

July, 1973

Vol. XXIII, No. 7

#### CONTENTS

BROTHER SUN—OR BROTHER FRANCIS?  Editorial	194
BUT I HAVE CALLED YOU FRIENDS	196
CHRIST THE ONE TEACHER OF ALL	205
SOUNDINGSAnthony Savasta, O.S.F.	216
HONEY AND LOCUSTS	217
BOOKS REVIEWS	221



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.

### **COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS**

The cover and illustrations for the July issue of THE CORD were drawn by Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A., of Sancta Clara Monastery, whose drawings have graced the pages of The Queen, the Franciscan Herald, and other religious periodicals.



### Brother Sun—or Brother Francis?

WHEN HE VISITED BRIEFLY with the friars at St. Francis Church in New York City, Franco Zeffirelli left no doubt as to the nobility and sincerity of his intentions in producing his latest movie, "Brother Sun, Sister Moon." Deeply impressed by Francis of Assisi and the saint's idealism, he sought to interpret that idealism anew and disseminate it for a new generation.

As is so often the case, unfortunately, noble and sincere intentions are not enough to guarantee successful or even valid execution of the chosen task. The fundamental flaw in this instance is Mr. Zeffirelli's conception of Francis's identity and mission. He sees the Poverello primarily as "one of the first examples in history of a drop-out," with acute problems of identity, and preoccupied with self-fulfillment. Undeniably there had to be some of this involved in the first phases of Francis's response to God's call, but the trouble is that in the film it is blown up out of all reasonable proportion and, at the same time, given a modern (hence quite distorted) flavor.

The way Graham Faulkner rolled his eyes, e.g., conveyed a distinct impression of mental instability on Francis's part. His hammy posing after stripping before the bishop and townspeople, likewise, seriously falsified the Saint's simplicity and strength of character. Of course Francis was concerned for the welfare of his contemporaries, but (though admittedly a sharp separation is impossible here) too little of the *religious* and too

much of the *humanistic* and *sociological* dimensions of his *concern* comes through in the film.

Were we to go on evaluating the film as though this were simply a review, we could point out as many successes, probably, as flaws. The inane music would doubtless be balanced by the spectacular scenery. Judi Bowker's fine portrayal of Clare would offset some dismal characterizations of Francis's companions, and Alec Guinness's superb pope would go a long way toward compensating for John Sharp's stereotyped bishop.

Our responsibility here differs, however, from that of the professional film critic; and our conclusion will no doubt seem, in view of the many flaws already pointed out, paradoxical in the extreme. We think it is valid, nonetheless, to distinguish the average movie-goer with only a passing interest in the film's subject, from the committed Franciscan religious or tertiary. For the former, we think there is too little content and too great a distortion of both values and personalities, even to recommend seeing the film at all. But for the latter, we feel there is a real chance of deep satisfaction precisely because such a viewer will bring to it his own balanced and nuanced appreciation of the real Francis and the pristine idealism of the Movement's early days.

The movie does unquestionably have the power to evoke innumerable resonances of Franciscanism that an individual may have long since assimilated and perhaps relegated to a less than fully conscious dimension of his life. When all is said and done, of course, each individual can say for himself alone what the film has or has not wrought in his own subjectivity. We can testify personally to spiritual benefit far beyond what the mediocre script and less than wholly adequate direction can account for, however; and we strongly suggest that the reader consider this possibility for himself before deciding on the basis of quite validly unfavorable reviews, not to see "Brother Sun. Sister Moon."

to. Michael D. Mailad, afor

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

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

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

### VI

so that we may grow in understanding: how do we do that? How do you do that, specifically, in a monastery that is dedicated to silence in order that its members may grow in the spirit of prayer? How do we do this at such times as Advent and Lent, when the abbess has just exhorted us to be more silent than ever, and then comes to tell us that Advent (or Lent) is a time par excellence to grow in friendship? Well, dear sisters, in very little ways.

I spoke last time about the refinement of understanding. How does this grow? First of all,

TO BE OPEN to one another I think, out of our relationship to God. The more we are open to God, the more we are open to one another. Open, in the routine daily events, the small daily vexations and annoyances, the little misunderstandings that are the furniture of creaturehood These may seem at first not to have any connection with our openness to God in prayer, but they bear a vital connection. The more sensitive we become to God and what God asks of us. and the more delicate in perceiving his inspirations, the more open we are to one another and the less do we make snap judgments about one another. If our rash judgments don't seem as

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., well known spiritual writer and contributor to many religious periodicals, is First Councilor for the Poor Clare Collettine Federation in the U.S. Her books include Spaces for Silence and the newly reprinted A Right to Be Merry.

wide-screen as the judgments of dence was against her. You canthose who were at first Job's real friends; if they don't seem that spectacular and obvious, we still have to watch ourselves nonetheless. This is the right kind of introversion; this is the authentic self-study.

We do this petty judging almost by reflex if we are not careful. We think that we know just why a sister did that, we know exactly why she looked at us like that, we know just why she did a thing the way she did it. Remember that classic example in the life of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, when she wanted so much to go to the gate to help the portress? You recall that there was a request made at recreation for somebody to assist the portress. Saint Thérèse wanted so much to do it: but then she thought that maybe somebody else wanted to do this very much also, so she just took her own good time about taking off her apron, folding it very meticulously. Obviously, that is just the way a person acts who doesn't want to do a thing.

We can see something similar. and immediately arch our psychological backs and make a snap judgment. You remember that the truth of the affair was that Thérèse took her own good time about it in order to let someone else who might want to help have a chance to get in first. Yet, all the circumstantial evi-

not, in the courts of law, convict a person on circumstantial evidence; but we often do it out of court. It would take a really deep sense of friendship and openness to God not to make a rash judgment or even a studied judgment about a little thing like that which could happen in any community at any time. Obviously, a person who is dragging her feet doesn't want to do the work at hand. Or so say we to ourselves in the inner tribunal. And maybe this is not true at all. With Thérèse, it was just the opposite. She wanted so much to do what was requested that she was holding back, giving the appearance of reluctance—willing to take that risk. Human nature having been the same in the time of Saint Thérèse as it is now, the "friends of Thérèse," in the same judgmental posture as the friends of Job, said: "It is plain to see that you don't want to go."

You see, these things have been occurring right along since the time of Adam and Evejudging one another's behavior and so never being able to grow in friendship. We don't know the real truth; how do we find out? Well, anyone who really knew Saint Thérèse would have realized that this was not her style, and not because the person had talked to her by the hour but because she had been open to this young saint in the community and understood her in the full context of communal living. Such a person would have known that Saint Thérèse would not react like this. Not that the saint could not make a mistake, not that she did not have faults, but simply that this was not the way she would have acted in this particular situation.

Saint Thérèse was an impulsive person. You recall how she had to run away one time so as not to give as good as she was getting. When she got a mouthful, she had a mouthful to give back, so she took to her heels and ran. Remember, how she had to sit down on the stairs because her heart was pounding so hard from holding back quite a few things which she had in mind to reply to the person who was blaming her? Her reactions were ardent! This ardor characterized her in any unexpected situation. And even if the saint had really not wanted to do that simple service at recreation, it would more have accorded with her temparament to have taken her apron off in an impatient way to show that she didn't want to go. Perhaps to toss the apron down and say something to the effect of, "All right—which way do we go?" The person who said, "Obviously, Thérèse does not want to help," was a person who had not been open to Thérèse in community and so did not know her.

Now, we cannot help observing one another's deficiencies. This is our glory in the cloister because it should teach us the greatest humility and love and warmth and understanding. It can, however, become our greatest hazard. You see, we have to learn to establish balance in there.

