COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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the CORD

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A REVIEW EDITORIAL

The Myth of Jesus

MYTH, WE HAVE often insisted in these pages, is not falsity or error, but may be the best way to tell the truth about the deeper dimensions of human life. This contention receives new and detailed clarification in a fine new Christology book by Dr. James Mackey, who holds doctoral degrees in both historical theology and philosophy of religion. He identifies himself as a priest in the course of his exposition, and other personal disclosures make it obvious that he is not a Roman Catholic priest. He is Associate Editor of *Horizons*, has engaged in missionary work, and presently teaches at the University of San Francisco. He writes so well, so eloquently, trenchantly, and on occasion so poetically, that several times as I was reading the book I wished that I could meet him or, at least, hear him preach.

Deeply impressed at the very outset with this book's erudition and scholarship, I took voluminous notes all the way through and considered expanding the present review into a discussion article, which the book richly deserves. When I realized the length such a discussion would have to assume, and the unavailability of space for it in the foreseeable future, I decided instead simply to make sure it came as prominently as possible to the attention of our readers and be content with engaging in terribly superficial, brief, and summary form its major issues.

Dr. Mackey is mainly concerned to insist that (quite in accord with our contemporary emphasis on history) the "quest of the historical Jesus" is not only capable of succeeding, but absolutely necessary for the proper grounding and understanding of the "Christ of faith." In his first chapter, therefore, he surveys the dismal history of the modern "quests," exposing the various authors' inadequate presuppositions and blaming them, rather than the sources, for the quests' failure.

Jesus: The Man and the Myth. By James P. Mackey. New York: Paulist Press, 1979. Pp. viii-311, including indices. Paper, $8.95.

Subsequent chapters make fruitful use of a masterful and responsible historical methodology to deal with the death, the resurrection, and only then the life of Jesus. In each case, myth, as a story woven from profound symbols, is shown to be not only legitimate, but the only way, really, that sense could be made of, and adequate expression given to, the way the disciples experienced Jesus. The order of these chapters is important—one can, historically, proceed only in this way to trace the construction of the "myth of Jesus."

After proceeding to justify the transformed symbolism in the Paul-line writings (from "kingdom of God" to "faith, grace, spirit, and life"), the author deals with the titles given Jesus by his followers. He shows the historical relativity of most of them and singles out "Word" and "Son" for special treatment, explaining that these two are not symbols exclusively, but concepts as well. The discussion of both ways of knowing is quite good: symbols must be allowed to evoke the ultimate depth of reality, and concepts need absolute purification; to stop short of the end in either case results in idolatry. Still, as will become apparent below, one may disagree with what is meant by the "absolute purification" that concepts need. Analogy is not metaphor, but literal characterization.

Dr. Mackey goes on to survey patristic Christology, concentrating particularly on just what was wrong with Arius's heresy. He concludes with a return to the "historical quest," this time exposing the fatal flaw in Bultmann's quintessential Lutheranism with its rejection of the immanent and the historical. An Appendix deals with the Lord's baptism and birth, insisting on the non-historical character of the theophanous aspects and the consequent demand for faith because of, rather than despite, the events' scandalous nature.

Regular readers of Christological discussions in these pages will understand that I approached this book with my guard up, wary of any tendency toward reductionism and the host of errors spawned by our contemporary exclusively "low" Christologies. I am happy to report that I found little to deplore along these lines. Some of Dr. Mackey's discussions of the Resurrection may strike the reader as ambivalent, but there is no question as to his acceptance of the Lord's real, personal rising to new life. He is right, I think, that this is not the sort of historical event to use as a "proof" for anything; rather, its power in the Apostles" life and work is surely the main point in scriptural references to it.

On the other hand, I find the book flawed by its author's repudiation of metaphysics (ontology, explicit acknowledgment of structure) in favor of a purely functional theology. With regard to the Trinity, to begin with what is most basic, Dr. Mackey three times appears to give the Spirit no distinct personal reality (pp. 105, 189, 235ff.) before showing that he knows he should do so (p. 240) without really doing so. The Trinity is treated in much too

Plotinian a fashion, so that it becomes a series of "way stations" along the human mind's journey into the depths of the divine Rality. When the author deals with the Incarnation, he says that Jesus *manifests* himself in two ways (divine and human) rather than that he *exists in two natures*. (Unaccountably, the Thomistic explanation of this orthodox doctrine seems to the author to be at least implicitly Apollinarian (p. 246)).

I said, above, that analogy is not metaphor. Failure to perceive this distinction, it seems to me, vitiates Dr. Mackey's trinitarian and christological perspective. Concepts used for these realities must be "absolutely purified," yes. But to interpret this to mean that they are metaphorical is to espouse modalism with respect to the Trinity and agnosticism with respect to the Incarnation. Unlike metaphor, analogy insists on a literal meaning for terms used even as it has a built-in provision for avoiding sheer anthropomorphism. With analogy, one holds a basic literal understanding even while acknowledging that the terms are understood in a manner different from their original, empirical signification. This is quite as far as the orthodox Christian may go in his "absolute purification" of concepts.

The other main difficulty I had with the book lies in Dr. Mackey's acceptance of today's prevalent understanding of revelation according to which it cannot consist of explicit, precise doctrinal statements literally divinely revealed. I under tand and fully sympathize with this as a rejection of divine dictation, but one does not have to go as far as the author does in search of a more subtle interpretation. This stance with regard to revelation, of course, is consistent with his rejection of analogy: How can one say anything about God with any accuracy if all one has at one's linguistic disposal is metaphor? When it comes to miracles, on the other hand, I think a careful reading of what Dr. Mackey has to say will show him to be orthodox and pretty much on target.

In general, some readers will be less than fully satisfied with what may strike them as a new emphasis in the depiction of Jesus achieved through historical analysis of the myths of his death, resurrection, and life (the latter being analyzed on the basis of his parables, signs, meal-rituals, prayers, and especially service to others). I think that what there *may be* (surely there *need not be any*) of a "low" or "reductionist" nature in all this, is traceable to the functional emphasis that becomes explicit only later in the book.

Jesus: The Man and the Myth is attractively presented and for a book its size has very few misprints. It is exceptionally well organized, quite reasonable in price, and so replete with information, profound analysis, literary eloquence, and religious inspiration that any reader with a minimal theological training should derive great theoretical and spiritual benefit from reading it.

Fr. Michael D. Meilach, ofm

Perseverance in Our Vocation

A Statement from the Personnel Committee of the Province of St. John the Baptist

IN WRITING this paper, we realize we stand on holy ground. Every call from God is a mystery. His ways are not our ways, his thoughts are not our thoughts. "As the heavens are above the earth . . ." (Is. 55). So too, the perseverance in a vocation: it is a matter of grace.

The loss of a vocation is also a mystery. We believe those people are mistaken who say that what God calls one to, he can call one from, and that some vocations, though bound by solemn vows, can be temporary. We think this answer does not honestly face the question. We believe that the faithful God allows man in his grace to make permanent commitments.

The painful loss of priests and religious to the service of the Church in the last decade has been experienced in our province. From 1963 to October of 1974, a period of 12 years, we have had a total of 291 departures from the province, not including deaths. A further analysis reveals that since January 1, 1963, 98 brothers, 81 clerics, 60 novices, and 52 priests have left the ranks. The total number of friars in the province has dropped from 602 in 1963 to 534 in 1974.

Especially dramatic has been the loss of middle-aged personnel. These friars have received the maximum education and formation in the Order and have been presumed to be entirely committed. But we have found that this group is very vulnerable. They have had little preparation for the abrupt loss of treasured values and beliefs. This particular age group is also deeply involved in demanding work that leaves their adaptive energies sapped. They find no time to work through their vocational conflicts.

Religious are not the only people who suffer during the middle years. These years, from

This "Statement" from the Personnel Committee of the Province of St. John the Baptist was distributed as the March-April Resource *for reflection and discussion by the Plan for Franciscan Living, consultation service described in an article by Father Anton Braun, O.F.M., in our November, 1978, issue. As a strictly statistical report, it may appear somewhat dated, but its substantive considerations, we feel, merit the serious attention of our readers.*

The loss of or separation from any of the significant people in our lives can precipitate this crisis. . . .

