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COVER AND ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

The cover drawing, illustrative of Franciscan loyalty to the Church, was drawn by Sister Marie Monica, O.S.F., and the other illustrations by Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C.

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A REVIEW EDITORIAL

Hans Küng—Catholic Theologian?

THE WESTMINSTER PRESS has done all Christians a real favor by making available in a single attractive and rather inexpensive volume a large number of essays dealing with theological themes that are quite fundamental and of great concern today.

The book's main theme is, as the title clearly indicates, the need for contemporary theologians to attain a consensus as to the nature and methodology of their science. A paper on theological method was solicited from Hans Küng for the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* by its Editor, Leonard Swidler, and responses requested from the various other contributors. Edward Schillebeeckx, in poor health at the time, did not reply directly to Küng's paper but sent, instead, a summary he had already written of his own latest book. Most of the other contributors, however—six Roman Catholic, three Protestant, and one each Episcopal, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu theologians—offer comments on both Küng's and Schillebeeckx's papers. Their responses do, as the editor alleges, cover the theological spectrum, but numerically there is a preponderance of contributions, on what I think most educated Christians would call the "left of center."

In addition to Küng's initial essay and the responses to it, the book contains an editor's introduction, a review of Schillebeeckx's latest book, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, reviews of Küng's last two books, a collaborator's account of the writing of *Existiert Gott?*, and Küng's post-condemnation statement. "Why I Remain a Catholic."

Consensus in Theology? A Dialogue with Hans Küng and Edward Schillebeeckx. Edited by Leonard Swidler. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1980. Pp. vii-165. Cloth, \$12.95; paper, \$4.95.

THIS REVIEW EDITORIAL is mainly about Hans Küng, and before it ends, I hope the reader will understand clearly why Küng's status as a theologian is of so specifically a Franciscan concern that it merits editorial discussion in this periodical. Still, something needs to be said about Schillebeeckx inasmuch as he figures prominently both in the book under review and in the current theological debate.

If you have not yet read what has come to be called the Dutch theologian's first (large) "Jesus book"—*Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*—I believe you will find both the author's summary and John Nijenhuis's review at least somewhat enlightening and helpful, as both author and reviewer clarify their concern that Christology be a truly evangelical response to the contemporary human condition fraught with pain and poverty. I have always held the renowned theologian in great respect, and surely we are deeply in his debt for the prodigious task he has accomplished in his last two books. It is not a pleasant task, however, to report that the unstinting admiration I have for his earlier work has yielded to an attitude of serious doubt toward his present doctrinal position. Although he still maintains a high Christology, e.g., he apparently does so only as "a temporary measure in order not to disturb the faithful" (p. 134). Again, he claims not to want to diverge from traditional trinitarian theology, but speaks disconcertingly of a "Binity" in apparent preference to Trinity and will not speak, on the other hand, of "an essence-trinity of *persons* BEFORE the Incarnation" (p. 135).

But to return to the book's main theme: both Küng's and Schillebeeckx's essays present a definite conception of theological method and norms, which some of the respondents consider closer to one another than do others. The method, redolent of Tillich's "correlation," consists in relating two "poles" (Küng) or "sources" (Schillebeeckx) of theology: the pure Gospel message (Küng) or past Christian experience (Schillebeeckx), on the one hand; and, on the other, contemporary human experience. The norms are spelled out as ten "guiding principles" (Küng) and three "hermeneutical principles" (Schillebeeckx); and, while there are certainly some differences between the two sets, both come down basically to an exhortation to academic openness, ecumenical awareness, tolerance, and historical-experiential emphasis.

Hans Küng is, as his collaborator Karl-Josef Kuschel explains with what I can describe only as a hero-worshipping rapture, a good, clear writer. He does say superbly exactly what he wants to say, with the result, not only that this work is clear and pleasantly readable, but also that any doctrinal difficulties it contains must be seen as deliberate and not due to any defect in his prowess as an author. I was hardly surprised, therefore, to find his seminal essay generally engaging. Reading it for the first time, I was indeed irritated by his reference to "benumbed neo-scholastic dogmatics," to "dogmas [!] that have become questionable," and to the biblical era as a "completely different world of experience" from ours; and I did have the impression

In his works . . . (Professor Küng) manifests clearly that he does not consider several authentic doctrines of the Church as definitively decided . . . ; and with that, based on his personal convictions, he is no longer able to work in the sense of the mission which he received from the bishop in the name of the Church.

Pope John Paul II, Letter to the West German Bishops' Conference, May 15, 1980 (Text in Origins, 10:3, 6/5/80)

of a certain one-sidedness and systematic incompleteness. But at that point, I was determined to remain as open as I could. An author, after all, cannot be expected to say exactly what, and everything that a given reader wants said; and omission does not necessarily indicate rejection.

The respondents, however, were not as reluctant as I was to find fault: to point out not only weaknesses and vagueness, but even omissions. Unqualified praise is, in fact, accorded Küng only by the book's editor, by collaborator Kuschel, and by Hindu theologian Kana Mitra—Hinduism's anti-dogmatic, relativistic character is, of course, well known to Westerners. Orthodox theologian Nikos Nissiotis focuses eloquently on the most glaring of all the omissions: Küng's utter silence on the essential Christian themes of pneumatology and communal, intersubjective experience. So revealing are these omissions, and so perceptive Nissiotis's essay in general, that it alone is worth the price of the book.

I also found Bernard Cooke and

Paul van Buren confirming my initial impression of Küng's vagueness. Cooke likewise called attention to Küng's failure to distinguish between "attitudinal" and "procedural" principles and, along with Arthur Crabtree and others, protested that Küng's much vaunted historical emphasis is really nothing new at all. Not only has Christian theology always had some degree of such emphasis, but historical awareness has also always been a central feature of Jewish theology (Jacob B. Agus). Paradoxically, Küng's own appreciation of the historical is truncated. First, he is strangely silent on pre-Christian Israel. Secondly, his version of the venerable "scriptura sola" doctrine (the Bible as *norma normans*) is just as unworkable as any of the other versions and embodies a supra-temporal understanding of NT Revelation (cf. Gerard Sloyan, Avery Dulles, and van Buren). And finally, he neglects important concrete, historical dimensions of contemporary scholarship: the literary, critical, symbolic, and hermeneutic (David Tracy and Sloyan).

Certitude in doctrinal matters is, moreover, both more easily attainable and of greater concern to the faithful than either Küng or Schillebeeckx seems to think (cf. Sloyan); indeed, any Christian reader ought to welcome gratefully and take to heart Muslim theologian Seyyed Hussein Nasr's eloquent reassertion of the eternal truth of metaphysical insight, of the ephemeral character of cultural fads, of the sterility of reductionism (to which Küng has certainly succumbed), and of theology's right and duty to lead, rather than follow, mankind with its empirical discoveries.

These are but a few of the important correctives and insights offered in this rich volume. Space precludes further extension of our sampling, but before continuing mention must be made of Rosemary Ruether, who emerges as it were out of nowhere in an otherwise respectable academically serious volume, to issue her perennial strident invitation to a populist revolt in the Church which will subvert both the academic and the ecclesiastical institutions.

As already mentioned, the book concludes with Küng's essay, "Why I Remain a Catholic," which appears also in his book, *The Church—Maintained in Truth* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980). The essay's tone of bitter dejection is of course understandable and hardly an important issue. In fact, it is somewhat mitigated by protestations of not "being against" Rome, the papacy, or the present Pope.

Substantively and positively, the essay is designed to answer the question, "What, properly speaking is this

Catholic reality for the sake of which [Küng wants] to remain a Catholic theologian?" (p. 161). The author defines Catholicity in temporal and spatial terms and goes on to insist that "not everything that has been officially taught and practiced in the Catholic Church is Catholic" (p. 163).