And that brings me to two very good questions that were asked by two of you since the last conference. The questions that come out of pondering, out of trying to seek our own answers first in prayer, are usually far more interesting, you know, than the questions we toss of without a moment's thought ourselves! Well, one question was about this matter of analyzing problems so that we can be more open to one another. The other question was about intimacy. We did talk about that before in a general way, but this question regards particularities. We do not give our deepest intimacies to a wide range of persons. If you have been given a special light in prayer, you may have a great urge to share this with someone; but obviously you don't go from one sister to another and say, "Guess what? What do you suppose God told me today?" You don't hold the floor at recreation describing your "light." You know, dear sisters, that I favor and foster "shared prayer" in the sense that at times we

share our reflections. But I can tell you frankly that I think some of this present movement toward turning ourselves inside-out to all and sundry is immature and tasteless. Anyone knows that the deeper one's prayer is, the less it can be shared in words. We share our deep relationship with God and its unfolding most authentically by the calibre of our lives. We know a person of deep, contemplative prayer when we meet her. She doesn't have to explain it to us. Nor would she!

There are other kinds of intimacies, however, and your question was about a family intimacy. It is a very good practical question. Perhaps there are some particular troubles in your family at the time. "Is that wrong," you ask me, "to share one's intimacies in such matters with another sister?" "Is that what I meant about not sharing intimacies?" By no means! You have to establish your own hierarchy. And by that I definitely do not mean a little coterie of persons around you with whom alone you share such things. and always to the exclusion of all others. Rather, I mean here by "hierarchy" that reason and matter vary, and you must make prudential judgments in each instance.

Perhaps you have a sorrow in your family that nobody but the superior is aware of, and you happen to find out that another

sister has a similar sorrow in her family. Well, it could be an act of sisterly love to have an exchange there. You use your iudgment—your own formed judgment—whether it might not be helpful to share this with her. Perhaps, again, another sister has a particular problem, and you know it at the time; and you want to share with her some problem in your own present or past life or some sorrow in your family for the very good reason (not condescending at all) of helping her to see that there are other people who have problems, big ones, lots bigger maybe. This could be a real reason. Or, it could be a real reason, just to want to ease the burden of her sorrow with the sharing of your own similar experience.

Now, this is not establishing cliques; this is not setting up about you that little coterie of the "élite" of which I spoke, the ones to whom alone you confide such things. Maybe one intimacy of that kind you would give to another sister at an allowed time. or another to a different sister. Is that clear? Because that is an important point. And I say "at an allowed time" because I credit you with sufficient intelligence to know that we have to use those areas of free time interlaced with the prayer and work of our lives and not set up an "anytime - anyhow - anyplace"



sort of sharing. What would become of the contemplative atmosphere of our monastery if there were casual interchanges going on any time at all? I have seen what has happened here and there in places where this has been tried.

I expect you to have sense enough to know by now that building up the enclosure of the heart needs real disciplining. It is a delicate and painstaking work. We would be idiots to think we could just wander about "sharing" whatever comes into our minds with no sense of discipline or of our responsibility to the whole community in maintaining an atmosphere conducive to that silence and solitude which are bought at a great price in

our noisy world. We want to be spontaneous, by all means. But we want to be intelligent anough to admit that no true spontaneity is possible without long discipline. The dancer "spontaneously" leaps through the air only because she has practised for years unto exhaustion. Anyone who attempts that kind of spontaneity without previous discipline will discover that broken legs take quite a while to heal. The organist who spontaneously improvises so delightfully can do this only because she has worked arduously at playing, beginning with scales and not with sonatas. The poet whose work is so fresh and "spontaneous" has sweated for years about the shaping of words to the "unbearable accuracy."

So, no, I don't think it is wrong at all to have intimacies of that kind as long as they are controlled by the context of our lives, by a sense of balance, and by a well-formed conscience. Now is that clear? That was one sister's question.

Another question was about talking things out, analyzing things and situations as distinct from analyzing persons—about which we spoke at some length in a previous conference. Well, I can't really say "yes!" or "no!" to you, dear sisters. I can help you to form your consciences, but I cannot be your consciences. God forbid that I would ever try

to be. Let's take an example. Suppose two sisters have had a misunderstanding and they think (usually one thinks!) that they really ought to talk this out. Now, how do you decide about that? It is a time for silence now, yet our holy Rule says that the sisters should nurture one another in love. And there is this little trouble between two of you. Should you sit down now and talk this out? Obviously, there are times you could not. If the mistress has said that you are to go to the general housecleaning, you don't puzzle over "Should I sit down now and talk this out?" Sometimes circumstances make our decisions for us. However, there are other times when there in an artificial way. You cannot are margins on the day and you could perhaps think that you should do this, that it would be a good idea to sit down and talk this out.

Well, as I say, I can't give you the answer. I can't be anyone's conscience but my own. But I will say that you have to exercise great prudence in this. You have to take a great many things into consideration, the first of which is that ordinarily little misunderstandings are aggravated by much explanation. Our love should be large enough to pass over small misunderstandings without digging about in them. We are women of the Church, with larger concerns. However, there can, of course

be exceptions. It is just that I want to mention that "ordinarily" in this context is a weighty word. In fact, I would underscore it. Women are famous, perhaps infamous, for this. That we can start out with a small problem and by discussing it, analyzing it, and airing it out in supposed adult fashion, emerge with a tremendously big problem. We entered the discussion with a minor matter; afterward, we can hardly carry out in both arms what we balanced on one finger before.

So, dear sisters, I would say: be as simple as possible. Keep it in as few words as possible. I do not, of course, mean that decide: "I am not going to say more than two sentences about this." You know that I never want to be rigid or artificial about anything. If you start out to say one sentence and twenty develop, all right. Just don't start out by saving: "We are going to get to the bottom of this." Dear sisters, we don't have to get to the bottom of everything. As was so well said on that Scripture tape, the mystery, after all, was not in Job; it was in God. The friends of Job wanted to figure out how all this happened. why he was in the situation he was in, what had he done? Then they made their own conclusions and told him what he had done. In the end, they were accusing

him of things he had never even thought of doing. You can't get to the bottom of God. You cannot get to the bottom of God's mysteries in his ways with men. As I said, each of us is a mystery of God's creative Love and his omniscient action. So we try to be as open and as accessible to one another as we can be; but we are not aggressive in our understanding. And sometimes these protracted analyses, these contrived talkings-out of things, can do a great deal more harm than good. On the other hand, a simple explanation might be the very best resource. Only, keep it limited. You don't have to take an afternoon off for it. To talk over this little misunderstanding or aggravation we don't have to be psychiatrists to one another; we need only be friends to one another, sisters to one another.

If we have been huffy to someone, it is sufficient to say, "Dear sister, I'm sorry I was so ornery this morning; it was just one of those days." You don't have to give the other sister a whole outline of how you happened to do that, what led up to it, why you said what you said, and how it must have sounded, and that you really meant something else, and what five factors produced it and what ten factors followed out of it. All you have to say is, "I am really sorry that I was huffy".

Another way to approach understanding is to reflect that it relates again to this delicacy, to this sense of mystery. Why is the sister who seemed so friendly and understanding yesterday so withdrawn today? Well, maybe it is none of your business. No superior should analyze every expression of her sisters. A superior should be available, but she should not pursue the sisters down every daily lane of life; her breath should not be always hot on their necks trying to find out what's the matter every time the clock strikes. Just available, that's all. Sometimes the abbess will ask when she judges it well. but she won't be forever pursuing the sisters with her understanding-tool-kit. Very rarely do you do well to pursue one another with "understanding." And if a sister is out of sorts, well, learn to be open to her weakness. Simply make nothing of it, except to whisper a loving prayer for her in your heart. Women are adept at making much of little things. We can also turn this wonderful talent around and know when it is better to make very little of certain things.

