

## FRANCISCAN STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS ACCENT FRANCISCAN SPIRITUALITY

### CALENDAR

Registration Monday, June 25  
Classes Begin Tuesday, June 26  
Modern Language Exam Friday, July 13  
Final Exams Saturday, August 4

### FEEES

Tuition per graduate hour: \$85.00  
Room and Board: \$330.00  
Fees subject to change; individual courses subject to cancellation due to insufficient enrollment.

### ACADEMIC YEAR OFFERINGS

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES M.A. Program may be pursued during the Summer, Autumn, and Spring Semesters. The required number of course credits can be obtained in two Summer sessions and the intervening academic year, or in six Summer sessions.

### LOCATION

ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY is located in Western New York State, 70 miles southeast of Buffalo, and two miles west of Olean. BUSES: from New York City, Buffalo, and Erie and Bradford, Pa. AIRPLANES: Buffalo International, and Bradford-McKean Co. (Pa.) Airports. CARS: N.Y.S. Rt. 17 Southern Tier Expressway Exit 25, and/or N.Y.S. Rt. 417.

### COURSES OFFERED IN SUMMER, 1979

All Courses meet daily, Monday through Friday in Plassmann Hall, except as noted.

#### FI 500 Bibliography

1 cr. hr., Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M., Ph.D.: Th 8:00-9:05, Room 108. This course is required of all new degree candidates. It must be taken in the first summer session attended.

#### FI 501 Sources for Franciscan Studies I

3 cr. hrs., Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., Ph.D.: 9:10-10:15, Room 201.  
This course is a prerequisite for 504.

#### FI 502 Sources for Franciscan Studies II

3 cr. hrs., Fr. Ronald Mrozinski, O.F.M. Conv., S.T.L.: 10:20-11:25, Room 301.  
This course is a prerequisite for 504.

#### FI 506 Survey of Franciscan History

3 cr. hrs., Fr. Lawrence Landini, O.F.M., H.E.D.: 10:20-11:25, Room 201.

#### FI 508 History of Franciscan Thought

3 cr. hrs., Fr. Joachim Giermek, O.F.M. Conv., S.T.L., M.A.: 9:10-10:15, Room 300.

#### FI 517 Introduction to Palaeography

2 cr. hrs., Dr. Girard Eitzkorn, Ph.D., MWF, 1:30-3:05, Lower Seminar Room, Friedsam Library.

#### FI 521 Rule of St. Francis

2 cr. hrs., Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M. Cap., D. Phil., Oxon.: 11:30-12:35, Room 206.

#### FI 524 Theology of Christ According to Franciscan Masters

2 cr. hrs., Fr. George Marcell, O.F.M., Ph.D.: 11:30-12:35, Room 303.

#### FI 534 Franciscan Reforms and Renewal Today

2 cr. hrs., Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., S.T.L.: 8:00-9:05, Room 206.

#### FI 539 Spiritual Direction and the Franciscan Tradition

2 cr. hrs., Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M., D. Min.: MWTh 7:00-9:00 p.m., Room 100.

#### FI 561 Development of the Franciscan Person

2 cr. hrs., Fr. Peter Damian Wilcox, O.F.M. Cap., S.T.L., S.T.D. Cand.: 11:30-12:35, Room 302.

#### FI 599 Independent Research

1-2 cr. hrs., for advanced students by special arrangement.

#### FI 699 Master's Thesis

6 cr. hrs., for advanced students by special arrangement.

Students planning to pursue the program through the year should begin their studies in Summer Session.

### PRE-REGISTRATION

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

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THE CORD (ISSN 0010-8685) (USPS 563-640) is a review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Subscription rates: \$7.00 a year; 70 cents a copy. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778, and at additional mailing offices. Please address all subscriptions and business correspondence to our Business Manager Father Bernard R. Creighton, O.F.M., at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Manuscripts, Books for Review, and Editorial Correspondence should be sent to the Editor, Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., or Associate Editor, Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., at our Editorial Office, Siena College Friary, Loudonville, N.Y. 12211.



## Celibacy, Grace, Experience

A NEW YORK TIMES feature article on the "mixed reactions" to Pope John Paul II's Holy Week message reaffirming celibacy for priests brought up several points worth pondering. First, it indicated that the celibacy issue is symbolic of the Church's stand on sexual matters. Hence the strong stand on celibacy is continuous with the strong stand on sexual morality that Catholic Christianity continues to maintain. And this, I believe, is correct. Underlying both stands is a dogmatic belief in *the power of God's grace*, which enables people to cope with and even consecrate their sexual powers. Genital sex is an option for human beings, not essential to their nature. The sexual character of human existence need not imply romantic or genital love. Jesus, and the whole biblical tradition with him, speaks of celibacy as a gift of God.

Pope John Paul II indicates to us that God has not of late decided not to give this gift. Not of ourselves, to be sure, but in God who strengthens us, as Paul points out, we can do all things. What is impossible with men, is possible with God; and these words of the Lord remain applicable to celibacy.

A second issue raised in the article was the relevance of *experience* to the question of celibacy. The suggestion that the Pope speaks from out of puritanical Polishness (stemming from Marxism as much as from Christianity), is about as absurd as suggesting that Peter's views on the Lord's Resurrection reflected his Jewishness. For the believing Catholic, the successor of Peter does have a *charism of office*. And de facto, John Paul II is an *international person*—more so, I suggest, than many of his American critics whose secularism and sexual idolatry continue to destroy rather than build faith.

"People are true to their own experience," rather than to someone telling them what their experience means, according to Dr. Eugene Kennedy, cited in this article. Some people fit this definition; we don't, however, call them *believers*, for it is the function of religion to *interpret* our experience for us, to reveal to us dimensions we might never otherwise con-

<sup>1</sup>Kenneth A. Briggs, "Pope's Message on Celibacy Gets Mixed Reaction from U.S. Clergy," *The New York Times*, April 13, 1979, p. A21.

sider. Faith depends on *hearing*, and the person who listens for a beat he is already marching to is like the man who looked into a mirror and walked out, forgetting what he looked like.

Actually, I do not think celibacy is foreign to human experience. Many cultures have esteemed it, and millions have found that the consecration of their bodies to God has opened up their hearts and lives beyond their wildest dreams. The promised hundredfold is for real! How welcome it is to hear John Paul II remind us of God's special Presence in the faithful who have left all for him.

*Dr. Julian Davis*



## Bright/Brown

Holding tight a post (worm-weathered)  
she was claw and muted coat.  
Motion moved her then to flight.

Caught against the distance,  
her graceful lift  
exposed a hidden happy blue,  
whirring promise of a brighter palette  
in the undersoft of wings.

Who are they for?  
Those sky feathers,  
held beneath the wooden, sombre brown  
blue to reach for rainbows  
blue to soar toward dippersful of stars.

I think I saw her soul,  
not brown and drab at all,  
no more than Francis ever was,  
fire-bright with Alleluias  
and aurora bursts of color  
at his finger's ends.

Franciscan minor Gospel preacher,  
leave one blue promise here.

I need it when the world seems only brown.

*Sister Carol Ann Munchel, O.S.F.*

## A Gospel Spirituality

BERNARD TICKERHOOF, T.O.R.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI was in part a product of the medieval penitential movement. Upon recognizing the call of God to give over his life, Francis spent three years living as best he could around the neighborhood of Assisi, repairing churches and leading the life of a penitent hermit. On that eventful day in February of 1208 when Francis listened to the Gospel being read on the feast of St. Mathias, his penitential life took a decidedly different direction. He became a preacher of the gospel of conversion, and along with the men who soon gathered around him, he began to proclaim the need for repentance to all he met. The early biographers tell us that after some initial misunderstanding those who heard his words were deeply moved, and many men and women were led through Francis and his friars to embrace the penitential life.