In itself and out of context, this sort of demurrer is harmless enough; I myself have made it on more than one occasion, pointing to some of the same examples used here by Küng. I would go further, in fact, and agree that there must be some criterion for deciding what is genuinely Catholic, and that somehow "reforms—in practice and teaching—must remain possible." This was, after all, the whole rationale for Vatican II. I also like Küng's insistence on an "evangelical catholicity" concentrated and organized in the light of the Gospel" (p. 164). The real rub emerges in the concluding four paragraphs, introduced by the question, "What of the Roman factor?" "Precisely because [he] wanted to be a Catholic theologian," Küng asserts, he "could not tie [his] Catholic faith and Catholic theology simply to the ingrown Roman absolutist claims from the Middle Ages and later times." He acknowledges and defends the "pastoral primacy of the Bishops of Rome," but objects to "Roman legalism, centralism, and triumphalism in teaching, morality and Church discipline" (ibid).

Any serious, conscientious academic must feel some sympathy for the plight in which Küng finds himself. In no other discipline is there this demand to subject one's well

thought-out conclusions to scrutiny and evaluation by others who are often (if not usually) less gifted than oneself in logical prowess, rhetorical talent, and even pastoral concern. But theology, the content of which is directly relevant to human beings' eternal destiny, is based on faith, not logic or rhetoric, and to reduce it to the level of other sciences (empirical or rational) is to eliminate what is most essential to it.

Any theologian, therefore, must submit his work to appraisal by the Roman authorities precisely because it is to Peter that the task has been entrusted of safeguarding the purity of Christian truth. The procedure for such submission has been spelled out anew in some painstaking detail by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (*Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 [1971], 234-36; trans. in *Canon Law Digest* 7 [1968-72], 181-84).

Küng says that he is ready "to learn and to be corrected," but only "whenever it is a question of discussion between equal partners in a collegial spirit." This is his fundamental error. Yes, in every age it is necessary to decide what is Catholic, and as recent popes have emphatically agreed, reforms in practice and in teaching must remain possible. But theologians do not decide these things "as equal partners" with the magisterium. Nor is *everything* fit matter for such decisions; one would think Küng had never heard of that venerable device called "theological notes," designed to clarify the varying degrees of certitude that characterizes various teachings and practices in accord with their proximity to the

center of Judeo-Christian Revelation.

Küng further insists that "against all the repeated assertions to the contrary by the German Bishops," he has "never refused... a discussion [of his teachings] with the Roman authorities" (p. 165). Does he really expect us to believe that the entire German Hierarchy is lying? Actually, the record shows that he took a full year to reply to the 1973 Decree, *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, and even then, his "discussion" consisted in a rejection of the invitation to a quiet reconciliation and a simple assertion that he wanted to reflect for a while and *might* eventually reach conclusions in conformity with Roman teaching.

Küng refers to the above "invitation" (and other decrees in the matter) as the exercise, "throughout all the years... of an Inquisition according all rights to itself and practically none to the accused person" (ibid). It is difficult to specify the exact reference of such a general statement, but he may be referring, among other things, to the fact that the staff of the Sacred Congregation for the Faith itself designates a "reporter" for the author in its investigative procedure. Only Küng himself and the others actually involved in the procedure know for sure all the concrete details of any personal communications that may have taken place. But the point is, none of this is to the essential point, at least for Catholics. The essential point is the one stated above: the safeguarding of doctrinal truth belongs to Rome, and theologians do not discuss their innovations with the Roman authority "as equal partners." Orthodox Catholic theologians have

The ministers... are bound to ask the Pope for one of the cardinals of the Holy Roman Church to be governor, protector, and corrector of this fraternity, so that we may be utterly subject and submissive to the Church.

St. Francis, 2 Rule, 12

always understood this—none, perhaps, better than Teilhard and de Lubac, to whom Küng refers in this unfortunate essay.

Why this feature-length editorial on general Catholic theology in a periodical devoted to Franciscan spirituality? Precisely because the allegiance to the Holy See so close to the heart of the Franciscan ideal is being undermined in the current theological miasma. This past January no fewer than sixteen Franciscan campus ministers wrote to *Forum* (Holy Name Province's Newsletter) to express their academic communities' scandal at "methods of coercion which they associate more with atheistic Communism than with the Church of Christ." They themselves were "alarmed too by the absence of due process." What bothered the academic community, they said, was the way Küng, Schillebeeckx, and others had been "treated. To suppress an idea, some felt, was wrong; to suppress a person, all felt was wrong."

In this age of heightened sensitivity to human rights, one can certainly sympathize with this personal concern and fraternal solicitude on the part of Franciscan campus ministers for their fellow priests. But in the interests of accuracy, one really must ask for evidence of human-rights violations—and no such

evidence is available, at least on the record. Küng *was* invited to attempt a personal, quiet reconciliation and refused the invitation.

More importantly, in a religious and theological context, the human rights issue is secondary. Truth and the purity of the Church's faith constitute the real issue. If a theologian contumaciously goes on subverting that truth and that purity, then, sixteen campus ministers to the contrary notwithstanding, his *personal* suppression is *not* "wrong." Even if the authorities' conduct leaves something to be desired in the way of courtesy, it is wrong to focus on that as the main issue. When the firemen have finished putting out the flames that threatened to engulf your home, you don't protest their using the wrong fork to eat the cake you serve them on their way out. So when those duly charged with the mission of safeguarding the faith have taken courageous action in discharging that mission, people loyal to the Church of Christ do not obfuscate the atmosphere with anti-Roman diatribes and accusations of "methods associated with atheistic Communism." If anyone in the world should have a delicately honed *sensus Catholicus* for what is important, necessary, essential, in Roman Catholicism, surely it is the followers of the Poverello—that *vir Catholicus et*

totus apostolicus!

It is no exaggeration to say that these are perilous times for the Roman Church. It is time for all of us to stand up and be counted as Rome struggles to rein in the many post-conciliar excesses. We may hope that people of good will everywhere, of whatever religious persuasion, will understand the need for this restoration of balance. We are grateful to such Muslim and Orthodox theologians as those who, in the book

under review, show that they understand only too well what is at stake. But we can only shake our heads in disbelief as so called Catholic theologians venture to speak "as equal partners" with the magisterium, all the while deploring an "Inquisition," and as followers of the Poverello take up their cause with an emotionalism devoid of historical perspective and perception of the real issue involved. Is Hans Küng a Catholic theologian? No.

Fr. Michael D. Mailach, OFM

A Reply from a Franciscan Campus Minister

I WOULD LIKE to comment on Father Michael's concern for the posture of his fellow Franciscans who as campus ministers felt constrained to speak of the scandal caused in their academic communities by the Hans Küng affair.

The heart of the issue is not in my opinion theological. Although Father Küng has written extensively on theological as well as non-theological subjects, the precise reason behind his condemnation by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is not clear. It seems that Father Küng is still free to publish, lecture, and disseminate his ideas, theological and historical. The Congregation has withdrawn his "missio canonica." It is unclear what constitutes "missio canonica"; the implications of the decision as well as its canonical limitations also are not clear.

This lack of precision is more than a little disconcerting to American academic communities accustomed

to Anglo-Saxon practices of due process. As much because of self-interest as because of the international threat of totalitarianism, academicians devote enormous attention to legal procedures in foreign countries, in the United States, and within their own universities.

Campus ministers serve men and women living in this intellectual environment. When the Franciscan campus ministers spoke of "scandal" to their communities, they meant that in their pastoral opinion the manner in which the official Church dealt with Hans Küng turned many academicians away from an interest in the Church and its teachings on Christ; that is to say, it constituted scandal.

