

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES M.A. PROGRAM

BY THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE AT ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY

CALENDAR *

Registration	Wednesday, June 25
Classes begin	Thursday, June 26
Modern Language Exam	Friday, July 18
Final Exams	Wednesday, August 6

COURSES OFFERED IN SUMMER, 1975

All courses meet daily, Monday through Friday in Francis Hall

- FI 501 Sources for Franciscan Studies,**
3 cr., Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 9:10-10:15
This course is prerequisite for 503 and 504
- FI 503 Early Franciscan Texts,**
3 cr., Duane Lapsanski, O.F.M., D.Th.: 9:10 - 10:15
Prerequisite: 501
- FI 504 Life of St. Francis,**
3 cr., Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 9:10 - 10:15
Prerequisite: 501
- FI 506 Survey of Franciscan History,**
3 cr., Lawrence Landini, O.F.M., H.E.D.: 10:20 - 11:25
- FI 508 History of Franciscan Thought,**
3 cr., Julian Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 10:20 - 11:25
- FI 511 Medieval Latin: Franciscan Texts,**
2 cr., Malcolm Wallace, Ph.D.: 11:30 - 12:35
- FI 517 Introduction to Palaeography,**
2 cr., Girard Etzkorn, Ph.D.: 11:30 - 12:35
- FI 521 Rule of St. Francis,**
2 cr., Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M. Cap., D. Phil. Oxon: 11:30 - 12:35
- FI 523 Bonaventurian Texts,**
2 cr., Juvenal Lalor, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 8:00 - 9:05
- FI 531 Womanhood and the Franciscan Ideal,**
2 cr., Hugh Eller, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 8:00 - 9:05

Students intending to pursue the program in the Autumn and the Spring semesters must begin their studies in the Summer session.

Course 501 is only offered in the Summer session.

Pre-registration forms are available from the Office of Graduate Studies, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, New York 14778.

This program is offered during the Autumn, Spring, and Summer Sessions.

The cover and illustrations for our March issue have been drawn by Sister M. Raphael Fulwider, O.S.F., Chairman of the Art Department at Maria Regina College, Syracuse, N.Y.

the CORD

March, 1975

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the CORD is a monthly review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published by the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. Please address all subscriptions and business correspondence to our Business Manager, Father Bernard R. Creighton, O.F.M., at The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Manuscripts, Books for Review, and Editorial Correspondence should be sent to the Editor, Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., or Associate Editor, Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., at our Editorial Office, Siena College Friary, Loudonville, N.Y. 12811. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778, and at additional mailing office. Subscription rates: \$3.00 a year; 30 cents a copy.



Watch One Hour . . . ?

ONE OF THE MANY shifts which set conciliar theology in a somewhat different key from what had preceded it, is the emphasis on the Eucharist as meal-event. Not only has the attitude of many people toward the liturgical celebration itself been thus altered (so that sacrifice is subordinated to banquet), but there has also been a discernible effect upon popular devotion to the Real Presence.

Thus some people make a point of marching past the Tabernacle without genuflecting so as to demonstrate their conviction that the Presence is for sharing at a communal meal and not real outside that event. Priests make the same point on occasion by ostentatiously flicking away particles of the Host that remain after Mass has been celebrated, instead of purifying the sacred utensils in the careful, traditional manner.

One recalls the "celebration" last June of the Feast of Corpus Christi, once the occasion for fervent and well frequented pageants, parades, and other spontaneous forms of devotion. For the most part the "Feast" is now commemorated only too often by the simple one-line announcement before the Mass identifying it as the subject of the day's liturgy.

With the other, even more important, commemoration of the Eucharist at hand this month, on Holy Thursday, we consider it appropriate to call attention to the Nocturnal Adoration Society, an association for Catholic men (priests and laymen) dedicated to the greater love and honor of our Lord as Priest, Victim, and King in the Blessed Sacrament.

The center of the Society is the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. One of its purposes is to atone for the coldness and indifference of so many Catholics toward the Holy Eucharist, which is the Spiritual Life of the Society and, indeed, of the Church itself. Men are brought together in witness to Christ's sacrificial action in the Eucharist by sharing in his night

prayer, spending one hour a month before the Blessed Sacrament exposed during the hours of the night. The Society, founded in Rome in 1810, now exists in practically every country in the world. For information, you can contact Father H. C. Lemieux, the National Director, at its American Headquarters, 194 E. 76 Street, New York 10021.

Whether or not you are interested in belonging to even so excellent an association as this one—and, of course, women evidently cannot belong to this one—the imperatives still touch you and every other Catholic: (1) that of attaining a balanced theological appreciation of the Eucharist as *both sacrifice and spiritual nourishment*—as *both transient event and abiding presence*; and (2) that of allowing some expression of such an understanding (some form of Eucharistic devotion) to mark our outward, public religious life. What better way to begin (or begin Anew) than, on this Holy Thursday, to watch one hour with our Eucharistic Lord?

Fr. Michael D. Mailach, OFM

"And Jesus Wept"

There's no season for Christ weeping
When His Apostles all seem sleeping.
There's no Jerusalem, great city,
Crying out to Him for pity.
Just a Priest—a Sister—a Brother
Who can lay blame upon no other.
They, His salt to give earth flavour
Somehow lost Indwelling savour.
They His lights for candles glowing,
His Spirit crushed, yet floods no tears.
To drown an anguished world with fears.
Yet His internal wounds are deepening
While His Apostles—we are sleeping.

Sister Claire Marie Wick, O.S.F.

Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought

EWERT H. COUSINS

A COMMEMORATIVE occasion such as this—celebrating the seventh centenary of the death of Saint Bonaventure—gives us the opportunity to re-examine his life, his thought, and his influence on the Franciscan Order and the history of Western culture. Since Bonaventure was a man of many gifts, we can examine his achievements from many points of view. We can consider him as a religious leader and administrator, the seventh Minister General after Francis, esteemed as the second founder of the Order, whose gifts of mediation enabled him to draw together disparate factions and to establish the Order on a firm organizational basis. Or we can consider him as one of the most eloquent preachers and controversialists of the turbulent mid-thirteenth century, who used his oratorical gifts not only to preach the Gospel, but to defend the mendicant orders and the theological tradition against varied attacks. Or we can consider him as a saint and spiritual writer, whose wisdom has been, throughout the centuries, a primary source of Franciscan spirituality. Or we can look upon him as one of the greatest synthetic minds in a century that is outstanding for its theological synthesis. Bonaventure achieved for the medieval Augustinian tradition a synthesis comparable to that produced by Thomas Aquinas with Aristotelian philosophy. All of these points of view would offer rich possibilities and merit extended investigation. But I have chosen to examine Bonaventure today from another perspective, which I believe is equally important: namely, his

Dr. Ewert H. Cousins, a consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christian Religions, is Associate Professor of Theology at Fordham University and President of the American Teilhard de Chardin Association. This is the complete text of his Convocation Address, given at Siena College April 4, 1974, on the occasion of his receiving the honorary degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. The comments on Dr. Cousins' Address, delivered on the same occasion by Father Peter D. Fehlner, O.F.M. Conv., and Father John E. Van Hook, O.F.M., will be published in our pages next month.

relation to contemporary thought.

It may seem strange to examine Bonaventure in relation to contemporary thought; for he lived in an age separated from ours by seven centuries, an age whose life-style, modes of thought, and challenges seem very foreign to our own. In contrast with the stable, homogeneous world of the Middle Ages, we are overwhelmed by process and bewildered by diversity. In the accelerating pace of change, we are numbed by future shock and confused by conflicting visions of the future: images of utopia and of cosmic catastrophe. On the religious scene, pluralism has supplanted a narrow orthodoxy, and ecumenism has expanded to the horizon of world religions.

After Vatican II, many Catholics have rejected the past and have plunged into the modern world. After a hundred years of looking at the modern world through neo-scholastic lenses, many Catholics have thrown off medieval thought patterns and are facing the modern world on its own terms. Even if we were interested in our past, Bonaventure may be too forgotten to be recalled. During the neo-scholastic revival, it was Thomas not Bonaventure who was in the fore; and within the Franciscan tradition Bonaventure was eclipsed by Duns Scotus. Therefore to see Bonaventure in relation to contemporary thought may seem like

an irrelevant and even impossible task.

