

The CORD

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COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for the May issue of THE CORD were drawn by Brother James Orthmann, O.F.M., a novice member of Holy Name Province.



Thank God for This one!

I first heard about Robert Hale from Minna Cassard, the late and never-to-be-forgotten secretary (if not the very soul) of The American Teilhard Association. It was sometime toward the last part of 1970 or early 1971, and I had just published *Bibliografia Teilhardiana 1955 - 1970* for the Florence based Italian Teilhard Association. Naturally, I had sent some copies to New York City for the American Teilhard Association's library—wondering (really) if anyone there would be interested in or need to consult a bibliography which concentrated heavily (if not almost solely) on the Italian side of Teilhardian literature.

Minna wrote thanking me for the copies and added (not without surprise) that upon the very day they had arrived, a young student-priest had come into the *Palais Teilhard* (as we affectionately called our 72nd Street office and library) requesting information on Teilhardian Literature in Italian. That person, of course, was Robert Hale—a convert to Roman Catholicism and Camaldolese priest, studying at Fordham and preparing a doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Ewert Cousins.

Shortly thereafter, I had a note from Robert Hale wherein he graciously thanked me for my work, expressed the hope of our meeting when I should return stateside, and told me that he was writing a dissertation concerning something about Teilhard and the Cosmos, or Teilhard and the Cosmic Christ. I say

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“something,” not because Father Hale was indefinite, but rather because I have (I must confess) become rather apprehensive, if not skeptical, about the plethora of Teilhardiana.

Father Hale and I were unsuccessful, despite several attempts, in meeting during my return to the United States in the summer of 1971. But during our last phone call we promised to try to contact one another in Rome come the Fall. At that time he would be returning to his Order's monastery, and I to the Fraternity's International Research Centre. And so, it was not until my return to Rome—and during the busy days of Synod II—that I finally met Father Robert Hale.

Our first encounter was on October 17th. Through the kindness of the Peruvian Franciscan Cardinal, Juan Landazuri, I had obtained two excellent tickets for the beatification ceremonies of Maximilian Kolbe, and I invited Father Hale to come along. Later on in the month, in a more relaxed atmosphere, we had lunch together and talked about Teilhardian scholarship.

During that luncheon, Father Hale told me about his dissertation, his hopes of teaching a course in Teilhardiana at San Anselmo, and his general feelings about the Church, monastic life, theology, and the like.

¹ Robert Hale, O.S.B., Cam., *Christ and the Universe: Teilhard de Chardin and the Cosmos*. Edited by Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973. Pp. x-130. Cloth, \$5.50.

As we parted, and I walked first past the Holy Office (where Teilhard was often discussed and is still not forgotten!) and then down the Borgo Santo Spirito (where in the autumn of 1948 Père Teilhard had come to live and—since it is the headquarters of the Society of Jesus—plead his cause), I pondered many things and reflected upon how the Church was changing with Synod III.

Sometimes during the course of our pleasant luncheon and conversation, I had asked Father Hale to let me see a copy of his dissertation when it would have been published. For he had told me of his plans for an abridged version to be published by the Franciscan Herald Press. And now, almost a year later, I have been asked to review it.¹

When I asked Father Hale to let me see the finished work, it was because I had the feeling (from listening to him and listening to others—especially Dr. Cousins — speak about him) that he might have something really important to say. When at last I saw the revised manuscript, I was anything but disappointed.

For a long time, now, people have been confused by Teilhard's exact understanding of what he termed the “cosmic body of Christ.” I remember watching the confusion that used

to come over my students' faces, whenever this topic—so central to Teilhardian thought—came up. And anyone who is the least bit familiar with Teilhardian literature is aware of the wide range of interpretations (from very conservative and usually false articles in *Triumph*, to some equally wild statements in the writings of Père Philippe de la Trinité, who still wages war against Teilhard's thought, despite his having been called to task by no one less than Père Henri de Lubac²).

Father Hale has, then, worked with a very difficult—but central—theme in Teilhard's thought: viz., the precise relationship of the universe as "body" to Christ as its "head." And he handles the matter very thoroughly and very professionally in five excellently written and closely knit chapters. He recognizes, very correctly and exactly, that "Teilhard understands his category 'cosmic body of Christ' to be much more than a metaphor"—that, in fact, for Teilhard the term is "not figurative or metaphorical, but quite literal." And he sets out to explain all of this. In Chapter I, "Cosmic Insight and Model," he gives an explanation of the theological model as a basic tool.

Having established that framework, Father Hale then goes on to

show in Chapter II, "The Key Early Texts in Teilhard," how Teilhard himself worked out his thought concerning the cosmic body of Christ. He realizes that Teilhard's *Writings in Time of War* "contains the essence of his religious thought," which is expressed in them "more clearly, more concisely than in any of his later writings."³ This important factor cannot be overemphasized in the endeavor to extend due praise to Father Hale's work: viz., that he has had the insight to study Teilhard chronologically. As Father Wildiers has often remarked, one really does have to sit back and read Teilhard's essays in chronological order if one seeks to understand the conclusions which he came, later on, to express so concisely in their fully evolved form.

But Teilhard's thought also needs justification. It must, in other words, be shown to be somehow in line with Scripture and Tradition; else it runs the risk (as has often been alleged) of being just one man's view. And so Father Hale, very nicely, takes up the matter in Chapter III, entitled "A Sketch of a Theological Heritage." In this chapter, the author demonstrates the place of Sacred Scripture in Teilhard's life and thought, his correspondence with, and encouragement by, some⁴

² Cf., e.g., de Lubac's *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning* (New York: New American Library Mentor Books, 1967), p. 65, n. 1.

³ The English edition, *Writings in Time of War*, was published by Harper & Row in 1968. It is interesting to note—for the anti-Teilhardians who still consider Teilhard a heretic—that this volume bears the *imprimatur* of Bishop Patrick Casey, Vicar General and Auxiliary of the Diocese of Westminster, England. It is particularly gratifying in this instance, that Father Hale worked with the original French, because the English edition omits (for no apparent reason) seven important essays.

of the best theologians (de Lubac, Valensin, Charles, etc.), the influence of Scotistic thought upon Teilhard's thinking, and in general the broad theological (not, however, Thomistic!) framework in which Teilhard's ideas developed. Father Hale feels, and he is right in this as in so much else, that this "broader theological context" is "needed to understand and vindicate Teilhard's outlook."

The author takes into account the important influence of Father Gabriel-M. Allegra, research scholar at the Studium Biblicum O.F.M. in Hong Kong. He reads carefully (as I think every scholar should) what Father Allegra has to say about his three-year encounter with Teilhard and draws the obvious conclusions.⁴ Maybe—no, certainly—after reading first Allegra and then Hale, the reader too will come to the conclusion that, because of Teilhard's interest in and understanding of Scotistic thought, it is really impossible to understand Teilhard's ideas concerning the "cosmic body of Christ" by relying upon Thomistic theology as sole normative matrix.

Finally, in Chapters IV ("The Universe as Ordered Unity") and V ("The Universe as Intrinsically Christic"), Father Hale furnishes his readers with what he terms a more "speculative articulation" of Teilhard's insights. He notes quite correctly that Teilhard himself tried to

do this—for, after all, "a theological articulation is surely enriched when it has recourse to both concrete model and speculative formulation." The reason for this is that "what the latter provides in terms of nuanced, systematic analysis, the former complements with vividness and depth, and the capacity to evoke a profounder insight."

This reviewer is especially pleased with *Christ and the Universe: Teilhard de Chardin and the Cosmos*, for quite a few reasons. Let me note just a few. First, it is an excellent piece of American scholarship, falling within the tradition of Mooney, Maloney, and Cousins. Father Hale makes fine use of Teilhardian sources, both primary and secondary; and, thank God, he always uses the original French edition as the basis for his work. For, as will be apparent when Paul Kelly publishes his study on the English translations of Teilhard's writings, the British and American public has been ill served by both translators and publishers. And then too, he knows and uses well many of the modern theologians, regardless of their confessional preference (which says something for the excellent theological methodology he learned at Fordham).

