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DECEMBER, 1981

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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Volume 31, No. 11

The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions

BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony EpCler: Letter to Clerics1 EpCust: Letter to Superiors1

EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful1 EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo EpMin: Letter to a Minister EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God

ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father Form Viv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221 LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours

OffPass: Office of the Passion OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix RegB: Rule of 1223

RegNB: Rule of 1221 RegEr: Rule for Hermits SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues Test: Testament of St. Francis UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Jon

11, II refer to First and Second Editions.

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis

L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

LP: Legend of Perugia

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis 2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis 3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles

Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

SC: Sacrum Commercium SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

Two Schools of Thought

LONG AGO ST. AUGUSTINE pointed out in questions which were not essential diversity of opinion ought to be accepted. The theological "schools" which flourished in the Middle Ages-Augustinian, then Thomistic, Bonaventurian, and Scotistic-evidence that when we move past the area of dogmatic faith, a multiplicity of perspectives is inevitable and probably useful. Witness the growth in understanding of Mary because Scotus was willing to think in terms of "pre-redemption."

Likewise, it seems to me, there is plenty of room for difference when it comes to living out our faith commitment in daily life. The organization of religious life, the daily horarium, the policies to be followed in an apostolate, are not matters of faith. Whether it is best for the community to elect superiors or to have them appointed, to have Mass in the morning or the evening, to concentrate on high schools rather than grammar schools, is not often immediately evident to serious and sincere persons. Hence there will be differences. Francis reminds us that "anger in ourselves and others hinders charity." Hence to react with anger-as natural as it may be when you think an opinion different from yours is stupid—is to reveal how much of self you are still hanging onto (or starting to take back).

The coming of the Prince of Peace invites us, not to abandon ou judgments or responsible participation in our community and apostolate but to a peaceful wisdom that can recognize that in much of what con cerns us there is room for "two schools of thought." Q

Ir Julian Davier ofm

Christmas, Half Price?

Autumn leaves falling, Santa's toys, wreaths, boughs, holly— Merchants deck their stores; Enticing men to enter "PURCHASE CHRISTMAS AT HALF PRICE!"

Tis All Hallows' Eve,
"Hurry, hurry," vendors cry;
"most precious jewel,
Securely yours at half-price!"
Harvesters glean ripened fields.—

"Three weeks 'til Christmas, Buy now, pay later," Elves cry. Scurrying,—Angel, Suddenly,—remembering: "A gift for Jesus,—half-price?"

One day til Christmas, Snowflakes, Ice pack Angel's door. "Angel, dust your floor, Most Precious Jewel comes tonight; JESUS ABIDES AT FULL PRICE!"

Sister Barbara Mary Lanham, O.S.F.

"Justice" according to St. Bonaventure

BONAVENTURE HINWOOD, O.F.M.

SAINT BONAVENTURE was very much a university man: an intellectual, a mystic, and a leader of men. His copious writings and sermons dating between 1250 and 1273 fit this personality. He was not a popular preacher and social reformer like two other well known Franciscans, Saint Anthony of Padua in his own century and Saint Bernardine of Siena a couple of centuries later. For this reason his works that have come down to us do not contain detailed applications to the particular circumstances of contemporary social, political, and economic life, nor juicy stories drawn from the marketplace. They are the products of a theologian and thinker.

But they are above all the reflections of a Christian thinker: not merely a Christian who also thinks about things, but a man who is so totally involved with Christ that for him life is Christian life, valid thought is Christian truth, and justice is Christian justice. What he says about justice, therefore, is not some philosophical speculation, not some reflection on natural law, not some generally acceptable moral norms. It is through and through a Christian view of life, without any apologies. Thus he can say: "It is our intention to show that in Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3), and that He is the medium of all spheres of knowledge" (Hex. 1, 11 [5, 331a]).

Listing the various fields of knowledge and activity, Saint Bonaventure affirms that, as the medium of justice, Christ is the light of the political and juridical fields.

The fact that only occasionally are practical applications and examples given, makes Bonaventure's thought less entertaining than that of some other medieval writers. It does, however, enable us to reflect with him about justice in tranquillity of spirit. It also opens up the exciting and creative adventure of making our own applications at the end.

Concept of Justice

FOR BONAVENTURE justice starts with God. So he writes that "God is Justice itself most uprightly rewarding in accord with the most just norms" (Hex. 12, 6 [5, 385b]). But he also sees clearly that man's justice is as different from

Father Bonaventure Hinwood, O.F.M., who lives in Pretoria, South Africa, is the author of Your Question Answered, reviewed in our June, 1981, issue.

God's as it is like it. For he holds that "human justice is as injustice when compared to the divine" (In Lc. 18, 20 [7, 462a]). This gives us the perspective then within which he thinks about the question of what "justice" really is.

Perhaps the broadest definition of justice that Saint Bonaventure uses is one taken from Saint Anselm to the effect that "justice is uprightness of will practiced for its own sake" (In festo Omnium Sanctorum, 2 [9, 605a]). He applies this then to both God and man, speaking of "uncreated justice, which is the uprightness of the divine will, and created justice, which is the uprightness of the human will" (In Sap. 1, 1 [6, 110a]). This compels him to stir up his reader "to love justice so that you may resemble God," because, as the psalmist says, "the Lord is just and loves the practice of justice" (Ps. 11:8). This leads to the obvious conclusion:

A man becomes upright when his will becomes like the highest goodness. The highest goodness is the highest fairness or justice. The more just a man is the better he is. . . . So when he becomes like the highest goodness and fairness he necessarily becomes upright. He becomes like the highest goodness by turning to it in love. . . . Thus he who loves goodness is upright [2S, prooem. {2, 4b}].

The intimate connection between goodness and justice is further emphasized in the following neat summary:

There are three things which make a man effectively seek and practice the justice that belongs to God's kingdom. The first is an honest intention in turning away from evil, the second is prompt and brisk action in doing good, and the third is a diligent care in correcting errors of thought and behavior [Dom. XIV post Pent., 1 {9, 409a}].

"Justice," then, has to do with what one is, before being concerned with what one does (In Sap., 8, 7 [6, 161b]. It is as much concerned with the internal ordering of one's own personality as with a properly ordered relationship to others (4S, 31.2.1, concl. [4, 722b]. Hence this personal or internal justice or uprightness affects all aspects of one's personality, thoughts, emotions, speech, actions, suffering, and attitude to others (In Lc., 3, 4 [7,, 72b]). This is why honesty with regard to one's motivation, that is, an upright intention, goes a long way towards ensuring that one travels the right path (In Lc., 2, 25 [7, 58b]). From this follows the conclusion related to Matthew 5:8 that

Justice has a threefold action, namely, to make upright and well ordered, and to reward. Hence justice is nothing other than upright will, properly ordered, and ready to reward, because thereby 'everyone is given what is due to him,' as befits the integrity of law and the dignity of order.

