

Summer
1977

A Franciscan Growth Opportunity

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES M.A. PROGRAM OF THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE

AT ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY

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

CALENDAR

Registration	Saturday, June 25
Classes begin	Monday, June 27
Modern Language Exam	Friday, July 15
Final Exams	Saturday, August 6

COURSES OFFERED IN SUMMER, 1977

FI 500 Bibliography

1 cr., Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 8:00-9:05, Room 4, M-W
This course is required of all new degree candidates after June 1977. It must be taken in the first summer session attended.

FI 501 Sources for Franciscan Studies

3 cr., Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., Ph.D. Cand.: 9:10-10:15, Room 1
This course is a prerequisite for 503 and 504.

FI 503 Early Franciscan Texts

3 cr., Dr. Duane Lapsanski, D.Th.: 9:10-10:15, Room 4
Prerequisite: 501

FI 504 Life of St. Francis

3 cr., Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 9:10-10:15, Room 2
Prerequisite: 501

FI 506 Survey of Franciscan History

3 cr., Fr. Lawrence Landini, O.F.M., H.E.D.: 10:20-11:25, Room 1

FI 508 History of Franciscan Thought

3 cr., Fr. George Marcil, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 10:20-11:25, Room 2

FI 511 Medieval Latin: Franciscan Texts

2 cr., Dr. Malcolm Wallace, Ph.D.: 11:30-12:35, Room 2

FI 517 Introduction to Palaeography

2 cr., Dr. Girard Etkorn, Ph.D.: 11:30-12:35, Room 3

FI 521 Rule of St. Francis

2 cr., Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M. Cap., D. Phil., Oxon.: 10:20-11:25, Room 3

FI 523 Bonaventurian Texts

2 cr., Fr. Juvenal Lalor, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 11:30-12:35, Room 4

FI 532 The Lay Franciscan Movement

2 cr., Fr. Cyprian Lynch, O.F.M., M.A.: 8:00-9:05, Room 2

FI 534 Conventualism, Primitive Observance and Capuchin Reform

2 cr., Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., S.T.L.: 8:00-9:05, Room 4

FI 539 Spiritual Direction and the Franciscan Tradition

2 cr., Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M., D. Min.: M-W-F, 7:00-9:00 P.M. Room 3

FI 552 The Franciscan Contribution to Peace and Justice

2 cr., Fr. George Marcil, O.F.M., Ph.D.; Fr. Roderic Petrie, O.F.M., M.A., M.S. Ed.; Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M. Cap., D. Phil., Oxon.: 11:30-12:35, Room 1

The M.A. Program is offered during the Autumn, Spring and Summer sessions.

the CORD

May, 1977

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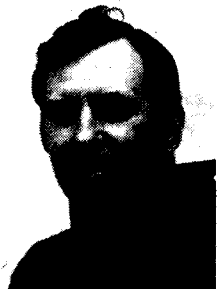
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The Handmaid of the Lord

IN PROOF-READING the review of Father Maloney's book, *Mary, the Womb of God* (see page 159 of this issue), I was struck by a reference to an entire chapter on Mary's submission to God. And it occurred to me that submission is a concept which needs rehabilitating in these days. What came to mind, first of all, was the relevance of such a doctrine to the recent papal document indicating that the ordained priesthood was not in God's plan for women. (We hope to have a sustained treatment of this issue in a future issue.) Stated so baldly, it seems a complete puzzle that Christian—even religious—women, could respond, in effect: "How dare you, God, leave me out of something I want?" Or "How could a message so out of step with the times really be your message?" But if there is anything that the whole of God's dealing with his people reveals, it is that his ways are not their ways.

In recent years the stress on the positive in our relationship with God: on love, on the friendship model of our relation with him, has perhaps led to some misconceptions about the demands of love. Love means giving, surrender, putting the will of the beloved above one's own. Marriage can be a partnership, but love never can, for as Augustine told us, "The measure of love is that it loves without measure." So too with religious life. We are promised a hundredfold here and hereafter (full measure, pressed down and running over) for our fidelity—but "giving to get" isn't total dedication.

God is our friend, yes. But he is our *God* and can never stop being so. Quibbling, second guessing, analyzing his decisions mediated to us by his Son and his Bride the Church shows lack of respect for him; and no one who doesn't respect God can really lay claim to loving him. We are God's children, too, the object of his special care and affection. To pout because that care and affection doesn't provide for all we want is to love childishly, not as a child *should* love.

We get lots of cards at Christmas time which say "To you in God's service." Vatican II styles our Church a *servant* Church. The servant is one who has someone else's good in mind, not his own. How really out of step with God's Spirit we would be, if we were to put our own desires uppermost in our minds. "To serve God is to reign," the Prayer of Peace reminds us. We are really in command, really free, when like Mary we have fully said, "Let it be done to me according to *your* Word."

A. Julian Davis



Francis

With birds and blossoms
decorating hands and robe, are you
sole property of Spring?
One would think a branch
blown pure by Wind,
stripped smooth by rain and
Sun would be a more apt sign, its world
a more apt season.
Ascetic wood, fine design
across Autumn-into-Winter skies,
you mark the universe with angled suffering:
brown promise of chilled slumber
before the break of green.

SISTER ANTOINETTE KENNEDY, O.S.F.

Saint Francis and Prayer

WILLIAM SLATTERY, O.F.M.

FROM THE TIME of his conversion around the year 1206 until his death in 1226, Saint Francis of Assisi lived an extraordinary life of love, humility, poverty, and joy. This extraordinary life was possible primarily because of the goodness of God and because Saint Francis was first a great man of prayer. Saint Bonaventure writes of Francis:

Saint Francis realized that he was an exile from the Lord's presence as long as he was at home in the body (cf. 2 Cor. 5, 6, 8), and his love of Christ had left him with no desire for the things of this earth. Therefore he tried to keep his spirit always in the presence of God, by praying to him without intermission, so that he might not be without some comfort from the Beloved. Prayer was his chief comfort in this life of contemplation in which he became a fellow-citizen of the angels, as he penetrated the dwelling places of heaven in his eager search for

his Beloved, from whom he was separated only by a partition of flesh. Prayer was his sure refuge in everything he did; he never relied on his own efforts, but put his trust in God's loving providence and cast the burden of his cares on him in insistent prayer. He was convinced that the grace of prayer was something a religious should long for above all else. No one, he declared, could make progress in God's service without it, and he used every means he could to make the friars concentrate on it. Whether he was walking or sitting, at home or abroad, whether he was working or resting, he was so fervently devoted to prayer that he seemed to have dedicated to it not only his heart and his soul, but all his efforts and all his time.¹

It was in prayer that Saint Francis discovered his vocation. Celano, at the beginning of his First Life, writes that the Saint "withdrew for a while from the bustle and the business of the world and tried to establish

Jesus Christ dwelling within himself."² And again, "He went with a certain man of Assisi to remote places and there Francis, 'filled with a new and singular spirit,' would pray to his Father in secret He prayed devoutly that the eternal and true God would direct his way and teach him to do his will."³ It was after this that Francis sold his goods, despised money, was persecuted by his father, and began serving the lepers.

In San Damiano, before the Crucifix, Francis received a clarifying message on his vocation from our Lord. At Mass in the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, he heard the Gospel proclaimed which was to become his Rule of Life. Francis discovered God, himself, and his vocation in prayer at this, the beginning of his religious life. What he wrote in his Testament is, then, literally true: "When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel."⁴

To get clearer on God's will for himself, Francis not only prayed himself but also had others pray for him, as on this

occasion when he consulted Saint Clare and Brother Sylvester:

Dear Brother, go to Sister Clare and tell her, on my behalf, to pray devoutly to God, with one of her purer and more spiritual companions, that God may deign to show me what is best—either that I preach sometimes or that I devote myself only to prayer. Go to Brother Sylvester who is staying on Mount Subasio and tell him the same thing.

When Masseo returned, Francis knelt down and bared his head and crossed his arms before Brother Masseo and asked him: "What does my Lord Jesus Christ order me to do?" Brother Masseo replied: "God wants you to go preaching, because he did not call you for yourself alone but also for the salvation of others."

