II. Our Chinese Martyrs

- 1) Francis Wang, T.O.R. Last year (1952) Reverend Francis Wang, T.O.R., prison. He was born in 1917. Because of the Sino-Japanese War he was unable to his Franciscan vocation, but in 1946 he was ordained to the secular priesthod labored with extraordinary zeal for souls among his own people until his arrest twa ago. Because he had hidden in his house certain persons who were being persecuted. Reds, he was imprisoned, put in chains, and sentenced to hard labor. Although put to every torture, he refused to deny the Faith or to accept Communist doctrinal apparently. After two years of incredibly harsh imprisonment, he was so weaker hard labor that he gave back his soul to his Creator and won the palm of martyrd
- 2) Doctor Peter Tang. While he was still a pagan and a student in the city of chang, Doctor Peter Tang used to make frequent visits to the Catholic Church but out any intention of embracing the Faith. After becoming a doctor he worked in a hin Japan, but after three years he was afflicted with tuberculosis and returned ho 1926 he joined the Communist movement. After the Communists were conquer dispersed, he continued to live in the rectory of the Catholic Church. Upon his returnssionary found him, and two months later, when he was at the point of death, he him. He then asked for Holy Communion, and the fervor and devotion of the man made a deep impression on the Christians. Against all hope he regained his and from then on when he gave himself to the care of the sick he did not neglect souls. With his own money he built and operated two hospitals, and none of the pin these hospitals died without baptism.

Because of jealousy he was falsely accused, but while he was in prison he preach. Faith to his fellow prisoners and baptized the dying. At the time of the Japan vasion he gave the hospitality of his own home to four missionaries, seven Sister eighteen orphans who had been forced to flee from their own mission. He provide all of them out of his own funds.

In 1951 the Communists finally seized all his wealth, and having pressed him for sum of \$28,000,000 in paper money, he was put in prison. He wrote to the mission "Reverend Father, be at ease; never will I accept the new church. Often for many have to remain kneeling before my accusers who continually threaten to kill me. say they will set me at liberty as soon as I pay them the twenty-eight million. Each preach to the prisoners and baptize the dying, and every day I say thirteen rose Doctor Tang tried to borrow money from his friends, and when finally this hugh had been raised he was killed because he would not join the new National Church because he was rich.

3) Peter Liu, Catechist. The Catechist Peter Liu gave a wonderful example of tude while he was in prison. An ex-seminarian, this fervent Catechist labored every. When in 1951 the Communists introduced the new independent National Church, whom they knew to have great prestige among the Christians, was urged in every pway to take over as head of the new church. His firm refusal led him to prison. The fortified himself with continuous prayer. From his prison cell he wrote to the mission. The firm the taken firm counsel: whatever happens, I am prepared to go to death for the of God and in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. I fear nothing because in prison not alone but Jesus Christ will be with me. To me death is glorious. If I have off any of the Fathers or Sisters I ask pardon. Praised be Jesus Christ! Pray for me. Notitiae Franciscanae Missionariae II, (1952)

TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

cause Your tongue of Fire

Iled all my sins by name,
y heart went up in smoke. My favorite dreams
ttled like cinders down my chromium thoughts.
d I fled away to my icy justifications.

twhen Your breath came curving tross my mind in irrefutable gales, It the petals of words blew off my songs; and I sat, afraid, in the stark trees stripped of music, While my reflections bent to a glorious dust.

When Your quite perfect Light
Leaned out of Heaven,
I searched in vain for saving shade, some shadow,
But all my veils went up in a cellophane blaze;
And I dropped down in the center of my blindness.

O Fire and Wind and Light! O sweet Destroyer!
O Brand and Gale and Torch! O perfect Sword
Wounding all subterfuge to the quick of candor!
I said: I will go and die in my confusion.

And then the Everlasting Arms, world-banding, Dwindled to fit my heart. Stripped and alone Now, this exquisite moment, I discover My one pure claim on Love whose final Name After the Flame and Storm and white Light gleaming Is: Father of all the poor, Father of me.

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

Sr. Mary Francis, P. C.

Voz 35 May 1952

OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Poverty: The Root of Perfection

The symbolism of the Middle Ages is not always familiar to modern practical mind. But when Thomas of Celano salutes the Clare as the Footprint of the Mother of God, a moment's thought reveal the deep implications of such an expression. A footprint sign that someone has passed that way, and from the footprint gather some knowledge of that person. Our Lady had walked that of perfection, following the path of her Son in her womanly fast and Clare, because she reflected the virtues of Mary, is like a mat footprint which her Mother and ours has left behind. Through the virtues of Mary were revealed once more to the world, and desire was aroused in human hearts to walk the path of Mary in imit of her perfections.

Of all the virtues of Our Lady, however, the one that seems si out by Clare for imitation was her poverty. Certainly her virginal p obedience and submission, kindliness and love of neighbor, we reflected in the Lady Clare. Yet, from first to last, poverty seet hold the primacy. Espoused to Christ before the poor altar of Lady of the Angels, Clare laid hold not only of the Poor Christ of the Poor Virgin Mother as well. Whenever poverty is mention is to include the poverty of Mary. For here was "the little flock which Lord and Father had begotten in His Church by the word and ex of the blessed Father Francis, who followed the poverty and hu of His beloved Son and of the glorious Virgin, His Mother" (Tes The Rule opens with Cardinal Rainaldo's approval of Clare's de follow Christ and Mary; it closes with the firm purpose of obs "the poverty and humility of Our Lord Jesus Christ and of Hi holy Mother." To Blessed Agnes, Clare writes that she may carry spiritually as Mary carried Him in her body, "if thou followest th steps of her humility and especially of her poverty" (Ep. III, 3).

Material Poverty

Undoubtedly, in Clare's mind as in our own, this poverty was first all in material things. Only then would the community be pleasing God when it was rich in poverty; only when fortified by the strong ard of poverty would it stand firm. That she might continue as she d begun, she obtained from Innocent III and Gregory IX the Privie of Seraphic Poverty. Her model was truly the Holy Family, for "she norted the Sisters to be conformed in their little nest of poverty to the or Christ whom His poor little Mother had laid as a Babe in the row manger." Contemplation of Bethlehem and Nazareth, perhaps, her to forbid more land than was necessary, while "for the love of all-holy and most dear Babe . . . and of His most holy Mother" begged the Sisters to wear only poor garments.

