

the CORD

July-August, 1980

Vol. 30. No. 7

CONTENTS

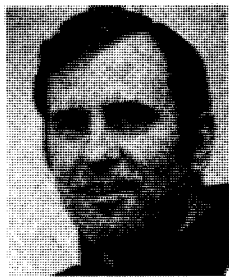
HOW MUCH DO WE NEED TO PLAY?	194
<i>Editorial</i>	
DIALOGUE	195
<i>Andrew Lewandowski, O.F.M.</i>	
IN HORA MORTIS MEAE, VOCA ME, ET JUBE ME VENIRE AD TE	196
<i>Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.</i>	
TO A LITTLE PLANT	204
<i>Mother Mary Clare of Jesus, P.C.C.</i>	
CHIARA POVERELLA	205
<i>Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.F.</i>	
GREETINGS AND PEACE	206
<i>Cy Gallagher, O.F.M.Cap.</i>	
FRANCIS-FOOLISHNESS	207
<i>Sister Andrea Wild, O.S.F.</i>	
MOTHER MADDALENA BENTIVOGLIO, O.S.C.—IV	208
<i>Sisters Frances Ann and M. Ellen, O.S.C.</i>	
THE MIRACULOUS CRUCIFIX OF SAN DAMIANO	215
<i>Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A.</i>	
FRIARS AND THE WORLD PROBLEM OF REFUGEES	219
<i>John Vaughn, O.F.M.</i>	
A NOVICE REFLECTS ON FRANCISCAN POVERTY—II	221
<i>John Coughlin, O.F.M.</i>	

COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover and illustrations for our July-August issue have been drawn by Sister Mary Regina, P.C.P.A., of the Monastery of Sancta Clara, Canton, Ohio.



THE CORD (ISSN 0010-8885) (USPS 563-640) is a review devoted to Franciscan spirituality and published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by The Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Subscription rates: \$7.00 a year; 70 cents a copy. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778, and at additional mailing offices. Please address all subscriptions and business correspondence to our Business Manager Father Bernard R. Creighton, O.F.M., at the Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, N.Y. 14778. Manuscripts, Books for Review, and Editorial Correspondence should be sent to the Editor, Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., or Associate Editor, Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., at our Editorial Office, Siena College Friary, Loudonville, N.Y. 12211.



How Much Do We Need to Play?

WHEN I was a serious young cleric I remember being confronted with the observation from Saint Thomas that it was a sin not to play. I recall too that talk of recreation—or re-creation of one's spiritual and psychic and physical energies by laying aside the work and needs of the day to refresh oneself by friendly conversation, or a game of cards, or listening to music, or what not. As we entered the psychological 60s, recreation became identified with relaxation or unwinding—expressions which indicate a loosening of a tension-filled spirit. Spiritual writers, I have found, claim about the same benefits from play as from prayer, although not usually in the same chapters.

And I think they are right. People do need to play, to be a little silly, to have fun. All work and no play does not only make Jack—and Jill—dull, but depressed as well. I haven't heard anyone say "My work is my play," but I know that some of you out there in Cordland are kidding yourselves with that slogan. Outside of a special gift of grace or calling, it seems presumptuous to me for someone to tie himself into a life style that doesn't include some goofing off; and I suspect someone who doesn't like to play, no matter what age, has lost something.

For many 20th-century religious, speaking of the need to play is superfluous. The "day off" is built into many apostolates, and psychology has baptized what we regard as our somewhat naughty urge to play. Yet perhaps some of us do play too much, too hard, too big. What is the ratio of time spent at prayer to time spent in conversation, watching TV, attending events? Do we return from days off or vacations exhausted because we have travelled so far, or done so much? Are the lay people we tell of our travels puzzled by the freedom and opportunity for leisure that seem to go with being in God's service? In reacting against the "forced fun" that community recreation sometimes was in our formative years, are we being impelled into following the world's idea of fun—flashy clothes, parties, and "chic" entertainment? Has play become such a part of our life that we are pretty much unavailable outside of normal business hours?

The young love to play, and the immature love little else. Mature and maturing religious should recognize recreation—re-creation—as a real need in their lives, and a real blessing too. Although no one should want himself eulogized by "He really knew how to enjoy himself," "He played as much as he prayed" would be a compliment we might strive to deserve.

St. Julian Davis ofm



Dialogue

You say:
Give us fruit
But we shall not plant.
Give us fruit
But save us from the heat of noon.
Give us fruit
That we may eat
And have plenty
And be satisfied!

You say:
Care to the plowing
But take no time to dream.
Care to the planting
But take no joy in the rain.
Yield to the yoke of the noon's heat
That you may prosper
And succeed
And eat to your day's end.

You say:
Kill the worker
for the dream.

You say:
Kill the dreamer
For the work.

So has it been

So shall it never be again.

Andrew Lewandowski, O.F.M.

In Hora Mortis Meae, Voca Me Et Jube Me Venire ad Te

MOTHER MARY FRANCIS, P.C.C.

WE COME now to the final phrases of the prayer, "Anima Christi." It seems to me that the petition, "in hora mortis meae, voca me," "in the hour of my death, call me," cannot be separated from what follows: "et jube me venire ad te," "and bid me come to you." While the prayer is immediately concerned with that final call which is death, the same thing is true of every call of God in our lives. It is never a case of a call for no particular reason; it is, in fact, always a call for the very same reason.

God calls us at our birth; God calls us at our death. God calls us every day of our lives. And for one reason only: that we should come to him. So, instead of beginning our consideration with that final call of death, maybe we should instead first reflect on God's calling us into life. Not "hora mortis meae," but "hora nativitatis meae," the

hour of my birth when he called me from my mother's womb into an individual life of my own upon this earth. That first call into life was for one reason: that I should come to him. And whenever a life is wasted, whenever a life is distorted, it is invariably because the call was not understood or was left unanswered as a call to come to God. The only reason he called us into life was that we should come to him.

Often enough God's calls impose on us human suffering, human pain. And we see this quite dramatically in our first call "in hora nativitatis meae," the call of our birth. What does the child do when called from the repose of the womb? Well, it cries its little heart out. This, of course, is a healthy sign of life; but it is also a sign that the baby objects to having its repose disturbed for the harder life of light and noise and many strange new elements. Francis Thompson in one of his

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., Abbess of the Poor Clare Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roswell, NM, and Federal Abbess of the Poor Clare Federation of Mary Immaculate, is well known to our readers as the author of many books of spiritual conferences and poetry. This is the tenth in the current series on the prayer, "Anima Christi," originally given at chapter to the Poor Clare Nuns in Roswell. To preserve the spontaneity of the spoken conferences, the barest minimum of editing has been done in the transcriptions.

most exquisite poems for the children of Wilfrid and Alice Meynell, the one entitled, "The Making of Viola," muses on this. We wait for this lovely child to appear. And then the child cries. The poet mourns, "Our first gift to you is a gift of tears, poor Viola!"¹

Something of this, dear sisters, is in every call we hear, because every call of God asks us to go forward to something in one sense less reposeful than what we had before simply by reason of its being a forward movement a growth. Something, too, of the distress of the newborn infant called from the comfortable and undemanding shade of the womb into a more personal and quite demanding way of living, carries through all of life in our answering God's calls. Once I talked to you about the call to life, and I seem to recall that we touched on the consideration of being called now to something more painful than what was before simply because we never go forward without effort. We can coast only downward, never upward and not clearly forward. We never move ahead without suffering in some degree.