Thus not only was Francis a product of the penitential movement, but in time he became the

spearhead of it. So great was his influence on this Order of Penance, as the movement was recognized within the Church, that it completely adopted his values and spirit. Soon after his death it began to be recognized as the Third Order of Saint Francis, and down to our present day it continues to form the largest part of the Franciscan family. It consists of the Third Order (Third Order Secular—now known as Secular Franciscans) and of the various priests, brothers, and sisters communities that comprise the Third Order Regular.

In light of these times of renewal the Third Order, as much as any movement within the Church, recognizes the need to examine its roots. It looks for that elusive original charism that sparked its life and gave it a dynamism that so transformed society in the High Middle Ages. Those of us within the various branches of the Third Order have come to see that charism as the

spirit of penance, that biblical *metanoia* that represents the process by which the Christian turns from a sinful state to an ever deeper life in Christ lived out in anticipation of God's Reign. In searching for this charism we have sought to rediscover the pre-Franciscan penitential movement and re-examine the conversion process of Francis. But part of this spirit of *metanoia* also lies in that early preaching of Francis that touched the depths of an already vibrant movement and gave it the strength to multiply its energies. In a general way that's what this article is about.

In 1975 Kajetan Esser published an article on a manuscript first published in 1900 by Paul Sabatier.<sup>1</sup> As Esser's title suggests, the Volterra manuscript appears to be an early edition of the Letter to the Faithful (*Omnibus*, p. 93). Until Esser's recent work it was considered important only insofar as it offered certain "variations" on the more complete piece.

Esser has theorized in his article, however, that the manuscript has significant value in its own right. "Vo is not only a copy of one of the oldest texts, but

contains also a text which is independent in itself and at the same time older than the rest of the tradition of the '*Epistola ad fideles*'" (p. 33). As such the Volterra letter represents an early stratum of Francis's writing. That it was added to and perhaps improved upon by Francis in later editions does not take away from its importance as an original work. Furthermore, as an independent text it offers a complete train of thought that, while not in conflict with the later Letter to the Faithful, presents us with a different intentionality that deserves to be studied.

Esser also offers some conclusions as to whom the letter is addressed. "It is quite clear therefore that we have before us a written instruction directed toward persons who have joined the penance movement of the later Middle Ages, a movement to which Francis and his brotherhood were deeply attached and obligated" (p. 38). Here, then,

we have preserved for us, if Esser's theories are correct, a simple and direct statement of Francis to the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, the grass roots movement of his age which not

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Father Bernard Tickerhoof, T.O.R., is a friar of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus Province of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. Ordained in May 1978, he holds a Masters of Divinity from St. Francis Seminary in Loretto, PA. He has studied at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University and at the Institute for Spirituality and Worship at the Jesuit School of Theology, Berkeley, CA.

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<sup>1</sup>Kajetan Esser, "A Forerunner of the '*Epistola ad Fideles*' of St. Francis of Assisi," first appeared in German in the *Collectanea Franciscana*. The English translation appeared in the *Analecta T.O.R.* 14 (n. 129). The article concerns itself with a Latin manuscript (Cod. 225 of the Biblioteca Guarnacci of Volterra), which Sabatier published in 1900—hence the name "Volterra Letter."

only helped to produce the Franciscan Order, but which in turn was radically renewed by it. The letter concerns itself with those who have taken up the penitential life, and also with those who have for various reasons not yet embraced a life of conversion. Such a letter is bound to be of great importance in the quest for the charismatic roots of the Third Order's existence.

Thomas of Celano, in his First Life (n. 37), implies that in his early preaching Francis set forth some norms for penitential living for the many men and women who listened to him and were moved by his call to *metanoia*. There is, however, no way of determining in what these norms consisted. They have, like most

of Francis's preaching, been lost in antiquity. The Volterra manuscript is not anything like a rule; it is, however, a spiritual statement of the greatest importance. While in the form of a letter, it has the enthusiastic and imaginative preaching of Francis as its core. While directed to penitents of the thirteenth century, its scriptural sense of spirituality reaches out to all Christians of every era.

If we are to examine more closely the spirituality of the Volterra letter, we must of course make the text available. What follows is an English rendition offered, not as a critical translation, but as a means of bringing Francis's letter into the proximity of the average reader.

### Francis' "Volterra Letter" (written probably ca. 1215)

In the name of the Lord.

#### Chapter One: Concerning those who do penance.

1. All who love the Lord with their whole heart, with their whole soul and mind, with all their strength, and who love their neighbors as themselves,
2. and have a hatred of their bodies with its faults and sins,
3. and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ,
4. and produce fruits worthy of penance:
5. O how blessed and praiseworthy are those men and women as long as they do this and persevere in such things,
6. because the Spirit of the Lord rests upon them and makes a dwelling place among them,
7. and they are children of their Father in heaven whose work they do, and they are the lovers, the brothers and the mothers of our Lord Jesus Christ.
8. We are lovers when our faithful soul is united with our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit.

9. We are brothers to him when we do the will of his Father who is in heaven.
10. Mothers when we carry him in our hearts and our body through divine love and a pure and sincere conscience, and we give birth to him through holy actions which should shine as an example to others.
11. O what a glorious, holy, and great thing it is to have a Father in heaven.
12. O how holy, fair, beautiful, and wonderful to have such a lover.
13. O how holy and beloved, gratifying and lowly, how peaceful, delightful, lovable, and above all desirable to have such a brother and son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave life for his sheep
14. and prayed to his Father saying: "Holy Father, in your name keep those whom you have given me in the world. They were yours and you gave them to me,
15. and the words you have given me, I have given to them. And they have received them and have truly believed that I have come forth from you and they know that you have sent me.
16. I pray for them and not for the world.
17. Bless and sanctify them and for them I sanctify myself.
18. Not for them do I pray, however, but for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may be sanctified in their unity as we are.
19. And I wish, Father, that where I am, they also may be with me, that they may see my splendor in your kingdom." Amen.

#### Chapter Two: Concerning those who do not do penance.

1. However, all those men and women who are not repentant
2. and do not receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
3. and commit vice and sin, and who follow evil appetites and the evil desires of the flesh,
4. and do not observe what they have promised the Lord,
5. and who bodily serve the world, the desires of the flesh, following the anxieties and cares of this life:
6. detained by the devil, they are his children and do his work.
7. They are blind, for they do not see the true light, our Lord Jesus Christ.
8. They have no spiritual wisdom for they do not have the Son of God, who is the true wisdom of the Father;
9. it is said of them: "Their wisdom has been swallowed up;" and "they speak evil who turn away from your commands."
10. They see and acknowledge, they know and yet they do evil, and they themselves knowingly lose their lives.
11. Look, you blind, deceived by your enemies, by the flesh, the world, and the devil; for to the body it is sweet to commit sin and it is bitter to serve God;

12. because all vice and sin come forth and proceed from the human heart as the Lord says in the Gospel.
13. And you have nothing to look forward to in this world nor in the next,
14. and you think you are going to keep possession of the vanities of this world. But you are deceived, because the day and the hour will come of which you neither think nor know and of which you are ignorant. One's body becomes sick, then death approaches, and thus he dies a bitter death.
15. And no matter where or when or how a person dies in guilt and sin without repentance or due satisfaction, if he can make satisfaction and does not do so, the devil snatches his life from his body amid such anguish and distress that no one could understand it if he has not experienced it.
16. And all the talent and power, all the knowledge and wisdom they believed they had will be taken from them.
17. And relatives and friends bear their property away and divide it among themselves, and afterwards they say: "Cursed be his soul, for he could have acquired more to give us but he did not."
18. The worms consume the body and thus they lose body and soul in their short life, and go into Hell where they will be tormented without end.
19. All those to whom this letter might reach, we ask in that love which is God that they favorably receive with a divine love these great and precious words of our Lord Jesus Christ,
20. and those who do not know how to read should have them read often,
21. and keep them with them, practising what is holy to the last, for they are spirit and life.
22. And those who do not act in this way will be held to account for it on the day of judgment before the seat of our Lord Jesus Christ.

