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Christ and the Cosmos

HE BIRTH OF ANY BABY involves enough mystery, no doubt, to keep inspiring artists, theologians, philosophers, and scientists for as long as babie continue to be born. But the birthday we celebrate this month envelop in its infinite breadth and depth the entire scope of reality itself: the God head as well as the cosmos.

In a remarkable synthesis of science, philosophy, and theology, Fathe Richard Pendergast (a Jesuit who holds degrees in all three fields) seek to elucidate the structure of the universe as God's creation in, through, and for Christ. His writing is very competent in a variety of ways: the style i engaging, genuine and traditional wisdom abounds in the book, and there is a real sense of proportion, with just enough material drawn from the various areas to furnish a balanced, satisfying whole.

The first two chapters form a sustained defense of holism against an form of reductionism in (1) the structure, and (2) the development of the universe (i.e., the "more" or whole cannot be explained totally in terms of the "less" or part). The third chapter, as the author candidly admits, is the least essential to the book's continuity; it extrapolates (mainly for the interes ed scientist, I would think) a digraph model from its scientific use in physic to a wider philosophical application. In the fourth chapter the development psychology of Piaget is dialectically played off against the scientific and philosophical ideas of Kuhn, Polanvi, and others with a view to a lat characterization of the universe in somewhat similar organic, development terms. (continued on page 41

Cosmos. By Richard J. Pendergast, S.J. New York: Fordham University Press, 19 Pp. xiii-207 with bibliography. Cloth, \$9.00.

Lancets on Bonaventure

MARIGWEN SCHUMACHER

R ECENT STUDIES on urban It has frequently been observed renewal, psychological and that the Gothic cathedral is world.

McLuhanesque investigations "scholasticism in stone"—i.e., have increased our awareness that the ribs, vaults, and flying that one writes and thinks in ac- buttresses which visibly support cordance with the environment the structure are parallel to the in which one lives and moves. detailed divisions and sub-divi-And one feature of that environ- sions of that "scholastic" mode of ment is architecture, which expression which we find in the therefore both shapes and is great Summas and in the preshaped by contemporary thought cepts of the Artes Praedicandi. patterns. We see, for example, And yet it is also agreed that the the logical thought of the Greeks impact felt by anyone—then realized in the vertical columns or now-on entering into a and horizontal cross-beams of Gothic cathedral is that of a temples sited so perfectly to the sensuous experience of vertical landscape. Our modern func- space that is almost dizzying in tional skyscrapers of steel and its transcendence. In this paper, glass, impersonally towering I should like to turn the usual above concrete sidewalks and analogy and, in so doing, conornamental shrubs, bespeak- sider the architectonic structure and betray-emphases in our of Bonaventure's homilies as ribs, vaults, and flying buttresses sup-Bonaventure, too, affected and porting and enclosing that same was affected by his milieu and transcendent surge. The formal the architectural thrust of his era expression is stone and structure -the nascent Gothic cathedral. for the Christ-message which he

Miss Marigwen Schumacher, a member of the classics department at the Emma Willard School, Troy, N. Y., and translator/editor of Bonaventure: Rooted in Faith (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), presented this paper at the 1974 Conference on Mediaeval Studies, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

preaches. The listener or reader, systematically explore the text. then as now, although subliminally aware of the surrounding edifice, is affected directly by the dynamic surge of his words. Thus the formal, detailed, "scholastic" structure makes possible—as in cathedral so in homily—an interior of mystic light, power, and beauty.

I have found, in my own experience with Bonaventure's Sermones, that this is, indeed, true. When I first started reading them, it was this remarkable spiritual clarity and beauty which had a powerful impact upon me. Only afterwards, as I became translator and commentator, did I analyze some of Bonaventure's homilies in accordance with the "rules" articulated in the Artes Praedicandi. These "Handbooks on Preaching" set forth the sections of a homily as (1) theme, (2) subtheme, (3) division, (4) confirmation, (5) distinctions, and Worringer's Form in Gothic.¹ (6) expansion(s). Bonaventure does structure his homilies in these patterns—with variations especially when he is preaching at the University where, obviously, such was the expected manner. But even so, I still find that I am conscious of these divisions and subdivisions and the techniques of expansions, etc., only when I deliberately stop and

Subliminally, I am sure, as Bonaventure moves from point to point, there is an awareness within me of transitions made and emphases shifted, but the total affect is more present, more absorbing as I am pulled into that sensuous experience of space, of light, of transcendent spiritual power.

TO BECOME more specific—and less personal—I propose to compare some of the architectural elements of the cathedral with their parallels (as I see them) in Bonaventure's homilies. My Bonaventure texts are my own translations from the Ouaracchi edition of his Opera Omnia. vol. IX: my quotations on architecture are mainly from the Metropolitan Museum of Art's publication, The Year 1200, from their magnificent exhibit there in 1970, and from Wilhelm

Since I am generalizing about the essence of a Gothic cathedral rather than considering those unique details and variations which make Chartres different from Rouen or Amiens or Notre Dame in Paris, it is equally necessary to abstract the "essence" of homily from a few limited examples rather than dwell on the many variation

which make each homily a different, unique experience. When one operates within a twentyminute time limit, abstractions and generalizations become mandatory!

The Gothic cathedral is said to be "a monument to clarity and reason... yet it is not a sterile exercise in logic . . . it is a visionary design."2 When one looks at a ground-plan or a vertical crosssection of the cathedral, the structural details of the building are clear—the stress and balance integral to the completion of the structure. But such a groundplan or cross-section stays flat and cold in comparison to the fully articulated reality of the building. So, too, an analysis of Bonaventure's homilies into theme, subtheme, divisions, and expansions reveals the structure—the stress and balance by which he builds; but this, too, is flat, cold, one-dimensional, in comparison with the fully articulated, warmly fleshed out totality of his preaching. In one of his Pentecost homilies Bonaventure has chosen his themetext from the Book of Lamentations, 1:13:

He has sent a fire from on high down into my bones and he has perfected me.3

Bonaventure divides this theme as follows:

There are three considerations to be drawn from this text . . .

- (1) the bountiful generosity of the Divine Giver—He has sent a fire from on high.
- (2) the Church as receiver of this gift-down into my bones.
- (3) the finished perfection—and he has perfected me.

One of the triumphs of the Gothic cathedral was the open statement of the support elements-e.g., the flying buttresses which, though functional and necessary, become an exciting part of the total aesthetic design of the building. In much the same way the explicit division of theme and the repeated sub-structuring into "first, second, third" fulfill the same open function of support but add to the clarity and beauty of articulation.

"The interior [of the cathedral] always has three stories in the classic proportion of A:B:A... the stories are stretched down the nave in bands "Repetition "gives the rhythm and articu-

¹St. Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, vol. IX (Quaracchi, 1901); Floren Deuchler, comp. & ed., The Year 1200: A Background Survey (New York: Graphic Society, 1970); Wilhelm Worringer, Form in Gothic, ed with introd. by Sir Herbert Read (New York: Schocken Books, rev. ed., 1964)

²Deuchler, p. 7.

³St. Bonaventure, Sermo IX (IX, 341).

lation." Thus, too, Bonaventure continues:

The text, then, is "He has sent a fire from on high." Consider that there is (1) a fire which the Lord sends "from on high"-fire of grace; (2) a fire which he allows to be enkindled from the depths —the fire of guilt; (3) a fire which he sends along a middle paththe fire of repentance.