You know that we can also in "preserving silence—the wrong kind of silence—let a sister know that she is offending us, that we are put out by her behavior, that she is really trying us at the moment, without ever saying a word to her. Some psychologists

are getting excited to book-length extent about non-verbal communication. Women have been experts in this from the beginning. Cloistered nuns will quite naturally grow in this expertise for wonderful good and family warmth, or for ill. Actually, it might be better for our state of soul if we said out loud, "You old unripe persimmon, you!" For, doubtless, five minutes later we would be very sorry for this, sorry enough to say to the Father confessor, "I spoke unkindly." But we can play this little record inside us without knowing and realizing how much more deeply uncharitable we are in our blameworthy "silence."

We are, all of us, on occasion, moody. You never know how diligently a sister may be trying to control herself. Let the poor soul alone for a while. Often enough, by analyzing, we come up with conclusions which obscure our vision of reality and invite us to make rash judgments. This can happen among religious. God forbid that it should happen here, but I have seen it happen. A sister will make up her mind what another person's motive was, why a person does such a thing, and everything is judged out of that basic premise which may be thoroughly unsound. Then, the most innocent thing the sister may be doing becomes one more "proof" of that basic false premise.

If we always put the best possible interpretation on the acts of others, we are nearly always right and we are always happier. This is a large statement, but I hold that it is true. No one would be in this kind of society, here in a cloistered community, unless despite all her weaknesses, all her deficiencies, she really were striving for high holiness, unless she truly were aiming at lofty charity. The fact that her faults may be rather obvious and her crashes rather loud does not mean that her effort is any the less sincere. Perhaps the person who in public falls the oftenest, makes the loudest crashes, and raises the most dust is also, in the eyes of God, the most charitable and the most precious. Maybe she is the one who is striving most assiduously of all.

Job said some quite unfortunate things to God, but he kept rising again. Job went on struggling. He fell and he rose and he fell and he rose. He was humanity, I would say, at its comictragic best. One moment calling God to account and the next saying, "Never shall I open my mouth again, nor shall I utter a word again." But several minutes later, he was uttering quite a few words again. Poor Job was always struggling, so he was very precious in the eyes of God. His supposed friends were

The Sermon of Saint Bonaventure on

not striving; they were set in their opinions, wedded to their own judgments. And so they were not precious in the eyes of God, as God made rather clear, even though they were simply unravelling seemingly logical judgments while poor Job was lashing around. And Job, remember, had the humiliation of having started out from the apex of what was absolutely sound and right. He could have luxuriated psychologically in the fact that he was an utter failure before God because he had started out with the highest form of submission, this pure love of God. "God gave, and God has taken away-it is as simple as that, and who am I to question God?" And then he had fallen so far from that sublime height. He had begun by accepting all of God's dispositions of things, and on a pinnacle of holiness, of charity, of right thinking; then he came tumbling down from this moun-

This is very important to remember, dear sisters, because we can torture ourselves in this way. "How did I get in this pickle I am in? How did I land in the situation I am in?" I had right concepts; I had correct theory? Maybe I started out this morning full of Advent Zeal (I hope so!). Then, one little thing happened and I started rolling right down the hill until now I am lost in this anguish of

tain of high thought.

remorse and self-reproach. This is what is important: what is the result of that kind of remorse. that kind of shame? Isn't it that we commit more and more and more faults? You see, if we are rolling down from the mountain of resolution, the thing to do is to get up and dust ourselves off and start climbing up again, that's all. If you sit there, rolling around, all you will do is to raise more dust. This can look like humility, especially to young sisters (not that it cannot look that way to older sisters as well); it can delude us, deceive us, because it seems a great act of abasement before God when we are rolling around in the dust and more and more dustclouds are coming up. "Oh, why did I do that! Why did I act like that? I'm not fit to live with other people!" But, at the same time that we are raising all this dust and breaking our chest bones striking our breast and repeating the refrain, "I'm not fit to live with other human beings," we are actually being more obnoxious all the time. That is what this kind of remorse always effectuates. It is as though we are out to prove to ourselves the truth of what we are saying. On the other hand, to get up requires really heroic effort. Yes, it is an act of genuine heroism if we just get up and dust ourselves off and start climbing

# Christ, the One Teacher of All

## Translated by Richard E. Hasselbach

1. "One is your teacher, Christ" (Mt. 23:10). In this quotation the fontal principle of cognoscitive illumination is identified as being, obviously, Jesus Christ, "who since he is the brightness of the Father's glory and the image of his substance, carries all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3). He himself is, as we read in Hebrews 2, the origin of all wisdom. And according to the well known passage of Sirach 1, "the font of wisdom is the Word of God on high."

Christ himself is, moreover, the font of all right cognition, for he himself is "the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). There are three levels of certain and true knowledge, as Hugh of St. Victor says with regard to the Sacraments: "There are three grades in the advance of faith: first to choose through piety, secondly to approve through reason, and thirdly to apprehend through truth." Following this it appears that the ways of knowing are threefold.

of which the first is through the belief of pious assent, second the approval of right reason, and third the clarity of pure contemplation. The first looks to the practice of virtue, which is faith; the second, to the habit of grace, which is the intellect; and the third, to the habit of blessedness, which is cleanliness of heart. Therefore, although there are three different modes of cognition: namely the believing, the bestowal, and the contemplative-Christ is the beginning and the cause of all of these. He is so, because he is the principle of the first inasmuch as he is Way, of the second inasmuch as he is Truth, and of the third inasmuch as he is Life.

As the Way, Christ is the teacher and principle of cognition, which is ours through faith. For this cognition is possessed in a dual way: through revelation and through authority. As Augustine says, "What we understand we owe to

<sup>1</sup> Hugh of St. Victor, De Sacramentis, Lib. I, p. x, c. 4.

Mr. Richard E. Hasselbach was graduated last month from Siena College, and will begin his novitiate year for Holy Name Province in September. This "sermon" is, of course, not the ordinary sort of sermon (homily) preached in church; it is one of Bonaventure's "University Sermons" delivered at Paris and as such reveals a good deal of the Seraphic Doctor's Platonic and Augustinian philosophy.

reason: what we believe, to authority."2 Moreover, there would be no authority unless it were preceded by revelation, since in the first chapter of II Peter we read: "We have the more firm word of prophecy to which you do well to attend as to a lamp shining in a dark place." In this passage he alludes to the authority of prophetic words, and he adds the reason for it: "For not by the will of man was prophecy brought at any time, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." Since these are the two ways by which one reaches true knowledge, no one can do so unless he is enabled to do so by Christ, who is the principle of all revelation by his coming into the mind, and the foundation of all authority by his coming into the flesh.

He comes into the mind as the light of revelation of all prophetic vision, as it is written in the second chapter of Daniel: "He reveals deep and hidden things and knows what is in the darkness, for the light dwells within him" (Dan. 2:22). Evidently the "light" is that of divine wisdom, which is Christ; as we read in John 8:12, "I am the light of the world, whoever follows me does not walk in the darkness." And John likewise says (12: 36), "While you have the light believe in the light, that you may be children of the light," because (1: 12) "he gave the power of becoming

sons of God to those who believe in his name."

Without this light, which is Christ, no one is able to penetrate the hidden mysteries of faith. On this account we see in Wisdom 9: "Send it forth." He is speaking of wisdom: "Send it forth from your holy heaven and from your seat of majesty, that it may be with me, and work with me, that I may know what is acceptable to you. For what man knows the plan of God, or who is there who knows what God wishes?" From this it can be understood that it is given to the intelligence that one cannot arrive at certain revelation of faith unless through the coming of Christ into the mind.