The perfect uprightness of abundant justice is seen in the will shaped by truth. The truth cuts everyone down to size, so that a person thinks less of himself than of others. For this reason that person is perfectly and fully upright, who willingly humbles his will before another, and in a sense subjugates it and makes it captive. This is achieved through obedience to another person, the antidote to arrogance and ambition, which lead one to put oneself before others [De perfectione evangelica, 4, 2 {5, 185b}].

This is only one expression of the real enemy which is pride. The person who thinks too highly of himself is less concerned with honoring God, withdraws from his superiors, and oppresses those under him. The antidote to this is the humility mentioned above, which produces precisely the opposite effects (Dom. X post Pent., 1 [9, 394a]; De patre nostro Francisco, 5 [9, 595b].

Becoming Just

TO BE JUST, in the way just described, is not something which lies within the power of sinful man left to his own devices. It is something which comes to him on God's initiative.

The immediate cause of man's being made just is Jesus Christ. Christ, the perfectly Just One, by suffering a death he did not deserve, and having his justice openly declared in his being taken up to reign with the Father, has become the source of men's justice (In Joh., 16, 18 [458b-59a]). This is normally given to people at baptism by God's free gift (De triplici via, 1.2.12 [8, 6b]). But this justice freely given has to grow in the personality by human cooperation. In this way man is God's assistant in the process of becoming fully just (Dom. in Septuagesima [9, 197a]). Saint Bonaventure spells this out as follows:

The personality cannot be upright unless the mind accepts the highest Truth for its own sake and above all else, and his will holds fast to the highest Good. A person cannot have this uprightness unless he really wants it. This is because nobody believes God rather than himself unless he wants his mind to be captive in obedience to Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). If then a mind captive in obedience to Christ is part and parcel of an upright life, then the will, by which one wants thus to be captive, must be an upright will, and faith, which facilitates and helps this on, makes the will upright. If justice then is simply 'uprightness of will,' and faith that by which our mind is freely captive in obedience to Christ, then it follows that faith belongs to uprightness of life [3S, 23.1.1, concl. {3, 471a-b}].

Christ, however, is not only responsible for the internal life of justice in men. He has also given the external aids and stimuli to this justice. This he does by teaching the mind so that men can know, by arousing the emotions so that they can will, and by accompanying their actions, so that something in fact happens (Collationes in Joh., 34 [6, 574a]).

The task of making this a living reality for and in a man devolves on the Holy Spirit:

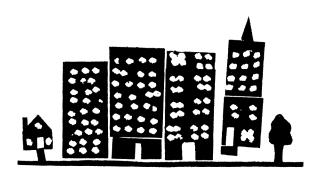
Like a true teacher the Holy Spirit first teaches his pupil reverence for the Lord, by which a person turns away from evil and does the good of justice, and seeks and follows up the good of peace in his relations with others. Then he teaches him to do good out of love for justice (Ws. 8:7). Justice is twofold, that is in relation to oneself and in relation to others. So the Holy Spirit first teaches prudence and sober modesty in making use of things for oneself; and secondly teaches justice and virtue in giving to others. Nothing is more useful than these two in bringing one to a full spiritual life [Dom. IV post Pascham, 1 {9, 311a}].

Justice and Mercy

WE HAVE SEEN that Christ died for men who were sinners, the Just One for the unjust. This immediately raises the question of mercy in relation to divine justice, and of the connection between mercy and justice in general. This is a favorite theme with Saint Bonaventure, and one to which he returns regularly.

He sees justice and mercy so linked together in God's dealings with men that they cannot be separated from one another (4S, 46.2.4, concl. [4, 966ab)). Thus divine mercy always has the tone of justice, and divine justice is always shot through with mercy. This is shown in God's giving his only Son for our redemption, who yet paid the price of our satisfaction. And this because man restored from sin to justice would feel that it was only decent to honor God who has been offended by suffering punishment (3S, 20.1.1. ad 4 [3, 418b]; 2, ad 1 [3, 421a]; 6, ad 4 [3, 431b]; De triplici via, 3,3,4 [8, 13a-b]), since guilt is of its very nature linked with punishment (2S, 36.2.1, concl. [2, 848b]). This Christ has done on our behalf, so that it is by faith in him alone that a man is made just (4S, 15.1.1, ad 3-4 [4, 351a]). Yet in all cases it is the divine generosity and condescension that prevails (2S 33.1.1). ad 4 [2, 786b]). This appears clearly in the incident of Jesus with the woman caught committing adultery, both in his forgiving her (Collationes in Joh., 33 [6, 574a]) and in his encouraging her not to sin again (In Joh., 8, 11 [6] 355a)). This is all tied up in a passage so classic that it must be quoted in full:

'Mercy' is used in three ways, just as is 'justice.' In its widest sense 'mercy means the abundance of divine goodness; more commonly it means generosity beyond what is due; and in the narrow sense it means kindness in supporting those fallen into evil. Similarly 'justice' most widely means the con



descension of divine goodness; more commonly, generosity in giving rewards and in the narrow sense, sternness in punishing evildoers.

On these three levels they work together in the same act. On the first level mercy, the abundance of divine goodness, and justice, the condescension of divine goodness, are present in the same work, as in every work, because [God] does everything from abundant goodness, yet nothing from abundant goodness except what is in line with his goodness. Similarly on the second level, mercy, which is generosity beyond what is due, and justice, which is generosity in giving rewards, work together, because in rewarding with good things, [God] rewards only those who merit reward, but indeed beyond what they merit. Similarly on the third level, mercy, which is kindness in supporting those fallen into evil, and justice, which is sternness in punishing evildoers, work together, because [God] never punishes so severely that he does not set aside some of the due punishment [45, 46.2.2, concl. {4, 964a-b}].

This helps us to understand why Saint Bonaventure agrees with Saint Augustine that the highest expression of justice is coming to the aid of those in need. The reason is that this makes one like Christ. Yet he goes on to indicate that there are other, and perhaps more usual, expressions of justice than this highest one. Thus one often gets the definition of justice as the virtue of giving to each what is due to him. Applying this to aiding those in need, Saint Bonaventure points out that if this is done purely and simply from duty, it is mere "justice"; if it is done from compassion, then it is mercy, which is part of the virtue of justice (3S, 33, dub. 1 [3, 728a]). More explicitly he states that mercy is really justice exercised toward those who are in some way or another inferior to oneself (In festo Omnium Sanctorum, 2 [9, 605a]).

Thus even in human affairs justice and mercy are intimately linked. Hence Saint Bonaventure quotes with approval Saint Gregory the Great's statement that true justice is always shot through with compassion (In Lc., 9, 43 [7, 181b]; 13, 14 [7, 343b]). He denounces a rigorous justice, an applying of the law without compassion, as severity or hardness that displeases God, is contrary to the true justice of Christ, and does nothing for the improvement of the culprit (In Lc., 10, 36–37 [7, 271b]; Dom. I Adventus, 2 [9, 28a]; Apologia pauperum, 1, 11 [8, 239a]). Anger at the other person's breaking the law is often a sign of this false justice, to such an extent that the foolish fanatic for the law is the destroyer of the law (In Lc., 13, 14 [7, 343b]). Whence Saint Bonaventure comes to the conclusion that to pursue another person's fault to the bitter end is itself a fault (In Eccles., 7, 17 [6, 59b]).