The Franciscans did *not* say that Hans Küng was correct. The campus ministers did say that members of the academic communities were scandalized by the process.

Perhaps we could say, then, that the campus ministers were speaking

from a pastoral point of view just as Father Michael is speaking from a theological point of view, but we should point out that one does not necessarily contradict the other. All of Father Michael's theological statements could be true and the chaplains could still be correct in their evaluation of the spiritual harm done to these people with whom they are working.

When a group of concerned clergy state that certain actions of the official Church scandalize their congregation, then the proper response, it would seem to me, is to demonstrate either (1) that *l'affaire Küng* did not scandalize the academic community, or (2) how to overcome that scandal. To say their expression of concern automatically makes these men un-Franciscan and disloyal to the Holy See is to miss the point of why they spoke and to assume a malevolent motivation behind the statement. This is not Christian dialogue.

No one knows the spiritual condition of people better than their pastors. If these campus ministers are sounding a warning, the Church officials should respond to their alarm. Their fellow Catholics should share their concerns and not introduce theological disputes where they are not germane.

Father Michael writes, "More importantly, in a religious and theological context, the human rights issue is secondary. Truth and the purity of the Church's faith constitute the real issue."

His statement is an abstract separation of truth and love that is alien to Christianity as lived by human beings. Christians try to love one

another, even those in the community who do not live as well as they should. Saint Paul's memorable phrase of "doing [making] the truth in love" comes to mind. Of course human beings come first (if in making this statement we can avoid an unhelpful comparison between love and truth or any implication that they are opposed, as Father Michael seems to and surely cannot mean to). It is the delicacy of treatment (due process, fraternal corrections or whatever) with which the Vatican demonstrates its concern for Hans Küng *and* the truth that will attract souls to Christ and his church.

The absence of this concern, which Americans expect in religious figures, exacerbates the uneasiness they feel in the absence of due process; Americans thus easily make the comparison with totalitarianism and Communist regimes. If people make this connection then the campus ministers do not "obfuscate the atmosphere" by saying so.

If we Christians can say that we must love people in truth, then we must be loving in the way we deal with people as we try to preserve that truth. This would seem to be a fundamental basis of Christian behavior. The campus ministers indeed "have a delicately honed *sensus Catholicus* for what is important, necessary, essential, in Roman Catholicism... as followers of the Poverello—that *vir Catholicus et totus apostolicus*!"

HOWARD V. O'SHEA, O.F.M.,
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Brothers and Sisters in the Lord Jesus:

Greetings and Peace

CY GALLAGHER, O.F.M. CAP.

THE RECIPIENTS of Paul's Letters to the Galatians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and the Thessalonians were, like those who received Francis's Letter to All the Faithful, ordinary people living their lives in keeping with the ordinary teaching they were most likely receiving in an ordinary way (though the Galatians were troubled by "false teachers who were trying to Judaize them"—see chapters 1 and 2). It was precisely this which prompted the authors to write the letters: to call them to more-than-ordinary lives.

These letters express deep affection on the part of Paul and Francis for the men and women who live their day to day lives honestly and uprightly. Paul and Francis exhort the faithful to the practice of the virtues, especially love. Paul (1 Thess. 3:12): "And may the Lord increase you and make you overflow with love for one another, and for all"; Francis (Letter to All the Faithful—II:25-27): "Besides this, we must bring forth fruits befitting repentance (Lk. 3:8) and love our neighbors as ourselves. . . ." And as a guideline to fraternal charity and correction both Saints speak with great

compassion. Paul (2 Thess. 3:15): "But do not treat (one who refuses to obey what I have written) like an enemy; rather, correct him as you would a brother"; Francis (II:44): "Nor from a brother's sin is anger to be had against a brother, rather dealt with him gently, with patience in all things, and humility, and encourage him."

Both Saints speak strongly about the mastery the faithful must have over their lower natures. Francis says (II:37-40): "We should hate our bodies, with their vices and sins, because the Lord says in the Gospel that all evils, vices and sins come out of the heart (Mt. 15:18-19; Mk. 7:23). We should love our enemies and do good to those who hate us (cf. Mt. 5:44; Lk. 6:27). We should observe the precepts and counsels of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, we should deny ourselves (cf. Mt. 16:24) and place our bodies under the yoke of service and obedience as each of us has promised the Lord." Paul says to the Colossians (3:5-17): "Put to death whatever in your nature is rooted in earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires, and that lust which is idolatry. You must put

them aside now: all the anger and quick temper, the malice, the insults, the foul language. . . . Bear with one another; forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. . . . Whatever you do, whether in speech or in action, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Clearly, these admonitions and

guidelines are intended for those who already believe. Both Paul and Francis are intent on calling the faithful to deeper holiness, to join with them in saying: "In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col. 1:24).



Tree Ghosts

Tree Ghosts
Shadows of shadows
Dancing on the window
Of the school across the way
Green grey and gossamer,
More real, for the moment
Than the forms that bind them
In the early morning light.

The clouds
steal the sun
And they break free,
Tree ghosts
Into the mind.

Andrew Lewandowski, O.F.M.

Father Cy Gallagher, O.F.M. Cap., is Director of Post-Novitiate Formation for the Capuchin Province of Mid-America. This is the fourth in a series of comparisons between the letters of Paul and Francis.

Francis: Patron Saint of Ecology

John Paul II
In Perpetual Memory

AMONG THE SAINTS and illustrious men who had a special cult for nature, as God's magnificent gift to mankind, Saint Francis of Assisi is deservedly included. He had, in fact, a high sentiment of all the Creator's works, and, as if divinely inspired, he composed that beautiful Cantic of the Creatures. Through those creatures, especially brother sun and sister moon and the stars, he gave the almighty and good Lord due praise, glory, honor and every blessing.

Therefore, with a praiseworthy initiative, our Brother Cardinal Silvio Oddi, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Clergy, on behalf particularly of members of the international Society "Planning Environmental and Ecological Institute for Quality Life," presented to this Apostolic See the request that Saint Francis of Assisi should be proclaimed the heavenly patron saint of those interested in ecology.

We, therefore, after consulting the Sacred Congregation of the Sacraments and Divine Worship, by virtue of these Letters of ours and forever, proclaim Saint Francis of Assisi the heavenly patron saint of ecologists with all the honors and liturgical privileges implied. Notwithstanding any norm to the contrary, we make this disposition, ordering these Letters to be preserved religiously and to have their full effect at present and in the future. Given at St. Peter's in Rome, under the Fisherman's ring, on 29 November of the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and seventy nine, the second of our Pontificate.

AGOSTINO CARDINAL CASAROLI
SECRETARY OF STATE

From Easter Sunday of this year (6 April), Saint Francis of Assisi, as well as being the chief patron saint of Italy (it was Pius XII who named him as such in 1939), is also the patron saint of ecology. In this special Bull, reprinted with permission from L'Osservatore Romano, we read the above text in translation from the original Latin.

Ut cum Sanctis Tuis Laudem Te in Saecula Saeculorum

MOTHER MARY FRANCIS, P.C.C.

IN OUR LAST conference, we reflected on the call of death, "in hora mortis voca me," linking that which is ordinarily considered part of the next petition with it, since it is the "jube me venire ad te," "bid me come to you," which explains the reason for each of God's calls to us. We were concerned not only with that great, final, dramatic call of death, but also with the calls of every day, since all of them are invitations to come to the Caller. In every call to sacrifice, to generosity, to charity, to humility, to whatever, our Lord calls only that we may come to him. If we do not understand this in life, dear sisters, then we shall not understand it in death; and that call at the hour of our death will not be fulfilled in our own free choice and response.