I believe that this is neither an impossible nor an irrelevant task. In order to face this task squarely, we must begin by asking the question: How is Bonaventure related to contemporary thought? We do not wish to approach this question superficially or to impose his thought patterns on the contemporary scene. Bonaventure represents one of the richest traditions in Western thought—a tradition that is very sensitive to process and diversity, two aspects of reality that are challenging us most critically in the twentieth century. Bonaventure inherited this tradition from Augustine, the Greek Fathers, Anselm, the Victorines, and Alexander of Hales. He exercised his genius in relating this tradition to the challenges of his age and in incorporating into the tradition the distinctively Franciscan spirit. If we in the twentieth century are to meet the challenges of the future—of process and diversity—then we must be in touch with all the resources of our past. It is crucial for us to know the tradition Bonaventure represents, and it is especially beneficial to know that tradition in the rich synthetic form that Bonaventure has bequeathed to us. When Bonaventure brought his tradition into contact with the issues of his day, he penetrated

deeply into the mystery of reality. It is not surprising that he touched levels which are universal, which transcend the differences of historical periods and are significant for us now in the twentieth century.

In order to reach these universal levels, we must enter deeply into Bonaventure's thought-world and perceive the inner structure and dynamics of his vision. We will see that for Bonaventure, God and the world are dynamic, God is intimately related to the world, and the diversity of creation is centered in the unity of Christ. In order to see this vision clearly, I believe we need a path, a road, a bridge that will lead us directly into the heart of Bonaventure's world view so that we can view it from the inside without obscurity or distortion. During the last several years I have attempted to build such a bridge with the coincidence of opposites. I have claimed that Bonaventure's total vision, with all of its parts, can be seen through the logic of the coincidence of opposites.¹ If we took another bridge—for example, through the logic of difference

—then we would never arrive at the heart of Bonaventure's world; for we would assume that God cannot be at the same time self-sufficient and dynamic and that he cannot be related to the world. Through the coincidence of opposites, however, we can penetrate to the depths of Bonaventure's understanding of process, relatedness, and diversity—to the universal dimensions where Bonaventure touches our modern problems.

I will deal with three areas of Bonaventure's thought, seen through three types of the coincidence of opposites: (1) the Trinity, where self-sufficiency coincides with dynamism; (2) God and the world, where the infinite coincides with the finite; and (3) the Christocentric universe, where unity coincides with diversity. In these areas Bonaventure can enter into dialogue with Hegel and Whiteheadian process thinkers, with Teilhard de Chardin and Tillich, and with the theology of ecumenism as it attempts to articulate the meaning of Christian unity within the horizon of world religions.

¹Cf. Ewert H. Cousins, "La 'Coincidentia Oppositorum' dans la théologie de Bonaventure," *Etudes franciscaines* 18 (Supplément annuel, 1968), 15-31, English version printed in *THE CORD* 20 (1970), 260-69; "The Coincidence of Opposites in the Christology of Saint Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 28 (1968), 27-45; "Mandala Symbolism in the Theology of Bonaventure," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 40 (1971), 185-201, reprinted in *THE CORD* 21 (1971), 324-39.

The Dynamic Trinity

BONAVENTURE'S doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of his entire system.² In fact, he is undoubtedly one of the most thorough-going Trinitarian theologians in the history of Christian thought. In Bonaventure's theology, the Trinity is the mystery of God's fecundity and dynamic self-manifestation. But it is also the mystery of God's absolute self-sufficiency. As Arthur Lovejoy points out in his book *The Great Chain of Being*, there has been great tension throughout the history of thought between two images of God: God as self-sufficient absolute and God as self-communicating fecundity.³ As self-sufficient, God is the timeless absolute, the unmoved mover, distant from the world and radically unlike the world. As self-communicating, God is out-going related, involved, sharing his perfections with the world. These two

images seem incompatible and according to some are ultimately irreconcilable. Often in the history of thought, the image of God as self-sufficient has won out, producing the view of God as static and unrelated, a view which has been severely criticized in the twentieth century by Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne.⁴

Bonaventure reconciles these two images of God through the coincidence of opposites. In the person of the Father in the Trinity, the two images coincide. As unbegotten, the Father is the root of the self-sufficiency in the Godhead, for he proceeds from no one. At the same time he is the fountain and source of the divine processions. Bonaventure not only sees these two images coexisting in the Father, but he sees them present by way of a dynamic coincidence of opposites, such that one implies and demands the other. For Bonaventure, to be unbegotten implies

²For Bonaventure's chief Trinitarian texts, cf. the following sources in, *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia* (10 vols; Quaracchi, 1882-1902): *I Sent.*, d. 2-34 (I, 46-596); *Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis* (V, 45-115); *Breviloquium*, p. I, c. 2-6 (V, 210-15); *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, c. 6 (V, 310-12); *In Hexaëmeron*, coll. I, n. 13-17; coll. XI (V, 331-32; 379-84).

³Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), *passim*.

⁴Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), pp. 519-33; Charles Hartshorne, *The Divine Relativity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1948); Charles Hartshorne and William L. Reese, *Philosophers Speak of God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

that the Father begets the Son; and to beget the Son implies that the Father is unbegotten. Thus at the root of the Divinity there is a profound coincidence of opposites. Because the Father is absolutely self-sufficient, he is absolutely fecund; and because he is absolutely fecund, he is absolutely self-sufficient.⁵

What are the implications of this? It means that the image of God as dynamic, processive, self-communicating, is not swallowed up by the image of God as self-sufficient. It enables Bonaventure to develop one of the richest doctrines of God as dynamic in the history of theology, a doctrine that has much to say to the process philosophers and theologians of modern times who have taken such pains to affirm the image of God as dynamic. I believe that the most significant contribution of Bonaventure to modern thought is his position that God is absolutely dynamic in his inner life and hence does not have to depend on the world to manifest himself.⁶ Bonaventure claims that God is

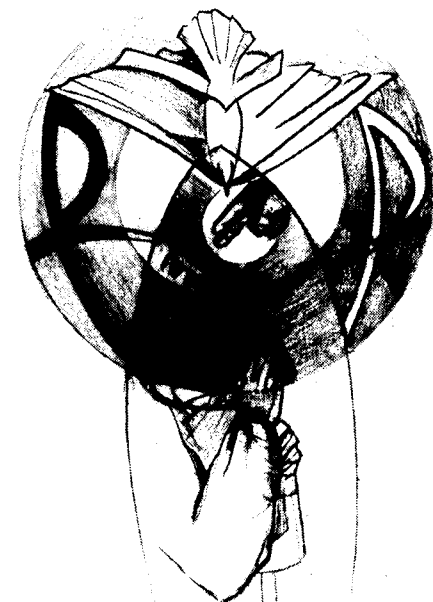
absolutely good; but the good is self-diffusive. Therefore God must be self-diffusive in an absolute way. This absolute self-diffusion of the good can be realized only in the Trinitarian processions: in the Father's generation of the Son and in their spiration of the Holy Spirit. If God had to depend on the world in order to diffuse his goodness, he would never be able to communicate himself adequately, for as Bonaventure says: "The diffusion that occurred in time in the creation of the world is no more than a pivot or point in comparison with the immense sweep of the eternal goodness."⁷

Bonaventure has placed God's transcendence precisely in his self-communication. Throughout the history of thought, philosophers who have affirmed the dynamic nature of God, for example Hegel, have been criticized for making God's self-communication dependent on the world. Bonaventure offers a solution to this problem: God is absolutely self-communicating within the Trinity. This frees God from

the world and the world from God, for the world would be overwhelmed by the full power of God's self-communication. But, on the other hand, the inner dynamism of the Trinity overflows into the world, activating within the world a process that reflects the dynamism of the inner life of the Trinity.