The Virtue of Justice

IT IS AGAINST this background that the Seraphic Doctor goes on to consider justice in as much as it is one of the four classical virtues (along with prudence, temperance, and courage).

He holds that these virtues are called habitual, political, and cardinal. They are habitual in that they arise from frequently doing good. They are political in that they make a man properly balanced for living among other men in society. They are cardinal because they are an entrance path to heaven (3S, 33, dub 5 [3, 730a-b]). This is so

because they are the gateway to acquiring all other virtues; or because they are the main ones, into which every other virtue fits, or because all aspects of human life are guided and regulated by them . . . in matters of action and thought [Hex., 6, 11 {5, 362a-b}].

In this complex of virtues, justice has a twofold role, as we saw earlier in

another context. It works as "general justice" when it regulates all the virtues into a balanced and coordinated single functioning whole, in virtue of an upright will. This is one aspect of that internal or personal justice mentioned above. It operates as "special justice" when it leads to balanced and well ordered relations with others, in virtue of the same personal uprightness, giving to each person what is due to him (3S, 33.1.2, ad 4 [3, 715a-b]; 4, concl. [3, 720a-b]). In this sense it includes such subordinate virtues as generosity, kindness, humility, obedience, and repentance (4S, 14, 13, concl. [4, 322a]). But unless one loves one's fellow man it is unlikely that one will in practice give him that which is his due (3S., 33.1.5, ad 3 [3, 721b]). This is because true fellow feeling and brotherly compassion are rooted in love, and the justice that flows from it is concerned about the salvation and development of others (De sex alis, 2, 6 [8, 134a]; 3, 1 [8, 136a]). And this love in its turn flows from a true devotion to God, whose love inflames a person to pursue justice (De sex alis, 3, 1 [8, 136a]; 7, 1 [8, 147a]), which is concerned with the common good rather than with personal advantage (3S, 29.1.3, ad 1 [3, 644b]).

In this way it counteracts the tendency present in us to a self-centered affection, which Saint Bonaventure calls "libidinous love." This sort of love consists in loving oneself or something else more than one should and without reference to God. This selfish affection lies at the root of fear, which is the cause of sin (3S, 27.1.4, concl. [3, 600a-01b]; 29.1.3, ad 1 [3, 644b]; 31.1.1, ad 3 [3, 675b]; Brev., 3, 9 [5, 238a]). Consequently the measure of a person's justice is the extent to which he hates evil (De sex alis, 2, 1 [8, 133a]). Furthermore, as there is no one who does not at some time or another neglect or omit what justice requires, justice itself demands sorrow and penance for these failures (De modo vivendi [9, 725a]; De XXV memorialibus, 24 [8, 497a]).

On the positive side, however, Saint Bonaventure spells out what true justice involves with regard to others in the following handy scheme:

Integral justice is practiced by zeal for God's honor, by keeping the divine law, and by desire for your brother's salvation. Ordered justice is practiced by being obedient to superiors, agreeable to your equals, and by correcting your inferiors. Perfect justice is practiced by being open to all truth, by favoring all that is good, and by opposing everything evil, in thought, word, and deed. Never do anything to anyone which you would not want done to you; and never deny anyone what you would want for yourself. . . . 'Unless your justice exceeds that of the scribes and pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven' (Mt. 5:20) [De regimine animarum, 9 {8, 130a-b}].

He spells out the exercise of justice towards one's fellow men in another passage which is also well worth quoting in full:

The righteousness of justice consists in the upright will to give to each his due: to superiors submission and honor, to equals adaptability and kindness; to inferiors graciousness and thoughtful care. This is because 'each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God' (1 Pt. 4:10). This happens when the wants of the needy are supplied, the ignorant are instructed, wrongdoers are corrected, those who fall into evil are supported, the afflicted are comforted, those who fall are lifted up, all others who are wretched are helped with compassion, and all men receive peace and love, in which the whole of the law and justice is summed up (Rom. 13:8) [De nostra redemptione, 2 {9, 724a}].

Justice in Social Life

AS WAS MENTIONED earlier, Saint Bonaventure holds that the political aspect of justice makes a man properly balanced for living among other men in society. Hence justice must necessarily be lived out in a social context, because man is social by his very nature (Feria sexta in Parasceve, 1 [9, 262a]).

The hallmark of a just society is unity, harmony, concord, and peace among the members who make up that society (In Lc., 2, 3 [7, 45a]; 13, 9 [7, 341a]; 2S, 55.2.2, concl. [2, 1008a-b]; ad 4 [2, 1009a-b]). This harmonious living together should be based on the recognition of the fundamental likeness among men, which consists in their all being made according to God's image. It is regulated by the principle of not doing to others what one would not like done to oneself (Tb. 4:16; Si. 25:1; Mt. 7:21; Lk. 6:31). Thus to love and build up one's fellow men is more pleasing to God than to discipline one's own body (Rom. 14:17-18; De s. Laurentio martyre, 2 [9, 567a]).

Saint Bonaventure works these social relationships out principally in relation to the ten commandments. Of these the first three regulate man's relationship with the Trinity and the other seven regulate man's relationship with other people—in both cases according to the dictates of justice (De decem praeceptis, 6, 2 [5, 526a]).

It is worth noting that these two sets of commandments are not entirely, distinct and unconnected, but rather overflow into one another. Since peace and concord are common to civil society and to the Church, what the Seraphic Doctor says in connection with the Church bears also on civil society.

We must now speak of the Church, which is a union of rational men living in harmony and likemindedness through harmonious and likeminded observance of divine law, harmonious and like minded adherence to divine peace, harmonious and likeminded celebration of divine praise. Now these three are

in logical order because there can be no praise without peace, nor divine peace without observance of divine law $[Hex., 1, 2 \{5, 329b\}]$.

A man gets carried away by the spirit of lust and greed, which are opposed to the first-mentioned. For these are two vices that turn man away from God's law. God's law prescribes the common good and the spiritual good, and draws one away from impure love which is lust, and from private love which is greed. So carnal and covetous men hate the law, and never want to listen to it. They are like the dog and the pig. The dog is always covetous and never wants to share, and the pig always wants to live in the mire.

Opposed to the harmonious unity that is peace, we have the spirit of malice and cruelty, issuing in hatred and anger, and these two upset the whole order. . . .

Again, opposing the harmony of divine praise, we have the spirit of presumption and curiosity, in the sense that the presumptuous person does not glorify God but praises himself, while the curious man is without devotion. There are many men of this kind, lacking in praise and devotion, even though brilliant in their knowledge [Hex., 1, 6–8 {5, 330a-b}].

