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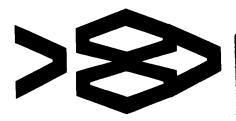


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COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for our September issue were drawn by Brother Ronald A. Chretien, O.F.M., of St. Francis Center for Christian Living, Rye Beach, New Hampshire.

A GUEST EDITORIAL



LIBERAL ARTS AND FREEDOM

A rew Months ago the student newspaper at Siena College included an editorial concerning curriculum reform. The editor criticized the attempt by certain departments to increase their requirements in order to ensure a high standard of education because she felt that the increase of courses would be an infringement on a person's freedom and "A Throwback to the 1950's." While the specifics of that editorial are unimportant here, its general position led me to reflect on the goals of a liberal arts education and on how well these goals have been served by the "liberalized" curriculum at Siena College and many other liberal arts colleges.

The first area which must be explored is the purpose of a liberal arts education. I believe that a person's study in the liberal arts should elicit in him a vision of truth, beauty, and the meaning of life. It should broaden his horizons and inspire him to examine himself seriously in relation to the world. This reflection will aid a student to discover what it means to be a created human being who exists spiritually and must relate on that level to his world and to his God.

If it is the aim of liberal arts education to educe this response from a student, then proponents of the liberal arts must devise programs which will satisfy that goal. Those courses should be required which challenge the student's mind and promote a degree of introspection. This is usually best served by courses in the Humanities which instill a deep appreciation of the complexities of life. By being confronted with both the questions and the diverse solutions of the world's greatest minds, the student is encouraged to build his own vision of reality.

I offer no definite proposals because I feel it is the duty of dedicated professors, administrators, and students to determine a program based on the strengths of their own institution. But there are certain

Brother Ockle E. Johnson, O.F.M., a novice member of Holy Name Province, was graduated summa cum laude from Siena College last June. He majored in physics, in which he received the award for academic excellence. We thought his letter to the student newspaper on a liberal arts curriculum received so favorable a reception that our readers would be interested in this expanded version.

general areas which should be considered. First, a historical perspective is necessary to enable a person to understand the world situation and to make decisions in a democratic society. The development of a solid outlook on life will be facilitated by a strong background in philosophy, religion, and English. A familiarity with the social and natural sciences will round out the student's education. The number of courses which should be required in each area must depend on the needs of the students, but priority should be given to philosophy, religion, and English, because these areas, which cannot be adequately understood at the pre-collegiate level, are essential in nurturing a broad vision of life.

Another point which must be made concerns the responsibility of the college to the individual. As I stated earlier, I believe that one of the goals of a liberal arts education should be to broaden the vision of the student. It is precisely because a student enters college with a limited vision that requirements are necessary. The responsibility of the educational institution is to ensure that a student is provided with the courses and environment to actualize his potentials. A student enters a program of education with the faith that those who have designed the curriculum are more mature and better qualified than he to specify those areas which are crucial both to mastering a major field and to developing into a well-rounded person.

Since the freedom of the student to determine his education is the major issue, I feel compelled to say a few words in an effort to shed some light on this problem area. First, requiring a student to take particular courses does not violate his existential freedom. He is still free to pursue other areas which are of special interest to him during his leisure time or, if necessary, by taking more than the required number of credit hours for graduation. If an individual finds that a particular program does not serve to promote his own development, then he should seek out another better suited to his needs. Secondly, it must be asked how well the freedom has been utilized. If the liberalized curriculum has fostered a broad educational experience and an atmosphere of academic excellence, then it has been successful and should be continued. But if an open curiculum has produced people with tunnel vision, whom Fr. Daniel O'Connell, president of St. Louis University, would call (using a German term) Fachidioten—"specialty idiots"—then educators must fulfill their responsibility to their students by instituting standards which will provide a broad, high quality educational experience. What is even worse than the production of "specialty idiots" is the real possibility that, by reducing requirements, colleges have promoted an atmosphere of laziness among students which has enabled them to graduate from college with no vision at all.

It is time for educators dedicated to the liberal arts tradition to reassess their responsibility to the young men and women who come to them for an education and to reassert the superiority of a broad liberal arts education. The liberal arts college has a responsibility to provide a healthy alternative to the business school, the technological institute, and the do-it-yourself state university.

While these remarks have been addressed primarily to those involved in education, it is also essential for any person who assumes the role of guiding high school students to realize the benefits of a broad college experience. A liberal arts education seeks to develop the whole person, and hopefully this wholeness will lead to holiness.

Ockle E. Johnson, O.F.M.

En Route

Let the Wind, who is Wisdom,
Whisper to me
Have the Word, Who is Love,
Lead the way
And You,
With your Wings overshadow me, Lord,
Then I'll find the right path
Come what may.

Helen Martin

The End of Our Exploring:

The Holy Eucharist in the Spirituality of Francis

SISTER ANTOINETTE KENNEDY

THE EUCHARIST as pilgrim-feast finds roots in the Old Testament with the Exodus and in the New Testament with the death-resurrection cycle of Christian life. Man on the move, sandals and staff ready, shaking dust from his feet and proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes again, finds his possible reflection in the words of T.S. Eliot:

What we call the beginning is often the end

And to make an end is to make a beginning.

The end is where we start from . . . We die with the dying.

See, they depart and we go with them...

We shall not cease from exploration And the end of all our exploring Will be to arrive where we started

And know the place for the first time. Eliot's journey seems to suggest for the explorer, a decision, a unification with repetition, and a homecoming. Saint Francis was an explorer, a man caught up in the Scriptural pilgrim-feast of the Eucharist, enthusiastic for the journey, gentle with the cyclic flow of events, and hopeful of recogni-

This threefold dimension of ex-

tion when he faced God.

ploration seems to be integral to the Eucharistic theme of his writings. Francis is, as Celano describes him, a wanderer who comes to the Easter meal, uncomfortable with stability of decorated tables. He would be more at ease, perhaps, with the people to whom God commanded: "This is the way you must eat it; you shall have your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet and your staff in hand. This is the Passover of the Lord" (Ex. 12:11). As a pilgrim he was to be a man on foot, a member of a departing community, going forward to share the meal "from generation to generation" in another place, another time. "The friar minor is before all things a pilgrim... like a true pilgrim he must detach himself from everything that might slow down his journey."2 This continual departure, this letting go, was not meant to fragment life or damage man's desire for a homeland. Francis believed that the lord nourishes his people, dwells with them, and so "we should make a dwelling place within ourselves where he can stay, he who is the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son,

¹T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," in *Four Quarters* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1943), pp. 38-39.

²Maxime Ethier, O.F.M., and Alexis Cantin, O.F.M., "As Strangers and Pilgrims," in *Round Table of Franciscan Research* (trans. Luke Guilbeault, O.F.M.Cap.; Winter, 1967), p. 220.

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and Holy Spirit."3 Man moves with Iesus, finding his home ground in the end of his being, which comes to be only the beginning.

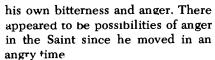
The end of slavery for the Jews was the start of an adventure. God blessed his people's initial spontaneity with his presence and bread. In the pilgrim Francis there seems to be a vision of a world reborn. and this vision has marked him in history as an explorer, a man in love with adventure, for "nothing could be more spontaneous, less artificial and 'cultured' than the genius of St. Francis."4 The world was under the sign of the Eucharist, and the man from Assisi spread the good word by reverencing the symbols and instruments of God's presence. Man, pre-eminent sign, was holy in the eves of Francis. He was the one responsible for carrying the Gospel, preparing a fitting table for the "chalices, corporals and all the ornaments of the altar that are related to the holy sacrifice" (Letter to All Superiors, p. 113). Once the table is set, the meal begins, and man is to be at his best, whether priest or member of the congregation: "Remember your dignity, then, my friar priests" (Letter to a General Chapter, p. 105);"... everyone should kneel down and give praise, glory, and honour to our Lord and God, living and true" (Letter to All Superiors, p. 113). The Eucharist is a solemnity, but not a sad occasion. Enthusiasm for the victory of Christ belongs to

Such overwhelming, abiding joy is, for Francis, the cause of awesome jubilation, with man, spirits, creation rejoicing when "Christ the Son of the Living God is present on the altar What wonderful majesty! What stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity!" (Letter to a General Chapter, p. 105). Francis of Assisi continues his journey with God, bells ringing. while the Holy Eucharist is honored and venerated in every place through which the friars travel. The end marks the beginning, and joy is the hallmark of both.