Now then, as the infant grows it has repeated calls into maturity, into reason. It learns to form words, and that is a call to learn the language of God. It learns

¹*Poems of Francis Thompson*, ed. Terence Connolly (New York: Apple-Century-Croft, 1941), 14.

with help to walk, to take steps forward; and already there is the call of God to walk that straight road to him. Let us repeat it:

that is really the reason for learning how to walk. We know how a parent encourages the little one in its toddling walk by standing at a distance with outstretched arms, and how the tiny child intuits that the summons to walk—a very difficult procedure!—is for the purpose of arriving in the arms of the parent. It makes all the difference to the infant, as we have surely observed. Again, returning to speech, it is the Word of God that is the reason for mastering speech. We want to learn the language of God, and we want to walk a straight road to the Father.

When we are most fully alive, we are coming most directly to God. We are least alive when we are least responsive to life, from God's first call into life on to his multitudinous other invitations through life, when we are rambling off on by-ways, following little tortuous paths of self. We are not responding when we are wandering off from grace, because God is calling us on a direct way to him. The straight path of grace begins with tears, is continued with tears in some measure, and usually ends with the tears of death, however willing and even sweet those final

tears may be, those tears of the dying one and notably the tears of those loving the dying one. But this, too, God has described in the Scriptures when he explains that heaven is the state where, we having answered the final call and come to him forever, he wipes all tears from our eyes. What a stark reminder the poet, Father Alfred Barrett, S.J., has given us: "If Heaven will be the banishing of tears, There must be tears for God to wipe away."²

Then there is that second major call, the call into Christianity and into Catholicism which some of us received as infants and which others of us heard later in life. Again, it is a call, dear sisters, to come to God. The call to Christianity, the call into the Catholic Church, is not a call to membership in a prestigious international establishment. It is not a call to keep certain laws *per se*. It is not a call to join a society which offers us a certain security. No, it is a call to walk more directly, more more securely, more firmly to God. "Jube me venire ad te." Let me come to you! It is this to which God gives assent when he calls us into baptism, to come more directly to him in this life of faith with the strength of the sacraments. We can walk so much better with them. We do not toddle as weakly, we do not stagger as

perilously, we do not fall as often. We have strength. Let us review it, then: our great call from God into his Church is not to membership in a worldwide society of considerable standing, but a call to come to him with means to do that more directly, a little faster, much more securely.

Our special call to Franciscan religious life has followed. And this, too, is a call to come to God. Again, it is not a call for any other basic reason. Not a call to enrollment in what even the world rather acknowledges as a generally pleasant company. It is a familiar saying that "the whole world loves Saint Francis," and the magnificent truth of the saying pulls at our hearts. However, we have received not just an invitation to be a part of this great, idealistic society that he established and rooted so firmly and so simply in the gospel, but a call to live like the meek and humble Christ, as Francis showed us. Like our Father Francis, we are called by Jesus to be lowly. And why? Because this Franciscan Order was described by its founder as the society of the very least ones in the Church of God? No. Rather, we are called to be the lowly ones in the Church of Christ because Christ himself was meek and lowly and humble of heart. And the call to our Franciscan life is a call to come very

directly to this meek and humble Christ.

Again, it is a call to be obediently poor because Christ was obediently poor. It is a summons to be thought of little worth by worldly standards, just as Christ was. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46). And could anything good come out of little Assisi forever struggling with its petty wars? Yet, Nazareth is remembered only because one Person was a Nazarene, just as Assisi is famous because Francis and Clare lived there and hardly for any other reason. Nazareth doubtless would have been well-forgotten except that Jesus the Nazarene abode and prayed and worked there. And Assisi would assuredly have been highly unremembered save that Francis and Clare were born there and heard there a call to come to God in the hour of their youth. After the "hora nativitatibus meae" comes the "hora juventutis meae," the hour of my youth when I am called into vitalizing faith, into the fullness of Catholicism, and into my Franciscan religious life.

Then, we have this Christian call and this Franciscan call to be lighthearted and joyous because Christ has invited us to leave all things for him and promised a hundredfold reward even in this life. This is definitely something to sing about! It is not merely that we join a company of good-

natured people called Franciscans, but a profound call to an all-pervasive lightheartedness. And by that we mean that God has called us to live this life so exactly like his: a simple, evangelical life, poor and humble, utterly obedient, cheerfully given and giving, joyful because we are coming very directly to him who was all of these things when he walked our earth.

We are asked in this vocation to leave our parents, our family, our friends behind in a physical sense in order to come to him solely, not because they are of no worth but because they are of such great worth that we would leave them only for him. And in that sense we already receive the promised hundredfold in answering our call to come directly to him, for all things are found in him and found more fully than they were ever before possessed. For example, all of us find in answering this call to come to God in religious life that we discover love of our family on a deeper level, in him where they have their own truest meaning and their own fullness of being. So, it follows very logically that the more directly we answer that call to come to Christ, the more fully do we discover all those we love since their own being and meaning are in him. Outside of him, we can never fully know our own, much less possess them in love.

²Alfred Barrett, S.J., *Mint by Night* (New York: America Press, 1938),

Again, there is a call to leave our will. Not to drop it as something of little worth or an impediment to spiritual progress, but to surrender this most precious gift of God back to him who gave it, that we may cling to him. Saint Clare describes this response as that of "a poor virgin clinging to the poor Christ." God does not call us to give up our will as a kind of fitness test for holiness. No, the invitation to surrender our will to the Father is the call to follow Christ who bent his own human will to the will of the Father. It is just that: a call. And one that he himself answered from the hour of his birth: "In the head of the book it is written of me: 'I come to do your will, O my God'" (Heb. 10:7)—until the hour of Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours be done" (Lk. 22:43) and on to the consummation of the redemption: "Into your hands, I commend my spirit" (Lk. 23:46).

Always remember, dear sisters, that the common denominator of every call of God to us is: to come to him. And that is why I am convinced that this phrase of the "Anima Christi" prayer cannot be separated from what immediately follows: "In the hour of my death, call me." For what reason? That I may come to you. Bid me come to you. "Jube me venire ad re." That is the whole point.

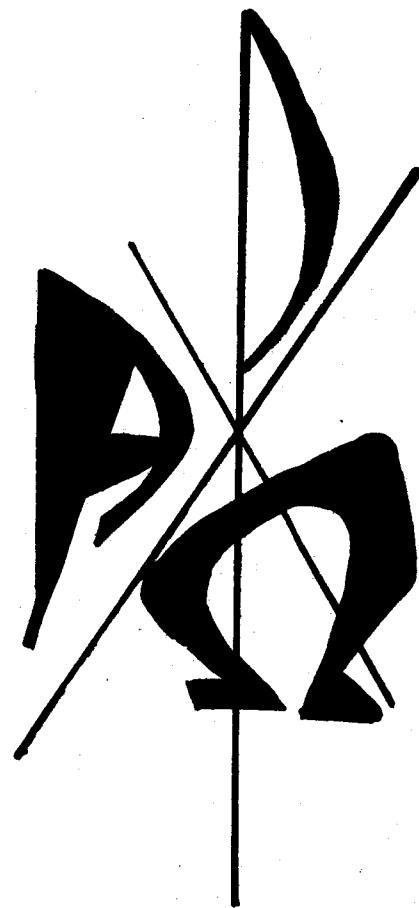
All of these calls through life on to death must be answered on

a very deep, personal level. The call to which we responded at baptism, as concerns those of us baptized in infancy, was answered in our name by others; but it became a real, living, driving force in our lives, a practical vital force, as we grew to maturity and actuated that decision in ourselves. The infant did not decide to be born; and if asked, would probably have stated his preference to remain in the undemanding dark repose of the womb. But as the child grows, he must answer his own call to life. Some persons do not. We need to look into ourselves and discover how fully we are answering our call into life so that we may come to God. There is no other reason to have been called into life.