Going on then with the other set of commandments, which refer particularly to the way men relate to each other in society, Saint Bonaventure gives the following analysis:

There are seven precepts on the second tablet: one is positive, the other six negative. The reason for the distinction is this, that all the commandments can be reduced to two: do to others what you would have them do to you, and do not do to others what you would not have done to yourself. So we have two precepts: the first concerns innocence, the second doing good, which are the two aspects of justice. Now these precepts are graded according to their value, and doing good is better than innocence. Thus the commandment about doing good is placed before the commandment about innocence, and so, as an example, the Jews are told: 'Honor your father and your mother' [De decem praeceptis, 5, 3-4 {5, 523a}].

Since it is the more important let us first take a look at the positive commandment. As was said above, the statement about honoring one's parents is simply one example of a much broader field to which this commandment applies. In fact it concerns doing good to all classes of people, because 'father' refers to a person distinguished by authority, old age, and lovableness (De decem praeceptis, 5, 11 [5, 524a]).

First, 'father' points to a person holding authority, i.e., the leaders in civil society. They have the responsibility for protecting and defending the other members of the community (Ibid.). Yet there must in each sphere of govern-

ment and administration be one final authority in order to secure the unity and concord which society needs. Hence there should be only one principal ruler and lawmaker, in case divided authority lead to internal divisions and strife in society. There should also be only one supreme judge, because contradictory judgments by equal judges would mean that disputes could never be properly settled (*De perf.* evang.., 4, 3 [5, 194a]; Expos. super regulam fratrum minorum, 8, 2 [8, 427a]).

On the question of good and bad government, Saint Bonaventure has two interesting comments, which are worth quoting in full. They must, however, be seen in the context of a society that is Christian in overall character.

Within the order of laymen there is a threefold division, namely, the holy people, the holy officials, and the holy rulers. . . . Good rulers have good officials; and good rulers and good officials have good people, because they instruct them. Contrariwise bad rulers have bad officials, and consequently instruct the people badly. Bad people elect bad rulers [Hex., 22, 18 {5, 440a-b}].

Taking up the particular question of bad rulers, Bonaventure has the following to say:

There are three different ways of looking at the bad or unjust ruler. One ruler may be unjust in himself, but has come to power by just means, and governs justly; and such a one may legitimately rule and does not sin by so doing, and it is lawful for others to submit to him. Then there may be another ruler, who has unjustly assumed power and governs unjustly; and such a one may not rule legitimately, nor are others bound to submit to him. A third ruler there may be who is unjust in himself, but has come to power by just means, yet he rules unjustly, afflicts good men and promotes the bad; one may legitimately submit to him in matters which are in keeping with justice, but one is not bound to submit to him in matters opposed to God. Since 'he who abuses the authority conferred on him deserves to lose the privilege' (Innocent III), such a ruler may be removed, even though he has come to power by just means [In Eccles., 10, 7, concl. {6, 82a}].

This is because he who governs his subjects well according to justice is a ruler, but he who governs his subjects badly through injustice is a tyrant (In Sap., 12, 14 [6, 187b]). The good ruler governs by prudence, not by violence, because violent and high-handed government is a sign of pride (De s. Angelis, 1 [9, 611b]).

As far as the subjects are concerned, they are bound in justice to obey their rulers in those things which are in keeping with legitimate custom, are reasonably enacted, and are not against God. They have, however, no obligation to obey in other circumstances (2S, 44.3.1, concl. [2, 1011a]; In

Lc., 2, 3 [7, 45a]; 20, 25 [7, 511a-b]).

In the second place, 'father' points to old age and weakness. Hence it refers to any person who needs help, lacks understanding or strength, or is maltreated by another. These we all ought to help by instruction, support, or protection, though the responsibility belongs in the first place to the leaders in civil society (De decem praeceptis, 5, 14 [5, 524b]).

. . . 'father' points to lovableness. Every man is lovable because of his origin, and so we are bound to honor every man.

Lastly, 'father' points to lovableness. Every man is lovable because of his origin; so we are bound to honor every man. This is done by willing his good, by feeling for him, by making up our minds to do something about it, and by actually doing something that can be seen (Ibid., 15).

The negative commandments, as we have seen, are viewed by Saint Bonaventure as commandments concerning innocence (*De decem praeceptis*, 6, 3 [5, 526a]). They are also seen as flowing from the commandments relating directly to the Trinity, giving the norm for a life that is pious, true, and holy (*Hex.*, 21, 8 [5, 432b]). They prohibit harm being done to a fellow human by wrong deeds, false words, and bad will, and are designed to straighten out what is corrupt in all our actions, words, and emotions.

The commandment about killing prohibits any harm to another person. Every person naturally desires a truly human type of life. This is more than merely being alive, including as well life with health, safety, and dignity. Hence this commandment covers not only murder and homicide but also 'equivalent homicide.' It includes failing to provide for people's needs, for instance, when they are starving. It also includes slandering, humiliating another person from bad will, and hating. In this way it makes one positively and negatively responsible for securing for one's fellow men a way of life in keeping with their dignity as those made in God's image (De decem praeceptis, 6, 3-4 and 11 [5, 526a, 527b]; Hex., 21, 8 [5, 432b]).

The commandment that uses adultery as its example concerns the field of justice that prohibits us from doing wrong to another in the person of those related to him (De decem praeceptis, 6, 3 [5, 526a]). Furthermore in forbidding sexual exploitation it cuts out all exploitation of inferiors. Thus a per-

son may never abuse a position of superiority of whatever kind by misusing another human being for his own selfish ends (Hex., 21, 8 [5, 432b]).

'You shall not steal' is not only a negative rule which forbids taking what does not belong to you. It also implies the positive act of giving to those in need what does not belong to you. This is how Saint Paul understands it when he writes, "The man who used to rob must stop robbing and start working, to earn an honest living for himself and be able to help the poor" (Eph. 4:28; Ibid., 21, 9 [5, 432b]).

The commandment which straightens out a man's speech is 'Do not bear false witness.' This not only forbids all deceit whether towards oneself or towards others, but positively means that "Everyone must tell the truth to his brother" (Eph. 4:25). It also means that the person eager for justice must not cover up and keep silence, as though he did not know the facts, when he should expose and censure evil and deter people from trying to do the same again (De sex alis, 2, 12 [8, 135a]). From another point of view, however, silence is a virtue. As we all know, too much talking often leads to some sort of injury being done to God or to another person. Being able to keep silence, then, is one important way of promoting justice and producing its fruit which is peace (Is. 32:17; De perfectione vitae, 4, 1 [8, 115a]).

Saint Bonaventure's comment on the last commandment is again a classic statement that merits quoting:

That which straightens out all emotions is, 'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,' etc. Hence Augustine says, 'This is a good law, which while forbidding concupiscence forbids all evil.' Concupiscence is twofold, lust of the flesh and greed for gain, and this latter is the root of all evil. For this reason the Lawgiver in this commandment goes into detail mentioning the ass, the male servant, and female servant, etc.