"Composed of solid blocks," the cathedral "is open and vast... rooted to the earth by massive ponderous walls, it soars upward into aerial towers and spires ... the wall is a mere skin stretched between uprights and arches, on which rest the ribs of the vaults, the hips in turn supported on the outside by flying buttresses."5

Stretching the "mere skin" of Bonaventure's "fire" homily into a schematic analysis reveals the "solid blocks" following "ponderous walls"—"ribs and buttresses"-"arches and spires": spires":

[1]. First, then, we should reflect upon the fire of grace which the Lord "sends from on high." . . . Fire has (a) brightness in appearance, (b) warmness of effect, (c) quickness of movement . . . Thus grace (a) shines because of knowledge, (b) warms through love, (c) enkindles and moves as a result of prayerfulness Re-

member, then, that this fire of grace ... is (a) enkndled in the penitent, (b) nourished in travelers-in-Christ, (c) perfected in beholders-of-Christ.

[2]. Opposite to this fire of grace is the fire of guilt The devil enkindles it from the depths ... (a) its smokiness beclouds, (b) its ravenousness devours, (c) its violence molests . . . This fire should be quenched (a) by removing the wood (of favorable moments), (b) by pouring on water (of tears), (c) by blasts of wind (at the Last Judgment).

[3]. The third fire is the fire of repentance which in some way is "from on high" and in some way is "from the depths." This fire has two different aspects: (A) the fire of present problems—which should be endured because it (a) scrubs us clean, (b) proves us as serviceable, (c) toughens us; (B) the fire of eternal condemnationwhich should be dreaded and prevented because it is (a)unquenchable, (b) unbearable, (c) unavoidable.

All this is, indeed, a "harsh activity of tremendous mechanical expression directing a thousand energies towards the same object,"6 and these repeated divisions and sub-divisions, each having three sections which balance and counterbalance one another, correspond to that "system of buttresses leaping freely in the air over the side

aisles... to a quite outspoken revelation of the static individual forces constituting the structure of the entire building."7Especially does this become apparent when these various sub-sections are seen in their consistency of verbal metaphor and apposite vignette of smoke and wind, logs and kindling, forge and kiln, which further support but also become arches and aerial towers of flickering flames of fire breaking through the massiveness of the formal structure.

For example, in explaining why the "fire of present problems" should be endured, Bonaventure gives, as reason (c), "because it toughens us" and continues:

Just as actual fire in the kiln toughens the earthenware vessels, but does not destroy them, so, too, the fire of problems toughens spiritual vessels-as in Isaiah 43:2: "Should you walk through fire, you will not be scorched and the flames will not burn you, for I am Yahweh, your God."... Those vessels which lack this divine encouragement are not "fired" (in the kiln) but broken because of their impatience-because they do not know how to endure that fire.

mense vertical uplift opened by tionship in all things. the spire(s) creates that sensuous THE OTHER major emphasis,

"dizzying." So, too, Bonaventure moves us inside the formal scholastic structure and in his expansions mystically offers a similar experience of vertical transcendence. "The whole building [homily] stretches itself upward in the glad consciousness of being freed from all weight of material . . . the vaulting loses itself in dizzy altitudes . . . the movement of thrust from both sides is gathered into unity by a keystone at the crown of the vault."8 The "keystone" which "crowns," towards which all energies are directed and from which all transcendence originates is, of course, for Bonaventure and for each Christian, the Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit-"and these three are one" (1 In. 5:7). In his long homily De Trinitate,9 which succinctly teaches the same doctrinal insights as his series of Disputed Questions on the Holy Trinity expounded in Paris in 1253, Bonaventure with repeated triplets of attribute and subdivision reinforces directly and subliminally and "dizzingly" the threeness of Trinity as crown and keystone. And everywhere else in his preaching and lectures, we find the same, constant Inside the cathedral, the im- vision of Father-Son-Spirit rela-

experience of space which is so when one enters a Gothic cathe-

⁴Deuchler, pp. 7-9.

⁵Ibid.

Worringer, p. 164.

Ibid., p. 163.

⁸Ibid., p. 157.

⁹St. Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, IX, 351.

dral, is the long horizontal approach emphasizing the High Altar as of central importance. Symbolically, it is that High Altar -that Table of the Last Supper -that is the tangible witness to the intangible mystery of Eucharist for which it exists and at which we are fed. This "horizontal pull towards the altar" in Bonaventure is his constant Christocentric focus. Possibly one of his greatest and best known homilies is the "Christus unus Omnium Magister,"10 but equally central is his metaphorimagery of Bread of Eucharist and Christ Jesus as "Tree of Life" (cf. IX, 56). In one homily, Bonaventure bursts forth into prayer:

O God! with what great eagerness should we pursue Jesus, the one and only salvation of mankind. the totality of good for Christians, the abounding joy of the blessed! In him wholly dwells that fullness of God-forming delight in which the spirit, immersed and absorbed, finds all ardent longings perfectly satisfied. Amen!

with Thus horizontal meets vertical as spire opens above altar.

of the wall, softened and unified nourishing strength, that same

the faceted surfaces of the architecture."11 Not only did these windows open up the heavy. massive walls and allow light to splash across and through the interior in myriad colors and everchanging patterns, injecting a life-giving quality to the atmosphere, but the windows themselves, in their Scriptural scenes, depict the basic tenets of the Faith in the familiar scenes of Annunciation, Nativity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection— as well as incidents well known from the experiences of the saints: e.g., the road to Damascus. the Tree of Jesse, the Patriarchs and the Apostles. In the intertwining motifs of leaf and vine. flower and fruit, which surround and connect these scriptural scenes, and in the symbols of dove, key, heart, book, and tower were expressed both the visible world and, implicitly, that invisible reality which such representations projected.

Is there parallel for this in Bonaventure's homilies? I find a similar effect in his constant reference to Scripture—both Old and New Testament writersand to Augustine, Gregory and "The shimmering mosaic of others to illustrate his statements colored light filtering through the and underscore his teaching. large glazed windows placed on These provide that same "opentwo and sometimes three levels ing," that same life-giving and

visual witness and familiar storydetail which combines with the visual expression in those stained glass windows to effect by scene and sacred Word the merged emotional-intellectual response which is so totally Franciscan because so totally in Christ. And there is, in Bonaventure's use of visual vocabulary to express doctrinal exhortations—e.g., pullulatio, flores sculpti, flores picti to describe ways in which "we ought to flower" in our Christ-life —there is that same intertwining of motifs from the tangible world to present the intangible reality of God's revealing of himself in everyday small miracles of leaf. petal, dewdrop, snowflake, sunrise. Who is so insensitive as not to be touched and blessed in response to Beauty so freely given? How can these not be silent screaming witness to Trinity? How can we not see crucifixion followed by resurrection as darkness is transformed into radiant dawn and into brilliant midday? As sunlight streamed through stained glass, so Scripture text, phrase, and vignette distill Christ-qualities from ordinary experiences and lead upwards in joy and trust: each homily is an itinerarium mentis in Deum.

spiritual and incomprehensible We can only comprehend it ... when we turn ex-

perience of space into an experience of the senses Anyone entering a Gothic cathedral encounters... a mystical intoxication of the senses which is not of this world."12 The same may be said of one who enters into the experience of interior space in the homilies of Bonaventure.