Aflame with divine power, he jumped to his feet: "So let's go—in the name of the Lord."⁵

The end of Francis' life was so centered in prayer that Celano was able to say that the Saint had himself become a living prayer. We recall Greccio, Poggio, Bustone, La Verna. Waiting at the Portiuncula for his imminent death, Francis "commanded them to sing in a loud voice with joy of spirit, the Praises of the Lord over his approaching death, or rather over the life that was so

¹The citations for this article have all been taken from the *Omnibus of Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973) . . . The present reference is to St. Bonaventure's "Major Life of St. Francis," ch. 10, p. 705.

Father William Slattery is serving as Acting Master of Novices at St. Joseph's Mission, Besters, South Africa.

²1 Celano 6 (p. 234).

³Ibid.

⁴Testament (p. 68).

⁵Fioretti, 16 (p. 1335).

near."⁶ Praying, listening to the Gospel of St. John, he died.

Francis was always praying:

His safest haven was prayer; not prayer of a single moment, or idle, or presumptuous prayer, but prayer of long duration, full of devotion, serene in humility. If he began late, he would scarcely finish before morning. Walking, sitting, eating, drinking, he was always intent upon prayer.⁷

Where Did He Pray?

IT IS AGAIN Celano who tells us that Francis

always sought a hidden place where he could adapt his soul and body to God. When he suddenly felt himself visited by the Lord in public, lest he be without a cell he made a cell of his mantle. At times, when he did not have a mantle, he would cover his face with his sleeve so that he would not disclose the hidden manna. Always he put something between himself and the bystanders, lest they should become aware of the bridegroom's touch. Thus he could pray unseen even among many people in the narrow confines of a ship. Finally, when he could not do any of these things, he would make a temple of his breast. Because he was forgetful of himself, there were no sobs, or sighs; because he was

absorbed in God, there was no hard breathing or external movement.⁸

Generally, however, Francis went away to lonely places for long times of prayer. We know the names: Fonte Colombo, the Carceri, the Celle at Cortona, La Verna, etc. As the Legend of the Three Companions tells us, he often hid himself from the eyes of men and withdrew to pray in secret. He was drawn by sweetness of heart to pray apart, far from all public meeting places.⁹ Small, deserted Churches, quiet valleys, high mountain caves, lonely islands, silent woods, were Francis' favored places of prayer.

Wherever he prayed, Francis tried to keep his prayer life a deep secret. As Celano has it, it "was his habit to rise so furtively and so gently to pray that none of his companions would notice him getting up or praying. But when he went to bed late at night, he would make noise, and even a great noise, so that his going to rest might be noticed by all."¹⁰

How Francis Prayed

AT THE beginning, prayer must have been very difficult for Saint Francis; it apparently took a lot

out of him. We read in 1 Celano, for example:

When he came out again [from the grotto] to his companion, he was so exhausted with the strain, that one person seemed to have entered, and another to have come out.¹¹

Francis was absolutely convinced of the need for humble prayer; so he persisted, he allowed nothing to distract him. Saint Bonaventure relates an incident:

During Lent one year he carved out a dish to occupy his spare moments . . . Then when he was reciting Tierce, it came into mind and distracted him a little. At that he was seized with fervor and he threw the dish into the fire, saying: "I will make a sacrifice of it to God, because it interfered with his sacrifice."¹²

If we were equally dedicated, how many cars, houses, etc., would we throw into the fire!

With his dedication to prayer, Francis found prayer easier. He took steps to deepen his prayer life. He avoided uncharity, he hated gossip, he tried to remain quiet in God's presence, he absorbed the Bible. The Gospel really was the food and method of his prayer. Saint Bonaventure says:

He had never studied Sacred Scripture under any human teacher, but the unwearied application of prayer and the continual practise of virtue had purified his spiritual vision.¹³

When someone consoled him on his poor eyesight and his inability to read the Gospel, he said that he was so filled with the Gospel now that he did not need to read it.¹⁴

Still, he had to undergo frightful attacks from the devil, says Bonaventure, who tried to withdraw him from prayer. But the Saint's fervent prayers and steadfast intention overcame the enemy.

Although we don't associate methods of prayer with the free-spirited Francis, it is obvious that he was extremely regular and methodical in his prayer. "Every day," says the Legend of Perugia, "he mediated on the humility and example of the Son of God . . . the sufferings and bitterness which Christ endured for us were a constant subject of affliction to him—so much so that he was totally unconcerned with his own sufferings."¹⁵

Speaking to a brother, Francis said: "Every day I find such sweetness and consolation in re-

⁶1 Celano 109 (p. 323).

⁷1 Celano 71 (p. 288).

⁸1 Celano 94 (p. 440).

⁹Leg. 3 Comp., 8 (p. 897).

¹⁰2 Celano 99 (p. 444).

¹¹1 Celano 6 (p. 235).

¹²Bonaventure, Leg. Maj., ch. 10, n. 6 (p. 710).

¹³Ibid., ch. 11, n. 1 (p. 711).

¹⁴Leg. Perug., 38 (p. 1016).

¹⁵Ibid., 37 (p. 1015).

calling to mind and meditating on the humility of the Son of God . . . that I could live until the end of the world without hearing or meditating on any other passage from the Scriptures."¹⁶

Francis began with Jesus in the Gospels. He saw that this was the Son of God, he saw his humility, he visualized and saw depicted in the crib and on the cross the unbelievable goodness of God, and this led to setting his heart on fire with prayer.

Remember him in the home of Bernard of Quintavalle, repeating "My God and my All" the whole night.¹⁷ A simple prayer like this—prayed, lived—overcame him, filling him with the awareness of his own nothingness, insignificance, and sinfulness healed with the merciful goodness of God behind and beyond his own weakness. He was now well beyond the first stage of purifying prayer and into the prayer of simplicity.

How did he pray during those long nights on the mountains?

But when he prayed in the woods and in solitary places, he would fill the woods with sighs, water the places with his tears, strike his breast with his hand . . . he would often speak with his Lord

with words. There he would give answer to his Judge; there he would offer his petitions to his Father; there he would talk to his Friend; there he would rejoice with the Bridegroom . . . Often, without moving his lips, he would meditate within himself and, drawing external things within himself, he would lift his spirit to higher things.¹⁸

Saint Francis' faithful response to the graces of prayer led him to the heights of contemplation. As Celano puts it, "Francis was often suspended in such sweetness of contemplation that, caught up out of himself, he could not reveal what he had experienced because it went beyond all human comprehension."¹⁹



¹⁶Ibid., 38 (p. 1016).

¹⁷Fioretti, 2 (p. 1303).

¹⁸2 Celano 95 (p. 440).

¹⁹2 Celano 98 (p. 443).

Bonaventure tells a story:

As Francis was passing through the crowded village of Borgo San Sepolcro on one occasion the crowds rushed to meet him in their excitement. He was riding an ass because he was not well, and they pulled him and dragged him this way and that and crowded all about him, pushing against him on every side, but he seemed insensible to it all and like a dead body, noticing nothing that was going on. Long after they had passed the village and left the crowds behind they came to the leper hospital and then, as if coming back from far away, he inquired anxiously when they would be near Borgo San Sepolcro. His mind [concludes Saint Bonaventure] was fixed on the glory of heaven, and so he had lost all track of changes of place or time or people.²⁰

So, beginning with humble, hard, tiring effort in prayer, Saint Francis advanced with God's help to the prayer of union in contemplation. But alongside this, what we might call the private prayer of Saint Francis, let us not forget his love for the liturgy of the Church. Let us not forget his love, reverence, and devotion centered around the blessed Eucharist. For him, long before Vatican II, the Mass was "the center and source of [his] spiritual life."