(Latin text: *Analecta T.O.R.*, Vol. XIV, No. 129, pp. 42-45.)

Modern biblical study has employed several tools by which to further our understanding of Scripture. It has been the genius of contemporary Franciscan research to apply these same tools to the body of the early Franciscan writings. Esser's article on the Volterra Letter is an example of such a tool, textual criticism. Through an examination of the various texts available to us he has not only reached some important conclusions as to the origin and purpose of the letter, but has also concerned himself with providing for us a critical Latin text. Yet it still remains for other methods of research to be utilized so that the richness of the text may be explored still further. One such method is form criticism, which seeks to move behind the written text and examine

the preliterate and oral composition of a work. Another method is literary criticism, which explores the content of a text from the aspects of language, composition, and origin. Much of the remainder of this article will be concerned with briefly applying these tools to the Volterra Letter in order to draw out the penitential spirituality contained within it.

Here is not the place to examine at length the differences between the Volterra Letter and the Letter to the Faithful. First of all, Esser has already done that in sufficient detail in his article (pp. 34-37). But we pass over the Letter to the Faithful here more than simply to avoid redundancy. An examination of the longer text would be imperative if we were attempting to trace the development of Francis' thought in regard to the Order of Penance. An analysis of the additions that made their way into the longer text would then be essential. Instead we are moving in the other directions. What concerns us now is not tracing Francis' development, but rather discovering the roots of his spirituality. Only upon examination of the foundations of his penitential spirituality can we be free to observe its movement as Francis became more self-conscious of the role he played in the popular spirituality of his day.

We begin by asking the question, what do we have before us in the Volterra Letter? It is, as

Esser maintains, a letter; II:19 clearly indicates this is so. But Esser is quick to point out (p. 34) that its form predates Francis' complete letter style. There is no real form of address, no admonition to make copies of the letter and circulate it, no exhortation that the letter be preserved. It is a letter only in the barest of structures. Yet the body of the letter possesses a deliberate and polished format. There are clearly two trains of thought, one an affirmative statement on those who do penance, the other a double negative which arrives at the same conclusion. Both statements are not only salted with scripture texts, but scripture is intricately woven into their very fabric. Assuming Francis' extensive and often intuitive use of Scripture, there is still a purposefulness to its presence here (as will shortly be demonstrated) that could lead us to the conclusion that the letter is in some way a spiritual statement on Scripture itself.

This conclusion undoubtedly says something about the intention that lies beneath the letter. There is no direct addressee. There are no personal appeals or exhortations, as there would be if Francis were sure who would actually be the beneficiary of his letter. What we have instead is a didactic tool. The letter is the means Francis has chosen to reach a wider

audience, to increase an original circulation. To commit to writing is an insurance measure. First of all, it insures that one's thoughts and beliefs will be preserved. Second, if this writing is published or circulated, it furthers the spread of these beliefs. But such beliefs and thoughts here pre-exist the form. The letter form has been imposed upon the material, which seems to have a more primitive oral form behind it.

The oral nature of the Volterra Letter is not difficult to notice. It can in fact be seen in many of Francis' writings. The letter does not seek to furnish rational proof. There are no complex arguments that would have to be logically set down and extensively explained. Rather, the content is light and repetitious. It is meant to create an emotional effect. Its style purposely tries to recall familiar phrases that will touch off a spark in the hearer. And the letter concludes with a story (II:14-18) designed to leave the hearer with something to remember long after the words have died away. An extensive use of Scripture makes sense here since it calls forth already existing phrases from the memory. In short there is present in the Volterra Letter sufficient evidence that the basic content of the piece existed first in oral form, and seems to have many of the characteristics of homiletic



material. The bulk of the letter may well be a close example of Francis' preaching, and perhaps the purest example of it that we possess.

While a preacher's style often appears to be light and simple, preaching is itself a complex art form. Several things are going on at once in a good homily. First of all, there is a train of thought which more or less directly leads to a particular theme or point. But the homily or sermon does not embody only this type of linear development. The preacher is also presenting a snapshot of a complete world view with every homily. In theory if we had

enough homilies from one preacher, assuming of course a congruence to his life experiences, we should begin to understand his world, for that world lies at the bottom of every homily he gives. Even the simplest, most direct statements are important, for they serve to validate this world view in the preacher's mind and clarify it for his congregation.

If we look at the Volterra Letter as a homily we observe that it presents us with a very simple and straightforward statement on Francis's part. In its purest form it runs something like this: It is highly beneficial for one to do penance, but on the other hand if one does not do penance he will not possess eternal life. But this statement is at the same time a snapshot of something deeper. It is, like all of Francis's writings, a picture of this holy man as he attempts to respond to God and his brothers and sisters from within his own life situation. It is a representation of his world view. Thus the letter can be a key for us. By examining the text we can bring to light many of the beliefs and values which motivated Francis.

It should be no great surprise to us that Francis's primary source for the letter is Scripture, or more specifically the Gospels. We are used to thinking of Francis as the Imitator of Christ, as the one who sought to follow the Gospels perfectly, as the one who hoped to renew the Church through a renovation of the gospel spirit. Yet we too often settle for the belief that Francis's understanding of Scripture was by and large spontaneous, that it was for the most part undifferentiated. Francis used Scripture because it was so much a part of him that he could not *help* using it. It was as natural to him as if it were his very own vocabulary.

To an extent this is true and it speaks well of the holiness of Francis. But if we conclude from this that he "merely" used Scripture spontaneously, then any further examination of the text has little to offer us more than a testimony to one man's holiness. In fact, however, that is not the case. Francis' use of Scripture in the Volterra Letter is quite deliberate, and presents us with a coherent scriptural theology.<sup>2</sup>

The letter is influenced from

<sup>2</sup>It might here be advisable to mention that we speak of Francis as the author of the letter, but do not thereby preclude the contribution of others to its theology. Nor should this keep us from maintaining that the spirituality contained in it is indeed that of Francis. The same, in fact, can be said of much of the body of Francis's writings. Authorship is here understood in that wider sense familiar to anyone who has made even a basic study of the New Testament.

two directions within the Gospels. There is clearly evident both an influence from the Synoptic Gospels and an extensive use of Johannine material. I do not state this merely as a convenient way of dividing the body of the canonical Gospels, for the Volterra Letter uses the two in decidedly different ways. The Synoptic influence, while still important, is recognizably secondary, and appeals more to our understanding of Francis's use of Scripture as spontaneous. There is, however, a primary use of Johannine material quite beyond mere Scripture quoting. Johannine theology has been intricately worked into the text itself, leaving us with the impression that the primitive oral form of the letter may well have been a sermon on some aspect of John's Gospel. We will briefly analyze the Synoptic influence on the letter for it does offer us a picture of Francis's world and thought patterns, but it is the influence of the Gospel of John which will most occupy our attention here.

Synoptic material is recognizable in the letter in I:1,4, 7b, 9, 19b; and II: 12, 14b, 16. There is however no coherent pattern to it. It is used as the situation seems to dictate. The reference, for instance, in I:1 (Mk. 12:30-31; Mt. 22:37-39) sees those who do penance as being a part of (or really synonymous

with) those who keep the two great commandments. This can be considered a more or less direct use of the Scripture. The same can be said for I:4 (Lk.3:8—the Baptist's preaching), I:7b) Mk. 3:33-35 and parallels—the true family of Jesus), and II:12 (Mk. 7:21—the source of impurity). Other Synoptic references, however, simply help to form Francis' vocabulary, as in I:9 and 19b, where he speaks with a decidedly Matthean flavor (cf. Mt. 12:50 and 20:21).