The material poverty of Christ in His birth, life and death, and at of our Lady, became the traditional motive of the Franciscan der in accepting privation of material possessions. Never poverty its own sake, as an end in itself; but poverty as part and parcel of our informity to Christ and our imitation of Him: that poverty, as Saint bnaventure says, which is begotten of justice. It must be a poverty tae est cum cruce: which is part of the Cross, and has conjoined to it is Gospel-life of penance, holiness, simplicity, humility and all kindness: this is the poverty which like the furnace of the Three Children Dan. 3, 92) purges and proves the elect of God.

That Franciscan poverty, and all voluntary poverty indeed, finds explanation only within the imitation of Christ and Mary, points a truth that is often underestimated in the spiritual life: that poverty spirit is more basic than actual material poverty. The latter, indeed, asually first in point of time; we learn and practice external poverty its accompanying spirit of poverty from the days of our novitiate. It later do we come to see, by the grace of God, that poverty of it is more fundamental, more important and far-reaching in its cts. External poverty, which is at once the safeguard and the fruit interior poverty, will differ from age to age, and even from person erson. (We leave aside the question of community poverty regulated the Rule, etc.). All must truly be pilgrims and strangers in this world, ing the Lord in material poverty and, like pilgrims hastening to homeland, using material things as though they belonged to some-

one else. Yet the tasks we are given, the duties obedience lays will of necessity vary our own material use of things. Much also in Franciscan tradition, to the zeal of the individual, provided the or she does not become singular or a critical zealot thereby. In material poverty is not the only thing that really matters despit Spiritualists and the Joachimites and the modern non-Fran interpretation of Franciscanism.

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The Primacy of Poverty of Spirit

In the following of Christ, as our former Conference showed, in imitation, in thought, heart and will, must precede and inspir external imitation. We must have first the mind and spirit of to be centered on the will of God, as He was from the first mon His earthly existence: In coming into the world, He says . . . B I come (in the head of the book it is written of Me) to do Th O God (Hebr. 10, 5...7).

Could we but penetrate a little more into the mystery of the nation, into the heart of Mary at the Annunciation as she yielde self as the handmaid of the Lord to do His will, into the inner sitions of the Word made flesh, we would taste and see the mean poverty of spirit. The Word of God, the eternal Son of the Fath becoming Man "did not abhor the Virgin's womb" (Te Deum "emptied Himself" of all external signs of His Godhead, "hu Himself " by taking the nature of a slave, by becoming obedient death (Phil. 2, 7-8). At the same time, the human soul of Christ, c in justice and holiness and endowed with the beatific vision, behe will of His Father and, caught up in an ecstasy of love, offered offered the whole nature of the God-man, to do his Father's will. is utmost self-abnegation, deepest abasement, complete self-suri Man had offended God and sin had entered the world through and disobedience and self-will. From the very moment, on the hand, that Mary had emptied herself and yielded herself to God and so had pre-echoed, so to speak, the Ecce Venio, the Word mad within her had offered the Father His humiliation, His obedience will. He poured Himself forth in complete sacrifice, and unto He was henceforth to do only as the Father had commanded His

overty of spirit, to which few mortals ever fully attain, is the w, the reflection of the self-oblation of the Son of God, of the basement, too, of Our Lady as the Handmaid of her Lord. This is Seraphic Poverty which by the fire of charity leads to complete poliation and self-forgetfulness and self-dedication in all things.

Despite interpretations to the contrary, this is the true Lady Poverty t Francis wooed and espoused with an everlasting love. Material erty was but the natural sign and expression of his love. Let us not et that his theology was like an eagle soaring, while ours creeps ng the ground! Let us not forget those long hours of deep prayer were his from the beginning of his conversion, wherein the Crucified d showed him the secrets of His Divine Heart, so that henceforth ncis carried in his own heart the marks of the Passion while his one re was to make the inner man the dwelling place of Jesus Christ. The spel-life, not mere external poverty, was the beautiful lady whom, as told his companions, he was to wed. Material poverty, to the extreme, the first manifestation of his nuptials.

When, as the loyal bridesman, he won Clare for Christ, the heart his teaching must have been the true meaning of poverty, as seen Our Lord and Our Lady. To her he addressed the words of the Gospel: thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast: keep nothing for thyself thyself, nor desire anything henceforth but to come, follow Christ in is humility, in His self-abnegation and surrender. Deny thyself, take thy cross, and follow Him who is the one foundation of all perfection.

The Root of Perfection

Later, Francis was to teach that same divine secret to his followers: Know, my brothers, that poverty is a special way of salvation, the source f humility, the root of perfection; and its fruits, though hidden, are panifold. For this is the treasure hidden in the field of the Gospel, to uy which we must sell all, and to obtain which we must spurn what we annot sell." He called Gospel poverty the foundation of his Order, for he whole structure of our religious life so rests on it that if it is secure Il is safe, but if it is destroyed the whole edifice tumbles. But this Poverty poverty of spirit before all else!

What then shall we say of the controversy over the fundamental

virtue that animates, shapes, informs Franciscan life? Some w claim it is poverty, others seraphic charity; and both find support medieval sources. Yet, truly, both virtues are necessary and must be for together. In fact, they may be considered as two aspects of the virtue, charity. They are both elements of the soul's journey to As sin is a turning away from God and a turning to self and creat so its opposite, our ascent to God, includes a turning from creat and self and a conversion upward to God. Poverty, true pover spirit, is that whereby we say No to self and the world; and Chart that which says Yes to Christ and the Father. We are to be emptited (Franciscan asceticism) that we may be filled with God (From mysticism). Poverty and charity are the concave and the convethe same seraphic love.

Poverty of spirit, then, is that side of divine love which puts proper relationship to self and creatures. Hence, in the mind of Fr it is our special way of salvation and the root of perfection. Perhap need not take this expression so literally as to say that all virtues s from poverty. But at least such is its relation to the other virtual religious life that truly the sublimity of the highest poverty make heirs and kings of the kingdom of heaven, poor in goods but exalte virtue.