And this commandment sums up God's commandments, whether the world accepts it or not . . . namely renouncing greed for gain. As the series of nine is completed and rounded off by adding one, so are the nine commandments by the renunciation of greed for gain, which is self-centered love, opposed to the common good [Hex., 21, 9-10 {5, 533a}].

This is a matter to which the Seraphic Doctor returns frequently both positively and negatively. He holds that the fairly general love of money is one of the main causes for the overturn and upsetting of justice (In Eccles., 10, 19 [6, 86b]). Consequently it is only when one takes up an attitude of indifference to wealth that one is capable of practising justice (Dom XXIII post Pent., 1 [9, 452a]). This is why that fellow feeling for the poor which leads one to go to their assistance is important in the life of justice (De s. Laurentio martyre, 2 [9, 567b]). As Saint Paul tells us, "God's kingdom is not a matter of food and drink, but of justice and peace and joy in the Holy

Spirit" (Rom. 14:17; In Lc., 12, 13 [7, 322a]).

Sharing, however, is not confined merely to material goods. So we find the following reflection on Lk. 9:60: "It is indeed a grave sin for a rich man not to assist financially a poor man; but it is an even graver sin for an educated man not to communicate his knowledge" (In Lc., 9, 60 [7, 251a]).

Furthermore, the man of wisdom who does not build up his fellow men by instruction and example, not only sins by default, but will be held responsible for their failures in as far as they are due to his neglect (In Lc., 19, 23 [7, 485a-b]; De s. Nicolao [9, 478a-b]). This is because any gift and any grace that a person receives, is given by God not for that person's personal use and benefit alone, but to be shared with others for their advantage also (De s. Stephano martyre, 1 [9, 480b]; De modo vivendi [9, 724a]).

This brief overview of Saint Bonaventure's teaching cannot be better concluded than by his own words in praise of justice: "Justice beautifies the whole world; it makes that which was deformed beautiful, that which was beautiful yet more beautiful, and that which was already more beautiful to be most beautiful" (Hex., 11, 34 [5, 335a]). Ω

Signs

December speaks to us by sign: in skies that flare a coral dawn with Heart beyond aflame to come and kindle fire within our own.

Through quiet mists or rhythmic drum of rain we wait and yearn like some far prophet's gathered cloud to show its hidden Light; the sod its Bloom.

PDecember sometimes brings us snow.
In wheeling white or drift we know
God's eager forming one of worth
to bear His Gift to men below.

December always brings to earth the Son of God in human birth; a Child to summon to our hearth, a Child to summon to our hearth.

Sister Mary Agnes, P.C.C.

Saint Francis of Assisi and the Christocentric Character of Franciscan Life and Doctrine

ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M. AND DAMIAN MCELRATH

THE LOVELIEST PARADOX of the Franciscan movement is that the profound teachings of its theology and the sublime riches of its spirituality are all derived from the simple faith and transparent holiness of the poor and humble Francis of Assisi. It is cause for wonder that though Saint Francis most probably never read a work of theology in his life, and certainly did not leave behind a developed system of spirituality, he was, nevertheless, the source and inspiration of some of the most learned ideas and doctrines in the history of theology, and of some of the most attractive mystical writings and practices of devotion in the history of religion.

If there is one word which does complete justice to Franciscan theology and spirituality, it is christocentric. And they have this as their distinguishing feature, because the faith and holiness of Saint Francis were totally centered on Christ. In Jesus Christ the revelation is made to us of what the world, as a whole and in all its intricate parts, means to God.

With greater or less intensity, the problem of meaning plagues us all. It breaks down into three basic questions: Where did we come from? Why are we here? Where are we going? The problem of meaning is the problem of origin, purpose, and destiny. In the mystery of Christ it is revealed that we are created. That is, we have our being by a most free and holy act of love. To be a creature is to be loved by the Creator and to have been known forever in the depths of the divine mind. There was never an instant when God did not know us as unique beings. We exist because we are wanted; we are because we are loved. And so the answer to the question about our origin is this: we come from the love of God. Secondly, it is made known in Christ that we are called to share in the life of God as Father, Son, and

This fourth in our series of conferences in commemoration of the 800th anniversary of Saint Francis's birth is reprinted with permission from Franciscan Christology, ed. Damian McElrath (St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1980), 1-13.

Spirit, and that through Jesus we are made brothers and sisters of one another in the world because he, as the Son incarnate, is the elder brother of us all. Our purpose is to share the divine life and to be co-lovers of God. The answer, therefore, to the question about our purpose is that we are here to give love in return for love, and for this we are graced by God. Thirdly, it is disclosed to us in Christ that God wills all men and women to be with him forever in the kingdom, where he will be all in all. He has destined us to share in the glory which the Son had from before the foundation of the world. He wants us to be where Christ is. In this we have the answer to the third question about our destiny, namely, that we are on our way to share in God's own glory forever. Through the Word made flesh we come to the knowledge that all is gift: our being, our grace, our glory. All comes from God's gracious love; yet it is all made most truly our own. And for this we are always to give thanks.

The focal point of the faith and holiness of Saint Francis was his love and imitation of Christ. It was this that made him so attractively a man of the gospel, and so authentically a man of the Church. And rightly understood, these are in fact interchangeables. A man of the gospel is a man who loves Jesus Christ, and thus fulfils the will of the Father, who loves us for loving Christ (cf. Jn. 16:23-28). A man of the Church is a man who makes Christ ever more truly present by being compelled and controlled by Christ's love in all that he is and does (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14). In this way he is drawn ever closer to the Father in the Holy Spirit. From Francis's deep faith in the crucified and glorified Savior, there emerged the christocentric theology of the Franciscan school; and from his holiness, which sought to imitate Christ in every detail of his life, there developed the distinctiveness and originality of Franciscan spirituality. The totally christocentric character of Francis's faith and holiness led to a close bond being formed between Franciscan theology and Franciscan spirituality, and so much so, that one is inconceivable without the other. There can be no such thing as a purely intellectual or academic truth for a Franciscan, though the method by which he arrives at it must be rigorously scientific and ruthlessly precise. This may be a roundabout way of saying that truth is always about someone. In any case, in the Franciscan vision of the world, theology flows into spirituality by an inner dynamism, that is to say, knowledge is always fulfilled in wisdom, and spirituality is ever guided and nourished by theology. The spirit of Saint Francis as much pervades the teachings of the doctors of the Order as it does the writings and experiences of its mystics.1

¹Often the same person is both doctor and mystic, e.g., Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Bonaventure (who are also Doctors of the Church), Peter Olivi, and John Duns Scotus.