Well, now, out of that consideration flows the final one of this great prayer. The last petition itself explains to us what we are supposed to do when we come

to Jesus. "Call me and bid me come to you." And then what? So that "with all your saints I may praise you forever and ever." "Ut cum sanctis tuis laudem te in saecula saeculorum."

We know, dear sisters, that praise is one of the predominant themes of Holy Scripture, certainly pre-eminent in the psalms. It would be an engrossing and rewarding work to go through the psalms searching for their invitations to praise. They simply abound! We are aware that there is even a special group of psalms called "the praise psalms." And if this theme runs so strongly, vibrantly, vividly through all of psalmody, it reaches its resounding climax in the final psalms. The last one of them all, Psalm 150, goes, one might say, quite wild with praise. We have reached the end of psalmody now. We have lived with the psalmist through some very hard times and some very downcast

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days. We have searched God's way with the psalmist, recognized his complaints as our frequent own, brooded with him on injustice, and been ashamed with him in our sins and failings. So, what is the climax, the final word? Praise! praise! praise! Psalm 150 calls us to get out our cymbals, get out our timbrels, get out our harps, and praise, praise, praise!

Let us look into this theme of praise, dear sisters, to which the Old Testament as well as the New returns us again and again. Just on the tip of my mind I have some very familiar phrases, "May the living God, my Savior, be praised forever." There it is, right there: the final phrase of the "Anima Christi" prayer—praise, forever and ever. "Ut cum sanctis tuis laudem te in saecula saeculorum." This praise is never to end. Again, the psalmist tells us that "a sacrifice of praise will give me glory." Speaking now in God's name, he announces: "It will give me glory." Does praising seem a rather bland occupation to be solely engaged in for all eternity? In *saecula saeculorum—amen*? Well, dear sisters, let us look into the theme of praise on the human level.

When we love someone very, very much, it is not true that one of our greatest joys is to praise him or her? Another outstanding joy we experience when we love deeply is in hearing the loved one

praised. We are pleased to hear others say kind and laudatory words about someone we greatly esteem. There is a very particular joy in this; and the more deeply we love, the deeper is the satisfaction. The more we love, the more do we wish to hear these praises of the loved one sounded from others as well as by ourselves. What delights a young man in love so much as endlessly extolling the beauty of his loved one? He rehearses and reviews her grace, her virtue, her physical beauty. He enjoys thinking about this, he delights to walk about it, and he loves to hear it praised by others. Or, turning the situation about, what do the poetry of the ages and the music of the centuries and the paintings of the millennia testify that that the young girl in love wants to do? She wishes to praise her beloved because he is so handsome, so strong, so upright, so kind, so talented, so brave. This is her joy, to praise.

As love grows stronger, dear sisters, so increases the desire to praise. It is always a sign of the weakening of love when we have less taste for praising a loved one. This is a good point of examination for ourselves. If our love for God is growing less fervent and ardent, we have an inbuilt barometer to warn us. It registers less concern for praising him. It is definitely not a rather bleak activity for all eternity, simply to

praise. For one thing, dear sisters, the more we love a human being, and certainly the more we grow in the love of God, the more do we see to praise.

The person who loves very little does not see much to praise in the other. Again, this is a test of our charity. If we do not observe much to praise in our sister, there's one thing sure: we do not love her enough and if we love her more, we shall have our own reward of seeing more and more to praise in her. The heart that loves little always sees little or nothing to praise. The heart that loves much will see something to praise where others perhaps will not. Now, there are qualities and characteristics of praise. Let us look at some of them.

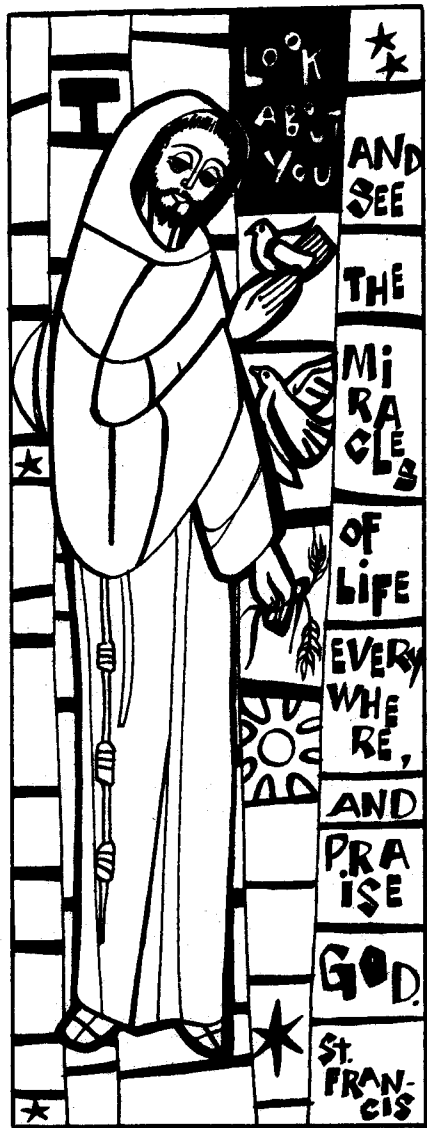
Praise is always humble. I would say that this is its very first attribute, because in praising another we in some way situate ourselves below that person. Praise of its nature exalts the one praised, sets this person or this dear God above the one praising. So, by the mere act of praising, we assume a position of humility. We take a willing stance beneath another. We claim the position so favored by Saint Francis and Saint Clare, that of being prostrate at the feet of God and at the feet of others. So, this is the first property. Praise is, of its nature, humble. We are situated beneath the one praised and the one

praised is exalted.

Turning our consideration around to its other side, we observe that in reality the less humble we are, the less taste we shall have for praise and the less we shall understand the glory of having an eternal activity—eternal assignment if you will—to praise God. The humbler we are, the more ardent grows our desire to praise. And the more we truly praise, the more do we discover how much there is to praise. This *in saecula saeculorum* praising of God is not static but forever unfolding, the horizons forever expanding.

Then, I think the second characteristic of praise is that it is joyous. The one who praises is by the very act of sincere praising not grudging but spontaneous and eager. We sometimes hear the description that a critic, perhaps a drama critic, maybe a music critic, often enough an everyday-life-critic, gave "grudging praise" to someone or to a performance. This is no praise at all, dear sisters. Praise of its nature can never be grudging; it is joyously, freely given. It flows out of desire. I would venture to say that it flows out of need.

We see something praiseworthy; humbly situated beneath it, we *must* praise it. There is spontaneity, eagerness. This, of course, was so very characteristic of our Father Saint Francis and our Mother Saint Clare. They saw



ardent! Be praised, you made the water so lovely and chaste! Francis praised, praised, praised. And the more he praised, the happier he became.

Remember, dear sisters, that the one who sincerely praises is always a happy person. And if we speak of grudging praise, we are not really talking about praise at all but rather dealing with an unhappy, cramped person—a wizened, constrained, self-focused person. Praise breaks out of a joyous heart. Juan Diego naively says to our Lady in the story of Guadalupe, describing his wife, Maria Lucia, “O! I wish I could tell you! She was lovely, my Maria Lucia. I wish I could tell you. I wish you could know.” Praise is inevitably gladly eager to share the charms, to tell the greatness, to describe the beauty of the beloved with others. So, praise is humble and praise is joyous.