Enthusiasm may wane when familiar patterns are repeated and the individual travels, expecting new encounters yet finding old fears:

That same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus. ...Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but something kept them from seeing who it was He asked them, "What is it you are debating as you walk? They halted, their faces full of gloom [Lk. 24:13-

Pilgrims on the way travel with, at times, dull minds, tired hearts; yet through it all Francis insists that the gifts of courtesy, peace, and gentleness must be given. Gentleness may result when one has confronted



But he turned all his anger against himself. He was never known to be angry with another . . . He knew by instinct that the early fathers stressed that we become angry by concentrating on evil. He concentrated on the latent good in all men and drew it out until the evil in them was blotted Out.5

Francis, perhaps, knew the fear men experienced in the death-resurrection cycle: the fear that an ancient evil would meet them again disguised in new vestments. He used his words to encourage officials: "This is my advice. Put away all worry and anxiety, and receive the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Iesus Christ fervently in memory of him" (Letter to the Rulers, p. 116); his weary friars: "And when they have confessed their sins with due contrition, they should receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ"; a wounded clergy who "are in a privileged position because they alone administer to others" (Admonition 26).

As unifier, the Eucharist brought God's people courage, teaching them how to die, how to depart with reverence. Jesus, the Incarnate Word, seemed to be the reason why Francis could enter and move so gently into the cycle, linked with the continuous series of individuals coming before and after him. Leading the way was Jesus, present in different places and at work in his own way. Gentleness opened Francis to the possibility that the cycle was worth the effort. For even though "in this world there is nothing of the Most High Himself that we can possess and contemplate with our eyes, except His Body and Blood and His words by which we were created and by which we have been brought back from death to life" (Letter to All Clerics, p. 101), there is in the reception of Him the power to move on throughout the journey. The cycle entails repetitive yet

With enthusiasm and cyclic flow

unique movement, rising and falling

in brotherhood, all made possible

through the tenderness of Christ,

manna for his pilgrim people.

ed. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), p. 49.

the Christian, and Francis enters into this creative act of deliverance which begins anew the pilgrimage with Christ.

^{3&}quot;Rule of 1221" in St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies,

All other references taken from this volume will be referred to in text by title, chapter, and/or page. *Christopher Dawson, "The Theological Development of Medieval Culture," in Medieval Essays (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1954), p. 111.

Liam Brophy, "The Second Lucifer," in Social Justice Review (October, 1958), p. 188.

comes the hope of the wanderer that there is good reason to be making the journey, good reason to be rootless for a time. If the journey moves in circles there is hope that men will come home to familiar ground and recognize the beauty of the landscape. There are traces of happy surprise in the resurrection accounts of Scripture. In keeping with the Passover theme of Exodus the disciples know the Lord at mealtime after they have traveled awhile: "Jesus said, 'Come and have breakfast.' None of the disciples dared to ask, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord" (Jn. 21:12-13). "And when he had sat down with them at table, he took bread and said the blessing; he broke the bread and offered it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" (Lk. 24:30-31). Francis hoped for this recognition of Jesus. Whether his own words, or offered by him, this prayer holds, to a degree, an expression of his belief that the Father will "reign in us by your grace and bring us to your kingdom where we shall see you clearly, love you perfectly, be happy in your company, and enjoy you forever" (Paraphrase of the Our Father, p. 159).

Sharing in the meal of Jesus was Francis' pledge of belief that the kingdom would come. It was a time to proclaim the journey worthwhile; to announce the membership that he shared with the disciples of the past, one with them in hope and faith: "We, too, with our own eyes, see only bread and wine, but we must see further and firmly believe that this is his most holy Body and Blood, living and true" (Admonition 1).

Such faith looks forward to a home, a kingdom that has already begun for the man of Assisi. Again, in Chapter 1 of the Admonitions, he proclaims that the Spirit of God dwells in those who receive the Eucharist. This awesome dwelling within man demands a response, and holds man accountable not only for his inner poverty before reception, but also his actions after the meal is over:

All those are damned who see the sacrament of the Body of Christ which is consecrated on the altar in the form of bread and wine by the words of our Lord in the hands of the priest and do not see or believe in the Spirit and in God that this is really the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Francis had before him the reason for the journey, the dwelling of the Lord within him, the foretaste of a surprise that recognizes familiar ground and faces. An enthusiastic, gentle pilgrimage is worth the cost because the Lord man receives is the Lord into whose hands man will fall. To be able to sit at the table. to rest in the hollow of God's hand, has its beginning in the Eucharist. By recognizing the Lord under the signs of bread and wine, man sharpens his vision for receptive communion with Jesus in the Kingdom of God.

Exploration oftentimes is a movement away from land that has come to be too confining. The thrust forward, initially enthusiastic, takes man through land unexplored by him. Throughout his journey, the wanderer moves in rhythm up and down toward the goal which might bring him to his starting point. With the recognition that he is home once more—wiser, weary—comes the opportunity to accept God as source of the promise of a future kingdom which begins from within. The journey often commences when the pilgrim finds it simpler to move outward than inward. God accepts the decisions allows man to travel, lead-

ing him in patience, accepting his surprise at homecoming.

Francis lived the journey of life, leaping after Christ. He was an explorer, tempered by suffering, happy to be coming home, to be passing through familiar gateways to the house of the Lord, just in time for the banquet.



Meeting

My fingers have grown longer, tip to tip they form the chapel for the silence from my pursed lips. In this quiet then, my eyes focus on the infinitely lost past to frame that point of miracle when your strength became mine

Joyce M. Latham

Plea of Romans 8

Uprooted trees
Enigmas of an undemonstratable God
Weep beneath the rays of a brilliant sun,
Burnt and groaning for that day to come.
And I who passed them by
Joined their desperate clamor,
Their prayer of soundless fury.

Roberto O. González, O.F.M.

Francis:

One Who Sees and Celebrates the World SISTER MARY SMITH

He loved the visible world as few saints have loved it.1

I. CONVERSION: A GRADUAL TURNING TOWARD THE REAL

RANCIS OF ASSISI was born a poet-dramatist. He must "act out" the Gospel life, not merely tell its story. He must give his spirit a body -so intensely human was he. Francis' thirst for earthly vision and his hunger for the "real" in life were nurtured by his natural affinity for the visible, tangible world. "In early youth he would gaze on the Umbrian valley and drink in the scene before him. Nature was to him a delight" (Ibid., 225). As a young boy he dreamed of making his own life one with the glory of nature and the glory of the heroes of chivalry whom he idolized.

This thirst for earthly vision and greatness first leads Francis from the lucrative world of his father, the world of commerce, to that of military adventure, where he seeks to experience the ideals of romantic chivalry. Sickness quickly brings this

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quest for secular adventure to a close, for in 1204 Francis returns from war in Perugia, ill with a fever. Much later, able to go again, he gazes on the beauty of the surrounding country; but to his surprise, the hills bring him no joy. What has happened to the gay-hearted romanticist of Assisi? In the long year of recovery Francis has undergone mysterious, radical shifts of mind and heart. So many factors now generate unrest: the depression due to the fever; the deep, inner questioning regarding values; the hunger for "more" in life. Celano tells us that Francis, in this present state of disorientation and sadness, "began to look down on the self he had known and to hold in some contempt the things he had admired and loved before."2 Hit hard by the dissillusionment of his phoney, self-assuring, merry youth, * Francis now begins a quest for

¹Cuthbert of Brighton, O.F.M.Cap., "The Mysticism of St. Francis of Assisi: His Sacramental View of the Visible World," Ecclesiastical Review 9(87 (1932), p. 225.

meaning. Faith, for this new searcher, is now a verb.3 Gradually, as a clearer inner vision of a new kind of world emerges, his sensitivity to natural beauty will also return to purer form.