IN CONSIDERING the architectonic structure of Bonaventure's homilies and their relationship to the contemporary development of the Gothic cathedral, it is important to examine Bonaventure's use of vocabulary and vignettes from what might be called the "building trade" of his day. It needs no stretch of the imagination to realize that in the thirteenth century, in Paris or in country town or elsewhere in Europe, any congregation would include those master-builders, masons, apprentices, craftsmen, and their families, who toiled for years to build the great cathedrals. When Bonaventure is preaching in one of these beautiful edifices, he-and they-are surrounded by that careful work, those lofty walls laced with vaults and arches, broken with windows ablaze with colors splashing across the interior. Statues, care-"Space is something in itself sfully carved and brightly painted, tendrils of stone leaves and flowers articulating corners and pointed arches, evoked response.

¹⁰Ibid., vol. V (Quaracchi, 1891), pp. 567-74.

¹¹Deuchler, p. 67.

As they entered the cathedral through the great portals carved with the whole panorama of salvation-history in ordered rows and symbolic stance, they knew—they saw—they learned they felt.

Can we doubt, then, that Bonaventure deliberately evoked their understanding response through his careful choice of metaphor and vignette from the vocabulary of sculptor and painter? A few small examples will have to suffice:

> There is no statue so beautiful that, if it is thrown down into mud, it does not lose its color and its beauty; so it is with our soul which is besmeared through filthy feelings.

Just as you yourselves see that the material sun illuminates the whole world in a material way, so, too, that true Sun of Justice illuminates in a spiritual way through grace the heart of man and woman whenever He enters within. Furthermore, the light of the sun—whenever that sun, or rather its light, enters through a beautiful glass that is well arranged and colored, is so beautiful that it is extraordinary. But whenever it comes through a window not so shining nor so well arranged, it is not so brilliant ... even though the light is as clear in itself coming through a dirty as through a clear window. So it is with the Word of God

It does not happen that any material statue (imago) has the same person as sculptor and painter and illuminator because the stone-cutter cuts the stone, the painter tints it, and the sun illuminates. Therefore whoever ascribes a material statue (imago) to one master is scorning the others. But the imago of our soul has only one Maker . . . who is the Lord because he sculpted it in creation, painted it in his passion, and will illuminate it in eternal reward.13

In one of his Epiphany homilies, Bonaventure expands upon Matthew 2:11 ("Entering the building..."). In part he equates the building where the Lord is found sacramentally with the building that is the Church and speaks of the elements necessary for its construction as comprising (1) foundation (=Christ), (2) building (=Mystical Body), (3) supports (=Sacraments), and (4) entrance (=Gospels).¹⁴

Sometimes the text which has come down to us of a homily of Bonaventure's seems rather cryptic. We must, of course, always remember that the texts we have are reportings or notes recorded by his secretary or by the official scribes at the University. Occasionally, however, we find illumination and understanding by looking around at the physical setting in which the homily was preached. This be- death of Christ Jesus. This is then comes especially significant as we become more aware of Bonaventure's visual emphasis in his preaching—his use of the familiar experiences of his congregations (6) straightforward openness, (7) —their tools, their trades, their compassionate kindness, triumphs.

As I was gathering materials for this paper, I happened upon a homily which is recorded as being given "in capitulo Parisiensi." It was preached on the 22nd Sunday after Pentecost on the text from Matthew 22:20 ("Cuius est imago haec et superscriptio?"). Bonaventure divides the theme thus: "With these words the Lord noted two facts concerning human nature: (1) the search to preserve the dignity of that nature, and (2) the endeavor to preserve the dignity of grace. Discussing the first fact under the title of imago, and the second under that of superscriptio, Bonaventure develops the idea of "imago Dei" in each of us and ways in which this imago can be enhanced. He also warns against the "imago Diaboli" and its destructive effect in us. Turning then to consider the "superscriptio" for each "imago," he lists (at least the schema-text preserves it only as a list; Bonaventure may or may not have amplified it in his preaching) that which accompanies one having the "imago Dei" as "firm teaching seen in frequent use" in conforming to the life and

partitioned into (1) humble dwelling place, (2) keen remorse, (3) blameless chastity, (4) total poverty, (5) encompassing love, zealous justice, (9) steadfast perseverance, (10) earnestness in prayer, (11) watchfulness in meditation, and (12) exuberance in reioicing.

The "superscriptio" of one who has the "imago Diaboli" is described as "passionate wantonness seen in frequent use" subdivided into (1) disdain, (2) amusement, (3) extravagance. (4) affluence, (5) indifference, (6) treachery, (7) impudence, (8) evil inclinations, (9) fickleness, (10) roaming, (11) sloathfulness, (12) wretchedness. Each list is followed by a quotation from the Book of Revelation: the first refers to those who have the "sign of the Living God" and are saved; and the second, to those who have been branded with the sign of the devil and thus condemned.

Obviously these are somewhat traditional listings of attributes of the good and the bad-the very basis of Christian moral teaching. Obviously, too, in the troubled times of the mid-thirteenth century, with heresy rife and judgment considered imminent. the intent of Bonaventure's molding of "imago=superscrip-

¹³St. Bonaventure, Opera Omnia, IX, 570a, 519a, 447a.

¹⁴Ibid., IX, 154a.

tio" is clearly directed towards immediate the encouraging choice and pursuit of salvation by following the precepts through which it is guaranteed—i.e., patterning one's life upon the life and death of Christ Iesus. But looking further, with considerable excitement we find the visual expansion of these abrupt lists in the series of vignettes of the then fully articulated cycle of Virtues and Vices which we find carved—at eye-level—on the central portal of Notre Dame de Paris! The central portal, completed around 1210 A.D., presents the scene of the Last Judgment in impressive scope and considerable vivid detail. Although we cannot date this particular homily, whether it belongs to those early years when Bonaventure was a Franciscan Magister in Paris or to a later vear when, even as Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, he continued to reside and preach in Paris whenever his duties permitted it, certainly that Last Judgment scene of the central portal of Notre Dame would be a familiar visual experience for the friars to whom he preached.

I find it fascinating to compare Bonaventure's lists with those portrayed on the doorway. They

are placed, by the way, in serried bands "supporting" the Apostles who line each side of the doorway. Here the Virtues, feminine figures calmly seated in square sections. with appropriate symbols, and arranged in a decisive movement towards the doors, are Humility, Prudence, Chastity, Love, Hope, Faith; Fortitude, Patience, Kindness, Peacefulness, Obedience, and Endurance. The corresponding twelve Vices are portrayed in founded sections with turbulent vignettes representing Pride. Extravagance, Foolishness, Greediness, Hopelessness, Idol-

worship; Laziness, Anger, Spite,

Dissension.

Fickleness.15

Obstinacy,

The lists are much alike in stone and word. I find the one explains the other: for example, I wondered-in light of our twentieth-century mobility as a life-style-what was so "wrong" about "vagatio" (roaming), which Bonaventure ascribes to the "superscriptio diaboli." One of the vignettes of vices represents a monk running away from his monastery. Another interesting parallel-in-reverse is in the emotional movement of word and stone. On the portals, the virtues are quiet and serene; the vices, turbulent and exciting. The

15A. Katzenellenbogen, Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art from Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century, trans. Alan J. P. Crick (New York: W.W. Norton Book Co., rev. ed., 1964), pp. 75-76, illus. 72a, b; 73 a, b.

virtues are ideal; the vices, very "real." In Bonaventure's listings. the virtues have a melody of phrase, a series of noun-genitive combinations which are rhythmically balanced and culminate in a triad which defies translation: instantia in orando, vigilia in meditando, excedentia in exsultando. Certainly this is "where the action is"! On the other hand, the vices are listed in a blunt, harsh, one-word series, the very sound of which, uttered in a disagreeable tone, could chill Lancets on Bonaventure.

the listening ear and increase the affect of rejection. Granted I am speculating on somewhat slippery ground here; but it seems to me very like Bonaventure to do this sort of thing quite deliberately to reinforce his words and reinforce the Christian interpretation from the visual world of artistic expression.

