332 EXPLANATI OF RULE OF THIRD ORDER REG

is more, it often dt so one away from God and provokes disco jealousy among m. For this reason, the words of the cond article, let all thin , be done in charity, reminds us that no should a supernatival motive transform all that we do, but our work we strive is avoid the strife and discontent that mare conduct of the Cov hithians and caused Paul first to pen these Francis intended VAt his children be apostles of peace, not flict. For this reason, especially, he desired that his first for in putting themse gives in the service of others shun all positi distinction that mile t arouse envy or dissension. Nevertheless, nature being what hit is, it is not always possible for a religi avoid provoking opposition to his good works. For that reason Rule goes on to post out that human likes and dislikes show deter us from doit the work of God. If I were still trying to men, wrote Paul (shal. 1, 10), I should not be the servant of Like Paul's, ours bould be a supernatural motive so that in ever we do we land only for His honor and glory. St. Bonaventure U iversity Fr. Allan B. Wolter, Q

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As I am the hreator of all that lives and as I preserve we have made, I will and command you to love and reverence creatures for love of Me, judging and despising none of them in heart, and showing in neither disgust nor displeasure toward any no matter who it.

Christ to Margaret of Con



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The CORD, a monthly magazine specifically devoted to Franciscan Spirituality, is published under the sponsorship of the Franciscan Educational Conference by The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., New York. Managing Editor: Columban Duffy, O. F. M., Christ the King Seminary; Editor: Philotheus Boehner, O. F. M., Franciscan Institute; Assistant Editor: Sr. Francis, S. M. I. C., Paterson, N.J.; Consulting Editor: Denis Gallagher, O. F. M. Conv., Albany, N.Y. Annual subscription, \$2.00. Entered as second class matter on November 25, 1950, at St. Bonaventure P. O., New York, under Act of March 3, 1879. All communications, whether of a business or a literary nature, should be addressed to The CORD, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure P. O., New York. Cum permissus superiorum.

Vol 3 no 12 Dec 1953

CHRISTMAS CAROL

Mary sang like falling snow And loved like violins At the wedding of love and sorrow In Bethlehem.

Angels crashed bewildered skies And stars blazed into hymns, But Mary looked in Jesus' eyes In Bethlehem.

The night got down upon its knees, The moon with wonder dimmed When Mary laid her Jesus down In Bethlehem.

And in the bright and noisy inn,
The keeper's heart was grim;
For Mary's face burned in his heart
In Bethlehem.

Now all love has a wound on it; But joy with tears can limn Since the wedding of love and sorrow In Bethlehem.

Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Roswell, New Mexico

Sr. Mary Francis, P.

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

A heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness (Col. 3, 12)

Noble by birth, said Pope Alexander IV in canonizing Saint Clare, she was more noble by grace and by her manner of life. There was nothing harsh or rude, nothing repelling about the Lady Clare even in the midst of poverty and seclusion. Rather, all the high ideals of Christian womanhood shone forth in her. Especially did she have that gentle dignity combined with deep humility which makes for a true nobility that expresses itself in reverence and courtesy and care for others.

One is conscious of her graciousness throughout her Letters, her courtesy in the salutations used for Blessed Agnes, her tenderness in the blessing she sent her. The words of her Rule and Testament give voice to her solicitude for all the Sisters, from the Abbess to the lowliest postulant. Her thoughtfulness and gentleness (as well as her sternness when deserved) echo through the testimony of her nuns and in the pages of Celano's Legend. In this, Clare is the feminine counterpart of the noble and courteous Francis, who even before he was called to the way of the Gospel was known for his gentleness, gaiety, and reverence. Was not cortesia the sum of all the virtues of a knight, a nobleman; cortesia, but half-translated by "courtesy," courtliness, the pattern of chivalry, the code of honor of the Christian noble?

When Francis and Clare were called by God to a new and higher life, he to become the knight of Christ the King and His standard-bearer through the Stigmata, she to be "the new captain of woman-kind", "princess of the poor and duchess of the humble", they lost none of their natural feeling of reverence and courtesy, their inborn gentleness and nobility. Instead, these natural good qualities were given new life, a new foundation, and became marks they would pass on to us.

The Bases of Reverence and Courtesy

The immediate and more direct basis of such holy reverer and gentle courtesy is revealed by Clare when as "the most low and unworthy handmaid of Christ and servant of the Poor Ladishe wrote to Blessed Agnes as to "her Lady most revered in Chr Sister and Spouse of the Most High King of Heaven." It is in true estimation of our own worth and that of others before God twe shall find the foundation of reverence. "What a man is before God, that he is and nothing more" (St. Francis, Adm. 20). We we are truly before God will make us humble, and should make wish to be "simple and subject to all"; what others are, will make us reverence them. In humility, says St. Paul, let each regard others as his superiors, each looking not to his own interests but those of others (Phil. 2, 4).

Franciscan reverence, nay Christian reverence, concerned to marily of course with God and the things of God, extends not on to rational beings, but to all creation. Its broader basis, motivand inspiration therefore is the presence of God, the mark of God in all things. The whole wide world is God's handiwork. It is God house. It is God's temple. Francis could find God everywhere, all creatures are the manifestation of the power, wisdom, and god ness of our Heavenly Father. Therefore all creatures, both greated small, must be reverenced for God; and we must be courted and gentle to all.

If other spiritual leaders, especially earlier than Francis, preferred to avoid the world as turning them from God, or wou almost condemn the material, the corporeal, as an impediment sanctity, not so the Poverello. True, Brother Body must be called and treated as Brother Ass, for it is "the enemy" and must be ke captive and wisely guarded (Adm. 10). Yet, "in what high position has not God placed you, O man, since He created and formed you to the image of His beloved Son in your body, and to His own like ness in your soul!" (Adm. 5) And that the good God has become Man and walked this earth; that in preparation for His coming H

readied a worthy dwelling in the body and soul of the Immaculate Virgin, and after His death carried our human nature to the throne of God, makes of this world the Temple of the Incarnate Word.

The earth is the Lord's...

Francis, then, could never have been satisfied with the poet who bade men look up through nature to nature's God. He would look at nature, the lowly and humble worm as well as the great and awe-inspiring heavens, and there as in a mirror see not nature's God but his loving Father. Though here below he was a pilgrim hastening to the Absolute, the world itself and all it contained offered him no little help along the way. "It was at once the battle-ground with the princes of darkness and the clear mirror of the Goodness of God. In what was beautiful he saw and knew the Most Beautiful; and all good things cried out to him: He who made us is Best of all. For they were His footprint, and showed the Beloved everywhere. Of all things, then, Francis made himself a ladder to reach to the throne' of his Heavenly Father (II Cel. 165).