He comes also into the flesh as the approving Word of all prophetic expression. We turn to the first chapter of Hebrews and read: "God who at different times and in diverse ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, last of all, in these days has spoken to us by his Son." Since Christ himself is the Word of the Father, full of power (as we see in Eccles. 8:4: "His word is full of power, no one is able to say to him, 'Why do you do this?'") he himself is also the Word full of truth-indeed, he is Truth itself: "Sanctify them in truth, your Word is truth" (In. 17: 17).3 So, since authority is due to the word which is full of power to command and judge, and Christ is the

The whole of authentic Scripture, then, and all its preachers have looked to Christ coming in the flesh as the foundation of all Christian faith. In I Cor. 3, e.g., we read: "According to the grace which has been given to me. as a wise architect I have laid the foundation. But let everyone take care how he builds thereon. For other foundation no one can lay. but that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus." He is the foundation of all authentic doctrine.whether Apostolic or Prophetic, according to both laws, the new and the old dispensation. This is the import of the famous text of Ephesians 2: "You are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, with Christ himself as the chief cornerstone."

It is clear, therefore, that Christ is the teacher of knowledge of the faith, and this insofar as he is the Way according to his twofold coming: by his coming into the mind and into the flesh.

But Christ is also the teacher of all knowledge which comes through reason—and this, insofar as he is the Truth. For if knowledge is to be scientific there are necessarily required immutable truth on the part of the thing known and infallible certitude on the part of the knower. Everything which is known is necessary in itself, and

certain for the one knowing it. For we know "when we judge the cause why a thing is and we know it because it is impossible for it to be otherwise."

There is required, therefore, in part, a knowable and immutable truth. Such a truth, though, is not a created truth—simply and absolutely-since every created thing is moving and changeable. But it is creating truth, which has the fullness of immutability. Wherefore it is said in the Psalms: "In the beginning, Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They shall perish but you remain, though all of them grow old like a garment. Like clothing you change them and they are changed, but you are the same and your years have no end" (Ps. 101:26-28). But this statement, as the Apostle observes in Hebrews I, is addressed to the Son of God. who is "the word, the heart, and the reason" of almighty God, and therefore eternal truth. As the Psalm says, "Your Word, Lord, endures forever, and for generation and generation your truth" (Ps. 118:89). Even as things have their being in their own proper way, so also do they have their being in the mind, and in the "eternal reason" as well. Nor is this being immutable in the first or second way, but only in the third: i.e., insofar as they are in the eternal Word. It remains that nothing accounts for the perfect intelligibility of things but Christ, present as Son of God and as teacher.

Word of the Father, it follows that God's power and wisdom are through him, and that in him all stable authority is brought to its perfection.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> St. Augustine, De Utilitate Credendi, cap. 11.

The usual interpretation of this verse, given, e.g., by St. Augustine, In Joan., tr. 118, n. 3, is thus: "In truth," that is, in Me, since I am Truth. This is clear from the fact that John adds "Your word is truth." Jesus is indeed the Word—in Greek, logos, and in Latin verbum.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, Bk. I, ch. 2.

Whence Augustine "Don't deny in any way that truth is unchangeable. It contains all that is unchangeably true. I am not able to say that this eternal truth belongs to me or to any other human being, but it presents itself commonly to all who perceive the reality of the eternal truths." The Saint again says this in the fourteenth book on the Trinity. Although the impious see the laws according to which each ought to ive, he asks,

Where do they see them? Not in their own nature, since without a doubt these things are seen by the mind itself and it is evident that their minds are mutable. But everyone can see that these rules are immutable, Nor is the answer to be found in any state of their mind, since these laws are of justice and their minds, as regards the truth of these things, have been established in injustice. Where are these rules written, then, by which even the unjust recognize what is just and what is unjust and see that they ought to have what they do not? Where are they written, except in the book of that light which is called Truth, whence all just law is transcribed and transferred to the heart of the man who works justice, not by wandering to it, but being as it were impressed upon

He says this in the book on True Religion, and in the sixth book on tations.

Secondly, certitude on the part of the knower is also required for this type of knowledge. This, however, is not possible on the part of one able to be deceived. nor on the part of that light which is able to be obscured. The sort of light that cannot be obscured is not the light of any created intelligence, but that of uncreated Wisdom, who is Christ. On this account we find in the seventh chapter of Wisdom: "God gave me true knowledge of those things which are, that I might know the organization of the universe, and the virtues of the elements. The beginnings and the end and the midpoint of time." And again in the same chapter: "Wisdom the builder of all taught me." Ouite rightly the writer adds:

For she is a vapor of the might of God and a pure effusion of the Almighty; therefore nothing stained is found in her, for she is the splendor of eternal light, the spotless mirror of the power of God. For she is fairer than the sun, and surpasses every constellation of the stars. Compared to light she is prior, for she stretches from end to end mightily and disposes all things sweetly.

Wherefore John likewise says: "He was the light which illumined all men, and the light shone forth in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (1:9).7

The light of the created mind is not sufficient. Music, and in his book of Retrac- then, unto itself for the certain comprehension of anything when it is not

accompanied by the light of the eternal Word. So we see Augustine say, in the first of his Soliloquies: "As in the sun one may notice three certain things: viz., that it is, that it shines, and that it illuminates, so in that most mysterious God there are three things: viz., that he is, that he is known, and that he makes other things to be understood." A little earlier, he had stated: "Just as it is not possible to see the earth unless it is illuminated by light, likewise these things taught in the various academic disciplines although everyone understands and acknowledges them without doubt to be quite true—must be seen to be intelligible only because they are illumined by something else, as by their own sun."8

And so in the twelfth book on the Trinity, speaking of the boy who responds rightly about geometry without help from his teacher, and rejecting the platonic position which says that souls are first imbued with knowledge of the sciences in a prior existence and then poured into the body, he says this is not true, but rather

we ought to believe that the nature of the intellectual mind is so founded as to see these things which are subjected to intelligible things by the order of nature, established by the Creator, in a certain incorporeal light of its own type, just as the eve of the body sees those things which lie opposite it in corporeal light, of which light it is made to be receptive and to which it is adapted.9

In the second book on Free Will, he tells us what this light might be:

The beauty of truth and wisdom does not pass with time, nor move from place to place. Night does not interrupt it nor darkness hide it, and it is not subject to bodily sense. It is very close to all those persons who turn to it from the whole world and who love it; and for all it is everlasting, it is in no place, vet nowhere is it absent. From without it admonishes us, within it instructs us. No one is its judge, without it no one judges rightly. Therefore it is without doubt shown to our mind that it is the most powerful who from its very own self makes individuals wise, and who judges all others not of itself but through itself.10

He says the same thing in his book on the True Religion and in his work on the Teacher where he proves this conclusion throughout the whole book: One is our Teacher: Christ!

Finally, Christ, as the Life, is the teacher of contemplative cognitions, about which the soul exercises itself in a twofold way. In both these ways: viz., in his interior life with God and in, his exterior life with humanity, Christ is the soul's nourishment. Following this the ways of contemplation are twofold: ingression and egression. But in either case one can succeed only through Christ, which is why he himself says, in John 10:9: "I am the door; if anyone enter by me he shall be safe and shall go in and out and shall find pasture."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> St. Augustine, De Libero Arbitrio, Lib. II, cap. 12, n. 33.

<sup>6</sup> St. Augustine, De Trinitate, Lib. 14, cap. 15, n. 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> The well known interpretation of this verse includes the correlative observation that "That light is not the true one, which gets its light from somewhere else, and not from him.'

<sup>8</sup> St. Augustine, Soliloquies, Lib. 1, cap. 8, n. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> St. Augustine, De Trinitate, Lib. 12, cap. ult., n. 24.

