bask in the sunshine of the assurance that their parents are around to protect them even through thunder and lightning, so the pure of heart see the world, the flesh, and the devil against the background of a smiling God; and their perfect chastity, even as perfect charity, "casts out fear" (1 Jn. 5:18). In innocence thus conceived I think we have the justification of the moralist's dictum that one cannot scandalize either the hardened sinner or the confirmed saint.

Looked at from another angle, innocence as a positive quality is akin to an aesthetic aptitude, a sense of beauty. A person who is endowed with an ear for music or an eye for design or a taste for propriety, a person, in short, who has artistic sensibilities, universal or special as it may be, is usually seen to wince or cringe before phenomena grosser constitutions hardly notice, such as cacophonous "music," garish apparel, or mawkish movies. Innocence, I contend, is a sense of moral beauty that makes a person instinctively recoil from the sight of another's sin or the thought of his own surrender to temptation, as if from something deformed and ugly. He





glimpses in a flash the disorder and turpitude of, say, physical brutality, sexual license, political corruption, racial inequity, environmental mayhem, or commercial dishonesty; and he is nauseated, though not overwhelmed, at the sight. In the case of Maria Goretti, it was precisely this penchant for the ethically aesthetic, and revulsion from the morally misshapen that infused a martyr's valor into a teenager's heart and eventually ravished the repentant soul of her

erstwhile seducer. Conversely, innocence conditions one to relish the spiritual splendor of heroes and heroines great, like the Curé of Ars or Thérèse of Lisieux, and small, like devout old folks ("As a white candle in a holy place / Such is the beauty of an aged face") or unspoiled youths ("A berry red, a guileless look, a still word—strings of sand! / And yet they made my wild, wild heart fly down to her little hand").

The third (and most elusive) in-

redient of the virtue of chastity is idealism. What I hope to nail down here are two transcendent attitudes that underlie, however subliminally, the profession and practice of chastity. One is the particular vision of romantic love; the other is the universal dream of perfection; both almost defy description. To illustrate this first degree of idealism, let me divulge that, although I am a confirmed bachelor and am amorously detached from every specimen of the fairer sex, I'm head over heels in love with the love-and-marriage ideal and romantically cherish just about the whole of womankind.

To express these sentiments more graphically, I'd like to publicly confess (for the first time in my life) that I broke down and cried when I saw the wind-up of the movie *Marty*, wherein young love blossoms for a balding butcher and a wall-flower schoolmarm. I've been "all choked up" each time I officiated at the wedding of cousins and schoolmates. I own five distinct recordings of *The Desert Song*, an operetta of the twenties that offers a musical commentary on the text: "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Mt. 19:6). And though on occasion (after over-exposure at a Rosary Society Communion Breakfast, or at the fringe of a domestic gab-fest) I could exclaim with Browning, "And straight was a path of gold for the sun / And the need of a world of men for me," every day is Ladies' Day with me. In young or old, I love their

daintiness, their attention to good grooming, their affectivity, their (apparent) helplessness, their personal loyalty, their unmuscularity, their intuition, their persistence, their non-rationality, their idealism—in short, their femininity. I look fondly on the svelte and curvacious maidens bobbing along the sidewalk; I gaze wistfully at stoop-shouldered and dumpy matrons shuffling out of the supermarket. Mine are the bitter-sweet reflections of the singing hay in this Roumanian poem by the Bard of Dimbovitza: "Yesterday's flowers that are yet in me / must needs make way for all tomorrow's flowers. / The maidens, too, that sang me to my death / Must even so make way for all the maids that are to come. / And as my soul, so too their soul will be / Laden with fragrance of days gone by." Finally I see the beautiful thing that has grown between my mother, all woman, and my father, every inch a man, after almost fifty years of give-and-take, which is the story of, the glory of, romantic love. I see. I approve. I marvel. But I also see through and beyond. In my heart of hearts I know that this beautiful thing only participates in and but dimly mirrors that "Beauty ever ancient, ever new" which, thanks to the light of grace, I realize may be straightway pursued and oh-so-shortly attained. Almighty God, eventually, is the Sweet Mystery of Life.

We come, at length, to idealism in general. Whatever one thinks of the vow of chastity and the virtue

that prompts and protects it, he must admit that those who try to practice perfect chastity do so from idealistic motives—misguided as some see it—and that they are living exponents of a supernatural destiny—however illusory. The practicing idealist may ultimately be proven a fool. But if he is, half of the important words of the language are nonsense, our sweetest lyrics are lies, and every value and virtue and goal is in the long run pointless; for as Browning argued, "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, else what's a Heaven for?"