35 to 55, are especially crucial in the life of any man. Dr. Theodore Rubin, as well as other psychologists, has called the experience of facing middle age "the male menopause." When a man reaches the age that he considers the turning point in his life, he may suddenly feel "old." Actually, this change-of-life reaction may have been developing unnoticed for some time. Causes include anxiety over the loss of youth, a decline in its powers and promise, the death of a parent or friend, an accident or serious illness. Depression, stagnation, the recurrence of adolescent personality problems are symptoms which may point to the occurrence of male menopause. Ken Rogers further suggests that the problems unresolved in earlier life are reawakened, which compel many to see changes in their lives or significant elements of their life-style. At a deeper level, however, they wish to halt or even reverse the aging process and thus the advent of death. The awareness of death, then, on either a conscious or a subconscious level, is the second cause of stress. Such attempts to deny the inevitable end in frustration which may actually destroy some of the deepest values or most vital relationships of life. The crisis of middle age offers to the mature pesrson a splendid opportunity for even greater growth —especially the man of middle years who has dedicated himself to a lifetime commitment to God in a religious Order.

From a review of some of the sociological research on priests who leave the priesthood, some conclusion may be drawn which can be applied to religious life in general. A main cause of defections from the priesthood might be called a *change in role identity*. In the past, the priest, the bishop, and the layman all had definite expectations, which served to reinforce the priest in his role. Now the old role is gone, and the new role is not determined yet. The priest is in a psychological no-man's land.

Another serious crisis that can strike at any time is the loss of emotional support, either through death or through alienation. The loss of or separation from any of the significant people in our lives can precipitate this crisis, be they parents, family, fellow friars, close friends, superiors, or work associates. Any loss of emotional support results in depression and loneliness. At times the friar himself directly or indirectly causes the crisis. Other times the friar is the victim of an unfortunate

coincidence of several of these circumstances. Invariably the friar will seek new support from another person, who might be called the "crucial other."[1] Who this happens to be may determine the friar's future. Consequently, his confreres have a special obligation to provide for the emotional support he needs during these periods of crisis. If the "crucial other" is someone who counsels him, or even hints, that he should leave religious life or the priesthood, he may very well take the suggestion.

The loss of self-esteem, the depression resulting from failure and inadequacy in production or performance, which in turn has been used to measure success and worth in today's competitive society, may well be a first indicator of a crisis in vocation, a crisis in faith. The lack of human signs of success tempts a friar to question his worth, without taking into account his commitment and dedication to God. The individual who follows this course has not grasped the basic fact of the Christian life: God is involved in every detail of his life. God has a plan for everything that happens to him. But now it seems that God is no longer involved, or at least no more involved that a somewhat less than wholly concerned spectator. The examination of faith commitment should take precedence over examination of our priestly and religious commitment.

To this point, the issue of perseverance has been examined from the viewpoint of the experience of loss and the resulting crisis. What of the even more basic question of decision? How valid is a decision made years ago, in a different frame of mind? Perfect decisions, even life decisions, are rare; for what human being is perfect? Still, human decisions can and must be reasonable. We can determine, for the most part, our future, the direction of our life, by our significant decisions. There is a "future self," what I wish to become, which is molded by every serious decision I make. Other persons are wrapped up in our human decisions, and they form—by their belief in us, their support, and their demands upon us—a part of the whole complexus which we call our "self." Fidelity, at all levels, is rooted in faith in self, a self which can never be known with finality or mathematical certainty. I can only believe who I am called to be.

Decision is also based on a faith in one's community: that I can rely on the faithfulness of the

[1]Eugene Schallert, "Reasons Predicated for Leaving the Priesthood," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 71 (Jan., 1971), 261ff.

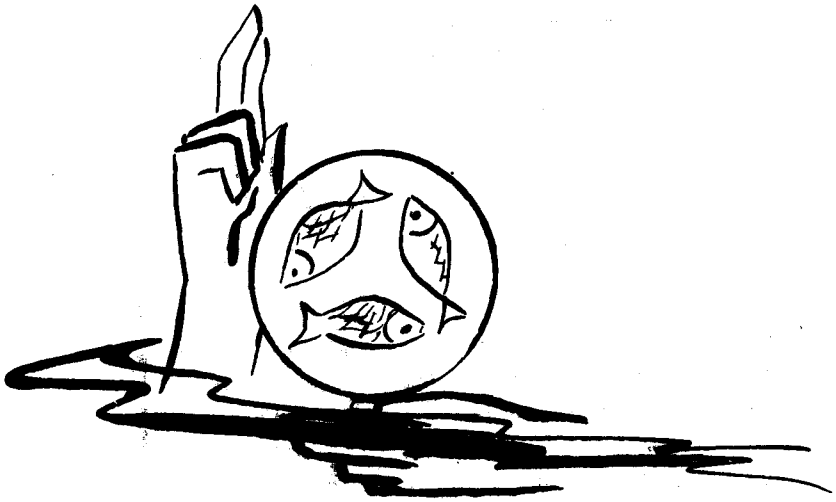
other members. Ultimately, however, I must appeal to Someone Other, who is present to men and unswervingly constant. For we cannot foresee the future with any degree of certainty; but we do make decisions which determine and commit our very selves to a specific way of living in a future we see only dimly. We commit ourselves ultimately to a God who is Lord of History: past, present, and to come. We are aware of ourselves as changeable creatures—changeable in our moods, our ambitions, even our basic perceptions of life. But we transcend ourselves in faith, for by our vows we lay our lives in the hands of God, who is unchangeable in his fidelity, who promises to be with us all days even to the consummation of the world—a promise we must take with complete trust, with patience and humility.

Unfortunately, man is sinful and weak and prone to error. The direction of fidelity, its expression, may be mistaken. One may not realize how much he was influenced by outside pressure, for example. Continued fidelity to a faithful God may in some cases require the choice of another commitment. But this possibility does not in the least touch upon *me* here and now, or upon the faith with which *I* made my original decision. In other words, there is no reason to presume from the start that *my* self-knowledge is so woefully inadequate and my faith about *my* future as a religious so ill projected that a final commitment is never justifiable at all. If this were so; if faith in myself were so inherently irrational that no sensible human being could dare run its risk, then no one could ever make a promise, and the whole question of fidelity would become absurd.

The scientists have spoken. The philosophers have had their say. The issue now lies in the hands of the theologians. All discussions of fidelity must begin with the original insight of the first theologians of the Old Testament: that we can be faithful, not because we are strong, but because God has been faithful to us. Some consider God's fidelity to the people Israel, despite the frequent lapses, to be the central theme of the Old Testament. Speaking to David, Nathan prophesies:

> ... but I will not withdraw my favor from him as I withdrew it from your predecessor Saul, whom I removed from my presence. Your house and your kingdom shall endure forever before me: your throne shall stand firm forever [2 Sam. 7:15-16].

Personal commitment to the Covenant, which is always more than the minimum required, is the individual's response to God's faithfulness.



The New Testament reaffirms God's fidelity with a New Covenant, sealed with the blood of Jesus. Conversion to Christianity envisages life-long fidelity. The call to follow Christ envisages no end. Paul saw himself called to a lifetime commitment: "Yet preaching the Gospel is not the subject of a boast; I am under compulsion and have no choice. I am ruined if I do not preach it" (1 Cor. 9:16).

All that is said about God's and man's fidelity has a bearing on man's general call to Christianity. We must conclude that, if the faithful God calls a person to a particular way of life—for life, that person can rely on God's own fidelity to enable him to be faithful. The person's own efforts to be faithful are rooted totally in God's fidelity.

As Christians, and especially as religious and priests, our response to God's enduring call, his unceasing gift of love and grace, places us in a highly visible role. But remaining faithful to our vows and orders, we sacramentalize, make real, the invisible fidelity of God for all. As Franciscans we cut a high profile and serve to bolster the faith of our fellow Christians. At all times, but especially in times of great change, there is urgent need for very visible signs of this fidelity of God to his people.