And so, in various ways. through structure and Scripture, through word and stone, through understanding and experience:

The Staff of the Franciscan Institute

joins the Editors in wishing you

A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS

and every grace and blessing for

A HAPPY AND FRUITFUL NEW YEAR

The Franciscan, Prayer, and Secularity—III

HOWARD REDDY, O.F.M.

AST MONTH the presentation of Bishop Robinson's ideas concluded with a summary of his "secular mysticism." I would like now to reflect a little on prayer in the life of Saint Francis and the early Franciscan school. Aware that parallels must not be forced where none exist, it appears evident to me that Saint Francis and Bishop Robinson have something important in common in their vision of the human situation and of man's prayer response before God.

did not have any difficulty with the traditional theistic projection of God. He would have been mann observes. surprised to learn that some Godfearing and Christian men should find it necessary to abandon talk of God as "a" being, "a" person, and to do so on the grounds that

such talk places God on the periphery of man's experience and concerns. For it was Francis' very intense experience that God was indeed present in and through and beyond all of the created reality of this world in which Francis was immersed. Nothing more clearly illustrates this implicit "panentheism" in Francis' view of created reality than his superb prayer, the Canticle of Brother Sun. What is most significant about this prayer is that although God is addressed as a person he is encountered Francis of Assisi obviously in and through and under, and not apart from the world of creatures. 1 As Father Placid Her-

> For a proper understanding of the poem it should be kept in mind that the praise is not directed to the creatures nor is the praise directed to almighty God for the

¹Robinson's emphasis on this point was developed in the opening pages of Part II in the present study (in the November issue of THE CORD; see John A. T. Robinson, Exploration into God (London: SCM Press, 1967), pp. 61 and 116.

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creatures, that is, for giving them to us. The prepositions cun and per are used in the meaning of instrumentality, that is, by means of or through. In his Essays in Criticism Matthew Arnold pointed this out in 1875.... The German translation of the poem. in the Esser-Hardick edition, uses durch2

In his biography of Saint Francis, Bonaventure writes of him that he

sought occasion to love God in everything. He delighted in all the works of God's hands and from the vision of joy on earth his mind soared aloft to the life-giving source and cause of all.3

This profound awareness of God's immanent presence in all his creatures was one of the most striking characteristics of Francis' spiritual personality and caused him to feel personally related to God in and through every creature, good and bad. He seriously meant to express this personal relationship when he used the titles "Brother" and "Sister" of every animal and element, and human person.

To call Francis' projection of God in all his creatures an im-

plicit panentheism may be to use the word more loosely than Bishop Robinson would like. There is no question that Francis also directly addressed God in prayer as a person. He called him "My Lord," which in his day was a very meaningful term. Yet there is abundant evidence that Francis was well aware that God was also totally other, totally transcendent. God could not be defined simply as "a" being who exists 'over against" or "apart from" his creation. God was, indeed, ultimately ineffable. This is evident from several descriptions of Francis at prayer which relate that he would spend long periods of time saying nothing but the words "my God and my all,"4 or the sentence "Who are vou, my sweet Lord and God, and who am I, your wretched worm of a servant!" The selfdepreciating reference to the worm may sound unpleasant to the secular ear, but it must be understood in context as a reference to Psalm 22:7, which uses the word to describe the sufferings of the virtuous man as a type of the Messiah to come.5 The point here is that these

²Saint Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), p. 130n. Henceforth, Omnibus.

³*Ibid.*, p. 698.

⁴Ibid., p. 1303.

⁵Anselm Romb, Franciscan Charism in the Church (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1969), p. 81.

prayers of Francis are obviously rhetorical and open-ended. He is placing himself in an I-Thou relationship with a God who is unspeakable.

I have noticed another element in the prayer of Saint Francis that provokes serious reflection. I have not been able to find any examples in the written or reported prayers of Francis that present him dialoging with God as with one who hears and answers prayers. This may sound startling and may be challenged. A fuller study of the matter than I have been able to do may be called for. Nevertheless, my investigation of early Franciscana and especially of Francis' own writings reveals that his address to God was overwhelmingly an address of praise and thanksgiving which did not imply or demand any specific response from God to any specific statement of his own.6 I am not saying that Francis rejected the con-

cept of petitionary prayer. He would certainly remember and accept literally the words of Jesus, "Ask and you shall receive." And although Francis' dramatic spirit of poverty prompted an attitude of abandon toward the kind of things people usually ask their theistic God to do for them in prayer, nevertheless his constant prayer of praise and thanksgiving reveals his fundamental conviction that God had done, was doing, and would continue to do all that really mattered to him in and through the created processes of this world.

The question of poverty must come up sooner or later in any discussion of Francis of Assisi, and it will come up sooner when one is trying to situate the "Poverello," the Little Poor Man, in the secular city. Bishop Robinson perceives that purgation, mortification, renunciation, and "forgetting all outward things" are not attractive concepts in the

The most typical of Saint Francis' prayer formulations is found in 1R 23 (Omnibus, p. 50). The only other authentic written prayers I have found include (1) the brief prayer "We adore you . . ." (Testament, ibid., p. 67; (2) The conclusion of his Letter to a General Chapter, ibid., p. 108; (3) the Praises of God, ibid., p. 125; (4) the famous Canticle of Brother Sun, ibid., p. 130; (5) In Praise of Virtue, ibid., p. 132; (6) his Salutation to the Blessed Virgin, ibid., p. 135; and several arrangements of Hours of the Divine Office, ibid., pp. 137-55, which are conflations of passages from the Scriptures. The famous "Prayer of Saint Francis" which begins: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace" was, as is well known, not composed by Saint Francis. It seems to me to take its inspiration from the Saint's Twenty-Seventh Admonition, where he merely declares, "where there is love and wisdom, there is neither fear nor ignorance, where there is patience and humility, there is neither anger nor annoyance," etc. (ibid., p. 86).

secular world. One avenue of "why." Pursued for themselves discussion would be to show these things are of no value, that the world itself has its own and pursued for a Manichean kind of purgation and renuncia- world-denying philosophy they tion when it becomes preoc- are positively despicable. In cupied with some special con- Francis' case, as Chesterton has cern whether it be the athlete for declared, it was because he was the trophy, the business man in love. "The first fact to realize for the profit, the scientist for the about Saint Francis is . . . that he breakthrough, the officer for the promotion; yes, even, the gang- ism a Troubador. He was a lover. ster for the booty and the hippie for freedom and "luv." They will enjoy indolence and luxury only to the extent that they are willing to settle for limited goals.

In his meditation on Saint Francis, G. K. Chesterton chides men like Renan and Matthew Arnold for being fascinated by Francis' gaiety, romantic imagination, spiritual courtesy and camaraderie while at the same time being perplexed and repelled by his asceticism and poverty. It is, he declares, because they do not understand that Francis' religion was not a philosophy:

As Saint Francis did not love humanity but men, so he did not love Christianity but Christ. Say, if you think so, that he was a lunatic loving an imaginary person. but an imaginary person, not an idea.7

The question of poverty and asceticism is not "whether," but was to the last agonies of ascetic-He was a lover of God and he was really and truly a lover of men."8 It was because Francis loved Jesus of Nazareth that he embraced with an incredible literalness the poverty Jesus described in his gospel. It is important to notice the chronology of Francis' decision to lead an ascetical life as he tells it in his own words.