Despite the inner confusion, Francis doesn't become bitter. Instead he becomes more sensitive to the poor. Such sensitivity could well be an outgrowth of his own personal need for care during his long term illness, but whatever be the incentive, this new attitude of concern for his fellow man began in Francis a pattern which would become a mark of his greatness. "One day he met a knight who was poor and well nigh naked; moved by pity he gave him for Christ's sake the costly garments he was wearing" (2 Celano, 5; p. 365). Might there be a relationship between this act of generosity and a vision he experienced soon after? It was a dream of knighthood that changed his life. Still absorbed in this plan to win glory, Francis, while asleep, is led into a gorgeous palace where a beautiful Princess-bride holds court. When he asks who is Lord of the Castle, the voice sings out: "It is the high court of Francisco Bernadone and his followers" (Ibid.).

When Francis awakes, something is different. It isn't the message of the dream that touches him so, not the announcement that he is going to be a great Lord. More significant for Francis is the realization that he now has a sense of direction, something to live for. He is going somewhere.

His dream has freed him from his own frozen will!

Francis immediately sets off for Apulia via Spoleto, determined to make his dream come true. Notice that the Lord is taking Francis where he is—an aspirer after glory. The "setting out" is important now, but the patterns of highs and lows in his life aren't to be wiped out by visions or dreams. Hardly on the road for more than a day, Francis becomes ill again, and after arriving at Spoleto he learns, in a sequel to the first dream, that he must do some reinterpreting! "The arms and palace are intended for other knights than those you have in mind; and your principality too will be of another order" (Legend of the Three Companions, 6). Shaken into fuller awareness. Francis understands that impatience has driven him to act too quickly and that he must wait and listen, and purify his heart to hear deeper words than he has imagined. He has tried to make God's will serve his own impatient desire for glory. He has not really listened.4

An empty feeling envelops Francis as he returns to Assisi, all dreams of glory drained from his heart. This unexpected return from Spoleto is one of the most painful experiences of Francis' early life. What courage he needs to face the rumor of supposed cowardice now sweeping the city. How can he face a proud, humiliated father? Although his mother softens the blow of rejection, his attempts to explain only further

Thomas of Celano, First Life of St. Francis, 4; in Marion A. Habig, ed., St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources)chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973), p. 232. Other citations from the Lives by Celano and Bonaventure, and from Francis writings, are cited in text with page references to this volume.

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³Alfred McBride, "Spiritual Education: Fowler's Stages fo Faith," Momentum (May, 1975), p. 22.

⁴Murray Bodo, O.F.M., The Journey and the Dream (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1972), p. 6.



convince both his parents that he has not yet recovered fully from his strange melancholy and the delusions of his illness.

Seeking support from someone, Francis allows a remnant of friends to throw a party for him at his expense! It is in the peak of the partying that he gets teased about being in love with a girl, so preoccupied is he! He willingly replies that he is deeply in love with one more beautiful than any (Lady Poverty). They laugh and say he is a fool and delirious (Legend of the Three Companions, 8). It is now clear to the probing Francis that he must make another break. To listen to one's own heart, while all others are speaking an entirely different language, is one of the hardest tests of a man's spirit. Francis thinks he will not survive it—so great the confusion and fears and mystery within and the misunderstanding and ridicule without.

Seeking peace and strength in

solitude. Francis goes to a certain grotto near Assisi and there prays devoutly "that the eternal and true God will direct his way and teach him to do his will." Here in the cave Francis experiences the parched joy of release-of facing himself and probing deeper into rooms never visited before. At first the inner journey is painful and terrifying—that look at all that is self: weakness and sinfulness as well as the strange thirst for the "real." What trust is demanded in the lonely journey inward! Finally, through honest, prayerful movement, he plumbs the depths to a still point where peace and strength sustain him. The secret to personal integration has been discovered!

For an entire year Francis returns to the dark cave outside Assisi and searches the depths, always trying to bring that "inner-cavern peace to the surface permanently" (Bodo, p. 11). One day it dawns on him that the quest must be a daily one—all is part of the life-long process of personal becoming. Daily waiting, listening, and "being with" are essential to growth in Christ. Deep in the darkness Francis finds the light for selfactualization. From solitude he * emerges, knowing who he is and what he is called to do. With sincerity and conviction he can now say, "I am who I am before God and no more"; and his listening heart now embraces the call "to observe the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rule of 1223, 1; p. 57).

Francis has experienced in the depths of his being the intrusion of a mysterious power moving beyond his horizons. With this power comes

the energy that is beyond his ordinary capacity to see or to reach. It is sacred. It comes from God, and it carries him to God. Yes, in the dark womb of the mountain Francis is reborn. He knows the complexity of his own nature, but he holds also the peace and courage needed to face a confusing and insecure future (1 Celano, 6; p. 234). He has made the difficult transition from a world of human measures into a universe of faith.

On the other hand, this new awareness of God's presence and power within, and the expansion that it brings, is a radical assault upon his humanity. Francis has a fine balancing job to do-one that can't be done in a day. He must reconcile the security of the Lord with the insecurity of a strange world, the spiritual joy and delight with the haunting hunger for the old ways of living, a more intense personal relationship with Someone, with moments of agonizing human loneliness. He experiences both courage and fear as he begins to seek out the poor more consistently, often clothing them to his own discomfort. Now he takes more interest in churches and priests, using his wealth to meet their needs and those of all men he encounters (1 Celano, 8; p. 236). Still, the agony of loneliness is sharp and deep, for cut off from his companions Francis is like a pathetic leader who is self-exiled from his people. Often just as he would start to return to his old friends, a panic would clutch at his heart. How could he throw away a iewel of magnificent beauty for a moment of pleasure (Bodo, p. 13)?

The road to fuller life and integrity is for Francis, as for all men, full of promise and full of danger. As he interiorizes more and more, he realizes that in the Christian venture, the more closely one is associated with God the more free and venturesome one becomes. Now he senses that the tug of God is deeper than the gift of his material goods. God asks more! It is in Rome that the Poverello is moved to dress in beggar's rags and to experience their real poverty and humiliation while roaming the city square for a day. Returning home, he prays receives an unforgettable response:

Francis, if you want to know my will, you must hate and despise all that which up till now your body has loved and desired to possess. Once you begin to do this, all that formerly seemed sweet and pleasant to you will become bitter and unbearable; and instead, the things that formerly made you shudder will bring you great sweetness and content [2 Celano, 9; p. 369].

What a protound effect this revelation of God is to have on the little Poor Man's concrete life! It is a call to face fully the many prejudices and repulsions which kept him tied up in himself. Francis has always panicked at the sight of lepers; now the opportunity comes along the road below Assisi. Bonaventure describes it for us:

The encounter was completely without warning and Francis felt sick at the sight of [the leper]. Then he remembered his resolve to be perfect and the need to overcome himself first, if he wanted to be a knight of Christ. He immediately dismounted and ran up to kiss the poor man. The leper stretched out his nand, noping to get something, and Francis put some money in it and kissed it. Then he

mounted his horse [Legenda Major, 5; p. 638].

A new-found freedom surges through Francis. Would the leper ever know that the giver has received more than he has given? All the pent-up frustrations of his early youth, the self pity. the waves of self-doubt and moodiness of his illness all vanish with this victory over self. The Three Companions recount: "After his visit to the lepers, Francis changed for the better" (The Three Companions, 11). That kiss, that faith-filled reaching out of the lips, directs his heart freely and fully toward someone worth loving other than himself. He begins that day to breathe out more than to breathe in, to turn outwards rather than inwards, to do rather than to think about doing. He has found courage to Teap across that deep secret chasm that separated him from the other, from loving what he feared would demand more of him than he could or would give. What a victory day for Francis! Throughout his life Francis tries to remember this beautiful moment and its insight into love, and he seeks to act it out daily. "Love is looking into the eye of the other; and forgetting the dark void between you, and forgetting that no one can walk in a void, you start manfully across, your arms outstretched to give of yourself and to receive of the other" (Bodo, p. 18).