God and the World

THROUGH THE coincidence of opposites Bonaventure can reconcile the image of God as self-sufficient and the image of God as self-communicating. Through another type of coincidence of opposites he can maintain an intimate relation between God and the world. Bonaventure shared the vision of Saint Francis, seeing the presence of God throughout creation—in the lowliest of creatures and across the vast panorama of the universe. Creatures were like a mirror reflecting God, a path leading to God, a statue depicting God, a stained glass window which reflects the richness of God's fecundity.⁸ Bonaventure gave a philosophical and theological foundation to this vision. In generating the Son, the Father produces in the Son the archetypes or *rationes aeternae* of all he can make. Thus when creation occurs



in time, creatures reflect the Son as their divine exemplar. Bonaventure developed an elaborate system of the various ways creatures reflect God: as shadow, vestige, image, and similitude.⁹

Between Creator and creature we find a coincidence of opposites of the infinite and the finite. As finite, creatures are opposite from God, who is infinite. They coincide with God, however, in that they reflect God's perfections through exemplarism. All creatures are in the Son as Word of the Father, and the

⁵Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d. 27, p. 1, a. un., q. 2 (I, 468-74).

⁶Cf. Ewert H. Cousins, "God as Dynamic in Bonaventure and Contemporary Thought," paper delivered at the Forty-Eighth Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, 2/28/74, Washington, D.C., to be published in the Proceedings.

⁷Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*, c. 6, n. 2 (V, 310); English translation by Philotheus Boehner, O.F.M., *Saint Bonaventure's Itinerarium Mentis in Deum* (St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1956), p. 89.

⁸Bonaventure, *In Hexaëmeron*, coll. XII, n. 14 (V. 386).

⁹Bonaventure, *I Sent.*, d. 3, p. 1, a. un., q. 2, ad 4 (I, 72-74).

Word is in all creatures. This relation is so intimate that Bonaventure can say: "I will see myself better in God than in my very self."¹⁰ Although creatures reflect God, they are not swallowed up in God as drops of water in the ocean. Rather, in reflecting God, their own individuality is intensified. While being intimately related to God, they remain radically themselves. Bonaventure holds that within the Word there are archetypes of each individual thing, not merely universal ideas.¹¹ This is Bonaventure's way of affirming the Franciscan sense of the importance of individuality and the value of uniqueness. Francis had this sense to a heightened degree, and it was expressed later by Duns Scotus in his doctrine of *haecceitas* (thisness), the property by which a thing is individualized.

In the coincidence of opposites between God and creatures, the opposites are maintained and intensified by their coincidence. For Bonaventure all the types of the coincidence of opposites—whether in the Trinity or in the world—are opposites of mutually affirming complementarity. That means that there is real opposi-

tion: both poles remain intact and are not absorbed into one another. God is not absorbed in the world, nor the world in God. But it means also that these opposites actually coincide, that they are internally related and not merely juxtaposed externally. The opposites interpenetrate and by this interpenetration intensify their uniqueness.

The coincidence of God and the world is a major theme in contemporary thought. Whitehead, Hartshorne, and the process theologians criticize the classical theological tradition for separating God and the world to such an extent that the God of Christian theology hardly seems to be the same as the God of biblical revelation.¹² It is here that Bonaventure has something pointed to say to process thinkers, for he represents an ancient and long-lived tradition in Christian theology that affirms an intimate relation between God and the world. It is true that Bonaventure's tradition differs from the process thinkers on crucial points, but it is equally concerned with God's relation to the world and offers an alternate resolution of the problem to that of the Whiteheadians.

¹⁰Bonaventure, *In Hexaëmeron*, coll. XII, n. 9 (V, 386).

¹¹Bonaventure, *Breviloquium*, p. 1, c. 8 (V, 216-17).

¹²Whitehead, *op. cit.*; Hartshorne, *op. cit.*; cf. also the selections in Ewert H. Cousins, ed., *Process Theology* (New York: Newman, 1971), pp. 3-226.

The Franciscan sense of God's presence in the world has great resonance with Teilhard de Chardin and Paul Tillich's theology of culture.¹³ Like Francis and Bonaventure, Teilhard is aware of the presence of God throughout the universe; and Tillich is aware of God as the ground of being and the depth dimension of human experience. In this vision there is not a sharp distinction between the sacred and the secular; rather the sacred is the ultimate dimension of all secular experience. Thus through a genuine coincidence of God and the world, the tension between the sacred and the secular is resolved, and modern man can plunge into the secular in all of its depths, without feeling that he must betray the secular or abandon his religious identity.

Unity and Diversity

BONAVENTURE brings us in touch not only with such contemporary issues as process and secularity, but also with ecumenism. This is not surprising, since Bona-

venture himself was an instrument of reconciliation during his life, both within the Franciscan Order and at the Council of Lyons, where he worked to bring about the union of the Eastern and Western divisions of Christianity. While Bonaventure himself was an instrument of ecumenism in his day, his thought can provide resources for a theology of ecumenism in the twentieth century. If his personality was effective in reconciling opposing groups, his thought can provide a matrix for integrating opposites. Since Bonaventure's thought is permeated by the logic of the coincidence of opposites, it can provide a model of diversity in unity—a model which can allow different religious traditions to realize a deep unity while maintaining their authentic diversity.

In his book *The Coming Convergence of World Religions*, Robley Whitson has drawn resources from Bonaventure to develop a model of unity and pluralism among world religions.¹⁴ He bases his approach on Bona-

¹³Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); *Hymn of the Universe*, trans. Simon Bartholomew (New York: Harper & Row, 1965); Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

¹⁴Robley Whitson, *The Coming Convergence of World Religions* (New York: Newman, 1971), pp. 147-65; for a longer presentation of Whitson and Panikkar in this perspective, see Ewert H. Cousins, "Bonaventure and World Religions," *THE CORD* 22 (1972), 55-63; reprinted in J. Guy Bougerol, ed., *S. Bonaventure 1274 - 1974* (Grottaferrata: Porziuncola Press, 1973), vol. III, pp. 687-706.

venture's doctrine of the coincidence of God and the world. Because God is present and revealing himself in all of creation and in the depth of human experience, one cannot draw a sharp distinction between the religions of revelation and those without revelation. For Bonaventure God has revealed through the book of creation, the book of nature, the book of the soul, the book of Life—as well as through the book of Scripture.¹⁵ Thus God's self-manifestation or revelation is foundational and universal. This allows Whitson to read Buddha's enlightenment experience and certain Confucian texts as revelational. Thus Whitson avoids the logic of separation—of revelational and non-revelational—through the coincidence of opposites in a deeper unity. Through Bonaventure's doctrine of cosmic revelation, Whitson can maintain the uniqueness of each revelational tradition. I might add that such a model of plurality does not negate a hierarchical structure which would assign a pre-eminent revelation to the Judaic-Christian tradition. It rather provides a broad revelational base in

which such a hierarchy can be affirmed without denying the validity of other traditions.

In his book *The Trinity and World Religions*, Raymond Panikkar uses another model of unity and diversity for a theology of ecumenism.¹⁶ He sees the different spiritual traditions of mankind according to a Trinitarian model. Stated briefly, his position claims that Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are religions of the Word, since they claim to have received God's revelation through his word as expressed in their sacred books. Buddhism is the religion of the silence of the Father, since the Buddhist strives to reach Nirvana, or the void, not through the Word but through silence. Although in the Trinity the Father is viewed from the standpoint of his power to generate the Son, it is possible to look upon that aspect of the Father which is the silence out of which he utters his Word. Finally, the advaitan tradition of Hinduism represents the religion of the Spirit since it seeks for the undifferentiated union between the soul and God. In the Trinity the Spirit is the union between the Father and the Son.

¹⁵Bonaventure, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Mysterio Trinitatis*, q. 1, n. 2. concl. (V, 54-56).

¹⁶Raymond Panikkar, *The Trinity and World Religions* (Madras: The Christian Literature Society, 1970); cf. also *idem*, "Towards an Ecumenical Theandric Spirituality," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 5 (1958), 507-34.

Although Panikkar does not mention Bonaventure, his use of a Trinitarian model reflects Bonaventure's vestige doctrine. Just as Bonaventure saw vestiges of the Trinity in all creatures—in their power, wisdom, and goodness reflecting the Father, Son, and Spirit—so Panikkar sees in the highest level of man's spiritual quest a reflection of the Trinitarian mystery.¹⁷ This Trinitarian model has great ecumenical implications, since it provides a paradigm of unity and diversity which allows even the most disparate religious traditions to retain their uniqueness and at the same time to be related to the Christian's understanding of the divine mystery. Since Bonaventure has one of the most thoroughly developed Trinitarian theologies in Christian history, he can enter into dialogue with Panikkar and provide resources for understanding this new extension of the vestige doctrine into the sphere of man's religious experience.