This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure. But then God himself led me into their company and I had pity on them. When I had once become acquainted with them what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.9

Thus it was that love came first: love for God and for Christ,

⁷G. K. Chesterton, Saint Francis of Assisi (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Image Books, 1954), p. 21.

⁸Ibid., p. 20.

⁹From the Testament of Saint Francis (Omnibus, p. 67).



·lepers. Only because of this love world.

Francis, "leaving the world" active religious, has been in large was not quite the same thing as part a serious misrepresentation to say something about this suspicion distinction between asceticism prayer.11 In the first place, the and fleeing the world. Un- distinction between active and

expressed in and through love for longer particularly meaningful.

I have found credible scholardid Francis decide to leave the ly opinion that the reason for this disaffection for contemplative It must be understood that for prayer, especially on the part of Bishop Robinson's "forsaking all of the nature of contemplative outward things." It is necessary prayer 10 and a general attitude of toward doubtedly the most serious in- passive contemplation was so dictment of traditional spirituali- overdrawn that religious generalty is that it created a false dicho- ly had the impression that tomy between the sacred and the ordinary souls-and they were profane, between being religious expected to consider themselves and being secular. The life style as ordinary souls—could not exof contemplatives in recent pect to pass beyond the illuminagenerations has seemed to many tive stage of holiness which was to be completely irrelevant to thought of as the second of the secular life. The first wave of three plateaus on the various secular enthusiasm to strike the mountains that particular orders serious Christian in our day ap- climbed in the spiritual life. Only peared likely to sweep away all those who were neurotic or given former contemplative prayer to inordinate pride seriously structures. It did not seem pos- talked about the unitive way. sible to be involved in the world passive contemplation and the and to be caught up in traditional mystical life. As a result many contemplative practices. And religious remained tied to even if it were possible, the lat- mechanical methods of mental ter appeared to many to be no prayer and purgative ascetical

practices which took all the fun out of life but which never brought them into any satisfying experience of loving union with God.¹² Moreover, preoccupation with personal prayer gymnastics took up so much time and energy that contemplative prayer seemed incompatible with the active apostolate.

With regard to mysticism, undoubtedly the deep-seated and prolonged suspicion of mysticism in Catholic religious life resulted from the famous Fenelon-Bossuet dispute that raged in the latter days of the seventeenth century and resulted in papal condemnation of twenty-three of Fenelon's supposed teachings regarding mysticism.¹³ It is now clear that what was being condemned were exaggerated concepts of quietism, total passivity in spiritual endeavor. a certain complete self-annihilation in which one was absorbed

altogether into God (pantheism), and the expectation that one can attain the Beatific Vision in this

It is likely that Bossuet and the Pope read more into Fenelon's writings than the author intended to put there, but mysticism became discredited and remained so, theoretically, until Dom Vital Lehody and Father Poulain, S.J., began correctly to describe a theology of mysticism in the early part of this century.

Still, on the practical level, mysticism continued to be viewed suspiciously by both Catholics and Protestants.15 When religious institutes and the secular city met head-on a few years ago it seemed to many an ideal time to eject the contemplative and mystical baggage of religious life which seemed so frustrating and so remote. But the first wave of secularity has passed, and in its

¹²Ibid. See also John Dalrymple, "The New Theology and the Life of Prayer," New Blackfriars 46 (July, 1965), p. 576, where Dalrymple writes, "Too often personal prayer stopped short at this stage and it was not encouraged to go further. If it did, a tremendous fuss was made, signs were called for, much discrimination and discernment of spirits was required and in general an atmosphere of exception was created."

¹³Wroblewski, pp. 26-30.

¹⁴E. Allison Peers, Spanish Mysticism (London: Methuen & Co., 1924). p. 43.

¹⁸ Speaking within a strong Protestant "faith alone" context, Emil Brunner insists that there is a fundamental opposition between mysticism and Christian faith. The former strives to experience inwardly what should be encountered in faith. See Emil Brunner, The Mediator (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1947). pp. 109ff.

¹⁰Joseph J. Sikora, S.J., "Modes of Prayer," Review for Religious 26 (1967), 884-85.

¹¹Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., Bonaventurian Theology of Prayer (Pulaski, Wis.: Franciscan Publishers, 1967), p. 32.

Bishop Robinson talking about peace between warring factions prophetic mysticism.16

understanding of the classic con- the Sultan of Egypt armed with templatives and mystics will nothing but love and concern.18 reveal that they were in fact quite Then there is his guileless letconcerned and involved in the after addressed "to all magistrates fairs of men and events. It ap- and consuls, to all judges and pears to be more a question of governors all over the world" language and emphasis when in which he reminds these they talk about abandoning all authorities "not to forget God or outward things to encounter God swerve from his commandmore dramatically within the ments because of the anxieties depths of their own spirit. There and cares of this world which is a need for a balance which you have to shoulder," and then the secular mystic may just as he adds that they should put easily upset in his emphasis on away all worry and anxiety, encounter with the "Thou" in receive Holy Communion, and possible exclusion of encounter the people that they should within the depths of his own praise and thank God.10 being.

was himself personally involved cupied with the ministry, many in the affairs of men does not would take jobs as farm workneed extensive arguing. Al- ers and the like. In the Rule of though he spent long periods of 1223, Francis exhorted "the friars time in seclusion and prayer, he to whom God has given the grace returned again and again to of working [to] work in a spirit preach the gospel, even setting of faith and devotion and avoid out a few months before his death idleness which is the enemy of for one final missionary en- the soul, without however exdeavor which he had to abandon tinguishing the spirit of prayer because he was hopelessly ill.17 and devotion to which every

wake one can find many like On one occasion he arranged of a city. On another he set out I am persuaded that a right on his personal crusade against other persons and things, to a have a herald announce to all

In the early days, before the That Saint Francis of Assisi friars became exclusively preoc-

temporal consideration must be in virtue of the action itself. It templative prayer, on the one God.23 This well describes, I hand, and genuine involvement believe, the kind of contemplain the world about him, on the tion Bishop Robinson is thinking other.

Bonaventure, who was the first theology of prayer as developed Franciscan to theologize about in the Franciscan school; but prayer, did not write about the several statements can be made purely human aspects of life— that seem relevant to this discusabout responsibility to society sion. First, following Saint Bonaand to the world, nor about the venture, Franciscan theologians events of his time. "The fact have always taught that a life is that he was an active, busy of contemplative prayer is posman involved in the life of the sible to all who sincerely desire Order, of the University, of the it. It is not an extravagant grace Church, and of ecumenism."21 E. given only to a few chosen souls. Allison Peers very strongly af- Saint Bonaventure does not in firms that before the decline and fact make any distinction bedecay of mysticism in the seven- tween active and passive conteenth century, the Spanish templation, but he does distinmystics had much to do with guish between discursive medisocial, political, and religious re-tation, affective prayer, and conform.22 The early Jesuits in-templation.24 David of Augsburg. vented and precisely defined the who wrote at the same time but term "contemplation in action" independently of Saint Bonaas not merely contemplation that venture, is in agreement that is sustained during action, nor contemplation is the normal encouraged between actions, but fruit of meditation.25 Even Saint

subordinate."20 It is clear from all is a way of knowing and loving of these reflections that Francis finite realities which are enof Assisi saw no conflict between countered as sacraments of the a life of asceticism and con- presence, truth, and goodness of about.