After a lifetime of outstretching, Francis remembered on his deathbed the miracle of this moment: "When I was in sin, it appeared bitter to me to see lepers; and the Lord Himself led me among them, and that which seemed bitter to me changed for me into sweetness of soul and

body" (Testament, p. 67). It was all in these words; the walk to the leper is the symbolic road to liberation. In this freely chosen, creative act, Francis achieves a wholeness in his being. "Conversion," according to theologian Bernard Lonergan, "is as if one's eyes were opened and one's former world fell away." This has happened to Francis. In and through an embrace he sees a new and exciting future orientation for life. He has conquered himself; he is free. In this moment he lets go of all his Linus blankets. He stands naked before his God and perceives his full security in his Father's love.

Not only are his eyes more able to see the "real," but his heart is more able to receive it.

From this moment on, the story of Francis is that of a man whose piety is virile. He is a faith-knower who understands Christ's call to the cross and is ready to face all the struggle and responsibility that implies. His love for Christ is soon more fully concretized in a vision of the Crucified at San Damiano. The Three Companions (14-15) tell us that "after the vision and the words spoken by the crucifix, Francis until his death, was always conformed to the passion of Christ," as is very clear in the stigmata, in his tears for the suffering Lord, his voluntary privations to endure what the Lord Jesus and His mother shared.

It is important to remember that these critical moments in Francis' life were almost imperceptible to others. The embrace of the leper, the vision of the Crucified, the stripping of himself before the bishop, the beggar experiences and other humiliating actions—all are highly significant aspects of Francis' personal conversion to the Lord. As his faith deepens, his vision sharpens; and all the visible world about him reflects deeper meaning too. The beautiful fertile world now becomes the stage on which the great redemptive drama is worked out in the lives of all persons: a stage on which every man, woman, and all other creatures have definite and unique roles in the redemptive story (Cuthbert, p. 229).

His heart full of love, this simple and lucid interpreter of life grapples with the power of evil and its consequences in all of life, for Francis sees that both man and nature bear the misery of sin. All suffering, even that of the beasts, and the deformations of nature are due to man's selfishness and blindness to the created beauty of a loving God.

Francis' transparent sensitivity to the accumulative evil in the world enables him to see that every Christian is drawn into the anguish and ignominy of Christ. Each person is responsible for the social evil that exists in our fragmented, suffering world; each selfish misuse of man and of nature is a sacrilege against man's Creator. Man has forgotten his Maker; and the global visionary, Francis, sets about the task of helping him improve his memory.

With every fiber of his being the visionary longs to walk literally in the footsteps of Christ, helping others see this as the road to the "real" in life. His lifelong mission is renewal of love in the hearts of man. His power is God's love, fully at work in one who has achieved a great degree of wholeness in his own being.

II. CONVERSION: A CELEBRATION OF THE REAL

Now, BLESSED with a fuller sense of the oneness of life, the Poor Man of Assisi views all things as but a "lader to the Source." It is the theologian, Bonaventure, who offers us a graphic description of Francis' power to see the real:

Francis 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 course of all. In everything beautiful, he saw him who is beauty itself, and he followed his Beloved everywhere by his likeness imprinted on creation; of all creation he made a ladder by which he might mount up and embrace Him who is all desirable [Legenda Major, 9; p. 698].

In Francis' prayer we discover the depth of his love of the Source of all good. At the conclusion of his Rule of 1221 we find these words of praise and thanksgiving to the Maker of all things:

Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father, holy and just Lord, King of heaven and earth, we give you thanks for yourself. Of your own holy will you created all things spiritual and physical, made us in your own image and likeness, and gave us a place in paradise, through your only Son, in the holy Spirit [Rule of 1221, 231 p. 50].

In this opening paragraph of his "Credo," Francis strikes a strong blow at the Cathari movement and its negative attitude toward all matter.

It is God alone who "created all things spiritual and physical." He further praises the God of all as he continues: "We should wish for nothing else and have no other desire; we should find no pleasure or delight in anything except in our Creator, Redeemer, and Savior; he alone is true God" (p. 52).

Out of deep concern that his friars grow in their love and reverence for the Author of Life, Francis inserted in the Rule of 1221, ch. 17 (p. 45), the exhortation: "We must refer every good to the most high, supreme God, acknowledging that all good belongs to him; and we must thank him for it all, because all good comes from him."

In Francis, Celano observes, the friars had the perfect model for referring every good to the Most High: "In every work of the artist he praised the Artist, whatever he found in the things he referred to the Maker. He rejoiced in all the works of the hands of the Lord..." (2 Celano, 165; p. 494). So clearly did the visible mirror the Invisible for Francis, that he joyed in and celebrated all the world.

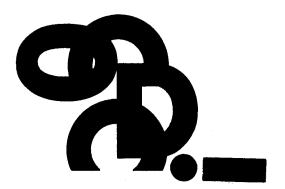
The Saint with the deep-seeing eyes celebrated everything from stars to cicadas; his special charism was always "to catch the simple and the ordinary and make it into the happy and wonderful." He delighted in looking up to the sun, moon, stars, and the whole firmament. It seems that floral beauty spoke special and profound Presence to him, for whenever he came across an abundance

of flowers he would stop and converse with them and then invite them to praise the Lord as though they had human powers. His reverence for nature extended even to the stones which his feet touched, for they were for him a reminder of Christ, the Rock. When washing his hands he was always careful that the water not be trampled underfoot afterwards. Water meant life; and it, like tree shoots, must be preserved and revered. Each living thing must be allowed to live out its existence.

Such was the Poverello's kinship with all of creation that he called all creatures "Brother" and "Sister." So deep was his reverence for "Brother Fire" that he would not allow still smoking firebrands to be tossed aside carelessly. Stories are told of his little "Sister" friends, the birds, clustering round Francis and listening intently as he urged them to praise their Maker who loved them so much. It is reported that once after he had blessed them, all the birds arose and flew off in the form of the cross he had made over them.5

Why did Francis have such control over the creatures he cherished? Bonaventure offers this theological explanation:

Such was his pure love of God that Francis had arrived at a point where his body was in perfect harmony with his spirit, and his spirit with God. As a reward, God disposed that all creation, which must spend itself in the service of its Maker, should be subject to his will and obey his command [Legenda Major, 5; p. 669],



So sincere, reverent, and deep was Francis' love that even the animals sought to return his affection in a special way. Bonaventure cites at least fifteen incidents which verify this type of love-response. Among the many we recall: the hare of Greccio which followed Francis like a little dog: the pheasant of Siena that refused food for sorrow after its dear friend died: the cicada of the Portiuncula that came at his call and sang God's praises to him; finally, there is the tender story of the devoted sheep that also lived at St. Mary of the Angels and always accompanied Francis to prayer and would prostrate itself at the moment of the Elevation (Ibid., 8; p. 693). One wonders if these animals were meant to authenticate the goodness and holiness of the Saint while calloused contemporaries failed to see the "real" as he moved among them.

Realizing the depth and power of Francis' love for the inaminate creation and for animals, we do not find it at all surprising that his love for persons should be far greater. Unlike most human beings who spend their lifetime discovering that

each person is Jesus, Francis penetrated this mystery in his conversion experiences; in every person he saw the image of his maker and loved him as would Christ himself. Celano tells us that he loved his brothers with deep affection "because they were of the same household of faith and united by participation in an eternal inheritance according to the promise" (2 Celano, 131; p. 501). Whenever he was criticized for his great asceticism he replied that he had been given to the Order as an example, that as an eagle he might encourage his young ones to fly. He actually believed that he would be without future glory unless he made those entrusted to him glorious with him (Ibid., 132; p. 502). Having opened himself to God's grace in his whole being, Francis knew the power of healing love and used it to create his brothers, to call forth new life.