Implicit in the life of everyone who has willingly chosen perfect chastity is this motive and message: there is a heaven. The very endeavor to reach for the stars in leading a virginal life validates the world's whole lexicon of noble notions: happiness, gladness, ecstasy, fulfillment, harmony, freedom,

comfort, peace, fellowship, victory, permanence, certainty, strength, light, life, hope, fidelity, honor, justice, loyalty, mercy, forgiveness, retribution, direction, meaning, significance, purpose, and goal. Because of every living and breathing man and woman of God vowed to chastity, all mankind may be assured in their sometimes faltering convictions about the Kingdom of Heaven, which is variously adumbrated by dozens of their most poignant songs. There is a long, long trail a-winding, east of the sun and west of the moon, that leads beyond the blue horizon and somewhere over the rainbow, to that land of romance, that cabin in the sky, that castle in the air, and the everlasting toyland that is the New Jerusalem. Thanks to a host of dedicated, full-time followers of the Virgin's Son, our young men will dream dreams and our old men will see visions until all things are made new.

*Have you read these inspiring series of Conferences by Father John F. Marshall?*

*They are available for \$1.00 each.*

CONFERENCES ON THE OUR FATHER  
BY THE LIGHT OF HIS LAMP  
THE LONG WAY HOME, THE SHORT WAY OF LOVE  
IN THE SHADOW OF HIS CROSS.

Order from  
THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE  
St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778



Sister Joyce, O. S. C.

## Inspiration of a Rose Garden

pink, delicate maidens  
drinking in the morning rays  
refreshing pilgrim spirit  
mirroring transcendency  
in your fresh loveliness!

## Mystic Hearts Touch

spark burst into flame  
greeting that Presence within  
blowing and fanning  
increasing arid fire  
knitting, molding  
two as one!

# Legislation Concerning Formation

Dismas Bonner, O.F.M.

The purpose of this presentation is to examine the juridical norms that pertain to our formation program. In particular, the paper deals with existing restrictive legislation regarding the novitiate and other phases of formation, and with the evaluation of candidates for profession and orders.

## I. Restrictive Norms of Law

### A. Recent Legislation on Formation

To place this topic of restrictive legislation in proper perspective, a summary review of recent legislative action will be helpful.

1. The General Chapter of 1967 voted the following norms in the area of formation:

- a. The time of probation shall last generally for six years, unless in a special case the minister provincial with his definitorium deem otherwise (Art. 172, §2).
- b. At the beginning or during the period of probation there is to

be a whole year of novitiate, which need not, however, be continuous... (Art. 183, §1).

- c. After consulting the faculty, the minister provincial with his definitorium is to determine when during the period of probation the novitiate is to take place (Art. 183, §2).
- d. The minister provincial with his definitorium shall designate the house or houses of novitiate for his province. In a particular case the minister provincial, if he judges it more convenient for grave reasons, may permit the novitiate to be spent in another house (Art. 183, §3).

2. When, by Decree of February 27, 1969, the minister general promulgated many of the laws enacted by the General Chapter of 1967, the above mentioned norms and the other enactments on formation contained in Articles 172-86 were excluded from the express promulgation. The reason for this exclusion was that, on January 6, 1969, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes had

issued the Instruction, *Renovationis causam*, on the adaptation and renewal of religious formation. This Instruction set down certain new norms on religious formation and, at the same time, derogated from certain norms of the common law in force up until then.

Some indication of the trend of this Instruction can be gained by looking at its effects on the norms of the Chapter of 1967 which were mentioned previously.

The Chapter had voted for a six-year period of probation, a time period that, according to the judgment of the provincial, was somewhat flexible and adaptable to individual circumstances. This period was to include a novitiate year which could be broken up according to need and timed in relation to the individual's situation. *Renovationis causam* states: "Religious life begins with the novitiate" (§13, §1). §21 of the Instruction speaks of twelve months of presence in the novitiate house as a requirement for validity. While the Instruction, in §23, §1, does permit periods of absence from the novitiate house for experiences in line with the purpose of the institute, it also prescribes that such periods spent by a novice outside the house of novitiate "be added to the twelve

months of presence required by §21 for the validity of the novitiate, but in such a way that the total duration of the novitiate thus expanded does not exceed two years" (§24, §1). Moreover, the Instruction places further limitations when it prescribes that these "formative apostolic periods may not begin until after a minimum of three months in the novitiate and will be distributed in such a way that the novice will spend at least six continuous months in the novitiate and return to the novitiate for at least one month prior to first vows or temporary commitment" (§24, §2).