It is the lack of understanding of life as a call to the Creator of life that leads the Godless philosophers to despair. It is easily understandable. For if we are called into a life which will end, which has an absolute terminal point, how shall we live it? This explains hedonism, debauchery, despair; this explains all of that company because there has been a call into life understood only as something fleeting and often enough most painfully afflictive and afflictive even in its brevity, rather than a call to come to God. Thus, the beautiful call itself becomes a dark summons into a welter of meaninglessness. Even the loveliness of life

becomes unbearable to the human heart unable fully to enjoy it because convinced that it is doomed to fade and die. And so nothing beautiful can really be savored since it is felt to have no meaning outside itself. Everything becomes tainted with the despair that so many experience. Why should we be alive? Why were we called into life at all? We know. It is that we may come to God. Why called to faith in baptism? In order to come to him more securely and with sacramental strength. Why called into Franciscan living? To come immediately to God in a simple gospel life.

So, dear sisters, there are the continuing daily calls. We never want in prayer to think only of that final call of death or to be tempted to think, "Well, how do I respond to that? There is no choice at all." If I had no choice about emerging from the womb of my mother, one would almost say I have still less choice about death. I cannot say to God: "I do not choose to die," nor, "I prefer not," nor "Not today." Where is the choice? Well, it is at the deepest level, for it is truly a terrible thing to die not choosing to die. We do make a decision in our own death that we freely agree to the moment and the manner. We agree to respond to the call. It is not that we are just "stopped" from earthly life, nor that life is turned off, but that



we use the great power of our God-given free will to respond to that call and to say: "Yes, now bid me come to you." Or, we can choose to say, as some do die saying, "No! no! no! I will not die. I do not wish to die. I do not want to come to you. I desire to live longer on earth." Or, "I want to live on earth forever."

There is a tremendous and ultimate choice in death. We can never say that this is something

beyond choice. Rather, it is the greatest choice of all—to choose God's appointed moment of our death as our own, to assent freely to the manner of our death, to choose in his choice all the circumstances of the death, sudden or prepared for by a long illness, indoors or outdoors, by night or by day, alone or with our sisters around us, in the cloister or in the hospital. We do not know, but we can decide to choose all of that. I think we all know that Saint Pius X had a prayer to which he granted an indulgence, a prayer of his own that he prayed every day. "Right now, I choose with all my heart the circumstances of my death and its hour." Death is not at all the moment and the hour of non-choice. It is the hour of deepest choice. And it flows out of all my other responses to all my other calls to come to God.

With every call in daily life, to be generous, to give, to spend ourselves, there is the invitation to come to God, who "having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end" (John 13:1) and in fullest measure and to the last drop of his blood. Every daily call to suffering is a call to come to him who bore all our infirmities and took all our wounds upon himself (Is. 53:4-6). Each daily invitation to patience is an invitation to come to him who was led like a pet lamb to the slaughter (Is.

53:7).

If only we could actuate this right thinking in answering our daily calls, we would have so widened a spiritual horizon, a vista so beautiful. It is not a matter of God's saying: "I want this sacrifice right now. I wish this suffering right now. I demand this act of obedience right now." And that is the peroration. No. Rather, he is asking an act of obedience that we may come closer to him who did always the will of his Father. He asks patience that we may come to him who bore all our infirmities without complaint. He suggests this particular act of charity that we may come into the arms of him whose name is Love (John 1:4-8). He offers an opportunity for meekness and humility that we may deepen our communication with Jesus who is meek and humble of heart. He asks this act of self-despoliation that we may be stripped of all things like Christ who hung upon a Cross stripped of all things, without support, without alleviation. This is what we mean by "call." Not a call to do this or to do that, to suffer this or to give up that, but always a call to come to God.

And so, dear sisters, we pray, "In the hour of my death, call me," knowing that he will, and for the same reason that he called me all during my life: that I may come to him. We shall be able to

make that final decision to say, "Yes! yes! I choose this hour for my death, so that I may come to you" if we have prepared for it by a lifetime of understanding what it means to be called. Do we not see this even in our dealings with one another? If I call one of you to our office, it is for a reason—maybe even the dearest of reasons: that I just want to see you! And when God calls us, it is for a reason, not less than his dearest final call which will be made because he just wants to see us. Let us help one another remember by our way of living that God has always the same elemental reason for each of his calls of us whether in life or in death: that we may come to him.

This is what we want to do: understand every call. It makes all the difference, because we are so frail and so limited. We get tired of obeying all the time. We get weary of making sacrifices. We lose a taste for penance easily enough. Shamefacedly we must admit that we tire very, very easily. Unless we remember that the calls to obedience, to sacrifice, to penance are calls to come to him whom we love. Again, we see this in human love. We see this in community. If there were piles of rocks along here, and you were down there and I called you because I wanted you to come to me—well, I really have faith that you love me enough that you would come to

me over the rocks, just as if you called me, I would do the same. Yet we do not see this so clearly in our daily life with God. God is not saying: "I have set up this hazards course; and I want to see how you do on the rocks, how you make the hurdles." No, he is calling us to come to him, and often enough there are rocks of one kind or another that will have to be suffered, hurdles that will have to be taken if we are going to get to him.

Dear sisters, it is very precious to be called by our name. When as children we were called by name to come in, though we did not want to come in, there was yet something very intriguing about hearing the sound of our own name. And to think of being called by God with the sound of our own name and in order to come to him! We could be called by others for selfish reasons, ulterior motives, worldly considerations; but God's call, whether into life, into faith in baptism, into religious profession, or into each daily situation, is never ulterior, never by-the-way, but always and only that we may come to him.

So, let us love this particular petition within the "Anima Christi" prayer, aware that we find the meaning and purpose of every call in it. Knowing that we are called to the God who loves us is what sweetens every sacrifice, gives meaning to

all suffering, infuses pain with splendor. It is the being called which gives significance to human love as well, to our sisterly love for one another, and impetus to the mortifications our life continually puts before us. If we could only remember that God is calling us by name in the unfolding circumstances of each day, we would assuredly reply: "Yes! bid me come to you." It is not a case of, "yes, I will make this sacrifice." Or, "Yes, I will be patient; yes, I will suffer this." There can be more than a bit of vainglory in that, you know. There can be any amount of pride in that. But we must come to understand that the call neither ends any more than it began in the pain, the suffering, the

sacrifice, the mortification, the situation, or the hour of death. It is God who is the common denominator of every call, "in hora nativitatís meae, in hora mortis meae, in hora et hora vitae meae per diem in diem."

Yes, let us love to be called, knowing that the call does not pertain so much to anything to which we are called as to God who is the Caller and the Meaning and the End. If we use our God-given energies to live in that fashion in responding to the daily calls of our life, then "in hora mortis nostrae" we shall be able to reply to that call, too, making in that tremendous, dramatic final hour of our life on earth a deeply personal decision.



To a Little Plant

Little plant,
rooted in Christ the Lord,
cling fast to Him,
drink in His Word.
Day after day,
lifting your face above,
bask in His sun,
live in His love.

Root deeper still—
surrender all your fears.
Your Father knows.
He counts your tears.

By day and night
His spirit works in you,
You know not how—
but He is true.
First comes the sprout,
the green leaf, and the ear.
Before you know
Fruit-time is here.
Entrust yourself,
Christ-plant,
to Wind and Sun.
Grow up in Him
'Til Harvest come.