Thus, without poverty of spirit, that imitation of and participal in the "emptying" of Christ, material poverty would lack motive meaning and spirit. It was through his deep poverty that Fra acquired humility, for it taught him to think himself as of less acce than others, and to acknowledge that whatever good is found in man is from God alone. Poverty it was that produced the simplicit the Poverello, for it taught him to place God first . . . and that is Franciscan simplicity, "which is content with its God and counts else as mean" (II Cel. 189). The perfectly obedient man is likened corpse because by poverty of spirit he has died to self with Ch Franciscan brotherhood, in unity and equality and deepest spiril love, is achieved only when one is truly a Lesser Brother: Lesser, mid because he has emptied himself of self-interest. And finally, with exhausting the list, our apostolate is vitally dependent on the degree which we have forgotten self that we may radiate Christ.

Detroit, Michigan

Ignatius Brady, O.F.

AFTER FIFTY YEARS

by Johannes Joergensen

From San Francesco Vivo, by Fr. Felix Rossetti, O.F.M. Conv.)

August 22, 1952, I commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of my first to the Basilica of Saint Francis, that triumphant exultation of the nt who sleeps there these seven centuries, in the crypt, in his coffin of he.

I have no longer the strength of fifty years ago when I used to run ough the winding paths of Assisi with the quickness and bravado of young writer dreaming of worldly fame. Then, I used to climb the eets and, without realizing it, I would find myself buried in the permed cloisters of Franciscan joy. I used to stop and admire the lovely adonnas, those sweet sentinels at every turn of the road; I would pause fore the paintings of Francis and Clare; and those streets opening on the horizon never failed to fascinate me.

Now, no more; life loses its vigor at eighty-five; eyes no longer see; they rejoice only in the splendid visions of long ago.

And yet, twice, on the twenty-second of August, without assistance, from my home built at the foot of the Rocca—that solid witness of medieval strife—I wandered to the Basilica of the Saint.

I passed over the narrow streets, those same streets I had traversed so many, many times before; the stones, now worn by time, were kinder to my feet as though respectful of my age. This people, it seems I always knew them; they were good people, peaceful, industrious, smiling, always ready to greet me if only with a nod.

And then, I am in front of the Church, in front of the Gothic rose vindow, the two doors, one of which only is open—everything is as it used to be. There, from under the arcs of the door, looking into the interior, I see the great pillar on the top of which the font of holy water resting on its twisted mosaic pedestal; and across in the recess of a ide chapel, the wonderful stained glass windows glisten like a plate of ough silver touched with amethyst, sapphires, emeralds, rubies, and topaz.

I take off my hat and enter the Church. It is almost pitch black in

the vast low nave; the windows dance all the more merrily symphony of colors, blue, violet, golden yellow, rose, and green

I proceed to the front of the Church where the high altar where, as always, a lay-brother, dressed in that black habit I well, goes patiently about his cleaning; but my slow and unstern in the shadows arrests the attention of a Father in the Basic approaches, takes my hand with fraternal affection and leads bench in front of the altar of the Poverello. While he leads me I look at the walls to assure myself that the frescoes are still the everything, everything is there. And there, too, is the door to the It is open, and I see the dark vestment closets of oak cut by An Perugia. All is the same as it was fifty years ago. And yet everything and I were in a dream, a beautiful dream from feared I would awaken any moment.

Then I go down the dark flight of stairs which lead to the I walk cautiously, feeling my way until I find at last, in the d of the crypt, the gate leading to the Saint's last resting place. Beth heavy iron grating, many candles, already half spent, play upon the with their unsteady glow. I move deep into this place of profound and silence, where I hear nothing save the flickering of the nois flames murmuring behind their prison of red.

And here, finally, that veil of unreality leaves me. Yes, I am at the feet of Brother Francis; there behind the gate, there whe candles burn, Saint Francis is resting, the Poverello, my dearly Saint Francis!

I withdraw into the darkness of a corner. I kneel down of prie-dieu. Pilgrims from every land pass me, but they do not disturperhaps they do not even know that I am here. I am happy in my so alone with my thoughts.

Fifty years ago I was there for the first time! It was then turned from the Protestant labyrinth into the true fold of Jesus I entered the Church with the assistance of a holy Franciscan, Spee, of Bois-le-Duc, Holland, a Friar Minor Conventual, with I became acquainted on my first visit to the tomb of the Poverello good Father Felix, to whom I dedicated the work, Saint Francis, winstrument of Providence which led me into the Catholic Churwas a Franciscan who showed me the light; it was Saint Francis at wo

; it was the Poverello who dissipated the clouds of doubt, of and of heresy from my soul.

om that day, I have known no other way than that of the Saint. neved with the Poverello over all the paths made by him. I rested places made holy by his prayers, by his abstinence and mortification. ted to establish my residence here in his city, to sleep next to him, g yet again his sweet voice. Francis, Catholic and wholly apostolic, ven health to my soul.

ifty years from my first visit to his tomb! I have traveled much, but urney was peaceful with him as my companion.

Fifty years ago I walked into the Church with these eyes full open, he spirit was not yet wholly enlightened with his light. Today, y-five years old, I have re-entered the same Church, these eyes of esh, weary, darkened, almost blind—like the Saint at the end of his but I have re-entered with a far greater vision. And this, because im, because of Brother Francis, the magnificent fool of Christ.

rancis Seminary, Fr. Hugh DeCicco, O. F. M. Conv. (Trans.) en Island, N. Y.

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O blessed poverty! to those who love and embrace her she bestows ernal riches. O holy poverty! to those who possess and desire her God omises the kingdom of heaven and in truth bestows eternal glory and be blessed life.

Saint Clare of Assisi

HUMILITY

Perfection, in the opinion of Saint Bonaventure, is made up of elements: grace, justice and wisdom. The relation of humility to the very striking and shows how important it is in the spiritual edifical humility is the door of wisdom, the foundation of justice, and the of grace.