His burning desire to heal, to make whole, all suffering people, is reflected especially in his approach to the sick. Always in a spirit of deep love he would come to them, often bringing them choice foods which he

⁵Omer Englebert, Saint Francis of Assisi (trans. Eve Marie Cooper; Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1965), p. 190.

had received from others. If he could not ease their physical pain he could always empathize deeply with them. At the same time he would urge those suffering to bear their pain patiently: "Let them give thanks in all things, so that they may desire to be as God wants them to be" (Ibid., 133; p. 502). However great his sensitivity to the physically ill, it was far greater to the ill of heart and spirit. Whenever possible he treated all with kindness and positive strokes. Often he would warn superiors that harshness and pity, burning and anointing, prison and kindness—all these have their season.

Fraternal love was the heart of Gospel living for Francis, and he envisaged it also for his brothers. Thus it is significant that the Order became known as "Lesser Brothers." Brotherly love must always be their substitute for home, homeland, and monastery.6 The bond is so intimate as to become that of a family: "Wherever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family" (Rule of 1223, 6; p. 61). His deep concern for fraternity urged Francis to go one step further: "For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly" (Ibid.).

It is this kind of affection that prompted Francis, although fasting himself, to sit down and eat with a friar who could no longer fast. The holy man would not make the brother

feel bad because of his weakness (2 Celano, 15; p. 380).

Esser comments on this crowning feature-brotherly love-within the Order: "It is precisely this immediate and practical brotherly love that sets its special seal on the new Order" (Esser, p. 240). But for Francis and his friars this sense of brotherhood must go beyond the Fraternity, for "the whole world is their cloister" (Sacrum Commercium, 6; p. 1593). Highly significant is the fact that the Order began as a lay movement. Membership cut through all class lines-rich and poor, skilled and unskilled, literate and illiterate. Such a movement prompted Pope Benedict to remark that "St. Francis made religious life common property." The Franciscan charism is to demonstrate that the life of preaching and service led by Christ and His disciples can be successfully lived in any age or locale. Gifted with a vision for the "real," the Franciscan exists to help the world see Jesus in every human face.

Francis always used all creation in such a way as to hold fast to that which lasts forever. In the light of this thought it seems to matter less that in his final period of life he suffered blindness, for his quest for the "real" had brought his inner being to full light—a twenty-twenty vision. What is blindness for a heart that sees?

Even in his last hours this little Man of Vision longed to incite all hearts to give glory to God that He might be forever praised in and through His creation. Thus he used his waning creative energies to celebrate the world in and through his profound, mystical poem "The Canticle of the Sun." Here Francis "discerns through the Lamp Beauty, the Light God" (The Canticle of Brother Sun. p. 127-from Francis Thompson), and from his heart flows gratitude to the Source of all life. He calls upon all creatures: the sun, moon, stars, all elements, even suffering and death itself, to pour forth their praise to their God.

It was this vivid sacramental vision of the universe which later prompted Franciscan theologians to develop the theory that the Incarnation of the Eternal Word of God was decreed in the very act of creation as the crowning glory of all the universe. So sacred was the creation that it called for that close personal union of the created splendor of God with the uncreated Splendor of the Father in the life of the Word Incarnate. "In this personal union decreed from eternity they saw the consummation of God's love for His creation and of creation's desire for union with God" (Cuthbert, pp. 233-34). How beautiful to envisage the Incarnate Word coming as the fullest and richest Expression of Life and Cosmic Oneness!

Twelve centuries before Francis, Iesus had reminded his disciples: "Happy are the eyes that see!" So empowered with eyes to see was the Little Poor Man of Assisi that he ran after Life, grasped it in its depths, absorbed it into his being, and then celebrated it everywhere. All of life became a journey into God.

III. AN ALTERNATIVE VISION FOR TODAY

AS A FRANCISCAN Sister of Clinton, Iowa, living in 1976, I hear the call of Francis to grow into a cosmic person. This is an invitation to become so grounded in God and alive with a vision for the "real" in life that I may offer the whole world an alternative vision of reality. I do believe that religious life, in its purest form, witnesses dramatically—and in extreme fashion, perhaps—to a Christian understanding of the meaning of human life, which challenges at several crucial points, other interpretations common in our culture.7

solved until people feel a oneness and reverence for all that is. Is not our ecology crisis the result of a lack of feeling of unity with all life? Have we not made the earth and its resources our slaves, and now brought the threat of destruction upon ourselves? Have we not "taken for granted" the rich gifts of the selfishly exploiting. Creator. ravaging, and wasting the good earth?

In the light of Francis' cosmic vision and reverence for all as gift, I, a Franciscan, sense a special call to witness to the glory of simply being, declaring that life is glorious apart Never will our world problems be from work produced or life engender-

⁸Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., Origins of the Franciscan Order (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), p. 21.

Michael Mason, "Religious Life-Fossil or Phoenix" National Catholic Reporter, March 30, 1973, p. 7.

ed. Mine is also a call to live attentively-responding to life in the now, sensing full Presence in the moment; ministering to self and others the gifts of color, sound, and taste; joying in the wonders of the universe and reverencing all as holy. Mine is a call to live simply uncluttering my life so as to communicate an inner gladness and secure oneness with my God; growing in ecological awareness and social concern for all my brothers and sisters of the world; rejecting all goods produced by man's exploitations. Mine is a call to live freely and fully—using my creative powers to affirm others and call forth their gifts, setting them free, throwing a lifeline to them and assuring them that they can be what in their deepest hearts they know they are intended to be; joying in the abundance of Iesus' love for me and all those precious persons pilgriming with me toward the "real."

Yes, "Happy the eyes that see"!

What challenge lies in the becoming! Hope, for me and all Christians, rests in the way of Francis; it is the way of faith, suffering, deep love. It means letting one's whole system be cleansed, purified, ventilated so as to be in touch with the deepest part of self, for the very pit-point of one's existence is the point where perception becomes clearer, the point where transformation happens, and the Spirit moves more freely. Only when purged of selfishness will I truly see. Only when my heart is ifully turned toward the other will I cross the chasm from pollution to purity, from selfishness to vision. It is the pure heart that sees; it is the compassionate heart that heals; it is the liberated heart that has the time of its life!

This is the Good News that the world needs to hear and to see. Francis was proof that it was. Before us—all who hunger for the "real" in life—lies the hope, the challenge, and the potential for its happening again.

We are pleased to announce to our readers the availability of a script comprising a dramatic adaptation of the early Franciscan eulogy of poverty, the SACRUM COMMERCIUM. The play, done at the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University during the summer of 1976 under the direction of Father Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., is available at a cost of \$2.00 (to cover duplicating and mailing costs) from the adaptor/playwright

Brother David Benzshawel, O.F.M. St. Paschal Friary Route 83 at 35 Street Oak Brook, Illinois 60521

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Nicodemus

MEGAN MCKENNA

Born: October 25, 1944, New York City. February 12, 1960, Maryland 1969. Mexico. -May 17, 1970, Washington D.C. March 12, 1973, Los Angeles in water and the holy spirit the air in those places touched me healed me, birthed me out of time into the kingdom come dwelled long in the womb of night What was that saying about night? Only those who walk in the darkness ever see the light. Night: the time for trusting sticking you big toe out feeling for the future moving in the shadows all about you the time for risk plunging into blackness like diving into deep waters and you learn to swim-or sink

death by water, drowning-immersion, baptism, I believe

I know the prophets
Church teachings
laws of love

I teach them

but do I know you fullness of life

faithful God, have you experienced me as faithful?
fullness of life—land furrowed for ploughing, planting
fertile times and drought, running across the earth
breaking up the clumps of dirt, burying dreams and bodies of
ones we love

what was it about the light:

oh, yes,

it's the cracked people who let the light thru.