Mother Mary Clare of Jesus, P.C.C.

Chiara Poverella

Chiara poverella—
In your garden of skylight
lay the holy poverello
deprived of earthly sight . . .
Yet—your light, it seems, was enough
to make Francis quite secure
since the winds sang with his canticle,
a legacy for us—his poor!
The peace-filled lyrics sent to those
whose scandalous tempers flared
roused wells of contrite tears
while a friendly embrace was shared!

Chiara poverella—
In your garden of moon's glow
our father Francis kept his vigil
that all the world might know
That bodily sight—a precious gift—
endowed by God most high,
cannot bestow a deeper love
for which we all must try.
And as a blessing for the ladies poor
he called you the favored ones
while created by the Father
and redeemed by the Son . . .

Chiara poverella—
about the Third he said:
"You are espoused to the Spirit,"
and with that he bowed his head.
Could he have died upon the spot
for joy and sorrow twined,
your soul surely would have followed
for the sameness of soul and mind!
But Francis lingered on awhile
amidst the mice and pain
until a little strength returned
more souls had he to gain.
Chiara poverella—
Francis' co-worker in the fray;
his little plant on prayerful soul—
your garden still blooms today!

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.F

Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus:

Greetings and Peace

CY GALLAGHER, O.F.M. CAP.

IN THE Pauline Letter to the Ephesians and in Saint Francis's Letter to the Custodes, we find a parallel topic of concern: that Christians live up to their trust—honor their heritage. In both these letters, the authors write to their own: to people who share with them a family membership. Paul had lived at Ephesus for two years. Francis was writing to the "elder brothers" of the Order, men whose responsibility it was to foster and preserve unity among the brothers.

Paul begins his Letter to the Ephesians with a magnificent doxology of the greatest importance for the cosmic significance it attaches to Jesus (1:3-14). "God has given us the

wisdom to understand fully the mystery, the plan he was pleased to decree in Christ, to be carried out in the fullness of time: namely, to bring all things in the heavens and on earth into one under Christ's headship" (1:9-10). Likewise, Francis begins his Letter to the Custodes with a direct and immediate reference to Christ, focusing all ministry and worship on the mystery of the Body and Blood of Christ and on reverence for his Word: "With everything I am capable of and more, I bet you to ask the clergy, with all humility... to have the greatest possible reverence for the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with his holy name and the



Father Cy Gallagher, O.F.M. Cap., is Director of Post-Novitiate Formation for the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. This is the third in his current series comparing the Letters of Paul and Francis.

writings which contain his words, those words which consecrate his body" (EpCust 1:2).

But how can people reverence Christ unless he is preached to them? Francis (EpCust 1:8): "When you are preaching, too, tell the people about the glory that is due to him, so that every hour and when the bells are rung, praise and thanks may be offered to almighty God by everyone all over the world." Paul (Eph. 3:8-9): "To me, the least of all believers, was given the grace to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ and to

enlighten all men on the mysterious design which for ages was hidden in God, the Creator of all."

In these Letters both Francis and Paul are concerned that "Everyone all over the world" be brought into the unity of the family of God. Paul speaks directly about family relationships as symbol and model to the single family of mankind (cf. Eph. 5:22-33 and 6:1-9). Francis speaks indirectly on this theme by referring his comments to those who are the guardians of unity in the Brotherhood, the Custodes.

Francis-Foolishness

he gives me hope
that Francis-fool
so hung-up on his
hermitage
and other quite unpopulars
like simple things
and mystic things
like Spirit-things
fathered and
godly synthesized
within his central
hermitage
not very far away

how could he keep
so hung-up high
so sure of all these
dubious things
unless he had his
hermitage
to scatter scatteredness

to winds
to wisen worldly
foolishness
to fool-proof
unprized certainties

he gives me hope
that poor-man rich
whose hang-ups turned
worlds upside-down
whose hermit-art
spun gold from dung
and other simple crazy things
he stored and treasured
foolishly
within his central
hermitage
not very far away

he gives me hope
that Francis-fool

Sister Andrea Wild, O.S.F.

Mother Maddalena Bentivoglio, O.S.C. Foundress of the Poor Clares in the United States

SISTERS FRANCES ANN AND M. ELLEN, O.S.C.

Part IV: "Still a Pilgrim at Sixty-Three"

THE COMMUNITY at Omaha was steadily growing in numbers, having weathered the violent storm of calumny and mistrust. It was a purifying death which brought forth so much new life. Mother Maddalena was now sixty-three and in poor health. Her spirit and zeal for the spread of the Order was, however, undimmed. Her words to a young sister: "For the glory of God I would go all over the world," bespeak the zeal of Francis, who wanted his followers to consider themselves as pilgrims and strangers upon this earth. Such was Maddalena's existence in this land of promise.

Tired and weary, Mother Maddalena set out on July 30, 1897, for the new foundation in Evansville, Indiana, which was to be her final resting place on this earth. For over two years she had planned and worked for this foundation amid misunderstandings, setbacks, etc., but nothing could discourage her un-

daunted spirit. "One more powerhouse of prayer, one more home where the young women of her adopted homeland could spend their lives in prayer and sacrifice for the glory of God"—this was her great desire. She would spend herself to the end in the mission that was given her by Pope Pius IX to bring the Poor Clare contemplative life to America and see it flourish.

Reading her sketchy biography, one is reminded of the pilgrims of old. Catherine de Hueck Doherty gives us a vivid picture of these early Russian pilgrims, representative of pilgrims all over the world, in her book *Not without Parables* (Ave Maria Press, 1977). In the very first chapter she speaks of the pilgrim, and as I read it I was amazed to find such a striking parallel with the journeyings of Mother Maddalena.

Russians are very deeply aware that all men are really exiles from heaven and that all life is a

pilgrimage. But they are also deeply aware that they can participate in the atoning sacrifice of Christ by the practice of faith, and by the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, by mortification, penance, silence, and prayer. Pilgrimage combines many of these features. Definitely they are undertaken with a spirit of atonement and prayer, atonement for one's own sins and then for the sins of mankind [p. 16].

When people went on pilgrimage they never set a time limit, for they believed very deeply that pilgrimage time was God's time. Walking as they did, crisscrossing the countryside they experienced good and evil happen. They thanked God for the good and when they met with evil they received a clearer vision why they were making their pilgrimage and what their atonement was all about [p. 17].

Mother Maddalena had lived a certain amount of mobility during her growing years. She first left her home at the tender age of four to attend the Boarding School at Trinità dei Monti. Later she would be sent to the Convent School of the Religious of the Sacred Heart at Turin. During the rebellion in Rome, her family moved for a time to Frascati and with the restoration of peace, returned once more to Rome. After the death of her parents, Maddalena, Constance, and Matilda were placed with the Dominican Nuns at Santa Cath-

rina. It was in this solitude that the seed of a Poor Clare vocation took root in the souls of the Bentivoglio sisters.

All three sisters entered the Monastery of San Lorenzo where the mitigated Rule of Saint Clare (approved by Pope Urban IV in 1264) was observed and the Sisters were known as Urbanist Poor Clares. However, Maddalena and Constance desired to live more in accord with the original ideals of Francis and Clare. Under the zealous guidance of their spiritual director, Father Bernardine Pourtoquaro, Minister General of the Franciscan Order, both Sisters had begun to observe the Primitive Rule. Seeing the growing fervor of these young religious, and the delicate situation created in the community by their observance of the strict life, the Minister General had hoped to transfer them to the Monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi, where this Rule was lived in its primitive purity ever since the time of Saint Clare. This plan he revealed only later on.