No one will ever enter into the room of wisdom except throug door of humility, whose portal is quite low. Only he is wise who k his own and others' nothingness as contrasted with the sublimit God. If any man think himself to be something, whereas he is not he deceiveth himself (Gal. 6, 3).

To give to everyone what belongs to him, that is justice. It speaking of what "belongs to him", "what is his own", we must with God. In the first place, honor and reverence are due to Him it is humility chiefly which disposes us to render this honor and the ence to God. For great is the power of God alone, and he is honor the humble (Ecclus. 3, 21).

No less is humility the dwelling-place of grace. It is grace that m us pleasing to God. We have to realize how much of a condescension has made in letting us share His Own divine life. There will be no realization except on the part of the one who looks closely at his unworthiness to live the life of God. Such a one is truly humble; grace of the Holy Spirit rests on the humble only. To whom she have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spand that trembleth at my words? (Isaias, 66, 2).

Because of the tremendous importance of the virtue of humility Seraphic Doctor often treats of it in his writings. But lest some (religious!) might imagine that humility is just a matter of the 1 and mind and need never show itself in action, the Saint spends the effirst part of his De Perfectione Evangelica, speaking of humility in enal action. To drive home the necessity of actually lowering ourse if we would be genuinely humble, it is part of the Seraphic Doc

thod to offering many objections—fifteen in all—against self-vilification.

s answer to these objections are enlightening and have a way of spurng the heart on to a closer practice of humility. But let the reader
dge for himself from the following adaptation of some of these obctions and the answers to them.

Objection: If we were to discover the religious who liked being put ide by the superior, forgotten, obscured by others less capable, and, ho, on the other hand, disliked being in any wise commended for work ell-done, or promoted according to merit and fidelity to duty, we would y that this was the find of the century, for we naturally hate being verlooked and we desire remuneration. Lowering or demeaning one-lif is contrary to the dictates of our nature and does not harmonize with ght reason. It follows then that the virtue of humility cannot demand tus to appear foolish or lowered in the sight of others.

Answer: An external act of humility does seem to clash with human hature. But this clash is really only with the instinct of our nature—and we must remember that it is a fallen nature—and not with reason. Truth and right reason find no repugnance on the part of our nature to self-vilification. To perform external acts of humility is for the most part quite agreeable to our make-up and for these reasons:

- 1. The fact that our human nature is made from nothing, it is defective; it fairly shouts out that it is defective and far from perfect. Surely if one demeans himself he is not in any way spoiling what is perfect.
- 2. When we examine our nature closely, we discover that it is preserved and kept intact for the simple reason that with all its might it keeps unity in all its elements and parts; and so far as it can, it quickly expels any foreign body that would serve to disrupt this unity.
- 3. Our nature advances and develops because it looks for influences from a higher nature. So as to find completion of itself, it desires to be subject to something better. Because it is the mark of humility to recognize nature as defective and to reduce one-self to a certain unitive smallness, the better to repel the spirit of pride and arrogance as agents that scatter and corrupt this unity, offering oneself to the influence of divine grace and being subject to it—so it is that self-humiliation is actually in line with truth and in harmony with our best natural instincts.

Objection: We are told that "virtue is the order of love." Sho superior subject himself to an inferior, thinking that it is humili act that way, he is perverting right order and consequently this so subjection is not a work of virtue—it is not humility.

Answer: There quickly comes to mind that Saint Francis once he would be quite willing, for the love of God, to be subject to a nof but one hour. When we speak of an order of love in virtue we remember that this means mainly, radically and essentially that C to be preferred to creatures. Every other order must lead to this or to the principal one. As Saint Augustine says, "it is quite proper the creature grow small in his own sight, so that the Creator might grow and sweet in his heart." But how can we better grow small in our estimation than by being subject to others for God's sake and by esting them better than ourselves? Such self-demeaning preserves a proder of virtue. Dignity, such as that arising from ecclesiastical rank, not suffer thereby. True humility does not pervert, neglect, nor an aught this dignity; rather, humility saves it, since in this case the hity remains within, in the heart, and, exteriorly, authority is maint according to one's rank.

Objection: Virtue consists in moderation, but when a person v himself he is going to an extreme and thereby fails to act virtuou

Answer: The difficulty, if there be one, lies in the word "moderate This word has to be understood correctly. Moderation does not a striking a mean in the amount of the object at hand, which in this is a virtue. It does not mean, in other words, that I will practice ju much humility and no more, lest I be accused of being an extremist it means holding to a middle path, so as to keep one's distance from what is a defect and also from what is an excess, because each these is an evil. So it is that to lower oneself is a virtuous act in bett timidity on the one hand and arrogance on the other. Both of these vices. Self-vilification may seem to go to an extreme but it actually I to a middle course. Besides, self-vilification is not only an act of veguiding our nature but it also repairs our (fallen) nature; it has about more of a medicinal than a completive character; and since the sick specially ruinous to the human race is arrogant pride, a counteral medicine must be found.

Objection: How can a really good and just person consider him

mer and baser than others? After all, there is a substratum of truth every virtue; virtues cannot exist where truth is lacking. The just in is really judging falsely when he reputes himself lower, for example, in the criminal recently sentenced to life-imprisonment for murder. The athought on his part is opposed to the truth and it necessarily lows that it is also opposed to virtue.

Answer: It is true, of course, that every virtue has a foundation in ath and this holds good also in the case of humility. The very truth the divine law demands that each of us is to feel more humbly about moself than about others. As everyone naturally feels his own sickness d afflictions more than those of someone else, so everyone is to recogte his own defectiveness more certainly and intimately and frequently; this reason he should judge himself viler than others, not because he more certain about his own vanity and vileness than he is of another's. hat is why it appears that demeaning oneself is not based on falsehood, at on truth, on the experimental knowledge of our own defects.

Objection: Among all creatures, man is the noblest and consequently hould be the most honored and esteemed; for that reason, whoever lowers himself is throwing a law of creation out of order.

Answer: It is true that man is the noblest of creatures and must be given preference over all others by reason of his deiformity, his being the image of God; yet he is on par with other creatures in the matter of the defectibility and nothingness that he shares with them; going further and seeing the deformity arising from vice, we understand that he loses his esteemed position and takes the lowest place of all; witness the wicked in hell! Since we are all sinners, humility is a very fitting quality of soul, giving us the basis of various virtues and a remedy for moral failings.