Of special note are the Synoptic references in II:14b and 16. They reveal something of the ongoing understanding of revelation for Francis as well as for the medieval Church in general. The texts refer to several eschatological passages from the Synoptics (II:14b—Mt.24:42, 50; 25:13; Lk. 12:46 and II:16—Mt. 13:12; 25:29; Mk. 4:25; Lk. 8:18), but the eschatology present in the Gospels is quite different from that of

Francis. In Scripture the passages are apocalyptic. They describe the final inbreaking of God, the definitive end of history, and the last judgment, whereas for Francis the judgment in question is specifically individual judgment. Francis does not expect an immediate cataclysmic end to creation. Rather the individual should first beware of his own end. Of course this does not mean that Francis would deny a final judgment (on the

contrary, see II:22), but it simply implies that his eschatology is primarily salvational and not apocalyptic. Francis has taken the Synoptics' penchant for apocalyptic imagery and has removed it from its metahistorical time frame. He has not been alone in this. The process was already underway in the first century. In fact it had already begun in the Synoptics themselves. Luke de-apocalypticizes much of his source material. What is of interest here is the extent to which Francis has taken this process for granted. Nor should we be too surprised if we did not pick up the change of sense in reading the letter; for the most part we automatically assume the process as well.

When we turn to the Johannine influence on the text we see a marked difference in the letter's use of Scripture. To begin with, over one third of the verses in the letter reflect Johannine vocabulary. One complete section (I:14-19) is an extensive paraphrase of the priestly prayer of Jesus in John's seventeenth chapter. When enumerated the Johannine references form an imposing list.

I:6—Jn 1:32; 14:23  
 I:7—Jn 8:41; 14:12  
 I:14—Jn 10:15; 17:6,11  
 I:15—Jn 17:8  
 I:16—Jn 17:9  
 I:17—Jn 17:17,19a  
 I:18—Jn 17:20,23  
 I:19—Jn 17:24

II:5—Jn 8:23,34  
 II:6—Jn 8:41,44  
 II:7—Jn 1:9; 8:12; 9:39; 12:46  
 II:10—Jn 9:41  
 II:11—Jn 9:39  
 II:21—Jn 6:63

But it is not enough to point out the extensiveness of the Johannine vocabulary. We must also note that there is a definite pattern to its use. In the letter's first chapter the core of the John material is positive and is drawn from the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel. John here records a prayer of Jesus addressed to the Father summarizing Christ's mission and praying on behalf of his disciples, the true believers, and for those who will come to believe through their preaching. Francis has chosen material from this chapter specifically bringing out the nature of discipleship in the lives of the penitents. For Francis the penitent has been given by the Father to Christ, and has been instructed through the words of the Son. The penitent has received this teaching and has come to believe. The life of penance is tied to belief. But not only that, for by their example and perhaps by their preaching they will also lead others to believe, and thereby to do penance.

In the second chapter we see the flip side of the coin. The material is drawn extensively from the eighth and ninth chapters of John's Gospel, and is

decidedly negative. The references are now no longer to the disciples of Jesus but to the Jews, representing for John those who are not true believers. The thrust of the Gospel is that while claiming to be begotten of God these nonbelievers are really children of the devil. Moreover they have gone beyond the point where they can truly see their own origin. They are spiritually blind, so that while claiming to have the light they show themselves to be unaffected by it. Francis has drawn from this image of the unbeliever and has applied it to those who refuse to take up the penitential life. While they claim to be Christians, their very actions show that they are self-deceived. They have lost true wisdom, and so they have created a bleak future for themselves.

This concept of true wisdom is indeed of great importance to us, for it shows the depth to which Francis has plumbed Johannine spirituality. Crucial to our understanding of this are verses 8 and 9 of Chapter Two in the Volterra Letter. The plight of the impenitent is here shown in a double reversal. On the one hand they possess no true wisdom (vs. 8), and on the other the worldly wisdom they do possess proves itself to be ineffective (vs. 9). The latter verse, a composite of psalmic material (Ps. 107:27; 119:21) shows a clear influence of Hebrew wisdom literature.

The same is true of verse 8, but with a truly interesting twist. Jesus, the personified true wisdom of the Father, recalls the personification of Wisdom as it appears for instance in Proverbs 8 and 9 and in Sirach 24. But here wisdom is feminine. She springs forth from Yahweh himself, united to him but distinct. She has creative attributes, and offers unending nourishment to humanity.

The surprising element, however, is that the writer of John also developed a theology of Christ around personified Wisdom, transferring her qualities to the masculine *Logos*, the Word, and applying them to Jesus. Compare for instance the parallel thought patterns between Jn 1:1-5 and Prov. 8:22-31, and between Jn 4:13-14; 6:35 and Prov. 9:1-6 and Sir. 24:19-22. Francis does not use any of these Johannine passages directly, and yet he has intuited the sense that John wished to present. Francis does not portray Christ as the Word, but in speaking of Jesus as the Father's true wisdom, he has utilized a pre-Gospel Johannine thought pattern. Such a theological development is truly remarkable, given Francis's limited formal education, and points out most effectively how much he had absorbed the Scripture into his being.

It should here be noted in passing that Francis also uses the

scriptural term "flesh" several times within the Volterra Letter (II:3, 5, 11). This term is likewise found in John's Gospel (Jn. 3:6; 6:63), but has not been cited by us as Johannine influence upon the letter, since the term is used quite differently by John. In the Fourth Gospel it is contrasted to the spirit, and represents the outward manifestation of human life, that which is mortal and passing. Francis's use of *flesh* is closer to that found in Pauline theology. Paul uses the term *flesh* in a holistic sense. The flesh is the whole human person as inherently weak and cut off from divine help. The flesh is isolated from God and therefore open to sin. Francis speaks in this vein, but he also shows himself to be highly influenced by a strong Medieval renunciation theology that links the flesh with the world and the devil to form a threefold united front in combat with God's truth and virtue.

The whole thrust of John's theology can be seen as faith-centered. Jesus is the eternal Word who comes that we may believe. He presents himself and the Father through a series of "signs" which call forth from within the observer a decision: Can you put your faith in the Son or not? This understanding of the Gospel is adequately stated in Jn. 3:17-18. "God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the

world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him avoids condemnation, but whoever does not believe is already condemned for not believing in the name of God's only Son."

The importance of the Volterra Letter lies in the direct link that Francis sees between this understanding of faith and the penitential life. For Francis following Christ is not simply a matter of degrees. The penitent is not just a little farther along the road. In a sense there is for Francis no middle way; the issue at stake is too important. And the issue, simply stated, is one's belief in God. The penitent has shown himself willing to put his faith into practice by undergoing conversion of life. The one who does not undertake conversion shows himself to be no better than the unbeliever. The penitent through his or her life style demonstrates true discipleship. But the one who is so proud and so avaricious as to feel no need for repentance has already been cut off from God. Such an understanding of the penitential life is indeed radical, but no more radical than John's. "If you were blind there would be no sin in that. 'But we see,' you say, and your sin remains" (Jn. 9:41). No greater gift can be given to a person than the gift of faith, and for Francis it was the penitent who showed what it truly meant to believe.



# Sanguis Christi, Inebria Me

MOTHER MARY FRANCIS, P.C.C.

WE COME in our reflections to the third phrase of the prayer, "Anima Christi." After having called out to the soul of Christ to sanctify us, having looked to his sacred body to save us from any misdirecting or misrepresenting of the role of our own body, we now plead: "Sanguis Christi, inebria me." "Blood of Christ, inebriate me," or, if you prefer, "Blood of Christ, make me drunk!"

Unfortunately, we have come to associate with inebriation only one particular effect of a specific indulgence. We understand the literal kind of drunkenness by which we mean merely overuse of alcoholic beverages. Oh, but there is more to that word than that! Obviously—or it would not be in this prayer. The kind of drunkenness to which we refer in our ordinary use of the word is a debasement of what true inebriation should be, that of which the poets and mystics have written when they said that they were drunk with the love of Christ, inebriated with God, set reeling with the thought of God's glory and of God's love for them.