In addition to the revelational and the Trinitarian model, Bonaventure provides another model for ecumenism—embodying, as the other two, the coincidence of unity and diversity. This is the model of Christ the center. In

the latter period of Bonaventure's writing career, the doctrine of Christocentricity came more and more to the fore. In the first of the *Discourses on the Six Days*, delivered the year before his death, Bonaventure developed the theme of Christ the center of all the sciences: metaphysics, physics, mathematics, logic, law, ethics, and theology.¹⁸ Christ is the center of all the reality studied by these sciences. Thus the whole universe is centered on Christ. As the union of God and man, Christ is the supreme example of the coincidence of opposites. As supreme coincidence of opposites, he functions as the center of the universe and history—unifying in himself the rich diversity of creation, in its process of return to the Father. I believe that Bonaventure's notion of Christ the center foreshadows Duns Scotus' doctrine of the primacy of Christ in creation.

This model of Christ the universal center is especially significant for ecumenism among Christian denominations. For Bonaventure, the mystery of Christ is as vast as the universe and as extensive as human experience. Various individual Christians and diverse Christian

¹⁷CF. Ewert H. Cousins, "Bonaventure and World Religions," 59-63 [701-04]; cf. also *idem*, "The Trinity and World Religions," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 7 (1970), 489-98.

¹⁸Bonaventure, *In Hexaëmeron*, coll. I (V, 229-35).

denominations have responded to different aspects of this mystery. Some have responded to Christ as the center of human existence, others as the center of the universe, others as the center of history. Yet the mystery of Christ the universal center transcends in its fullness any single aspect. In fact, one can see in Bonaventure's image of Christ the center a reflection of the mystery of the fullness of God. In the unity of Christ the Universal cosmic center, Christians can find a point of unity that can ground their authentic diversity.

This same mystery of Christ the universal center can help Christians relate to world religions and yet retain their own commitment to the uniqueness of Christ. The two models of Panikkar and Whitson are universalizing models of unity and diversity. If a Christian employed only these models, he might feel that his commitment to the particularity of Christ is weakened and even dissolved. On the other hand if he commits himself to the particularity of Christ, he seems to cut himself off from relatedness to the other religions of the world. If he views the mystery of Christ through Bonaventure's perspective and sees Christ as the universal cosmic center, then he can see the rich diversity of religious traditions centered ultimately on Christ,

but not necessarily immediately connected to him through a direct historical line. I must state here that this is intended as a Christian's theology of ecumenism and would not be the appropriate perspective for, say, a Buddhist's theology of ecumenism. For the Christian, the tension between the opposites of particularity and universality are resolved in the coincidence realized in the mystery of Christ the center.

In summary, then, with Bonaventure we can penetrate deeply into the mystery of Christ the center, of particularity and universality, of unity and diversity, of the interpenetration of God and creatures, and of the complementarity of the images of God as self-sufficient and as self-communicating. Drawn into the Bonaventurian universe through the coincidence of opposites, we can marvel at its richness, its complexity, and its fullness. In this vision, we find ourselves not stranded in the Middle Ages but thrust into the heart of the problems of today and tomorrow. Bonaventure has been true to his origins—to the spirit of Francis. He has grasped Francis' sense of the richness of God, of his nearness to the world, of the importance of each creature, and of the centrality of Christ. By being true to his origins, Bonaventure has become relevant to our day, and I venture to predict, relevant to all times.

Blessed Are You—III

MOTHER MARY FRANCIS, P.C.C.

Blessed Are They Who Mourn, for They Shall be Comforted

IN A WAY, that plan for living offered on the Mount of the Beatitudes got stranger as it went along. It might be thought quite enough reversal of worldly philosophy that Christ should have declared that the kingdom belongs to the poor, to have asserted that the whole earth-planet and, by implication, the estates of heaven as well, are to be given not to the highest bidder or to the most aggressive claimant, but to the serene and reposeful meek. But, no!—there was more to come. For now into the company of those hallowed by God are brought the weeping ones. "Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Mt. 5:5).

It is doubtful whether most of us would have arrived unaided at the conclusion that it is a blessed thing to mourn. If we had any distinct concept of blessedness connected with mourning it could likely have been that it is a blessed thing to be rid of it. Are not moumers by widely accepted definition the unhappy ones? Obviously, if a moumer is blessed, then it has to mean that he is blessed to have got out of this painful predicament, to have escaped from this sorrowful situation, to have fended off suffering. And so we might well have written the third beatitude like this: Blessed are they who enjoy the comfort of not having anything to mourn about. But then we run up against the hard fact that

this is just not what Christ said.

Again, his words are not our words. That could have been predicted, since he did mention that his thoughts are not our thoughts (Is. 56: 8). Thoughts at odds with each other are scarcely going to emerge in a verbal identity. We shall have, then, to deal with the words that our blessed Savior uttered and not with the words that we think he ought to have uttered. This confrontation for all its initial difficulty is apt to prove rather more rewarding than we might have supposed. It is, in fact, calculated to revise us, redirect us, reform us, and, in the end, overwhelmingly reward us. What do his words really mean? What, for that matter, do *the* words mean? For we do not ever find Christ manipulating words or reshaping them to his purpose or showing any predilection for the abstruse. Always, he spoke so simply. This is what devastates us. His words were so plain. That is what is so disconcerting.

It did not matter to Jesus that men even then had tacitly agreed upon a false definition of comfort any more than it matters to him now. A word is not debauched because we have played it false, even though we may be. And to comfort means "to make strong" (con & fortare) no matter how much we prattle on about ease and sensual satisfaction. We might, incidentally, pause right there a

moment to consider "ease."

To accomplish with ease implies either an initially strong and outstanding gift from God or a previous strong and persevering effort on our own part, and usually both. The poet who writes "with ease" has suffered and labored in order that ease could be possible. The dancer pirouetting with ease has practised and sweated how many hours. The ease of the concert pianist is the fruit of toilsome years. And even the established ease that comes of persevering effort is never secure of itself but needs always to be sustained by continuing effort. So much for a slight pause to consider ease—back to comfort.

It is obvious that to make strong is not synonymous with deliverance from difficulty. Rather it already implies just the opposite. We begin here to have an uneasy suspicion that to be comforted, to be made strong, may mean just precisely that we become equipped to bear difficulty. It is a well-founded suspicion. To be comforted in sorrow is to be made strong enough to suffer. If mourning, then, is to be blessed with strength, it cannot of itself be evil. It must, in fact, bear within itself an intrinsic good. How else could God comfort it, much less declare it blessed?

Before we reflect on the radix of mourning, we could stop to recall how we ourselves comfort the mourner. We comfort a sorrowing friend not by removing the cause for sorrow, which is most often quite beyond our power in any case, but by reaching out the strength of our love for our friend, our understanding of his pain, our making our-

selves one with him in it. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, heroine of our times, has brought comfort to how many of the wretched dying in India and elsewhere by the strength of her love, by her presence to them. Sometimes we can alleviate certain effects of suffering. We can at times reduce pain with drugs or therapy. Neither of these is actually a comfort, but simply an alleviation, a reduction, a mending. True, physical suffering can sometimes by God-given human skills be ended and pain eventually soothed or even eradicated. But for the mourner, it is a question of the present situation rather than making an end of the situation. There will be finale to mourning, certainly, an eternal soothing, a forever-and-ever eradication. "And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more mourning nor weeping nor sorrow any more, because the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4). But this does not appear to be what Christ is speaking about in the third beatitude. For he does not talk of the end of mourning which is to come in life eternal, but of the comforting that is to be given in order that mourning in this life may be possible.

Possible? Yes. For mourning is a very pure thing. Without strength, it degenerates into its very antonym: self-pity. It can even be perverted into bitterness and end in blasphemy. Why does God allow this? Why is God so cruel? Why does God do this to me? How many have sought to punish God by walking no more with him when he allows them to suffer! "I am through

with God. I have had enough of him." Or, "I have stopped going to church. I will show God what he can and cannot do if he expects me to worship him." Is this our newer mode of making idols? We agree to worship a graven image of our own decisions. We know what is right and what is fitting for God to do. And we shall do homage to a deity who behaves himself according to the way in which we instruct him. All this is, of course, to disqualify ourselves for mourning, which is always sprung out of the humility of the creature before the Creator and which is rooted in faith.