We scarce need dwell on this sacramentalism of Saint Francis, so well is it known to us. All things indeed to him were sacraments, so to speak, of God: outward signs of an inward grace, external manifestations of the Creator and Father of all. But, if it is known to us, do we see its place in our lives and therefore show ourselves reverent and courteous to all creatures? Do we fall into a rhapsody over Francis the lover of nature—and fail to see rather Francis the lover of God who found his Love, his Beloved, mirrored in all things? And if we do understand, do we with him sing, in thought and action as well as in word, the Canticle of creatures, or more properly the Praise of the Creator through all His creatures? Do thing lead us to God or away from Him?

Unfortunately, Jansenism still has its influence in many a child of Francis. We are hastening to God; therefore we think we must put blinders on our eyes lest we look at the world as we hasten through it! Yet, often we are passing by the very things which led Francis to God. Is there a superior today who would admonish his or her subjects to praise the Creator for every leaf and flower they saw, to praise their Maker whenever they saw any human being or any other creature? Clare did that! Do we think it more perfect, more ascetic, to refuse to smell a flower rather than let its sweetness waft us to the eternal sweetness of God? Did we ever hear that Francis bade the gardener plant a plot of flowers along with his vegetables, that their beauty might preach to us the loveliness of God's great Beauty (II Cel. 165); or that he preached to flowers as well as to birds (I Cel. 81)? All these things led him to God "from whom (as he said so often) is every good", because, as Celano gives us his secret, that Fountain of all goodness who will be all in all in the life to come (I Cor. 15, 28) even now worketh all things in all (I Cor. 12, 6), and so shone forth to the Saint in all the works of His hand

If we have lost that spiritual sight, then more than likely we are blind also to the role of things as symbols of the God-man. Of all irrational creatures, Francis loved and honored those above all which had especially in Sacred Scripture some allegorical likeness to Christ, the lamb, the lowly worm, even the rock in the road. With the Church he could and did find the marks of God and of His Christ in the symbolic meaning of her vestments, and saw in his own habit the livery of Christ, in books the reflection of God's wisdom—even copies of the pagan classics he handled reverently, for what good might be in them belonged to God. (So surely he would have thought of Juvenal's word: Maxima debetur puero reverentia: The greatest reverence must be given the child.)

Would not a corresponding sense of God's presence everywhere induce in us a greater feeling of reverence, for example in the things conceded for our use; and show us how to go to God from and through all creatures?

...and the fulness thereof (Ps. 23, 1)

If Francis so loved and reverenced the lowly creatures of God and saluted them as brethren, how much more did he not show love

and courtesy to those who were the image of God, his fellow men? He was no friend of Christ, he said, if he did not embrace in love all for whom Christ died. And so as he went through the world as the herald of the Great King, the knight-errant of Assisi, his way was marked by the same and even greater courtesy, gentleness, and reverence that had marked his love for the little creatures. Is not the same implied of Clare when she is praised as "the vessel of humility, the essence of kindness, the strength of patience, the bond of peace and source of loving unity in her flock: meek in word, gentle in deed, lovable and beloved in all things"? (Bull, n. 14, p. 107)

Reverence, courtesy, gentleness, urbanity, are as important for the Franciscan of the twentieth century as they were for Francis and Clare and the ancient friars in the dying world of chivalry. They are far more important than a veneer of culture and gentility that goes by the name of politeness or etiquette; more important because deeper, and rooted in a supernatural as well as natural basis, a supernatural vision of the world as the house of God, and of men as the creatures and images of God and actual or potential members of Christ.

That God and the things of God are the first objects of our reverence and courtesy goes without saying. What a sense of awe Francis ever manifested in the face of God; what a feeling of decorum and delicacy he had for the house of God and all things therein; what reverence and devotion in the Divine Office and in assistance at Mass. Here, however, we would rather emphasize his outstanding reverence for the priests of God "I wish to fear, love and honor them. . and I do not wish to consider sin in them, because I discern the Son of God in them." How beautiful was the courtesy he showed them on all occasions, and revealed likewise in his words to those Friars who were priests (Epist. II). Religious, whether priests or not, have need of such reverence, for too easily can they short-sightedly see only the human side. Would that we too with the vision of faith might always discern in them the Son of God.

To others likewise whom the Friars would meet in their apostolate they are expressly bidden to show such virtues as corteste mands: "Let them be gentle, peace-making, and modest, meek and humble, and speak uprightly to all (i.e, explains St. Bonaventure, give every man the reverence due him)" (Rule II, 3). Wherever they are, "let all who come to them be received kindly, whether friend or foe, thief or robber" (Rule I, 7; Fioretti, 26). In such a spirit of reverence and gentle courtesy, they should rejoice to be among the poor and the lowly, the sick and the leper and the beggar by the wayside (I, 9); for these indeed when lowlier than ourselver are a greater reflection of Christ!

But above all, may all of us, everyone who calls himself or herself a Franciscan, fulfill these words: "Wherever the Friars are and in whatever place they may meet one another, let them spiritually and diligently (or, perhaps we should say: in the Spirit of God and in all love) show reverence and honor to one another without murmuring" (Rule I, 7). Yes, let our reverence and courtesy, our kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, start with one another! It will simply be Christ loving Christ!

Could you imagine the courteous Francis or the gentle Clare laughing at the foibles and faux pas of those whom in reverence and courtesy they called Brother or Sister in God? Would they gossip or murmur, slander or detract? Nay, "blessed is the Friar who would love and fear (i.e., reverence) his brother when the latter is far from him as much as when he may be with him; and who would not say anything behind his back that he could not say to his face and still preserve charity" (Adm. 25). Do boorishness, rudeness, crudity, form part of our hidden family life, though to the world we seem so suave and sweet? Rather, brotherly love must be the soul of our community life, and it is all the better, says Saint Bonaventure, when it is mixed with reverence: Ipse amor aliquo modo suavior sentitur cum reverentia mixtus!

These days of Advent are full of joy for us as we close the seventh centenary of the Lady Saint Clare and at the happy command of Pope Pius XII inaugurate a Marian Year. Our hearts and our voices are anticipating and preparing for the Feast of Feasts, the Birthday of our Brother. Clare, Mary, the Christ-Child: With the

poet (Belloc) may we not see here Three Pictures on the wall: "And courtesy was in them all!"

"Of Courtesy, it is much less
Than Courage of Heart or Holiness,
Yet in my Walks it seems to me
That the grace of God is in Courtesy."