Out of that flows its third characteristic. Praise is liberating. It takes us out of ourselves into the glory of another. It bursts open doors, breaks locks, sets us free. And this is what will be our occupation in heaven: forever expanding, being taken more and more out of even our own glorified selves into the glory of God. This alone shows us that it is not static. Rather, of its nature it is dynamic. Praise breaks out. Let us remember these characteristics of praise, and let us look into our-

more to praise. We have Francis’s Canticle of the Creatures: O dear Lord, be praised for the sun! Be praised, you made the moon! Be praised, you created fire so

selves as we remember. If we have lost our taste for praise, if we are “grudging” in our praise, if we see little to praise in our sisters, then we shall certainly not see all that much to praise in God’s lower creation, either. We shall be just as grudging about that. But if we are praisers because we are humbly situated beneath the other whom in praise we are exalting, we shall be joyous, spontaneous, ungrudging, and eager, with wide-open eyes to see all there is to be praised, liberated from the dank little dungeon of ourselves into the glory of another. It is in the glory of God and in the glory of others that we find ourselves. We do not find ourselves in self-focusedness, in constraint. That only gives us spiritual myopia. It is when we are liberated into God and into others, into praise of them, that we find our own true selves.

Turning those three characteristics around, we can examine together for a few minutes what tends to obscure them. The taste for praise is endangered or lost by what I have just mentioned: self-absorption, the very opposite of humility, being always concerned with ourselves and ever or at least a great part of the time seeking our own exaltation. We are grieved if we are invited to attend to what is not praiseworthy in ourselves and what needs amending there. We take it amiss when this is pointed out

by those whose duty it is to correct us and to help us see what is not at all praiseworthy in ourselves. We make a great trauma out of this, excusing ourselves from effort because we are so self-absorbed. Then, of course, praise of God as well as of others is gravely endangered if not forsaken because there is no humility in us.

Similarly, if there is fault-finding, then obviously the joyousness of praise is afflicted. The fault-finder, as I have reminded you on occasions before, will always have her dark reward. We can find fault in any situation if we wish to do so because no human situation is perfect. If we set out to find fault with one another we shall inevitably be rewarded because everyone of us has many faults. And we can end this dark pursuit, dear sisters, by finding fault with God. That may seem a stunning possibility at first hearing, but do we not have to strike our breasts and admit that it is so? Often enough we are grumbling at God, finding fault with God. “Why is this the way it is? Why did this have to be changed? Why are my plans upset? Why does so-and-so do this? Why does so-and-so not do that? Why does this situation have to perdure?” Finding fault with God as well as others can become one’s occupation. So, of course, all the joyousness is drained out of us, and our darkness is inflicted

on others.

We can find fault with the sun because it is hot. It makes us uncomfortable in the summer. Instead, we could be standing with our Father Saint Francis and praising the sun because it gives us the light of day. Our appreciation of God's most splendid creations can be dulled by fault-finding. Instead of rejoicing in the gorgeousness of the sunset we can grumble that it is heralding the night and light is going to die. We can find fault, dear sisters, with God's greatest gifts. We can chafe at his grace because it invites us to excel our present state and to expand our present narrow attitude. We can murmur at the inspiration to sacrifice because it demands something of us. By fault-finding with others, we drift into the horror of finding fault with God, in his creation, in his arrangements, in his designs. Why do I have to suffer this? Why does it have to be that way? Fault-finding comes from a heart that has lost the joyousness of praising.

And then, the opposite of that third characteristic of praise—that it is liberating—could only be negativism. Just as with the positive attributes of praise, so with these three dark characteristics of the un-praising heart (and isn't that a frightful descriptive, dear sisters—the un-praising heart!): we find them flowing out of one another into one another.

This third property of the un-praising heart, negativism, comes from self-absorption and fault-finding. We cannot have a positive enjoyment of flowers because they need to be watered, watched, picked. We need them for the altar, and so they must be sheltered from the heat of the sun, be given fertilizing elements, be protected from infestation or blight. These needs, calling for her energy, disaffect the negative person.

Our Father Saint Francis loved the flowers; our Mother Saint Clare said to her sisters, "Don't miss the trees!" Saint Vincent de Paul in his old age used to tap with his cane at the flowers as he walked in the garden and admonish them: "Don't shout so loud!" To him they were literally shouting the praises of God. And that is our vocation, dear sisters. It is the vocation of every Christian and certainly of the contemplative bride to praise all the works of the Beloved. Sadly, we can gradually degenerate into the peevishness of the un-praising heart because flowers have to be watered and are such a lot of trouble, really.

We have an eternal vocation to praise God, and we practice for it on earth by praising him in all his ways which are not our ways, for his thought which is not our thought, in his wisdom which is beyond our understanding, for his plans which excel our com-

prehension, so that our taste for praising grows and grows and grows. It is the one who praises God in the small flower who will see an even smaller one to praise, just as it is the one who is grudging, negative, and self-absorbed who will either see the flower merely as something demanding work for its tending or not worth the eye's seeing. This person will end up by stepping on the flower in one way or another.

Dear sisters, there are flowers blooming all about us: sentient, animate, human flowers. If we do not praise them in the love of our hearts, we will finish by stepping on them, too. And if we do that, let us never deceive ourselves that we can ever grow in the praise of God. We rehearse for eternity every day. And this great "Anima Christi" prayer, as it comes to its climactic end, reveals to us what eternity is: the state where all the saints of God praise him forever and ever. Let us begin it with renewed vigor today. Let us see how many things there are for which to praise God. O! what a litany we could compose, just sitting here together! We are alive! God has loved us, thought of us, wanted us to live. May he be praised! What God is there like this God who thought of creating me? I am an unique thought of God! And God has redeemed us. May he be praised! Even after we have denied his grace, betrayed his

inspirations again and again, disappointed him over and over, he still thinks us worth redeeming. May he be praised! And he made this day for us to live in and gave us sisters to love. Our Father Saint Francis walked about like one bemused, saying: "And then God gave me brothers!" God gave us sisters. May he be praised!

Let us end this conference by turning to our Mother Saint Clare as she speaks her last words on this earth: "Be you praised, Lord, for having created me!" She is confiding to us that she had rehearsed carefully and long for eternity, so that now a whole life of praising God in all his works could end only with this great cry of praise. Not: thank God, the pain is over now and death is going to put an end to it, and I am going to enter into heaven. Oh, no! This very sick woman, this great Mother of ours, suffering in body and so long suffering in spirit, too, cried out: "Praise! praise! praise!" She is joyous, she is humble, she is liberated beyond what some of our modern liberated ladies could even imagine. "Be you praised, . . . Lord, for having created me!" Dear sisters, how I praise him for having created every one of you. May we practice together for eternity where we hope with all the saints to praise him forever and ever.

To John Paul I (August 26, 1978 — September 28, 1978)

Love's Gift

A part of me had died somewhere
(Strange—I don't know where or when),
Lay cold and barren
Unable to respond.

Until that moment
When—like a flash of lightning
Across a stormy sky—
My winter heart was touched.
And like smoldering fire
Which receives a breath of air and
Leaps into flame,
My heart was filled with a warmth
It had not known before.
That part long dead
Now lived.

A smile had crossed the ocean
On that August afternoon
And, like a fire consuming the ice within its path,
Encircled my heart
And melted the frozenness within.
That part long dead
Now lived.

A smile had crossed the ocean
On that summer day of hope
And freed my heart to love.
As one day wove itself into another
I grew to know and love

The author of that smile
Who wrote within my searching soul
The beauty of a gentle, humble life,
Whose simple message: "I am a poor man, accustomed to little things,"
became my goal.
That part once dead
Now lived.

Then suddenly
In the hushed silence of a September night
He was gone,
His work complete,
His love poured out.
A stunned world found it difficult to believe—
A month had barely passed—
"His life too short," they said.
"Why so soon?" some asked.
There was so much of him we did not know,
So much we could have known . . .
"O the mystery of our God,
Who can know His ways?"

He is not gone—
His spirit lives
More vibrant now
Because of what he has become.
And I touch that spirit and feel that presence
And love more deeply (because of him)
Another Presence
Whose precious gift to me was
A man who called himself

JOHN PAUL.