Objection: The soul is the image of God and was created for no other reason than to become like to Him; now God is good, wise and majestic and the desire to reach His excellence fits right in with remaking the image of our soul. It is self-vilification that hinders this work.

Answer: There are certain qualities belonging to the Divine Excelence which would make us like Lucifer were we to desire to have them the extent that God possesses them, such as divine judgment, revenge, and honor. Other qualities God willingly shares with us, like goodness, buth and virtue. When one conquers himself, it is these virtues that

shine out; so it does not follow that to humiliate oneself will harm image of God in the soul.

Objection: Every virtue and virtuous act has its exemplar in Since God, though, in no way demeans Himself—there is no place anything like that in Him—how can we claim that self-vilification consonant with the perfection we must look for in God as our me

Answer: There is need for a distinction here. Humility has it emplar in God if by it we understand something so complete in that it does not go beyond its bounds; but if by it we understand is defective, implying subjection to another, then it does not hav exemplar in God who is in no way defective and has no superior that man would not neglect to humble himself for lack of an exant God was pleased to assume the form of a slave, and in it to be humiling despised, debased and in that wise to inflame others with the desirt perfect self-contempt.

From the above answers, one can see with what insistence Seraphic Doctor teaches the need for exterior as well as interior hum It is quite clear that external humility is as important as interior small but he would be among the very first to proclaim that there is never true humility without at least the desire of making oneself small in sight of others, always for the motive of imitating Christ our Lord. many words he states that the sum of all Christian perfection rest humility, whose act is an interior and exterior vilification of on This great Mystical Theologian knew how to live humbly. To choo well-know instance of this truth, he was found scrubbing pots and in the kitchen when the Pope's legates came offering him the Cardi hat! For Saint Bonaventure, a true and correct knowledge of self bring one to a full knowledge of God; but no one really knows him who does not care to grasp the fact of his own nothingness, for if man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he decei himself (Gal. 6, 3).

Paterson, N. J.

Fr. Leonard D. Perotti, O.



SOME POINTERS ON FRANCISCAN EDUCATION

In the eighteenth of October, 1952, at the opening of the school year to the Apostolic College of Grottoferrar, the Minister General of the riars Minor, Father Augustine Sépinski, in a few brief and simple words made some pointed remarks on Franciscan education:

The great mission of the College (to train masters of the spiritual fe and to form teachers for the Order) prompts me to use this solemn occasion to emphasize and repeat the conclusions drawn just now by your Very Reverend President in his masterly talk:

1. In your own formation, avoid religious formalism

Our Franciscan life is the result of two elements which are providentially bound together: the call of God to a state of higher perfection, and the free adherence of our will to that call. This free acceptance of a grace so great and precious for us must lead us to a joyful fidelity to all the obligations of our state, a fidelity that springs from a deep conviction of the sanctity of the religious state, which is based on the love that indissolubly unites God to the soul and the soul to God.

And as all Rules, Constitutions, ordinances, the will of superiors, etc., lead us to greater attachment to God because they demand a renunciation of self and our evil inclinations, it is evident that all these must be observed with conviction, with love and enthusiasm; for we must see in each regulation, however small, a means of advancing in the way of perfection.

Such a concept of religious life causes us to follow on our own initiative, without force, whatever is prescribed, because we are profoundly convinced that we are doing what is pleasing to God and beneficial to our soul.

On the other hand, religious formalism consists in a mechanical bservance of laws, either to avoid conflict with superiors or for some

other human motive, but without conviction of the holiness of calling or without supernatural outlook and spirit. Too often, hower religious think they are condemning formalism when they cond certain prescriptions that do not please them or when they so lightly of them and do their best to avoid them. Such overlook formative purpose and intent of that sacred inheritance of laws we are the fruit of age-long experience.

Hence we must condemn and avoid both that observance we keeps our laws only out of convenience and that attitude of rewhich makes light of our Rules and regulations. I leave it to the Ma and directors to translate these ideas into practice, but to all I urge that we carry out with faith and holy enthusiasm the fait observance of all that has been commanded us.

2. In forming others, respect the individuality and talents of ea

All our Religious must observe our holy laws: this is a further mental principle to which all must subscribe. Nevertheless, in process of spiritual formation and progress in virtue it will not possible that all be able to follow the same method or reach the segree of perfection though all follow the same path. The sefigures of our Saints show this to us: Saint Francis and Saint Palcantara, Saint Bonaventure and Saint Didacus, Saint Bernardit Siena and Saint Leonard, to mention only a few. All were Follow, yet quite evidently each had his own particular chara

Hence, it is necessary in the direction of souls, especially of the consecrated to God, to take into account the temperament of experimental individual qualities and capabilities, home background, etc. Expected, hence we must help him develop his talents, his abilities, direct to good purpose the inclinations proper to him. This is not say that the educator can allow any lack of observance of our and way of life; but it does mean that he must study the character each that he may the better develop in each one those natural qualities which will dispose and help the student to direct all aspirations and actions to the ideal of holiness. If such norms are we followed in practice, there should result a religious community the

ited in like observance of the same Rule and yet is most varied in generous realization of individual abilities and talents.

3. Whole-hearted Submission to Authority

This third point is indeed implicit in the two foregoing. Yet I hould like to speak of it more at length since today it is too easy to have superficial concept of the vow of obedience.

All authority comes from God: this is a very general yet very asic concept. But we Religious, who have freely chosen a life, a mode if living which is covered by very definite laws, too often lose sight of that concept. By solemn vows before the altar of God we have promised to obey in all things that are not against the Rule and our conscience. We have freely yielded our will and our liberty to the will of our superiors. It is indeed a great sacrifice which we have made; yet to that sacrifice is attached a still greater reward on the part of God.

Our religious must be convinced of this great truth, so that they will obey under the influence of such a profound conviction and their obedience be total, generous, and joyful.