Detroit, Michigan

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O. F. M.



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

of the Most Reverend Fr. Augustine Sepinski, Minister General of the entire Order of Friars Minor, on the occasion of the seventicentenary of the devout death of holy mother Clare of Assisi.

Frater Augustine Sepinski, of the Strasbourg Province of Sepaschal in France, Minister General of the entire Order of Friant Minor, and humble servant in the Lord: to the Very Reverent Ministers and Commissaries Provincial, Superiors of the Missions Fathers and Brothers of our Order, Sisters of the Second Order Brothers and Sisters of the Third Order Regular and Secular, is whatsoever way our subjects,

Peace and the Seraphic Blessing.

Most beloved sons and daughters in St. Francis:

That splendor of life-giving and seraphic light with which "the clear renown of Holy Clare so marvellously filled the whole world" now blazes forth with even greater brilliance. It is the occasion of the seventh centenary of your holy mother's joyful entrance interpretation.

Anyone who has been following the events which were commenced so fervently in Europe and America at the beginning of this year could justly make his own the words of an ancient verse.

"As a sign of yet unseen clarity
Does Holy Clare shine forth;
As the star of a new magnitude
Does there appear this brilliant light of sanctity." 2

Yes, there have passed seven centuries since that day of Augus 11, 1253, when Sister Death embraced the virgin of Assisi in a since cell near the Church of St. Damian. It was in this church that the

First Antiphon, I Vespers.
 Chevaller, Repertorium Hymnorum, 12336.

Seraphic Founder of the Minorite Family had received from Christ Crucified the command to repair the tottering house of God; it was to this place also, as to a well fortified citadel of holy poverty, that he led Clare, the little plant, chosen and devout, and, with her, the first Poor Ladies.

At Assisi there is now a magnificent basilica built around the tomb of Clare where her devoted daughters keep faithful watch. It was here on January 11, 1953, that we, in company with the Ministers General of the other Franciscan families, presided at the ceremonies which inaugurated the jubilee solemnities. We were happy to use this joyful occasion to deliver a radio message and thus recall the event to the minds of all who were present either in person or in spirit at that festive celebration. ³

In a short while we shall celebrate the anniversary of the day on which "Clare entered heaven in the company of virgins," 4 and we feel bound by our office to speak to our dearly beloved sons and daughters of the First, Second, and Third Orders, both Regular and Secular. We would like to speak more at length about this serene and unspotted mirror.

When, as you will recall, we gave our fatherly greetings and New Year's message last Christmas, we entertained great hopes that Holy Mother Clare's return in spirit, occasioned by this year's remembrance, would strengthen our lives with the piety of the seraphic spirit. Resplendent in her glorious life as the singular and most faithful interpreter of the holy Patriarch of the poor, she encourages us to walk in his footsteps. Fashioned from the depths of her soul into a model for the seraphic flock, she admonishes us to seek out his sweet odor and to do all things in imitation of her shining example which has so glowed throughout the ages. She appears in this bright year of jubilee nearer and more glorious than light itself.

In recalling the virtues of such a mother, we are only too pleased to borrow the very words of the Supreme Pontiff, Alexander IV. In his Bull of her canonization he thus expressively extolled the

⁸ Acta Minorum, vol. 72 (1953), pp. 24-25; cf. ibid., pp. 92-93.
4 First Antiphon, Lauds.

Virgin of Assisi: "She shed light while yet in the world, while in religion she shone above others. In her father's house she was like a little ray, but in the cloister like the brilliance of lightning. In life she shone to a few, after death she shines on the whole world. On earth she was a clear light, now in heaven she is a brilliant sun." This sublime encomium coming from the lips of Christ's Vicar only confirms that prophetical voice which, according to Thomas of Celano, Clare's devout mother heard shortly before the birth of her child: "Fear not, woman, for you shall bring forth without danger a light which shall greatly illumine the world."

She Shone Forth While In The World

From her early years and throughout adolescence Clare gave ample proof of that splendor of eminent sanctity whose rays, growing greater day by day, she was to send forth in abundance from her monastery of St. Damian for forty-two years. Hiding like a silver winged dove within the hidden recesses of this cloister, Clare made of herself an altar on which she continually offered the perfect and entire sacrifice of herself to her dearest heavenly Bridegroom, Christ Jesus.

She came from a noble family of Assisi: her father, Favaronium of Offreducci, was of the nobility; her mother, the Lady Hortulana was not only of noble birth, but was very pious as well. In supports of her piety, consider that she was burdened by the duties and cares of a wife and mother. And yet she allowed no sacrifice or danger to deter her from making devout pilgrimages to Palestine's Hold Places across the sea, to the shrine of St. Michael at Monte Gargand and to the Tombs of the Apostles at Rome.

Her mother's example and instruction helped Clare to advance in wisdom and in age. Thomas of Celano tells us a few things about this girl whom heaven had already chosen: she was constant in the practice of holy prayer; she gave alms willingly to the poor and

6 Celano, Legend of St. Clare, chap. I; ed. cit., p. 20.

did much to satisfy their needs; she denied her own frail body of delicate foods so that she might feed the orphans. As far as her spiritual life was concerned, she nourished it with constant reading of Scripture and the lives of the Saints. She rarely permitted herself any luxury and was very careful not to attach her heart to the wealth which her family possessed. Like a pure vessel, she spread the sweet perfume of spotless virginity. Her way of life was much different from that led by others of her own age. It was a small, growing beacon light for those who walked in darkness; later, it would brighten up the whole world. Those were the virtues that she practiced in her father's home; those were the first fruits of her spiritual life, and her first experiences in the realm of sanctity. All this gladdened the heart of her good mother Hortulana. Both she and her husband wished the happiest of futures for their daughter and were anxious that she be betrothed to some very noble suitor. Hortulana was a God-fearing woman and would never interfere with the designs of the Heavenly Bridegroom and the constant workings of unseen grace. Thus, without realizing it, her maternal care furthered the plans which the Ever-Provident Lover of Virgins had prepared for Clare.

In this manner did Clare, in the privacy of her father's house, strive to please Christ, and by intense good will and serious work, run quickly along the way which led her to Jesus, her Spouse. It was only natural, then, that she should visit often the Cathedral of St. Rufinus nearby, and here it was that she heard St. Francis preach. This sermon of Francis served to light the way for the hesitant steps of the virgin, and was the occasion which the Father of Mercies used to quicken her eager journey towards her bridegroom.