Francis was always the first to recognize his own weakness and to praise God for the miracle of grace in his life. His own memorable words, "Up to now we have done nothing," express an ongoing fidelity, which was his response to God's unwavering faithfulness to him. As friars, we must also accept God's grace as

the only real agent of fidelity, letting the powerful influence of Saint Francis assist us to live the Gospel joyfully, unaffectedly, simply, and to show Christ to the world in poverty, brotherliness, and littleness. Faithfulness demands a deepening maturity of character, a continual purification of motives, and steadfast commitment to our baptismal covenant. All these aspects of perseverance, finally, must take place in the context of the daily support of the fraternity.

The earliest spritiual writers linked the loss of vocation with the capital sin of *acedia,* mistranslated into English as "sloth." They called it the "noonday devil," characterized by spiritual torpor, an attitude that says, "I just don't care any more." John Cassian's description may have a contemporary ring:

> The sum total of all the drawbacks of this disease was elegantly stated by blessed David when he said: "My soul hath slumbered through heaviness" (Ps. 118:28), that is to say, boredom. Very properly it was that he said, not the body, but the soul had gone to sleep. For the soul does indeed slumber with respect to the contemplation of the virtues and beholding spiritual meanings, if it has been wounded by the dart of this disturbance [Institutes, Bk. X, ch. 4].

Alan of Lille called *acedia* that which draws back the Christian's hand from the plow. Saint Thomas brought the long development of thought on *acedia* to a head when he defined it as "sadness in the face of spiritual good." He opposed this vice to the theological virtue of charity or love of God.

Acedia is still with us. One might conclude that it is particularly besetting for those in middle age, and especially contemplatives: teachers and professors. One of the principal symptoms is a desire for greener pastures, more diversion. Georges Bernanos once said: "You understand nothing of the twentieth century unless you realize that everything in it conspires against the interior life." With this insight in mind, we as religious might examine our use of the media and our other diversions. Do they block the inwardness necessary to seek the truth that lies within? Do they hamper our struggles to persevere?

A closing word must be said concerning our feelings about those who leave. Departures do not evoke one stock response. Some, in evident discomfort for years, leave in peace, and we are relieved. Some may insist that they have no feelings when others leave. Is this avoidance, or rationalizing? To displace anger we may blame; sadness may become chronic bereavement; envy may surface as resentment. Any of these feelings occur

after the experience of loss. The mature, healing response to these feelings is to meet them head-on, admit them, and use them as another step to maturity.

Admittedly this statement is incomplete. We have skirted some important issues, such as loss of faith and problems with celibacy. We wish to invite other friars to join with us in continuing this study. From the foregoing material, however, we can voice some conclusions.

1. All who are struggling with their vocation are urged not to work out their problems in isolation, but to seek spiritual direction.

2. The importance of good fraternal life can scarcely be overemphasized for needed spiritual and emotional support.

3. Our shared prayer together must become more genuine and characterized by fraternal concern for one another.

4. We must renew our spiritual vision of a consecrated life, as a mode of existence which is special in itself.

5. We must recommit ourselves to fulfilling our vows faithfully, thoroughly, and radically.

6. Each friar should ask himself about the attitude he is forming concerning faithfulness, and whether his attitude is a true expression of the Gospel.

Ego Eimi

Living water, liquid light,
quench dark thirsting; slake dry sight.
Bread of sweetness unsurpassed,
feed wry starving; break dour fast.

Sheepgate, shepherd, lamb—all three
allude to Your own Trinity,
Which—being far beyond my state—
my thinking halts, awed, inchoate.

And yet, if I, benighted, stray,
I hear Your words, "I am the Way."
And, trusting Truth, I turn, contrite,
to find You, Lord—Love, Life, and Light.

God's brilliant Word by men misread,
come, blast the shadows of our Dread!
Ravage the mountains: raise the plain,
reveal Your eschaton and reign.

Sister M. Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

A Francis Song

I

In an apparel
not gold,
Garmented
sans velvet,
Dressed only
in woolens
and sack,
I would present myself
to caliph and king
to prince and baron
to power and authority.

Seeking
a peace
so distant
so desirable
to humanity.

Seeking
an order
to life
and love
for humankind.

Asking
a touching,
a reaching
that
fraternity
reals
fraternity
reals
fraternity
births
in brothers.

Asking
not
commiseration
nor
sympathy
but
pursuit
and a living
of
that
poorness
and simplicity,
that
celebration
of life,
and
an acknowledgement
of creation
and its
potential—
of creation
and its
so very glorious
performance,
of creation
and its
humbling
presence
on life's stage
as presented to
whited women
and
those blacked,
to actors unrôled
to farmers unrained
to soldiers unwarred
to mariners unstarred.

A creation
unsurpassed
and
not fully realized.
Tokening beatitude
yet so easily
distorted
and trivialized.

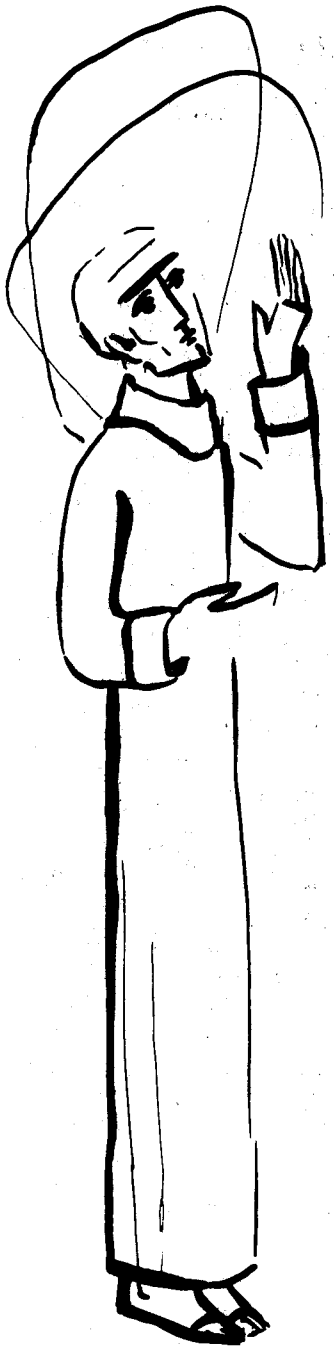
II

Attempted in homage—
my rule,
my theory,
my hope.

I invited them.
I wanted them.

They couldn't
They wouldn't.

I remain
unreachable
Yet I was
am a man.
Chosen,
I must confess
Inimitable,
I must regret.



Mirror,
man has
accorded me.
Image,
the friars
insist.

A follower,
a lover,
a child,
I permit
myself
only to suggest.
Covered in weakness
Clothed with inadequacy
Standing in sand—
Yet persisting as
a spider's web
a bird's nest
a water's motion.

We live
in Your Hand
We breathe
in Your Love
We love
in Your Grace.

I,
poor brother,
Francis,
desire
Your patience
Your kindness
Your strength,
need
Your love,
poor man
that I am.

Mount Alvernia
September, 1978

Justin Bickel, O.F.M.

The Paschal Mystery in the Writings of Saint Francis

SISTER JOANNE BRAZINSKI, O.S.F.

THE SPEED of our contemporary world has seduced modern man into accepting many things without taking time to examine them or think them through. It has given him neat categories, compartments, and labels for people, things, and events, so that he does not have to ponder long before making judgments. Quick decisions can be made, and thus he can move on to the next appointment, task, event.

Unfortunately, this speed-acceptance attitude has touched man at his religious core also. There is much of our Christian tradition that we take for granted. We give mental assent to many things, labeling them "Christian," "non-Christian," "good," "bad"; and then we simply move on to the next topic of discussion. Perhaps too many of our Christian mysteries and principles have never been given sufficient reflection—we have never taken time really to ponder them or deliberately to embrace them; and thus they have never touched us deeply nor become living realities in our lives.