It would be impossible at this It must be admitted that Saint point to present an adequate something that results precisely Peter of Alcantara, writing later

¹⁶For a description of recent popular interest in mysticism, see "The Ouest for a Spiritual Survival," in Life 67 (1/9/70), pp. 16ff.

¹⁷John Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order (Oxford: Clarendo Press, 1968), p. 75.

¹⁸Johannes Jorgensen, Saint Francis of Assisi (Garden City: Doubleda Image Books, 1955), pp. 171-74.

¹⁹Letter to the Rulers of the People, Omnibus, pp. 115-16.

²⁰The Rule of 1223, *ibid.*, p. 61.

²¹Wroblewski, p. 10.

²²Peers, p. 7.

²³Sikora, pp. 901ff.

²⁴Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., "Saint Bonaventure," New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 2, pp. 662-63.

²⁵James Heerinch, "Theologia Mystica in Scriptis Fratris David ab

on, although he used the terms "active" and "passive" contemplation, intended by the latter only those extraordinary phenomena that are the gift of God.²⁶ He saw nothing extravagant in the ordinary person's aiming at contemplative prayer.

Secondly, while Franciscan theologians use the terms "purgative, illuminative, and unitive" ways, they do not think of these as chronological stages as one advances in holiness. These are three aspects of the spiritual life which are present together in varying intensities throughout the whole of one's life. In each of these ways there will be some attention given to discursive meditation, affective prayer and contemplation. In fact, we cannot, in the writings of Saint Bonaventure, find a comprehensive definition of contemplation, chiefly because he describes contemplation variously as it is found in each of the three ways. It is not reserved primarily for the third stage.²⁷

Finally, in the Franciscan tradition of prayer, prayer other than the divine office has been largely unstructured and without method. The first codified laws of the Order, in 1260, make no mention whatever of mental prayer as a religious exercise, and Saint Bonaventure's Rule for Novices suggests that novices were to choose their own time and place for prayer. All the evidence shows that fixed time for mental prayer was unknown in the early days of the Order.²⁸

Neither Saint Bonaventure nor David of Augsburg gives a precise method of prayer. They do of course describe the processes in volved in prayer experiences and Father Devas is probably right when he says that method in the classical sense is contained here implicitly.29 Saint Peter of Alcantara presents the most detailed method of mental prayer in the Franciscan school, and even his method is not, in fact, very structured. It consists of six acts: the preparation, a reading if necessary, reflection and three affective responses. But he considers his method as applicable primarily for beginners, and even in their case not always strictly to be adhered to.30

The early Franciscan authors, we may conclude, thought of prayer as spontaneous, relaxed, and affective. In prayer each person can and should find his own level of encounter with human. Nevertheless, ultimately God. Methods and programs Francis' words reduced themought not to get in the way of selves to "my God and my all." this joyful experience.

the prayer life of Saint Francis age so removed from our ecuand on the teachings of the menical spirit that the sword Franciscan school are summed could be considered an apup, I believe that several im- propriate way to deal with the portant parallels with Bishop "problem" of pluralism!), and Robinson's notions on prayer can even robbers.³¹ It was this prereadily be perceived. First of all, occupation with love that led to it is clear that Saint Francis en- his personal poverty and material countered God in and through abandon. In this regard, Bishop and beyond creation. He drama- Robinson ought to know that tically perceived God within toward the end of his life Francis every creature and met God with- confessed that he had perhaps in every created process. He did been too hard on his body. not call upon God as if God were "Brother Ass."32 His Rule is a "God of the gaps," a "Deus notably more relaxed in the matex machina." He did not feel ter of prescribed penances than the need to make requests of God the usual monastic rules of his who was already so munificent day, and it is a fact that he took in his creation and providence. a strong stand against the min-His prayer was almost exclusive- isters of the Order who wanted

thanksgiving. But Francis knew too that God is beyond creation and that he is ineffable. God must be encountered in human words and actions not because these are adequate but because we are

Moved by love, Francis em-WHEN ALL OF OUR reflections on braced all men: Moslems (in an ly a prayer of praise and love and to introduce stricter obser-

Augusta," Antonianum (1933), p. 191. See also Dominic Devas, O.F.M., ed. Spiritual Life and Prayer by David of Augsburg (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1937), vol. 1, p. XII.

²⁸Dominic Devas, O.F.M., ed., A Treatise on Prayer by Peter of All cantara (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1949), p. x.

²⁷Brady, loc cit.

²⁸ Dominic Devas, O.F.M., "The Franciscans and Mental Prayer," Monta 157 (March, 1931), p. 215.

 $^{^{29}}Ibid.$

³⁰Peter of Alcantara, A Treatise on Prayer (Westminster: Newman, 1949), p. 85.

³¹See the account in the Fioretti of "How St. Francis Converted Three Murderous Robbers," Omnibus, pp. 1360-62.

³²Jorgensen, p. 262. When Francis was criticized by his physicians for his harsh treatment of his body, he acknowledged this as a fault and exclaimed, "Rejoice, Brother Body, and forgive me. Now I am ready to humor you in your wishes." Thereafter he submitted to his physician's directions. but it was too late.

vances.33 In any event, Francis' embrace of "Lady Poverty" was in no sense an expression of a Manichean, world-denying philosophy. He did neither forsake nor try to forget the world. On the contrary, through his own personal poverty he was able to embrace the world more warmly and more selflessly.

Francis of Assisi was not a professional theologian, and so it remained primarily for Saint Bonaventure to present Francis' prayer concepts in technical terms. At the heart of the Franciscan theology of prayer is the notion that discursive, affective, and contemplative prayer situations are fluid and that they come and go, now one, now the other, throughout life. The same is true

also of purgation, illumination, and union.34 Franciscan prayer is spontaneous and relaxed. It is not mechanical or methodical; there is not much introspection and self-analysis.35 The Franciscan thing is not to denigrate self, but to become so caught up in the love of God and neighbor that self-interest simply gets lost in the shuffle.

For dramatic effect, perhaps, 1 have been saving the most important consideration until last. The thing that is notably absent from Bishop Robinson's reflections on God and on prayer is the living reality of Jesus of Nazareth.36 It is precisely that living reality, however, that is the heart and center of the Franciscan's prayer life. I certainly have no intention of suggesting a Franciscan monopoly on Jesus Christ; but it cannot be denied, either, that the unique contribution made by Saint Francis to Christian thought and Christian life was his retrieval of the significance of the Incarnation, of the humanity of Jesus, of the fact that God became man so that man could enter into relationship with him in human terms. Later John Duns Scotus and the Franciscan theologians who followed him would propose the theological

ratio for the primacy of Christ in Bishop Robinson come to an imthe order of creation. While retaining God's radical freedom in creating, they would reflect on the notion that because "goodness is diffusive of itself," God intends Jesus first and foremost in the creative plan; the Incarnation is certainly not an afterthought prompted by the "felix culpa,"37

In perceiving the central place of Jesus in the material universe. the Franciscan school anticipated by seven hundred years the notion that the secular is sacred in its own terms. Man can respond to Jesus who is alive and well and close by, and who can give and receive human affection. This he does in several ways. Francis perceived Iesus present in 1209 in the Eucharist and in the priesthood, in the Gospels, in the teaching of theologians,38 and most of all in the least of Jesus' brethren.