Nine years of prayer, penance, and solitude would ready the souls of these noble women for God's work in the foreign element to which they would be called. Circumstances would converge and bring about the unveiling of God's plan for them in the guise of Mother Ignatius Hayes, a Franciscan Sister of the Third Order

Sisters Frances Ann, O.S.C., and Mary Ellen, O.S.C., are members of the Poor Clare Community at Lowell, Massachusetts.

who had come seeking seasoned religious for her newly established foundation in Belle Prairie, Minnesota. Having failed to enlist the help of any of the suppressed Third Order members, she turned to the Minister General for advice. Ever eager for the opportunity to spread the Order of Poor Clares, Father Bernardine decided that since Mother Ignatius could not get the Third Order, perhaps she could enlist the help of the Second. It was hoped that the cloistered Poor Clares would, by their prayer and penance, be a hidden spiritual support to the external missionary activity of her institution. Encouraged with the proposal, she went to the Monastery of San Lorenzo to seek volunteers. Many seemed eager to accompany Mother, but this eagerness would be tested by the displeasure of the other Sisters. Only three names were presented to the Pope for approval: the names of the two Bentivoglio sisters and that of a nun of the Monastery of San Cosimato. When the Holy Father received the petition to grant permission to these sisters to leave the enclosure for the purpose of establishing a convent in the United States, he responded: "Leave the petition here, for I wish to pray and thus to choose those who are to go." Fearing that her plans might fail because of the opposition that had by now arisen against it, Mother Ignatius

sought the aid of Father Francis Silas Chatard, then Rector of the American College in Rome. Later, as Bishop of Indianapolis, he would be a staunch supporter of Mother Maddalena and receive her into his diocese. After a few days, the Holy Father decided that the two Bentivoglio sisters should go. As he said: "These Sisters will have to suffer much and will have to face much contempt, and only two sisters of the same family, encouraging each other, will be able to endure."

Thus, the two Bentivoglios received their obedience from the Pope and the Minister General to proceed to Belle Prairie with Mother Ignatius and there establish the Second Order according to the Primitive Rule of Saint Clare. And thus the pilgrimage began.

In retrospect, one marvels at the fortitude and total sacrifice of these two sisters in obedience to their superiors, for, once again, they had to leave all things—to go into a foreign land and adjust to a new language and a new culture. One of the greatest hardships was the fact that there was little or no support—material or moral—from their own monastic community. Even though the Minister General defrayed expenses of transportation, they had to depend on charity for incidentals and even necessities at times. The blessing of the Vicar of Christ had given them courage for

this canonical mission, and, as always, they had unbounded trust in divine Providence.

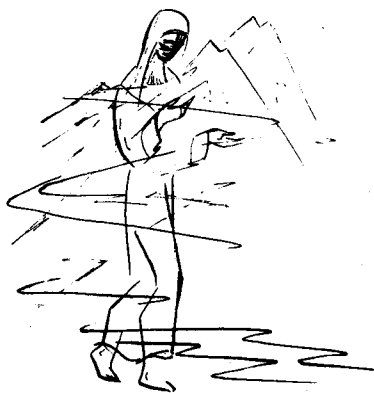
The records of San Lorenzo have this brief entry: "August 12, 1875: On this day, with permission and approbation of the Holy Father, Pius IX, the two choir religious, Sister Mary Constance and Sister Mary Maddalena Bentivoglio, sisters german, went forth from our venerable monastery for the foundation of the First Rule of Saint Clare in North America."

The first stop on their long pilgrimage was at Trinità dei Monti, Maddalena's school, where the other Bentivoglio sisters awaited them. From here they proceeded to the Vatican to receive a farewell blessing from the Holy Father. After words of encouragement, he gave them his blessing with these words: "May this blessing ever accompany you and be for a happy journey, for strengthening unto endurance, and may it be to you a crown of glory in paradise."

Upon leaving the audience hall, the Bentivoglio sisters visited Saint Peter's tomb to ask for assistance in their new mission. They next visited the Church of the Gesù, where their parents were buried, and then the basilica of Saint Mary Major. They left the eternal city to visit Assisi, the home of the Poverello and Saint Clare. First they stopped

at Our Lady of the Angels, where they were overcome with devotions and where they poured out their hearts in prayer to their Seraphic Father. During the overnight stay at the Monastery of Saint Clare in Assisi, they were given the opportunity to spend some time in the crypt where the body of Saint Clare reposes. Kneeling before the sacred remains, they underwent such a spiritual experience that they were loath to leave that place; but upon their farewell they were in possession of a rather large relic of Saint Clare. Next came San Damiano, the cradle of the Second Order, where Clare had lived and died: there they prayed for the grace to carry across the Atlantic the living flame that Clare had ignited over six hundred years before. From Assisi to Florence, on to Bologna, Venice, and Padua. Then Milan, Genoa, and Nice. Maddalena and Constance met the Minister General here, since he was conducting a canonical visitation in the city.

Father Bernardine, upon whom the responsibility of the mission rested, used the time with his spiritual daughters to give them some final instructions to help them transfer from the Urbanist observance to that of the First Rule of Saint Clare and to renew their vows. Here the General gave them the decree of obedience commissioning them



to go to America to found a cloistered monastery and appointing Maddalena the Superior with Constance as her Vicarress. They were also told that Father Paulinus of Castellaro would go with them as their director and guide.

They journeyed now to Marseilles, where they remained for eighteen days to experience the living out of the First Rule in its original vigor. A bond of friendship was formed between this community at the two pilgrim Poor Clares which would continue long after the American foundations had been established.

On September 14, before boarding the ship which would take them to their new homeland, Maddalena wrote to her sister Matilda:

Let us pray always that Our Lord will be with us, on land and on sea and even at the bottom of the sea.... Who is sure of the future? Let us throw and plunge ourselves into the Sacred Heart of

Jesus. What a peace our souls will enjoy there abandoned to divine providence! Be convinced that we are always happy. In loving Our Lord we must not entertain any anxiety. It is ever so: a scratch and a caress. Everybody is telling us that we shall suffer. Poor us! We shall sow and others will gather the fruits; foundations are always sorrowful. But let us leave all in Our Lord's care!

The steamer they were to take was a merchandise ship, but would also accommodate passengers. The ocean voyage had its hardships and mortifications—sea-sickness for the greater part of the journey. Arriving in New York on October 12, 1875, the Sisters were hospitably received by the Grey Sisters at 143 West Thirty-First Street. Many disappointments were to arise, such as Father Paulinus' announcement that he would go no further until he received word from the Minister General. However, they could proceed, if they wished, but he would advise them to remain in New York. Consideration of the language barrier, lack of real knowledge about Belle Prairie and/or Mother Ignatius, and their obedience to Father as their director, all added up to their decision to remain in New York.

It was November 28 before any word came. There was no definite decision regarding their future, only words of encouragement.

Living on the charity of others until mid-June was most humiliating. But when word did come, it left the burden of what was to be done entirely in their hands. It advised a foundation in New York or in Cincinnati or possibly in Philadelphia. But the necessary letters of authorization had been forgotten in this communication, and the need for funds was not realized by the Minister General. Nevertheless, the Sisters began their strange pilgrimage by visiting with Cardinal McCloskey. The answer was most unexpected! He was not interested in a community which did not work—it was not in keeping with the spirit of the country. Letters from Cincinnati also brought this type of reply. So—on to Philadelphia! New hope filled their hearts when the Archbishop responded affirmatively. They moved into a house which he provided for them, and they even received a new postulant! This spark of hope was, however, soon to be shattered when on October 27 the Archbishop sent for them to inform them that they could not remain in his diocese because such a life was not in conformity with the spirit of the people.