Taking a deeper look at the reality of the paschal mystery in the life of a Christian and a religious has involved me in much reading and reflection, from which many questions have emerged. Do we realize that the Christian vocation is to *live* the paschal mystery? Do we recognize the call to "die" with Christ as a life-giving invitation? Do we have the vision of resurrection that makes the daily dying to self a *gift*, a unitive, freeing experience? It is counterculture to live the paschal mystery today; can we do it? As religious of the twentieth century, are we embracing that living death which makes us a freer, more Christ-centered people? In the Franciscan tradition that we profess, what part does this death-resurrection reality play? What does Francis leave us in his writings, as a legacy in this regard? What does all this mean to us as Christians, as religious, as Franciscans?

Death, in the discussion to follow, does not of course refer exclusively to the cessation of all vital functions—the end of physical life; rather, it is used to mean a transformation—a process of "letting to" effected by the vision of greater life. Resurrection, similarily, is not a rising from this state of decay and disuse, but rather the deep experience of life: living and experiencing the Lord's kingdom here and now. The core meaning of the expression "paschal mystery" is of course the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; but the term will also be used to denote a daily dying, a continual conversion, the acceptance of living with the questions of life and the insecurities of the future.

The Lord's own life is of course the example par excellence of what it means to do all this. His words which we read in the Gospels not only speak of the reality he lived but also invite us to live it with him. "Whoever wishes to be my follower must deny his very self, take up his cross each day, and follow in my steps. Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk. 9:23-24). "I solemnly assure you, unless the grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat. 'But if it dies, it produces much fruit" (Jn. 12:24).

To be Christian means to follow Jesus Christ. Are we aware of the implications of this statement? When we attend Mass, is it a "celebration" of the paschal mystery? Is liturgy a "strength source" for us to embrace the daily dying to self in order to rise with Christ in the experience of living the kingdom here on earth?

A contemporary author has said of Francis of Assisi that his life was no more and no less than a Christian life. What made the difference was the intensity and imagination with which he lived it.[1] For Francis the paschal mystery was truly a reality; it was so real in his life that his very body carried the marks of his embrace of it. In Celano's conversion account, we see Francis's eagerness to be identified with Jesus, to *live* the paschal mystery, to embrace this death-resurrection reality. In the initial stages of his conversion, Francis endures the humilitations of rejection, beatings, ridicule, disinheritance. Ultimately, he can even "die" to his delicate, refined nature by kissing the leper—an act the thought of which previous-

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Sister Joanne Brazinski, O.S.F., wrote this paper in partial fulfillment for the completion of the Institute of Religious Formation Program at St. Louis University. Nearing the completion of her work in the Franciscan Studies Program at St. Bonaventure University, Sister Joanne is currently the Formation Director of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Providence of God, Pittsburgh.

[1]Walter Nigg, *Francis of Assisi* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), p. 7.

ly had repulsed him.[2]

As Francis lived and worked among the lepers, others came to him who wished to follow his lifestyle, to partake of his inner joy, to share in his resurrection vision. These men wanted to learn the secret mysteries of life through death, joy through self-denial, possession of the kingdom through humility and poverty. After celebrating the liturgy with his first followers, Francis sought guidance in the Word of God; he asked the priest to open the Gospels three times to see what the Lord would reveal to them about their future.

"If you wish to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me" (Mt. 19:21).

"Take nothing for your journey, neither staff nor knapsack, shoes or money" (Lk. 9:3).

"If any man will come after me, let him renounce self, take up his cross and follow me" (Mt. 16:24).

What more direct words could be used as an invitation to live daily the paschal mystery, to die to one's desires for wealth, prestige, honor—to die to one's very self? Francis and his brothers rejoiced, and this became their program, their very *rule* of life.

These passages form the scriptural foundation of the Franciscan Order. Have Franciscans throughout the ages continued to pledge the living out of this mystery? Have we realized the implications of following this way of life? Have we perhaps missed sharing part of Francis's vision because we have been afraid of the "dying"? Are we living as Franciscans if that total identification with Jesus, even to death, is not part of our primary life goal?

Francis's whole life was an ascent to total transformation into Christ crucified. His life gradually became a participation in the "great and marvelous mystery of the Cross."[3] His living out of the paschal mystery was a daily dying, a minute by minute dying, so that Christ could live more fully in him. All the pleasures of the world were a cross to him, because he carried the cross of Christ rooted in his heart" (2 Celano 211; p. 531). The cross spoke to him of annihilation, and it was an insistent invitation to self-renunciation and interior poverty. For Francis it was never death for the sake of death, but rather death as a means of union with his Lord, a participation in his very life. Francis was a lover, and because he loved Jesus Christ so intensely, no dying was too difficult or beyond his reach; his eyes were always fixed on his Lord. That vision and that love were the motivating forces in his life. After each act of asceticism, each action of death to self, Francis experienced a deeper life in Christ; he became more rooted in him and was thus able to live the kingdom here on earth.

There are many examples in the life of Francis that manifest his living out of the paschal mystery event, but perhaps even more important are his writings to us concerning this reality. He has left us a legacy, an invitation, a challenge; he beckons us to "die," invites us to "renounce self." He promises the kingdom and salvation and God if we also have the courage to live the paschal mystery by following "the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This invitation to the life of penance, the message of embracing death, threads its way through the Rule of 1221 from beginning to end. From the very opening lines Francis reminds his followers that their way of life is a call to death through self-renunciation and interior poverty (ch. 1), is a call to be emptied as the Lord Jesus Christ was emptied. Francis's vision and understanding of the paschal mystery was a lived experience; therefore, he offers specific ways the brothers are to live this death experience. He invites them to die to their uncontrolled natural desires and their pride by fasting (ch. 3) and begging alms (ch. 9). In regard to begging, he says they "should have no hesitation about telling one another what they need, so they can provide for one another" (ch. 9). This concept of begging has mind-boggling implications for the experience of community even today.

To emphasize humility and poverty as ways of embracing the paschal mystery, Francis forbids his friars to wield power over anyone (ch. 5), to accept positions of authority (ch. 7), or to accept money (ch. 8). Francis was aware of the intrinsic opportunities to "die" that accompanied community living. Concerning these he says of the brothers: "There must be no quarreling among themselves or with others . . . let them be without a word of criticism or condemnation . . . they must give no thought even to the slightest faults of others" (ch. 11). He suggests that in humility and with much eagerness, the brothers always be ready "to wash one another's feet" (ch. 6).

In reflecting on the excerpts of this Rule, we see clearly that Francis does not merely prescribe for us acts of mortification to follow; he did not mean simply to inculcate a progressive control of the instincts by deadening the appetites of the heart. The Christian ascesis and death to self that

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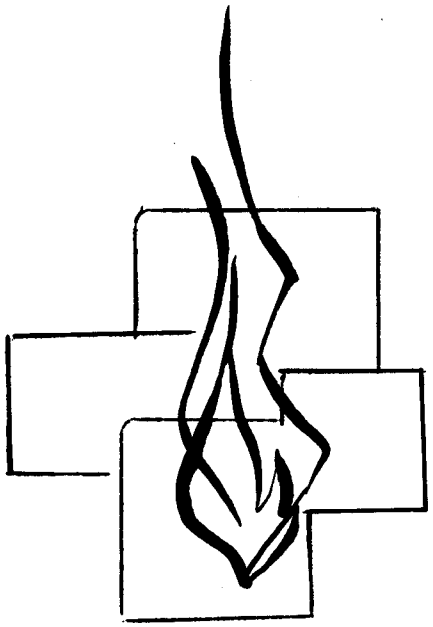
[2] 1 Celano 17; *Omnibus*, p. 243. All subsequent citations, with page numbers in text, are taken from this edition.

[3] St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Major*, X, 8; p. 786.



he enjoins in this document touch the very core of our being. They demand a conversion of heart, the cultivation of counterculture attitudes and values, and the vision of treasuring the Lord above all else.

> They should be glad to live among social outcasts, among the poor and helpless . . . if people insult them and refuse them, they should thank God for it, because they will be honored before the judgement seat of our Lord Jesus Christ for these insults [ch. 9].
>
> No matter where they are, they must always remember that they have given themselves up completely and handed over their whole selves to our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they should be prepared to expose themselves to every enemy, visible or invisible, for love of him [ch. 16].
>
> We should be glad when we fall into various trials and when we suffer anguish of soul and body, or affliction of any kind in this world, for the sake of life eternal [ch. 17].