But someone may want to raise a small question here. Does not faith of itself cast out mourning? And if I believe that this sorrow, this disappointment, this betrayal is part of a divine plan, would I not show a lack of faith if I mourned over it? It is a good enough question. It has a ready enough answer, even if the answer is part of the whole mystery of suffering.

Why did Christ weep at the tomb of Lazarus? "We have not here a lasting city" (Heb. 13:14). And, "I will raise him up in the last day" (Jn. 6:40). In point of fact, Christ was going to raise Lazarus up that same day and within a very few minutes. And he knew that he was. How explain the tears? A touching demonstration of kinship with the common run of humanity? A lovely bit of play-acting? But Christ never gave demonstrations in the manner of play-acting. "I am the truth" (Jn. 14:6). And the truth which he taught at Lazarus' tomb was not only that he has complete power over life and death but also that faith does not

eliminate mourning, not even for the Son of God. What is mourning, anyway? There are many kinds of it and many definitions of it: to grieve, to lament, to sorrow, to weep. I would like to propose an addition to the dictionary definitions: to mourn is to make the right response to penancing truth.

Returning to Lazarus, we see that this is exactly what Christ did at the tomb of his friend. Death is a truth. It is right. We have all sinned in Adam and we bear together the penalty. Having come to glorious life out of the dust of non-being, we have with Adam obscured the glory. We are redeemed by the Son to the pardon of the Father which returns us to eternal glory. This is the truth. But with painful appropriateness the return to glory and entrance into eternal exaltation will be accomplished only by way of the penance of falling again into dust, this time the dust of non-animation which is assuredly a humiliation and degradation for the noble creature that is man.

This penancing truth reaches out to all who love this dead person, this *non-anima* that will so rapidly and appallingly forfeit its former physical testimony to *anima*. Those who are unwilling to mourn will strike out in fury against the truth of death. The unpenitential will hate death, fear death, execrate death. And all of these are, of course, precisely wrong responses to the penancing truth of death. Even farther removed from the right response are those who perpetrate frauds about death. We have the kind of cemetery which Evelyn Waugh observed and

memorialized with such penetrating brilliance in his book, *The Loved One*. Fountains flowing, soft music playing, dummies reposing in a playtime park of unreality. We have a thousand devices to distract us from death, even to the inane scheming to withhold from the dying the fact of their dying.

Over and against all this bitterness and fear or this escapism through fantasies themselves crumbling and decaying with the odor of that worse death which is untruth, stands mourning pure and undefiled in its right response to penancing truth.

We have deserved to die and to experience temporary spatial separation from our loved ones as well as personal physical decomposition. And so we weep. It is an act of faith, really. A humble acknowledgement that we have brought upon ourselves a penance in altering God's original design. We accept and embrace the truth without acrimony, with tears but not with protesting screams, for there is nothing to protest about. This is always characteristic of the true mourner. He does not protest. He suffers.

Lazarus' sister, Mary, wept at home. And when Jesus came, she immediately got up and went out, not to accuse him for allowing death to be, but to meet him whose power she acknowledged. Martha did not berate the Lord, but merely stated a fact: "If you had been here, my brother had not died" (John 11:21). That is, she made an act of faith in Christ's absolute authority over life and death. That she was mourning and not demanding a miracle is obvious in her concern over what seemed to her the imprudence of the Savior

in preparing to present to the senses of the onlookers the humiliating facts of death. Better to leave poor reeking Lazarus sealed in his tomb until that last day when "I know that he will rise again" (Jn. 11:24). Meanwhile, with Christ, she and Mary did mourn the separation. And while Jesus did not accede to Martha's prudent counsel that he reconsider his plan, he did mourn: "And Jesus wept" (Jn. 11:35).

So, too, did our blessed Lord mourn over Jerusalem, his tears accompanied by what is perhaps the tenderest of all his self-revelations: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! you that kill the prophets! How often have I longed to gather you under my wing, as a hen gathers her chickens in, but you would not" (Mt. 23:37). Here is another king of mourning. That of the mother whose persevering love fails to reclaim the errant son. That of the shepherd who is so willing to leave the ninety-nine and search in the brambles for the one lost sheep, but whose bleeding efforts prove ineffectual before the determination of that sheep to remain lost. That of the spender and giver and lover who is deserted by the heirs, unrequited by the donees, spurned by the beloved. Before the penancing truth of the self-destructiveness which is one option of the human will with whose freedom God has chosen to circumscribe his own omnipotence, Christ wept. "How often have I desired..." God desired it. "And you would not." Man despised it.

With the parents through all ages who watch at the window like the prodigal father (Lk. 15:20) but unlike him never see the wayward child re-



turning home, Jesus shed tears. In company with all who see their best efforts go unrewarded and suffer unrequited love, Christ mourned. In

God's own way, these mourners shall be comforted. And Christ himself was "made strong" to go forth to his passion and death even in the foreknowledge that of his beloved Jerusalem there would remain "not a stone upon a stone" (Lk. 21:6).

Perhaps it is the will to go on that is God's comforting to this kind of mourning. "O, Corbie, Corbie!" mourned Saint Colette over her native city that would have none of her. Then the Poor clare saint went on with her work of the Franciscan Reform entrusted to her. "Absalom, my son, O! my son, Absalom!" mourned David (2 Sam. 19:4). Then he got on with his business of reigning. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" And blessed are all such stricken mourners. They shall be comforted.

We have said that the very antonym of mourning is self-pity. Those who mourn cannot at the same time indulge in self-pity. And those who are engrossed in self-pity will not be capable of mourning. Nor can they be comforted. For the self-pitying, it is not so much a matter of being weak, which we all are in one degree or another ("Who is weak, and I am not weak?"—2 Cor. 11:29), but of pampering weakness, luxuriating in personal condolences. This has nothing at all to do with the mourning which Christ blessed.

Grief is strong. It will cry and weep before penancing truth. Self-pity will only whimper and whine. In the manner in which we face the penancing truth of our own misdeeds and betrayals of grace there stands

forth with bright clarity the difference between the simplicity of mourning and that whimpering self-justification which can construct almost incredible elaborations of non-truth. Let's consider the mourning for our own offenses.

We acknowledge the fact that we can defeat God's ambitions for our holiness, that we can belie his expectations of us. The mourning for our having actuated this knowledge is what we mean by that abiding contrition for sin which nearly all the classical writers on the spiritual life have presented as characteristic of holy creaturehood. The modifying specific is important: abiding. The very word has about it a kind of peace and even sweetness. The implication is steadiness, stabilization, and a form of contentment which, so far removed from anything masochistic, comes of recognition of the appropriate.

It requires healthiness of mind, robustness of spirit, and rectitude of conscience to be able to mourn for our sins. The moody melancholic is disqualified, for he does not really believe himself to be forgiven by God. The man flabby of spirit cannot manage anything like the true mourning for sin. He merely spins out his endless threnody from the easy chair of his caricature of spiritual living, disavowing God's ability to heal his wounds of sin in favor of the odious pleasure of perpetually examining his sores. The scrupulous are unequipped for mourning because they will never believe that God has really got the thing straight. If God knew about themselves what they know about themselves, God would undoubtedly withhold absolu-

tion. And so they march around and around in the stuffy room of self, intent on fetching up new evidence against themselves. What all of these non-mourners have in common is an undeviating focus on self. They simply never get as far as looking at God. This explains why they cannot see themselves either, except in the distortions which are their images wrested, as it were, out of the beam of God's love.

And so it is that those who may appear to lament their sins and offenses but are actually disqualified for mourning by their non-focussing on God, do some strange things. Maybe at this point it would be salutary, however, to move away from the more facile observations on the third person plural, and humbly confront the first person. Let us agree that it is we, not any conveniently faceless "they," who do some very strange things and accomplish some very deft psychological sleight-of-hand work when we deliver ourselves over to self-recrimination loud or listless as the case may be according to mood, temperament, and weather.

We cannot have failed to notice that the person who makes most noise about his condition of black-sheepedness is usually the most unwilling to be led to the sheep-pool. Vehement declarations of our utter uncomeliness of soul often enough are used to avoid recruitment to holiness. We are no good, we explain and protest. Look at all our failures, laziness, betrayals—the lot. What we can really mean by this is that we do not by any manner or means intend to be deprived of our ticket to undemanding mediocrity.