Unconditional love for Christ was the basic principle of Saint Francis's spirituality. On the day when he stripped himself of his clothes in the public square of Assisi, he committed himself completely to Christ and remained totally attached to him to the end. In his account of the last two years of Francis's life Celano tells us: "He died in the city of Assisi where he was born and at St. Mary of the Portiuncula where he first planted the Order of Friars Minor, twenty years after he had given himself perfectly to Christ" (1Cel 88; Omnibus, p. 303). He dedicated himself to Christ absolutely, loved as really and truly present in creation, in the Scriptures, in the Eucharist, and in the Church. The presence of Christ was all but visible and tangible to him. So deep was his faith in Christ and so ardent his love of him, that Francis longed to do what he had done, to say what he had said, to suffer as he had suffered, above all in his passion and death. In a word, he wanted nothing else save to walk in the very footsteps of Christ. At Greccio on Christmas night 1223 he reproduced the circumstances of Christ's birth in Bethlehem. In memory of the Lord's forty days' fast Francis went out to fast on an island in Lake Trasimene. On at least three occasions, according to Bartholomew of Pisa, he re-enacted exactly the account of the Last Supper.2 Two years before he died he received the marks of the stigmata on his hands and feet and side. By this his desire to follow Christ down to the last detail of his life was by God's grace for him fulfilled.

The totally christocentric character of St. Francis's faith and holiness led to a close bond being formed between Franciscan theology and Franciscan spirituality [so] . . . that one is inconceivable without the other.

The expression of his love of Christ, whether in words or gestures, is thoroughly biblical and orthodox, often original, and always tender. His faith in Christ and his devotion to him brought out in bold relief the poet in Francis. It was through poetry that he came to understand more and more all that he believed by faith, and it was in poetry that he gave expression to

To discover Francis's christology in its origin and in its process, it is necessary to study his writings, understand them in their context, and remember how multifaceted they were. In his writings we discover Francis's own concepts before they were defined and systematized by professional theologians. Francis's christology is intimately linked to his life. It is of the existential order, just as his language is existential, concrete, essentially biblical, and intuitive.

Francis's understanding of Christ developed against a medieval background. The 11th and 12th century vision of Christ, as represented in sculpture, art, and literature was formed under Byzantine influence and greatly determined by the structure of medieval society, especially feudalism. Christ appears as Teacher and Judge of all things, the King of glory before whom all humanity prostrates itself. Moreover, as dutiful vassals of their Lord, Christians are obliged to take up arms in his cause. It is therefore all the more remarkable that Francis laid such stress on Christ's humanity.

Of course, during the early twelfth century, Saint Bernard had been a strong advocate of the humanity of Christ, but it is difficult to imagine this spirituality reaching the ranks of popular piety without Francis of Assisi, for whom

our Lord Jesus Christ is the glorious Word of the Father, so holy and exalted, whose coming the Father made known by Saint Gabriel the Archangel to the glorious and blessed Virgin Mary, in whose womb he took on our weak human nature. He was rich beyond measure and yet he and his holy mother chose poverty [EpFid II; Omnibus, 93].

Rich and diverse are the christological titles and images contained within the writings of Francis. True, they express Christ's divine Lordship: God the Creator, the God of Israel, God, Living and True, and the Supreme Judge. But they also depict Christ's human condition: the Suffering Servant, the Master who is at the same time the Servant washing the feet of his disciples, the Pilgrim, the Worm, the Lamb, and the Good Shepherd. Moreover, Francis employs titles which portray Christ's role in salvation history: Creator, Redeemer, and Savior. Finally, Francis collects those that depict Christ's mediatorial role: the Word of the Father, the Wisdom, the Light, the

²Liber de Conformitate Vitae Beati Francisci ad Vitam Domini Nostri Jesu Christi in Analecta Franciscana V (Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi], 1912), 354.

³For an in-depth study of Francis's Christology and Christological titles, see Nguyen van Khanh, Le Christ dans la pensée de saint François d'Assise d'après ses écrits (Thèse pour le Doctorat en Science Théologique, Paris, 1973).

Well-beloved Son, our Brother, and the Way, the Truth, and the Life.3

In Francis's faith-vision Christ is the Revealer of the Trinity. God is known by his mighty acts in salvation history, the greatest of which are creation, the Incarnation, and the mystery of the Church. The salvific deeds of God are in fact common to the three Persons of the Trinity. Christ's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying functions are never viewed as separate or apart from his relation with the Father and the Spirit.

It is Christ through whom the Father realizes together with the Spirit his plan of love for all men. Precisely in this context Francis exhorted his brothers in proclaiming the word to the Saracens, to call "on their hearers to believe in God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Creator of all, and in the Son, Redeemer and Savior. . . ." (RegNB 16; Omnibus, 43). And as Saint Bonaventure wrote, "He proclaimed the triune God and Jesus Christ, the Savior of all, with such steadfastness, with such courage and spirit, that it was clear the promise of the gospel had been fulfilled in him. . . ." (LM IX.8; Omnibus, 703).

Thus the movement of the Father toward mankind is in Christ, the Verbum Dei. This precisely is the profound meaning of the Incarnation for Francis. The expression Verbum Dei was employed by Francis to designate Christ, the God-man, as the expression of the will of the Father. For Francis, the "Word of God" refers to the Son, not only in his eternal pre-existence, but also in the concrete man, Jesus Christ.

Christ always appears as the singular revealer of the Father—the only guide and way who can conduct men toward Light Inaccessible. Christ is for Francis the unique Master (RegNB 16; Omnibus, 44), the True Light and True Wisdom (EpFid II; Omnibus, 97). The Johannine character of Francis's Christology is clear. In confrontation with the world of Satan characterized by pride and death, Christ is the Light, Truth, Wisdom, and Only Master.

In summary, Christ is regarded by Francis as the strong link between the Father and the Spirit. He is the Wisdom of the Spirit and the True Wisdom of the Father. He is the gift which the Father gives to men—but it is the Holy Spirit, the Principle of discernment and love, who allows us to receive him.

As we have noted in summary fashion above, the Christians of the early middle ages had the preponderant view of Christ as the Glorious Lord and the Supreme Judge of the universe. It was the transcendent, "awe-full" God before whom mankind prostrated itself to ask for mercy.

As it is to be expected, Francis also was conscious of Christ's divine Lordship. He employs the word Dominus for Christ as well as Deus. He affirms explicitly the equality of the Son with the Father. "But God the Son is equal to the Father and so he too can be seen only in the same way as the Father and the Holy Spirit" (Adm 1; Omnibus, 78). He saw Christ as God-Creator,

the God of Israel, God, Living and True. And Francis viewed him as the Supreme and Majestic Judge at the time of death (EpRect; Omnibus, 116).

At the same time, however, familiarity with the liturgy and Scripture enabled Francis to see Christ as the Servant who came to minister (RegNB 4; Omnibus, 35), as the Suffering Servant (OffPass passim; Omnibus, 141-55), as Mendicant and Pilgrim (RegNB 9; (Omnibus, 39), as the Lamb, and as the Good Shepherd. These last two images of Christ were extremely important for Francis. The image of the Lamb united the two fundamental dimensions of Christ's life, his debasement and his exaltation (LaudHor; Omnibus, 138), while the image of Shepherd highlighted the height and depth of Christ's love for mankind (Adm 6; Omnibus, 81).