Francis believed that death in all forms opens the ears of the heart to God, frees us from ourselves, sharpens our vision and our appreciation of the value of all life, and gives us an inner joy and peace that no one can take away since it is rooted in our God. "They should let it be seen that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of them, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites" (ch. 7).

It is not enough that as Franciscans we be people who live this mystery; it is also part of our legacy and inheritance to announce it. Francis commissions us to call others to living this death-resurrection reality: ". . . beg and implore everyone to persevere in the true faith, and in the life of penance, there is no other way to be saved" (ch. 23).

Thus, we see the Rule of 1221 reflecting the reality lived in Francis's own life: an embrace of the daily dying to self. The life of penance is conceived not as a burden but as a liberation and a participation in the very life of Jesus Christ. Are we as Franciscans living the spirit of this rule, or have we allowed culture and society to dictate and control our values and vision? Have we slipped into the "comfort" of pride and possession? Have we forgotten how to "die"?

For Francis this mystery of death with Christ in order to rise with him to new life was real and vibrant. He did not simply look on the life of penance as a matter of interior acts and good intentions, but rather as a concrete way of expressing imitation of Christ. Many of the exhortations he gave to the early brothers centered around this theme. In Admonition 5, he speaks of dying to one's pride and sense of self-sufficiency. He extols God as the eternal Gift-Giver and in doing so awakens within us an awareness of our dependency on him. His words bring gratitude and praise to birth in us as we realize all good things come from our God and are not from ourselves. "But there is one thing of which we can all boast; we can boast of our humilitations and in taking up daily the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (p. 81). This is to be our legacy, our joy: living in gratitude and dying daily, carrying willingly and lovingly our cross.

In many of his writings, Francis reminds us of our promise to "walk in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ." He presents the Good Shepherd image in Admonition 6 and urges us to reflect on how the Lord endured the agony of the cross for the sake of his sheep. The saints before us have "followed him in trials and persecutions, in ignominy, hunger, and thirst, in humiliations and temptations . . . for this God has rewarded them with eternal life" (ibid.). Francis is aware that man can appropriate even that which is intangible; thus he exhorts us: "We ought to be ashamed of ourselves, because the saints endured all that, and we who are servants of God try to win honor and glory by recounting and making known what they have done" (ibid.). Francis admonishes each of us to do his own dying, to do his own cross embracing in imitation of Jesus Christ, not as a one-shot deal, but as a daily choosing to follow him in this death-resurrection experience.

Although Admonition 10 is concerned with exterior mortification, calling us to die to the appetities and desires of the flesh. Francis makes us realize our dying must go beyond this level. In Admonition 14 he exhorts us to die to our self-esteem, to our defensiveness, to our very self. He invites us to foster counterculture attitudes as he encourages us to think less of ourselves and to "love those who strike us in the face" (p. 83). Can we live with such values? Can we accept this degree of dying?

Total renunciation was important to Francis as a means to total identification with Jesus Christ. This is why there were no limits to the dying he recommends to us: all had to be given, all possible forms of death had to be embraced. In his "'Letter to a General Chapter," he exhorts the participants: "Keep nothing of yourselves, so that he who has given himself wholly to you may receive you wholly" (p. 106). We are to cling to nothing, to fear no form of death, if we expect to be received by the Lord Jesus. Since the very reason for our Franciscan vocation is to bear witness to the message of the Lord Jesus Christ by word and deed, we must realize the necessity of living Francis's words: "... be well disciplined and patient under holy obedience, keeping your promises to him generously and unflinchingly" (ibid.). To be well disciplined, one must know the taste of death, the experience of surrender, the freedom of "letting go." One must be patient as he dies slowly and foster a loving heart that refuses no embrace of death because of its deep love.

Francis saw the Eucharist not only as a commemoration of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but also as a participation in this mystery. He contemplated the Real Presence principally as the perpetuation upon earth of the redemption effected in the immolation on the cross.[4] He writes to the General Chapter:

> Kissing your feet with all the love I am capable of, I beg you to show the greatest possible reverence and honor for the most holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things, whether on the earth or in the heavens, have been brought to peace and reconciled with Almighty God [p. 106].

In his well known "Letter to All the Faithful," Francis invites all Christians to live the paschal mystery. He recounts the Lord's celebration of the Pasch, his agony in the garden, his death to self-will and acceptance of the Father's will. He reminds us that the Lord's sacrifice on the cross was for our sake, and that his emptying of self was total and complete. Francis reassures the faithful that as Christians their vocation is to "follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ" through their own ways of death to self. In speaking of death to the desires of the flesh and of living a life of penance, Francis says: "On all those who do this and endure to the last the Spirit of the Lord will rest; he will make his dwelling in them and there he will stay, and they will be children of our Father in heaven whose work they do" (p. 96). Is he not giving us the reassurance of the resurrection experience in the here and now? He promises sonship and the eternal, abiding presence of our God if we live the vision of resurrection through death. Of those who refuse to do penance and die to self, he says that they are blinded by their own uncontrolled longings and desires: "... they lack spritual insight because the Son of God does not dwell in them" (ibid.). Of those who are "slaves of the world and of the desires of their lower nature, concerned primarily with the cares and anxieties of this life," he says that they have no good in this world and "nothing to look forward to in the next. They imagine that they will enjoy the worthless pleasures of this life indefinitely, but they are wrong" (p. 97). He emphasizes this fact, as well as summarizes one of the major themes of this Letter, in the final section: the dialogue with the unrepentant sinner. Here he reminds man that unless he dies daily to himself through acts of mortification and self-denial, he will not be ready to embrace the final moment of life and accept physical death.

Francis saw this daily dying as inevitable for the practice of virtue. In the "Praises of the Virtues" he stresses the necessity of self-denial, this dying to self-love and self-attachment, as the basis of any and all virtues: "In all the world there is not a man who can possess any one of you [virtues] without first dying to himself" (p. 133). In expressing this death to self as the essence of the Christian life, Francis emphasizes the importance of self-denial for identification with the Lord. In this same work, he stresses obedience as a special call to the death experience, because through it man subjects himself to others, mortifies his lower nature, and gives his own will as gift to the Father.

The last works of Francis to be considered in this reflection are his "Praises before the Office" and his "Office of the Passion." The former work was composed by Francis to be recited before the regular office of the day. It is made up of passages from Scripture, exclusively from the Books of Daniel and Revelation. It is a song of praise to God for all his works, and it certainly reflects the resurrection vision. "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God almighty, who was, and who is, and who is coming" (p. 138). Perhaps Francis wrote this so that the brothers would begin and end the day with the resurrection vision before their minds. He knew that without this reminder, this reality, any kind of dying would seem worthless and of no avail. It was not enough to die, one had to realize the reality behind the con-

[4]Lazaro Iriarte de Aspurz, *The Franciscan Calling* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), p. 32.

stant death-experience: new life in Christ. Each day in these praises the brothers prayed: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing" (ibid.). They praised their God for all in heaven and on earth; they praised him for his constant presence and for the promise of resurrection, the promise of new life through death.

Then, after this prayer, they often prayed the "Office of the Passion." This work is what the Italians call a "cento," a literary piece composed by uniting pieces of quotes from other places. It is a kind of literary mosaic. The psalms of this office are made up of verses or parts of verses from scattered places in the Book of Psalms. Occasionally a verse or phrase is taken from another part of the Bible, and sometimes Francis adds his own words. The whole office is filled with the warmth and devotion of a deeply earnest man of prayer who lived in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus Christ. The various "patchwork" psalms form an office that praises God through the Cross and Passion. This office is full of hope and anticipated gratitude, for Francis knew well that the "world to come" was already present. This is what the brothers were to live and pray: the dying to self with their eyes on the resurrection. They were continually to find a deeper life in the death expression they chose daily to embrace. It was thus that they could proclaim the glories of the kingdom of God, for they were testing it in the here and now through their embrace of the cross and their daily response to the invitation to die to self.

What does all of this mean? What has this reflection on the paschal mystery said to me? What avenues have been opened that I previously had not been aware of? What vision has it begun or sharpened in my life? What does it all say to me as Christian, as Franciscan?