The General Chapter had likewise voted to place in the competence of the minister provincial the erection of the novitiate house or houses, and the granting of permission to make the novitiate in another house. *Renovationis causam* places these matters and similar ones in the hands of the superior general with the consent of his council.

3. Certain faculties in *Renovationis causam* were reserved to general chapters in such a manner that, if the general chapter had already been held and the convoking of a new general chapter, in the judgment of the general su-

*Father Dismas Bonner, O.F.M., is a Professor of Canon Law at the Catholic Theological Union, Chicago. This paper was presented originally at the Oak Brook Conference on vocations, last year.*

perior and his council, was thought to be too difficult, then all or some of the faculties might be put into effect if the major superiors and their councils were consulted and two-thirds of them consented, after consulting the religious in perpetual vows. This process was initiated in the Franciscan Order, and, in accordance with the vote taken, all the faculties reserved to the general chapter by *Renovationis causam* were put into effect. This was accomplished by the promulgation, on September 17, 1969, of a new redaction of Articles 172-86 of the General Constitutions. This new redaction contained the above mentioned faculties which are reserved to the general chapter, other norms of *Renovationis causam* itself, and finally those laws enacted by the General Chapter of 1967 which could be reconciled with *Renovationis causam*. This redaction is to remain in force experimentally until the next ordinary chapter of the Order in 1973. The laws of the old Constitutions from the Chapter of 1951 which treat the same subject are abrogated and suppressed.

### B. The Spirit of the Instruction "Renovationis Causam"

*Renovationis causam* is evidently somewhat more restrictive in its outlook than our General Chapter of 1967. Still, in comparison with the past policy of the Congregation for Religious and the past attitude of canon law, it is surely a broadening of outlook. The document stipulates a formation that takes

place progressively in a graded manner at each stage (cf. ¶¶4, 5, 6, 15, 25, 31), a formation that is more integrated in the sense that all the elements of the religious life as lived in the Institute after the period of formation are to be found at all stages of formation, although there may be an area of concentration in each of the stages (cf. ¶¶ 4, 5, 15, 18, 29, 35, 36). Formation as conceived by the Instruction must be adapted to individual persons and places (cf. ¶¶1, 4, 19, 23, 24) as well as to the life of each institute (cf. ¶¶1, 14, 15, 23, 33), and conformable to the modern mentality, modern living conditions, and the needs of the apostolate (cf. Introduction and ¶¶4, 7, 18, and 25). It is a document which is founded on the realization that sound experimentation is needed, "carried out on a sufficiently vast scale and over a sufficiently long period of time to make it possible to arrive at an objective judgment based on facts" (cf. Introduction).

Negatively, the Instruction has been criticized for giving a too sacral and static notion of religious profession and for emphasizing too strongly the objective perfection of religious life. The emphasis on the role and importance of the community is weak in spots. For example, much importance is placed on the community of the novices and their Master as a sort of ideal community; this is not thoroughly realistic, since there is need to point up the importance of the more healthy interaction of

the young with older members of the community. More stress is needed too on the idea that profession is not just a matter between the person and God, but is very much an affair that involves the whole community in preparation for profession, the decision to make profession and the achieving of stability in religious life. Moreover, the expression of the psychological experience of unity is poor when the Instruction downplays the emotional aspects of personal commitment:

Young religious must be taught that this unity so eagerly sought and toward which all life tends in order to find its full development, cannot be obtained on the level of activity alone, or even be psychologically experienced, for it resides in that divine love which is the bond of perfection and which surpasses all understanding (¶5).

Commenting on this passage, Father Kevin O'Rourke, O.P., remarks,

One of the chief aims of the formation program should be to integrate the person's character in such a way that he does experience a unity between his awareness of himself as an individual human being, and the way he thinks as a religious. In other words, he can and should feel at home and at ease as he lives his everyday religious life and strives to attain its ideals (Report of the Convention of the Canon Law Society of America, 1969, p. 108).

Knowledge of these circumstances of the Instruction, a grasp of its purpose and some insight into the mind of the legislator are essential if we are realistically and effectively to interpret and imple-

ment *Renovationis causam*. (Cf. Canon 18). Even apart from the implementation of the Instruction itself, such knowledge is vital for the future of our formation programs themselves, since it enables us to see how the framers of the law are thinking, what course future developments in the law might take, and what we must do now to ensure that we will not be hindered by unrealistic future legislation from carrying out what we consider essential. We need to work towards the establishment of a structure that will enable us to assess our situation and adapt formation programs more readily, unfettered by norms that do not fit our situation.