And now, dearly beloved sons and daughters, we advise you to consider seriously the calling of St. Clare. It is true that even from childhood she had accustomed herself to live with God. She disciplined her tender body with a hairshirt and she cherished no desire for the things of the world. But remember that she had no little experience in the bitter warfare, the continuous struggle and contradictions of all kinds which block the way of all who wish to lead a devout life. There were allurements towards a happy life in

N. 3; in Legend and Writings of St. Clare (Fran. Institute, 1953), p. 101; all references have been changed to this edition.

the world; before her mind there arose images of a possible marriage which her more than ordinarily favorable circumstances and beauty augured fortunate and favorable. But in spite of the tossing waves of a tempest-ridden heart, the valiant virgin did not sink. She merely strengthened her trust in God and fought the harder. Unpleasant work conquers all things because hardship calls for a struggle both interior and exterior, and this struggle in turn presupposes virtue as its underlying support.

Enlightened by the example and teachings of the blessed Francis; she came to realize what is meant by the true life and the true way of life. Hence there was no doubt or obstacle to hold back this dove from taking flight. Once she had penetrated fully the logic of her Seraphic Father, she became an exponent and industrious companion of his endeavors to restore the falling house of God. She showed herself a wise leader in bringing into being the militia of women which Francis had conceived in his mind.

You must therefore look for the beginnings of Clare's admirable work within the privacy of her ancestral home. It was from here as from a solid piece of rock, that there flew off that small spark which, growing constantly and becoming brighter and more resplendent down through the ages, has drawn in its wake countless virgins to serve Christ their King in the spirit of a virginal humility purified by continual self-abnegation.

She Shone With Greater Brilliance In The Religious Life

Memorable in the life of St. Clare was Palm Sunday, March 27, 1211. It was on this day that as a bride adorned to meet her bridegroom she went to St. Rufinus' Cathedral to receive from the hands of Assisi's Bishop the blessed palm and to implore of the Divine Guest in the tabernacle the strength necessary to carry out her resolve of leaving the world and seeking the better things to which St. Francis had summoned her. After receiving courage from the prayers which she poured forth to God, she returned home. "On the following night she set about to fulfill the Saint's command, and undertook in good companionship her long-desired flight... Thus she

abandoned home, city and kinsfolk, and hastened to Saint Mary of the Porziuncola. There the Friars who were keeping vigil at the little altar of God received the virgin Clare with lighted torches." 7 little altar of the altar of the ever-blessed Mary, the Queen of the In front of the altar of the ever-blessed Mary, the Queen of the Angels, she espoused herself to Christ and exchanged her splendid womanly attire for the sackcloth of penance. She allowed her golden womanly attire for the sackcloth of penance. She allowed her golden hair to be cut off, and then covered her head with the veil of humihair to be cut off, and then covered her head with the veil of had combefore our Blessed Father Francis to whose counsel she chosen as mitted herself entirely, and whom, after God, she had that the the guide for her spiritual journey. "Nor was it fitting that the Order of virginity raised up in the evening of time should come Order of virginity raised up in the evening of time should come to flower elsewhere than in the sanctuary of her who, first and most worthy of all, was alone a mother and a virgin." 8

The ensuing ages have marveled rightly at this shining example of staunch will and faithful cooperation with divine grace found in a girl who had not yet reached her eighteenth birthday and who was enticed on all side by the allurements of the world. And yet what she did was only the first step of the arduous upward fourney toward the final embrace of her Spouse. There were battles to win and more severe hardships to endure. Everyone knows how her parents tried to dissuade her from this lowly have her by their entreaties, promises and threats. But Our Lord gave her strength. Clare overcame all these various difficulties and was faithful to the advice of blessed Francis; she took flight to other soul of St. Damian, "where, as it were, she fixed the anchor of the on solid ground...nor did she waver or hesitate because of the straitness of the place or shrink back because of its lone the form this small and holy retreat she served Christ most faithfully for fortytwo years; she brought into being her company of virgins; she instituted the Order of Poor Ladies. She strove to keep alive that flame which she had received from the hands of St. Francis; with care she fed it and made it grow on the oil of holy prayer, devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, love of poverty, and continual self-immolation

⁷ lbid., chap. IV, p. 23.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., chap V, p. 24.

in union with Christ Crucified. She spread abroad the perfume her sanctity, for her younger sisters came to join her, and final even her mother Hortulana. It was as though her entire family he come together again within the rough walls of St. Damian's.

In The Cloister A Brilliant Sun

"This light was confiined within a convent cell, yet spread self through the wide world. It was kept within, yet it stream forth without. For though Clare was hidden, her life was known all. Though Clare was silent, her fame cried out. Though Clare we enclosed in her cell, she was preached to men in all the cities. Litt wonder indeed that a light so burning and shining could not hidden but would break forth and illuminate the house of the Lord." 10

This is so true. For when we pause to consider her virtues, we see that surely they were a real sermon—a sermon all the more convincing because it was joined with humility, solitude, and silence. Reflect on her virtues: the ardent and unbroken faith which shapprofessed by her actions; her zeal to make herself like the suffering Christ through continual prayer and perfect adherence to the Diving Will, through the spirit of charity towards her sisters and the poor and by the practice of holy and imperturbable joy. All these things she used as so many adornments for her martyrdom which was a life of poverty and privation.

Every day she took pains to please the Spouse whom she had chosen. She was ever careful to observe the things which she had freely promised at OurLady of the Angels' on the night of her consecration. To imitate the Crucified and to follow in the steps of her Father Francis was her task. She was deeply anxious lest she lose her privilege of poverty, and she was devoted to the Blessed Eucharist. These virtues and others like them make Clare's life a herald shouting far and wide. You could say that her virtues were a poem relating with eloquence the life-story of this admirable heroine. "Ever since I have known the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through His

10 "Bull of Canonization", loc. cit., p. 105-106.

servant Francis, no suffering has troubled me, no penance had been hard, no sickness too arduous." ¹¹ This testimony of a clear and tranquil conscience was given at the hour of her death when her Spouse was at hand, and it is the best possible praise for the virtues of this virgin who was truly brighter than light. What more is there to say of her faith, of her love, of her great trust? When the Saracens were scaling the walls of St. Damian's, the nuns lost courage; they trembled with fear and began to cry and scream. But Clare, with fearless heart, firmly took hold of the Blessed Sacrament, put the enemy to flight, and restored peace to the entire city. Because of this action, she merited to hear the Lord Jesus Himself say in words full of peace and protection, "I shall guard you always." ¹²

A Serene And Unspotted Mirror

With the death of St. Francis, their great leader, the Friars felt themselves orphaned. Desirous of seeing the image of their Father even after his death, they would joyfully go to Saint Damian's to visit their holy Mother Clare, because she was the most authentic replica of the Holy Patriarch's image, and was able to tell them exactly what Francis would wish in any circumstance.