The Religious, on the other hand, who obeys without a supernatural spirit, out of force, or for some other mere human end, is an unhappy Religious: his life is burdensome and lacking in that joy and lightsomeness which calms the mind even in the midst of great renunciations. Only a true Franciscan appreciation of this most difficult of the vows can render our burden sweet and light. We must have the vision which inspired those words so dear to our Seraphic Father: We have promised great things, still greater are promised to us . . . suffering is slight, glory in infinite!

These are the thoughts which, in simple words, I would propose to you on this occassion. Generously model your own life on such formative principles and study how you may impart them later to the hearts and souls of those whom you will be called on to teach and to train in the years to come. (Acta Ordinis Fratrum Minorum, LXXI, 1952, 288-290).

Detroit, Michigan

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (trans.)

SALUTE TO CLARE OF ASSISI

The beauty and wonder of an unacted play written in free may exist largely in the reader's beholding eye. Perhaps the touches a nerve in his own experience or plucks a chord of memor vibration of which is confused with the melody of the words reading. While scanning the lines, his inner ear may be listening to the has heard elsewhere.

When the editor of this review gave me a copy of Candle in Um a four-act play written by a Poor Clare of the Monastery of Our of Guadalupe in Roswell, New Mexico, this cautious meditation of perils of subjectivity came unbidden to mind. Because Saint Claour Franciscan sister, any Friar is always happy to read everything that is written about her. He is seeing his own family praised in He is predisposed to approach the subject with his heart instead dhead.

Forget all that. Anyone with an ear for beauty can approach play with his eyes, ears, and intellect working at full tilt and he undergo a profoundly moving and rewarding experience. Here is a of love and insight of deft and unerring craftmanship and glo inspiration. Candle in Umbria is as clear and beautiful as the their celebrates.

The plot is historical. Since it tells the history of a soul as well a body, it spans both the realm of spirit and the world of sense. In play, things happen which Clare's contemporaries saw happening, of which the rest of us may read in a hundred books; but what things meant to Clare herself are visible only to other Clares. Or them has now told us.

The spirit and soul of this composition are of more importance its body or plot, although its corporeal side is a superb dramatic pratation of the red-letter events of Saint Clare's unusual life from the she joined Saint Francis until her death. A good skeleton of plot, steenough to support an historical novel, has had its bare bones of inci

ned with living tissue. This play lives. And, like all intelligent life, vitality is rooted in spirit. In this instance it is the spirit of Saint neis.

The play begins, and on the instant you are transported to Assisi, home, and a company already familiar. The atmosphere is not so ach constructed as evoked, for the author has an unerring sense of ace and character. The rhythm of the lines is too natural to be noticed. here is no march of events, but a smooth, even, unhurried progress. It was like a river. Every image is appropriate. Each one is lived vividly d concretely. There is no unclarity anywhere.

In the prologue Ortolana Scefi feels "the whole world's music" cked in her, for Clare is yet unborn.

"What manner of child is this astir in me Whose flesh and bone are mine though yet unseen, But kindles song at once and fear in me?"

The child Clare is comely and loved. She could be a heroine on any tage, although her love is not the kind that Broadway is accustomed to applaud:

"How shall I tell you how I love the shades Of morning when the fields are half-awake And God's breath is the scent upon the day! When every blossom does Him homage, I Reach an ambition wilder than their own: To bloom a while, then die upon His Heart, Giving Him back the perfume He has poured Down all my veins and flooded in my heart."

From the day Saint Francis planted this flower to bloom awhile until he day she died upon God's Heart, Clare lived a divine romance packed ith drama. In a soft Umbrian night while Assisi is sleeping, Clare and er cousin Pacifica slip from the Scefi home and go to Saint Mary of the ngels where the friars with lighted torches are gathered around Saint rancis.

"They should be coming soon, good Father. Listen How the small noises of the night grow quiet, Waiting the footsteps of the Lady Clare!"

And Francis speaks:

"My brothers, hear and remember what I tell you This night, though do not press me for a gloss Upon it! There will come a day when only One woman's loyalty will buoy me up In a great raging sea of desolation And bring our brotherhood from storm to port."

He tells Clare to

"cast down the sandals
From off your feet, and the more swiftly run
Down the sweet tanglewood of penance into
The everlasting arms of Christ Our Lord."

The second act opens with a scene in the Assisi marketplace there is much talk of the Saracens "testing their bows and shar their arrows" for an attack on the city where terror stalks and so the walls "like knuckles of Belial". When the blow falls, Clare, we never felt "the hard drag of fear" upon her heart (for in Christ flutters a breath of fear"), tells her Lord,

"We cast our quivering lives upon Your Power And lean our women's trembling on Your Arm."

The tumult increases with the approach of the Saracen host. her Sisters sing the Jesu Tibi Vivo, Clare holds the Blessed Sacra aloft and the Saracens are felled by the power of God.

In the fourth act Clare sees "the King's bright court" which now entering. At her request, the friars sing *The Canticle of the Sur* she is commanded by Our Lady to

"leave at last the secret cloister And walk the shining acres of His Love."

In the whole work there is not one line of sticky sentimental one piece of pietism. It is all authentic Franciscana, redolent of **U** aglow with the heart-warming fervor of the Poverello.

Nowhere in this piece does the author make the lines yield thought or does the thought constrain the lines. The two are on message is the method. No excursions into moralizing impede the

eorizing interrupts the thought. It is all done so honestly and natuthat you seem simply to have been privileged and blessed with a ome visitor who tells you what happened in Assisi many years ago.

Everything about this play seems inevitable; you would want nothing ged, for to do so would falsify fact. The stamp of reality is here, tual reality. It seems not to have been contrived but only to have beened. You have read some plays and witnessed others where your d was caught in a web of the author's weaving and from which he e could extricate you by the solution of the plot. Candle in Umbria whole world and heaven apart from that sort of writing. When Our y appears, you know she could not have remained away from that icular scene; when the Voice is heard, your ear is not the least bit rised.

There is properly no great complication of plot, because this play s with the biography of a dedicated human soul. Clare's mind was le; her path to God was straight. It was not so much a path as a at. Obstacles are of the earth and are no hindrance to her. This very is the source of the play's pervading lyric quality. Its single causal at is not an event at all in the usual sense, but the fulfillment of a ation heralded at the play's beginning and confirmed at its close.