In addition, Father Hale writes with humility and reverence, so necessary for a theologian. He admits, e. g., that he has undertaken "a task which, because of the profundity of Teilhard's experience, we

⁴ Interested readers will want to study Allegra's entire book: *My Conversations with Teilhard de Chardin on the Primacy of Christ* (trans. with an introduction and notes by Bernardino M. Bonansea, O.F.M., preface by Romano Stephen Almagno, O.F.M.; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971, 126 pp.).

undertake with a certain diffidence. It is always hard to deal with the interior life of others." Not frequently, throughout the book, does the author reveal his awareness of his own limitations.

But the best thing I can say about this book is that for years to come (I do feel that) professors will be telling their students: "If you want a good insight into Teilhard's ideas concerning the cosmic

body of Christ, check Hale." And as I continue working on the *Bibliographia Teilhardiana*—a multi-lingual work to be published in 1975 (on the twentieth anniversary of Teilhard's death), that will list all Teilhardiana I can dig up, in whatever languages published, and note how much of the material published is really poor scholarship, I can't help exclaiming: Thank God for this one!

R. S. Almagro

Sunshine

Sunshine plays hide-and seek on newly fallen snow.

It warms the earth to bring it to fruition.

It gives vision to unveil the beauties of nature.

It cheers the weary on a winter evening.

It awakens a child from its mid-day nap.

It banishes gloom from a sickroom.

It sprinkles a lake with slashes of color.

It trips over the pebbles of a bubbling stream.

It melts snow into mountain freshets.

It hugs fleecy clouds to its ample bosom.

It slashes rainbows through stained glass windows.

It fondles the ringlets of a playing child.

It caresses a rose to unfold its petals.

It bounces on waves at high tide.

It jigsaws through the leaves of a forest.

It fires the arid sands of a desert caldron.

It glows on a windowpane at sundown.

Sunshine is God's smile upon the earth
showing
that he
still

loves
his
creatures.

Sister M. Dolores Ahles, O.S.F.

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

But I Have Called You, Friends (John 15:15)

IV

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

Recently I came across an intriguing little book by Father Ignace Lepp, *The Ways of Friendship*.¹ Some of you are familiar, I'm sure, with this well known priest-psychiatrist. Now, there is nothing quite so satisfying as finding that a professional person proven worthy of great esteem is saying exactly the same thing you have said yourself! You want to comment: "What a bright fellow this is!"

We were discussing in an earlier conference the irrectitude of tagging either an exclusivist attachment or a perversional attraction with the title, "particular friendship," and concluded that a genuine friendship cannot possibly be anything else but particular, whereas the type of relationships that frequently are

dubbed with this term do not qualify as friendships at all. Well, here is Father Ignace Lepp saying on page twenty-two: "As though friendship could be anything but particular!"² As I say, one gets this happy feeling welling up within that here we have a manifestly intelligent man making an obviously insightful observation because it is what we have ourselves observed!

But seriously, now, dear sisters, we do want to return to this idea and examine it from yet another angle. For I believe there is an especially marked tendency right now in some areas to swing to an opposite extreme from mistakes of the past. It is a fact that formerly there was a tendency in some communities to disfavor warm friendships

¹ Ignace Lepp, *The Ways of Friendship* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

² *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Mother Mary Francis, Abbess of the Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roswell, N. M., and First Councillor for the Poor Clare Colletine Federation in the United States, delivered these conferences to the postulants, novices, and junior professed nuns at Roswell. Minimal editing has been done, to preserve their spontaneity.

among the sisters. As our Mother Immaculata³ used cryptically to remark: "Too much was said about particular friendships and too little about particular enmities."

Somehow, in certain places, a false ideal was held before young religious: that the spiritual life is exclusively an affair of "God and I." Now, we could develop this thought into a valid and meaningful theology of personal holiness. But I am afraid that the way it was all too often understood, even if this was not intended, was that it is "God and I" in the sense that other people are simply present for the practical purposes of living and have no personal connection with me and my holiness. Other people are just . . . here. We live in the same house and supposedly have the same goal; but I live my life, and . . . well, please don't bother me. And, of course, there is point #2 in this outline for holiness, which is: You live your life; it has nothing in particular to do with mine. The conclusion was that the more I am concerned with God and with nobody else, the holier I am. This is a heinous fallacy and falsity, even heresy, sisters. "Love one another as I have loved you," Christ said (John 15:12). And his love was not—is not—an aloof,

disinterested, "detached" love. Now, however, instead of correcting that aberration, we sometimes seem to be going over to the other extreme so that there is a tendency in many places to "understand" people until we have emotionally and psychologically reduced them to a pulp, or to pry into them in the way that one opens a can with a can opener.

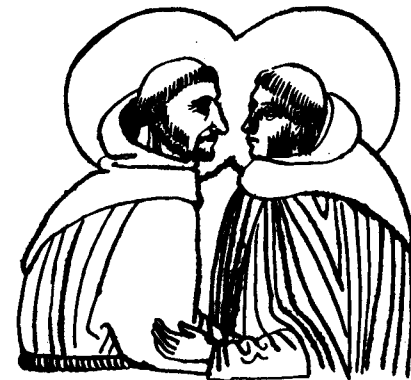
Each of us has a right to her privacy, and we shall want to remember this if the friendships we are interested in building are to be genuine friendships. This is where we want to establish our balance and sense of values. The professed nuns discussed this at some length when we took C. S. Lewis' *The Four Loves*⁴ in our cultural reading program. The one of the four loves—viz., affection, friendship, charity, and eros—which Lewis considers the highest love is the love of friendship. There were a number of interesting insights expressed on this.

Some of you will remember the discussion when the novices came along and some were puzzled because they had had a constricted view of friendship. I discovered that some had the idea that all authentic friendship is expressed by the sharing of the deepest intimacies of

thought and experience and opinions. Now, as I reminded you when we started this series, there are degrees of friendship. And there should be and must be in a religious community dedicated to a single goal and sharing a common dedication to essentials, friendship between and among all the members. But these friendships develop in varying degrees and on different planes. They cannot all be the same. And remember this, dear sisters: friendship is a matter of emotional energy, not of intellect.

When we see a person who seems very poor in friendship capacity, this does not inevitably indicate that that person is impoverished intellectually, but it does mean that she is impoverished emotionally. So, this is one of the under-developments we help one another to correct. But friendship, in the sense of this deep intimacy of spirit and, above all, as concerns a deep intimacy of soul, is possible with only a very, very limited group of persons, perhaps with only one person. And this is where the confusion comes in.

I remember one professed sister asking me: "Well, how can this be in our way of life? Is this not something that belongs only to my relationship with my superior?" Well, I would say: maybe yes; and maybe, no. That reminds me of a professor in



forensics I had in days of yore. He answered all thorny questions with this reply: "Well, yes. And then again, no." After having said which, he always swallowed noticeably, cleared his throat impressively, and observed a half minute of silence before changing the subject. You do need to have this relationship with someone. Normally, I think that you'd be inclined to give an intimacy of soul to the one who is set to direct you, guide you and help you, than you would to a peer. And you'll recall how quickly St. Therese of Lisieux had ruefully to conclude that "spiritual sharings" with a peer were not available for spiritual growth in the cloister. But that's not to say there are not exceptions. It is a large subject, and we shall want to consider it by itself another time. What I'm occupied with right now is that you get out of your minds as a difficulty, that when I speak of friendship I mean this very,

³Foundress of the Roswell Monastery of Poor Clares, R.I.P. February 23, 1972.

⁴C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1960).

very deep sharing of spiritual things.