Francis never lost sight of the twofold vision of Christ, God and Man, Lord and Servant. Thus, while Francis invoked the image of the Supreme Judge of the universe, it was always to evoke religious reverence among the faithful and to encourage their life of penitence. At the same time the abasement of the Son of God in the man Jesus and in the Eucharist led Francis to invite the faithful to respond to the love of the Lord who so gave himself for them. Reverential fear and love were the two inseparable aspects of the piety of Francis—the more important of which was certainly love in response to love.

All things spiritual and corporal were created through the Son (RegNB 23; Omnibus, 50). Moreover, his devout love of the humanity of Jesus Christ brought him to understand that everything in heaven and on earth has been reconciled with God through Christ (EpOrd; Omnibus, 104). Francis reminds us all to realize the dignity God has bestowed on us: our body he formed and created in the image of his Son, our soul he made in his own likeness (Adm 5; Omnibus, 80). This reflection is one of the most profound and far-reaching in the writings of Saint Francis. For it seems clear that he is asserting in it that the first Adam was created after the image of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. The body of the Incarnate Word, Jesus of Nazareth, was the blueprint for the bodies of the first human beings. A little after the time of Saint Francis, the learned doctor of the Order, Friar Alexander of Hales, explained that the image of God in whose likeness mankind was created, was the Savior, who is the firstborn of all creatures.4 For all their simplicity and clarity, these sentences of Francis just quoted have a rich theological content. Contained in embryo is the christocentric vision of the Franciscan school and even the doctrine of Christ's absolute primacy as for-

^{*}Summa Theologica, I-II, Inq. IV, Tit. I, c. 5, art. 3 (Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi], 1928), II, 410: "Sed utrum homo possit dici ad imaginem Filii quaeritur. Dicit enim Augustinus, Super Genesim: 'Quae est imago Dei, ad cuius similitudinem factus est homo, nisi Salvator noster qui est primogenitus omnis creaturae'...."

mulated and expounded by John Duns Scotus.

Francis was profoundly aware of Christ's true presence in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and in the Word of God, the holy Scriptures. These for him are intimately connected because it is through the power of Christ's words that the Eucharist is consecrated.

His almost anxious concern that the Eucharist be always honored reflects the Church's own preoccupation at that time. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 found it necessary to issue canons about the cleanliness of sacred vessels and about the reservation and reverent reception of the Eucharist.

Francis revered the Eucharist because it continues the revelation of God made in the Incarnation. It is Christ really present among us.

There is only a difference of modality between this present and the Lord's days on earth in Palestine, when he was truly and historically present. Francis makes this comparison most lucidly in the First Admonition (Omnibus, 78-79):

He shows himself to us in this sacred bread just as he once appeared to his apostles in real flesh. With their own eyes they saw only his flesh, but they believed that he was God, because they contemplated him with the eyes of the spirit. We, too, with our own eyes, see only bread and wine, but we must see further and firmly believe that this is his most holy Body and Blood, living and true.

Just as God was present there when Jesus was asleep in the boat as a storm raged on the Sea of Galilee, so is he present now on the altar motionless and hidden, amidst the activities and hurly-burly of life. Francis had a profound love of the Eucharist. Celano tells us that he

burned with a love that came from his whole being for the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and he was carried away with wonder at the loving condescension and the most condescending love shown there.

Through the Eucharist we are more intimately united to Christ, more closely to one another, and more deeply with the whole world and the entire cosmos. The Sacrament, constituted of a tiny piece of bread and a little wine in a cup, together with the transforming word, unites God and man, eternity and time, heaven and earth, Church and world. We find Francis voicing his love of this Sacrament over and over again in his writings, but beyond doubt he expressed his love most beautifully of all in his Letter to a General Chapter (Omnibus, 105–06):

Our whole being should be seized with fear, the whole world should tremble and heaven rejoice, when Christ the Son of the living God is present on the altar in the hands of the priest. What wonderful majesty! What stupendous condescension! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the

whole universe, God and the Son of God, should humble himself like this and hide under the form of a little bread for our salvation.

The Eucharist is the commemoration of the great redemptive act of Christ. In it he remains continually with his followers as he promised, until the end of the world.

The student of Francis's writings will note his reverence for priests, his devotion to churches, and his practical concern for the cleanliness of liturgical linen and vessels. These issue, in fact, from his great faith in the mystery of the Eucharist. He begs all his friars to show reverence for the Eucharist because it is the Body and Blood of him who reconciled everything to God. It is the sacrament of our reconciliation re-enacted in human history.

Francis did nothing of any significance in his life without first consulting the Scriptures, and he always received guidance. The Lord, he was convinced, always showed him the way.⁵

When Francis meditated on the mysteries of the life of Christ, his thoughts and feelings were always guided by Scripture and by the liturgy. His view of Christ was mediated and shaped by the word of God. The liturgy was the principal source through which Francis knew Christ.

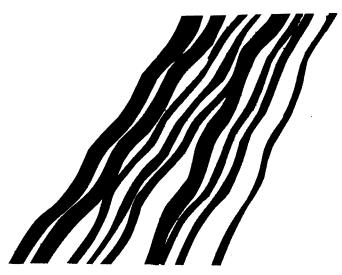
Francis's Christ lives therefore in the words of sacred Scripture. For Francis discovered a living presence in these words-that of the Son who transmits to men words received from the Father; and a life-giving (vivifying) presence because through these words Christ provides both the Spirit and the Way. In holy Scripture it is the Lord who speaks and it is the holy Scripture together with the Eucharist which are the essential elements in the continuation (extension) of the Incarnation. Finally, in the Church Jesus Christ is really, truly, and mystically present. The Church is Christ's mystical body. He is the head and we are his members. He is the vine and we are the branches who cannot have life without him. Where two or three gather in his name, he is present in their midst. Francis's respect and love for the Church found concrete form in his obedience to the hierarchy, his orthodoxy, and his reverence for priests. His Order of Friars belonged to the unity of the Church because it was here that he had learned through the gospel that Jesus Christ is the brother of everyone and of all creatures. Through Jesus Christ every creature had already been endowed and blessed

⁸See The Testament of Blessed Francis in The Rule and Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi. A Translation with an Introduction by Eric Doyle, O.F.M. (Canterbury, 1974), 48: "After the Lord gave me some Brothers, there was no one to show me what I ought to do, but the Most High Himself revealed to me that I should live according to the way of the holy Gospel."

from before the foundation of the world, with the sacred name of brother and sister. And so beginning with Friar Christ, he came to see himself to be in the midst of a universal friary, a universal brotherhood, which had its origin ultimately in the loving will of the Father-Creator of all things in heaven and on earth. It is most interesting and worthy of note that Saint Francis not only professed that everything had been brought to peace and reconciled with God through Jesus Christ, but also proclaimed that

in this world there is nothing of the Most High himself that we can possess and contemplate with our eyes, except his Body and Blood, his name and his words, by which we were created and by which we have been brought back from death to life [EpCler; Omnibus, 101].

This text seems to contain, at least implicitly, the doctrine of the unconditional primacy of Christ. The "by which" in the latter part of the text certainly refers to "his words," but it may also refer to "his Body and Blood" and "his name." But even if this is debatable, there can be no question about its christocentric content.