The lapse of seven hundred years has not lessened this marvellous prerogative of St. Clare; rather it has increased it. On the occasion of her seventh centenary, this holy Mother has come to us to show us the portrait, to speak the voice, and to interpret the will of Our Holy Father Francis. When he was troubled with doubts or difficulties, he would seek often the prayers of the virgin Clare and ask for her counsel and advice.

Let us, then, be imitators of our Father and have recourse to our Mother Clare, for we too are troubled with cares. Terrible wars surround us and difficulties are on the increase. Most beloved sons and daughters, do not say that a long time has passed—that changes of time and ways of doing things make Clare's example impractical for our age and manner of living. The Gospel is timeless: it fits every century. The countless turns of the calendar and the flight of time are incapable of undermining or destroying the Master's call

¹¹ Celano, op. cit., chap. XXIX, p. 49.

¹² Ibid., chap. XIV, p. 34.

to the state of perfection. Then, too, the voice of Francis who captured the marrow of that Gospel shall never pass away; nor shall there pass away Clare, the perfect echo of such a voice as Francis'. A virgin has returned to whom we may aptly apply this line of poetry: "I shall never completely die; I shall keep on living, made eternally young by praise." 18

We spoke above of Clare's life at home and how she illumined that home with her purity. To her, purity was worth more than any feminine charm or beauty. It was the pearl of great price, and so she desired this treasure and despised all else. Hortulana, her mother, gave her training and example, and cooperated carefully with her daughter's high resolves. This is something which can be applied beneficially to family life even today. Parents should learn to look to the example of Clare and her mother when they hear in their home the voice of the Master calling, "Come, follow me!" Obstacles like rationalization, prejudice, or worldly considerations should not bar the way; there should be no opposition to that divine grace which knocks at the virginal heart's door, inviting her to a heavenly marriage with the Son of God. Insanity is what worldly men called the penitential life of the daughter of Favaronius the noble-borns they disapproved of her intention and used all their powers to carry her back to the world. The same thing happens in our own times men do not honor virginity or the cloistered life; they do not esteem the desire for heavenly things, or the love of poverty or the happen. ness of sacrificing oneself for the love of Christ and mankind. Often when a young woman at home thinks of giving her life to Christian what a war is waged! There is strong opposition and violence; then are the allurements of nice clothes, of shows, books, friends, and parties-and all of this is aimed to destroy in her any longing for better things. You can see, then, how timely is the return of Clare. Among other things, she will make her voice heard especial by young ladies who are considering a life of virginity.

Her voice is all the more opportune in this jubilee celebration sons and most beloved daughters, because it so concerns our own interests: it repeats the voice of Christ's Vicar on earth. About to months ago, Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, in addressing the Horace, Poems, III, 30.

Superiors General of Religious Orders and Institutes of women, lamented the fact that there are some priests and preachers of the divine word who not only devote no effort to praising the consecrated life, but even look on the married state as the only one which can lead to the full perfection of nature and the human personality. He warns them to reflect on what a responsibility they assume before God and His Holy Church whenever they speak or write such an erroneous opinion as this. ¹⁴

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

All of us, therefore, have a serious obligation to implant, to promote, and to foster vocations to the state of virginity. We must do all we can to explain and praise the spiritual and social value of this unknown apostolate in which voluntary victims of divine love labor in the bosom of the Church.

Cloistered nuns talk very little, but their deeds are eloquent arguments for the primacy of the spiritual over the materialistic tendencies of our age. Their hearts are lyres on which they play a constant song of praise to God and make reparation to Him for the indifference of agnostics and the public hostility of so many men who attack the Name of Christ whenever the occasion presents itself. The unceasing prayer that these nuns offer before the altar of the Lord is like so much leaven to vitalize the daily work of the apostles who plant the seeds of the divine word. More than this, the nuns actually make a great contribution toward spreading and preserving the Christian way of life in every land.

We readily agree that the life of a Poor Clare is strict in its great poverty and complete separation, and we admit that such a life is not suitable or bearable for many of our present-day young women. They most certainly hear Our Lord's voice and desire to live with Him by keeping themselves pure and untouched by this world. But God's grace has many facets: if a life with the Poor Ladies is difficult, there are many other different religious institutes which glory in the name and spirituality of St. Francis. These put into practice the advice which St. Clare gave to our Seraphic Father about uniting the life of action and apostolic work with a life of contemplation and prayer. Thus, they share very much in the spirit of St. Clare.

¹⁴ Address of Sept. 14, 1952; A. A. S., vol. 44 (1952), p. 824.

Tender Little Plant Of St. Francis

The life of the blessed Clare is also an incomparable example to each and every soldier who fights beneath the banner of the holy rule of St. Francis in the divisions of the First, Second, or Third Order. The valiant virgin Clare had one constant aim: to put into practice the words of St. Francis, and to use all her strength it following most closely his own footprints.

After all, the basis of the Franciscan life, as of any religious profession, is the gift of self—absolute and without reservation. The concrete expression of this giving is to be found in the rule which one observes; and the perfection of this giving lies in an unchanging attitude of soul which in every action and circumstance constant repeats the generosity with which it made its first self-offering. How Mother Clare did all of this in a more than ordinary way.

She was deeply rooted in the virtue of humility: "She would rather serve than command, and give honor rather than receive it." She guarded her unspotted chastity by constant vigilance and defended it with a special zeal and care through the incessant practic of extreme mortification. Her obedience to the rule of life whice Francis had given her under Our Lord's inspiration was most perfect and exact. Besides this, she kept continual vigils, prayed incessantly, and spent her time practicing charity. Her mind was constantly on God so that, while "her body remained on earth, her sou dwelt in heaven." ¹⁸ Her life, then, was a pilgrimage to God, Whis the final goal of all Christian perfection.

United To The Bread Of Life

Clare's life is truly striking. But there is one virtue in particular which completes and makes all the others one; it is the fresh and unfailing fountain from which she drew all her many graces are gifts: her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. Francis had invite her to "fall in love with the God-Man, Whom love had made man."