This is not only impossible with a large group of persons, but it is most undesirable. To share with a whole group of persons the deepest intimacies of one's soul is a thing that I believe any normal person would consider most repugnant. If, for instance, God has given me a particular grace, a special spiritual joy, it would not be normal that I should want to race around telling everybody about it. There are, aren't there, the secrets of the King? If you have suddenly or gradually received in prayer or through some other channel a light about your own spiritual life or about a problem you have had, it would simply be a matter of taste that you did not gallop around to each sister and say the equivalent of, "Guess what?" So, let us put this supposed difficulty aside as being not a real difficulty. Such crude wholesale sharings would be not only an offense against spiritual good taste but would show a lack of the true contemplative spirit. It is normal to be shy about sharing one's spiritual life. It is nothing but crude to be ready to discourse on it to all and sundry.

So, when we speak about friendship, especially friendship in a religious community, we

are referring to it in its broader sense. Now Father Ignace Lepp begins his book on the ways of friendship⁵ by talking about loneliness, the tremendous loneliness in modern society. He is not writing about religious life in particular, although he often brings it into his considerations, but about society in general. He maintains that because people are so lonely, they seek the herd mentality. Let me herewith announce that I agree with him. I'm sure he will be relieved to know that! But, seriously now, it is true, isn't it? Undeniably true. Many people have in fact not developed as persons and so cannot bear to be alone for fear of finding out what God has really created in themselves.

We just read something along these lines this morning in Vatican II's *Decree on the Missions*. You recall how the document talked of the seed that is planted and how it has to have the nourishment of all the elements. It needs the soil, it needs the dew, it needs—help. No very startling idea, but I think it is a very good approach to friendship, too. We need one another; man is a social being, as has been noted for some thousands of years but perhaps not assimilated as a working idea. This is the way God created man. Now, when God further intensi-

fies this idea of human community to religious community, we have a concentration and not a modification of God's creative plan. There is the human community, the Christian community, the ecclesial community, the religious community, the family community. Let's take another dip now into religious community to see that there, more than elsewhere and not less than elsewhere, do we need one another.

Friendship, dear sisters, is based on reciprocity. We've touched on that already. You can never have two persons only one of whom is a friend to the other. If you have some relationship like that which masks itself as friendship, be sure that it is nothing but selfishness. One person uses another person. When the former has a difficulty, she rushes to the latter person to whom she has invalidly given the name, "friend." But the same former person is not equally available to the same latter person. Nor has she any regard for the other's condition at the time she "needs" her. It doesn't matter to her. She has a difficulty she wants to unload, an opinion she wishes to give, a view she has to put forth. The other person is simply a receptacle. This is surely no friendship at all; it is without the reciprocity essential to friendship in which I give and I receive.

Now, oddly enough, although it may seem at first consideration that it is easier to receive than to give, that is often not so. It can sometimes require more humility to receive than to give. There is often enough not the experienced reward in receiving that there is in giving. It takes a certain depth of spirituality, you know, even to realize that receiving is a kind of giving, when the admission of my own inadequacies lets me give others the opportunity to help me or to supply for me. It requires humility to receive with graciousness. If it is possible to be lazy enough to let others do all the giving in community, it is also possible to be proud enough to refuse others the opportunity for giving.

Related to this is the "work loner." You sometimes find in community, sisters who are prodigies of generosity in their own charges. A certain sister will do anything, will give everything to the charge that she is given; and she will really do it with a loving zest which goes beyond the mere desire for approval to the point of sacrifice. She will give up her free time to take care of her work area in community. She will never need correction about the way she functions in her own charge. Yet this same sister may be an abysmal failure at general undertakings. A supposedly generous

⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 11-21.

sister can be quite peevish and niggardly in a community effort. Now, this type of person has not developed her potential for friendship. How well am I able to relate to others in communal undertakings? How well do I relate to my community working as a team? How much am I able to receive from others in our common efforts?

And this, in turn, relates to some types of "dialogue" by which are meant a group of people sitting around a table, with each one trying to push her opinion down the throats of the others. Maybe there is a tremendous energy of "giving"; certainly there is no receiving. At one of our first federation chapters, Bishop Floyd Begin came to the meeting. Federation was then, of course, a new concept to us, and the bishop was explaining the functional aspects of the concept. I recall his pointing out that a federation meeting did not mean a coming together of delegations from every monastery, each delegation with its own preconceived ideas which were, obviously, the best by reason of their being its own ideas, and each delegation out to sell its ideas to the others. The bishop also described the wrong way to return to the home monastery after a federation meeting, which would be either to announce triumphantly: "Well, we won!" or to do

the equivalent of throwing one's hat on the peg and muttering: "Well, we lost." Any degree or shade of that would indicate that there had been no real sharing, but only a coming together of persons with preconceived ideas which they would in no way alter. The only gain I could possibly see coming from this sort of thing would be the financial aid we'd contribute to the airlines.

The person of intelligently strong convictions is ready to have them modified, expanded, or changed according to the counter evidence presented. Any persons of opposite convictions are friends to be listened to, not enemies to be warded off. So, as at work, as at meetings, we identify ourselves and we enlarge our personal capacity for friendly giving and receiving according as we can be authentic members of a group effort and not just determined loners.

But there is another kind of foxhole protection against the genuine communication which is essential to friendship. And that is talk which is not only non-communicative but is actually a defense against any real communication. In speaking of the "total emptiness" of many conversations of young people, Father Lepp comments with what I consider great acuity that *because* they are incapable of any

real communication, such persons hasten to meet again as soon as possible.⁶ You see, in this way we can avoid the communication of solitude. Father goes on to say: "The majority of relationships between adults are no better, and it is quite frightening to listen to conversations between people at a dinner or cocktail party."⁷ And from that depressing evaluation, Father Lepp moves into the true meaning of communication which is so especially important for us as enclosed nuns.

I believe that three or four of you asked me, at the beginning of these conferences, how we can really develop friendship and communication in a community given to silence and solitude. It's a good question, but not too difficult to answer. Obviously, we cannot be talking to one another all day. But, is that necessary? I have just alluded to talk as often being a barrier to any real communication. And Father Ignace Lepp has this to say, which is so pertinent for us: "The hermit in the desert can communicate with God *and* with all those dear to him by prayer and reflection, and he can communicate with all mankind *if* his capacity for love has attained such universal dimensions."⁸

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 15

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13 (emphasis added).

The loner in community is not a community. She does not communicate with anyone. And she may even be radically incapable of real friendship and real communication, in which case it would be a tragic thing indeed that she had ever been admitted to a cloistered community where the members should really be experts in communication—the deep communication which is not dependent on words even while knowing how to make use of words. To arrive at a point where we might think we do not need communication with others is a dark achievement indeed dear sisters. If we would ever feel that we don't really need one another, then we would merely be people living together in a house.

So we find ourselves returning to the point we've made before. We discover ourselves only in relation to others. And as we discover ourselves, we learn better how to communicate. As we expand sufficiently to communicate widely and profoundly, we emerge from any inner ghettoes of opinions we may have either consciously or half-deliberately built up and come out into the sunlight of receiving even as we give, and giving while we receive. It is in grow-

ing in that communication-ability which is essential to friendship that we discover in ourselves depths of compassion and depths of severity. And we have to be willing to recognize both in order to be true to ourselves and to others, and, above all, to God and his creation of us which we have disordered and perhaps even seriously marred but which is basically good and beautiful.

There is nothing so salvifically disillusional as living in community. Remember the adverb there: salvifically! It's a healing, healthy disillusionment. False illusions about ourselves are dispelled in no way so well as by living in community, and perhaps particularly in the intense form of community which is an enclosed community. We are forced, if we are at all honest (which you are!), to discover new things about ourselves each day. And not all of them are unpleasant by any means either. We get some happy surprises about ourselves. Remember, we touched on that before? We discover a generosity in ourselves

which could not have expressed itself if others were not there to be its beneficiaries. Or, when someone in the community is in some particular need, whether physical, emotional, or whatever, don't we discover generosity welling up in us to help our sister who is the loved vehicle for the goodness in ourselves?