Francis took great care to celebrate the great feasts of the Church, preparing for them with long and arduous fasts. The *Mirror of Perfection* speaks of his devotion to the Divine Office (which, of course, does so much to bring to the fore in our consciousness the spirit of the Feast or day's liturgy):

He was so devout and reverent at the Divine Office that when saying it he would never lean against a wall or support. He always stood upright and bare-headed, although he sometimes knelt . . . One day it was raining heavily, and he was riding an ass because he was sick. Although he was already drenched to the skin, he discounted from the horse when he wished to say the Hours, and said the Office standing in the road with the rain pouring down on him, as though he had been in a cell or in Church. He said to his companion, 'If the body likes to take its food in peace and ease, although it becomes food for worms, how much greater should be the soul's reverence and devotion when it receives the food which is God himself!'²¹

In his Rules Francis is careful to see that his brothers say the Divine Office, and in his Testament he suggests rather forceful measures of dealing with those who refuse to do so.

²⁰Bonaventure, Leg. Maj., ch. 10, n. 2 (pp. 706-07).

²¹Mirror of Perfection, n. 94 (p. 1228).

The Prayers of Saint Francis

THE MAIN prayers found to be authentically from Francis are the Praises of God, the Canticle of Brother Sun, the Blessing for Brother Leo, the Praises of the Virtues, the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin, the Praises before the Office, and the Office of the Passion.

It is important to notice the extent to which these prayers are permeated by praise of God's goodness. They are all, in fact, prayers of a man going to the limits of words' ability to praise. They are prayers showing an extremely extensive knowledge of Scripture, being themselves, in some instances, just a collection of scriptural texts. They show, too, an appreciation of nature. They make it clear that Franciscans should praise God for his gifts (sun, moon, stars, etc.). Do, at your leisure, read some of Francis' prayers preserved for us in the *Omnibus of Sources*.

Characteristics of Saint Francis' Prayer and Devotion

THE MOST characteristic feature of the prayer of Saint Francis is his devotion to our Lord and his identification with Him. Our Lord was God become man.

²² 1 Celano 84 (p. 299).

²³ Fioretti, 3rd consid. of the Stigmata (p. 1448). For the following reference to the Testament, see p. 67.

1. Francis appreciated who God was to an extent rarely found among human beings. God was, in him, a loving Father, infinitely generous, absolutely good. God was everything; Francis, nothing. "Who are you, God, and who am I, your poor miserable servant!" he prayed; "My God and my all!"

2. The thing, then, that really astounded Francis was the love and humility of this all-powerful God in becoming Man. His prayer is a meditation upon, a worship of this God-become-man, especially at his humblest, in the crib and on the cross. "Above all things," Celano observes, "the humility of the Incarnation and the love of the Passion so occupied his mind that he could scarcely think of anything else."²² Francis cried at the poverty and squalor of the crib; he shed tears "because Love is not loved." He prayed on La Verna that he might feel in his own body and soul "the pain that you, sweet Lord, did bear in the hour of your most bitter passion" and that he might teach others to "die for love of Your love as You deigned to die for love of my love."²³ The good God, who became a man born among animals and who died among criminals, is at the center of all Francis' prayer

life.

3. If you were to receive a letter from Saint Francis, there is one thing you could be sure of: he would tell you "Above everything else, I want this most Holy Sacrament to be honored and venerated and reserved in places which are richly ornamented" (Testament). All his letters bear on the subject of the Blessed Sacrament, so that it could be called the central preoccupation of all his thoughts and prayers.

In the Letter to All Clerics, we read that "Indeed, 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 in the Letter to a General Chapter, likewise, we are told, "I implore all my friars to offer single-mindedly and with reverence the true sacrifice of the most Holy Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ." To the "Rulers of the People," finally, Francis addresses the same urgent counsel: "This is my advice: Put away all worry and anxiety, and receive the holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ fervently in memory of him."²⁴

²⁴ Letter to All the Faithful, p. 95.

²⁵ Pp. 101, 104, 116 respectively.

²⁶ Admonition 1, p. 78.

²⁷ Testament, p. 67.

²⁸ Bonaventure, Leg. Maj., ch. 11, n. 1 (p. 712).

²⁹ Fioretti, 10 (p. 1322).

Jesus Christ, Son of God, present in the Blessed Eucharist, is for Saint Francis the beginning and the end of his prayer life. As he writes in his first Admonition: "It is the Most High himself who has told us, This is My Body and Blood of the New Covenant"; and, He who eats My Flesh and drinks my Blood has Life everlasting."²⁶

4. Francis' prayer is characterized by being founded on sacred Scripture, for which he had so great a love. He made a point of picking up the writings containing the words of our Lord and putting them in a proper place.²⁷ He said: "I want my friars to be true disciples of the Gospel and to progress in knowledge of truth in such a way as to grow in simplicity."²⁸

Francis' love of God's word served to focus his attention on Jesus as the center of all devotion and prayer.

5. Francis' prayer is characterized by humility. His prayer shows a man who realized he was nothing and that God was everything. "Why does everyone run after you?" queried Brother Masseo.²⁹ "Because," said Francis, who expected

The adorable humanity of Christ is the royal road which leads to contemplation.

Masseo to believe it, "God did not find on earth a viler creature." We remember his heart-rending cries at Poggio Bustone, where he begged God to have mercy on him—a "sinner."

6. The Effect of Saint Francis' Way of Prayer

THE CONCENTRATING of his contemplative love upon the historical facts of Christ's earthly life and his effort to share in these facts made the prayer of Francis have great influence on the Church.

"This approach," writes John Moorman,

was common to all those who drew their inspiration from St. Francis, and it had a considerable influence upon the spiritual life of the Church. If hitherto the Christ of the divine plan had been thought of in terms of the Judge before whom all must one day stand, the High Priest who pleads his sacrifice on man's behalf, the Redeemer who reigns from the tree; he now came to be loved and worshipped as the Son of Mary who smiled and wept, who loved and sorrowed, who knew

pain and grief as well as joy and peace, who lived among men and shared with them in the vicissitudes and injustices of life. From this teaching and all that it implied, changes took place not only in popular religion, but also in art and literature, as the austere yet triumphant Redeemer of Byzantine art gave place to the tender and mournful sufferer, the man of sorrows acquainted with grief, of later medieval art and devotion.³⁰

The early Franciscans, following Francis, prayed as he prayed. Bonaventure writes: "The adorable humanity of Christ is the royal road which leads to contemplation." And later, Ubertino of Casale writes: "Jesus made me feel, in an extraordinary way, that I was with him in every action of his life—that I was first the ass, then the ox, then the crib; then the hay on which he lay, then the servant attending him; then one of his parents, and lastly, the Child Jesus himself."

"He took me with him," Ubertino continues, "when he fled into Egypt and to the temple

on his return, and to Nazareth with his Mother. In a strange manner I knew that I was with him at his baptism, in the desert, in the course of his preaching, and constantly in treacheries, desertions, insults, and injuries." And again, Ubertino imagined himself as Mary Magdalene, or Saint John, or the Virgin Mary, or the penitent thief."³¹

7. The effects of Francis' prayer

life are inestimable. Because he gave himself completely, God too gave Himself completely. All the gifts for which he is revered: his joy, his peace, his originality, his charity, his courtesy, his infatuation with our Lord, his Stigmata, his joyful death—all were possible, all are real, because Francis was a man of prayer—because, rather, he WAS A PRAYER.

³¹Ibid., p. 259.



Teach Us, Holy Spirit

I

Teach us, Holy Spirit, Flaming Breath,
How to be a saint—that is Your call!
Strengthen that desire;
Fill us with Your fire,
Lest we falter on the way, or stall.
Teach us how to live in love 'til death!

II

Teach us, Holy Spirit, tell us how
Holier we can become through grit.
Stir our souls to will
All that You instill;
Learning ever more from Holy Writ,
'Til we love in that eternal Now!

BRUCE RISKI, O.F.M.CAP.

³⁰John Moorman, D.D., *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 256.

A Hymn

God and Lord of all, I thank and praise you with all of nature.

With the Sun and the Moon; with the water and fire;
With all animals and living things, from the smallest plant to the mightiest redwood; from the smallest insect to the largest animal.

With all these I praise and thank you.

You are the God from whom all these things come.

They are my brothers and sisters because they come from you.
But there is another world, a world unnatural, a world discovered by other creatures, a world magnificent and wondrous.