Dear sisters, in this prayer we

return the word and the concept to truth. Although its ordinary use cannot really be called merely connotative so much as a universally accepted actual meaning, still, beyond and beneath that we want to look at the purity of the word and of the concept. Inebriation really means a state of exaltation, of enlivenment above what is ordinarily possible. Do we not see immediately in that consideration how the present almost sole debased use of the word outside of mystic treatises or poetry has nevertheless taken on the lineaments of the actual and radical meaning? I mean, do not many persons seek by the stimulation of alcohol, as many others also presently do by the use of drugs, to bring themselves to a state of enlivenment and exhilaration beyond what they can otherwise achieve? Of course, because overuse of alcohol is only an artificial stimulant, as drugs can be a really perverse stimulant, both overreach themselves as all artificialities and perversions must invariably do. So, the drunken person, that is, the alcoholic, may experience an initial exhilaration; but this

quickly lapses into stupor, complete languor, and sometimes total unconsciousness. Drugs can have the same effect: initial exhilaration and enlivenment, and then the subsequent languor and loss of consciousness.

With the inebriation of the spirit, it is different. This is the true exhilaration and enlivenment which lift us above and beyond the ordinary in truth and purity. And this is what the Church proposes to us in this prayer: that we should be enlivened, lifted up and above our ordinary functioning, abilities, even potential, by the precious blood of Christ. It is in this sense that the saints and the mystics have so well understood it. Certainly it was a mystic who wrote this prayer.

"Blood of Christ, make me drunk!" A very bold expression, and a very accurate expression. Here is veracity both stark and glorious. It is in this sense that the contemplative most particularly, dear sisters, should be inebriated. Now, unlike the debasing inebriation which the stimulus of liquor or drugs produces, this inebriation is not of the senses. It may have nothing whatsoever to do with emotional response or lack of response. It means that the spirit is enlivened, and the body is enlivened and exhilarated, not by what it feels but by what it can do. We see something of this in the Acts of the Apostles when, on the first

Pentecost morning, they were speaking with such an exhilaration that was new and far beyond their ordinary way of acting, in a way obviously exceeding their own potential. And the people said, "These men are drunk!" (Acts 2:13). Well, they were, in a more profound sense than those listening and accusing them could ever have dreamed. They were inebriated with the blood of Christ whose effects the Holy Spirit was at that moment bringing to climactic action. And whenever, dear sisters, we are enabled by the Holy Spirit to exceed ourselves, to surpass our natural capabilities, we are experiencing and expressing the inebriation which is the effect of the blood of Christ outpoured.

It is the spilled blood of Christ which through the ages has inebriated souls unto martyrdom. One has to be enlivened beyond one's own possibilities to be a martyr. One has in the mystical and profoundly spiritual sense, to be quite drunk—drunk with God. And so the martyrs were the outstanding inebriates, enlivened and exhilarated beyond nature's possibilities. Nature clings fiercely to its own life. The spiritual inebriate runs singing to martyrdom. All the saints of God were inebriated by the blood of Christ. And if we are to excel our own meager possibilities, we must also be made drunk with that most precious Blood. It is the

*Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., is a well known author and Abbess of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Roswell, NM.*

blood of Christ alone which can enliven us to respond with a service beyond ourselves, which can achieve the overextension of ourselves without harm and, in fact, with glory. We ought to love this outcry of the prayer: "Sanguis Christi, inebria me!" For we need so much to be lifted above ourselves and beyond ourselves into God so that thus situated we are most truly ourselves, just as we considered in our earlier reflection on this prayer that we are most fully ourselves when we have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). Again, we are best using, even best understanding, our own bodies when we see ourselves saved by the body of Christ. And we are enabled to do the impossible when we are inebriated with the blood of Christ.

Even in considering the unfortunate usual meaning of inebriation, we see a certain parallel there in that first exhilaration and false enlivenment of which we spoke before. But then the stupor, the inevitable comment on artificiality, begins to take hold, much the same way as when we stimulate a storm of emotion or a hurricane of passion and are made somehow to experience a strength beyond ourselves for a brief moment. And because it is wrong or artificial or perverse, it quickly degenerates into the opposite effect. It is easy to see, though, in those

first stages, a fleeting strength beyond the ordinary. Scientists and doctors have observed this often enough, that a drunken person can weave his way along, avoiding danger, with a sureness beyond himself. Again, a drunken person in the first stages can often evince a strength he does not appear to have when sober. In the true inebriation of the spirit, the antithesis of all that is perverse or evil or self-indulgent, there is a strength beyond what we could ever have of ourselves, but which never lapses into languor. It is always turned out, dear sisters, never in. That is why I have said that spiritual inebriation is not borne witness to by what I feel, but by what I do.

If the martyrs, many of them, went singing and jesting to martyrdom, it was because they were inebriated with Christ, strong beyond themselves. For the body does not wish to die. We reflected earlier on how the body comments in the tomb on its temporary separation from the soul in a chilling way which is permitted and even penitentially imposed by God. But for the body to desire death in the loftiness of martyrdom, not as an escape, not as the manic depressive might desire death, but in the flaming love of Christ which knows that if to live is Christ, "to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21), there are needed the in-



ebriating effects of the blood of Christ.

And so when the martyrs went smiling to martyrdom, it was because they were drunk with the blood of Christ. And when we go singing, not necessarily emotionally, but with that great *desiderium* of the will which functions with or without the supportive factor of emotion, into the daily little dyings, it is again the effect of the blood of Christ. In all the hidden, humdrum martyrdoms that are part of real Christian daily living and still more of the intense form of Christian living which is our cloistered life, one must be inebriated to agree to them singing. In all the little sacrifices of each day when God invites us: "Come, and die!" we can respond with that deep joy of an inebriated heart able to over-extend its natural limitations and follow a difficult path with un-

stumbling feet. "Yes, I will die!" We die to our own preferences, we die to the tart response that nature quickly frames, we die to the caustic reply that pride proposes, we die to the sensual urge. One goes singing into all these invitations to the little deaths of every day when one is inebriated with the blood of Christ.

In the lives of our seraphic founders, Francis and Clare, we certainly observe this inebriation. Our Father Saint Francis was so drunk with the love of God, so inebriated with the blood of Christ, that he spent his whole life excelling himself and exceeding his own possibilities. Our Mother Saint Clare was another true inebriate of the blood of Christ, exceeding her own human possibilities all through her life, in the stand she unflinchingly took, in the faith that never wavered, in the long and arduous illness, in the disappointments and frustrations and faith-testings that were her ordinary fare. She excelled herself and raised up in the Church of God a great Order to which we so humbly and gratefully belong because she was inebriated with the blood of Christ.

Dear sisters, this inebriation is there for us also. Why can we not make it our prayer, our faith? When what is asked of us in daily life seems to our niggardliness and fear to be just too much—too much to give, too much

patience to sustain, too much meekness to achieve, why don't we go and get drunk? Why do we not turn to what is so accessible to us in the merits of the precious blood of Christ and become inebriated with it so that we have a strength which can discover: "No, that is not too much! I can do it. I can lift this weight. I can sustain this activity. I can suffer this oppression. I am drunk! I have a strength beyond the ordinary." Could this not be a precious aspiration of our daily life on all the occasions that seem "Too much"? Could we not turn to Christ, look at him upon that Cross, look at the ring upon our finger which bears his crucified image, and say: "Yes, it's too much for me as I am. I have to get drunk! I need a strength beyond my own. Blood of Christ, in-

ebriate me!"

The merits of Christ have been given to us, delivered over to us by the Father through the passion and death of his divine Son. So, may you be true spiritual inebriates, dear sisters. The more that some things seem "too much," the more inebriation we need. And so the more we must turn to the precious blood of Christ streaming out through all his sacraments, given to us every morning in holy Communion, cleansing us in every sacramental absolution, and also mysteriously washing over us in every actual grace as well as every increase of sanctifying grace. Let us not leave untapped the resources we have to be spiritual inebriates to whom no sacrifice at all is too much. Sanguis Christi, inebriate nos!