On the other hand, we do get the very helpful but not always very pleasant revelations about ourselves. We find out how selfish we can be, how very intolerant we can tend to be, whereas if we were living alone, a contemplative living somewhere in an apartment, we could live a whole lifetime through without discovering how really intolerant we can be, how energetically impatient, how selfish. In our little alcove, we could build up a false illusion that we are great souls of prayer, persons fitted and attuned to solitude. Community, dear sisters, community life richly lived, does not allow for illusions. It is a seed bed of honesty by which alone one grows in spirituality.

So, God Made Music . . .

Sister Claire Marie Wick, O.S.F.

Legend tells us a make-believe story of God calling all the angels in heaven to him after creating the world and asking them what they thought of this beautiful, vast world of wonders he had created. One of the angels observed, "One thing is lacking—the sound of praise to the Creator."

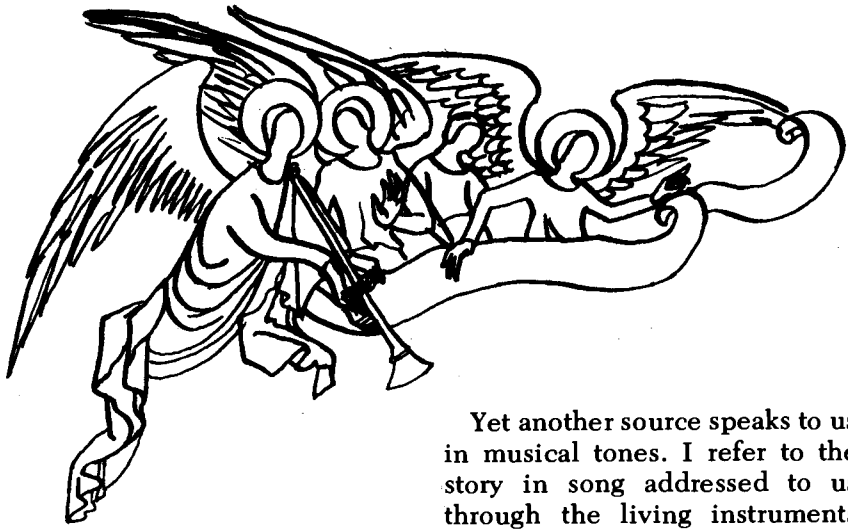
So, God created music and it was heard praising him in the sounds of the sea, the whisper of the winds, and rhythm in nature, and the song of the birds. And then to man was given the best gift of all: the power to praise God with song. And all down the ages the gift of song has indeed proved a blessing to innumerable people—excellent therapy both for soul and for body.

Scripture tells us a true story about a time—the coming of the Christ-Child—announced in the song of these same angels bringing the message from heaven to earth, first of glory to God in

the highest heaven; and then, of peace on earth among men of good will. Music continued, no doubt, to accompany the Christ Child's advance in age and grace and wisdom. It accompanied his life in temple psalm, in joyful song at the wedding of Cana, and at the Last-Supper sharing of sorrow in singing the liturgical hymns and psalms with his apostle-friends. From birth to death, from joy to sorrow, music adorned the Lord's life.

God is love, and it is a love's song that accompanies us our own whole life long. From the very beginning, he fills our life with grace-notes so we can find our joys intensified and our sorrows lessened by song. As a baby we had our cries lullabied; as a little child of needs we were taught the language of sung prayer; as a first-grader we saw our energies directed into lively marches and drills; as a teenager we were shown how to share experiences with others in

Sister Claire Marie, who holds a Master's Degree in Music from Wisconsin State University, in one of the few registered Music Therapists. Her experience in Music Therapy at Sacred Heart Hospital, Eau Claire, Wis., has resulted in widespread demand for her services as a consultant in the field.



choruses and bands; as sweet-hearts we graced our courtship with His Love in songs; in tired days we were relaxed with soothing melodies; in gay, happy days of celebration we were stimulated with festive songs; in concentration camps we were consoled with folk-songs; in the service of our country we were roused to defend our God-given freedoms through patriotic songs; in our churches texts wed to melodies of praise, thanksgiving, and petition brought His Presence to us and brought each of us into a togetherness that is Love. In the last service for us on earth, God's comforting words of welcome to the departed soul and of encouragement to those loved ones still on earth shall find their expression in song of unearthly beauty.

Yet another source speaks to us in musical tones. I refer to the story in song addressed to us through the living instruments of God who come our way to sing the glad tidings (again and again) of His birthday song. Such a living instrument might be a parent, other relative, friend, co-worker—anyone can be heard by the duly trained ear, singing the part assigned him by the Creator. Never asking to be heard for itself, for its own sake alone, such an instrument ever sings God's glory and love.

Each of us, then, is such an instrument. Each of us, whether we have musical talent or not so as to sing in any renowned choir, can give God glory and bring the joys of peace among men, if we daily practice to become minstrels of the Lord seeking to lift the minds and hearts of men to spiritual gladness.

Whose voice can we use? Why, our own singing hearts!

Toward a Theological Understanding of Religious Poverty

Gerald M. Dolan, O.F.M.

Is virtue to be associated with poverty in the Church? Ever since Cardinal Lercaro astonished the Fathers of Vatican II with two speeches in which he insisted upon the central value of poverty for the Church, we have come to expect a prompt and energetically affirmative response to this question. Among other things, Lercaro had said:

If the Church is truly the theme of this Council as so many have said, then in full agreement with the eternal truth of the Gospel and our present moment in history we can say: The theme of this Council is indeed the Church, but insofar as she is the "Church of the poor" above all.¹

Usually, however, the affirmative response is followed by a hesitating pause. Poverty is, after all, a very complex reality which confronts Christians on many levels.

The majority of people in the world are poor, and many of these exist in the most dire poverty. This is not only to speak of those who actually lack what is needed to sustain physical life, it also looks to that multitude who are prevented by poverty from participating and sharing in the cultural goods of society. Such goods include whatever is necessary and useful for individual and social human development, and, as such,

¹ Mario von Galli, *Living Our Future. Francis of Assisi and the Church Tomorrow* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), p. 119; the full text of Cardinal Lercaro's conciliar interventions can be found on pp. 116-20; 126-30. Cf. the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, I, §41; the Decree on the Bishop's Pastoral Office in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, II, §§12, 13; the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, III, §17; the Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, §13. Cf. also Pope Paul VI, Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples, *Populorum Progressio*, *passim*, concerning the relation of economic development, prosperity of mankind, and the peace of the world.

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they are destined for the entire citizenry of a nation, of a state, or of a city. To witness poverty on this level is to be against it.² Recent years have seen a growing awareness of the claims of the poor on the goods of society, and there have been praiseworthy attempts by local, national, and international bodies to conquer this poverty.

It is to be hoped that such efforts have come from a more acute awareness of the human demand for social coexistence. Each person is called upon to collaborate in the creation of the many elements and the myriad techniques which are needed to sustain modern society. Each human activity is necessarily possessed of a social dimension and is required for the development of the concrete conditions needed to foster truth and moral good among men.³ The Church has allied herself with those who endeavor to help the poor to be poor no longer; this is the firm commitment of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*.

What is the meaning of poverty as taught in the first beatitude (Mt. 5:3)? What is that

poverty which is praised in the history of salvation, and which is a desired value in the religious life? Our question is, What is religious poverty? And this is a question which the admirer of Francis of Assisi may not avoid. But in our present moment of optimism concerning human values, our question invites another: Where is the response to be found? In God? In man? In the world? Despite the wide-ranging teaching of Vatican II, there is scant theological comment on religious poverty which, together with the profession of celibacy for the Kingdom of God, and obedience, constitutes one in the religious state. It is difficult to frame an exact and unambiguous definition of evangelical poverty:

Poverty voluntarily embraced in imitation of Christ provides a witness which is highly esteemed, especially today. Let religious painstakingly cultivate such poverty, and give it new expressions, if need be. By it a man shares in the poverty of Christ, who became poor for our sake when before he had been rich, that we might be enriched by his poverty (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9; Mt. 8:20).⁴

² Cf. L. Janssens, *Liberté de conscience et liberté religieuse* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1964), pp. 149-54; and the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, Part I, ch. I, §26.