*Renovationis causam* is an official document of the Holy See, and its prescriptions are binding in the same way as other documents coming from Roman Congregations which act in virtue of the authority given them by the Pope. It is to be noted, however, that *Renovationis causam* does not so much impose legislation as it permits a broadening of or derogation from presently existing canon law (cf. Introduction). As the document itself states: "The prescriptions of common law remain in force except in so far as this present Instruction may derogate therefrom." (III, Application of the Special Norms, I). Moreover, it is true to say that the derogations and innovations of *Renovationis causam* flow from a new and changed theological attitude, different from the mentality which gave rise to former prescriptions.

In view of this, it must be borne in mind that, while some of the older legislation remains in force legally, it must nevertheless be interpreted and applied in the spirit of the new document. Keeping all of this in mind, we may conclude that the legislation concerning religious formation, whether this be the older norms of the Code or the norms of the Instruction, is to be interpreted broadly in the context of the present climate of the Church. What is prescribed as necessary for validity both in the Instruction and in other sources of law is to be strictly observed. What is not explicitly prescribed as necessary for validity should be applied in practice, unless in a particular case there should be proportionately serious reasons persuading the contrary. And the smaller the deviation from the literal norms of the law, the less grave the reasons would need to be for departure from the norm in particular cases.

The responses to the questionnaire indicate that, in the view of some, the Instruction lays down too many detailed and restrictive prescriptions, particularly in regard to the novitiate. There is a feeling that it would have been better had the decree simply insisted on the need for a good solid novitiate, and then left the details to be solved not on the general, but the provincial level. However, in the conditions of confusion and uncertainty that are present in many quarters today, it was decided that a substantial amount of guidance is still necessary; at the same time,

it likewise appears that there was a genuine attempt to escape from the hothouse approach to formation, and specifically in the area of the novitiate. Hence, a middle course was chosen. The document is experimental and in a progressive vein, with the promise of greater progress in the future. According to Father Heston, a characteristic of *Renovationis causam* is that it opens doors, and cannot be considered the last word. (Cf. Canadian Religious Conference, Bureau of Religious Affairs, Report n. III, "Renovationis causam," p. 40). Shortly after the publication of the Instruction, a commentary on its juridical nature was published in *l'Osservatore Romano*, a commentary which emphasized the provisional aspects of the Instruction's norms (Mar. 13. 1969).

This experimental and provisional character indicates that the Congregation is open to suggestions on how to improve the general legislation, especially if suggestions or requests are based on actual valid experiments. If laws are to be made that are binding on all religious, it is most desirable that religious themselves take proper measures to see that the laws made are truly helpful to the proper development and training of the members of each institute. What a mistake it would be to adhere too closely to a strict interpretation of presently existing norms, to forget that they are not ends in themselves but only means to facilitate progress towards the end of the institute. Religious must not be afraid to take the initiative by ex-

perimenting with creative interpretations of *Renovationis causam* and other norms pertaining to formation, such as our own Constitutions. Such creativity in practice today can prepare the way for more realistic and forward looking legislation tomorrow.

### C. Restrictive Norms Concerning the Novitiate

Most of the criticisms of restrictive legislation in *Renovationis causam* dealt with the document's norms for the novitiate. Although some provinces stated that they did not consider the norms too restrictive, there were those who felt that the possibility of a non-continuous novitiate at any point in the probation period, as outlined by the General Chapter of 1967, should not have been taken away from the Order. Other criticisms relative to the timing and continuity of the novitiate were directed against the requirement of twelve months' presence in the novitiate house as a condition for validity, as well as the rigid determination of the various stages of the novitiate and the total maximum length of two years.

The total length of the periods spent by a novice outside the novitiate will be added to the twelve months of presence required by Art. 21 for the validity of the novitiate, but in such a way that the total duration of the novitiate thus expanded does not exceed two years (*Renovationis causam*, ¶24, §1).

In order to be valid, the novitiate as described above must last twelve months (*Ibid.*, ¶21).

Absences from the novitiate group and house which, either at intervals or continuously, exceed three months render the novitiate invalid (*Ibid.*, ¶22, §1).

As for absences lasting less than three months, it pertains to the major superiors, after consultation with the Novice Master, to decide in each individual case, taking into account the reasons for the absence, whether this absence should be made up by demanding an extension of the novitiate, and to determine the length of the eventual prolongation. The Constitutions of the institute may also provide directives on this point (*Ibid.*, ¶22, §2).