It is a world with which I live every day. So often, though, I forget that along with this world, I too should sing to you.

In this world, my brothers and sisters cannot see, but with their unseeing eyes they say: "See for me, my brother, the good God who is waiting for us."

In this world my brothers and sisters cannot hear, but they look at me with their unhearing ears and say: Listen for me, listen to the voice of God."

In this world, this unnatural world, my brothers and sisters cannot speak or sing; but they look at me and say: "Sing a hymn of praise for us to the Great King."

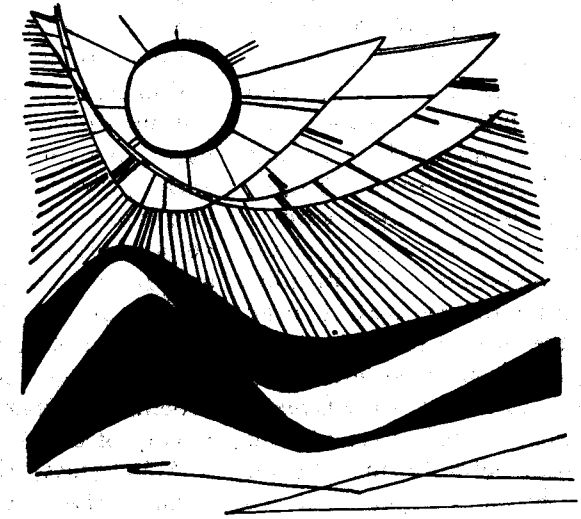
So, Father, with these brothers and sisters of mine of that unnatural world;

With these brothers and sisters of mine who are so often misused and misunderstood;

With these brothers and sisters of mine who are not appreciated as your gifts;

With these brothers and sisters, I raise a voice to you.

I praise you with my sister the telephone, who brings friendly voices from so far away.



I praise you with my brother the computer. How smart he is, so quick to discover the order you created.

I praise you with my brothers and sisters, the automobile, the train and plane. So swift, so kind to lazy legs.

I praise you with my sisters the cooking range, the washing machine and dishwasher. How strong they are, such good friends, always making my life a little more enjoyable.

I praise you with my brothers the air conditioner and heating system. So kind to cool the summer and heat the winter.

I praise you with my sisters the television set, radio, and movies. They bring faces and voices to me that I would never see or hear.

All these brothers and sisters of that unnatural world. How often I have seen but not seen, heard but not heard.

But now, as a creature among them, I raise my voice to you, God; for you are God and we but your creatures.

WILLIAM DE BIASE, O.F.M.

Prayer

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

RECENTLY I HAD the pleasure of being the third man in a presentation on prayer. The main speakers were a married couple who were talking to other married couples about the ups and downs of their personal prayer life and their prayer life together. My role was similarly to share my own feelings and attitudes about prayer: the way I pray alone, the way I pray in community. Such an experiential approach to prayer is a bit foreign to my normal style, but I think it has some value for instruction. (And I do have a penchant for autobiography.)

One way of talking about prayer life—in fact, one way of talking about almost every area of relationships and in particular personal ones—is to speak in terms of cycles: a cycle of romance, of disillusionment, and of perfect joy. The words, especially the second, may sound too strong for you, but when you hear their meaning, you will, I think, go along.

As religious people, i.e., people who are together in com-

munity, we can trace these cycles in two areas: personal prayer and community prayer.

Romance implies attraction, enthusiasm, zest, almost fun. Perhaps you can recall your very early prayer experiences when you used to love to go to novena or kneel at your bedside and remember twenty or thirty intentions, or go into a downtown shrine church and attend three or four Masses. Or maybe your “romantic” stage was the discovery of the peace and quiet of a 6:30 Mass, the Holy Week chants, the real devotion engendered by Benediction. You knew your prayers were being heard, and you stormed Heaven with confidence.

Then—and maybe it didn't happen this way—you got some *no's* from God, or a few jolts, like the death of a loved parent or friend— or you started noticing that few people your age were at Mass and Benediction in the morning. And you began to wonder whether it was all very real. Disillusionment is the name given to this phase, which may

or may not say too much.

Then, as is evident from your presence in your community (and perhaps from the fact that you are reading these pages), you came back to prayer—or rather, you stuck it out—and you found a new dimension to it. You started thinking of it in terms of something you are giving, not getting. You no longer demanded answers from God which were precise, but you acknowledged that his Wisdom was by and large superior to your own. Such a growth process, which may well have happened before you even had a notion to enter the religious life, repeats itself throughout our lives. In the spiritual literature the phase of disillusionment goes by the name of “aridity.” We know that Teresa of Avila endured it for seventeen years, and that plenty of other saints also felt no joy in praying despite the long hours they spent at it. The perfect joy phase may seem like and overstatement, but certainly there have been times in our lives when we have reached a stage of peace and contentment in our prayer—with our prayer.

Profuse illustration of the same stance toward community prayer is unnecessary. How many have passed from loving it to despising it to tolerating it to (to add a new phase) profiting from it! Few things, it is safe to say, have generated so much annoyance as community prayer. Some of us

felt it really was an occasion of sin—or at least some of us male religious did. The translation into English of our Office, and the cutback on the amount of it said in choir certainly took away much of the grief connected with the Divine Office, but by no means all of it. The liturgical renewal triggered by Vatican II had its three phases in our communities, I'm sure. Dittoed liturgies, something different every day, singing and hugging found us polarizing, and we became surfeited with too much of a good thing.

Hopefully the dust has settled now, and the new Liturgy of the Hours can offer us a stable backdrop against which to conduct our prayer in common. Of course, Vatican II has opened up other forms of prayer in common: shared prayer, spontaneous petitions, or declarations of thanksgiving, or praises of God. These things have not miraculously transformed our community prayer lives (or, for that matter, our personal ones); but they have become more or less familiar, and many who thought they could never be comfortable with such “Protestant” spontaneity really value it.

The thing about cycles is that they keep coming. Of course, they never come in exactly the same way, and so they are hard to recognize. But knowing that our prayer life has rhythms or patterns can be a help, for when we

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seem to be getting nowhere we may well be in a transition stage. In fact, here is where the cyclic view limps as an analogy, since the new cycle should be at a higher and deeper plane and ordinarily will be so as we grow in religious life. Perhaps "spiraling" is a better image.

Some may say this talk of three stages is obsolete—that today people see only two: up and down. If it seems this way, it may help to recall that downs are followed by ups, and that in the life of faith, "down" is not only not out, but also may well be a real time of growth. John of the Cross spoke of dark nights of the senses and of the soul, of the purification that God's friends need to go through as they grow closer to him. So, far from depressing us, as they tend to do, our "downs" in prayer (if they are not caused by any willful backsliding or neglect of our own) ought to inspire us to go on.

Here again, perhaps, some words of caution are in order. An experiential approach to prayer such as that referred to at the beginning of this article relies heavily on describing how we feel about our prayer life, and also on a rather keen evaluation of it. To take the second first, I don't think we should be continuously asking ourselves, How is my prayer life? Am I almost to the prayer of the quiet? In which of the seven castles

am I now dwelling? (Or am I in a shack?) Our relationship with God, like our relationships with one another, flourishes best when we don't keep score. The less self-conscious we can become in relating to God, the better we will be. The pursuit of perfection, we all know, is not necessarily the pursuit of God. If we are too frequently rating our performance in prayer, we may find ourselves performing instead of relating.