³ Janssens, *op. cit.*, 157-60, *passim*.

⁴ Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, §13.

What seems to be deliberate vagueness concerning the nature of this poverty is complicated further by what Father Constantine Koser has called a spiritual schizophrenia:

... considering what is being done in practice among us, it can be said that attempts have been made and are being made to pass from the ideal of "being poor" to an ideal of "involving oneself in the combat against poverty, so that one may cooperate in the liberation of man." There can be no objection against truly evangelical involvement in the fight against poverty. But it has happened and is happening now, that the love for "poverty" has been absorbed in the love for "the poor," a love understood in the sense of freeing the poor exactly from that which is considered their greatest evil: "poverty." So Lady Poverty has gone from being Lady of the soul to become a wicked witch who must be driven out with the utmost energy and greatest effectiveness possible. "From the life of others," we say, of course. But it happens in this way that one falls into a certain "spiritual schizophrenia": to think of poverty as an evil and at the same time to hold it up as a lofty ideal of life.⁵

If the poverty which religious embrace by vow is to be called

⁵ Constantine Koser, Encyclical Letter on the Occasion of the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord—1971 (Pulaski: Franciscan Publishers, 1971), pp.5-6.

⁶ *Lumen Gentium*, VI, §43.

"religious," we need to seek its meaning by consulting its place in the total religious consecration. It therefore seems necessary to investigate the present understanding of religious life. Of particular interest in this matter are those paragraphs of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, which close Chapter Five, concerning the universal vocation of all in the Church to sanctity, and form the introductory bridge to Chapter Six, concerning Religious. The attentive reader will discern a terminological inversion from what has been the usual listing of the vows of religion—poverty, chastity, obedience—to "... chastity dedicated to God, poverty and obedience."⁶ The important paragraphs are these:

The holiness of the Church is also fostered in a special way by the observance of the manifold counsels proposed in the gospel by our Lord to his disciples. Outstanding among them is that precious gift of divine grace which the Father gives to some men (cf. Mt. 19:11; 1 Cor. 7:7) so that by virginity, or celibacy, they can more easily devote their entire selves to God alone with undivided heart (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32-34). This total continence embraced on behalf of the kingdom

of heaven has always been held in particular honor by the Church as being a sign of charity and stimulus towards it, as well as a unique fountain of spiritual fertility in the world.

The Church also keeps in mind the advice of the Apostle, who summoned the faithful to charity by exhorting them to share the mind of Christ Jesus—he who “emptied himself, taking the nature of a slave . . . becoming obedient to death” (Phil. 2:7-8), and, because of us, “being rich, he became poor” (2 Cor. 8:9).

Since the disciples must always imitate and give witness to this charity and humility of Christ, Mother Church rejoices at finding within her bosom men and women who more closely follow and more clearly demonstrate the Saviour's self-giving by embracing poverty with the free choice of God's sons, and by renouncing their own wills. They subject the latter to another person on God's behalf, in pursuit of an excellence surpassing what is commanded. Thus they liken

themselves more thoroughly to Christ in his obedience.⁷

To call attention to word order may seem to be quibbling. In this instance, however, the change manifests a theological orientation which will have far-reaching consequences. It was the promulgation of *Lumen Gentium* in 1964 (at which time the document which would become *Perfectae Caritatis* was still “in committee”) which influenced the placing of chastity “on behalf of the kingdom of heaven” as the first and fundamental element of religious consecration in *Perfectae Caritatis*, published in 1965.⁸ This priority has the advantage of acknowledging the genetic-historical evolution of religious life in the Church. Consecrated virginity or celibacy seems to have been at the roots of the appearance in the Church of a special call to the total gift of oneself which was different from, but complementary to, martyrdom. Chastity or

celibacy is without doubt seen as the most extraordinary sign of the Church's life in the midst of the world today. It is that evangelical counsel which, among the others, especially evokes the eschatological dimension of ecclesial life, and places the religious life at the center of the Church's straining forward to the Day of the Lord.

Religious life is rooted in consecrated chastity or celibacy whereby the religious consecrates himself to God with an undivided heart. The other evangelical counsels traditionally associated with the religious state aid the religious to dedicate himself totally and particularly to God.⁹ The specific mark of the religious life, which each member must constantly renew in his own life is to undertake the form of life of Jesus Christ (and in him, the Church) who is completely oriented to the Father. To seek the meaning of poverty and obedience as deeper explicitations of consecrated celibacy is to guarantee their properly religious character. Poverty, by which the Saviour's self-

giving is followed and manifested,¹⁰ chastity, and obedience are but three modalities, three forms, three levels, of the same mystery—the mystery of interior poverty sacramentalized on the three levels where human life is fulfilled: the possession of material goods, the possession of one's own heart, and the final determination of one's own lot. Their one root which brings them into communion is the *kenosis* of Christ—his total dependence upon, and relation to, the Father.¹¹

In the words of *Lumen Gentium*, religious life “reveals in a unique way that the Kingdom of God and its overmastering necessities are superior to all earthly considerations.”¹² Other passages of the Constitution are more precise explanations of this. *Virginity* is the imitation of Jesus Christ whose whole life is in relation to, and a straining toward, the Father, as the exemplar of undivided love.¹³ *Obedience* adds its own nuance. Jesus, the Son of the Father, hears the Word of Love and responds to it. Seemingly abandoned by

⁷ *Ibid.*, V, §42; cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, §§12-14.

⁸ Cf. *Schema Constitutionis de Ecclesia* (Vatican City: Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1964), p. 152; *Relatio de n. 42*: “Nova redactio in primis agit de *sacra virginitate* ac de eius momento pro singulis et pro Ecclesia. Quaedam verba desumuntur ex textu priori, attamen nonnulla alia adduntur vel etiam mutantur, ad Patrum postulationibus respondendum. Ita sermo fit de ‘virginitate vel coelibatu pro Deo solo,’ quia vox ‘castitas,’ vel ‘castitas perfecta’ vel ‘castitas Deo dicata’ de se potest habere applicationem latiore . . .”; the *Relatio* states: “Ecclesia . . . conformiter, agit de aliis consiliis evangelicis, scilicet *paupertatis* et *oboedientiae*, quae etiam illis qui non sunt Religiosi proponuntur ad perfectionem consequendam . . .”; also G. Philips, *L'Eglise et son Mystère au IIe Concile du Vatican*, tome II (Paris: Desclée, 1968), pp. 104-16.

⁹ R. Schultz, “La vie religieuse comme signe,” in *L'Eglise de Vatican II* (ed. G. Baraúna), tome III (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1966), p. 1155.

¹⁰ Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, V, §42; also Phil. 2:7-8; 2 Cor. 8:9.

¹¹ J. M. R. Tillard, “La Chasteté religieuse,” in *L'Adaptation et la renovation de la vie religieuse* (ed. J. M. R. Tillard) (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1967), p. 393.

¹² *Lumen Gentium*, VI, §44; cf. §43.

¹³ *Ibid.*, V, §42; VI, §46; VII, §50.