She followed Francis' example and with tenderest love dwelt upon each mystery of Our Redeemer's life on earth. But she was concerned most of all with the mystery of the Cross and its perpetual and living reminder, the tabernacle. Clare the virgin frequently made visits to her Jesus hidden beneath the Sacramental Species, and it was from this Eucharistic Bread that she gained the strength which rendered her a staunch Abbess of penitents. "When she was to receive the Body of the Lord, she shed burning tears and would approach with awe, for she feared Him no less in the Sacrament than ruling heaven and earth." ¹⁸ Her devotion towards Him was such that "when at last she was stricken with prolonged illness...with a support at her back, she would work with her hands, making many corporals for the Sacrifice of the Altar." ¹⁹

How should we praise her act of faith in confronting the Saracens with that ebony-encased silver pyx containing the Sacramental Body of Christ? The outstanding devotion to the Eucharist which Our Holy Father Francis and Blessed Mother Clare evinced are applicable to these times of ours when the cult of the Holy Eucharist continues to grow despite the many overwhelming evils and path-obscuring clouds. It has been promoted in many ways and has spread the world over; it has reached its peak in the solemn manifestations of regional, national and international Eucharistic Congresses.

And so with this year's celebration we ardently and hopefully await the much desired return of St. Clare. We call upon her to enkindle in all a love for the Blessed Sacrament and to renew everywhere life with the Eucharistic Christ, for it is He who is the leaven which will move even the most inert of the populace.

With St. Clare's help, assistance at Mass, daily Communion, and frequent visits to the Tabernacle will produce abundant fruits. It is the Eucharist which is the unfailing source of those spiritual energies which give life to the work of the apostolate and conserve carefully the life of grace in the souls of all.

^{15 &}quot;Bull of Canonizat.", n. 13, p. 107.

¹⁷ Second Antiphon, First Nocturn, Matins.

 ¹⁸ Celano, op. cit., chap. XVIII, p. 38.
 19 Bull, n. 16, p. 108.

We take pleasure at this point in recalling what an effective contribution the daughters of St. Clare are making towards the conversion of souls and the honor of the Church. In imitation of their blessed Mother, they take turns, day and night, at perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. They make acts of adoration to the God Who is there present, they make reparation for man's sins and carelessness, and they implore help for the Church.

We commend them for this practice of adoration and reparation, and we hope that this centennial celebration of the death of St. Clare will result in spreading such Eucharistic devotion to an even greater extent in every monastery.

Promotor Of Peace

There are also examples from the life of St. Clare which are very applicable to some aspects of this troubled age in which we live. Take the social question for example.

This "noblest of the poor" reiterates the true doctrine of the brotherhood of Christians. Her family ranked high on the social scale, and she lived in an unfeeling age when the masses of the poor and less fortunate were trodden underfoot by the property owners. But Clare completely disregarded the distinctions placed by such a wall of pride and hate, and she showed no preference for the social status even of her own family. She rose above all class-consciousness and took every person to her heart in that fiery Gospel charity which holds that all men are members of one family, and that the Head of that family is Christ, the Redeemer of all. If there is anything which we must rescue from oblivion in these times, it is the "new commandment" of brotherly love. For our part, we must preach this "command"; we must do all we can to see it practiced by people who differ so much among themselves and in their opinions. This task is ours because we are followers of Francis, the unwavering model of brotherliness and love. It is ours because we take pride in calling ourselves the heralds of the doctrine which the Son of God Himself preached while on earth, and which we claim for our own, as is indicated by our manner of greeting: Pax et Bonum!

Earnest Advocate Of Poverty

Bitter conflicts are destroying the unity which Christ Our Lord restored to human society through His Blood. One of the evident causes of these misunderstandings is the unjust distribution of goods and wealth in a society unprepared to receive them. But everyone knows that the principal and ultimate cause is the unbridled striving after the things of the world, and a growing forgetfulness of heavenly things. How opportune, then, is the return of St. Clare who "valued the glory of the whole world as worthless", and in "refusing to possess what was given her", "sowed the seed of justice." ²⁰ It is precisely her kind of justice that the children of our day clamor for. Clare was intent on storing up treasures only in heaven; "she paid no heed to passing joy for fear of losing the happiness of eternity." ²¹ And this was the one thing which she willed to her daughters: "Never to be unworthy followers of their mother's poverty." ²²

She was very firm in her adherence to the spirit of total renunciation and poverty. Thus it was that she fought hard for her "privilege" against all the advice of men. She kept always in mind the commendation given her by her dying Father Francis: "I beg and counsel all you, my Ladies, ever to live in this life of holiness and poverty." ²³

This heedful virgin rested from defending her position only on her death-bed when she was able to seal with a kiss the pontifical document of Innocent IV which sanctioned her "privilege" of the highest poverty.

²⁰ Office of St. Clare

²¹ Ibid.

²⁸ Rule of St. Clare. VI, n. 3, p. 74.

The words of Christ Our Lord should incite us to follow faithfully these teachings and examples of St. Clare, for He says: Seek ye therefore the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you. 24

We are thoroughly cognizant of the difficulties and the state of affairs which today press in upon many monasteries of cloistered religious, and, for our part, we have followed the daughters of St Clare with heartfelt and fatherly anxiety. We have encouraged them to lift up their hands and eyes to their Spouse, for He it is Who will give them aid. We have stressed the fact that they must renew as every moment their trust in Divine Providence. In all of this, we have called upon the example of Holy Mother Clare, who provides for the necessities of life by manual labor, and even left in her rule a special precept of work.

This is also the sentiment of Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XI as is evident from his recent constitution, Sponsa Christi. In the document he sets down timely and wise norms: he reiterates the law of enclosure and invites monasteries of religious women to take a definite part in the labors of the apostolate; he advocates that even in their monasteries they should establish useful and wisely-regulated projects to meet the various needs of the times. The Vicar of Christian also urges an amalgamation of the monasteries into federation through which they will be better able to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of their lives. If our devoted daughters keep these things in mind and strive to observe them faithfully, they will share in the joy of their holy mother Clare who, in imitation of Francis promised and observed with constancy the "obedience and reverence which she promised "to the Lord Pope Honorius and to his legic mate successors." 25 Finally, the return of St. Clare with these jubil solemnities gives us the long-awaited and auspicious occasion express and strengthen our paternal affection toward our belove daughters of the Second Order. We are therefore happy to rene what our Blessed Father Francis promised the virgin Clare in tellin her that he would assist the Poor Ladies in their spiritual and tem poral affairs. In doing this we hope to strengthen the family bond which our Holy Founders were the first to establish. This is what we, on our side, promise; and we exhort of of you, provincial superiors in particular, as also all our beloved sons and daughters of the First and Third Orders to do your part and treat the devoted Poor Clares with brotherly love and solicitous care. As ample reward, you may expect the protection of St. Clare and the prayerful assistance and good works of our cloistered sisters who help us to fulfill our ministry and who enable all to work out their sanctification.