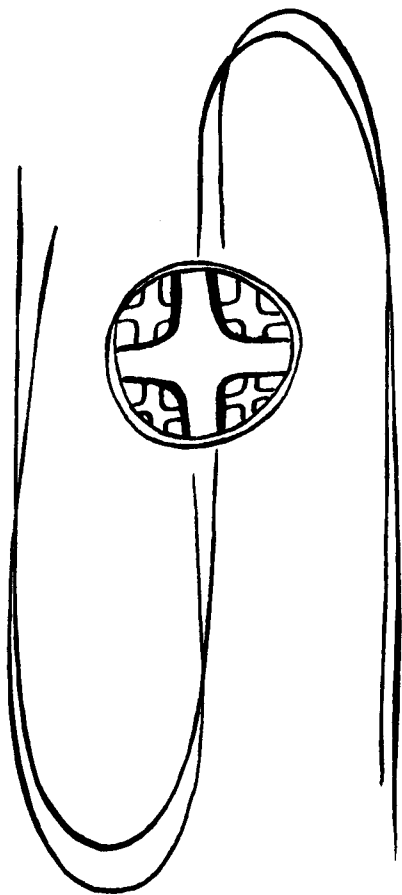
With regard to feeling in the matter of prayer, we need to be warned again against Paphnutianism, of FIF—the funny-inside-feeling that some mistakenly take to be the goal of and sign of union with God. And we need to remind ourselves that like any relationship our relationship with God depends on our decision to maintain it. Time and again the spirit of our age—the Age of Aquarius—suggests that prayer must spring spontaneously and gushingly forth from within to qualify as prayer. Certainly such moments are a part of our experience. But they are what are known as "peak experiences," not everyday ones: the death of a loved one, a time of desperate spiritual need, an occasion of great joy. Faith tells us that prayer is not limited to these peak experiences—that any conscious effort to contact God is prayer. Moreover, it indicates that we must make these con-

scious efforts and not just "wait for it to happen." We plan and set aside times to be with those we want to be with, and we must do the same for God. Another thing: prayer is a responsibility. We owe it to ourselves and others who support us in our calling to be professional "holy people," to pray. We don't let our feelings stop us from teaching, or nursing, or visiting, or whatever our job is; so we mustn't let our lack of feeling stop us from prayer to which we have committed ourselves either by personal resolution or by public profession in our community.

Closely related to the question of feeling is that of honesty in prayer and about prayer. Honesty means being ourselves in prayer, not the someone we think God wants us to be. It means recognizing what feelings we have—even negative ones like resentment and bitterness, envy, ambition. It means leveling with God about the time we set aside for prayer. So often we find excuses to omit our devotions or to skip communal prayer. We say we have papers to correct, letters to write, phone calls to make, sleep to catch up on; we don't have time to do it properly (one of my own favorites), are too distracted, etc. Like the devils', excuses' names are legion. But we ought not to fool ourselves in the matter of prayer; we should acknowledge that here and now we

don't *want* to pray, we don't *feel* like it. Such a state will hardly persist, though it is possible for us humans to make honesty a cop-out from prayer as we can from any personal relationship. Again, our own experience should enable us to see the shams that most of our excuses are for not praying: we save ten or fifteen minutes from communal recitation of the Office and make two or three extra phone calls which leave neither us nor our phones any better off. We are too tired to pray, and yet we manage to summon up the energy for television or a novel. We have too much work to do, and we end up not doing any work—or any praying.

It is a delightful experience that I pass on to you now. Recently a college student came to me with a problem: he was having difficulty with mental prayer. What is delightful in this is that serious young people are convinced of the value of mental prayer. (You can't have any difficulty with something you are not trying!) The term "mental prayer" is one we Franciscans have always been a little leery of—we prefer to think that the meditation stage signified by the word "mental" quickly passes to affective prayer—i.e., prayer of the will and emotions—prayer in which we talk to God more than think about him. Such prayer is apart from that of the Divine



Office or of the Mass. It is time we spend with God . . . and ourselves . . . recalling his presence, his favors, his care for us, the example of his Christ. Theoretically nothing should be easier— if we forget that we are human beings with imaginations and senses and a yen for the physical and tangible. Concentrating on God, who is Spirit, isn't easier, and doesn't get that way, whether you are 19 or 39 or 59. We have to prepare ourselves for prayer.

Being in God's work should give us a good start on some common interests, and being Jesus' friend and brother/sister ought to give us some more. Spiritual reading is suggested for us precisely to give us a context in which to approach God. Conversation is a two-way street; we can certainly relate to God from where we are, but common decency suggests we be familiar with his interests (conversation comes easily with people from our home town).

Then we have to give ourselves a proper atmosphere for prayer—a quiet place, whether bedroom or chapel or backyard, or bus or car—and we need quiet, interior peace. We must resolutely put aside all worries or concerns about our work, our friends and families, our problem children. One resolution I make (and break too) and recommend for general use is never to use any ideas you get during the time of mental prayer. I don't mean to imply that God cannot inspire us at prayer. What I do mean is something like this. One of the stories about Saint Francis is that while praying the Office he found himself thinking about a piece of ceramic that he was making (he was into ceramics "therapy" before we ever conceived of calling it that). After prayers he went to his bench and broke the jug which was taking his mind from God. Now that was a bit

excessive, for sure; but the point remains valid. In my own case I find myself planning classes, or giving advice, or making a phone call, or looking forward to a future visit while I'm supposed to be praying—and I try not to act on any of those plans, not because I superstitiously think they will be doomed, but because I want to get myself accustomed to the fact that time with God is not meant to be time for solving my personal problems or thinking about my concerns. Self then gets the message: no sense thinking about your concerns now, since they won't be attended to. Far from ruling out divine inspiration, then, I am trying here to repeat the caution we need to take so that time for God not be converted into just so much more time for ourselves.

Distractions will of course be a part of our prayer. As the word's etymology suggests, distractions are thoughts that draw our concentration away from God and spiritual realities. The best remedy is still to ignore them, make a prayer of them, laugh at them if need be. As one who has opted for the 4-volume edition and is trying to get back to saying the Matins prayer, or Office of Readings as it is now called, I was pleased to hear from a fellow friar that he found that the Office spoke to his own needs—that when he read the Readings he inevitably (or almost that often)

found God speaking to him about a present concern or feeling. In brief, he found the Divine Office not only relevant, but satisfying in the best sense of the term. We have to remember that this has certainly held true for us many times; for most of us prayer is something we want to do, choose to do, not something we have to push ourselves to do.

A second nice experience: my sister, married and the mother of three, has recently rediscovered prayer and the Mass. What caused the turn-about in her was her involvement with a charismatic group. All of you have undoubtedly heard about charismatic prayer groups, and many of you may have participated in some, as I have not. My initial skepticism about the movement has been tempered a good deal, not only by my sister's experience but by my conversations with others who attend these meetings. They do produce good fruit; and by their fruits, Jesus tells us, you shall know them. I know the prayer sessions are sometimes long, frequently far more emotional than most of us can stand, do appeal to mentally troubled people (who of course do not constitute a large proportion of the participants); yet I find the prayer groups do influence people in the direction of orthodox Catholicism—in the direction of attending Mass and of loyal adherence to Church

teachings. Where such a direction is lacking, you can be sure that it is not the *Holy Spirit* operating, but the spirit of the world or the flesh. Unfortunately such results are part of the total picture of the charismatic movement. Still I would like to go on record as endorsing the movement for any who want to try it, and expect that sooner or later I myself will get to it.

One thing, however, no one will push me into it, and I have to take my stand forcefully and explicitly here against any effort to force people to pray in any particular way. Prayer of open petition can be beautiful, and it can be painful too. Dittoed liturgies, constant changing of music, etc., often make uncomfortable what should be a comfortable experience—the Mass and Divine Office. Communities and individuals have to respect one another in this matter as in all else.

A couple of more things need to be said about prayer, before I sum up what I have been trying to say. First, prayer before the Blessed Sacrament is still, in the Catholic Christian community, a special opportunity and a special place to pray. Jesus is there in a special way, and it's for our benefit, not his. I have yet to hear of a saint since the middle ages who did not zero in on Christ in the Eucharist as a pivotal point of his or her prayer-life—and we can

include the late Pope John, if we can canonize him, as well as Mother Teresa, if we can name her a "consensus saint."

In reminding ourselves that we were not misguided when directed to center our prayer lives on Christ in the Eucharist, we need not close ourselves off to other opportunities or modes of prayer. We know we can pray anywhere: in the open air on a mountaintop, in a car or bus while traveling, in our room; and we must be flexible enough to make the most of any circumstances of prayer. For myself, some of my best prayer is done while traveling—I find it inconceivable one could be in a car for any more than an hour without praying. We ought to feel free to try a different form of prayer, a charismatic or meditative reading, or shared prayer, or to stick by what has been very successful for us.