God, he accomplished his redemptive mission by accepting suffering and death.¹⁴ In its own way religious life realizes these two aspects of the Lord's obedience.¹⁵ And finally there is *poverty* understood in the spirit of Jesus.¹⁶ To live this Gospel counsel is to manifest in the Church and in the world in a fuller way the *kenosis* of the Word made flesh.¹⁷ The religious life seeks to follow Christ and be close to him in the various aspects of his mystery. To do this is to realize that he himself chose the way of simplicity and lowliness.¹⁸

In relation to poverty, what can be said about simplicity and lowliness must be of a general nature. The poverty of Christ, as given in the Gospels, is not

entirely without ambiguity. He knew the poverty of Bethlehem and Calvary, of Nazareth and of the life of an itinerant preacher. And besides, Jesus did not set out to moralize about poverty; as the prophet of the Kingdom of God he chose the way indicated for him in the Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah. And Francis, who has been called his mirror, set out to follow the holy Gospel of him who "took the form of a slave" (Phil. 2:7). Poverty is a value for Francis of Assisi not simply in itself, but because he found it in the Gospel. It should be the same today. Life styles change. They are subject to history. But if poverty, understood in its relation to celibacy and the total dimension of religious dedication, is to witness the *kenosis* of Jesus, it must be rooted, not in the material imitation of the life style shown in the Gospels, but in the full-hearted attempt to reflect to the world the *mind* of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5). Pope Paul VI speaks of this to our world:

The poverty of Christ, whether one likes it or not, is essentially a liberation, an invitation to a new and higher life, where the goods of the spirit, not earthly goods, have supremacy, which for some people—the perfect fol-

lowers (Mk. 10:21)—becomes exclusive, for others hierarchical (cf. Mt. 6:33): *quaerite primum*); it is the best condition to enter the kingdom of God (cf. Mt. 5); it is the initiation not to want, not to lack of understanding for the world that sweats and works, that builds and progresses, but to love. To love, it is necessary to give; to give, it is necessary to be freed of selfishness, to have the courage of poverty.¹⁹

Without wishing to make of these remarks a catena of citations, it does seem that Father Matura has caught the dilemma which can puzzle the religious seeking the meaning of poverty:

The religious does not embrace poverty to share the lot of the working class, even though this in itself would be proof of great charity; nor to show—though equally true—that the Church is not bound to riches; nor is it even by way of freeing himself from material cares in order the better to attend to prayer and to the apostolate. Undoubtedly all these motives have a certain value, but they are all relative. If there were no longer so much as one single poor man in the whole world, there would be all the greater need of souls dedicated to the practice of evan-

gelical poverty. As for freeing ourselves from care, it is sometimes the possession of material things that does this best, while poverty, on the contrary, can in some cases be a positive hindrance to it. It is therefore not at this level that we must seek the true motivation for poverty. The need for poverty does not arise from particular situations in the world or in the Church, even though these situations may have a part to play in the pursuit of poverty; it is a transcendent need of the Gospel. We must be poor because the Son of Man was poor, and because he made poverty the very corner-stone of Christian holiness. Is not poverty his first demand, as it is also the first beatitude?²⁰

That poverty which is taught in the example of the holy ones of the Old Testament and of the saints in the New Testament is "the awareness on the part of the sinful creature of his position before God."²¹ Before any reference to movable or immovable goods, poverty concerns the attitude of man, created, sinner, redeemed, and facing the unsoundable riches of God in Christ who is our Creator and all-holy Redeemer. The attitude of him who would be evangeli-

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, I, §3. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Chapter VI, cf. V, §42.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, V, §42; VI, §46; VII, §50.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, V, §42; VI, §46; cf. I, §8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, I, §§3, 8; II, §9; V, §42; VI, §44.

¹⁹ Paul VI, "The Gospel Message of Poverty," in *The Teachings of Pope Paul VI: 29-12-1967 - 18-12-1968* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1969), pp. 159-60.

²⁰ M. C. Matura, "The Claims of Religious Poverty in the Case of the Individual," in *Donum Dei: Religious Poverty in the Modern World* (Ottawa: Canadian Religious Conference, 1966), p. 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

cally poor must be governed by two poles, the one being the infinite goodness of God, the other being the utter emptiness of the creature before God. It is the attitude of one who has come to the *realization* that all which he is and possesses—his existence and powers, his talents of mind and body, his relation as son to the Father, his possession of the Spirit as the Gift of the Father and the Son—is *gift*. His total being is to be attributed uniquely and solely to the benevolent love of God—*αγάπη*—which is creative and recreative in the redemptive love of God shown him in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

To be poor, then, is to be keenly perceptive of the goodness and kindness of God toward us. It is to know that the humane Christian existence is surrounded with good things of every sort—goods of mind and will, goods of human love and friendship, material goods without which it would be difficult to develop humanly—and that all are *received* from God. If man can be adequately defined

only in the context of his relations to the world, to others, and to God,²² may we not say that poverty, accepted in imitation of Christ (whose human nature is created by God, and whose divine personhood in the Word can be understood only in the concept of relation) takes on an ontological dimension in human existence. The paradox of poverty is that a Christian must first realize the richness which is himself and all that is his, and then proclaim that none is rich save God alone from whom all good things come.

Ladislav Orsy states that the essence of the virtue of poverty and, in particular, of religious poverty is to be found in the understanding of the first beatitude: "How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3). Of interest is his remark concerning the difficulty of rendering the thought expressed in the Greek text. On the whole, the English does not translate the full meaning of the blessing, which is an echo of that which had a long tradition in Israel.²³ Whereas poverty had been, in the earliest

²² Janssens, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

²³ Cf. L. Orsy, "Poverty in Religious Life," in *Review for Religious* 26 (1967), 60. The author states that the French translation, "Blessed are those who have *une âme pauvre*," is closer to the original, but hardly connotes the same idea when merely translated into English. John McKenzie writes: "Mt's 'poor in spirit' emphasizes less the literal lack of possessions than the lowly condition of the poor; their poverty did not allow them the arrogance and assertiveness of the wealthy, but imposed habitual and servile deference. The term is close to

days of Israel, a sign of God's disfavor (cf. Ps. 1:3; 112: 1, 3), there was a tradition of wise men who perceived that some of the poor were virtuous men.²⁴ There still did remain the conviction that misery was often the result of sloth or disorder, or that it was itself an occasion for sin (Prov. 6:6-11; 10:4ff.; 13:18; 21:17). The middle road, as expressed in the Proverb, seemed to express the desirable attitude before God: "... give me neither poverty nor riches, grant me only my share of bread to eat" (Prov. 30:30; cf. Tob. 5:18ff.).

There was, however, another stream of Old Testament thought which concerned itself with righting social wrongs that victimized the poor. This was given voice by the Prophets who looked to the time of the Messiah who would defend the rights of the downtrodden and the poor.²⁵ Proper behavior and

attitudes had been prescribed in the Law. In relation to this the Seers recalled the rights of the poor whose defender was the Lord, to whom worship was given by alms.²⁶ It is not only the indigent whose cry is heard by the Lord; the prayers of the persecuted, the unhappy, the afflicted, are all included with those of the whole family of humans who are called poor (Ps. 9:10, 22, 25, 29). They all await salvation from Yahweh, as did Jeremiah, who presented their cause to God (Jer. 20:12ff.).

In the Psalms the poor man appears as the friend and servant of Yahweh whom he fears, whom he seeks, and in whom he places his confidence (Ps. 86:1ff.; 34:5-11). Related to the difficulty in translation mentioned above, and important for understanding its meaning, is the fact that in the vast majority of instances, the Greek transla-

'meek' in the third beatitude" ("The Gospel according to Matthew," in *JBC*, 43:30). Orsy seems in accord with this observation: The developed concept of poverty in the Old Testament meant much more a religious disposition, a genuine devotion towards God, than physical deprivation" (cf. *art. cit.*, 60).

²⁴ Cf. Prov. 19:1:1 Better the poor man living an honest life than the adept at double-talk who is a fool"; and *ibid.* v. 22: "A man's attraction lies in his kindness, better a poor man than a liar"; cf. also *ibid.*, 28:6 and Sir. 4:13.

²⁵ Job 24:2-12 describes the distress of the downtrodden poor; Amos shows his monumental anger against the crimes of Israel (Amos 2: 6ff.; 4:1; 5:11); after him the seers denounce violence and brigandage (Ez. 22:29), the shameful frauds of commercial life (Amos 8:5ff.; Hos. 12:8), the hoarding of lands (Mich. 2:2; Is. 5:8), the enslavement of the little ones (Jer. 34:8-22), the abuse of power and the perversion of justice (Amos 5:7; Is. 10:1ff.; Jer. 22:13-17).