<sup>10</sup> St. Augustine, De Libero Arbitrio, Lib. 2, cap. 14, n. 38.

The ingression is to Christ who is the uncreated word and food of angels, about whom John 1 says "In the beginning was the Word." This entrance is spoken of in the Psalms too: "I will go into the place of the tabemacle up to the house of God, amid cries of joy and thanksgiving, with the multitude keeping festival" (41:5). This was said about that that heavenly Jerusalem, upon the contemplation of which no one enters unless he has been introduced to it by the uncreated Word, Jesus Christ. And so we read in the first book of Dionysius on the Angelic Hierarchy:

Therefore invoking Iesus, the Light of the fathers, who is the Truth illuminating all men who come into the world, through whom we have our access to the Father, the Principle of Light, in the most sacred of elocutions from the Father he transmits illumination, and as much as possible we look to these, and from them we will consider the hierarchies of celestial spirits manifest to us symbolically and allegorically. We will consider them even as we gaze upon the Principle and super-Principle of divine clarity of the Father with our confident, immaterial eyes of the soul.11

The egression, though is to the incarnate Word, who is the milk of the very small, and about whom John says in the first chapter: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." We read about this going-out in the third chapter of Canticles: "Daughter of Ierusalem, come forth and look upon King Solomon in the crown with which his mother has crowned him on the day of his marriage, on the day of the joy of his heart." This crown with which the true, peaceful Solomon (Christ) was crowned by his mother, is immaculate flesh which he assumed from the Virgin Mary, and which is called the crown of espousal because through it he wed himself to our holy Mother the Church which was formed from his side just as Eve was formed from the side of a man. And, through him, the whole hierarchy of the Church purged, illuminated, and perfected So it is seen that he is the life. giving pasture of the whole Church:



<sup>11</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, De Angelica Hierarchia, Lib. 1, cap. 1-2.

"My flesh is truly food and my blood is truly drink" (Jn. 6:56), whence it follows that "whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood will have eternal life."

Thus the life of the spirit is said to be twofold. one which lives in the flesh and another in God. There are therefore two senses in man, one interior and one exterior. Each has its own good whereby it is refreshed: The interior sense in the contemplation of Christ's Godhead, the exterior sense in the contemplation of Christ's humanity. God was made man so that he might bless the whole man in himself, that, whether ingressing or egressing, in doing so he will find pasture in his maker: external pasture in the flesh of his Savior, and internal pasture in the divinity of his Creator.12

This ingression to Christ's divinity and egression to his humanity is nothing else than ascension to heaven and descent to earth, accomplished through Christ as through a ladder. We read about this in Genesis (28:12): "In his sleep Jacob saw a ladder standing above the earth with its top touching heaven: on it angels were ascending and by the ladder, and the illumination and descent of angels.

Here, too, we glimpse the twofold way of contemplation in the interior and exterior reading of scripture. As we see in the Book of of the human mind cannot be fixed Revelation, "I saw upon the right on so excellent a light unless it has throne, a scroll written within and the justice of faith."18

without, sealed with seven seals" (5:1), and "No one was able, neither in heaven, nor on earth, nor under the earth, to open the scroll and look at it" (5:3), but "the lion of the tribe of Juda has conquered—he has overcome to open the scroll and break its seven seals" (5:5). Now, if he who opened the scroll and broke the seals deserves to be called "teacher," the title certainly belongs to Christ, who was a raging lion and a slain lamb. It is clear that our one teacher, in all different kinds of knowledge, is Christ because he is the way, the truth, and the life.

From all this, the way and the author of wisdom become clear. For the way is such that it is begun by a strong faith, and proceeds by serene reason, arriving at the sweetness of contemplation to which Christ alluded when he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Thus the statement of Proverbs 4 is fulfilled: "The way of the just is like a shining light that grows in brilliance until perfect day" (4: 18). This is the way to which the holy have kept, giving heed to what Isaiah said: "Unless you believe you descending." Christ is symbolized shall not know" (7:9, LXX). Those philosophers are ignorant of this way of contemplative man by the ascent who, neglecting faith and founding themselves totally on reason, are wholly unable to come to contemplation. As Augustine writes in his first book on The Trinity, "The weak eye hand of him who sits upon the been nourished and strengthened by

<sup>12</sup> Pseudo-Augustine, De Anima et spiritu, cap. 9.

<sup>13</sup> St. Augustine, De Trinitate, Lib. 1, cap. 2, n. 4.

It is also clear who the author and teacher is, for Christ is the leader and director of our intelligence not only generally, as in the operation of nature, nor only specifically, as in the working of grace and meritorious virtue, but also in a way intermediate between the two. In observing this the mind discerns in creation three ways of conforming to God. Some things conform to him as vestiges, others as images, and still others as similitudes. A vestige resembles God as an effect its cause; to this the image adds the resemblance between what is moved and the goal that moves it. "Thus is the soul God's image," observes Augustine, "in that it is receptive to him and able to be a co-sharer in him,"14 i.e., through knowing and loving. The similitude resembles God not only as its cause and goal, however, but also as a Gift poured into it.

As the creature's beginning and cause God cooperates in all its operations considered precisely as universal, natural acts of his vestige. He cooperates in the intellectual acts of his image, however, by being its object and the moving power of its thinking. But it is as an infused Gift that he cooperates in those actions which flow from the creature considered as God's similitude. Hence Augustine points out that "God is the cause of being, the reason of knowing, and the way of living." 15

That God is called the "reason of knowing" should not be taken to mean that he is the only, or the bare, or the total, means of our knowing. Were he the only means there would be no difference between scientific knowledge and wisdom-between knowledge through abstraction and knowledge through the divine Word. Were he the bare and open means, there would be no difference between scientific knowledge and wisdom-between knowledge through abstraction and knowledge through the divine Word. Were he the bare and open means, there would be no difference between knowledge here below, where we depend on sense images and see "through a glass, darkly," and knowledge in heaven, where we see "face to face." Were God the total means of our knowing, we would not need appearance or perception to get to know objects; this is clearly wrong because we are deprived of a way of knowing when we lose one of our senses. So, even though Augustine considers the soul to be in contact with the eternal laws, since it does attain that light according to the upper portion of the agent intellect and the higher part of its reasoning power, still, it remains indubitably true as Aristotle says, that knowledge is produced in us by way of the senses, memory, and experience—from which the universal (foundation of the arts and the sciences) is derived within us. Plato, we know, grounded all cognition in the intelligible or ideal world. He

was rightly criticized by Aristotle, not because he was mistaken in saying that the Ideas are the eternal reasons—indeed, Augustine praises him for this—but because, despising the sensible world, he sought to reduce all certain knowledge to these Ideas. If he could do that, he certainly would seem to be establishing the way of knowledge which proceeds according to these eternal reasons; but he would also subvert the kind of knowledge that proceeds according to the created reasons (Aristotle justified the latter, in opposition to Plato, while neglecting the former.) So it seems that as regards these two philosophers. Plato ought to be followed where wisdom is concerned; and Aristotle, where science is involved. The former looks to the superior, the latter principally to the inferior.

The ability to discourse on both wisdom and science was given through the Holy Spirit to Saint Augustine as the most prominent expositor of all Scripture; this appears explicitly enough in his writings. In a more excellent way it appeared in Paul and in Moses: the latter had it as a minister of the law of "prefigurement," and the former possessed it as a minister of the law of grace. In Acts 9:22, e.g., Moses is said to be "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and again on the mountain it was said to him: "See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain." (Ex. 25:40). Paul says of himself that when among simple people he should not boast that he knows

anything except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Still, according to 1 Cor. 2:6, he did speak of wisdom among the perfect, wisdom he learned when he was brought up to the third heaven (2 Cor. 12). But this wisdom was most excellently personified in our Lord Jesus Christ, who was the principal lawgiver and at the same time the perfect traveler and comprehender. He alone, then is the principal teacher and Doctor.