When we consider that ¶21 of *Renovationis causam* demands twelve months' presence for a valid novitiate, while ¶22, §2 allows absences which add up to less than three months when there are good reasons, it is legitimate to conclude that, unless we admit a contradiction between the two articles, strictly speaking only nine months of presence are necessary for a valid novitiate. Why, indeed, can we not use this three months' latitude to place some apostolic experiences during the time allowed for absences according to the judgment of the major superior? After all, the allowable time of absence from the novitiate house was tripled by *Renovationis causam*. Liberty is left to major superiors regarding the necessity of making up this time "taking into account the reasons for the absence." It would seem that one such reason might be further apostolic experience. However, it is also stated that the Constitutions may provide further

directives on the matter. Article 178, §2 of our General Constitutions states:

The length of time devoted to formative activity outside the house of novitiate can be divided into several stages. However, the total time which the novices spend outside the house of novitiate for such formation must, for the validity of the novitiate, be added to the twelve months prescribed for the novitiate...

There is a subtle change here from the language of *Renovationis causam*. ¶24, §1 of the Instruction has: "tempus... additur duodecim mensibus, qui, tenore n. 21, ad validitatem novitiatus requiruntur," while Article 178, §2 of the Constitutions has: "Temporis spatium... ad validitatem novitiatus addatur duodecim mensibus pro novitiatu praescriptis." The Constitutions seem to state that, in any case, time spent outside the novitiate house for the purpose of apostolic formation must be added to complete the full twelve months of presence, and that the minister provincial cannot consider apostolic experience as a reason for allowing an absence of up to three months. Also pertinent are the first two paragraphs of Article 182:

§1. The novitiate is interrupted and must therefore be started anew and completed: if a novice is absent from the group and house of novitiate for more than three months, continuously or at intervals, except in the case of an absence for formative activity (cf. Art. 178); if on being dismissed by the superior he takes leave; or if he leaves the house without the latter's permission with the intention of not returning.

§2. If the period of absence from the house of novitiate mentioned in §1 does not exceed three months, it is up to the major superior, after consulting the novice master, to decide whether the deficiency of time has to be made up or not and, in case of proration, to determine the length of time.

Here too there is a slight change from the wording of *Renovationis causam*. In the case of absences of less than three months, ¶22 of the Instruction permits the major superior to determine whether the time need be made up "taking into account the reasons for the absence"; Article 182, §2 of the Constitutions permits him to make this decision in the case of "the period of absence mentioned in §1," scil., "except in the case of an absence for formative activity."

Does the change in wording first mentioned above mean that it is indeed the intention of the Constitutions to set up an invalidating law where *Renovationis causam* did not have one? Does the apparent exclusion of absences for formative activity from Article 182 amount to a statement that the authority granted in this Article cannot be validly applied to such instances? Or is the main intent of Article 182, §1 simply to indicate that absences of more than three months invalidate the novitiate, except in the case of the formative absences mentioned in Article 178; and Article 182, §2, then, would simply indicate that such absence of less than three months would not invalidate the novitiate, without any explicit exclusion of the major superior's right in regard to periods of time spent in formative

activity? Relying solely on the wording of the Constitutions, perhaps some case can be made for the view that, if the provincial uses the authority of Article 182, §2, in regard to absences for formative activity, he does so invalidly. However, the norms of *Renovationis causam* are already a restriction of the enactments of the General Chapter of 1967; it would not, therefore, be sound interpretation to settle the question raised by the change in wording with an explanation that is even more restrictive than *Renovationis causam* itself. Moreover, it is no secret that, in some provinces, it is the practical interpretation and implementation not to add the time spent in apostolic experiences to round out the full twelve months of presence in the novitiate. It would seem that, for good reasons, this practice can be lawfully followed. Indeed, still further apostolic experience can be obtained even during the presence within the novitiate house; after all, there is nothing to prevent apostolic experience during part of the day without in any way interrupting the legal "time of presence in the novitiate." This likewise is the practice in some provinces.

Regarding the continuity of presence in the novitiate, it may first seem that the prescriptions of ¶24, §2 of the Instruction and Article 178, §2 of the Constitutions are too rigid and detailed regarding the times that must be spent continuously in the novitiate house. However, there may well be less difficulty in striving to fulfill these

prescriptions than one might imagine. After all, some of these periods can well overlap; a certain amount of apostolic and intellectual endeavor is possible while living in the novitiate; the times prescribed for continuous residence are not necessary for validity; absences of less than three months may be permitted in certain circumstances. All of these factors indicate a great amount of latitude which can be used creatively in structuring the novitiate program.