## Religious Question

Seen on a wall at St. John's University:

"And Jesus said unto them: 'Who do you say that I am?' And they replied: 'You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationship.' And Jesus said: 'What?'"

## Reflections on Father's Day

When the ultimate lightning cut the day's white promise,  
Calling your sudden sons like thunder, Zebedee,  
And the cloud-burst swelled the rising apprehensions of your pain,  
What law stayed the undulating waters at the heart's shore?  
What power save love sank new abysses for your pain?

Of Zebedee there is no word beyond the nets, the leaving.  
No later clarion call of swift, intoxicating joy  
Running dry shod on the waters:  
No future clouded churning of off-scoured pride or quested preferment.  
But in Mark's spare word that pales our bright effusions,  
The Spirit breathes precise encomium for him and kindred Zebedees:  
For implicit trust is highest praise,  
And love is best revealed in silences.

*Sister Catherine Jenkins, O.S.C.*

# Contemplation in the Franciscan Tradition

MAURICE SHEEHAN, O.F.M.CAP.

SAINT FRANCIS is one of the great contemplatives of the western Church, a man who spent much of his life in the unitive way in perfect possession of Christ. He liked to have contemplatives around him and often made them his counsellors. When Clare and Sylvester told him that God did not want him to devote himself exclusively to prayer but wanted him to preach,<sup>1</sup> the character of the way of life Francis was founding was set: it would be a mixture of retreat and activity, of prayer and preaching, a following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

But the attraction of the hermitages remained compelling, and it has been estimated that Francis averaged four months a year in hermitages. Many of his preaching tours were trips from one hermitage to another. He had

some twenty hermitages, and it is no accident that some of them, like the Carceri, Fonte Colombo, and La Verna, as Englebert remarks, are the high places of the Franciscan story. Many of his places of retreat and hermitages of the friars remain today to dot the map of and to give charm to what we call Franciscan Italy.

Both the writings of Francis and his life confirm that he made full, explicit allowances for a contemplative and solitary element in the new way of life he founded. His little Rule for Hermitages succinctly describes the kind of life he envisaged for the friars who wanted to live in a hermitage. There is a passing reference to hermitages in chapter 7 of the Rule of 1221. If there are any references in the Rule of 1223 they are veiled, in chapters 5 and 10. Celano tells how happy

<sup>1</sup>St. Bonaventure, *Legenda Major*, in *St. Francis of Assisi: Omnibus of Sources* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), XII, 1-2 (pp. 720-22); *Little Flowers of St. Francis*, *ibid.*, ch. 16 (pp. 1334-35).

Father Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap., is presently an Assistant Professor of Ecclesiastical History at the Washington Theological Union in addition to being a member of the summer faculty at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University. This September he will join the Institute full time as Assistant Director.

he was when a Spanish priest told him how the Spanish friars lived in their hermitages, and the Legend of Perugia says that he called those friars who hid themselves in remote and desert places to pray and to meditate his "Knights of the Round Table."<sup>2</sup>

But once Francis was dead, if we are to credit the accounts that have come down to us, the friars found his ceaseless travel for the sake of the Gospel more appealing than seclusion in some mountain fastness. Francis himself may have been unwittingly responsible for this, since he demonstrated by his life that he did not really need the hermitages. He was a living, walking hermitage. Solitude for him was something entirely spiritual. He could lose himself in prayer in the hold of a ship, on the back of an ass, or in the middle of a crowd. Celano was right to call him a living prayer, and Bonaventure was telling the friars nothing new when he said that Francis prayed constantly, whether walking or sitting, working or resting.<sup>3</sup>

Both prayer and evangelization were constitutive elements of the Franciscan movement. Men of an earlier time, like Peter Damian and Romuald, who wanted to turn the world into a cloister, equated Christian per-

fection with the monastic life. The more monasteries the better, was their ideal. Francis stuck out on a different—and more Christian—road. He wanted to take the Gospel to the world so that it might become more Christian. He wanted to convert the world so that it might be changed; the monasticizers wanted to change it so that it might be converted. The difference is basic. The one assumed that men could not be fully Christian in the world; Francis challenged men to give to the world what they had first gotten from giving themselves to God.

Thus a very real part of Francis's legacy to his friars was his own divided heart which preferred prayer to everything else even though he knew that he was called to help others. This was part of the friars' dilemma, as was the unavoidable reality of living in the world. There was no way the friars could get around this. To be able to pray and to preach, the Order—so much a part of the world and so economically dependent on its good will—had to adapt itself to conditions imposed on it by the world. This meant, above all, obtaining the good will, or at least the tolerance, of clerics and popular affection.

When at the end of the thirteenth century the Spirituals

<sup>2</sup>Celano 178; Legend of Perugia, 71 (*Omnibus*, pp. 504-05, 1047).

<sup>3</sup>*Omnibus*, pp. 440-43, 705-06.

raised the cry that the Order had undergone a sea change, they meant primarily that it had abandoned poverty and solitude. The Community's attempt to answer their charge by tricking out legal arguments left them cold. Neither charge was without foundation. Forty years earlier Thomas of Eccleston, writing nostalgic history to shame his contemporary English friars, said much the same thing in softer tones.<sup>4</sup> In the first balmy days of the province one could not visit the chapel without finding one or two friars in prayer at any hour of the day or night. Many of his heroes were prominent men of the province, who, after years of office-holding or reading theology, either volunteered for the mission to the East or gave themselves to a life of contemplation: men like Stephen of Belase, William Coche, and Warin of Orwell. Good patriot that he was, Eccleston makes part of his account John of Parma's eulogy of the English province as the best in the Order. But most significant is the absence of any mention of hermitages. The English province was contemplative but not

eremitical.

Eccleston wrote before the friars had general constitutions. When Saint Bonaventure codified the medley of the friars' laws in 1260, he fell back on the chief model to hand, the monastic. Henceforth friars were to live in houses laid out on monastic lines and each house was to be, as far as possible, self-sustaining. Bringing the friars off the roads and attaching them to a fixed abode allowed the Order to emphasize vocal, fraternal prayer. Liturgical prayer, both the Mass and the sung Office (much longer than today's), took center stage and absorbed much of the friars' attention and time.<sup>5</sup>

Bonaventure has been praised and damned for what he did. Without entering into the question of how great the monastic influence was and whether he deformed the Order, we should note that the monastic influence would not make the Order more contemplative because monastic life, especially its Benedictine form, was more liturgical than contemplative, as any medieval monastic *horarium* will readily show.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>*De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, ed. A.G. Little (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1951), ch. 15, pp. 88-104.

<sup>5</sup>On the Liturgy, see Stephen Van Dijk, "The Liturgical Legislation of the Franciscan Rules," *Franciscan Studies* 12 (1952), 176-95; 241-62.

<sup>6</sup>David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), 448-52; 639-30; and L. J. Lekai, *The Cistercians, Ideals and Reality* (Kent State University Press, 1977), 248-49; 255-56.

But the contemplative tradition, in spite of the receding of the hermitages from view, has been stronger than we think. The writing of the Order's history has given pride of place to the pastoral work of the friars and the internal struggles, usually but not always over poverty, that eventually divided it. It becomes too easy to forget that the Order has a distinguished tradition of writing on prayer that begins with Bonaventure himself and reached a peak in sixteenth-century Spain and seventeenth-century France and that prayer, as much as poverty, has been the catalyst of every enduring reform of the Order.

The successful reforms share common characteristics so that one can construct a paradigm which, *mutatis mutandis*, can be legitimately applied to all. All avoided the mistakes, especially the rigidity and pride, of the Spirituals. They went about reform in the same way. They simplified their lives so that they could retire to prayer and solitude; both fructified their subsequent pastoral activity. Prayer was their goal, poverty the means, and a heightened pastoral effectiveness the result.