Megan McKenna, Editorial Director of Celebration, has served as Associate Editor of Images and Lifelines at the Franciscan Communications Center, Director of Religious Education in a Bethesda, Maryland, parish, and Consultant for the U.S. Bishops' Campaign for Human development.

Raised up: brazen serpents on a stick look-look on your God and do not die I thought the Old Testament said "if you see God you will die." the new thing: come die with God you ain't seen nothing yet. This God does't indulge in the expected what do you want from him—consistency? try some changes

come out into the light, where everyone can see you laugh at you kill you

a Christian is a sinner who got caught in the light, in the act of turning around—conversion . . . repenting again.

The wind blows:

gently across tall summer grasses comes crashing thru the trees making music in the hollowed out spaces of reeds making tombs out of men hollowed out rock casts forth newness. This new God is strange. Can't stand darkened rooms, clandestine meetings, sneaking around or hiding in cellars. He lives on whim or where he will and you-do you break or bend in the wind?

Above: raised up on high rise up

stand up in the light, be known, recognized, stand your ground, stood up on your word, hold your flesh in your hands and let the spirit move over all that collected chaos again . . .

touched from above bent by your friends the spirits stood up

torn shredded light is not enough.

This god is one of extremes, blindness and sight

no middle ground-except a cross between two extremes called God and man.

Nicodemus—one of us

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furtive, careful to probe cautiously at the truth the darkness gives us the edge on surviving in the sunlight you are older/wiser and all known as children holding in common the fear of fullness (darkness) known in common as the children of the light.

Brightness of life, saved in the darkness raised up in the light look: your redemption is close at hand like in the night: how close do you get before you see what is before you always, just unawares. Or a little like love-the nearness screams so softly you don't notice it until it leaves.

I believe in signs—a little but truth? what is that? I have trouble enough with understanding little differences like night and light death and birth

You-you come from above up there in the clouds unreal to me

What did you say? I must come from above? that means being taken down from up there... such a new thing on the earth no wonder it is spoken of only in the dark, whispered over and plotted in secret.

God is making love to man again, in the spirit and the flesh.

To speak of it in the light is to court being picked up and made a spectacle of

and dying in the light

it takes more than what I'm made of or born for it takes spirit

fire-sunlight, a touch of blindness, seeing in the dark not the night times I believe-a little

I don't understand, but I accept

but

without the night times what would the birth of day be like? (how would day be born?)

I have known the night only because you have known me and that makes all the difference and I think it will be enough

to stand in your presence with sight and not die it's almost time now

to come again to birth and cry out loud.



Jesus of Nazareth: Meditations on His Humanity. By José Comblin. Trans. Carl Kabat, O.M.I. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1976. Pp. 167. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Head of the Department of Philosophy at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

Operating on a premise which is, in my judgment, incontrovertible: viz., that "the spirituality of centuries shows the danger of illusion which accompanies a metaphysical leap to Christ's divinity that is made without dedicating sufficient time to meditation on his humanity" (p. 6), the author proceeds to describe the human personality of Jesus as it emerges from the Synoptic Gospels, particularly St. Mark. Jesus is seen to be a lonely, independent, missionconscious, hopeful Son of His Father. Friendship in his life was subordinated to his task of establishing the kingdom of God. A person steeped in the Old Testament, Jesus nevertheless creatively went far beyond it. A man of prayer, personal prayer, Jesus did not worship publicly to any extent (sic). A man of hope, he established an

organization with no specified direction save to have a supper in memory of him, and imitate his love and brotherhood. A fearless opponent of Phariseeism, Jesus came to liberate man from slavery to the law.

Valuable in this little book are the situating of Jesus in the Jewish milieu of expectation of a savior, the delineation of the crowds seeking healing, the placing of Jesus' awareness of his mission to die in focus. Very questionable in this book. however, are the portraval of Christ as anti-cult and close to anti-nomian. Also the omission of John's insight into Jesus' personality as a work of theological reflection results in the portraval of a lesus who is an iceberg. His personal attention to the sick, his mercy toward sinners and foreigners do not come forth from the author's work as the revelation of a tender, loving God, but rather as the expression of a doctrinaire liberalism that must champion the underdog at any cost-or as the calculated attention to a part for the sake of a tendentious interpretation of the whole.

Although José Comblin intended to give a portrait of Christ free from pious presuppositions or assumptions of any kind; and although he is probably right in assuming that too much 20th-century personalism is read into early biblical texts, yet current liberation theology seems to be the guide to his interpretation of the texts. I feel the Jesus of the New Testament is a far more attractive person than Father Comblin's meditations show him to be.

The Runaway Church: Post-conciliar Growth or Decline? By Peter Hebblethwaite. New York: Seabury Press, 1975. Pp. 256 incl. index. Cloth, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Johnemery Konecsni, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy at Caldwell College, N.J., A Dominican Tertiary, and one-time Lay Assistant Pastor at a Church in Brooklyn.

Sounds like a title ghosted for Bill Buckley, Jr., right? So one should be braced for statements like those which follow in the rest of this paragraph. Manly women are not an answer to the effeminate priests; the Catholic Traditionalist Movement is not paranoid but merely seeking in conspiracy theories the debacle made of the liturgy in the vernacular; the Dutch canon for agnostics ("Lord, if you exist, come among us"); ex opere operato has been replaced with a turn-yourself-on ex opere operantis.

That's not what is in this book.

So The "Runaway Church" should be put in ironical quotes? So the Church is really under intelligent liberal guides? Well, experimental liturgies, how to trap a bishop, the Curial Machiavelli, Pope Paul Hamlet, Camillo Torres, and Catholic Marxism do appear in the book—but they aren't its main topic, either.

In this case, what we have is the densest (in data per page) presentation of what has happened 1965-1975. Every possible name, date, place, face, and event is systematically included in this book. If, like me, you were rather too busy to get a Doctorate in Sacred Theology in the last decade, or like many others said

"Call me when the chaos is over," well, the chaos isn't over, but this book is a massive attempt to give a full and balanced presentation

It is an attempt which 90% succeeds. All shades of the spectrum will nod at the "right" statements and laugh at the idiocies of the "opposition" wrong-headedness. Where the book fails is in its very encyclopedic approach; as with *Tima* magazine, one wants to quibble with those political, philosophical, psychological, or geographical observations with which one is intimately familiar, while swallowing whole the authoritatively matter-of-fact style on subjects which are terra incognita.

In short, I appeal to the dictum, "In certain things, let us have unity; in doubtful things, let us have liberty; but in all things, let us have charity." Hebblethwaite's vision seems to be certain only in presenting a few liberal positions, while for the rest he leaves at least me with the feeling of faith. But who knows what he believes in, except a vague something? A weekend with ten years' back issues of National Review or Commonweal might give the same information in a sharper faith-focus.

All God's Children. By Dorothy Gauchat. Foreword by Dorothy Day. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1976. Pp. x-180. Cloth, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Celestine A. Pagini, O.F.M., M.S. (SUNY, Buffalo), Speech Therapist and Instructor in Education at Siena College, Loudonville, N.Y.

Looking at the title of this book,

many people may perhaps not find it overly attractive, but then again, they might be intrigued as to what the title refers to. It is a simple story, and once you start to read it, it is hard to put down. It is a story told from the heart, a story about the experiences of a couple who are foster parents to handicapped children. The book would seem to appeal, or be largely directed, to parents of handicapped children, but that is not the case here. Dorothy Gauchat, even with six children of her own, one of whom later becomes handicapped, gives us insights that would benefit everyone. The love that she has for these children shines through every page of this book. Her faith in God is not flaunted at the reader, but one does sense her deep reliance on God in the problems that she has had to face, especially when she finds out that one of her own children is diagnosed as handicapped. Mrs. Gauchat tells us what she had to go through with her own child to find out what the problem was; and this will appeal to parents who have gone through the same process.