### **PART TWO**

As principal teacher, Jesus is primarily to be honored, heard, and asked. He must be honored by being accorded the dignity of a teacher: "Do not call vourselves teacher; one is vour teacher, and all of you are brothers" (Mt. 20:8). The Lord wants to reserve for himself the dignity of teacher; "You call me teacher and Lord and you speak rightly, for so I am" (Jn. 13:13). He must be honored, moreover, not only by word of mouth, but also in reality, through imitation: "If, therefore, I, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet. you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I have given you an example that as I have done to you, so you also should do." As it is said in Luke (14:27): "Whoever does not follow after me cannot be my disciple."

21. Jesus must be heard too—principally through the humility of faith. "The Lord gave to me an erudite tongue," we read in Isaiah 50:4, "that I might know

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Lib. 14, cap. 8, n. 11.

<sup>15</sup> St. Augustine, De Civitate Dei, Lib. 8, cap. 4.

how to speak to the weary a word that will rouse them. He opens my ears, morning after morning, that I may hear him as a teacher." The word opens is used twice in the original version of this passage, because it is not enough that our ears hear to understand—they must also hear to obey. This is the meaning of Mt. 13:43: "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." For Christ has taught us not only by word, but also by example, and no one is a perfect hearer of the word unless he accommodates his intelligence to Christ's words, and his obedience to Christ's deeds. Thus we see in Luke 6:40: When perfected, everyone will be like his teacher."

Jesus must, finally, be asked-most importantly through the desire to learn, but not after the manner of the curious and the unbelieving, who ask in order to test. We read in Mt. 12:38 that "certain of the scribes responded, saying: 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." Surely they had seen signs—indeed, they continually saw signs; but still at that time they sought a sign. From this episode we can learn that human curiosity is unbounded, and also that it does not deserve to be led to the truth. Note, however, the Lord's response to the scribes: "A sign will not be given to you, unless it be the sign of Jonah the prophet." Jesus is not to be sought in this fashion, then, but with an earnest desire like that of Nicodemus, of whom it is written that he "came to Jesus in the night and said to him: 'Rabbi, we know that you have come as a teacher from God'" (In. 3:2). The point is,

Jesus opened to Nicodemus the mystery of faith because he had sought, not a sign of power, but a testimony to the truth.

23. As teacher, Jesus must be asked about what pertains to knowledge, to discipline, and to goodness; as the Psalm says (118: 66): "Teach me goodness, discipline, and knowledge," Knowledge, since it consists in the understanding of truth: discipline, since it is the avoidance of evil; and goodness, since it consists in the choice of good. The first looks to truth, the second to holiness, and the third to love. So Christ must be asked about what relates to the knowledge of truth, not with a desire to test, as the disciples of the Pharisees tested him (Mt. 22:16-21):

Master, we know that you are truthful and that you teach the way of God in truth, and that you do not care for any man, for you do not regard the person of man. Tell us, therefore, what do you think, Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or not? Since they asked the question with evil intentions, he replied, "Why do you test me, you hypocrites?" It was a good question, and he gave a true response: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

In the second place, he must be asked about what pertains to the sanctity of discipline, as that young man asked him in Mk. 10:17: "Master, what must I do to gain everlasting life?" Jesus answered that he should observe the commandments, and if he wanted to be perfect he should obey the counsels, by which is attained perfect discipline

of character so as to avoid what incites us to sin. And Jesus must be asked, finally, about what pertains to love of benevolence. Consider, for example, the doctor of the law in Mt. 22:36, who asked him, "Master, what is the greatest commandment of the law," and Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with your whole heart and mind and soul and strength," thus showing that the fullness of the law is love.

These are the three 24.things, then, that must be asked of Christ as of a teacher. toward which the entire law of Christ is oriented. It follows that all the teaching of his ministers ought to be directed toward these three things so that their office can be properly discharged under his own headship. The minister should. in teaching, look to the knowledge of the true faith as is clear from 1 Tim. 2:7: "I tell the truth," and from 2 Pt. 1:16: "For we were not following fictitious tales when we made known to you the power and the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. but we had been evewitnesses of his grandeur."

Christ's teaching ministers should also bear in mind discipline and holiness of soul. Paul says in 2 Tim. 1:11-12, "I have been appointed a preacher and an apostle; that is why I am suffering these things." And in Proverbs 19:11 we see that "the teaching of a man is known through patience." Just as it does not befit the stupid to impart wisdom, so it does not befit the impatient to teach patience, nor the undisciplined to teach dis-

cipline; for in the realm of morality actions speak louder than words.

26. Likewise, the teaching minister should look toward the benevolence of the love of God and neighbor. As we read in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes (12:11): "The words of the wise are like goads, like pegs fixed on high, which through the advice of teachers are given out from one Pastor." The "words," here, are words of divine love, which penetrate the depths of the heart; and they are said to be given "through the advice of teachers from one Pastor." Although love is praised and recommended by the words of many writers in both the Old and the New Testament, it is infused by the one and only Word, who is indeed the Pasture as well as the Pastor of all. All these words are from him. and all tend toward him, which is why they are said to be given in a sign identified as "the advice of teachers." Since all teachers of the Law of Christ should seek as their goal the bond of love, they ought also to agree in their thinking.

In James 3:1 we read, "Do not let many of you become teachers, brothers." It does not seem that they are prohibited by this injunction from sharing in the gift of knowledge. As Moses says in Numbers 11:29, "Why are you disturbed; would that all the people prophesy; would that the Lord would give his spirit to all the people," and in 1 Pt. 4:10 we see, similarly, "Each one of you who has received grace ought freely to give it." His point is therefore rather that they should not have

differing statements, at variance with one another, but instead, all say the same thing, as we find in 1 Cor. 1:10: "I beseech you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all say the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you, only that you may be perfectly united in one mind and one judgment."

This divergence of opinions arises, actually, from presumption; as we read in Proverbs 13:10, "Among the proud there are always controversies, and it ends in confusion"; and in 1 Tim. 6:3-5:

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree with the sound teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that doctrine which is according to Godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting on controversies and disputes of words. From these arise envies, quarrels, blasphemies, base suspicion, and the wrangling of men, corrupt of mind and bereft of truth.

28. There are, then, three obstacles to the perception of truth: presumption on the part of the senses, differences of opinion. and despair of finding the truth. It was to eliminate these obstacles that Jesus said: "One is your teacher. Christ." He says he is the teacher so we shall not be presumptuous about our knowledge. He says he is the one teacher lest in perceiving we might disagree in our opinions. And he says that he is your teacher because he, in his readiness to help us, especially wants to, knows how to, and is able to teach us by sending that Holy Spirit about whom John says (16:13): "When the Spirit of Truth comes he will teach you all things." This it is, that he wishes to offer to us.

## Soundings

in quiet and in silence i hear His voice

in pain and in want His hand is with mine

my soul sees His face when she is at home in prayer

Anthony Savasta, O.S.F.

### Honey and Locusts

Sister M. Thaddeus, O.S.F.

John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; he ate locusts and wild honey. He announced to the people, "The man who will come after me is much greater than I am; I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the holy Spirit!" (Mark 1:6-8)

THERE IS A TREND in religious community life today to return to the vital aspects of the life of prayer as is evidenced by the multitude of articles written about such happenings as houses of prayer and desert experiences. This trend, hopefully, is the answer in part to the frustrations of many religious who are caught in a whirlwind of activity because of the demands their apostolates place on them. They have tried admirably to measure up to these demands and have only

found themselves "wanting" in the "one thing necessary" for their lives as consecrated persons.