To begin with, being touched by the reality of the paschal mystery in my everyday life has been an awesome experience. It is as if I am seeing Christianity with new eyes, with a new vision. It is only a beginning, and I realize that; but it is the beginning of a deeper awareness, the beginning of a different kind of vision, the beginning of a transformation, a depth experience. I am becoming more aware of the call as Christian to live this reality —to die to self in everyday situations and encounters.

Eucharist has taken on a deeper dimension of meaning. It is the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; it is a reminder, an invitation to die to self, to be emptied as the Lord

Jesus himself was emptied, to be broken as he broke his own Body and invited the apostles and each of us to do likewise in memory of him. The Eucharistic liturgy is a participation in the paschal mystery and at the same time a "strength source" for the living out of the death experience. It is a promise of the kingdom and at the same time the experience of that kingdom in the here and now. It is a sacred time of worship and union; it is invitation and response.

By reflecting on the reality of the paschal mystery in the writings of Francis, I am becoming more aware of the richness that lies within our Franciscan heritage. I am beginning to understand what John Moorman has said of Francis: "He lived a Christian life and what made the difference was the intensity and imagination with which he lived it."[5] Perhaps the secret of the Franciscan life lies in the rediscovery of that intensity and imagination.

Throughout the writings of Francis I am struck by the constant invitation to "die." In so many ways Francis promises that living the paschal mystery is the secret of salvation, the promise of the kingdom, the experience of freeing oneself for God, the experience of letting him take over in your life. For Francis living this reality was a vision-sharpener that led one to complete dependence on God and fostered a reverential sense for all things. He has written in so many ways that his followers are to embrace the cross, to encounter this living death experience because of their vision and love of the Lord Jesus.

His message has said to me that as a Franciscan I must not only be willing to die, but ready to do so lovingly. It has said that each and every day I am called to die in different ways: to my natural desires by mortification and fasting, to my own will by listening, giving, and obedience, to my very self by surrendering and dying beyond the limits of reason. His message is an invitation to be counterculture, to be apart from the crowd, to develop attitudes not always acceptable to society.

This reflection experience has left me with questions that need to be lived, with an enthusiasm to do my own cross embracing, with an eagerness to search and discover the very practical and everyday ways of "dying to self" that are encountered each day; it has made me reflect on the meaning of living and proclaiming the kingdom.

This study in no way has exhausted the topic of the paschal mystery in the writings of Fran-

[5]Cited by Nigg, p. 7.

cis of Assisi; it has simply been an attempt to reflect on this reality in the light of the Poverello's writings and to discover his legacy to us in this regard. If this "dying to self" is such a vital part of our Franciscan heritage and mission, perhaps we need to reflect individually and communally on it, to discover and rediscover it.

At the end of his life, Francis said, "Let us begin, for until now we have done nothing" (*Leg. maj.*, XIV, 1; p. 737). Perhaps there is a certain dying in always beginning, in not being able to look back over achievements and successes and see how far we've come. Perhaps we need to look at each day as the beginning of our dying. Perhaps we need to discover, not merely with our intellects, but with our very lives, the meaning of "new life through death." We are gifted with the invitation to die, to live a constant death experience; do we have enough of the resurrection vision and experience to accept this invitation? Is our love great enough to embrace all forms of death? Are we rooted in the Lord enough to be a counterculture people who live for the kingdom to come and *in* the kingdom on earth?

R.S.V.P.

Oh, God!
What, incarnation time again?
Can my muddled heart and flabby flesh
bear your awful weight?

Your taste, you know, is tacky—
forever dabbling in the clay.

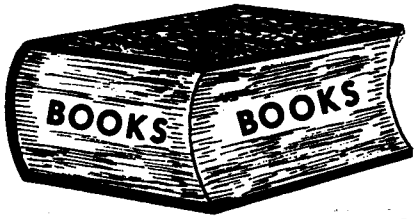
Don't you know that marble, bronze, and stone
are finer,
far more fitting to your Glory?

You might at least have mercy on our moods;
spare us the task of being Body.
Well enough for you to do it—
but we are reluctant brothers,
sorry sisters, at our best.

Still, Love will not be stayed.
Dusty Glory it may be,
but still it shall be Glory!

Come, then, Word, leap down . . .
take flesh in us, be born anew.
Your world awaits you.

Sara Pahl



The Mass: Meaning, Mystery, and Ritual. By George Every. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1979. Pp. 200, including index and color illustrations (8 1/2"x9 3/4"). Cloth, 14.95.

Reviewed by Father Vincent B. Grogan, O.F.M., J.C.D. (Catholic University of America), a member of the faculty at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, New York.

Prefacing, as he does, his treatment of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper with a discussion of the roots of human ritual in primitive history, the author thereby reflects his main purpose—to describe the development of the Mass from the perspective of its *ritual* (prayers and ceremonies). This is not to say that questions of theology/doctrine are overlooked. As a matter of fact, the author devotes an entire chapter to the notion of sacrifice in the Old Testament and how this was appropriated by the early Christians in their understanding of the Eucharist. Interesting is the author's description of Christianity as a mystery cult (as these had developed at the time of the Roman Empire) in its relationship to the religion of Judaism.

There follows an account of the spread of the Roman rite of Mass to the newly evangelized nations of Europe, with the author pointing out the mutual cultural influence and interchange between Rome and these emerging countries as this process affected the liturgy.

As a prelude to the Council of Trent, Every (a convert from Anglicanism) pointedly describes some of the liturgical abuses rampant in the late Middle Ages—practices which cerntainly provided a context for Luther's and Zwingli's cries for liturgical and ritual reform. The author succinctly delineates the controverted doctrinal issues vis-à-vis the Mass, with which Trent was confronted: is the Mass a true sacrifice? is the private Mass without a congregation a valid celebration? is Mass at which the congregation does not receive Communion valueless? what precisely happens to bread and wine in the course of the Mass? An interesting sidelight to all of this: to uphold the efficacy of private Mass Trent came to view this form of liturgical celebration as the normative, and the Missal of Pius V required the celebrant to recite even those parts which originally pertained to the choir and/or the congregation (Introit, Offertory, and Communion antiphons, etc.).

The growth of the modern liturgical movement in Europe provides the setting for the author's treatment of the reforms initiated by Vatican II. Of special interest is Every's comparison of the third and fourth canons, in both content and structure, with the Eucharistic Prayers of the Eastern Churches, as well as the resonances of early Christian sources that are found in these new canons of the Roman rite.

Some inaccuracies occur in the book: e.g., one of the three Scriptural readings on Sundays is *always* taken from the Old Testament (p. 54); in the Chrism Mass, the place for the Blessing of Oils is immediately before the final doxology of the canon (p. 88)—de facto, only the Oil of the Sick is blessed at this juncture.

All in all, this book is not of the same quality as those of Jungmann and Howell. The author has a penchant for detail which might easily discourage all but the most enthusiastic liturgist. This criticism is not intended to detract from the author's scholarship—only to indicate that this work is by no means light reading.

Also, one might have hoped for a summary at the close of each chapter (since disparate material is treated in each) or at least at the end of the book.

The book is endowed with an abundance of illustrations and pictures which do differentiate it from other studies of the liturgy. However. its price ($14.95) might well place it out of range for the popular audience.

New Pressures, New Responses in Religious Life. By John P. Dondero, F.S.C., and Thomas D. Frary. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1979. Pp. xviii-172. Paper, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., M.A. (English), Coordinator of Alumni Services at St. Bonaventure University.

A psychologist and a theologian have collaborated in presenting in this book their thoughts on the state of religious life in the United States at the present time. The psychologist is a religious, and the theologian is a layman. The authors explain their purpose in their Introduction: "Together we have discussed possible ways of looking at the important issues and problems facing religious life. . . . Now we want to share what we have thought in the hope that our views may provide some common understanding for those in religious life and for the laity in thinking about life" (pp. xii-xiii).

The authors treat their subject in ten chapters and a conclusion. In the first chapter, "Perspectives on Vocation," they present their understanding of vocation as "God's call and a person's response lived out, worked at and completed" (p. 17). "Vocation in the Church is not a thing . . . someone can lose, or find, or break, or water. Vocation is an event, it is a happening" (ibid.).