We are no good. So, don't expect us to be good. We are black sheep. That means that no one has a right to ask whiteness of us. We shall want to inquire of ourselves before God (for we get the oddest answers elsewhere) whether we have not sritten ourselves a license card for permanent or at least intermittent very bad behavior by signing in as a black sheep—as one determined to remain so. Certainly there is no true mourning for sin in this.

So, too, in the indulgence of brooding remorsefulness, we can observe ourselves engaged in agile footwork to escape that confrontation with the penancing truth which elicits the right response of mourning for sin. If I convince myself, usually at full sound volume, that I am beyond recall and can never be worthy of forgiveness (as though anyone ever is), I give myself a kind of blank check on all manner of misdemeanors. The past is so bad that it is unforgivable. Obviously this frame of mind will scarcely rouse me to great efforts in the present or splendid hopes for tomorrow. When we affront God's omnipotence and declare ourselves unforgivable, we grant ourselves permission to sin without limit.

There is something large about this, but in the sense of perversion. Or maybe we should call it inverse largeness that leads down to the sooty speck of a totally devitalized self, devitalized since it is no longer recognized as the image of God. Because we affirm that we have done the unforgivably wrong in the past, we give ourselves permission to live without seeking forgiveness now. We excuse ourselves from mourning. We

elect instead that bitterness of remorse which is often enough the springboard for all manner of licentiousness.

For the scrupulous, in their turn, there is obviously no possibility for mourning which is of its nature centered outside self and on the other. If we are centered on God, we of happy necessity believe not just *in* him—but *him*. We know that his power of forgiving remains forever greater than our power of offending. And we are given by him to understand that he is not only in possession of all the facts of our life but apprised within himself of all our vital (and non-vital, especially) statistics, and that he knows far more about us and our acts and our thoughts and our most secret desires than we do ourselves. We become aware of our sheer nakedness before him. And in the midst of our tears of contrition and confusion and abiding sorrow for having betrayed God's love, in our mourning before the panancing truth, we are happy with an absolutely unique joy. We understand that we have never taken God by surprise. We are given to apprehend the shaking truth that God would not have repented his having created us had he been able to foresee how we would function. For he did foresee. But one cannot go on describing all this. Anyone who has experienced it will understand, and it cannot be explained to one who has not.

Mourning of this kind is less a mourning for our sins than for our sinfulness. And this abides with us always, not just concomitantly with desiring to have our sins forgiven, but made possible precisely because

the sins are taken away and then only the consciousness of sinfulness remains, fitting us and inviting us to mourn that we may be comforted.

There are many causes for mourning. In these two: the separation and loneliness which death occasions with the helpless witnessing of pain and suffering so far as concerns our power to change it, and the abiding sorrow for our sinfulness, as in all other kinds of Christian mourning, there can never be an element of craven fear, though there is always something of the "timor Domini," the awe before God who regulates life and death, who is judge in heaven and on earth. The difference is very clear in the Latin words for these quite disparate and even antithetical fears. *Metus*, appropriately enough, is centered on *me*. I am afraid that something I consider adverse will happen to me, that something will be taken away if the truth is known about me, that I shall be brought up short, that I shall stand revealed. All that dreary company. God has nowhere promised that he will comfort this servile fear which has in it nothing of true mourning. *Timor, timor Domini*, is so different. It is, as the Scriptures explain, the beginning of wisdom (Sirach 1:16). It is of the Lord, yes. And it brings his comfort which will eventually release us into Love, for it is never centered on me, but on God. It is full of awe for God's power. It is informed with solicitude that he should not be offended. It is especially, a right response to penancing truth.

Up through this beginning of wisdom which *timor* is with all its

consciousness of creaturehood and that understanding love which, in the end, casts out all fear—even *timor*. God is love (1 Jn. 4:8). *Metus* knows no mourning. *Timor* mourns and is comforted. And then there remains only *amor*.

We have lingered on Christ's mourning for his dead friend, Lazarus, and for his beloved city, Jerusalem. He shows us likewise in the Scriptures how he deals with the mourning sinner. "Two men went up to the temple to pray . . ." (Lk. 18:10). When the publican put down his stricken head and said, O God, be merciful to me; I am a sinner" (Lk. 18:13), he did not add one word of justification. Mourners don't. How differently the story could have been written. I am a victim of circumstance. If only I had had different parents. I got in with the wrong people. The business of being a publican and cutting corners on tax collecting has been handed down in our miserable family. Of course I had to associate with riffraff. I was led astray. Society has betrayed me. But no, the publican made the briefest act of contrition on Scripture record. "God, be merciful to me. I am a sinner." "He would not so much as lift his eyes" (Lk. 18:13) to God—*timor Domini*—much less defend his self-justifying rights against God's invasion of salvation. Do we not see our Lord's relishing of this parable when he concludes with a ring of pride: "This man went home justified" (Lk. 18:14). What does justified mean? Made holy. If we want to be quite literal, we can say that this sinner went home a saint because he was so humbly honest in confronting the truth and

making a right response to its penancing. He mourned. Nor does one show forth one beatitude apart from others. The forgiven publican was forgiven because he was poor in spirit, because he was meek and without excuse for himself, because he mourned without any self-pity.

It is strange how deftly we sometimes eschew that *timor Domini*, beginning of wisdom. We could ask ourselves why we are so unwise as to try to defend our interests against God. Is he our enemy, then? Someone before whom we must justify ourselves as the unfortunate pharisee in that same parable did, listing all our good points? There is obviously no place for mourning in this kind of performance. To think that we have no reason to mourn for our failures is to step out of the radius of God's comforting.

Christian mourning reveals ourselves to ourselves, whether in some external sorrow, that is, not directly pertaining to our interior spiritual life, or whether in the inner court of our being. To those who are sorry and suffer without remorse, without argument, without need to defend their interests against God or against those who represent him, God says, "They shall be comforted." He comforts as the sees fit. And his most exquisite comforting is experienced beyond explanation. Surely we have all of us had this experience sometime: the moment in which God really lets us see ourselves as we are and not

as we so hotly debate that we are, and in which we know in our own being the exhilarating joy that comes of this. God does not love me because I have this or that quality, or turn in this excellent performance (cf. the elder son of the prodigal father); but I am lovable because he loves me. I am forgiven because he is merciful. And I am comforted because I have mourned, and not raged or brooded or bedeviled myself and my company.

This seems to be what the saints meant when they talked of the joy they experienced in their faults and their failings. They were not glad that they had sinned, but the headiness of recognizing what they were and that God forgave them, set them singing even as they wept. They mourned. And they were comforted.

One final word. In true mourning, there is no aggressiveness. People despair; people commit suicide, people blaspheme God because they refuse to mourn. They are aggressors of God, so he cannot comfort them. But the more we mourn in this scriptural sense of allowing ourselves to be comforted by God in our bearing of suffering, the more fit we are to forgive others and to comfort them in their own mourning. It is a beautiful circle. And it goes on and on, right into eternity, where mourning is no longer comforted because it is crowned.

(To be continued)



Spring Is for Joy

CROCUSES shove their hairy heads out of a nest of matted oak leaves.

Tulips blaze near the doorsteps beckoning to friendly jonquils—their next-door neighbors.

A man across the street wheels out his creaky lawn mower. Soon the fragrance of newly-cut grass saturates the air.

Robins twitter deep secrets to their mates— mostly reiterating endlessly "Spring is here."

A cocker spaniel pads along the sidewalk crinkling its nose in an attempt to sort out the many perfumes of the spring air.

Children roller skate recklessly along the street, screeching their delight at their liberation from classrooms.

An old man totters hesitantly, stooping often to lean on his ancient cane. He searches for signs and smells which delight and tickle his senses.

A housewife hangs out her wash, hoping to capture the clean freshness of the early morning.

Park trees stagger beneath the heavy scent of blossoms, while bees buzz busily, harvesting a bounteous crop of nectar and pollen.

SO WITH THE SPRING COMES:

Healing of hearts.

Restoration of confidence in God, in man, and in self..

Quickening of souls, throbbing with gratitude for another winter passed.

Easter's healing balm, with forgetfulness of trials borne and wounds mended.