Example is the best way to

show what this meant practically. Both the Observants and the Capuchins took their origins in solitude and made prayer the cornerstone of their reforms.<sup>7</sup> For the Observants prayer was "the key of all our observance"; for the Capuchins it was "the mother and nurse of every true virtue." Circumstances affected how each put its program into practice.

Observant legislation in their Barcelona Constitutions of 1451<sup>8</sup> is based on previous legislation of the Order (the Constitutions of (Narbonne and Perpignan) and the writings of friars on prayer (Bonaventure and Bernard of Besse). The Constitutions gave the friars the opportunity to simplify the Office; chanting it was left to the discretion of the superiors. They also urged the friars to set apart time for devotion and private prayer, i.e., meditation, and, as a corollary to this, require the "great silence" to be observed in specified places within the friary from after compline until prime. Hermitages are not mentioned since the intent of the legislation was to create an atmosphere favorable to each friary.

The attitude of the Observants toward prayer and solitude was one of the ways in which they

<sup>7</sup>See Ignatius Brady, "The History of Mental Prayer in the Order of Friars Minor," *Franciscan Studies* 11 (1951), 317-45.

<sup>8</sup>Edited by Michael Bihl in *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* 38 (1945), 3-39; 106-97.



ater of the Order. Their aims are summarized in their constitutions of 1529 and 1536.<sup>9</sup> Those of 1529, short-lived, called them Friars Minor of the Eremitical Life, a title that can be used to prove their promotion of contemplation but is also open to misinterpretation. The constitutions of 1536 dropped the name and introduced the name that stuck: Capuchin.

The legislation in favor of prayer restricted vocal prayer, and that which was protective of prayer restricted the friars' pastoral activity. Their legislation was also the first to use the phrase "mental prayer," and, what may be surprising, to prefer mental prayer to vocal prayer.

41. Since holy prayer is the spiritual mistress of the Friars, in order that the spirit of devotion may not decrease in the Friars, but continually burning on the sacred altar of our heart, may be enkindled more and more, as our Seraphic Father wished, we ordain that, although the true spiritual Friar Minor should always pray, two special hours shall be appointed for the tepid Friars. . . .

42. Let the Friars remember that prayer is nothing else than speaking to God with the heart. Consequently, he does not pray who speaks to God with the lips. Each one, therefore, should

endeavour to pray mentally, and according to the teaching of Christ, taking diligent care to enlighten the mind and enkindle the affections far more than to frame words. Before the morning meditation . . . they shall recite the Litanies. . . . And no other offices shall be said in choir except that of the Blessed Virgin, so that the Friars may have more time to devote to private and mental prayer which is far more fruitful than vocal prayer.

Silence was to be observed in the friaries, and so that the friars would not be distracted by outside noise the friaries were to be located at some distance from the cities and towns, but not so far removed as to hinder their work as popular evangelists or to put them out of touch with the sources of charity on which they lived. They were to be small, to accommodate seven or eight friars, and each friary was to have one or two hermitages attached to it for those friars who were called to the solitary life. Superiors were never to deny a friar solitude if he was judged suited for it.

In addition, the friars' pastoral activity was severely restricted. Preaching was to be the only outlet for their pastoral zeal. They had no schools, and their priests

were not to hear confessions. Prayer was usually the theme of their popular missions, and it was largely to promote the practice of prayer that they wrote their treatises on prayer.

Writings about the first days of the reform resonate the chronicle of Eccleston. Francis of Iesi went so far as to describe the Rule in terms of prayer, saying that it was accommodated to achieving contemplation. Chroniclers like Mario a Mercato Saraceno and Bernardino of Colpetrazzo described the life of the friars in terms of prayer: the friars often stayed in choir after the midnight office or went to one of the hermitages; by day and by night friars were to be found in the chapel praying.<sup>10</sup>

Contemplative deviationism, so graphically described by Celano,<sup>11</sup> never took hold among them because apostolic activity was amply safeguarded. Theirs was not a furtive and cloistered virtue," but one geared to preaching and the care of the poor and the sick.

Two things contributed heavily to their success. By locating their friaries on the outskirts of the cities they guaranteed to themselves the quiet necessary for

<sup>10</sup>Handy references to these and other works will be found in Vitus a Bussum, *De spiritualitate franciscana* (Rome, 1949), 221-36; 263-77; and in Melchior a Poblatura, *Historia Generalis Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, pars prima 1525-1619* (Rome, 1947).

<sup>11</sup>*Omnibus*, p. 505.

differed from the Conventuals and contributed to their popularity and success. Since they wanted both to reform the Order and to preserve its unity if possible, they repudiated separatism and made it their aim to get control of Conventual houses, many of which were in the heart of the cities and towns. They preferred not to build their own friaries if they could avoid it.

With the Capuchins the central role of prayer in the life of the Order comes into sharper focus. Their emphasis on contemplation is the distinguishing characteristic of their reform, and much of their legislation was framed to protect the contemplative char-

<sup>9</sup>Found in *Round Table of Franciscan Research* 7 and 8 (reissued in 1949), 110-42; 116-26.

prayer. By making a complete break from the start they avoided many of the entangling relationships and distracting struggles that the Observants had to work through in order to make their reform effective.

At the same time that the Observants and Capuchins were flourishing, there were other movements of reform that emphasized prayer and solitude, movements that gave rise, either immediately or eventually, to the Discalced Friars, the Reformed Friars, and the Recollect Friars, each of whom had their hermitages, houses of recollection, or *retiri*. By 1650 there were distinguishable within the Franciscan family five separate reform movements, all of which had taken their origin in solitude and made prayer the cornerstone of their live.

Rather than describe the decline of the Order in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—the one spiritual, the other numerical—it may be better to jump to the twentieth century to see what this contemplative tradition means in terms of the second Vatican Council's call to religious to renew their life.

It is because of the Council that members of the Order have had their interest in contemplation awakened or renewed. Going back to the sources has made

us aware that contemplation is an integral part of Franciscan life.

In the first place, it should be evident that the Order is radically contemplative. Contrast may put this into sharper focus. To see what it means for an order to be radically apostolic one has only to look at the Dominicans. Their first constitutions released their friars from fasting and from choir if either interfered with study.<sup>12</sup> The Friar Minor, on the other hand, starts with prayer and then combines it with study, if he is ordained, to enhance his apostolate. In the Franciscan scheme of things prayer is the indispensable agent of effective pastoral activity.

The revised Constitutions of the three branches seem to have tried to combine the recent practice of the Order on prayer with the primitive tradition. Each requires a set time—or times—each day, with the understanding and the hope that the friars will spontaneously go beyond this minimal requirement to foster an intense, personal prayer life.

Certain conditions, either peculiar or common to the American scene, will shape and affect any attempt to reinvigorate the contemplative side of Franciscan life. Most provinces in the United States were founded, or soon made it part of their ministry, to care for the immigrant

through parishes. Thus parish ministry, with all that it implies by way of year-round activity and residence, became and remains a substantial part of many provinces' activity.

Another factor is what we may call, for want of a more precise term, the American character. A remark like Werner Stark's, that there is no such thing as a contemplative American is obviously an exaggeration. But there is no denying that ours is the fastest-paced society in history and that American friars, like Americans in general, are caught up in a round of activities and take pride in their pragmatism, their ability to make things work.

Then there is the camera. No society has yet come to grips with or brought the invention under control. Some believe that TV is the greatest obstacle to contemplation in today's world.

Among conditions that may make it difficult to achieve a contemplative spirit the following may be noted.

*Our increasingly noisy world.* We speak today of noise pollution. The location of the friaries is critical. The days are gone when the principle can be not to place them too close to or too far from the cities, but it seems essential that some friars be away from the city's noise so that they may have an atmosphere conducive to thought and to prayer.