But amid all of this, we also share the joys that she experiences with the handicapped children that she cares for. Mrs. Gauchat does not always paint a grim picture. She treats these children as normally as possible; in other words, she treats them as human beings and with the dignity due to human beings. Her "fault," if I may use that phrase, is that she loves all children, whatever condition they may be in. As she says in her title, they are "all God's children." After reading this book, one's faith in humanity is strengthen-

ed in, among other things, the mere knowledge that there are people like Mrs. Gauchat and her husband. There are many others like her, moreover, and some day their story will be told to remind us that we are all, even and perhaps in a sense especially the handicapped among us, "God's children."

The Franciscan Calling. By Lazaro Iriarte de Aspurz, O.F.M.Cap. Trans. Sister Carole Marie Kelly, O.S.F. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974. Pp. x-242, incl. bibliography by M.A. Habig, O.F.M. Cloth, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Wilfrid Hept, O.F.M., a member of the staff of St. Francis Chapel in Providence, Rhode Island.

In their encyclical letter commemorating the 750th anniversary of the death of St. Francis the four Ministers General of the Franciscan Order attribute the renewed interest in the Franciscan movement in the past century, in part, to the scientific research in matters Franciscan. The Franciscan Calling is a product of this kind of research. As the author says in a very informative Appendix.

In trying to return to the genuine spirit of the founder in order to project it upon our own times, knowing how it was projected in the thirteenth century and how it was: received in the succeeding generations does not interest us as much as discovering it again in its very origins [p. 220],

Constantly going back to Franciscan origins, Fr. Lazaro Iriarte gives us a modern, faithful, and updated interpretation of the Franciscan spirit. Sensing the Franciscan

charism as a unique product of an historical epoch, he sees it as also and more especially the product of a unique personality—St. Francis—who enkindled in the mind and heart of his followers "the Spirit of the Lord and his holy operation" (Rule of 1223, ch. 10).

Reading the book, we get the feeling that Francis and his followers had captured the enthusiasm of those early converts to Christianity after the first Pentecostal preaching of St. Peter, which Acts records thus: "They devoted themselves to the Apostles' instruction and the communal life, to the breaking of bread and the prayers . . . Day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47). The same Pentecostal Spirit descended upon this Franciscan fraternity as had alighted upon those first Christian converts. The author covers the main points of this "gospel living" of the early Franciscans in the various chapters whether it be under the title "To Follow the Teachings and Footsteps of Our Lord Iesus Christ" or "The Charity that Is God" or "The poverty and Humility of Our Lord Iesus Christ" or "Franciscan Fraternity"-to mention just a few of the chapter titles.

Since the desire to pray and pray well is uppermost in the minds of many today, chapter four, entitled "To Love God with a Clean Heart and a Pure Mind," gives some practical insights into the Poverello's mind on the subject. The gift of prayer, we learn, came to Francis together with the grace of conversion (p. 63); and for him prayer "Was not an exercise regulated by a

schedule; he prayed at every moment, 'waking, sitting, eating, or drinking,' both day and night.... The normal prayer of Francis, like that of Jesus, is one of praise and thanksgiving" (p. 64).

The author points out that the first fraternity, which was itinerant by vocation, did not say the Office in choir; but he is quick to add that mental prayer is not the only nor even the primary foundation of Franciscan piety. "Liturgical prayer receives, if not the greatest amount of time, at least the major emphasis" in Franciscan piety along with Eucharistic devotion (p. 65).

In a well organized chapter on Franciscan Fraternity, Father Iriarte points out that the bonds of fraternity were keenly felt as a demand of gospel authenticity during the 12th and 13th centuries. Francis, truly a man of his times as well as for all times, made brotherhood a primary value among his followers. Those who today are conscious (and who is not?) that fraternity is primary both in the Christian "good news" and in the Franciscan charism will find this chapter a useful guideline for revitalizing their communities along the lines of authentic gospel commitment. In this rather lengthy chapter the author discusses the most significant characteristics of the Franciscan Fraternity under headings such as "Christ the Living Center," "Fraternity Vitalized by the "Mutual Acceptance," Word," "Mutual Openness and Understand-

Since this book is a translation, the references at the end of each chapter may frustrate the American reader

when they refer to foreign publications. But many of the references are to works fround in the Omnibus of sources for Francis' life, published in one volume by the Franciscan Herald Press. There is also a bibliography compiled by Father Marion A. Habig, O.F.M., which is current and adequate. Then the few pages of the Appendix contain a brief but scholarly summary of the use made of the sources of Franciscan Spirituality. I recommend that the reader begin with this Appendix.

The Franciscan Calling is a book not only for those committed to living the Franciscan life-style, but for any authentic Christian who is looking for a model of a life-style that is Christ-centered and gospel oriented.

Christian at the Crossroads. By Karl Rahner. Trans. V. Green. New York: Seabury Press, 1976. Pp. 1976. Pp. 95. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

In this brief but characteristically profound book, Karl Rahner proposes philosophico-religious answers to the questions on the nature of man, Christianity, truth, and faith. One key summary statement occurs on page 18: "Man is the unanswerable question. His fulfillment and happiness are the living and worshipping acceptance of his inconceivability and unanswerability, in the love of God's inconceivability with which we can learn to 'cope' only by the practice of love and not by the theory

of the desire to understand." Here one sees expressed the synthesis Rahner has accomplished, of Heidegger's philosophy and Transcendental Thomism.

After elaborating his responses to these questions of faith, truth, man, Christianity, Rahner turns to "practice" and addresses himself to prayer, the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, Lent, penance and confession, dying, hope, and Easter. In each instance he addresses himself to the nagging doubts created by the intellectual milieu in which Christians today are immersed, particularly the atmosphere of positivism and the worship of the natural sciences. Rahner's views on practice. then, are not a series of "howto's." but a dialectic of removal of obstacle and infusion of faith-commitment into whatever is being discussed.

Particularly valuable is his correction of some of the simplistic thinking that has occurred in Catholic theological circles since Vatican II, e.g., the equation of metanoia (repentance) with aggiornamento (renewal), the down-playing of prayer of petition and crucifixion with Christ as part of daily life.

Christian at the Crossroads is by no means a book for everybody. But it does offer insights and challenges to the Christian intellectual, particularly one of a philosophical bent.

Wisdom's Fool. By Eddie Doherty. Bay Shore, N.Y.: Montfort Publications, 1976. Pp. 243. Cloth, \$4.95; paper, \$2.95. Reviewed by Father Pius F. Abrahams, O.F.M., a member of the staff of St. Anthony's Shrine, Boston, Massachusetts.

Father Eddie Doherty, once acclaimed "America's Star Reporter," has authored some 22 books. He has re-written Grignion de Montfort's The Secret of Mary and True Devotion to Mary in a popular and more readable style. He fulfilled a promise to compose a biography of St. Louis de Montfort, and Wisdom's Fool is the glowing result.

Doherty, ordained a priest at the age of 79 in the Melkite Rite in the village of Nazareth, has done extensive research in the course of writing Wisdom's Fool, including a pilgrimage to De Montfort's Brittany where he visited scenes and places made famous by the ministrations of the Saint. Eddie succeeds in providing us with an electrifying portrayal of a great missionary, founder, poet, and slave of Mary.

The reader naturally anticipates a book with a Marian flavor; it is a Marian feast. The second chapter is an intriguing treatment of the founding and work of the Legion of Mary in Dublin, an apostolic effort which found its seed in *True Devotion to Mary*. De Montfort's words are quoted: "Toward the end of the world the greatest saints will be those most zealous in praying to Mary."

The author assures us that from his earliest years St. Louis had a special devotion to our Lady. "All his biographers comment on this." We are told Louis Marie grew up with a Rosary in his hands. Throughout

his life De Montfort venerated images, pictures, and statues of Mary, indeed, sculptured them himself. He died with a statue of Mary in his grasp. His theology premised that devotion to Mary brings us closer to Jesus, Eternal Wisdom. "When will souls breathe Mary as bodies breathe the air?" De Montfort queries. "When will souls, losing themselves in the abyss of her interior, become living copies of her, to love and glorify Jesus?"