*Cf. Letter to All the Faithful in Omnibus, 96: "How glorious, how holy and wonderful it is to have a Father in heaven. . . . How holy and beloved, how pleasing and lowly, how peaceful, delightful, lovable and desirable above all things it is to have a Brother like this, who laid down his life for his sheep. . . ."

'The Latin reads: "Nihil enim habemus et videmus corporaliter in hoc saeculo de ipso Altissimo, nisi corpus et sanguinem, nomina et verba, per quae facti sumus et redempti 'de morte ad vitam,' " in Opuscula Sancti Patris Francisci Assisiensis . . ., ed. K. Esser (Ad Claras Aquas [Quaracchi], 1978), 97 and 99.

Francis had a very special love of God in what we may call the mysteries of divine humility. He was deeply attached to the Infant Jesus, to the crucified Christ, and to the blessed Eucharist. There is nothing that shows more graphically the humility, the poverty, which the Divine Word accepted in becoming incarnate, than the helplessness of infancy, the defenselessness of the crucifixion, and the silence of the Eucharist. If God wills to reveal himself to us, he has to make himself known as other, as less than he is. He has to become a creature. He cannot appear greater than he is; and as he is in himself, he cannot be seen. And so he came among us as one of us, and he accepted all the poverty and limitations that are the essential features of the human condition.

The poverty of God was made known in the limited existence and very circumscribed life of Jesus Christ. This expression of divine poverty carried Francis to the highest flights of contemplative union. So it was, therefore, that Christ in himself and as revealed in all the mysteries of his life, death, and glorification, was at the heart of Francis's faith and holiness, spirituality and devotion. Christ was for Francis the beginning and end, the alpha and omega of everything that exists, of all that had been and of all that was yet to be.

It is necessary and important to recall a fundamental requisite in Francis's following of Christ. For Francis following Christ consists in living always according to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Thus Francis wanted the Spirit to be the Minister General of the whole Order, and the Brothers were to promise obedience directly to the Spirit. The Chapter on working in the Second Rule states that every temporal consideration should be subordinate to the Spirit of prayer and devotion (RegB 5; Omnibus, 61).

In the same Rule, also, Francis urged that the brothers should desire only to have the "Spirit of God at work within them, while they pray to him unceasingly with a heart free from self-interest" (RegB 10; Omnibus, 63-64). In his Letter to a General Chapter, Francis asked the Father for guidance and help "so that, cleansed and enlightened interiorly and fired with the ardor of the Holy Spirit, we may be able to follow in the footsteps of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ . . . " (EpOrd; Omnibus, 108).

While the following of Christ consists in the exterior imitation of the Gospel, fundamental is the need to be attentive always to the Spirit of the Lord. This can be seen as the radical element of Francis's evangelical freedom. Francis discovered this Spirit particularly in the gospel, which was the sacrament of Christ, the Word—a gospel which had to be observed "without gloss." As has been indicated, Francis had a profound respect for the words of Scripture because they are the words of the Spirit.

Thus the imitation of Christ demands continual effort to identify with

him, an effort which is impossible unless one is internally purified and guided by the Spirit of the Lord. In other words, the following of Christ is primarily due to an interior conversion inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit coupled with an external and literal imitation of the Word become flesh. In this way the spirituality of Francis is christocentric.

The crowning point of Francis's life was his reception of the stigmata on Mount La Verna in September, 1224. This sealed his life in imitation of Christ and was the visible sign of his total and unconditional love of him. The unambiguous message it contains is that Francis made Christ live again for the believers and world of the thirteenth century.

Because of the tremendous influence Saint Francis exercised on the subsequent history of his Order, especially in the realm of ideas and spirituality, it is hardly surprising that the school of the Order should have taken its name from him, rather than from Saint Bonaventure. Histories of the development of medieval thought have always referred to the Franciscan school. The founder-mystic prevailed over the learned doctors. The unwritten reason for this, we would venture to suggest, is that the great Franciscan scholastics—some of whom are represented in this book—especially in their reflections on the mystery of Christ, have transposed into categories of thought the ardent faith of Saint Francis in Jesus Christ.

Franciscan mysticism, having its source in Saint Francis and taking its example from him, is distinguished by its devotion to the humanity of Christ. This devotion has taken many and varied forms. But its tenderest and most attractive expressions are to be found in the honor it pays to the Name of Jesus and in the love it has for his Sacred Heart.

In Saint Bonaventure Franciscan theology and mysticism met, embraced, and then blended into a balanced and harmonious unity. He is at once both doctor and mystic of the Order. And of all its doctors and mystics, it is on him that Francis had the most formative influence. While marvelling at all that God had accomplished through the simplicity and poverty of Saint Francis, Bonaventure laid down at Francis's feet the treasures of his brilliant mind. Like Francis he began with Christ, and passing through reason, enlightened and guided by faith, as Francis had passed through poetry, he arrived at contemplative union with God. According to Saint Bonaventure, not only are all things created in Christ, all truth is known through him. Christ teaches interiorly and is the fontal principle of all human knowledge.

Because of Saint Bonaventure's love for Saint Francis, his profound an extensive learning, and his sweet mystic doctrine, we conclude these reflections with a text by him which reveals so limpidly the christocentri character of Franciscan theology and spirituality:

As regards the second point, note that a beginning should be made from the center [medium], that is, from Christ. For he himself is the Mediator between God and men, holding the central position in all things, as shall be seen Hence it is necessary to start from him if a man wants to reach Christian wisdom. $^{\circ}$ Ω

Visitation

Ave Maria

in the winter-whiteness of so many bright intentions, you flicker down on me.

So gentle are the painted features of your loveliness.

So silent, I, beneath you smile, that seems so mobile in the moving light.

How still my heart, how calm, when mantled in the blue of Mary's glance.

Ave Maria. . . .

In the dying embers of so many hushed intentions, reflect a prayer upon my heart that I may go my way in peace.

Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

^{*}See Christ, the One Teacher of All, in What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ by St. Bonaventure. A Translation with Introduction and Commentary by Zachary Hayes, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), 21-55.

^{*}Collations on the Six Days, I, 10, in The Works of Si Bonaventure. . . . Translated from the Latin by José de Vinck (Paterson, NJ: St Anthony Guild Press, 1970), V, 5-6.

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You took me into the darkness then into light where flowers grow and springs gush forth wetting my deepening thirst but the desert became my new home yet my eyes could see your banquet hill in blossom and the night winds carried the scent of the feast aloft.

II

You who know me complete me and so slowly in the darkness verdure begins to spring forth giving firmness to my steps no longer does the wind blow headlong but behind me thus the traveling is auicker and the hill still far off in the future but you now send manna and quails and water flesh and blood and presence into the changing desert.

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The Staff of the Franciscan Institute joins the Editors in wishing you a very merry Christmas and every blessing for the New Year.

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The illustrations for our December issue were drawn by Mary Jo Huck of Chicago, Illinois.