Sister Adrienne Ann Urban, O.S.F.

Reverence and Vocation

Foundations of Chastity in the Spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi

TIMOTHY JOHNSON, O.F.M.CONV.

TO SPEAK of chastity from the Franciscan perspective never appears to have been a popular undertaking. This is evident from the lack of written material which is available in regard to this subject. This sparsity can, however, easily be understood when one turns to the ancient biographies and writings of Francis. The sources rarely speak of chastity, and when they do, the few thoughts and incidents which are mentioned are overshadowed by the emphasis which was placed on poverty and, to a lesser extent, on obedience. Modern commentators seem to be placed in the awkward position of trying to find a reason for chastity, whereas the respective values of poverty and obedience appears as self evident. The common approach in the past has been to place chastity within the context of poverty, and, in particular, within poverty of spirit. Although this point of departure is certainly rich, it is at the same time somewhat limited.

To interpret chastity in the light of poverty of spirit is by no means the only avenue for arriving at Francis's perception of chastity. Within the ancient "Lives" and writings of Francis, there are two concepts, reverence and vocation, which can serve as a basis for a different approach to chastity. I would like to make sure of these concepts in order to arrive at what I consider to be a fresh, yet faithful, interpretation of Francis's view of chastity.

A reading of the Rule of 1221 reveals the essence of Francis's perception of reverence. Reverence was for Francis an action prompted by the recognition of God's activity in the world. An awakened consciousness of God's presence was to lead to, and be consumed in, the adoration of the very same God.

We must refer every good to the most high supreme God, acknowledging that all good belongs to him, and we must thank him for it all because all good comes from him. May the most supreme and

high and only true God receive and have and be paid all honor and reverence, all praise and blessing, all thanks and all glory, for to him belongs all good and no one is good but only God (Lk. 18:19).¹

Francis demonstrated in his thoughts, words, and deeds that reverence is an attitude which one begins to acquire when there is an encounter with the works of the Most High. An attitude such as this was always to be incarnated in an act of adoration which pointed to God, the source of every good work. We can thus say that as Francis conceived it, reverence contained a particular attitude and a corresponding action.

Of all the wonderful works that the Father does in the world, certainly one of the most marvelous and mysterious for Francis was that of the giving of a vocation. To be called personally by God through the mediating presence of the Spirit was an occurrence of great import. It is in his Testament that Francis acknowledged quite clearly the divine origin of his vocation:

This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark on a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated me beyond measure; but then God led me into their company and I had

pity on them. When I once became acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me. After that I did not wait long before leaving the world.²

From Francis's point of view, not only his vocation, but every vocation which came to the community found its roots in the movements of divine inspiration. The animating presence of the Spirit was manifested within the process of entrance into the fraternity. With this in mind, we can understand why Francis insisted on a careful reception of the new candidates.³ He in no way wanted to hamper or impede an activity which owed its existence to a divine source.

The extent of divine initiative in the friar's vocation was not limited, in Francis's view, to the call to, and entrance into, the community. It was God himself who revealed the substance and basic orientation of the friar's life and how it was to grow and mature in the fertile soil of communal life. Francis was careful to point out that it was God who revealed that the sum and substance of the friar's life was to be found within the pages of the gospel: "When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but

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¹Rule of 1221, ch. 17 (*Omnibus*, p. 45).

²Testament (*Omnibus*, p. 67).

³Rule of 1221, ch. 2 (*Omnibus*, p. 32).

the Most High himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the gospel."⁴

Francis wholeheartedly accepted the gospel as the foundation and framework of the friar's life. In the first chapter of the Rule of 1221, we are able to see what he considered to be the gist of the Evangelists' message:

The Rule and life of the friars is to live in obedience, in chastity, and without property, following the teaching and footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou wilt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me (Mt. 19:21).⁵

Francis was aware that this lifestyle expressed in the Rule was to be lived in a unique way by the friar minor. Consequently, he resisted all attempts to be placed under a Rule which was foreign to his vocation.⁶ Because every Rule of a religious community carries within itself a specific and proper insight into the nature of Christian living, Francis knew that his calling could not be expressed in one of the existing Rules without doing spiritual violence to it. Conscious of his

personal summons from the Most High, Francis wished to protect his vocation in its pristine form. The core of this vocation was found in its literalness. To follow the very footsteps of Christ could not be reduced in any way to a simple imitation of some of Christ's virtues. Francis protected and treasured his vocation with a great sense of reverence. In this light we can see how Francis's concern was born out of the desire not to let anything alter, damage, or destroy the unique expression of the Spirit manifested in the calling of a friar minor.⁷



A holy reverence was an important factor in all of Francis's relationships, both inside and outside of the Order. Within the

⁴Testament (*Omnibus*, p. 68).

⁵Rule of 1221, ch. 1 (*Omnibus*, p. 31).

⁶*Mirror of Perfection* (*Omnibus*, p. 1197).

⁷For a discussion of this principle within the context of the friars' vocation, see Cajetan Esser, *Origins of the Franciscan Order*, trans. Aedan Daly and Irina Lynch (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970), p. 213.

fraternity Francis strove to place every decision between guardian and friar in the light of divine inspiration. A reverence of this type was significant because it demonstrated a deep respect for the workings of the Spirit. Its aim was to allow the most complete manifestation of the will of God.⁸ In living the gospel life, Francis saw that certain penitential practices could be helpful for the friars if they were approached, understood, and undertaken correctly. But he realized that the inspiration to take up these practices must come from God and not from man.⁹ Because Francis honored the presence of the Spirit within the friars, he allowed them the freedom to respond to his promptings. It was Francis's conviction of the Spirit's presence within the community that encouraged him to say that all friars should have a special reverence for one another. Thus, when the friars come together, their actions were to reflect the reality of the Spirit's presence among them.¹⁰

⁸For a treatment of the subject of divine inspiration and obedience, see *The Marrow of the Gospel: A Study of the Rule of St. Francis by the Franciscans of Germany*, trans. and ed. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1958), p. 190 (henceforth referred to as Brady).

⁹See Brady, p. 242, for an analysis of the role of penance in the friars' life.

¹⁰The importance of reverence in the context of fraternal relationships is discussed in Brady, p. 306.

¹¹*The Legend and Writings of St. Clare of Assisi*, trans. and ed. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1953), pp. 22-23.

Not only did Francis want the friars to honor one another, but he also believed that they should have a special reverence for all people. The acknowledgment and appreciation of the divine presence within all mankind became the foundation of Francis's lived expression of chastity. It is at this point that we can take up an analysis of chastity in a positive sense.

Any serious reflection on Francis's interpretation of chastity must take into account the relationship which Francis had with Clare. Within the context of this relationship, chastity can be viewed as a lived reality and thus escape the danger of being reduced to a vague or ambiguous ideal. Chastity lived within a void is unintelligible.

Francis discovered very early in his religious life that his interpretation of the gospel life was in no way restricted to men. His efforts to encourage and aid Clare in her desire to lead the gospel life is ample evidence of this realization.¹¹ Francis's discovery

no doubt led him to desire a deep relationship with Clare in which they could both grow and develop in the mutual understanding and living out of their gospel vocation. Reverence for this calling became the base upon which he, with Clare, built a unique and truly chaste relationship. Francis accepted the calling of Clare as being mediated by the Spirit, and Clare on her part acknowledged the divine source of Francis's vocation. Clare's acknowledgment of the Spirit's presence within Francis led her to turn to him for spiritual guidance:

And then Clare committed herself wholly to the guidance of Francis, considering him, after God, the director of her steps. Henceforth, her soul depended on his holy admonitions, and received with a ready heart whatever he spoke to her of the good Jesus.¹²

The mutual reverencing of their respective vocations was essential for Francis and Clare, and consequently they wished to do everything possible to further the divine initiative present within them. Their interaction could not have borne the fruit it did if a sacred respect had not been present within them. At this point

¹²Ibid., p. 27.