Duration of the novitiate is the subject of further restrictive legislation. According to ¶24, §1 of the Instruction and Article 178, §2 of the Constitutions, the novitiate must not exceed two years' duration. Again, it is not explicitly stated that this limitation pertains to the validity of the novitiate. Moreover, the faculty granted in canon 571, §2 to prolong the novitiate for six months can still be used. Another possibility: If it should seem good to extend the novitiate even further, why not have the novice make promises which, while they technically end the novitiate period, would still not rule out a desired prolongation of the type of formation being carried out in the novitiate stage?

Another criticism of *Renovationis causam* is the seeming violation of the principle of subsidiarity. The authority for the designation of the place of the novitiate is put into the hands of the general superior instead of the provincial (Instruction, ¶¶16-19; Constitutions, Article 176). Moreover, the faculties granted by the Instruction may

not in any way be delegated (III, Application of the Special Norms, II). It does, however, stand to reason that the provincial and his definitorium together with the local formation personnel are in a much better position to judge local needs and conditions than those in the General Curia. For the present, a practical way to correct this poor application of the principle of subsidiarity is for the Minister General and his Council to provide easily for local needs by readily approving the requests that come from the various provinces.

Hopefully, the future will see the removal of many of these cumbersome restrictions. One particularly incisive observation emerges from the questionnaires: "Should not the very notion of validity be dropped in the case of the novitiate? After all, what really counts is not that the novitiate be valid, but that it permit the attainment of certain objectives. A valid novitiate offers no guarantee that one has attained the objectives desired, whereas one can well attain these objectives without the novitiate's being valid. Whether the novitiate be valid or not signifies absolutely nothing from the point of view of objectives to be attained" (Report of the St. Joseph Province, p. 16). There are better ways to achieve the purpose of the novitiate than by retaining the sanction of invalidating laws, and this amid circumstances where the attainment of their purpose is questionable at any rate. Perhaps the future will see some improvement in this regard.

## II. Evaluation of Candidates

Several Articles of the Constitutions touch upon this question of the evaluation of candidates for profession. Articles 174, 175, 179, and 185 sketch in broad terms the characteristics which must be considered in the process of evaluation, prescribe certain reports on the candidates that are to be sent to the major superior, and call for "due severity of judgment in sorting out the candidates" (cf. Art. 185, §2). According to Article 173, §4,

The minister provincial for his own province . . . may:

- a. admit candidates after sufficient investigation to preliminary probation and, after a favorable vote by at least two-thirds of the definitors . . . to the novitiate;
- b. admit to a promise or to temporary and solemn profession of vows, after a consultive vote of all the solemnly professed friars of the house of formation.

In regard to the matter of admittance to Orders, the Constitutions contain only the very general norm of Article 189:

§1. The friars who aspire to Orders are to be trained through the necessary curricula and by an opportune probation, both spiritual and pastoral, in compliance with the requirements of the law.

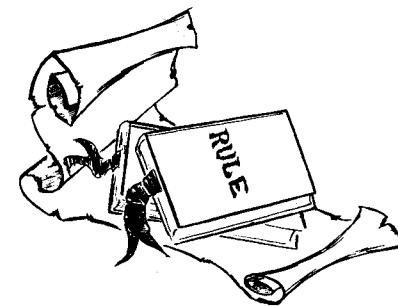
§2. The study curricula, the requisites for Holy Orders and the probation period are to be determined by particular statutes of both the Order and the provinces, with due regard for the local circumstances and the laws enacted by the episcopal conferences.

These norms of the Constitutions leave a great deal of latitude for

the individual provinces to develop evaluation and vocation procedures for both profession and ordination. It is evident from the responses to n. 6 of the questionnaire that this latitude has been applied in practice; moreover, the question of evaluation and means of arriving at a vocational decision is still the object of much study and experimentation.

An important source of light on this subject are the programs for priestly formation drafted and approved by the bishops of various nations in accordance with the Decree on Priestly Formation of Vatican II and the *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* issued by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. For example, the document of the Bishops of the United States, "The Program of Priestly Formation," contains the following pertinent ideas:

1. Administration and faculty will necessarily retain the major role of evaluating students for promotion, especially to Holy Orders, yet consultative votes of the students about their peers can be helpful (#219).
2. Since education and growth are gradual processes, continuing evaluation of student development is needed. Such evaluation is the responsibility first of the seminary faculty. This responsibility should be shared progressively with others who are involved in the work of formation, including the candidate himself. Personality testing and counseling should be employed wherever warranted. The substance of the periodic review by the faculty should be communicated to the student in a constructive way (#236).