After five long months of waiting, another ray of hope arrived in a kind and welcoming letter from the Archbishop of New Orleans. In their small home they began to live out the Rule as best

they could and were joined by two more postulants. At this point they were under the direction of Father Gregory Mankneck, O.F.M., who visited the little foundation. Disapproving of the conditions—too small a house and no chaplain for Mass with little hope for improving the situation—he told them to go to Cleveland where he had already spoken to the Bishop and purchased a house for them. Joy and sadness filled their hearts—joy to be at last near their Franciscan brothers, and sadness to have to disappoint the good Archbishop. They promised to return someday.

The journey to Cleveland did not take long. Their spirits were high as they envisioned the prospects of monastic enclosure and good Franciscan spiritual guidance. Then, the unexpected once again! Shortly after their arrival Father Gregory told Mother Maddalena of the arrival of a group of German Sisters. He said the two communities were to be amalgamated. He further stated that they were to conform to the customs and dress of the German Sisters, and when Mother Maddalena attempted to explain the commission they had received from Pius IX to found the Poor Clares of the Strict Observance, he simply stated to conform or leave. The two groups did attempt a merger. Differences of "language, Constitutions, and

customs made it too difficult," however, "for new beginnings in a strange land."¹

As Mothers Maddalena and Constance were about to leave Cleveland, the three novices and one postulant expressed the desire to go with them. Back to New York again! They would collect money and go back to the good Archbishop in New Orleans. Mother Constance and one novice went West on their begging expedition and while in Nebraska made the acquaintance of Mr. Creighton, who generously offered his help.

Upon writing to the Bishop there, Mother Maddalena received a favorable reply, and thus it was that she and her two faithful novices at long last made their first foundation in America. Of course, her trials were not over. Through Mr. Creighton's generosity a monastery was

constructed, which was promptly blown down by a freak cyclone. And, once again, it would be held up by a windstorm—but Mr. Creighton, faith, and charity proved to be greater than any storm. Now, indeed, the first Poor Clares in the United States could sing their Alleluias of praise and thanksgiving. Soon Sisters from Marseilles would join them, and Mother Maddalena would rejoice to see this aspect of her mission accomplished. Calumny, however, would interrupt some of the dream's fulfillment for a time. The two pilgrims would climb the hill of Calvary for a time and then burst forth into new life. This new life would be Mother Maddalena's last foundation during her lifetime. Her pilgrimage over, her mission accomplished, she would intone her "Nunc dimittis" in Evansville, Indiana.

¹For more information on this, see Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., *Walled in Light: Saint Collette* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1959), 246. Other sources for this article not mentioned in text are Mary Alice Zarella, *I Will God's Will* (Evansville, IN: Poor Clare Monastery Press, 1975); and Albert Kleber, O.S.B. (the Vice Postulator), *A Bentivoglio of the Bentivoglios* (unpublished manuscript).



A Descriptive Reflection:

The Miraculous Crucifix of San Damiano

SISTER MARY SERAPHIM, P.C.P.A.

WHO WAS HE, this pre-Franciscan, who in a moment of inspired devotion, created the remarkable painting of the Crucified that has had such a formative influence on Franciscan spirituality? He was probably a man of twelfth-century Umbria, trained in the Romanesque school of painting and influenced by the lingering Byzantine style of the early Middle Ages. His name, like that of so many of the cathedral builders they see him give a literal meaning; but his devout talent has gained immortality. He arose from the soil and scenes of Umbria, the same land that nurtured Francis of Assisi. Was it pure accident that the lineaments of Franciscanism were portrayed in art shortly before being enfolded by another man of Umbria?

Can any Franciscan afford to overlook the profound and vivid theology of divine Love that the San Damiano crucifix presents to us? Before it knelt the Poverello when he was only a

barely tolerated religious crank. In that anguished year of 1206, Francis was searching ardently but blindly for direction in his life of service to the Lord. He stumbled down into the sunken nave of the half-ruined chapel and was drawn to the compelling image of the Crucified that hung above the altar. Dust and mold lay thick about Francis, doubt and confusion crowded his mind, when suddenly all was changed by the wholly unexpected command: "Go, Francis, and rebuild my house, which as you see is falling into ruin."

A transformed man emerged into the Umbrian sunlight. Francis now had a mission, a vocation that was soon to be shared by thousands of brothers. The Church of God needed him, Jesus the Crucified had called him. He responded with the whole of his ebullient nature.

Some term Francis naive when they see him give a literal meaning to the enigmatic words of the Crucified as he set about collecting stones for the little chapel

Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A., a member of the Poor Clare community at Canton, OH, is a regular contributor to The Queen as well as to this periodical.

of San Damiano. But in an age when church building was a dominant pastime, when cathedrals of unsurpassed splendor were rising all over Europe, it was an honor and a privilege to set one's hand to trowel and mortar on a church wall. San Damiano was a humble church, undoubtedly; yet for Francis it was the symbol of the very bride of Christ herself. He would begin where he first received the Light and the Call. From there the path would open before his bare feet, measure by measure.

Although Francis physically left San Damiano many times, his spirit ever hovered before that adored Image. To it he brought his greatest trophy, the virgin Clare. Was it merely a coincidence that he rooted his "Little Plant" in the soil before this Crucifix? That he bade her flourish in the light of the flickering lamp for which he had once spent all he had to keep burning? The answer is obvious. Clare, and the Second Order too, were to be spiritually formed by this blessed Image. Let us contemplate it as Francis did, as Clare must have for the forty-one years of her cloistered existence at San Damiano.

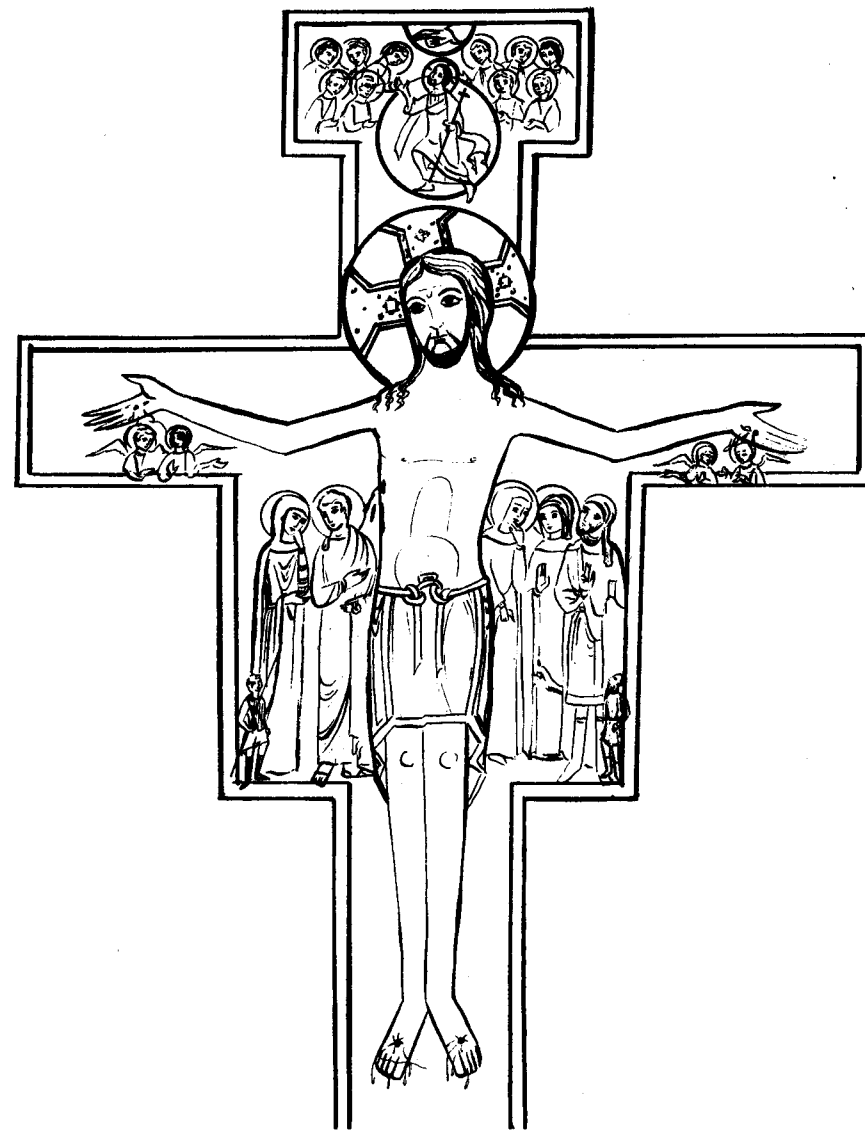
The first thing that strikes us are the eyes of the Crucified. Although they are stylized, they convey a sense of distant vision as well as almost infinite sadness. These eyes compel us. We are