¹³Auspicius van Corstanje, O.F.M., *Francis: Bible of the Poor*, trans. N. David Smith (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), p. 91: "She was the perfect fulfillment of his dream and his holy task. 'One and the same Spirit led them out of the world' (2 Celano 204). The most complete expression of their faithfulness to each other was their faithfulness to the call they shared."

we can see that the relationship of chastity which Francis and Clare shared flowed from the deep, abiding reverence which each one had for the work of the Spirit in the other.¹³ Thus chastity became a lived reality for them which was manifested and experienced within their concrete relationship. All their subsequent actions which entered the realm of chastity were judged in this light.

Francis's reverence towards vocation, which developed into the dynamic state of chastity, was not restricted by Francis to Clare. It found some expression in every female relationship into which he entered. Francis was not fearful of women; rather, he feared he might in some way impede the action of the spirit within them if his actions were not rooted in a reverential attitude. In the varying accounts of his interaction with women, the ever present base of reverence can be found. One of these expressions of chastity was recounted by Thomas of Celano in his Second Life of Francis:

Once it happened, when Francis was going to Bevagna, that he was

not able to reach the town because of his weakness from fasting. His companion, however, sending a messenger to a certain spiritual woman, humbly begged bread and wine for the saint. When she heard this, she ran to the saint with her daughter, a virgin vowed to God, carrying what was necessary. But after the saint had been refreshed and somewhat strengthened, he in turn refreshed the mother and the daughter with the word of God. But while he preached to them, he did not look either of them in the face. When they departed his companion said to Francis: "Why, Brother, did you not look at the holy virgin who came with such devotion?" The father answered: "Who must not fear to look upon the bride of Christ?"¹⁴

An analysis of this text helps us to recognize that Francis was not motivated by a polite type of respect, nor an anxious fear, but rather by a truly sacred respect which flowed from his recognition of the spirit's presence in the women. Steeped in reverence, Francis labored to advance the work of the spirit in the women; yet he refused to be a hindrance

¹⁴2 Celano 114 (*Omnibus*, pp. 456-57).

¹⁵Father Cajetan Esser comments on this incident on the way to Bevagna; see Brady, p. 221.

¹⁶In several different instances in the various "Lives" of Francis, we find a real caution on the part of Francis in regard to his relationships. Thomas of Celano (2 Celano 119—pp. 460-62) describes how Francis came to discover that his relationships with certain prelates could be a true hindrance to the movement of the Spirit. This was not because these prelates were evil, but simply because Francis recognized that this type of relationship could hamper the vocation of the friars.

to that Spirit's action in any possible way.¹⁵

The different admonitions which Francis gave in regard to the friars' relationships with women must be viewed in the light of his perception of vocation. Francis was convinced that the friars minor were called to proclaim the Kingdom of God to all people. This fact necessitated the movement of the friars into various social levels. In the eyes of Francis, nothing was to impede that task. The important thing to remember is that, although he did believe certain female relationships should inhibit the vocation of the friar, he did not hold the opinion that this was the only type of relationship which could restrict the movement of the Spirit.¹⁶

Francis wished that a spiritual good would flow from every encounter that the friars had with women. His preoccupation with the spiritual good of those with whom the friars worked is expressed in the following admonition, found in the Rule of 1221:

No matter where they are or where they go, the friars are bound to avoid the sight or company of women, when it is evil. No one should speak to them alone. Priests may speak to them in confession or when giving spiritual direction, but only in such a way as not to give scandal. The friars are absolutely forbidden to allow any woman to profess obedience to them. Once they have given her advice, they should let her go and lead a life of penance wherever she likes.¹⁷

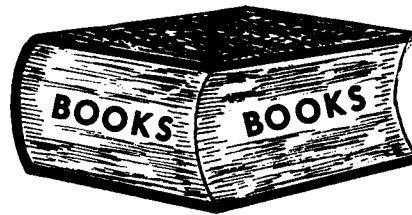
The strong language which is used by Francis discloses that he is concerned for both those with whom the friars work and for the friars themselves. It is true that he feared that the friars' vocation might be jeopardized in some of these situations. But what is often overlooked is the concern he showed for the workings of the Spirit in the women the friars encountered. The friars were to avoid times and places where evil was present; yet they were given the freedom to help any woman in the discovery of her divine calling. Within these particular situations, Francis insisted that the friars always give women the freedom to follow divine inspiration as they felt led.

¹⁷Rule of 1221 (*Omnibus*, p. 42).



Thus it might be said that Francis did not want the friars to avoid women as such, but rather wanted them to develop chaste relationships in their encounters. Chastity was to be the fruit of reverence for the divine action within the women with whom the friars worked.

By meditating upon the writings and early biographies of Francis, I believe we can discover a discernible link between the reverence Francis had for a divine calling and his experiential understanding of chastity. As his own vocation unfolded, he could not but praise God for the merciful outpouring of grace, of which he was the recipient. Francis was awed by the gratuitous goodness of God, and this brought about a deep reverence for the divine initiative within himself and others. Within the context of reverence and vocation, I think we can come to a fresh comprehension of the place of chastity in the spirituality of Saint Francis. It is my hope that this comprehension will lead us to a deeper lived expression of chastity as we too attempt to respond to the gospel call.



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

Reviewed by Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., Federal Abbess of the American Poor Clare Collettine Federation and author of several spiritual and literary works.

When the Well Runs Dry is a very sincere offering. Father Thomas Green sets out to assist those who have earnestly given themselves to prayer for a long time and are presently having a difficult time sorting out themselves and their prayer. Or wondering if there is really anything to sort out.

Presumably one would not turn to such a book in search of a display of consummate literary skill or to enjoy a bookman's festival, but to seek practical help when one seems to be

floundering in prayer. This being so, the reward will be found between the covers of this book, Father's second on prayer. For if it is not a work of high literary quality, it is unmistakably an honest first aid manual. For this we can be so grateful.

No matter how emphatically the classical guides in the life of prayer—John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and all their distinguished company from before their time to our own day—trace out for us the suffering and spiritual malaise, the doubts and the darkness, the frustrations and the fatigue which anyone purposefully set upon a life of profound prayer must experience, there is something particularly encouraging in a contemporary author assuring us of the same in the most homespun language and with a kind of Monday morning manner. As a matter of fact, Father Green follows St. John and more especially St. Teresa right along their road and up their ascent, sometimes paragraph by paragraph through their works. But he does this in his own idiom and with the simple embellishments of his own experience.

A seeming self-consciousness in Father about his role as spiritual

director may actually be only a bit of over-reach in his engaging simplicity. Certainly anyone entrusted with the spiritual direction of others will welcome and endorse such forthright conclusion as this one: "One of the great hazards of the interior life is that we go to find God and we end up talking to ourselves. There is a fine line between prayer and introspection . . ." (p. 30).

And likewise such canny observations as this: "We do not seek the experience of God in prayer merely for its own sake, but in order that the virtues in our lives may live and grow" (p. 34). This is a point notably missed by some who talk glibly enough of prayer.

Again, a Franciscan Poor Clare striving to show young religious our Father Saint Francis' way of prayer will applaud such an existential conclusion as this: "Suddenly . . . everything comes alive; every line of Scripture and every bit of creation

speaks to us of the God of love and the love of God. . . . At that point, I could give them [retreatants] the telephone directory to pray over and they would find God in every name on every page" (p. 44).

But the reviewer needs to fore-swear quoting too much. As the new-rich, eyelash-fluttering lady said of Shakespeare's works: "They're so full of quotations"!