Finding myself in such a whirlwind, and likewise, finding myself "wanting," I decided to look into the experiences from which others are finding courage and strength to continue in their apostolates. After reading many articles, after experiencing a few weekends at a diocesan house of prayer, I decided to search the Gospels for a historical counter-

Sister Mary Thaddeus Thom, O.S.F., is Chairman of the English Department at Oswego Catholic High in Oswego, New York. A member of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis, Minor Conventuals (Syracuse, N.Y.), Sister Thaddeus has published poetry in several periodicals, including Poetry Parade and National Poetry Anthology.

"It was... his desert experience, his time of locusts and honey, which provided John with strength, knowledge, and conviction in his vocation as precursor."

part to these experiences. In my search I found such a counterpart in none other than the precursor of Christ, John the Baptist. I'm sure you will agree that his was a real desert experience followed by a vigorous active ministry. I would like to share some of my impressions as I perused the story of John and meditated on his vocation.

John appeared in the desert preaching a message which many of the people of his time seemed to comprehend, according to an account in Mark (1:5): "Everybody from the region of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins and he baptized them in the Iordan River."

Iohn at an earlier time as if to set the scene for his desert appearance. He tells us of the unusual circumstances surrounding John's birth, and most especially, emphasizes the silence into which Zachary is forced because desert period of his life, and, just may further assume that he, as

as Zachary's understanding and faith developed during this silent period so that he could burst forth in praise of God, so too, John's desert experience prepared him for his vocal mission. Later, when Mary visits Elizabeth, we are told that the child leapt in her womb. John's recognition and physical reaction while held in the shelter of the womb of his mother seems to indicate his anxiety to go forth and begin his vigorous preaching of the kingdom of God.

It is evident, however, that it was not these happenings but his desert experience, his time of locusts and honey, which provided him with strength, knowledge, and conviction in his vo-Luke, unlike Mark, introduces cation as precursor. His coarse clothing, his simple food, his solitude and prayer were all that he needed to set his vocation plans in order. We may assume that his communing with God was no different from ours; a conscious attempt to speak to of his lack of faith. This silence God which becomes at times a presents itself as a foreshadowing tedious task. He did, however, of the silence of John in the take time out to work at it. We

man, had the same needs and desires as we, but he sought the fulfilment of these in God. From this period of total giving he learned his mission so well that he did not hesitate at the appointed time, but he went forth to accomplish his task until God should call him again.

Can we, then, presume that John never had any doubts about his vocation? He seems to be very sure of himself when he states: "... among you stands one you do not know. He is coming after me" (John 1:26-27). But we are made aware of his lack of knowledge when he says, "I did not know who he would be, but I came baptizing with water in order to make him known to Israel" (John 1:31). Further, he continues: "I still human authority. did not know him, but God who said to me, "You will see the Spirit come down and stay on a man; he is the one who bap-1:33).

prevent him from continuing his mission to announce the messiah, whoever he might be. He followed the inspiration of the Spirit to deal with men and he allowed the Spirit to work freely through him. Many times this was a dangerous thing to do since even those who professed to know the Scriptures rejected him because of his tactics, his manner of dress,



his direct speech, and his lack of

The last time we hear of John sent me to baptize with water he has been imprisoned. At this time he sends his disciples to Jesus to ask, "Are you the one he said was going to come, or tizes with the Holy Spirit'" (John should we expect someone else?" (Luke 7:19). After Iesus John's doubts, then, did not lists the miracles that have taken place, he states, "How happy is he who has no doubts about me" (Luke 7:23). At this point Iesus commends John for all he has done and he seems to indicate that John's mission has come to an end. There is nothing left for John now but to die. Think of the privilege which was his: to spend many years in intimate union with God before his mission began; to step forth at the lives, and today's religious life appointed time to preach the coming of Christ; to baptize Christ; to send disciples to him; and, finally, to die for him.

We, too, have been given an early vocation—from the be-

we need to be effective in our Here is my feeble attempt:

has re-opened these experiences with God that John knew so well.

As I read about and meditated on John's life, I could not help There is a parallel in our lives. feeling a little envious of his present condition—his mission is accomplished!-but I must vet ginning of time; we, too, are search, hope, and plod along. His messengers announcing the good life, however, did increase my news of Christ; and we have an desire to search, my belief in edge on John the Baptist, be- my vocation, and my hope for a cause we know who Christ is, better life to come. I tried to The desert experience? Not formulate what a desert experionly can we have it; it is a ence might be, but words come necessity. John taught us what hard where the spirit is involved.

### A TIME OF LOCUSTS AND HONEY

In the vagueness of being A hollow groaning breathes Satisfaction from the un-named Which it has tasted. Drenched with a new honey, Which pleasantness seems to mock The fulness of desire, Life appears negatively new. Puny knowledge! which only estranges Here . . . from . . . There. Human attempts labeled prayer.



The Community Called Church. By Juan Luis Segundo, S.I. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973. Pp. xi-172. Cloth, \$6.95; paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Sister Marie Clement Edrich, S.F.P., regional director of the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor in Italy. Sister Marie Clement has spent the past nine months as a member of the Religious Leaders' Program at the University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind.

The result of the collaboration of the Peter Faber Center of Montevideo (Uruguay), this book is the practical outcome of seminars actually conducted at the Center. The format is based upon what was done: three or four day seminars providing five or six sessions of four hours each during which certain aspects of ecclesiology were presented in lecture, pertinent questions proposed, and then studied in smaller discussion groups. This last was recognized as a critical point: the confrontation of what was heard with real-life experiences.

Whether adopted for use in this way as it is designed for college and seminary courses or adult discussion groups, or whether used as thought provoking personal reading, this book presents a truly stimulating approach to the study of the Church. That it comes from Latin America, where there is an awareness of revolutionary needs on the

part of a modern people to which the Church must respond, is evident in the sense of urgency with which real-life situations are proposed. Enough theorizing and compromising!

There are only five chapters, but each conveys a kind of electrifying challenge to members of the Church to really live as Christians. There is a great emphasis on the need for the Church to be essentially and primarilv a sign. This sign function unceasingly calls for creative dialogue. inventive love, and real disinterestedness, which are qualities poles away from any minimum standards. There is insistence on what is acknowledged as a harsh and selective criticism of personal self-giving assumed as a real responsibility for membership in the Church.

The topics of the various chapters reflect the seriousness of the approach. "The Church, a Reality Particular and Universal" is followed by "The Essence of the Ecclesial Community." Then "The Function and Necessity of the Church," along with "Obligations of the Ecclesial Community" precede "Church-World Interdependence."

Very striking is the fact that the references are almost entirely limited to Sacred Scripture and the Vatican II conciliar documents. This method

of documentation serves to concentrate one's attention to the essentials. A disadvantage, however, is that for the most part any other references are to Spanish, French, or German

articles or books.

There are three appendices, one of which is made up of certain conciliar texts and could easily be considered superfluous, but at the same time proves convenient for references. Then there is a unique "Biblical Tapestry" that can well serve as an introduction to the reflections of the volume. And finally, there are "Springboard Questions" not based on the material presented but actually broadening the outline by presenting a confrontation between real-life experience and what is supposedly believed or known.

The first of a series called "A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity," of which succeeding volumes are to be Grace and the Human Condition, Our Idea of God, The Sacraments Today, and Evolution and Guilt, this seems to be a volume really oriented toward responsible and thought-full life in the Church today. Advantageously, it is available in both cloth and paper bindings.