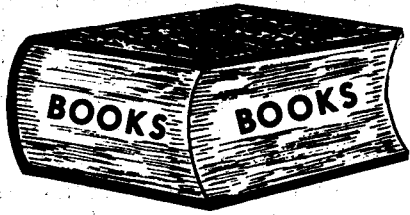
*Our increasingly pagan*

*world.* Efforts to halt the drift toward paganism can be made a reason for avoiding contemplation. Such arguing misses the point. The pastoral needs of the Church have always been demanding and insistent. Sometimes superiors have not been helpful or have forgotten that Saint Francis considered the friars' life of prayer and penance part of their apostolate for the Church.

*Our increasingly pastoral programs of formation.* From the start we ask the new member to do three things: to study, to pray, and to minister. It is not a question of whether the goals are good but whether all three can be done at once. As one friar put it, the way to build inner conviction is not through activity. Perhaps the question is, how are we helping the new member achieve the serenity necessary for prayer? Can the programs, as they are now structured, truly foster the contemplative spirit?

Any discussion of the contemplative tradition of the Order has to end where it began, with the person of Saint Francis. Times and circumstances change. In the changed times and circumstances men have called themselves sons of Francis and given his message to the men and women of their times. We are truly and fully his sons when we imitate his life and example. Francis is a contemplative.

<sup>12</sup>See *Acta capitulorum generalium ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. B.M. Reichert (Rome, 1898), I, 11, 13, 105.



**Studies Honoring Ignatius Charles Brady, Friar Minor.** Edited by Romano Stephen Almagno, O.F.M., and Conrad L. Harkins, O.F.M. St. Bonaventure, N.Y.: The Franciscan Institute, 1976. Pp. 496. Cloth, \$25.00 plus postage and handling.

*Reviewed by Father Earl A. Weis, S.J., Ph.L., S.T.D., Staff Editor for Dogmatic Theology of the New Catholic Encyclopedia and Chairman of the Department of Theology at Loyola University of Chicago.*

The idea to honor Ignatius Charles Brady, O.F.M., in a *Festschrift* was well conceived in the summer of 1974, and the plan to carry it out was elaborated with a seriousness worthy of the project. That was the summer in which Father Brady received from St. Bonaventure University the degree Doctor of Letters *honoris causa*. An appropriate follow-up to the recognition of the value of a scholar's contribution is some plan to continue his work, and to stimulate further continuance. This volume of studies does both of these things.

Father Brady was born in Detroit, Michigan, May 9, 1911. He entered the Order of Friars Minor on August 15, 1929. His graduate work was done at the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, Canada.

After a teaching career in a number of institutions of higher learning in the United States, Father Brady was assigned by the then Minister General to the Collegio San Bonaventura, Quaracchi, Italy, and appointed Prefect of the Theology Section.

Beginning in 1937 with a book review in the *American Ecclesiastical Review*, Father Brady began a writing career that had by 1974 already included 162 items on Franciscan topics strictly so called and on topics of special interest to a Franciscan. He did scholarly work (e.g., "The Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in the Fourteenth Century," *Studia Mariana*, 1954), but did not proudly scorn writing for more popular periodicals, too (e.g., "Our Monthly Conference," *THE CORD*, 1953), or doing the English translations of works that he admired (e.g., *St. Anthony, Doctor of the Gospel*, by Sophronius Clasen). Editing scholarly editions was a great part of his contribution (e.g., Matthew of Aquasparta's *Quaestiones disputatae de ieiunio*), as was reviewing scholarly works written by others, to which last occupation he brought all the resources of his considerable learning (e.g., his review of *The Discursive Power*, by George P. Klubertanz, S.J., in *Franciscan Studies*, 1953).

One of the ways that Father Brady put his learning at the services of a public larger than that of an enclosed scholarly world was by writing for widely used reference works, those volumes on the library shelf that so beautifully bridge the gap between a

specialized world of higher learning and the scholar from other fields or the intelligent inquirer seeking authoritative answers to his request for information and understanding. Thus we find 33 articles of his in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, *Dictionnaire de spiritualité d'ascétique, et de mystique*, as well as *New Catholic Encyclopedia*—22 articles for this last, on Franciscan topics, naturally, including the one on St. Bonaventure.

What we have indicated about his generosity in sharing his learning through his writings for reference works relates not merely to the readership of these works but also to their editors, who were glad to have such cooperation, without which such great projects perish. There are prominent scholars whose bibliographies exhibit no such magnanimous spirit of cooperation as almost calls out from the list of Father Brady's works, and not merely from those items relating to reference works, but also from his contributions to periodicals, projects, and *Festschriften*, as well as his translations, already mentioned.

This volume of studies, with a Foreword by the eminent Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the . . . Clergy, Cardinal John Wright, with its main topics numbering 15 and its authors more than twenty, reflects the broad range of Father Brady's interests, as well as the focuses of his concentration. The first essay is on Scotus and the history of the editing of the critical edition of

Scotus's works, an extremely interesting account (in Italian) of the editing project within its historical context of politics and personalities. The author, Carlo Balic, is well known to all the scholars in the field of Mariology. The last essay is on the priest and scholarly witness, by Father Donald W. Wuerl, whose Catholic writings so frequently grace the pages of *L'Osservatore Romano*.

In between is a broad spectrum of scholars—ranging over a wide variety of specializations as well as geographical locations and languages: Peter John Olivi to Mary of the Passion; Rome, Italy to Sewanee, Tennessee; English through Italian, French, German, and Spanish. The frontpiece is a good character study of Father Brady, photographed by the Dominican B. Berthelot, and the epilogue is a brief encomium of scholarship by the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin—fraternal salutes coming and going from religious scholars. This work, Theology Series No. 6, is a fine addition to the Franciscan Institute Publications.

**The Gospel according to John: A Theological Commentary.** By PHEME PERKINS. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978. Pp. xvi-251, incl. bibliography. Cloth, \$7.95.

*Reviewed by Father Cassian F. Corcoran, O.F.M., L.S.S., S.T.D., Assistant Director of Formation at Holy Name College, Washington, DC, and*



*Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Washington Theological Union.*

This is a fascinating commentary on the Fourth Gospel. Its style is clear and engaging. Its "aim is to help Christians of today appreciate the exciting and creative dimensions of the Evangelist as theologian by showing how he worked with his tradition" (p. xi). Each chapter scrutinizes Johannine concepts as they may have been understood by a Hellenistic, a Jewish, and a Christian mind. To come to an understanding and a theological appreciation of John's use of the concept *Word (Logos)*, to cite an example, readers are brought into contact with such documents as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, the Old Testament, and current scholarship. The authoress illustrates how John grappled with theological as well as philosophical sources in his effort to articulate the revelation of God through the person of Jesus. Anyone interested in Scripture and unfamiliar with the literary activity of the early Church should find the lucid insights of this book intriguing. The impressive references to non-biblical ancient writings (p. vii) as well as the many references to early Christian writings (p. viii) add to the quality of scholar-

ship. The study of the twelfth chapter of John swarms with comments on parallel references in the Synoptic tradition. In this way, one sees how John, although he is aware of other traditions in the early Church, takes his own position and proves himself to be a theologian in his own right and presents his personal theological understanding of the person and revelation of Jesus.

I would recommend this book very highly to anyone who is looking for an enrichment of his insight into the Fourth Gospel in the light of contemporary scholarship. There are sections, such as the treatment on the Bread of Life discourse, where the theme of wisdom could have been incorporated into the discussion. A consideration of bread as a symbol, moreover, would have enhanced this chapter. The author, however, has a control and excellent insight into current Johannine scholarship. She presents the fruit of her studies in a well balanced, appealing, and clear manner for any interested serious reader. The annotated bibliography at the conclusion to this commentary suggests several books for anyone who may be interested in studying the Fourth Gospel at a more scientific level.



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## BOOKS RECEIVED

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## COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for our June issue have been drawn by Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C., of St. Anthony's Novitiate, Riverton, Illinois.