The chapter entitled "Revitalization of Religious Life" is extremely critical of the leadership role in many

religious communities and suggests a reexamination of the position of authority in communities. Perhaps, the authors write, there has been too strong a tendency to make an identification between the action of the Holy Spirit and the decisions of the person in the position of responsibility. The authors suggest that religious tend frequently to become so introspective that they find it difficult to revitalize their communities. They suggest "strengthening the impact of religious life on the people of God in this day and age is dependent on listening" to those who are not religious. "That listening cannot be done from afar, from the isolation of our religious houses" (p. 32).

In the ensuing chapters of their book, the authors express their views on a variety of subjects: obedience, chastity, love relationships, community, theology, the Kingdom, reconciliation. The influence of the psychologist is present in almost every sentence. The theologian interjects some "new theology" in the consideration of all the topics treated. An interesting emphasis in many of the chapters is the idea of smaller communities as the saving feature of religious life in the future. The reason for such detailed treatment of this feature of contemporary religious life, the authors explain, is the necessary recognition of individual worth and personal growth that seem so much more readily promoted in this form of community; living with so many, the individual can shirk the responsibility of creative growth.

New Pressures, New Responses in Religious life is an interesting presentation of the theological and psychological insights of the authors about religious life in the United States in 1979. Admittedly, the writers do not attempt to suggest what religious life ought to be. Their book describes religious life as they have discovered it to be in their work with religious communities in America over the past several years. Their "existential" approach to the various topics is a "here and now" appreciation of living the evangelical counsels. In this reviewer's opinion, the writers have caught the "spirit of the times" in religious living during the seventies. As an instructor in English Composition to college freshmen, however, he could not but be appalled by the number of split infinitives. Otherwise, the book is very readable; the reader will get the most out of the work if he is constantly mindful that the authors are writing as professionals: one a psychologist and one a theologian. Hence their optimistic conclusion: "Whether from the theological perspective or the psychological perspective, the current emphasis on individual worth, on the value of person over institution, on the call to a personal responsibility for there to be corporate witness, on the necessary to mute differences in engaging in the ministry of reconciliation—all are viewed as revivifying life" (p. 171).

Forty Years behind the Wall. By Father M. Raymond, O.C.S.O. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1979. Pp. 336. Paper, $5.95.

Reviewed by Father William Meninger, O.C.S.O., St. Joseph's Abbey, Spencer, Massachusetts.

In his breezy introduction (which begins with "Hi!"), Father Raymond primises that his book will be "shockingly different—and differently shocking." Unfortunately, he does not live up to his promise.

It is a difficult thing to criticize a man of Father Raymond's stature as a monk, as an author, and as a man of many years' experience of people and of life. These qualifications alone make almost anything he chooses to write worth reading. Yet I am forced to say my overall impression of his book is negative.

I began reading it with some eagerness. What a period he lived through! Forty years as a Trappist during what have probably been the most significant decades in the history of the Order. Yet it seems that the aggiornamento, which really began for the Trappist ten years before Vatican II, had hardly happened at all. Perhaps it was unfair of me to look for significant historical elements in a book which as autobiography must necessarily reflect personal responses even from one who has, as Father Raymond admits, a "selective memory." Nonetheless, apart from a very few references to new construction, redesigning the monastic church, and some liturgical changes, one would never realize he lived through one of the most traumatic and momentous periods in the history of Gethsemane, of the Cistercian Order, and indeed of the Church itself.

The first nine chapters, beginning with Father Raymond's entrance into Gethsemane as a Jesuit priest in 1936, read like a loosely connected florilegium of sermons. They are "pre-Vatican II" in content and expression; but, for all that, solidly theological and as valid today as at any time in the long life of the Church. For anyone under 50, however, I think they are likely to be tedious. Yet for those who can still respond to that particular style they are worthwhile reading.

Father Raymond's forty years spans the period when the Trappists, a penitential order, once again became the Cistercians, a contemplative order. This is somewhat obscured by the admittedly valid, wholesome, and obedience-orientated progression of his life described in the last five chapters, beginning with the tenth: "A Third Vocation . . . Reacquaintance with the World." While many of the early chapters are involved with a description of Father Raymond's growth in understanding the value of the contemplative life to the Church ("What tangible results could we see of all our praying?"), the last four chapters are precisely that: a description of Father's personal involvement with people outside his monastic environment. In one sense this can hardly be criticized. After all, he is writing an autobiography, and if that is the way it was, then that is the way he should tell it! One wonders, though, if his monastic community and way of life really had so little influence on him in the past twenty years, or if it was a negative influence and his "selective memory" simply prompts him to pass over it in relative silence.

Writing in his "75th year of life, 58 years as a religious and 45 years as

priest," Father remarks: "Age may not bring wisdom but it does make one wary of innovations." One does see between the lines more than a nostalgia for the past (pre-Vatican II past); there are even regret and disapproval of the present in spite of some optimistic statements to the contrary.

Yet, one feels impelled to say, so what! He lived (and still lives) the past traditions successfully, as many others did and do. The "changes" were not necessary for him, and he has a right to regret the passing of so many traditions and practices which he lived authentically and effectively. In spite of his reservations, Father Raymond's attitude remains one of positive hope, joy, and optimism.

I do, however, feel disappointed. One should be able to expect something more worthwhile from the author of *The Man Who God Even with God.*

Shorter Book Notices

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

A World at Prayer. By Robert J. Fox. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1979. Pp. 224. Paper, $3.95.

This is not an ordinary book of prayers. It is a manual of visual aids to prayer on any and every occasion: prayer before and after Confession and Mass, at the start and the end of the day, in happiness and in sorrow. It is a book of prayers for others: prodigal sons and daughters, parents, the elderly, missionaries, priests, and sisters. It is a book of prayers to Our Lady, to Jesus in the Eucharist, to the Father, and to the Spirit. Of special value are the *contemporary* examination of conscience and the "clause" method" of praying the Hail Mary in the Rosary—adding after "thy womb, Jesus," a clause such as "whom you have brought to Saint Elizabeth." Religious and priests, as well as all prayerful adults, will profit from this work.

Lord, Hear Our Prayer: A Collection of Traditional and Contemporary Prayers. Edited by Thomas McNally, C.S.C., and William G. Storey, D.M.S. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1978. Pp. vi-366, including index. Leatherette, $4.95.

This fine publication is a combination mini-breviary, with its daily and seasonal prayers, and "occasional" prayer book with Psalms, readings, prayers for various intentions, litanies, etc. It is quite handsomely bound and so forms an elegant as well as very manageable aid to prayer for any serious Christian.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Elwood, J. Murray, *Kindly Light: The Spiritual Vision of John Henry Newman.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1979. Pp. 127. Paper, $2.95.

Green, Thomas H., S.J., *When the Well Runs Dry: Prayer beyond the Beginnings.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1979. Pp. 175. Paper, $3.50.

Kelly, George, A., *The Battle for the American Church.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1979. Pp. xi-513, incl. bibliography & index. Cloth, $14.95.

Sheed, F.J., *Christ in Eclipse: A Clinical Study of the Good Christian.* Kansas City: Sheed Andrews & Mc Meel, Inc., 1978. Pp. x-158. Cloth, $8.95.

in love with Assisi, clinches the theme of his book with its ever so brief treatment of the novel that despairs of every other section of the world but Assisi.

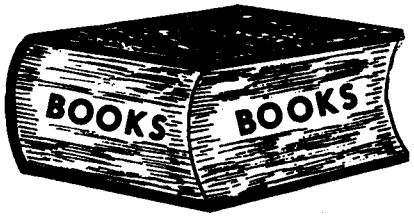
Now it scarcely needs to be said, but out of my Franciscan love for the Mother of God I'll say it anyhow: pilgrims to her various shrines on earth have experienced no less genuinely than pilgrims to Assisi the same inner peace and a joy nothing short of heavenly. But here let it be remembered that the very cradle of Franciscanism, the center of the Franciscan movement, was itself a Marian shrine. Though situated in the valley somewhat off from the town, the little chapel of St. Mary of the Angels must always be considered an integral part of the complete Assisian domain. It was and it remains, as its title asserts, a Marian stronghold against evil.