²⁶ Prov. 14:21; 17:5; 19:17; 22:22ff.; 23:10ff.; Tob. 4:7-11; Sir. 3:30 - 4:6.

tors of the Old Testament did not use the term πτωκος (indigent) or πέννης (poor, needful one who is a day laborer). They made use of the term πραύς, which evokes the idea of one who is mild, peaceful, gentle, and who is such even in trial and difficulty.²⁷ It is quite legitimate to translate the Hebrew 'anawim by the English *humble* (cf. Ps. 10:17; 18:28; 37:11; Is. 26:5ff.). There is here betrayed a deeper characteristic of the poor—their fear of God and their faith-inspired trust in him. Those who suffer and, with such dispositions, pray to him, merit the name "poor of Yahweh," and they are the object of God's benevolence; they are the first-fruits of the Church of the Poor whom the Messiah will gather to himself (cf. Ps. 74:19; 149:4ff.; Is. 49:13; 66:2).

The progressive interiority of poverty exemplified in the Old Testament is deepened in the New. Jesus asks interior detachment from external goods of his disciples (detachment from what they already have, and from those things of which they may be bereft), in order that they be able to receive true riches (Mt. 6:24, 33; 13:22; Rev. 2:9; 3:17). Material possessions are but one of the objects of total renunciation to which one must consent

if he would be a disciple (Mt. 10:37ff.). The physiognomy of the New Testament successors to the 'anawim is characterized by consciousness on the religious level of personal emptiness and need and dependence upon God. Far from the imagined self-sufficiency of the Pharisee confident of his *own* justice, theirs is to partake of the humility of the Publican (Lk. 18:9-14). Realizing their own need and weakness, they are as infants, and the kingdom of heaven is theirs (Mt. 19:13-24; Lk. 18:15ff.).

The accent placed on interior poverty may not distract the Christian from appreciating the religious value of exterior poverty in the measure that it is a sign of, and a means to, interior poverty. Such poverty is good when it is inspired by a filial confidence in God, the desire to follow the example of Jesus, and in generous service to others. Its benefit is that it provides the opportunity to receive with greater freedom the Gift of God, and to give oneself to the service of the Kingdom.²⁸ The Lord asks of those who would follow him closely, and first of all the Apostles, this exterior poverty (Lk. 12:33; Mt. 19:21, 27). His missionaries should have neither silver, nor gold, nor wallet. But the literal

application of this prescription will not always be possible. Saint Paul had funds for missionary and charitable needs, but he proclaimed the Gospel freely, and knew how to live in straitened circumstances.²⁹ And while the invitation of the Lord is heard, yet misery is always seen as an inhuman condition reprehended by the Gospel no less than by the Prophets of old (cf. Mt. 23:23; Jas. 5:4). The rich are to turn to the poor with whose happy lot they will be associated if they welcome them as has God upon whom they depend (Lk. 14:13, 21). Service for the poor expresses love for Jesus who, in the person of the poor, receives this gift (Mt. 25:34-46; 26:11).

There is a deepening and expanding of the principle of poverty from the Prophets through the teaching of Jesus. From being seen as a sign of divine disfavor, there emerges a view of a spiritual and blessed poverty which is the openness to the Gift of God in confident trust and patient humility. From this derives the privileged *Way of Poverty*, whose beginning and end are in communion with the mystery of the liberality of the Lord Jesus who, though rich, made himself poor for us that

we might be enriched by his poverty (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). The principle which is to be discerned in the Scriptures is well stated by Orsy when he comments thus on the first Beatitude:

[Christ] is using the present tense. He does say that the kingdom of God *is* already theirs. This actual possession of the kingdom of God and the experience of its possession is really the key to evangelical poverty and to a life of poverty in a religious institute. We cannot be poor in the religious sense of the term unless we are already in possession of the kingdom of God. . . . Unless a person experiences the riches of God, he cannot be poor, and he *will not* be poor.³⁰

Against the background of what has already been said, these dense words make us think of the conciliar teaching that religious consecration to God with an undivided heart results from the happy realization that one has found the Messiah who is the beloved of man.³¹ The message of Christ is not only a promise, it is also a presence, the presence of the already begun Kingdom of God among us. In this ever newly dawning realization must be rooted religious poverty. Having found Jesus, the religious will find the strength to turn from the promise of the world

²⁷ Cf. L. Roy, "Pauvres," in *Vocabulaire de théologie biblique* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1962), col. 771.

²⁸ Cf. Lk. 12:32ff. for other motives for evangelical poverty.

²⁹ 2 Cor. 8:20; 11:8ff.; Ac. 21:24; 28:30; 1 Cor. 9:18.

³⁰ Orsy, *art. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

³¹ Cf. *supra*, n. 7; also Cant. 1:6; 3:1-4.

to depend upon the promise of Christ. To meet him in his word is the condition of sharing his poor life. We need, in the imagery of Jeremiah, to be seduced, and to permit ourselves to be seduced, by God (Jer. 20:7). And it is in this turning to God that we truly find that everything which is made, whether in the heavens or on the earth, is nothing but "the incarnation of the beauty of God."³² The poverty demanded by the possession of God will then enable one to turn to the world in awe and friendship, together with apostolic concern. Spurred on by the experience of God, we shall be unsatisfied until others partake of this joy which is God's gift.

In consequence of what has been mentioned above, a *theological principle* which might help us to discover what must be a modern manifestation of religious poverty, would seem to lie in the understanding of *gift*. Orsy makes the following statement:

Perhaps it is useful to say clearly that when I speak about a poor soul, a poor man who is possessed by God, I do not mean a perfect person. Good Christian is not synonymous with perfect person; good Christian is synonymous with a person who is loved by God and who receives this love. It is God's mystery that

he loves and desperately loves, imperfect persons.³³

The "poor soul" clings to God without whom he would cease to be. The "poor soul" receives all from God. He is dependent upon God, and this dependence is concretized in his dependence upon other men. The "poor soul" lives on gifts, and what he receives he gives away. There is need to receive the gift; there is need to give the gift.

In receiving gifts the poor man looks not only to God from whom all good things come, but he looks to men in the consciousness of his dependence on them. Having given himself to the Lord in consecrated celibacy, he comes to the realization of his richness in this relation. Content to be as he is, he seeks to be better. In this he is aware of his need to extend his hand to others to receive gifts from them—gifts of love and affection, of admonition and advice, gifts which, when given in benevolent love, are creative in the image of the creative love of God. The poor man is receptive and he is grateful to God and to man.

To be poor in heart is to be generous in *giving*. As important as it is to receive, more needful is it to give and to give

without counting the cost. The realization that one is rich in the possession of God needs to be expressed in giving. And that which is most precious and the most difficult to give is the gift which is ourselves. Any Christian can be economical in the use of property, goods and belongings—this may be an important aspect of poverty—but this is not poverty. Poverty is related to the Lord's emptying of himself. As dedicated to the Lord's work as one may be, to be poor is to welcome the intrusion of other persons upon one's plans and one's time, and to give oneself away to them.

This is real poverty—and to do it in such a way that people will not even notice it makes my poverty all the more real. Let them make an appeal to me, and let them take it for granted that unless I am held back by obedience, or what is a genuinely more important task (I will have to make a responsible judgment), I am going to help them.³⁴

The poor man does not covet his own heart. Poverty concerns one's own self. And when it begins to be realized on this level of religious existence, it will call forth a cheerful abnegation in the use of material goods. Penury drives men so to concentrate upon what is necessary for life that real human

values are eclipsed. At the same time, modern consumer society has given men a certain freedom in relation to things. Abundance seduces in its own way and endangers human values. Each acquisition is a step, a pause, on the way to more acquisitions—there is the threat of losing oneself in a constant effort to acquire. Avarice enslaves one to the constantly new need; it impels to the prowling search for that new thing; it renders one incapable of rest and of interior peace. Religious poverty demands inner freedom of heart, and in a sacramental way leads the religious and others to the experience of that freedom which is promised to the children of God. Poverty reminds all men that we are nomads who must always be prepared to fold our tents and move on for the sake of the Kingdom. Once again Orsy has focused upon the issue:

External poverty will be a blend of genuine abnegation and mortification in the use of created things, and of genuine freedom in using anything, absolutely anything that is necessary or helpful for the propagation of the Gospel. A person who is poor in his heart will try to lead a life of mortification; he will be moderate and discreet in using material things; at the same time, he will be free enough to take any created thing that will

³² Orsy, *art. cit.*, p. 67.