The major points I think have been made in the foregoing pages are these: that prayer has cycles (or rhythms, or spirals); that it is a growing thing, and like a growing plant grows better the less frequently we take out the tape measure and see how long the shoot is. Again, I have tried to illustrate that prayer is alive and well among all sorts of people, and that it is alive because of the work of God and because it is a satisfying experience. I made a small, but

important, point about distractions: that they should not worry us. I indicated that we should be flexible in our prayer life and open to new approaches, but should not feel compelled to try them. I urged Eucharistic prayer as part of our religious prayer life. Throughout this article I have been operating on a theory of the person-to-person relationship as the model of the God-and-I relationship. Just as love between individuals is a matter of decision, covenant, commitment—not just feeling, so our relation with God which we foster through prayer is a matter of decision, choice, and selection, and not one of mere impulse or happenstance.

In my office in Ryan Hall at Siena College hangs literally the biggest thing anyone has ever given me—a banner, hand cut, on which Saint Paul's words to the Thessalonians about prayer are written: "Rejoice always, render constant thanks, never cease praying. This is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:15-16).

FRANCISCAN PLAYS

Several new Franciscan plays are now available, based upon the original sources and commended by Franciscans who have read them. Brother David Paul Benzshawel, O.F.M., holds a degree in drama, and from his studies at the Franciscan Institute, has written the following:

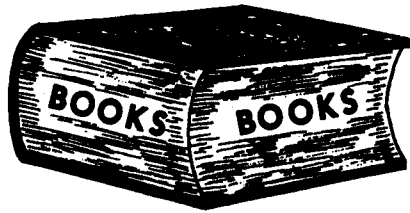
—*Sacrum Commerclum*, adapted from the work by the same name as a medieval mystery play.

—*Clare's Song of Songs*, in analogy with the Old Testament Song of Songs, portraying Clare's conversion.

—*Lord or Servant*, dramatizing Francis' conversion and transformation into the leader of a new Order.

Scripts are available in mimeograph form for \$2.00 each. All rights of production and performance with purchase of script. Scripts are suited for dramatic presentation, choral readings, or private reflection and meditation.

Write to
Bro. David Paul Benzshawel, O.F.M.
St. Paschal's Friary
3400 St. Paschal's Drive
Oak Brook, Illinois 60521



Christian Prayer: The Liturgy of the Hours. English trans. by ICEL, of the official text. Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1976. Pp. 1760, incl. illustrations and indices. Leather, \$19.95; leatherette, \$15.50; plastic, \$8.50. Clergy and religious discounts: 20% up to 50 copies, 30% for more than 50.

Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., Editor of this Review.

The Daughters of St. Paul ought surely to be very proud of this handsome new Breviary. Before writing up this notice, I used it for a couple of weeks and can thus speak from some experience about its convenience and many attractive features.

I suppose translations of the Psalms are a matter of taste, but I for one much prefer the one used here to that used in the interim Breviary. The hymns seem much better too, both because of their content and because the editors had the sense to avoid destroying rhyme by modernization of archaic forms (although, occasionally, one does find *you* and *thou* in the same hymn!).

The *Benedictus* and *Magnificat* are printed in full for each day instead of only once, in the Ordinary—a great convenience! A short biographical sketch is included for each feast or memorial of a saint. The

antiphons are repeated after the psalms, and the *Gloria Patri* is likewise indicated at the end of each psalm.

Typographically, this breviary is fascinating. It makes use of three sizes of both light and bold faced sans-serif type, and you must actually use it to see how pleasantly and sensibly these faces have been distributed in the text. The illustrations are, I think, wood-cuts, and are so beautiful that I wish more of them could have been included. The prayers before and after Mass are reprinted from the Sacramentary at the end of this delightful book, which is printed on non-glare paper, lies flat no matter where it's opened to, and—wonder of wonders—can be held comfortably in one hand. I certainly hope it will be possible for our community to adopt it for choral use, and I recommend it most enthusiastically to any individual or group, lay or religious.

And Would You Believe It! Thoughts about the Creed. By Bernard Basset, S.J. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1976. Pp. 120. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father John Marshall, O.F.M., Assistant Pastor at St. Joseph's Church, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and author of some widely acclaimed series of spiritual conferences for religious.

We all have our favorites. They are favorites in that they provide a menu that never fails to satisfy the appetite.

So it is with favorite authors. With

the publication of each of their books we are guaranteed satisfaction in the reading and profit in the perusing. Such is one of my favorite authors, Bernard Basset. Time and again he has provided in content, style, and pertinence, incisive insights and observant outlooks, as in his most recent book *And Would You Believe It!*

The content of this latest effort is the Nicene Creed, the style is both picturesque and humorous, the pertinent is the need in a changing climate for a renewed inspection of a basic stance, faith in God. As Basset himself says, the creed may not put last things last, but it does put first things first.

Bernard Basset takes the Nicene Creed and analyzes it with the support of those twin giants of the faith, that "Creed man" John Henry Cardinal Newman and the prolific translator of the Bible, Ronald Knox. Belonging not to the sphere of having but of being, he dissects not to murder or to muddle but to expose the articles of the Creed in such a manner that in our own faith we see them as the necessary precondition for living, moving and having our being in Christ.

In reading this book we have the same problem that Franz Werfel had when he gave us "The Song of Bernadette." To those who do not believe, no explanation is possible. To those who do believe, none is needed. But we must add that even those who do believe must nurture their faith, scout about in support of it, continue to plant and water, and so appreciate God's increase. Abetting us in this holy endeavor is this delightful volume of 115 pages

fully complemented with documentation.

Central and pivotal to Father Basset's source inspiration is a line plucked from Cardinal Newman's *Grammar of Assent*: I am as little to think by any mind but my own as to breathe with another's lung. As Newman applied this to conscience, his power-hold on truth, our author applies it to faith and gives it pride of place. He refrains from this conviction throughout the book.

For Cardinal Newman any creed was a prayer or a hymn. The Athanasian Creed was a "war-song" of faith. Like the earliest creeds the Nicene Creed must also be a personal pledge of allegiance. Admittedly this is the need of the hour. Thanks to Father Basset and his latest book we are confronted with that need and comforted in the truth that only real, not merely notional, martyrdom can do justice to the Nicene Creed. Many are they who say they are willing to die for their faith even while they are failing to live up to it.

Living the Eucharistic Mystery.

By Ernest Lussier, S.S.S. Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1976. Pp. xix-209. Cloth, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Francis de Ruijter, O.F.M., B.A., B. Th., a graduate student working towards his M.A. in Franciscan Studies at St. Bonaventure University.

The author depicts the Eucharist and Jesus, the Bread of Life, against a biblical background, both NT and OT. Although the scholarly investigation is evident, the book reads smoothly without undue scientific

show. Its 31 chapters, not too long (usually 6 pages) yet long enough to stimulate meditation, can appropriately be used for one's daily quiet time with the Lord, during an entire month.

Already a natural meal has the biological purpose of sustaining life, the sociological effect of renewing human ties, and the religious sense of blessing God for all his gifts; over and above all this the Eucharistic meal is infinitely richer because it has also the characteristics of a sacrifice. It is a meal of healing, the remedy for sins because the Son who was sent "to be a bodily and spiritual medicine" is always present. It is a meal of divinization because it infuses deeply into our being the life of Christ, the Trinitarian life . . . At the Lord's Table, Christians become what they eat [pp. 118, 136].