In this last, Saint Francis and

portant concurrence: God is encountered in the sordid, the ugly, the nauseating—in a unique way! There are the terrible and sad faces of God; these are the crucified body of Jesus. Here is where Francis and Bishop Robinson rise to the noblest human response of loving self-surrender with Jesus on Calvary.39

But the man in the secular street does not think or talk about Jesus of Nazareth. It is probably because the orthodox stereotypes have rendered Iesus ancient, remote, unreal, and outside the secular experience of today, and because the many persons and things that ought to be a sign of the saving presence of Jesus have simply ceased to function in that capacity. The problem that faces Christianity today is that of reintroducing secular men to the reality and meaning of Jesus, so that they will be able to ex-

³³Moorman, p. 50.

³⁴Brady, p. 662.

³⁵Romb, p. 85.

³⁶ Mark Pontifex, Book Review: "Exploration into God, by John A.T. Robinson," New Blackfriars 49 (Feb., 1968), 165.

³⁷On the history of this question, see Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., "Jeus Christ, Primacy of—," New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 5, pp. 944-45.

³⁸ See the Testament of Saint Francis, Omnibus, pp. 67-68. 39Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., says in his edition of Saint Bonaventure's Itinerarium Mentis in Deum (St. Bonaventure, N. Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1956), that "one may go so far as to say that Saint Bonaventure's mysticism is distinguished from all preceding by the place he assigns to the crucified in the mystical union. The Seraphic Doctor learned from Saint Francis that the cross is not only our hope of salvation but also the resting place of the soul in mystical sleep" (p. 16). It would be interesting to pursue Archbishop Bloom's thought in this regard. "God rules the world of reality. The ugliest of realities, the most hateful, the most infamous, the most alien to the kingdom can become the kingdom but only on condition that we render unto it its quality of reality." Anthony Bloom, "Prayer and Life," Lumen Vitae 24 (1969), p. 615.

Initial enthusiasm for dialog and shared prayer getherings seems, already, in some case's, to be waning . . .

savirig presence and his saving live and move and have our being. gospel as unique and identifiable. Sin be the time of Bonhoeffer IN THE PREPARATION of this study ma/ny Protestant and Catholic I originally planned to offer a theologians have given thought to th/is problem, and their answers have, so far, not been entirely satisfactory.

But the main point here is that Francis of Assisi, in his grasp of God and the world and prayer, managed to place Jesus in the center of all three in a way that was unique and meaningful to his day. I have attempted to show that there are many important parallels between early Franciscan prayer concepts and the prayer concepts of Bishop Robinson's secular friends. Of course there are some important differences. Bishop Robinson says that prayer is whatever discloses or penetrates through to that level of reality wherein man encounters that overriding claim to respond to the personal that meets him in and through every creature. Francis of Assisi perceived this same overriding personal claim. It was a call to brotherhood because every creature shares in the common fatherhood of God, and because every creature shares in the common brotherhood of Jesus, the firstborn of every

perience in secular terms his creature, in whom the rest of us

general survey of prayer concepts and practices in Franciscan tradition with a view to making recommendations to present formation programs. I sent a questionnaire to twenty-four Franciscan of several novice-directors provinces and congregations of the first, second, and third Orders. The questionnaire was badly conceived in that I discovered later that I would have like to have information about some matters I did not think to inquire about. But as my study progressed, I perceived those interesting parallels between Bishop Robinson's and the Franciscan notions of prayer which have been the theme of this study. Some of the information sent to me in the responses to the questionnaire indicate, at any rate, that religious formation _ programs have already made some important steps in restructuring.

For one thing community prayer services have been drastically curtailed and are limited almost exclusively to liturgical celebration. Initial enthusiasm for dialog and shared prayer gather-

ings seems already, in some cases, to be waning, and some directors have expressed concern over the lack of interest in common prayer celebrations. In this regard I believe Bishop Robinson and Dom Moore may have something to sav. 40

It may be necessary for us to develop a new understanding of the nature and meaning of communal prayer services which does not attempt to equate them with the kind of experience one has in personal prayer, where he encounters God in the depth of his own being. Young people find that common prayer simply does not evoke those emotions and responses that are possible in private prayer and which they think ought to be present if praver is to be meaningful. They think of common prayer as an attempt at private prayer by a lot of people at the same time and in the same place, where they get in each other's way if indeed they are at all conscious of each other! Private prayer in common appears as a contradiction in terms. and this may explain why some religious are not attracted to shared prayer.

question that communal prayer,

the Eucharist, were of paramount importance.41 Nevertheless, I believe there are indications that Francis' own attitude toward common prayer has something more in common with Bishop Robinson's and Dom Moore's than with the caricature of common prayer that they reject. I believe this "something" can be seen in the following incident in Saint Francis' life. On one occasion Francis and his companions came together to "converse about God." Francis had each of the brothers take a turn speaking about God "as the spirit moved," which each did wit such unction that they were all moved," which each did with Francis is quoted as saving.

My dear brothers, give thanks to our Lord Iesus Christ who has been pleased to reveal the treasures of divine wisdom through the mouths of simple ones. For God is he who opens the mouths of infants and the dumb, and when he wishes he makes the tongue of the simple speak very wisely.42

There is in this episode no "talking to someone beyond the east wall." There is a "sharing of ultimate concern," a coming together "to be sensitized, deep-As for Saint Francis, there is no ened, built-up in the awareness of agape-love . . . " I am saying that especially the divine office and I believe a new rationale along

⁴⁰See the opening pages of Part II of this study, published last month in THE CORD.

⁴¹ Jorgensen, pp. 237-38. 42Omnibus, p. 1331.

thought ought to be worked out so that "to get a man to visit and that novices may see the meaning- speak with another we do not defulness of communal prayer scribe theories of communication, services over and above or in lieu of whatever personal prayer responses may be present. Such a rationale is not inconsistent with Franciscan experience. I believe any effort to repudiate communal prayer is antithetical to the Franciscan vision of life in God's presence.

With regard to personal prayer formation, several directors expressed an unwillingness to make prayer instruction very theoretical or textbookish. They saw great merit in tailoring instruction to the individual and personal needs of each novice. Many affirmed that their principal concern was to awaken in the novices a real awareness of the presence of God and to guide them into an encounter with Jesus, especially as he is met in the sacred Scriptures.

clear that no one felt we ought to of prayer. These views seem to be of recent publication. Father bench.

the lines of Bishop Robinson's Dubay puts it well when he says we describe the other person."43

> I am in substantial agreement with these views. Yet, as a result of this present study. I believe we need not be afraid to talk about Saint Bonaventure, Saint Peter of Alcantara, and even the somewhat humorless David of Augsburg, along with the other authors-including, as one director reminded me, modern writers like Thomas Merton. Of course the director must keep in mind the needs and capacities of each novice. Nevertheless, as I have attempted to show, I believe that the concept and practice of prayer in the Franciscan tradition has more to say to the young people of today than perhaps has been recognized.

I believe that every Franciscan today has a need for some reflection on where things are at. I be-Some admitted that they did not lieve every Franciscan must reach discuss the classic Franciscan out affectively toward God and authors on prayer at all, but most must perceive and embrace him said they gave some treatment of both in the depth of his own heart these writings in a course on the and in his encounter with the history of the spiritual life. It is many faces of God hurrying to and fro in the city street. And I do not begin with a technical discussion think they should be surprised if around the next corner they find in accord with what is generally Saint Francis of Assisi and Bishop written about prayer in articles Robinson resting on the same

Ouest

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The
   soul
     is
       anchorite-
 Alone
   on
     paths
       un-
          trod--
 Its
   goal
     the
       mountain
         height-
Finds
  its
     rest
       in
         God-
Un-
  knowing!
     Concept-
       free!
Spirit
  held
    un-
      to
         Eternity.
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SISTER M. ELLEN BURKE, O.S.F.