"The more unity a thing has," says Thomas Aquinas, "the more feet is its goodness and power." There is so much unity here that a act could stand alone, and yet there is no redundance, for its unity the mind and spirit and not something contrived by the playwright's ulness. It is a clear draught from a deep well of spirituality, an anded thought from a mind integrated by seraphic living, and that hy it registers with the impact and authority of truth, for, as Aquinas again, "the higher a nature is, the more closely related to it is that the emanates from it."

What I hope I am saying is that Candle in Umbria is something to than high art. It is that, too; but it is also an effect beyond the sal power of mere artfulness, and resembling less a literary and draic composition that a breath of love, a prayer, an offering to one's ther in God. As such, it is a worthy oblation and a timely one in this of Saint Clare's Centenary.

The images and actions get off to no false starts. They flow like ams tributary to the larger river of the theme, which at the end surges

in a beautiful poetic peroration fresh from the heart and of the author. This final chorus of the epilogue with its to the atomic age, its insight into the true psychology of clear as the spirit of Clare and as simple as the love of F

SALUTE TO CLA

Something in the author must have wanted to say the long time, and in this play she has said them incompared Clare, she finds the world too small a place for her hear the uncloistered playgoers, who think their immediate very large thing, may easily become staggered by the spir of this play. They may easily get lost in the dimensions which the play is written.

The author has drawn the inner truth of the soul is an anatomy of light. This is a love story; but many a not suspect that it is. Those who appreciated Oklahoma!, of the soil, may fail to appreciate Candle in Umbria, whethe soul.

It should not be irrelevant to ask the question: "Is Would it go?" Yes, to the first part; and Who Knows, to much of the stuff that currently passes for theater is done who have slavishly mastered a pattern and can now start in pieces of Standard Brands plots that it is quite beyond or not the real thing would sustain public interest. Subcautiful play goes on in the sphere of the spirit that a get goers who confuse the non-sensible with the nonsensical amused.

If a play is vexatious enough, or timely enough, of if it tosses verbal custard-pies into the faces of the gods beguiles the external senses and lets the mind of the alone, it has chance of success; but even with all these ents theatrical predictions are still precarious. A piece brittle, brilliant quality of T. S. Eliot's Cocktail Party devoted audience; but the rule to be observed is that the plot and discourse must never rise above the uplane Our audiences will not strain to catch a glimpse of the sense of the sense

The theater-goer, absorbed in matter, blinded by the things, and deafened by the din of the world, will not is going on in a play like this one. He may think it at

verge of the real world if indeed it exists anywhere or at all. is will either disbelieve it entirely or regard it as myth. Yet infirmed secularist will not remain unmoved by the strength of the play's action or by the imponderables that make it wen an opportunity, the glow that comes from this small *Umbria* could light the moral and aesthetic darkness of the lay.

Imbrian girl who fell in love with Christ is no pale plaster varm human being with a heart of fire. The fire lit a candle to abria seven hundred years ago. In its light, the author's pen from its flame her own heart has caught fire. That is why the this play is a wonderfully warming and enlightening human

ne require the eye of faith to see into this play? I think so.
majestic scene as the one in which Clare repulses the Saracen
aloft the Blessed Sacrament could be construed as empty
The dynamic behind the plot and action is the Franciscan
thout it the piece would be pointless.

was clearer than light, as the author and the breviary tells timacy of her love for God is fully intelligible only to those elves love Him. Death was the supreme union towards which tened. Even religious persons, who somewhere along the road ght of the fact that the happiest life is one that is totally ad-God, will be only half-appreciative of Candle in Umbria. trays a Saint in action, it will not delineate a universal existeeped in Franciscan thought and love, and these are not redients of contemporary society.

or's own deep insight into the spirit and character of Clare being one of those who

g their gleaming hair away like laughter turn their faces toward a nameless spring, ing! because one small light flickered, faithful, be Clare-candle lights the weary world!"

Seminary Fr.

Fr. Rudolf Harvey, O. F. M.



AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (XIV)

The Thirteenth Article

TEXT: Besides the fasts and abstinences to which all the faithful obliged, they should observe those which are prescribed in their retive Constitutions, notably on the vigils of the Immaculate Conce and of their Seraphic Father Francis.

The present article forms a natural unit with the preceding and expression of that form of love of God known as atonement or ance. Mortification and Penance are frequently spoken of in the breath and one and the same act of love may pertain to both cate Though a technical difference exists between the two, penance and fication are kindred notions in the sense that both involve doing vi to self-love or self-indulgence inasmuch as inordinate love of self root cause of all sin. Penance, however, looks to the past; mortific to the future. Penance includes detestation or sincere sorrow (our own or others') coupled with the intention of atonement latter is a desire to erase, as it were, the effects of sin and ingratitu means of a more fervent act of love. And since all sin is a for selfishness, all penance is a crucifixion of self and selfish impulses much as such an immolation is a manifest expression of the un ness that should characterize the most perfect love of God. But penance stresses more the positive element of love manifested the the medium of self-denial, mortification stresses the denial or o of self as a precaution against any future defection from the love of

The Franciscan inspiration for both penance and mortifalike is to be found in the Passion. Frequent meditation on the ferings of Christ should inflame the heart of the Franciscan rewith commiseration for the Crucified. This love in turn beget a genuine sorrow for sin ... which is already a cosuffering, a compatitude of the cross ... and secondly, the de

atone for what we and others have done to Christ. This "at-one-ment", if you will, with the Savior through self-crucifixion permits us to say with Saint Paul, It is now no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.

If we consider further that the only specific penance Francis imposed upon his followers was fasting, which in his day included abstinence as an integral part, we can more readily understand why the present article not only follows that prescribing meditation on the Passion, but how it is in a sense symbolical of the whole penitential practice Francis expected of his followers. To appreciate this fully, however, we should consider not only the wording of the present article but its whole historical and present context. This would involve a consideration not merely of the earlier Rule of Leo X but also of the subsequent article of the present Rule. Since the latter belongs to the following chapter, which deals with the control of self, we shall postpone discussing the Franciscan concept of penance for the moment and limit ourself for the present to the article on fasting. Besides the fasts to which all the faithful are obliged . . .