Joy in the present; hope for the future; love and peace enveloping all in the boundless magnitude of the heart of God.

SISTER MARY DOLORES AHLES, O.S.F.

Mother Marianne— A Sister of Saint Francis

SISTER M. THADDEUS, O.S.F.

II. God Writes with His Own Hand

IN NOVEMBER, 1862, at 26 years of age, Barbara Kopp dreamed only of being a Sister of the Third Order of St. Francis of Syracuse, New York. She had already demonstrated her abilities as manager of a home after the death of her mother, and she had further manifested her familial devotion by caring for her father in his last illness. Now that her brothers and sisters were established in lives of their own, she could fulfill her dream—she could become a Sister.

After her profession in the religious life, she began her teaching career; but her particular administrative abilities soon caused her appointment as the Superior at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse, which was staffed by her community. As a child she had been impressed by these Sisters who went about caring for the sick and the poor in her home town, and she had longed for the same opportunity. But it was granted her for only a

short period of time, for once again her talents and leadership qualities inspired her Sisters to elect her as the Superior of the entire community in 1877 and to re-elect her in 1881.

She had moved rapidly from among the ranks in the Sisterhood to the highest position in the community; and, as in all other positions, she did more than an adequate job.

What was left for her to do? Why had she attained this position so quickly? Seemingly, God had placed her in this suitable position in anticipation of the visit of Father Leonor, who came as the representative of the King and Queen of Hawaii begging for Sisters to aid the suffering members of the Hawaiian Islands so sadly afflicted with leprosy.

Mother Marianne, as she was titled, then conducted a very direct and collegial meeting with all the Sisters present. It was providential that all the Sisters

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had come together at this time for retreat. She frankly discussed the dangers of the disease, the strangeness of the land and people, the fear of distance, the depletion of the workers left at home, and the possibility of never returning to the mainland. She also expressed her sympathy for the wretched, neglected people and their poverty of material and spiritual aid, but the freedom of choice rested with her Sisters. When the vote proved affirmative, and the volunteers responded overwhelmingly, Mother Marianne was convinced that her life would never be the same. Her life script was far from complete—now she must continue to allow God to re-write her part in a foreign land under strange conditions.

How different things would be! No longer held in the security of the Syracuse Community, at the mercy of a government whose desires and claims on her energies would be almost suffocating, Mother Marianne would find, indeed, that her life-script was radically transformed by constant association with desperately ill and deformed individuals, and insufficient means at her disposal to care for them.

Although her office as major superior presupposed her role as guardian and protector, she found that role expanded now: she would now fully assume that obligation not only for those

Sisters whom she accompanied to the Islands, but also for those many afflicted members under her care, whom she fondly called "the children."

In God's plan she once more crossed an ocean to a strange land to serve a new people. Following the path of Christ and Francis to care for the leper and in imitation of the community foundress, Mother Bernardina, who had crossed the ocean to "go to that America—that country so far away—and nurse the sick people and take care of the little children as do the good Sisters of Saint Francis in the cities here in our country."

For them—the unknown sufferers—she would venture forth: relinquish her title and assume the Franciscan role of servanthood. As Francis had embraced the leper, so would she. As Francis had kissed him, so would her gentle hands bind his wounds. As Francis had felt a new surge of strength and love, so too did Mother Marianne grow and love and restore those whose faith had become superstition, whose joy had deteriorated into license, and whose future was only for a moment at a time.

Very often Mother Marianne is depicted as that great heroic soul who walked among the deformed—shaking hands, embracing each one, and greatly enjoying her welcome to Molokai. Her letters, however, reveal

her true self—her true feelings—the self that felt repelled, that trembled interiorly, but that loved so strongly that those around her would see only her smile and her gentle concern.

Is this not a greater virtue?

Mother Marianne most assuredly did not enjoy the ill treatment meted out to herself and her Sisters by one of the agents on the island who resented their arrival because it meant that he, too, must correct his ways. She probably suffered much grief when all of the lovely flowers and trees which she and the girls had planted, watered, and tended to a beautiful growth were suddenly uprooted by an official who "needed" them to win the prize offered for the best garden of the year. Certainly she did not relish the filth in which she found the lepers, nor their lack of manners caused by a type of dehumanizing despair in their lives.

All of this, and more, God continued to write in her life script. She accepted her part with the reply: "We must lean on God," or "Heaven arranges things."

The fact that Mother Marianne leaned on God while remaining a very human individual is clearly brought out in one of her letters to Mother Bernardina where she tells her how pleased she is with the progress of the hospital—but she feels a twinge of desire to be there:

I am pleased to know that the hospital is progressing so well . . .

I am painfully disappointed not to be able to return home but must submit to this as the holy will of God.

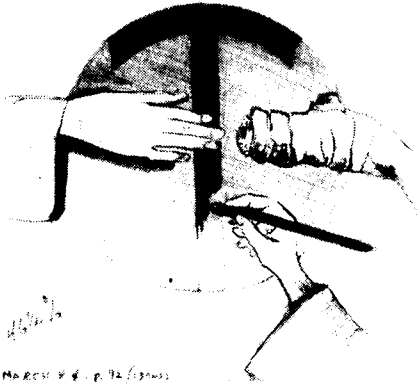
Again, in another letter to Mother Bernardina on the occasion of her feast day:

Your feast day is coming and that reminds me that I am one of your children, and as such come to you with sincere and hearty congratulations. I wish it was my privilege to do so in person. The thought of the great distance between us makes my heart heavy and sad. Will I ever see those whom I love again? God's will be done. Do not think me heartless, because I am so still and silent. My heart is all too sensitive and feels deeply and keenly the pain of separation from the loved ones and from the community.

Besides her loneliness regarding her community and Mother Bernardina, who had always been a source of inspiration to her, Mother Marianne also missed her family. In a letter to her nephew she attempts to explain her slow and infrequent communication:

We had for ten years a Japanese family living with us as servants, the women assisted in the house work, and the man was a general helper. They left us last October and have not been replaced, for the simple reason that people do

not like to come to the leper settlement, for love or money. We are obliged to do all our house work and attend to the wants of our leper girls and women; as many of them are helpless, we have to do their sewing, and all this takes more time than God allows us; consequently much that we would take pleasure in doing has to be left undone—for instance, such as writing letters to dear ones.



There were other forms of communication, too, which were equally difficult to handle. In her role as guardian Mother sometimes had to be very stern with those she loved, and obviously she suffered as much as they did when a correction had to be given for a command not heeded. One occasion which caused her much grief was the incident of a visit to Father Damian's house. He, now a leper, was so overjoyed at the arrival of the Sisters that he had his cook prepare a simple meal for them of some home-made bread, hard-boiled eggs, and coffee. Mother Marianne was not

present when Father suggested they have lunch, since she was looking over the site for the new home. The two Sisters with Father Damien attempted politely to refuse his offer; but when he insisted that he would make it right with Mother and appeared very hurt, they felt they could not refuse the dying man. Later, upon their arrival home, the Sisters confided to Mother what had transpired in her absence. Mother did not scold them, but she reminded them that she had given them an order not to eat anything since both Father and his cook were lepers. Then she simply asked them a question. "Would a sick Sister—or a disobedient one—be of use in the work the Order had undertaken?" With those few words the matter was closed. The Sisters knew that Mother would never again refer to the incident; and they also knew they would obey this careful, concerned guardian.

Mother Marianne was to assume still another role in her life script. Father Damien did not close the matter, but came, conscience-ridden, to kneel at her feet and beg her pardon for putting her Sisters in such an awkward and dangerous position. Somewhat disconcerted and embarrassed, Mother rose to the occasion, determined that this great man would not go away guilt-ridden as he had come. As he left, she was awed with

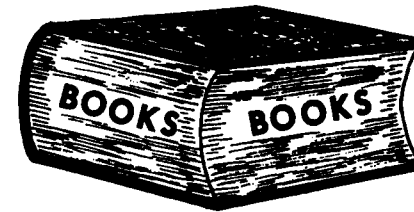
admiration for his honesty and pity for his suffering.