We have written this letter because the thought of Holy Mother Clare has inspired delightful memories. We were likewise firmly confident that the jubilee remembrance of this virgin would yield abundant fruits for our entire Seraphic family. Such also was the ardent wish of Our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII. ²⁶

Let us therefore earnestly implore St. Clare to teach us how to tread more closely in the footsteps of our Seraphic Patriarch. Let us ask her to intercede for the whole Franciscan family, to come o the aid of Our Holy Mother the Church, to protect the Supreme Pontiff and our Eminent Cardinal Protector, and to hasten the triumph of Christ in His kingdom of justice, love, and peace.

Upon each and every one of our beloved sons and daughters subject to our care we call down the fulness of the blessing of Our Holy Father Francis and Our Holy Mother Clare. Through their intercession may all your attempts after the better gifts yield fruit and profit.

Given at Rome, from our General Curia at St. Mary Mediatrix, on the feast of Corpus Christi, June 4, 1953.

Frater Augustine Sepinski Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor

The Theologians of Santa Barbara (trans.)

26 Letter of May 25, 1953, on the Seventh Centenary of the Death of St. Clare

²⁴ Matt. 6, 33.

²⁵ Rule of St. Clare, I. n. 3, p. 66.

SINGULAR VESSEL OF DEVOTION

Dogmas are not merely determinations of the Church, or truths imposed upon Catholics simply to be held by an act of faith. Dogmas are more. They are formulae in which basic principles of the spiritual life are condensed; they are transpositions, translations, as it were, of religious truths into words and, as such, axioms of our religious life. Consequently, dogmas are not formulated for their own sake, nor simply to provide matter for the speculation of theologians. They are given to the faithful that they may be lived and practiced in that charity which is the fulfillment of Christian life,

There seems to be a danger in modern times of our forgetting the basic and all-penetrating role of Christian dogmas. We are subject to the temptation of leaving a dogma to intellectual faith and our spiritual life to uncontrolled sentimentality. The dogma of the Immaculate Conception seems to be a case in point. We certainly know the truth defined by our holy Mother the Church. We believe it; but for the rest we seem to feel that the dogma expresses at most just another venerable title of the Virgin Mary. This is not the attitude the Church intends for us. Rather, she wishes us to inquire and to search deeply into the rich treasures contained in the dogmatic formula and to make them an active and integral part of our own personal spirituality.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception states in terse theological terms the fact that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the very first moment of her existence, was pre-redeemed from the bondage of original sin through the foreseen merits of Jesus Christ. If we try to translate this formula into Christian life, we find it revealing itself as the example of God's free gift of grace. The Immaculate Conception is a miracle of grace. Grace, transcending natural powers and rights, is in itself a miracle and absolutely incomprehensible.

But the fulness of grace is still more incomprehensible in the supreme and unique miracle of grace realized in the Blessed Virgin. She is "full of grace", wholly and entirely penetrated by grace from the very beginning and for all time and eternity. Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the original stain is not in thee. Only once in the tragic, sin-stained history of human existence was a child of Eve conceived and born free from the taint of the Ancient Serpent, and embraced at the first moment of her being in the love of God: Dominus tecum. Never was it true for her, as it is true for all the rest of Eve's children, that for a time the Lord was not with her. In Mary grace is complete; it reaches its full measure; the love of God finds total fulfillment because it is love without reservation.

Let us try to penetrate more deeply into this mystery of grace. Why was the Lord always with Mary? Of course, because she was the Mother of the Incarnate Word. But why was she chosen for this ineffable dignity? Because of her merits? But no one merits without grace, and in crowning our merits, says Saint Augustine, God crowns His own works. Why then? There is no other answer than that the Lord bestowed upon Mary the plenitude of grace because it pleased Him to do so. His gracious will, His infinite love, embraced the lowliness of His creature. Here our reason comes to a halt, not because it is satisfied, but because it has no right to search further. O man, who art thou to reply to God? Does the object moulded say to him who moulded it: Why hast thou made me thus? (Rom. 9, 20).

God loves all His creatures, and He loves the one more than the other, and He does so because He is good (Lk. 19, 15). The choice of grace is inscrutable. It is for us children of our most loving Father to fall to our knees in adoration, and overwhelmed by our absolutely undeserved gifts of grace and predilection, to give voice to our gratitude in the rapturous cry of Saint Paul: Oh, the depth of the riches of wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments and how unsearchable his ways! (Rom. 11, 33).

In this adoration, thanksgiving, and love, we join the Immaculate Mother of Christ. She leads the choir of the redeemed and

predestined. She knows that she is nothing of herself and everything through the love and grace of God. She has the first duty and the first right to chant the new canticle of the predestined, and from her we too learn to sing: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Because he has regarded the lowliness of his handmaid. For, behold, henceforth all generations call me blessed. Because he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name...(Lk. 1, 46-49).

When God calls a creature, that creature must respond; but freely, not in fear or as a slave. God's call is His love and grace; the creature's answer must be free, humble, and wholly without reservation. This is the meaning of devotion. The word "devotion" come from devovere. Originally it signified to be sworn with body and soul to the gods of the underworld. This meaning has been changed into its opposite, and now it means to be sworn body and soul to God, to belong to God without reservation, to be sacrificed to God to be holy for God. This is devotion in its Christian meaning.

In this sense the Blessed Virgin, in and through the Immaculate Conception, became the Vas insigne devotionis. The evil spirits never had any right or any part in her, as they had, at least for a time, in all of us. From the very first moment of her existence she was the chosen vessel in which the flame of sacrifice burned in holy devotion for the Lord alone. She was with the Lord and the Lord was with her. She belonged entirely to Him. In this most profound and total devotion the Blessed Virgin bowed her head and as handmaid of the Lord accepted His will to become the mother of the Redeemer, and she accepted it with the almost certain possibility of shame in the eyes of the world and anxiety for her future bride groom.

Our Lady surpassed every creature by her privilege of being the Mother of God. But Christ Himself did not praise her for this privilege; He praised her for her devotion. When a certain woman lifted up her voice and said to Him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the breast that nourished thee, the Lord answered: Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it (Lk. 11, 27-28).