3. The advantages of peer evaluation should be explored. A student's acceptance by the seminary community is a hopeful sign for his future priesthood (#237).

4. See #238 on the role of properly supervised leaves of absence and deferral of ordination as a means of progressing in maturity.

5. Reports about the seminarian's performance in apostolic activities and the deacon internship will prove invaluable in measuring progress as the seminarian advances (#239).

6. See #240 about the prerogative of the Ordinary to make the final judgment on a student's fitness for Orders and the role of the seminary in furnishing him with regular evaluative reports. This article also contains a listing of basic qualities in a candidate for Orders.

7. The Ordinary should weigh the opinions of the People of God about an individual candidate, noting the qualities they judge essential for effective ministry today. He will establish a suitable structure to elicit such evaluation (#241).

8. See ##242 and 243 on the exercise of the diaconate in the parochial ministry or other apostolic work. Careful attention should be paid to reports from all forms of supervised pastoral activities, e.g., the evaluation of the Director of Field Education (##104-13), the reports of auxiliary pastoral supervisors (##114-15), and the e-

valuation of the supervisor in the program of Clinical Pastoral Education recommended by #116.

These and similar ideas can be of invaluable assistance in helping to make the process of vocational decision a meaningful project of the entire community. Such informed and enlightened procedures can go far towards eliminating the fear and mistrust of evaluation and vocation procedures that were expressed in some responses to the questionnaire.

This presentation has examined two areas of concern to us as we work to implement an effective program of formation. Other areas too might require further study, e.g., the effects of substituting

promises for temporary vows, the use to be made of the time of immediate preparation for solemn profession. But in all these matters, and in any dispositions that may be made by the forthcoming General Chapter, it is well to emphasize the right and responsibility of each province to engage in creative application of the general norms of formation to its own situation. Let us hope that, through such implementation of present legal norms, we can hasten the day when the norms will be more closely in touch with the needs and circumstances of religious life, more aware of the problems to be faced and solved by individual institutes and provinces.

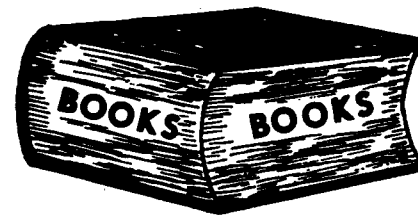
## NEEDED

### FOR CATECHETICAL WORK IN INDIA

*Rosaries, Medals, Crucifixes, Statues, Christmas and Easter Cards*

Any articles you can send will be deeply appreciated. Please send them by *parcel*, rather than *small-packet*, rate, so as to avoid duty. Send the materials to

Fr. L. Abraham Joseph  
St. Michael's Church  
Kumbalam P.O. Via Mulavana  
Quilon District, South India



*With Open Hands.* By Henri J. M. Nouwen. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1972. Pp. 160. Paper, \$1.95.

*Reviewed by Father Raymond Hirt, O.F.M., S.T.L. (Catholic University of America), Moderator of the Franciscan Formation Program at Holy Name College, Washington, D.C.*

This is a book on prayer which grew out of the shared prayer experience of the author and twenty-five theology students. It expresses the reality of prayer through the medium of words and photographs. The central thesis of the book is that prayer demands a relationship in which one allows the other to enter into the very center of one's person. Such a demand calls for detachment, for letting go, for putting fear aside. The very title of the book images this basic attitude of the person who wishes to pray. Interesting enough, the concluding portion of the book bears this same title whereas the Introduction bears the inscription "With Clenched Fists."

It is Nouwen's conviction that prayer has something to do with silence, acceptance, hope, compassion, and revolution. Each of these items form a separate chapter. The chapters on Hope and Compassion are especially good and are more developed than the other three. Prayer is the expression of hope which expects everything from God without binding him in any way. It is only in the light of hope that prayer of petition can be properly understood and appreciated.

Compassion is another way of saying that we cannot pray alone but

only with our brothers and sisters. Prayer has meaning only if it is both necessary and indispensable in our lives. The crucial question is not when or how to pray but whether we should pray always and whether prayer is necessary. Prayer must be rooted in our very lives as human beings and as Christians. It is at this juncture that prayer becomes demanding and makes us uncomfortable.