bidden to look at the vast sweep of the plan of salvation, but also to experience the sad yearning of a Savior over a world that rejected his love. Inspired by those eyes, Clare's prayers were often accompanied by tears while Francis' preaching was fired with urgency.

From the eyes we move to contemplate their setting, the calm countenance that betrays no anguish but a strange serenity. The effect is arresting, for it suggests majesty. Then we notice the naked corpus, gaunt and bleeding, yet bearing the beauty of the glorified Body of the Lord. Here is a concise theology of redemption—an expression of Saint John's vision of the Crucifixion as the hour of Christ's glory.

The figure is not a detached corpus as we are familiar with in modern crucifixes, but is painted onto a wood tablet carved in an unusual cross-form. The Body stands out in high relief against the ornamented background. It almost seems to hover in front of it and can so capture the interest that one may look at the composition for a long time before adverting to the background at all.

Yet that background is profoundly significant and theologically rich. We first notice that below the outstretched arms, the main figures in the Passion story are painted. We find Mary and John standing under the right arm of Jesus, the holy women



with (perhaps) Nicodemus under the left. Smaller figures are also found, of the Centurian with lance and the mocking Jews. We are made to feel that Jesus' Passion was not accomplished in isolation but was intimately shared with those dearest to him. Could Francis or Clare have looked long at those faithful men and women without identifying with them?

Around the bleeding hands are angels in animated exchange. While some direct one's gaze to the gushing Blood, others seem to be joyously discussing its significance. Another Franciscan stream of devotion and theological explication has been portrayed by our artistic precursor!

The most striking figure in the background, however, is above the head of the Crucified. Here is depicted the glorified Christ engaged in energetic supplication to the Father, whose Hand is seen outstretched in benediction. What could more fully illustrate the true meaning of the Crucifixion? More animated angels surround this small figure, one at least appearing to assist him.

Could Clare have prayed forty-one years before this manifold painting and not be transformed in the depths of her being by its theological accuracy and devout intensity? Her writings, few as they are, bear witness to the harmony of her spirituality with this Crucifix. She would call her

daughters "co-workers with God for the sake of the frail and failing members of Christ's ineffable Body"—the Church (3rd Letter). She well knew that imitation of the Crucified meant intimate conformity to his sentiments as well as fullest participation through compassion with his sufferings.

For Francis, here was the Image par excellence of the "Good Shepherd who suffered the pain of the Cross to save his flock. That flock has followed him in trial, persecution, shame, hunger, thirst, sickness, temptation, and in every kind of suffering" (Admonition VI).

The precious heritage of all Franciscans, the expression of their prime ideals and the wealth of their piety is embodied in this single Crucifix. The Poor Ladies took the original with them from San Damiano when they moved into Assisi after the death of Saint Clare. It now hangs in its own chapel in the basilica of Santa Chiara which entombs the body of Saint Clare. A copy, however, has been made and hangs in place over the small altar at San Damiano where Francis and Clare has always seen it. Who can say which is the greater miracle—that once in 1206 Christ spoke through this Image to young Francis Bernadone, or that he has spoken through it seven hundred and seventy years to Franciscans and Clares the world over?

DOCUMENTATION

Friars and the World Problem of Refugees

JOHN VAUGHN, O.F.M.

THE SPIRIT of the gospel that is also the kernel of our Franciscan Movement draws us almost naturally to people who suffer and to places where justice and peace are at risk. Wherever people suffer, the gospel tells the friar to go and bring consolation. Where there is such a strong call today to come to the aid of "marginal" people we have the very clear example of Christ, who spoke up for voiceless people and sought the company of the outcast of his society.

The same evangelical spirit penetrated deeply into the whole life of Saint Francis. His farewell to the world and his choice to lead a poor life were a direct consequence of his decision to live a life according to the gospel. In the process and the growth of this ideal his encounter with the leper constituted an important stage. His desire for a real *metanoia* was put to a severe test when he felt the urge to embrace the leper, one of the "marginal" people of his day.

The encounter with the leper did not remain just an incident in the life of Francis. Not only did he preface his Testament with this experience, but repeatedly Francis sought the company of the lepers, to discover further, for himself and his brothers, the deeper dimensions of his own life. He sat down with them for meals (LP 22; Sp 58) and had the brothers take care of them (1 Cel 39; LP 22; Fior 42). He passed the night with them (2 Cel 98), sometimes in the company of other friars (LP 23; 3 Soc 55). These incidents clearly show that such encounters, in which he cultivated his respect and love for the lepers, also served as a "novitiate" for himself and the other brothers in the discovery of self and of God.

.....
How can the contemporary friar become involved? The first step is a preliminary one: We must inform ourselves about the problem of refugees and its implications, and share this information with others.

These two short excerpts are from the eleven-page encyclical Letter of Father John Vaughn, O.F.M., Minister General, given at the General Curia in Rome September 10, 1979 and published in English by the English Speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor.

The present exodus from Vietnam has taken on world dimensions, affecting many nations at the same time. We all know something about it; it has touched the lives of many of us. Where we can help we should. But for all its tragedy it is just one of the many refugee situations. None of us can avoid being somehow involved in the vast range of refugee problems of today. The problem has its ramifications right down to the smallest villages where our friars have their daily tasks. Many of us, as peoples or nations, have known our own "exodus" in the past. The knowledge of the experience should make us sympathetic to those who are living this same experience today. But we must begin by being properly informed.

The actual involvement of our friars can take many concrete forms. Friars who live among refugees should come close to them to understand their plight, to share their sufferings, and to help the rest of us understand. Those who live in "countries of first asylum" should give active support to the development and improvement of refugee camps, meanwhile making their own people more receptive to these emergency arrangements. They could also make contacts with friars in the remote countries to build "bridges" for refugees to settle permanently. Finally, friars in countries of possible permanent settlement should try to influence public opinion in favor of opening the borders of their countries more generously to refugees, and should assist in the process of integration.



Material aid, too, can be a project in which friars are involved. Food, clothing, shelter, and financial assistance are many possibilities for coming to the aid of refugees. The friars can serve in aid centers, whether these are meant for "boat people" or for any refugees.