Each moment of the day and night presented new challenges. A knock at the door, at any time, could mean a small child wanted a needle and thread from the hands of Mother Marianne herself; or it could mean some harassment taking place in one of the dorms: Perhaps one of the

discouraged patients had decided to run away, or a small child who had been very ill was now on the verge of dying. For these human beings and their all-too-human needs, Mother Marianne schooled herself, relying mainly on God for her education. She tried reading the lines as He wished them read—not as she might have desired.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Carroll, James, *Forbidden Disappointments*. Paramus, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1974. Pp. 60. Paper, \$2.50.
- Doherty, Catherine de Hueck, *Poustinia: Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1975. Pp. 216. Paper, \$3.50.
- Faucher, W. Thomas, and Ione C. Nieland, *Touching God: A Book about Children's Liturgies*. Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1975. Pp. 157. Paper, \$3.50.
- Kernan, Julie, *Our Friend, Jacques Maritain: A Personal Memoir*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975. Pp. 192. Cloth, \$7.95.



Grace and the Human Condition (Vol. 2 of *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*). By Juan Luis Segundo, S.J. Trans. John Drury. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973. Pp. viii-213. Cloth, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Gerald M. Dolan, O.F.M., Ph.D. (*Theology*,

Louvain), Associate Professor at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, N.Y., Lecturer in the Department of Theology, St. Bonaventure University.

The present work is the second volume in a projected series of five under the general title *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*.

The hope of this second volume, building upon what has already been said in *The Community Called Church*, is in the bringing to light that newness which is both the hope and the goal of the whole series. [For a review of volume 1, see our July 1973 issue, pp. 221-22; reviews of volumes 3 & 4 are now in preparation—ed.]. The newness of the New Humanity is not a new or newly warmed-over ideology; it is the newness of the New Covenant, the Gift of God which is Himself. The question which this work addresses is whether growth to full human existence today is a process of estrangement from God. This is the question which concerns the whole Christian economy, and the value of Father Segundo's work is that it speaks, not to the professional few, but to the Christian enquirer.

At a time when a once enthusiastic renewal seems to have become weary and breathless, we have a new dimension coming to us in North America from the staff of the Peter Faber Center in Montevideo, Uruguay. How fortunate it is that a theological treatment of the Grace of God comes to us, not from the theological bastions of Europe, but from that section of the World which has called upon the consciences of us all to give heed to the demand for human dignity for all. This book seeks to speak of God's Grace; it seeks to discover something of the meaning of the transformation caused by grace; and it seeks to find Grace operative in the oft jolted dimensions of contemporary Christian existence. To the North American mind, so taken up with systems and planning, this book (and hopefully, the series)

comes and asks us to listen to the meaning of life as given to us by Jesus in the Gospels and the other New Testament writings, and proclaimed anew for our day by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council.

Nevertheless, for the North American reader, the attraction of this book is betrayed on two levels of utility. It does treat, after all, of each one of us and God. To take it up is to receive a gift difficult to put aside, and the reader comes to realize that he has been happily seduced. This seduction is, however, the result of an expertly devised presentation of difficult theological questions and problems. Each chapter progresses according to two divisions. The initial article lays bare the essential aspects of the issue in three sections corresponding to (1) the biblical data, (2) the important historical moments which have clarified theological insight, and (3) our own questions. Lines of thought important for the presentation in more depth are developed in a second division, "Clarifications." Here central themes and related issues culled from human experience, literature, and other areas of study are developed in a more concrete way.

This structure is complemented by footnotes which have been engineered, not for the erudite, but for the reader of ordinary means and interest. Valuable reference texts culled from the Scriptures and conciliar documents are thematically related to divisions within the text. And, in addition to these appendices, there are discussion questions designed to promote the dynamics of study groups.

If theological discussion is to serve

Christian life today, it must open the way for each believer to respond inventively and loyally to the many questions which vex religious belief. *Grace and the Human Condition* is happily such a discussion. The theological position taken is basically rooted in the insights of Karl Rahner; but it is not merely warmed over Rahner. Segundo develops his theme by concentrating upon man, aware of his tragic and divided condition, who seeks the authentic law of freedom and liberty proclaimed by the Apostle Paul (cf. Rom. 7:14-25).

This is a work of solid worth. There are some weaknesses which may derive from the translation (e.g., "Christendom," p. 4), or from a view of the Christian life which seems overly confident in the meaning of *secular* as understood in the sacred-profane dialectic of the sixties. There can be a legitimate question raised concerning the denigration of that tradition in the development of the Church which can be called, in the very broad meaning of the term, monastic (cf. pp. 47, 64, *passim*). It is somewhat unfortunate that the author passes quickly from Pelagius to Jansenism (pp. 15-20), without further clarification. And it is unfortunate, too, that in an instance of a major citation, the "Denzinger number" cited is not to be found in more recent editions (p. 107). It seems, finally that the translator would have helped the North American reader if he had obtained permission to adjust parts of Chapter III, Part i, §3 (pp. 108-12) so as to eliminate the obviously South American bias arising from a culture which has been traditionally

understood as Christian.

These are but small items which in no way distract from the value of this book. At a moment when the anthropological dimensions of theological studies have resolutely demanded attention, and when the social dimensions of Christian faith have become more and more visible, and when the need for an educated and adult Christianity makes itself known, particularly in the area known as the "Third World," this work—hopefully, the whole series—is a very valuable tool.

Myth and Modern Man. By Raphael Patai. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972. Pp. xi-359. Cloth, \$10.00.

Reviewed by James S. Dalton, Ph. D. (University of Chicago), Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Siena College, Loudonville, New York.

Although the subject of mythology is one of the most popular themes of modern scholarship (as, for instance, in Anthropology, Ethnology, Literature and, even Psychology), the term "myth" is widely misunderstood. The gap between the often obscure scholarly articles on the one hand and the common usage as meaning "falsehood" or "fiction," on the other, is a wide one. It is one of the principal strengths of Professor Patai's effort that it seeks to bridge this gap. He attempts to present a clear explanation of the scholarly discussion for the average reader and tries to show how this is important for understanding modern myths.

In the first chapter Professor Patai presents a clear and concise review of the various ways myth has been understood in the past. After reading this chapter one can no longer be satisfied with the "journal-ese" usage of the term (myth=lie).

Chapter two takes up some of the problems of myth, such as the relation of myth and history, how myths are created and what purposes they serve. Here some of Professor Patai's positions are open to dispute, e.g., myths as vehicles of psychological gratification (pp. 3-4) or the history of myth as man's attempt to create the gods which he needs (p. 162). In spite of this he cannot be faulted on his efforts to see the parallels between how myth functioned in the past and how it continues to function in modern times.

The bulk of *Myth and Modern Man* is dedicated to analyzing the various forms which myth has taken in recent years in the Western world. Professor Patai sees such phenomena as Marxism, Nazism, Che Guevera, the "God is dead" theology, new Black religious faiths, cartoons and cartoon characters (such as Mickey Mouse), Madison Avenue, the "new morality," UFO's, and even Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's evolutionary theory as examples of modern myths. These, he argues, play important roles in the lives of many of our contemporaries, religious and non-religious alike.

In such an ambitious effort it is almost inevitable that some cases will be weaker than others. Often it seems that Professor Patai strains to include too much as, for instance, when he tries to connect the dead film star, James Dean, with the

self castration of the Greek god, Attis. At this and other points in the book less labored explanations would suffice.

Another, and more distressing, weakness is the intrusion of some of Professor Patai's personal *political* biases into the discussion. The most obvious example of this is his treatment of what, in chapter eight, he calls "the myth of the child terrorist." This section strikes me as almost a polemic against the radicals of the nineteen-sixties (pp. 124-29). Statements such as the following are personal opinions which have little relevance to a discussion of myth: "The young militant is basically a spoiled child who has remained emotionally immature, infantile."

Another questionable political conclusion to this study of myth appears in the final chapter ("Wanted: a charter myth for democracy"). The argument maintains that since myth is such a powerful stimulant to action and belief, the American government should use myth to unify and control its people. This is a dangerous option for a democracy to consider. Myth, in this case is close to thought control imposed by the government on its people. Traditional American reliance on the will of the people expressed in their democratic institutions would, it seems to this reviewer, be a safer course.

In summary, *Myth and Modern Man* is an effort which partially succeeds. Despite its weaknesses it is worth considering for the insights and clues which it does provide in the attempt to understand contemporary man through an analysis of the *truth* of his myths.

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