In itself, the meaning of these words is clear enough. The Rule simply confirms the general practice of the Church without adding any further obligations. On the other hand, perhaps we are not reading too much into this article if we see here another instance of that estential characteristic of Franciscanism mentioned earlier (Art. 2), submission to the holy Roman Church and its fundamental practices. The fasts and abstinences imposed by general ecclesiastical law are to be observed in the manner required of the rest of the faithful. The religious, therefore, may adopt such legitimate practices customary in the locality and participate in the dispensations granted by the bishop to his diocese (Can. 620).

They should observe those prescribed by their Constitutions. . .

The earlier Rule of Leo X prescribed a great number of additional st and abstinence days. Many of the Tertiary Regular Congregations, owever, found it necessary to seek some mitigation of these prescriptions way of papal dispensation or through their special Congregations, nee the ordinary type of apostolic work in which they were engaged ade it either impossible or imprudent to insist on these penitential factices in full. The present Rule is more flexible and permits the invidual Congregations through their Constitutions to retain or adopt

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such additional fasts or abstinences as are deemed feasible and commable in view of their specific aim and function. Thus, for instance, a religious institutions have retained the Friday fast found in the ear Rule.

These additional fasts proper to the Tertiary Congregation mobserved like ordinary Church fasts. Consequently, where customs as the so-called "relative fast," the use of milk as a pure beverage so on prevail, religious may follow such conventions in regard to prescribed by their Rule. Similarly, the latter do not oblige religious to the twenty-one or those who have begun their sixtieth year.

One important difference between the fasts imposed by the Ru Constitutions and those by general ecclesiastical legislation is manner in which they oblige. The Church laws bind as such under of grave sin though they may admit of a lightness of matter. The and abstinences imposed by the religious Order or Congregation, ever, oblige only after the manner of the other precepts of the Rul Constitutions, and therefore do not of themselves bind under paeither mortal or venial sin. However, a Tertiary religious who see the ignore them without a valid reason would hardly be exentirely from sin, not indeed because of the binding force of the itself but because of the dispositions of mind and heart that pront the disobedience.

Furthermore, religious superiors can usually dispense their subfrom the observance of the Order fasts or abstinences according to norm of their respective Constitutions, but, unless they are super of exempt clerical congregations, they cannot dispense from the Ch law, but they and their subjects must have recourse to the bishop local pastor, or to other priests (e.g., confessors) to whom the bishop local pastor of the dispense from fast and abstinence.

If the bishop gives a general dispensation on a day where the or abstinence of the Church and the religious Congregation happe coincide, the religious may not make use of the dispensation ut the superior also dispense from the Rule or Constitutions. Should superior neglect or refuse to do so, however, the religious violathe precept would fail only against the Rule or Constitutions and against the general Church law since the obligation of the latt suspended by episcopal indult.

on the vigils of the Immaculate Conception and of their Seraphic Father

These two feasts are singled out for special consideration because hey are, so to speak, the two principal feasts of the Franciscan Order. The fast prescribed for the vigil of Saint Francis (Oct. 3) is readily inderstood. That of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, perhaps, requires a word of explanation. Not that this special devotion of Franciscans to our Blessed Lady should provoke any wonder, especially if we recall that Francis "honored the Mother of Jesus with a love so reat it cannot be expressed in words" (Celano, Legenda Prima, n.198). But why this particular feast of Our Lady?

The answer is to be found in the history of the doctrine of the immaculate Conception and the glorious role played by all three Orders of the Franciscan family in the long and stormy controversy that preceded the definition of the dogma by the Franciscan Tertiary, Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1854.

The feast itself grew out of an earlier feast known as the Conception of Mary (also called the Conception of Saint Ann) that was celebrated as early as the seventh century in Palestine. In the years that followed this feast was gradually introduced into the West. It spread throughout England, Germany and France during the eleventh century, and in 1263 at the General Chapter of the Franciscan Order held at Pisa it was decreed that the feast should be adopted by the entire Order. But while the feast implied that Mary's conception in the womb of Saint Ann was a holy event, theologians still raised the question whether Mary was immaculately conceived or whether there was not at least an instant preceding her sanctification during which her soul contracted the stain of original sin. Even great saints and doctors of the Church like Saint Bernard, Saint Albert the Great, or Saint Thomas could not see their way clear to accepting the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Even Saint Bonaventure, after reviewing the theological arguments for both sides, confessed that the one favoring Mary's sinless conception was less probable. It was the famed and aintly Franciscan theologian, John Duns Scotus (d.1308), who turned he tide in favor of the Immaculate Conception by his brilliant solution If these theological difficulties. From that time on, while that other reat mendicant order, the Order of Preachers, defining the position of aint Thomas, opposed both the doctrine and the celebration of the feast of the Conception, the Franciscans took up the cause of During the fourteenth century, many learned Franciscans def Mary's honor in the classroom, in public theological debate a popular sermons, sometimes even despite calumny, persecution imprisonment. In the following century, Saint Bernadine of Saint John Capistran, Pope Sixtus IV are but a few of the profession champions of Mary's prerogative. Indeed, during the years of controversy, the Franciscans, who had pledged themse oath to teach and defend this doctrine in public and private undoubtedly the greatest single factor in silencing the oppositic changing the general attitude so that eventually the doctrifuniversally accepted.

Thus the love for the Mother of Jesus which Francis bequeto his followers crystallized, as it were, in this defense of the Imm Conception, and the feast itself became the symbol of the deep reand devotion of all three Franciscan Orders to Mary, the MocGod. Today it is their special patronal feast with a privileged and is celebrated not only by the Third Order Regular but also Third Order Secular, which was an effective instrument in special devotion among the faithful during the years of controversy

The observance of these two vigils follows the general post of the Church. Consequently, when October 3rd or Decembralls on Sunday, the liturgical celebration is transferred to the present of the prese

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God can reject everything in a creature that was conceived and that carries the unfortunate mark of sin inherited from Adi He is absolutely unable to reject our sincere wish to love Himpadre Pio