Greater stress is given to a number of aspects of the Eucharistic celebration—which have at times been overlooked in the past. The unity of the Eucharist finds its best expression in concelebration, so much appreciated by lay people, but still misunderstood by many priests. There should be no celebrations without song or silence (p. 84). Between the two comings of Christ—Incarnation and Parousia—the Church is in a state of mission, which the author calls a dimension of the Apostolic Pentecost (p. 131). In chapter 18, Father Lussier brings out the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Eucharist—something we rarely read about and is therefore so new and refreshing! Christ's action in the Eucharist must be understood as a constantly more encompassing hold on all creatures as they are drawn to their ultimate end. This will be achieved with the cooperation of man who is re-

sponsible before God for creation's march towards its maker. Do we dare to live as resurrected people? Do we dare for Christ's sake to commit ourselves to the service of mankind and proclaim the hope which our Lord by his Spirit has planted and fosters in our hearts? Let us be honest enough to admit that too often our Masses could become practically a call to atheism, if we remained indifferent to the demands of social justice. The Eucharist is a dangerous, indigestible food for anyone who would disregard the true aspiration of man. It is ours to make our Eucharistic celebration a constant protestation against any structure marked by sin and egoism, and a commitment of our energies to the service of mankind (pp. 205-07).

A number of obvious printing errors side-track the reader—I noted 14 of them on the way through. Still, this is a book which will make people love the Eucharist, a book which is, like its subject, spiritual nourishment. It is a very positive and worthwhile book, highly recommended for reflection and for renewal.

Francis of Assisi. By Walter Nigg. Photographs by Toni Schneiders. Foreword by the Rt. Rev. John R. H. Moorman; trans. William Neil. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975. Pp. 142. Cloth, \$12.95.

Reviewed by Sister Donna Marie Woodson, O.S.F., B.S. (St. Louis University), who works in physical therapy Home Care on Chicago's South Side and is a summer student at the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University.

This book is a beautiful experience for anyone who longs to return to the sources and become familiar with the world of Saint Francis. It is published in commemoration of the 750th anniversary of the death of Francis and joins the myriads of books about this fascinating man. The remarkable full page photographs are a key feature making this an important and colorful addition to any Franciscan library.

The sections of the book fit together loosely. A foreword by Bishop Moorman, whose interest in Francis is well known, tells us that our holy Father "was not an ordinary person . . . all he wanted to do was to take Christ seriously—and face the consequences." An essay of 30 pages by Walter Nigg, "Francis, the Little Brother from Assisi," concludes with a translation of the Testament. Third is "The World of Saint Francis," including excerpts from the Lives by Celano, Bonaventure, and the Three Companions. Toni Schneiders' beautiful color photographs are effectively arranged at key places in the text. A concluding section explains the photos, each of which is identified numerically and reprinted in a smaller size. These pages should have been numbered, however, for easier reference.

Walter Nigg is a Swiss historian who has written two previous books about Francis. His essay seems to capture Francis' spirit well enough but with some distortion. There are statements attributed to him, e.g., which are not thus documented by recent scholarship on the early sources. The attempts to compare the youth, society, and Church of today

with those known by Francis and his opinions about them seem forced. Do we really know that he had all that in mind? A better knowledge or use of the earliest writings and the relative value of the later sources of Francis' life could have improved the essay's historical accuracy. The translation from German by William Neil speaks of "Brother Everglad," and also of "Brother Death," a rendition which fails to capture the spirit as well as other renditions which speak of "Sister Death."

What makes the book so worthwhile, then, is clearly the pictures—72 pages of full color reproductions for which the photographer is to be heartily commended. The selection, arrangement, and variety are truly remarkable. There are scenes, landscapes, important buildings, hermitages, and early paintings which capture the corner of the world known by Francis and those who lived shortly after him.

The book is recommended to all Franciscans, with some reservation for those who are interested in historical accuracy.

Bioethics: Basic Writings on the Key Ethical Questions That Surround the Major, Modern Biological Possibilities and Problems. Edited by Thomas A. Shannon. Ramsey, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1976. Pp. x-513. Paper, \$9.95.

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

The 29 essays in the collection

cover seven bio-medical areas: abortion, the treatment of severely handicapped infants, death and dying, experimentation with humans, genetic engineering, the allotting of scarce medical resources (both organs for transplant and such machines as kidney dialysis ones), and behavior modification (whether by chemical, psychological, or electrical methods). The strength of this work lies in its breadth and in the real acquaintance with critical issues manifested in the by-and-large outstanding papers. Particularly fine, whether or not one agrees with all the ethical positions taken by the authors, are Gustafson's essay on the right to life of mongoloids, Capron's and Kass's essay on a definition of death, Jonas' treatment of experimentation with human subjects, and Lappe's essay on morality and genetic control.

Generally speaking the essays would be characterized as "pro-life." Kass's remark that "We must all get used to the idea that biomedical technology makes possible many things we should never do" (p. 316) is a good case in point. A significant exception is the stance of Joseph Fletcher in his two essays. In one he draws an empirical profile of what constitutes humanness—a profile which would rule out of the human race a good many of its helpless members. In the other, he urges a shift from rights to needs as ground for norms in genetic decisions, a stance which undermines any tough pro-life stance.

An introductory essay on the evaluation of Roman Catholic medical ethics seems out of place, for although Catholic stands are mentioned one way or another in most of

the articles, very few of them are written by Catholic theologians, and perhaps only one by a representative of the traditional position the editor criticizes. The absence of a really solid, sustained argument against abortion seems inexcusable in virtue of the plethora of literature on the topic. That section on abortion thus ends up, in this reviewer's judgment, as one of the weakest in the book.

Bioethics is a valuable source book and should be in the library of any college or rectory.

Gadgets, Gimmicks, and Grace: A Handbook on Multimedia in Church and School. By Edward N. McNulty. St. Meinrad, Ind.: Abbey Press, 1976. Pp. xi-130. Paper, \$3.50.

Reviewed by Father Thomas J. Burns, O.F.M., College Chaplain at Siena College, Loudonville, New York.

Gadgets, Gimmicks, and Grace was written to allay the fears of some that there is no grace in gadgets and gimmicks. The objects, to be sure, contain no "stuff" called grace. But when used under the watchful eye of a good liturgical artist, the most inexpensive audio-visual Equipment can assist the minister or educator to proclaim the Gospel in a most powerful way.

The author, a Presbyterian minister, presents a compelling case for going to the trouble of incorporating films, slides, and music into congregational worship. Drawing from his perceptive analysis of Scripture and history, his appreciation of contemporary art and music, and the

impact of his multi-media programs upon his congregations, he integrates these new media tools into worship in such a way that the electronic invasion of the sanctuary seems less like tinkering with the sacred Mysteries and more consistent with some of the traditional principles of Judeo-Christian ritual and worship.

Gadgets may also prove helpful to the congregation or youth group faced with restricted budgets (most of us, we can safely assume), since one of the main premises of the book is the possibility and feasibility of producing quality audio-visual experiences without spending great amounts of money. A number of money-saving procedures are enumerated (including a remarkably simple method of converting magazine pictures into slides—simple because the author discovered that magazine photos are not laid directly on the page, but on a very thin layer of clay, which can be lifted off into a transparent cellophane pane). In addition, a useful guide to judicious purchasing of electronic equipment is included.

Most importantly, the author attempts to encourage pastors, individuals, and groups to stop believing that multi-media ventures, even film-making, are beyond their realm of competence. Any group with a fair sense of artistic value, patience, and liturgical sense can enhance the proclamation of the Word for very little money but with a great spiritual return.

Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years. By Anthony Mockler.

London: Phaidon Press, 1976. Pp. 256. Cloth, L 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 mystery of sanctity is something that is very difficult for the ordinary unholy biographer to describe, and almost impertinent to analyze" (p. 248). These words of Anthony Mockler come at the end of this very difficult and impertinent biography of Francis of Assisi; they provoke a question as to the motivation of this author. Any Franciscan who has struggled to deepen within himself the spirit of Francis will undoubtedly close this book convinced that Mockler never should have attempted such a task.

Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years is launched from a platform of history: the history of Europe before and during the time of Francis. The author offers the definition of history through which he will view Francis in these words: "A hard core of interpretation surrounded by a pulp of disputable facts" (p. vii). From this pulp he enters into the Franciscan world by way of a cloud of political, military, literary, and religious interpretation. There is hardly a glimmering of light which is left unnoticed: the intrigues of the papal campaigns, the medieval trade fairs, the literary ballads of knights and courtships, even an examination of the fundamentalist religious movements

which were springing up in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

What is the most basic flaw of this book is the indisputable way in which the author presents the history of medieval Europe in such a sharp contrast to the history of the primitive Franciscan fraternity. This is evident in the very first chapter, "Legends, Lives, and Literature," in which Mockler examines the sources of the life of Francis. It is evident that he spent a great deal of time discovering the world in which Francis lived; it is a shame that he did not spend more time more time discovering the world of Franciscan literature. If he had done this, Mockler might not have been as impertinent or flippant in his use of the early biographers. Bonaventure, for example, is completely dismissed for his politically motivated compromises and interpretations of history. The Three Companions are, once more, cast in the roles of real heroes whose portrait has emerged as the most accurate. There is an inconsistency in Mockler's approach to these sources. The *Fioretti* are seen as pious, apocryphal stories with little foundation in history; yet they are used for many examples and interpretations. What is the most prominent failure is Mockler's failure to study the writings of Francis himself. He is certainly aware of them, for he quotes them throughout the book, but it is obvious that he did not study them or try to plumb their depths.

The role of Francis is founding the Order, his relationship with Clare, his desire to preach to the Saracens: all of these aspects of his life are examined without any serious

attempt to discover what was the central reason for them all—God. Mockler offers a psychological analysis which is superficial, for it fails to understand the dynamism of love in the personality development of Francis. The author offers a sociological understanding of the Saint without a deep look at the society of the Franciscan fraternity, which was of paramount importance to his life. In short, the author writes a biography of a saint by writing about the world which surrounded him and not about the saint himself and the profound mystery of his life with God.

It is unfortunate, for *Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years* is a well written book. It is a rare author who is able to write of history in an interesting, absorbing, and colorful way. Mockler succeeds in this particularly throughout the early sections of the book which describe the political intrigues and military conflicts which enveloped the world of Francis. There is evident in these sections the style of a literary historian which is reason for enjoyable and easy reading. Moreover the book is printed in a most attractive and readable manner.

Mockler suggests that he wrote this biography of Francis because of a request, a request which he was able to satisfy in an unusually short time. Perhaps that is the reason for the failure of his book. A book cannot be written about Francis of Assisi without the process of absorbing his spirit, which is to say, without spending time in prayer and in peace striving to be filled with the Spirit which so absorbed his life.

One final thought. The author acknowledges the kindness, hospitality, and assistance of the many Franciscan friars and nuns who were influential in the writing of this book. If the book reflects the life-style or the interests of our Franciscan lives, then it should be used as a communal examination of our manner of living. What emerges is a concern for the things of this world: organization, psychology, secular culture, etc. If this was the Franciscanism of which the author drank, then his biography is sadly understandable, for it reflects an emptiness and shallowness in living what the Saint of Assisi was all about.

Viewed in this light, *Francis of Assisi: The Wandering Years* may have some value in contributing to the spiritual vitality of the followers of Saint Francis and of those who are fascinated by his charism. Otherwise, it is another attempt to understand the mystery of sanctity through the eyes of the historian and the secular man.

Mary: the Womb of God. By George A. Maloney, S.J. Denville, N.J.: Dimension Books, 1976. Pp. 208. Paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Richard Leo Heppler, O.F.M., Chaplain to the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, West Paterson, New Jersey.

Using Sacred Scripture, quotations from the Fathers, and theories of modern psychologists and theologians, Father Maloney has erected an inspiring Marian shrine.

The book is composed of an Introduction, nine chapters, an appendix

(Russian Devotion to Mary, Mother of God), and seven pages of footnotes.

Mary is introduced as the contemplative woman always attentive to God. Even in her youth Mary was aware of God as the center of her life. She realized that God was seeking entrance into her life, and she stood ready to yield her whole being to him, so great was her faith and love.

The Fathers often contrasted Mary and Eve. They pointed out that while both listened, the results were the opposite. Eve listened to the serpent and was instrumental in bringing death into the world. Mary listened to the angel and was instrumental in bringing life into the world.

Mary continually grew in grace; hence she is the model of the individual and of the Church.

A one-word summary of Chapter 2 (Mary, Virgin) is *submission*. Virginity is seen as feminine receptivity. Not only at the Annunciation, but always does Mary agree to accept God's plan.

A one-word summary of the next chapter, Mary—Mother of God—is *service*. We are told that God began his new creation with the new woman who was willing to do what Eve had refused to do: be the handmaid of the Lord. And by her union with the new Adam, Mary became the Mother of the human race, offering her maternal service to all her spiritual children.

The Holy Spirit, Father Maloney reminds us, saturated Mary with grace from the first moment of her existence. She is a sign of what God has destined us to become in Christ. For we too are expected to grow in grace by cooperating with the Holy Spirit.

In her sorrows Mary was the woman of hope looking forward to a participation in God's glory. She comforts us in all our sorrows and stiffens us in our struggle to yield to the demands God makes upon those who love him.

From the womb of Mary came the Lord Jesus. From the womb of the Church comes the people of God. But Mary is the Mother of the Church; she is the Mother of the living for the many Fathers who work out an Eve-Mary-Church parallel showing the Mother of Jesus as the Mother of his followers.

As intercessor Mary unites her prayers with those of her Son to plead for all her children as Virgin Most Powerful and Gate of Heaven.

In the section on Russian devotion to Mary we learn that the Russian people for centuries have been conscious of Mary's blessings upon them and have honored her with innumerable shrines and special feasts. The heart of this Marian devotion is to be found in sacred icons and

in liturgical texts.

The book is obviously a labor of love. It does occasionally get a bit classroomish. There is an element of repetition that a teacher uses to make his point, to impress a truth. A few sentences do get ponderous ("In this respect Mary's cooperation in the redemption of the human race is one of intimate union as *socia* or companion used by God, not only in order that God could penetrate into the temporal, the human, the finite, but also that Mary might remain the perfect example for the Church as *socia* to Christ in cooperating with the Second Adam, the New Man, Christ, in restoring the whole created world and in transfiguring it into that which perfectly mirrors forth God's plan from all eternity"—pp. 63-64).

But when a skilled professional theologian combines erudition with love in praising Mary, we are assured of a fine book. That the author should demand some work on the part of the reader proves no deterrent for the client of Mary who wishes to know and to love her better.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bacigalupo, Leonard F., O.F.M., *The Franciscans and Italian Immigration in America*. Hicksville, N.Y.: Exposition Press, 1977. Pp. 80. Cloth, \$4.50.
- Critelli, Ida, and Tom Shick, *Unmarried and Pregnant: What Now?* Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1977. Pp. vi-137, incl. index. Paper, \$1.95.
- Dubay, Thomas, S.M., *A Call to Virginitv?* Huntington, Ind.: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1977. Pp. 63. Paper, \$1.95.
- Koyama, Kosuke, *No Handle on the Cross: An Asian Meditation on the Crucified Mind*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1977. Pp. ix-120. Cloth, \$7.95; paper, \$3.95.
- Lukas, Mary, and Ellen Lukas, *Teilhard: the Man, the Priest, the Scientist*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977. Pp. 360, incl. index. Cloth, \$10.00.
- Maier, Gerhard, *The End of the Historical-Critical Method*. Trans. Edwin W. Leverenz & Rudolph F. Norden. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977. Pp. 108, incl. bibliography and glossary. Paper, \$4.50.
- McCloskey, Patrick, O.F.M., *St. Anthony of Padua: Wisdom for Today*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1977. Pp. VIII—120. Paper, \$1.75.
- Rosenbaum, Jean, M.D., *How to Be Friends with Yourself and Your Family*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1977. Pp. 79. Paper, \$1.35.
- Whitehead, Raymond L., *Love and Struggle in Mao's Thought*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1977. Pp. xx-166, incl. glossary & index. Cloth, \$8.95; paper, \$3.95.

CORRECTION

The final listing for April Books Received should have read:

Kelsey, Morton T., *Encounter with God*. Foreword by John Sherrill. Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, 2nd ed., 1975. Pp. 281. Paper, \$3.95.

COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for our May issue were drawn by Sister Marie Monica, O.S.F., of Sacred Heart Academy, Klamath Falls, Oregon.