In his preaching of home missions, St. Louis battled often against the Jansenist heretics who attempted to thwart devotion to Mary. But at the conclusion of his preaching endeavors he would leave a legacy of towns devoted to the Mother of Jesus. Rough soldiery would become converts to fervent recitation and meditation of the Rosary.

Witnesses testified that frequently in his ministry Louis had been seen conversing with "a beautiful lady who floated in the air above him" or talking with "a woman of unearthly beauty." The Saint reportedly told a young altar boy who observed this converse with "a beautiful and shining lady": "You are a happy boy. Only the pure of heart may see that Lady." In his will De Montfort requested his heart be placed "under the steps of the altar of the Blessed Virgin."

In two places Francis of Assisi is proffered due tribute. Bishop de la Poype asked Louis, who wished to be a missionary in the prelate's diocese, "How will you live?" "God who feeds the swallows," the priest responded, "will provide for me. I do not want any money. I do not want

any certain place to live. I shall go where I am most needed, do what God wants me to do, and, perhaps, build up some of the old and ruined churches I have seen here and there."

"You sound like St. Francis of Assisi," the bishop remarked; "isn't that rather out of date?"

"St. Francis will never be out of date," Louis countered. "There will always be men to follow where he led."

Wisdom's Fool, is very brief, is well written, engaging, and absorbing. One shares in the triumphs and trials of a great missioner who founded the Company of Mary for priests and brothers, the Daughters of Wisdom, a congregation of religious women, and many lay societies such as the League of Virgins.

Jesus Christ is Incarnate Wisdom. St. Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort became, as St. Paul, a fool for Christ and declared with conviction: "The Cross is Wisdom, and Wisdom is the Cross."

Francis. By Efrem Trettel, O.F.M. Trans. Leonard D. Perotti, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975. Pp. xxii-224. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap. Ph.D. Cand., Professor at Maryknoll Seminary, Institute of Contemporary Spirituality, Dunwoodie, N.Y., and presently involved in research in Franciscan Spirituality in Rome.

The simplicity of the title of this book is indicative of its content, style, and purpose. It is a book

simply written about Francis of Assisi, without any pretentions of greatness, and published in the hope of introducing to a new audience the saint who evokes such fascination. If the reader comes to this book expecting a new and undiscovered side of Francis, he will be disappointed. If he comes looking for new insights into the spiritual heritage which Francis left to his followers. he will turn away and look elsewhere. Yet in just these ways, the book reveals its strength; for it encourages the reader to look deeper into the life of Francis of Assisi, to delve into so many of the other rich studies of the Saint. Francis is an introduction to his life, written in an attractive style, from a solid base of research, reflection, and lived experience.

There is no in-depth study of Francis among the many reflections offered by the author. At times this is somewhat disconcerting, particularly when the Saint's experiences of God are touched upon, or when the richness of his utter poverty is presented. The same may be said about the historical background provided throughout the book—particularly with reference to the latter years of Francis' life. Here the reader is left to look elsewhere to fill in some of the gaps left by the author.

What is appealing about the book is the style of writing used by the author. It is attractive—at times poetic—and sensitive to the delicacies of interpretation. There is a good treatment of the discovery of vocation which blends the workings of grace and personality development into a harmonious pattern and which reflects a sound theology and

an appreciation of contemporary Franciscan research. In this respect the book might serve those involved in recruiting or in the early stages of formation programs. In many ways, Francis is presented by the author as someone to whom young persons, struggling with the prospects of vocation as well as with the mysteries of God and life, might well relate.

There is a sense of balance in the approach that the author takes to the life of Francis. Many examples might be offered to illustrate this; perhaps the author's treatment of the chaste charity of Francis is most appropriate. The number of chapters devoted to Clare highlight the important place she holds in the life of Francis, and they also suggest the care and concern which Francis lovingly manifested to her and her sisters.

It is too bad that the publishers

of this book were not more scrupulous in examining the printing, for there are a number of typographical errors which detract from the book. At the price (\$4.95), more should be expected.

There have been many times when followers of Francis were asked to recommend a book on him. That fascination which so many people have for him seems to be intensifying, and those requests may well increase, particularly as the celebration of his feast approaches. Efrem Trettel's Francis will not enter the annals of Franciscan literature as a piece of excellence. It is far from hitting the mark of a classic biography of the Saint. But it will serve as an introduction to his life and, hopefully, will spur its readers on to a deeper study of his life and spirit. If it accomplishes this, it is a book well worth recommending.

Shorter Book Notices

Tell Me Again You Love Me. By John C. Tormey. Canfield, Ohio: Alba Books, 1976. Pp. xii-113. Paper, \$1.65.

This is a little book about marriage and how two people can avoid the pitfalls that fallen humans fall into. After a brief sketch of married love and a caution not to use this book as a weapon, Father Tormey details some twenty-three failings that anyone can spot—in another's marriage. He does it by caricaturing the faults alpha-

betically—from Andy and Amelia Anger to Wison and Wanda Worrywort. Cartoons and quotations from contemporary writers of the Scriptures make epigrammatic the lessons he is trying to bring across.

—J.A.D.

The Morality Gap. By Mark Evans. Canfield, Ohio: Alba Books, 1976. Pp. xvii-183. Paper, \$1.85.

This book is a sustained attack on the "hippism" of the 1960's

with its counterculture of drugs, free sex, sloppiness, and anti-establishmentarianism. Illuminating is the chapter on the promotion of rock as an art. Refreshing is the author's plea for a return to standards of morality, and his insistence that new is not necessarily better. Biting is his criticism of parents who have capitulated to "giving the kids what they want." His California environment may have given him a different outlook, but from my point of view "hippism" has not been as absorbed into our culture as he alleges (thank God!); and the wishy-washy morality which does characterize our day has its roots in ideas more than in practices.

A Catechism for Divorced Catholics. By James J. Rue and Louise Shanahan. St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey Press, 1976. Pp. xii-66. Paper, 1.95.

Written to begin to offer some spiritual guidance to some of America's five million divorced Catholics, this collaborative effort succeeds admirably. In no way espousing a weakening of the Church's stand on marriage's permanent character, the Catechism addresses itself to information that Catholics who have experienced the tragedy of divorce need. More than that, it discusses in a sympathetic and understanding way problems like custody of the children of divorced parents, visiting rights, de-

pression, and reluctance to build a new life. Every parish church with a bookstand will undoubtedly soon have this on its shelves.

—J.A.D.

Body of Christ. By Earnest Larsen, C.Ss.R. Canfield, Ohio: Alba Books, 1976. Pp. 118. Paper, \$1.75.

Father Larsen's "thesis" is that the meaning of Eucharist, of the Body of Christ, is God's love for us. God's love is personal, special, healing, forgiving, real. Too often we feel God does love, forgive, trust others, but not us. Too often we underestimate our role as gift to others, and their role as gift to us. Too long do we hang onto that part of our self that the Lord longs for. But God is a Hunter whose Love ever seeks us out. An inspiring book of reflections for any human being.

-J.A.D.

The Jesus Experience. By Edward Carter, S.J. Canfield, Ohio: Alba Books, 1976. Pp. 107 & Preface. Paper, \$1.75.

Father Carter offers the reader a series of reflections on Christian life. Not only does he deal with traditional topics like humility, prayer (in a sustained and excellent treatment), love of God and neighbor, but he also adds reflections on limitations, escapism, seasons of life, memories. This is a work useful for preparation of mini-homilies or spiritual reading.

—J.A.D.

BOOKS RECEIVED

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- Bassett, William, and Peter Huizing, The Future of the Religious Life (Concilium, vol. 97). New York: Seabury Press, 1976. Pp. 96. Paper \$4.95
- Careers in the Christian Ministry: An Ecumenical Guidebook for Counselors, *Pastors*, and Youth. Wilmington, N.C.: Consortium Press, 1976. Pp. viii-289. Cloth, \$12.00.
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