⁴³Thomas Dubay, "Psychological Considerations in Our Approach to Mental Prayer," Review for Religious 24 (1965), p. 188.



From Slave to Priest: Biography of Augustine Tolton. By Sister Caroline Hemesath, O.S.F. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974. Pp. xiii-174. Cloth, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Brother Roberto O. Gonzalez. O.F.M., a second-year theologian at Holy Name College, Washington, D.C.

From Slave to Priest is a biography of Augustine Tolton, the first Afro-American priest in the United States. Sister Caroline Hemesath, the author, writes, "My interest in Augustine Tolton dates from the year 1933. the first of my nine years as a teacher of Black children in Chicago. While making a study of black Catholicism, I learned about Saint Monica's Church ... and its first pastor, a Negro" (p. ix).

Although Tolton, in this reviewer's estimation, led an uneventful life, he confronted the obstacles that tried to crush him with an admirable individual and solitary courage. Hemesath is to be commended for her effort to preserve the story of his life.

Tolton was born in 1854 of Black Catholic slaves in Missouri. His father fled north, during the Civil War, to fight with the Union for the freedom of Blacks and was consequently,

river, secured her family and undertook also the dangerous flight north. They settled in Quincy, Illinois, where Tolton's youth, as well as his subsequent life, was humiliating and painful. He had to be withdrawn from the local parochial school, for instance, because of the bitter protest raised by the White parents and parishioners; and when he expressed his desire to become a priest, all American seminaries closed their doors to him.

Several diocesan and Franciscan priests, however, took a special interest in Tolton. They educated him tutorially in the traditional disciplines and worked for his admittance in 1880 to the seminary College of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, where his years were of special joy, because he did not feel the burning rod of oppression.

When he returned to the United States as a priest, six years later, Tolton received a parish for Blacks, which had formerly been a school that he himself had founded for Black children in his home town of Quincy. He engaged in lecturing and delivered the keynote address at the First Catholic Colored Congress in Washington, D.C., held in 1889.

Tolton lived under the heavy duress of discrimination. His church was known as "the nigger place," and he was called "the nigger priest." A neighboring pastor forbade his White congregation to attend Tolton's church, and Tolton himself was told by his bishop to minister solely to Blacks. (This restriction followed upon a marriage Tolton had perkilled in action. Before the war end- formed: a rich White society ladv. dised. Augustine's mother, fearing that approving of her daughter's choice her children would be sold down the succeeded in having "the doors of

Ouincy's White churches barred to the couple.") Shortly afterwards. Tolton requested a new assignment, and he accepted a church for Blacks in Chicago, where he lived a life of abject poverty and worked for his people with the deepest solicitude until his sudden death one hot, 105° afternoon. He died of heat stroke and uremia on July 9, 1897, at the age of 43.

I would have been better pleased with From Slave to Priest if Hemesath's approach to this biography had made her subject live, and if she had so written it as to pose a challenge to the reader. As it stands, this book offers simply the data of Tolton's life, along with a great amount of trivia; while discussing the conversions of Tolton's school into a church, e.g., she says, "In the matter of money it must be mentioned " and she goes on to list the donors down to who gave the pews and the monstrance!

If the author sought to preserve the uneventful story of America's first Afro-American priest, it seems she would have done him greater justice by shortening substantially the length of her book, which is dry and wordy in style.

In the author's Foreword, Hemesath states that she has worked with Black children. Perhaps she has written this book for them, rather/than for the critical reader who/ would doubtless find it unrewarding. If this is the case, she has attained a certain amount of success; but then there remains the problem that this book might instill into the young and uncritical mind a quietistic sense of piety and an outdated understanding of the priesthood.

The dust-jac ket describes From Slave to Priest as an "authentic biography... a major contribution to BlackCatholic Americana . . . [which] deserves wicke circulation to put into perspective/the road back and ahead for Blacks in American society both civil and religious." This reviewer finds this/statement to be a gross exaggeration of the value of Hemesath's book; ard, for the reasons stated in the foregoing paragraphs, does not recommend the book.

St. Arhthony: Doctor of the Church, By Sophronius Clasen. Translated by Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973. Pp. xi-116. Paper, \$2.25.

Reviewed by Father Cyprian J. Lunch, O.F.M., Superior of Holy Name Friary (the House of Prayer for Holu Name Province, in Lafayette. N. I.), and a contributor to the New Catholic Encyclopedia as well as to several scholarly periodicals.

Few things are as irretrievably lost as vital facts about the finder of lost things. Writing a life of Saint Anthony is a challenge cautious hagiographers hesitate to accept. Those brave enough to undertake the task have customarily relied more heavily on vivid imagination than on historical acumen. Extant sources are scant and overladen with legend. The predominant interest of early biographers is Anthony, the Wonderworker. The stiff, conventional, and almost expressionless portrait they present provides little by way of insight into the saint as a human being. Unfortunately Anthony of Padua had no Celano.

Fourteen years' study of the sources for the life of Saint Anthony convinced Father Sophronius Clasen of the impossibility of writing a formal biography that could meet modern critical standards. It became his firm conviction, however, that an authentic, though incomplete, view of the character and inner life of the saint could be attained without undue recourse to the legendary and the marvelous.

The method he devised to accomplish this task is both direct and valid: to let Anthony speak for himself through his sermons. A slight framework of verifiable facts is filled out with numerous and often lengthy quotations from the saint's preaching. This procedure uncovers many similarities and some significant differences between Anthony and the founder of his Order-a kind of primitive pluriformity. Both saints were evangelical men, persistent peacemakers, popular preachers, and proponents of orthodoxy. Like Francis, Anthony frequently withdrew to wilderness hermitages to renew his apostolic fervor. But unlike the Poverello, the Wonderworker of Padua was a priest, a theologian, and a gifted administrator. All these facets of his personality are clearly reflected in his sermons. Thanks to the translator's skill the very apt selections chosen for inclusion appear to have lost little of their force in the journey from Latin, through German, into English. The narrative text is supplemented by 33 photographs of places where Anthony lived and worked.

Father Clasen and Brady have rescued a brother whose popularity has obscured his personality.

CHRIST AND THE COSMOS

(continued from page 380)

Beginning with Chapter Five, the book's content becomes more explicitly theological. (Father Pendergast says the ideas could have been elaborated without reliance upon revelation, but that would have been a much lengthier task.) The fifth chapter utilizes Karl Rahner's notion of being as symbolizing activity: the trinitarian life of God himself, as well as the universe's reality, is thus explained very righly as symbolic activity, and the discussion is continued into the following chapter too, where the nature of matter and spirit is discussed with refreshing vigor and common sense. The seventh chapter, on evil, is one of the best treatments of that subject that I have ever seen. The cosmos is the direct symbolic expression, not of God himself, but (under the divine creative power) of the cosmic powers; and their rebellion has meant the vitiating of the whole created order. This patristic doctrine helps to resolve the problem of evil without any pretense of obviating its mustery. In the final chapter, Father, Pendergast gives us an eloquent statement of the meaning and ground of hope in Jesus, risen from the dead and triumphant over evil.

Cosmos is not the kind of book one breezes through quickly; but neither does it seem to be too difficult of technical for the average educate reader. Its coherent unity, its soli orthodoxy, and its progressive openess commend it to any serious read seeking to work out for himself reasonable, positive perspective of reality.

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