Dedicated Poverty. By Philip F. Mulhern, O.P. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1973. Pp. xiv-246. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Gerald M. Dolan, O.F.M., Ph. D. (Theology, Louvain, 1967) Associate Professor of Theology at St. Bonaventure University and Christ the King Seminary, and Chairman of the Department of Theology at Christ the King Seminary.

The question of poverty has become a matter of deep concern during recent years, not only for men and women vowed to witness gospel values, but for all men of good will who seek to alleviate the condition of their fellows who are mired in poverty. In this concern the religious is faced with a particular difficulty—better, a schizophrenia. The opening words of the preface highlight this: "The attitude of the Church toward property and its use is enigmatic to say the least. She teaches detachment from the things of the world but is constantly involved in bettering the situation of the poor..." (p. y).

We can be grateful to Father Mulhern for successfully undertaking this historico-theological study of dedicated poverty, a study which is especially important for all who seek to live renewed life according to the evangelical counsels. The author seeks enlightenment for his subject where enlightenment can alone be found: in the revealed Word and the covenanted history of the Old and New Testaments. He investigates the phenomenon of poverty by following the historical indications of the Church's relation to property together with the evolution of dedicated, religious, or ascetic poverty.

Father Mulhern's work unfolds in six chapters. The first treats of the evolution to spiritual poverty in the Scriptures. He traces the growing consciousness of Old Testament dependence upon Yahweh; he follows this thread through the willfully embraced poverty of Oumran to the example and teaching of Jesus about wealth and poverty. Chapter Two follows the patristic testimonies of the first three centuries. Father Mulhern calls attention to the unique. but not normative, character of the Jerusalem Church, and traces development from the ancient Mother Church through Alexandria and the first beginnings of ascetic monasticism in Egypt and the Near East. The following Chapter treats of the new situation which developed in ecclesial life after imperial recognition of the Church. Now the Church is in position officially to own property, but from the beginning of this era there were movements to canonical poverty (Saint Augustine) and cenobitic monastic poverty (Saint Benedict). With it all there is the appearance in Europe of feudalism and the historic drama of monastic abuse and reform. There follows in Chapter Four an examination of the mendicant, apostolic poverty of the Friars established by Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Dominic. Much of this Chapter is devoted to the deviations of the Spirituals in the Franciscan Order and to the Mendicant Controversy at the University of Paris. The contributions of Saint Bonaventure and of Saint Thomas are highlighted in this extremely important development for religious life in the Western Church.

Of particular value is Chapter Five wherein attention is given to that insufficiently known era which extends from the Reformation through the Nineteenth Century. The Reformers reacted against religious life because of their antipathy to the distinction between gospel precept and counsel. Valuable insights can be gained from various citations of the Reformation writings which reflect the religious and intellectual climate of the times. The author describes the conditions of sixteenth-century monasticism, the Ignatian plan, and the beginnings of community poverty among some Reformed communities in Germany and England during the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

The final chapter is devoted to the contemporary dilemma. After citing the life-style of Charles Foucauld and the orientation of the community of Taizé, Father Mulhern brings forth the various aspects of our contemporary discussion. Central to this

is the renewed realization that the Church is to be the "Church of the Poor," and that religious, because of their insertion into this reality, need to rethink the relationship of goods and property to the "witness to the primacy of the direct commitment to God" (p. 195).

Each chapter of this book is important for the reader who seeks to trace the roots and development of evangelical poverty. The final two chapters, however, are more immediately pertinent to the task of coming to grips with contemporary demands of dedicated poverty. There is the question, among others, whether or not, in view of the ministries performed by many religious these days, there can in fact be any witness to evangelical poverty. Equally important is the difficulty, in view of the human bent to institutionalization, of realizing the challenge of Perfectae Caritatis (§) that new forms of witness to gospel poverty be found.

This book contains no recipe for a contemporary poor life. In view of historical developments the autho invites his reader to rethink this Christian reality. If, as Father Mulhern rightly states, "deliberate poverty is associated with an invitation, is part of an invitation; its living out is an answer; invitation and answer are equally related to grace" (p. 184), we are all called to think together how the Church, and religious-individually and in community within the Church—can best incarnate this value today. It is to be hoped that Dedicated Poverty will stimulate and foster this necessary conversation.

The Sensitivity Phenomenon. By Joseph Reidy, M.D. St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey Press, 1972. Pp. 134. Paper, \$1.95. Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Associate Editor of this Review and Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College.

If there are still some around who hope for salvation through sensitivity. Dr. Reidy's book will reveal such a hope as the illusion that it is. In this rather careful, if brief, description of the history, goals. methods, leadership, and results of encounter-type groups, their abuses. defects, and dangers are hung out for all to see. Not that there is anything sensationalistic about his treatment; on the contrary, gory details are at a minimum, and the concentration is on the dubious psychological or psychoanalytic theory underlying much practice of sensitivity. For example, the author deals with such questionable views as these: that feelings have an absolute value, that expression is necessarily healing, that bodily exercises can cure neurotic illness, that suffering can be removed from the life of mortals,

that truth is in the group.

Sensitivity practice, Dr. Reidy argues, is as good and as bad as its leaders, as the few studies of such groups show. And there is no scarcity of unqualified leaders—there are too many neurotic people seeking instantaneous wholeness that no week-end can give them. For the normal person, of course, there can be growth under properly trained leaders and in properly screened groups.

Though the book is excessively polemical and didactic, it is clear and interesting, and professionally done. Worhippers of Carl Rogers will be upset to find the master criticized.

Religious communities have been exploring the area of sensitivity for some time now. Those who have tried it have certainly seen that no gimmick can turn us around. Those who may put such exaggerated faith in twentieth-century techniques may perhaps be restrained, and saved some pain, by reading Dr. Reidy's book.

Consortium Press of Washington D.C. is actively seeking booklength manuscripts treating social, psychological, and historical aspects of religion and theology, in a popular and non-technical vein.

Consortium Press has published a considerable number of theological writings, including the famous "Fathers of the Church" Series, "Studies in Christian Antiquity," the "Cistercian Fathers" Series, and, recently, Thomas O'Brian Hanley's popular book, "The American Revolution and Religion."

Authors are invited to submit their manuscripts to:

Dr. Daniel F. McGrath, Publisher Consortium Press 821 Fifteenth Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005

#### **BOOKS RECEIVED**

- Ebeling, Gerhard, Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language. Trans. R. A. Wilson; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973. Pp. 221. Cloth, \$6.50.
- Greeley, Andrew, and Gregory Baum, eds., *The Persistence of Religion.*Concilium, new series, vol. I, n. 9. New York: Herder & Herder, 1973. Pp. 160. Paper, no price supplied.
- Habig, Marion A., O.F.M., ed., Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973. Pp. xx-1808. Cloth \$18.95.
- O'Grady, John F., Jesus, Lord and Christ: The Meaning of the New Testament Jesus. New York: Paulist Press, 1973. Pp. 152. Paper, \$3.95.
- Peil, William, *The Big Story* (a pictorial catechism for very young children). Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1973. Pp. 62. Paper, \$0.75.
- Rahner, Karl, S.J., The Priesthood. Trans. Edward Quinn. New York: Herder & Herder, 1973. Pp. vi-281. Cloth,\$8.95.
- Sheed, F. J., Christ in the Classroom. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1973. Pp. 96. Paper, \$1.45.
- Storey, William G., ed., Praise Him: A. Prayerbook for Today's Christian.

  Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1973. Pp. 223. Paper \$2.45.
- Taylor, Michael, J., S.J., ed., The Mystery of Suffering and Death. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1973. Pp. xi-203. Cloth, \$5.95.
- Talec, Pierre, Bread in the Desert: Prayers for Private and Public Worship. Trans. Edmond Bonin. New York: Newman Press, 1973. Pp. vi-216. Paper, \$3.95.