The value of this little book is not so much in its depth, erudition or profundity, but rather in its ring of real-ness, honesty, and hope which flow from the personal lives and experience of other people very much like ourselves. Many of the insights are briefly stated without being developed at any length. The rationale (certainly the advantage) of this approach is perhaps twofold: only the reader can develop these insights once they strike a resonance in his own person and experience; and only the reader can accept or reject the challenge which they present. The price and layout of the book make it a worthy gift to be given and to be received.

*The Power in Penance.* By Michael Scanlan, T.O.R. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1972. Pp. 62. Paper, \$0.60.

*Reviewed by Father Richard Leo Heppler, O.F.M., an experienced spiritual director, and chaplain to the Immaculate Conception Sisters at Tombrock College, West Paterson, New Jersey.*

A "brown-out" is a modern summer annoyance caused by the lowering of electrical voltage to prevent a total power failure. For a certain period of time during the day the "juice" is cut down so that lights, elevators, TV sets, kitchen appliances, power tools—everything run on electricity—lumpers haltingly along.

For priests and penitents who feel they are suffering from a spiritual



"brown-out" when it comes to confession, Father Michael Scanlan, T.O.R., offers a method for "up-ing" the voltage in *The Power in Penance*.

This short booklet, one in the series of "Charismatic Renewal Books," is designed to open up the sacrament more to the Holy Spirit, to the POWER of the Sanctifier to heal, to deliver and to strengthen in addition to reconciling.

Most of us, I presume, are accustomed to praying to the Holy Spirit before confession and, possibly, to thanking him afterwards. Father Scanlan's approach is that of spontaneous prayer during the confession and again after the absolution. The spontaneous prayer may be by the priest, by the penitent, or by both.

Does it work? The author has been using this method for over two years, and he cites a few of the many results he has achieved. True, this is not for everyone—any more than charismatic prayer is. But for those who are inclined towards the charismatic renewal, this approach should unlock some of the vast power contained in the sacrament of penance.

Some may fear this method is a rejection of the approved manner of going to confession, but Father Scanlan reminds us of Article 72 of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, which recommends revision of the rite and formula of the sacrament of penance so as to give more luminous expression to both the nature and the effect of the sacrament.

---

**A Passion for the Possible.** By William Toohey, C.S.C. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1972. Pp. 112. Paper, \$1.35.

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

Father Toohey, Director of Campus Ministry and Assistant Professor of Theology at Notre Dame, has done it again. Drawing on his wealth of

personal experience, he has produced an eminently readable book worthy to succeed his *Rebuilding Faith* and so uncannily relevant to the issues of today's America that it often becomes impossible to remain in one's chair and continue, passively, to absorb what he has to say.

The style is appealing direct, and it exudes an infectious optimism. There is a good deal of food for serious thought, as e.g., in Father Toohey's development of the notion of sin as failure to do, as lack of action rather than doing the wrong thing (pp. 26-28). Seeming obiter dicta often jolt one into salutary reflection as when the author points out that there is no official prayer to the Christ-Child (p. 63) because there is no Christ-Child—the point being, of course, that prayer is not a sentimental reverie.

What may not sit well with most older readers, but will probably be really provocative to most younger ones, is Father Toohey's radical, uncompromising stance vis-à-vis the Lord's injunction to poverty ("It has to be impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. For if a man is to gain eternal life he must love his neighbor, and when you do that you don't have riches left over"—p. 107) and vis-à-vis the war in Viet Nam. Regarding this latter subject, I have said what I want to say in an article on the subject (*THE CORD*, Jan., 1970), and I see no reason, over two years later, to change a word of that. I know that the article has had some good effect, and I pray that Father Toohey's fine vignette of "Our Schizophrenic Nation" (pp. 96-101) will do some more of the same.

The book is packaged very attractively, each of its nine short chapters prefaced by a full-page, interesting photograph illustrative of the theme. I recommend the book unequivocally to all readers seeking to take the Christian message seriously, concretely, and literally.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

Carroll, James, *Contemplation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1972. Pp. 94. Paper, \$1.25.

Eterovich, Francis H., *Approaches to Natural Law from Plato to Kant*. Jericho, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1972. Pp. 194. Cloth, \$6.50.

Latourelle, René, S.J., *Christ and the Church: Signs of Salvation*. Tr. Sister Dominic Parker; New York: Alba House, 1972. Pp. viii-324. Cloth, \$9.50.

Ryan, John Julian, *The Humanization of Man*. New York: Newman Press, 1972. Pp. viii-246. Paper, \$4.50.

Whelan, Joseph P., S.J., *Benjamin: Essays in Prayer*. New York: Newman Press, 1972. Pp. 122. Cloth, \$4.95.