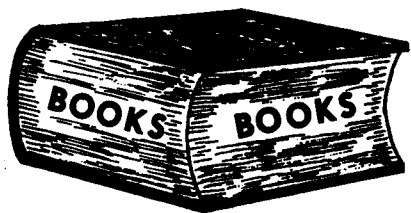
³³ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 72; Mt. 4:23-24; 9:35; 2 Cor. 11:26-29.

help him to work for the expansion of the kingdom of God.³⁵

It would therefore seem that externals cannot be simply equated with poverty. Poverty is manifested in many ways, in works of penance and works of the apostolate, in smiling service, in the abnegation of one's own pet practices and prejudices for the good of others. The general rule must be that if poverty is to be true and religious, it must be rooted in the individual's total being, and the community's total existence, being possessed by God. It is here that there is the power to risk new ventures in freedom, and to surrender oneself for the Kingdom of God.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 74.



God and Man. By Archbishop Anthony Bloom. Paramus, N.J.: Newman Press, 1971. Pp. 125. Cloth, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Richard Leo Heppler, O.F.M., former professor of English at St. Joseph's Seminary, Callicoon, N.Y., and now chaplain to

It has been our position in these pages that the meaning of religious poverty in our day must be sought in the dedication of the whole person to God by the vow or pledge of chastity/celibacy. Organically related to this consecration is that poverty in which the realization of total dependence upon God stimulates the religious to seek the freedom of the children of God. Francis of Assisi was one of these. Joyous in his simplicity, determined in his living of the Gospel, poor because of the Kingdom, he is the Patriarch of those who would bear his name and whose company is formed of men and women from all the lands of the earth.

the Immaculate Conception Sisters at Tombrock College, West Paterson, N. J.

This small volume contains an abundance of theological and spiritual insights by a priest-physician who penetrates some of the deeper regions of the religious world. Archbishop Bloom examines his topics very carefully, much like a skilled doctor making a diagnosis. And he uses examples and illustrations from literature both sacred and profane, as well as from music, art, history, science, and personal experience, to concretize his general statements.

Each of the five chapters was originally a talk or interview which has been cast in essay form. "The Atheist and the Archbishop" is along the lines of apologetics, but goes far beyond a discussion about the existence of God. "Doubt and the Christian Faith" elucidates the position of the Christian as a man of faith who must still face doubts. "Man and God" reveals man as the center of the modern world and then goes on to show that the Church has always placed *the Man*, Jesus Christ, at the heart of all creation. "Holiness and Prayer" examines the nature of holiness as a sharing in God's holiness, a sharing to which all are called. Prayer is the blending of contemplation and action motivated by love for God and man. "John the Baptist," the concluding essay, reveals the forerunner as the model of all Christians; they are called to make smooth the pathway for all other people.

For one who profits by reading over his notes taken on retreat conferences or listening to a spiritual tape here is solid nourishment. For those who teach classes in spirituality here is a book for outside reading assignments. For all who enjoy learning new meanings to the Gospel stories such as the storm on the lake and the marriage feast of Cana here is an effective teacher. For the rest of us who are called to holiness here is a quiet nudge in the right direction.

To the Hebrews. The Anchor Bible, vol. 36. Trans., introd., & commentary by George Wesley Buchanan.

Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972. Pp. xxx-271. Cloth, \$7.00.

Reviewed by Father Cassian F. Corcoran, O.F.M., S.S.L., S.T.D., Vicar and Vice Rector for Student Affairs at Holy Name College and Professor of Sacred Scripture, Washington Theological Coalition.

This scholarly work is indeed a credit to its author. It reveals his competence and shows his control of Scripture, rabbinics, biblical languages, and contemporary biblical studies. His introduction states that "the document entitled 'To the Hebrews' is a homiletical midrash based on Ps 110" (p. xix). Thereupon, he defines and lucidly illustrates the literary forms and techniques involved in this New Testament writing: namely, midrash, parables, inclusion, chiasm, etc.

The commentary follows Buchanan's own literal English translation of the original Greek. He is thorough in his treatment. Religious *Sitz im Leben*, the contemporary political situation, theological concepts, the explanation of key Greek terms, a consideration of significant parallel biblical texts—these are some of the elements employed to come to an understanding of the meaning of the "document to the Hebrews."

It seems, however, that the commentary should have developed the theological implications of some texts. For example, much could have been said with respect to the Christology contained in Hebrews 1:3-4; and the statement that Jesus "offered himself for his own sins as well as for those of the people" (pp. 131 and 254) raises many questions not brought up in this book. The sec-

tion referred to as "Conclusions" is very good and should be helpful in applying the message of this homiletical midrash to Christian living today.

Things Lost in Need of Finding:
A Book of Parables and Prayers.
By Joan Sauro, C.S.J. Notre Dame,
Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1973. Pp.
124. Paper, \$2.75.

Reviewed by Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F., a member of the staff of St. Joseph's Hospital, Tacoma, Washington, and a frequent contributor to our pages.

A first glance at the title of this book may give one the impression that it might be another book on St. Anthony, famed as the finder of lost objects. But this is not a book about the finding of things known to be lost, but rather about the discovery of familiar objects in a way that is unique and penetrating. The author sets out to help us see God's grandeur in the beauty and truth of the many things we ignore or take for granted. Joan Sauro will help one to look at raindrops, a chair, train tracks, a mailbox, etc., with a different kind of vision.

In the first part of this book, photographs are accompanied by parables, which are "intended to enlarge sensitivity to the ordinary things of this world and to some thoughts these things can provoke" (p. 8). The author invites the reader to take time, as she has done, to let these ordinary things of life reveal their own inner beauty and the lessons they can convey. One might not

agree with all her parables, such as "The Beauty of Broken beyond Mend" (p. 36); but with a little insight the truth will shine forth colored by one's experience and personality. Four pages of this section are devoted to things lost in the nursery. These pages are delightful in their simplicity yet profoundly thought-provoking.

In the introduction to the second part of the book, the author speaks of the Gospel prodigals: "internal revenue men, military brass, lepers, servants, the son of a widow, a woman with five husbands" (p. 66). These are the prodigals who were "found" and healed. There are other prodigals who were not "found": "men as hard as the stones in their hands—those too rich to make it through that needle's eye—the prodigal son's brother outside the hall of celebration, more lost than the one lost" (p. 67). The prayers in the second section are for those lost prodigals in need of finding.

One will find subjects throughout this book for meditation and contemplation. Since prayer is a very personal dialogue, the subjects suggested here will bring to mind hundreds of others, which may be more suited to the personality and experience of the reader. After perusing this book one may be inclined to make personal jottings using the familiar objects which may be more meaningful than the ones illustrated. Such is the beauty of this book, that it may act as a springboard to the creation of one's own contemplative prayer, in imitation of Mary, as the author puts it: "one mother bends on far-off hill/ and fits her limbs the way she fits her life/ to match the contours of his will" (p. 60).

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Griffin, Robert, *In the Kingdom of the Lonely God*. Paramus, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1973. Pp. 128. Paper, \$2.95.
- Killinger, John, *The Fragile Presence: Transcendence in Modern Literature*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973. Pp. x-166. Paper, \$3.95.
- Mosteller, Sister Sue, *My Brother, My Sister*. Paramus, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1973. Pp. 117. Paper, \$3.95.
- Willmann, Sister Agnes, F.M.M., *Everywhere People Waiting: The Life of Helen de Chappotin*. North Quincy, Mass.: The Christopher Publishing House, 1973. Pp. 376. Cloth, \$5.95.