... there are various levels on which friars may be involved, as individuals, as members of a parish or group, as members of a regional, provincial, or federal community. In whatever capacity they may decide to involve themselves, we feel that friars should enter into and take part in existing organizations and agencies rather than initiate their own Franciscan ones. This latter would be necessary only if no other agencies exist locally and no initiatives are taken by anyone. Not only will this combined and integrated service be more effective, but our own witness of service will be far more convincing. . . .

A Novice Reflects on Franciscan Poverty—II

JOHN COUGHLIN, O.F.M.

The Spontaneous Process of Embracing Nature and some Applications

QUITE OFTEN when the question of poverty is raised the first thought that comes to mind is material poverty. This is largely because of the historical development of the question. From what I have already said, it should be obvious that I consider this to be a misperception of the real question. It is sad that of the three levels of poverty—poverty as relation to God, to others, and to material goods—the least significant, material poverty, has dominated the history of the question and even divided the Order. Yet I also feel that if one truly lives from a perspective of spiritual poverty, he finds himself mandated to express this poverty in regard to material things. Material poverty ought to

be for the Franciscan a sacramental sign of a deeper reality.

Francis experienced such a mandate for sacramental expression in his own life. It was his inward conversion that led him to such great respect for all material reality. He was able to integrate his strong call to penance and his love for life into a vision that led him to embrace all creation. As Zachary Hayes has put it:

There can be no doubt, on the one hand, that Francis was a profoundly spiritual man. On the other hand, there is every reason to say that he was a man profoundly in love with material reality. Indeed, his was a spiritual-

Brother John Coughlin, O.F.M., a student for the priesthood in Holy Name Province, originally published these reflections in the Novices' journal, Caperon (Brookline, MA, May, 1979, pp. 39-52. The article, begun in our June issue and concluded here, is reprinted with permission.

ity that did not turn him away from the physical world, but led him to embrace it in a new way.⁹

It seems to me that when we speak of poverty we ought to be guided by this perspective.

Such a perspective is more easily understood when juxtaposed with the materialistic



world view so pervasive today. Much of modernity sees the world as composed of physical objects to be defined and controlled for utilitarian ends. In many senses, we often put greater trust in technology than in God. The Franciscan vision, needless to

say, is not limited to this one-dimensional perspective. For Bonaventure, material reality symbolically expresses the divine love, beauty, and goodness. As an expression of God, material reality strikes the chord of an inner experience so rich that it leads man to the Creator. We are part of the materialistic perspective of our day, and yet each of us is at the same time called to be attentive to and aware of God's presence in material reality.

The Franciscan world view leads to certain concrete manifestations concerning what material poverty does and does not mean. If God's presence is seen through materiality, then the use of that materiality ought to include a sacramental dimension to express the mystery it contains. To begin with, Franciscan poverty does not include legalism or rationalizing. First, legalism about material goods can easily make poverty the value in itself. The ultimate value is not poverty, however; it lies in relationship to God and in advancing his Kingdom. A heavy structure of laws and regulations regarding material goods is external to the inner life of penance. Such an

⁹Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., "Toward a Philosophy of Education in the Spirit of St. Bonaventure," *Proceedings of the Seventh Centenary Celebration of the Death of St. Bonaventure* (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, July 12-15, 1974), p. 18. The following thoughts on the Franciscan world-view are from this article.

"Each friar must know his true needs and be able to distinguish between necessity and luxury."

extrinsic structure provides little guarantee that poverty will become an interior value and motivating force. Each Franciscan must come to his own respect for materiality flowing from interior conversion. Secondly, both on a communal and on an individual level, the excessive ownership and use of material goods is often rationalized. The distinction begun by Gregory IX in *Quo elongati* between "use" and "possession" of goods has little importance in the daily life of the friar. With all due respect to the canonist, in my opinion such a distinction is no more than a legal fiction. For the individual friar, luxurious habits are often rationalized by a further fiction. We say to ourselves, "I really need these things to be a fulfilled person." For myself, I think I often confuse what I really need and what I really want as the same. Of course, needs and wants are not always the same. Material poverty does not include room for such legalism or rationalization.

Material poverty does include (1) originality and spontaneity in process, (2) moderation of use based on needs, and (3) a pro-

phetic response to modern materialism. First, Francis does not give us a legal structure. He leaves us the model of life true to his originating inner self and spontaneous in response to his surroundings based on this originality. This presumes a life of penance or continual conversion, which means that each friar must continually ask himself how his relation to material goods reflects his inner poverty. Only in such a process can integrity to self and unfeared response to the situation occur. Secondly, each friar must know his true needs and be able to distinguish between necessity and luxury. Francis, for example, broke his fast and ate with his hungry brother. In the First Rule (ch. 9), Francis tells the friars to accept material goods for their needs. The principle developed by Bonaventure and enunciated by Nicholas III in *Exiit qui seminat* calls for "moderate use,"¹⁰ recognizing that the use of certain goods (clothing, buildings, etc.) is necessary but that moderation ought to be observed. Each community and each friar has the obligation of discerning needs and moderate use of goods. Final-

¹⁰John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 177-87. The opinion here is mine, not Moorman's.

ly, given the opposition between the vision of Francis, who saw God's presence in materiality, and the outlook of much of our own society, which manipulates materiality without respect for its deeper mystery, all the friars are called to respond prophetically to

Conclusion

AT THE beginning of this article, I said that in addition to the three levels already discussed, there is a fourth level of poverty: poverty in relation to self. I place this last in order, not because it carries the least importance, but because it is operationally evident in the relations to God, persons, and things. I feel I should add that it is on this fourth level that the pain and joy of living poverty will be experienced. If poverty frees us from what in our lives holds us back from God, it will be because it has touched in a special way the inner core of our self. From my initial study of Francis, I feel that poverty accomplished this for him. By stripping him to the very core of his being, it removed his fear of the lepers in his life.

The *Sacrum Commercium* tells the story of Francis's courtship of Lady Poverty—a process that begins with his conversion to a life of penance, his adopting of a spiritual perspective which

such abuse. Where nature is abused, when the elements are combined to destroy rather than to enhance creation, the friars must respond by presenting their alternative world vision. In this way their poverty gives witness to what is to come.

becomes the principle of all poverty. The process also includes, for Francis, a relationship to his companions in minority. A banquet takes place, where he and they reap the fruits of poverty. The material manifestation of poverty plays a central and prophetic role in salvation history according to this narrative, which concludes with Lady Poverty giving admonitions to the friars regarding their future.

In this article, I have presented my own views on poverty. Certainly these views do not hold the weight enjoyed by those of the author of the *Sacrum Commercium*. But the description is similar, and all in all, I believe that they hold true to a basic core of Franciscanism. In light of what I have said, perhaps each of us can ask himself how his journey of poverty in relation to God, other people, and material things brings him closer to God and witnesses to the Kingdom.



BOOKS RECEIVED

- Bain, Georgia Weber, and Sister Virginia Ann Gardner, S.S.J., eds., *Understanding the Sunday Readings: July, August, September, 1980*. Wilmington, NC: McGrath Publishing Co. Consortium Books, 1980. Pp. xiii-173. Lector's edition, \$12.95 1-year sub., \$51.50, paperback. Regular edition, \$8.95; 1-year sub., \$38.50, paperback.
- Wroblewski, Sergius, O.F.M., *Sons of Saint Francis, Get Together*. Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers, 1980. Pp. 70. Paper, \$1.25.