In its blessed confines Francis not only heard the angels sing but founded his three orders, dedicating them to the Queen of the heavenly choirs. There, too, through her intercession he won from his beloved savior the Portiuncula indulgence. This man, who wanted to own no property, yet made one allowance: St. Mary of the Angels. If any ruffians drive you out of this holy place, he told his companions toward the end of his life, come back in through another door, for you must never give it up. He died by his own request on the floor of a cell adjoining the chapel, a cell in the friary which had been built unto the chapel to give the first Franciscans their headquarters. The lone remnants left of that complex are the cell itself and the chapel both of which now stand within a large basilica bearing their same glorious name.

Before he died singing his invitation to Sister Death to take him, the saint had had his friars carry him out on a stretcher to a vantage point on the lower plain which commanded a perfect view of Assisi. He blessed it fondly, this hillside so radiant in the morning sun, so peaceful under the stars, so ever remindful of its adorable Creator. At the age of forty-five Francis was going home, yet not without a pang from memories of exile. He still loved the town, its vicinity of valley and ridge, and with his blessing his spirit seems to have settled permanently on the holy environment.

Raphael Brown stresses the importance of that blessing, and rightly so, in his highly commendable book. Other great saints have had their mortal remains preserved from the corruption of the tomb. Not so Francis of Assisi. However, a different kind of miracle is at work on his behalf. Seven centuries after his body was laid to rest and began to go the way of most flesh, his spirit remains as alive as during his lifetime throughout the Assisi area. His final blessing upon everything thereabout, the homes, the streets, the fountains, simply everything, still prevails. Pilgrims cannot breathe the air of that environment without feeling, especially in the shrines, the saint's influence: the joy of having come nearer to God.

True Joy from Assisi in treating all this deserves to be read and reread and then kept handy for a third reading.



God Said: Let There Be Woman: A Study of Biblical Women. By James A. Fischer, C.M. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1979. Pp. xiv-115. Paper, $4.95.

Reviewed by Sister Barbara Marie, O.S.F., a member of the staff of St. Anthony's Hospital, Pendleton, Oregon, and a frequent contributor to our pages.

With all the controversy today about women in a man's world, scriptural sources are being used to prove the inferiority or the superiority of women, depending on one's particular prejudices. Many conclusions are drawn from biblical quotations taken out of context, without considering the period in which they were written, the customs which were accepted in that era, or the insight of the inspired writers. It is Father Fischer's purpose, as stated in the Introduction, to give his honest opinion, inadequate as it must be, of the entire biblical attitude toward women.

In the first chapter of this book, the reader is introduced to some of the women, heroines as well as villains, mentioned in the Bible. These individuals are portrayed as playing important roles in the history of salvation. The author gives his own insight as to their character and their relationship to God. He also lists a number of commentaries which have been written, with his opinion as to their usefulness. These listings are found after each section throughout the book.

Many books of the Old Testament, as well as some of the writings of the New Testament, are known as Wisdom Literature. Through these passages, which are considered in the second chapter, attitudes toward women are perceived by observation toward real life experiences in accordance with the social customs of the times. We see the portrait of the worthy wife in contrast to the unworthy adulteress. The Christian attitude toward women is seen in the first Letter of Peter and some of the Pauline Epistles. Here we are confronted with many controversial statements, but "the significant theological insight is always that of unity of man and woman, not of inferiority" (p. 72). "Man is incomplete without woman; he needs her to find some sort of answer to the riddle of who he himself is" (p. 74).

The many feminine symbols are dealt with in the third chapter. Symbols are created through life experiences and lead to meditative thought and contemplation. "The feminine symbols often say that God is very like the woman whom we popularly describe as feminine—loving, peaceful, instructing, contemplative, life-giving" (p. 111). "For our purposes, we may very well

ask why the Church—and every commentator agrees that we are looking at the Church when we look at the Woman—should have been portrayed as a Woman" (p. 103).

Even though the author gives no enlightening answers to our current problems of women's rights, a slow and meditative reading of this work will help us to understand that true freedom and a sense of fulfillment can come only from within as we live our daily experience aided by faith. I must admit that I have been a little disappointed that Father Fischer did not deal at greater length with Christ's attitude toward women. Readers who are interested in this subject would find the following books helpful: *The Woman at the Well*, by Adrian van Kaam, C.S.Sp. (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1976); *Jesus and Women*, by Lisa Sergio (McLean, VA: EPM Publications, 1975); and *Women: Image of the Holy Spirit*, by Joan Schaupp (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1975). The last named of these was reviewed in THE CORD 26:5 (May, 1976), 156-57.

Liturgies for Little Ones: 34 Celebrations for Grades One to Three. By Carol Rezy. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1978. Pp. 160. Paper, $3.95.

Everything You Need for Children's Worship (Except Children). By Jack Noble White. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1978. Pp. viii-104. Paper, $3.25.

Reviewed by Mrs. Margaret E. Clarke, Director of Religious Education and Liturgical Music for the past ten years at St. Edward the Confessor Church in Clifton Park, New York.

Two fine resource aids for children's Liturgies deserve to be brought to your attention.

Liturgies for Little Ones contains 34 celebrations for grades one through three, designed especially for teachers who have access to art material, etc.

There are four celebrations suggested for each month of the school year from September, ending with two for June. These are easily identified by the seasonal and liturgical changes of the year with similar formats for each Liturgy consisting of the Theme, Readings, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel, Petitions, and Preparation of Gifts, followed by the musical and banner suggestions.

The original "Calico" art work woven throughout the book lends a delightful added dimension to the themes.

The author, being a second-grade teacher, is well versed in the interests and abilities of the primary child and gears her ideas and activities to this level, thereby providing the average teacher with a practical source. Another "plus" for the book is the selection of songs taken from popular children's liturgical music collections that are easily available (titles and addresses are listed in the back of the book).

My first impression of the book's limitations soon waned upon the realization that it provides exactly what the title indicates, and I would highly recommend it for the purpose for which it was intended—Liturgies for "little ones."

Everything Your Need for Children's Worship adds another good source to the increasingly growing list of material available for children's liturgies. The first section of the book contains four services, followed by thirty scriptural based ideas for Liturgies. The format for these is similar in each case, including readings, props, and activities; however, the author readily points out these should be treated with the necessary flexibility for classroom and/or worship usage in grades kindergarten through eight. (It is my opinion that this section would be more easily used in the classroom, since most suggested activities involve the children's doing artwork, crafts, or bodily movements.)

The last section contains original music for the ordinary parts of the Mass and original words and music for paraliturgical worship.

Mr. White has the unique qualifications of experience with children and extensive musical and liturgical background in the Episcopal Church. These qualifications, and his obvious love for children and sincerity in providing them with happy liturgical celebrations, give his book the necessary credentials for consideration by liturgists responsible for planning children's worship, and provide a splendid resource for elementary religious education teachers.

John Paul II: A Pictorial Biography. By Peter Hebblethwaite and Ludwig Kaugmann. New York: McGraw Hill, 1979. Pp. 128, including index. Cloth, $14.95; paper, $7.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Associate Editor of this Review.

This brief biography succeeds in situating John Paul II in the real world. Fascinating to me were the pictures of his parents, himself as a young boy, and the places, especially churches, in Poland that featured so much in his life. The narrative of his young manhood leaves one wanting much more, as does that of his continuing church career. In tracing his activities as bishop and the confidence shown him by John XXIII and Paul VI, his activities at Vatican II and in international affairs, the authors make clear how well known in church circles was Cardinal Wojtyla. The accounts of his trips to Mexico and Poland are well done and splendidly illustrated. An outline of his life against thebackground of world history is helpful, but a simple year by year chart would have been welcome. I wanted to know more about his priestly career 1951-1955, much of which was spent as a professor.

Hebblethwaite and Kaufmann have succeeded in not only informing us about John Paul II but also arousing the desire to know more of the man God has chosen to be the Shepherd of his flock on earth.

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