We are not able to be what Mary was, a "singular vessel of devotion." We had to be purified from sin by the holy waters of Baptism. But once we are set free from the bondage of Satan, we become the property of the Lord, we are His booty. However, we are not His slaves; we are redeemed and called by Him into freedom, and He expects our response to His call to be given in freedom and humility and charity. In other words, He expects our devotion. In this devotion, if it is perfect, nothing is left to us. We are of no account in our own eyes; only God matters. Then, following the pattern of Mary, we become vessels of devotion in which the flame of devotion is the same for us as it was for Mary. While the Immaculate Virgin said: Be it done unto me according to thy word, we say in the Lord's Prayer: Thy will be done. In this sense, then, we can join Our Lady and become true vessels of devotion if the kingdom of God, His will and His glory, are our deepest interests.

The fact remains, however, that we cannot join Mary in her purity. We are conceived in sin, and we cannot avoid personal sin without such extraordinary grace as was given to the Mother of God. We have to carry on in our misery, and we have to combat our inherent weaknesses. We have to struggle against Powers and Principalities and against our own corrupted nature; inevitably, in this ceaseless warfare waged from within and without, we must frequently suffer severe and disabling wounds. As long as we live upon earth we are exiled children of Eve and we must carry the burden of her disobedience. If we, from the murky depths of our impurity, contemplate the Immaculate Virgin who was not only free from original and actual sin but even from the inclination to sin, we could fall into hopeless shame and despair. Her dazzling brightness cannot be our model, for we are by nature incapable of reaching it. But it can be our ideal. Mary is the realization of such innocence-the first innocence-of such unsullied purity and radiant holiness that, although no model for our second innocence, she is nevertheless a source of strength for us in our struggle. For Mary is our hope, a bright greeting from our eternal homeland where no battles rage, no tears are shed, no uncleanness dwells. On earth we are bound fast in impurity of compromise, but gazing upward at Our Lady's

self-possession, we know that in her victory there will finally be an end to our combat.

It is a well-known human experience that a pure and sainth woman creates an atmosphere of purity and cleanness; it is son irresistible and mysterious power radiating from her. The ideal, the perfect woman, is given to us in Mary; it is her purity and sanctiful that elevates our heart, stimulates our activity, dispels evil desire and inspires hope. For Mary is the mother of fair love, of fear the Lord, and of holy hope. She is indeed our hope—and hope is the virtue of homesickness for the eternal mansions.

St. Bonaventure University Fr. Philotheus Boehner, O. F. I



FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

CHINA:

Is there any relaxation in the persecution of the Church in China? Apparently. At the beginning of May this year, many imprisoned Chinese priests were set at liberty. In a certain small city, over six hundred faithful received Holy Communion on Easter Sunday. In Wuhan, where there are three episcopal sees, three processions were held during the month of May—at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the month. More than forty priests took part in the processions together with three thousand Christians and thousands of pagan spectators. In another city, two foreign priests received official residence permits and are now able—at least theoretically—to set out for their missions. In the famous sanctuary of Zo-se (near Shanghai) forty-five thousand Holy Communions (fifteen hundred daily) were distributed during the month of May. All these things were done openly and without the least trouble or opposition.

But now suddenly there seems to be a reaction. In the little city mentioned above, the names of all who had celebrated Easter were taken by the police. In Hankow, the Peoples' Court was summoned and two missioners were expelled by the "people". In Shanghai several missioners were imprisoned, others placed under house arrest. The Franciscan Procurator in Shanghai was among those imprisoned, while his two assistants were sentenced to house arrest. We can therefore easily believe that the two missioners who received their residence permits may indeed begin their journey—to prison or to exile.

In a certain seminary in China there are at present thirty-seven students in the minor seminary, thirty-three in the major seminary, and twelve Franciscan clerics.

KARACHI:

A new problem has arisen here. Many Catholics from the Province of Pundjab have had to migrate because of the influx of Mohammedan refugees from India. The great majority are migrating to the city of Karachi, where they apply at the mission for work to support their families.

JAPAN:

The Franciscan Fathers at Nagano-Ken have opened a new school, a kindergarten. for four hundred boys and girls.

The mission in Urawa reports that on April 19 five aspirants to the Orientectived the Franciscan habit in the novitiate house there. Father John Ber 1 Provost has been named Master of Novices.

SOUTH AFRICA:

In the Kokstad mission, the Fathers work among a population of whites, blacks, and mixed. The whites, especially those of Netherlandish origin, are fanatical Calvinists and violently hostile to the Catholic Church. Those of English origin are much milder. The law prohibiting the erection of a church or school within three thousand miles of a place where a church or school of another religion already exists is a serious handicap to our missioners.

Marriage between whites and blacks is forbidden by law; almost every form of association—business, commercial, or social—is also prohibited. This applies to all public places—churches, schools, theatres, public conveyances, and the like. It is very difficult to apply Christian social principles in such a society.

In Pretoria the new seminary is flourishing. By a decree of the Propaganda Fide, August 12, 1950, the seminary for the education of priests for the Union of South Africa was entrusted to the Irish Franciscans. Hostility to the seminary is rapidly diminishing because of the work of the Friars themselves and because of the truly excellent results they have already accomplished.

Besides the Father Rector, eight other Franciscan Fathers teach in the seminary. All hold advanced academic degrees. This year there is an enrollment of thirty-two students. Civil and ecclesiastical authorities as well as the clergy and laity hold the work of the Fathers in great esteem. Their fine culture, especially in the humanities, will of necessity bring about a change in the temper and cultural level of the South African clergy. It has been recommended, especially by non-Catholics, that the University should keep in mind the courses taught in the seminary, and should make similar courses obligatory for those seeking academic degrees.

Besides their work in the seminary, the Fathers take part in the spiritual and academic life of the region. They hear the confessions of religious women, give conferences, and during vacation time they direct retreats for priests and religious. One of the Fathers fills the post of chaplain to Catholic students at the University of Pretoria.

BRAZIL:

Recently the Minister Provincial of Saint Anthony's Province, Brazil, visited the mission among the Mundurucu Indians, located far in the interior of the vast Amazon valley. The mission, which is constantly receiving contributions from the Mission Procurators of all the houses of the Province, is developing rapidly. The Provincal reported that the religious life of the mission is flourishing, and the Indians have the greatest confidence in the missioners. Many of the Indians of their own accord come to the mission and wish to remain there, for they see the good example of the Fathers and the Sisters (Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception), and realize that at the mission they can more easily receive religious instruction. The physical development of the mission, however, is progressing very slowly; lack of needed material and help is a great hindrance to the missioners.

Besides working among the Mundurucus, the Fathers also take care of mission outposts along the Tapajoz River, especially in the "Danger Zone," so-called because of the almost unnavigable cataracts through which the Fathers must pass to reach the people dwelling in that region.

Notitiae Franciscanae Missionariae, (III, 7-8, 1953)