The sixth and final chapter offers the book's reward. Here Father Green enlarges on the happily accurate phrase used freely in the foregoing chapters where he writes of the necessity to "float free" if one is to enter into and persevere in contemplative prayer. The apt and accessible image of the floater vs. the swimmer is developed with utter simplicity and unmistakable sincerity. This book should be especially helpful for directors of young religious. It is a good pulse-taker for anyone.

Shorter Book Notices

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

Sons of Saint Francis, Get Together!
By Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M.
Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers, 1980. Pp. 70. Paper, \$1.25.

This short history of the three branches of the Order, covering the period 1209-1553, aims to show that all Franciscans share the same charism of Francis, and that Friars Minor, Friars Minor Conventual, and Friars Minor Capuchin are "branches belonging to the same tree which St. Francis planted." I found the account

of the Spirituals the most enlightening, and the very brief story of the Capuchin reform second best. Father Sergius has a colloquial style, which perhaps accounts for overstatements. The brevity of his enterprise and the omission of documentation leaves some of his contentions unsupported. Yet, all in all, this is a work Franciscans can read with interest and profit.

Under the Fig Tree: Stories of Prayer-filled Moments. By William

Breault, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1980. Pp. 96. Paper, \$2.75.

The eleven reflective essays in this volume form a compendium on prayer and the spiritual life. Sincerity, listening, patience, perseverance, suffering are some of the topics the author has found illumined by his life experiences with prayerful people of all ages and conditions. Ideal for Retreat, *Under the Fig Tree* could also be a source book for several conferences on prayer.

The Good News about Sex. By David Knight. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1979. Pp. viii-312. Paper, \$3.95.

This book is intended for young adults and for those who deal with them. It puts sex and sexuality in perspective, seeing it from the physical, cultural, personal, and spiritual aspects of human existence. The gospel is seen as good news for persons, and what Jesus has to say about sex is part of what he has to say about persons. Value-centered and person-centered as it is, the book does not slip into a naturalistic relativism by any means. After the stage has been set by giving the rationale of sexuality for a Christianism some practical guidelines are offered. Father Knight's book would be an excellent one for a young college group to discuss, or for adult education. I recommend it highly.

The Teaching of Christ: A Catholic Catechism for Adults. Abridged edition, edited by Ronald Lawler,

O.F.M.Cap., Donald W. Wuerl, and Thomas Comerford Lawler. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1980. Pp. 396, including index. Paper, \$4.95.

This catechism for adults has been put in a much more manageable form, and without sacrificing content or impact. Reduced by some 200 pages and with a larger print size, the catechism looks attractive rather than formidable. Kept from the larger edition are the valuable appendices on the Bible, the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the Church Councils. New are the discussion questions at the end of each chapter and, I think, the marginal numbers referring to other pages in the text covering the same material. The book also has an easy to read index. Adult educators and college theology teachers ought to take note of this work.

The God of Jesus Christ. By Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Translated by Robert J. Cunningham. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979. Pp. 114. Cloth, \$6.95.

In a series of short reflective essays unified around the consideration of God as Trinity, the author addresses himself to issues about faith raised in these times. Though some chapters seem better than others ("One in Being with the Father" and "The Holy Spirit" impressed me most), each of them makes at least one profound observation which bolsters faith. Priests, religious, and well educated laity can derive much spiritual profit from a careful reading of this thoughtful work.

A Month with Christ: A Way to Pray the Gospels. By J. Murray Elwood. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1979. Pp. 127. Paper, \$2.95.

rather J. Murray Elwood has written a practical book on mental prayer. An Introduction explains the art of meditation in general and the special method of praying the Gospels proposed by the author. Thirty units follow, each beginning with a Scripture passage, followed by a kind of paraphrasing which takes the reader into the passage, then a resolution, and finally a one-sentence motto that summarizes some aspect of the Gospel and reflection. The resolutions, however, are such that the reader must apply them to his own life. Beginners in mental prayer and all those who feel they must begin again will find this work helpful.

Franciscan Readings (English translation of "Vitam Alere"). Edited by Marion A. Habig, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980. Pp. 152. Paper, no price given.

This valuable book contains readings on 31 topics of Franciscan spirituality—topics you would expect like poverty, humility, fraternity, love of God and neighbor, and prayer. The format consists of two Scripture readings (one from the Gospel) and a reading from the writings of Francis or Thomas of Celano, or, in six instances, from Hugh of Digne. *Franciscan Readings* is a month of meditations or a mine for sermons or both.

John Paul II: A Pictorial Celebration. By Russel Palmer. Hunting-

ton, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1980. Pp. 128 with photos, 8 5/8" x 11 1/8". Cloth, \$12.95.

I counted 100 photo credits in this aptly named presentation of Pope John Paul II. Valuable in the work are the background chapters on the 78 days from the death of Pope Paul VI to the election of John Paul II, the way a pope is elected, the Vatican State, and the Pope's devotion to Mary, the Mother of God. About half the book recounts in word and picture the Pope's historic and moving journeys to Mexico, Poland, Ireland, and the U.S. Several pages of epigrammatic quotes are interspersed in the text, and blocked quotes from a pattern throughout the book. Any convent or friary library should have a copy of this inspiring account of Pope John Paul II.

Our Journey in Faith: From Baptism to Christian Maturity. Edited by Jack Wintz, O.F.M. (Catholic Update Series #4). Cincinnati: St.

Anthony Messenger Press, 1980. pp. vi-122. Paper, \$2.25.

This fourth volume in the Catholic Update series continues to address contemporary Catholic issues in a post-Vatican II Church. The topics treated in this collection of essays are baptism, an excellent explanation of the need for infant baptism, the Mass as meal and sacrifice, authority in the Church, religious education programs, religion in the home, sharing the faith, and the integration of life and faith. Discussion questions follow each of the clearly written presentations, making this book suitable for groups as well as individuals.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Aumann, Jordan, O.P., *Spiritual Theology*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1980. Pp. 456, including index. Paper, \$18.95.

Committee for Franciscan Liturgical Research, *Entering the Order of Friars Minor: Background Information and Liturgical Guidelines*. Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers, 1979. Order from St. Leonard College, 8100 Cloyo Road, Dayton, OH 45459. Pp. vi-89. Paper, no price given.

Doornik, N.G. van—, *Francis of Assisi: A Prophet for Our Time*. Trans. Barbara Potter Fasting. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979. Pp. xvi-244, including bibliography. Cloth, \$8.95.

Dubouis, Alberic, O.F.M., *Conversations in Umbria according to St. Francis*. Illus. Helene Jouvin, trans. Paul Lachance & Paul Schwartz. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980. Pp. xiv-277, including index. Cloth, 7.95.

Edwards, Tilden H., *Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*. New York: Paulist Press, 1980. Pp. viii-264, including bibliography. Paper, \$7.95.

Moran, Patrick R., comp. & ed., *Day by Day with My Daily Visitor*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1980. Pp. not numbered. Paper \$4.95.

Noonan, Hugh, O.F.M., *Companion to the Clams*. Illus. Phero Thomas. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977. Pp. 84, 10"x10". Cloth, \$12.50.

Pozo, Candido, S.J., *The Credo of the People of God: Theological Commentary on the Profession of Faith of Pope Paul VI*. Trans. & ed. from 2nd Spanish ed. by Mark A. Pilon. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980. Pp. xviii-231, including index. Cloth, \$8.95.

Squire, Aelred, *Summer in the Seed*. New York: Paulist Press, 1980. Pp. xvi-240, including index. Paper \$7.95.

Walsh, David, *Growing up Together: A spiritual Perspective for Parents of Adolescents*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1980. Pp. vi-122. Paper, \$2.50.