The CORD

A Franciscan Spiritual Review

FR. MICHAEL D. MEILACH, O.F.M., Editor Siena College Friary, Loudonville, NY 12211

FR. JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M., Associate Editor Siena College Friary, Loudonville, NY 12211

FR. BERNARD R. CREIGHTON, O.F.M., Business Manager The Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 14778

CONSULTING EDITORS

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St. Bonaventure, NY 14778	

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1

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CONTENTS	<i>J</i>
LIVING IN THE SPIRIT Editorial	130
PRAYER	131
THE FRANCISCAN ORDER AND THE PERMANENT DIACONATE—II Eric Doyle, O.F.M.	132
ANGELUS Barbara Doria	136
BLESSED MAXIMILIAN KOLBE AND THE MISSIONARY VOCATION Vitale M. Bommarco, O.F.M.Conv.	137
PURITY Sister Rosemary Di Lauro	144
THE FRANCISCAN EXPERIENCE OF KENOSIS—I Anselm W. Romb, O.F.M.Conv.	145
TRANSFIGURED NIGHT Sister M. Relicity Dorsett, O.S.F.	155
FORTINI'S LIFE IN ELEGANT TRANSLATION Raphael Brown, S.F. O.	156

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Living in the Spirit

NO DOUBT MOST OF YOU were taught, as we were, that the spiritual life is one of faith, and not (at least essentially) an incessant quest for exotic and esoteric "religious experiences."

I still believe that the teachers who told us that were basically right and were communicating to us faithfully the Church's balanced teaching in this regard. God certainly does not make himself tangibly accessible at our beck and call, and the religious life is not simply a search for good feelings and consolations.

Even with that said, though, we should bear in mind what Paul says about the fruits of the Spirit—the "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness," etc. (Gal. 5:22) that, if they are real at all, have to be in some sense a matter of experience.

But this has to be understood correctly. Leaving aside the case of the advanced mystic, experience of God is never experience of God only. Rather, the Lord's presence is mediated by the experience of something else. This does not mean that it is indirect—that we conclude to God's presence by a process of inference. It means only that God is experienced in some context: particularly in a sacred ceremony, place, or event, and in the experience of those gifts Paul speaks of in Galatians and elsewhere.

It is important to notice that the gifts in question are gifts of the Spirit. The experience of God's presence is the experience first of all of the Indwelling of his Spirit, who "pleads for us as God wills" (Rom. 8:27). And it is equally important to realize that what we are now celebrating in this Easter Season is, in addition to the Lord's triumphant entry into new and glorified life, the outpouring of his Spirit without whom we should be forever excluded from that life.

The Easter Encyclical promulgated by all four of our Ministers General and by the Poor Clares and the Secular Franciscan Order exhorts us to a thorough-going renewal of our Franciscan spirit. One way to ensure the success of such a renewal will be for us to recall, on June 7, the observation of St. Francis that the Holy Spirit is "the minister general of the Order" (2Cel 193): to celebrate that day with all the solemnity of which we are capable, and to bring its light, warmth, and strength with us into our octocentennial year. Living in the Spirit, aware of his presence, we shall indeed renew our Order, and in so doing we shall be helping him to renew the face of the earth. Ω

to Michael D. Malad, of



Prayer

O Prayer
You lie hidden
Behind the mornings pale
Beyond the owi's call
Beneath the dew-teared grasses
Of secret garden spaces
Under sweet grass and wildflower
With long forgotten bones.

Awake, The third day beckons. Burst like dawn Upon the native genius Of the soul.

Andrew Lewandowski, O.F.M.

The Franciscan Order and the Permanent Diaconate—II

ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M.

HAVING DISCUSSED, last month, the theology of the permanent diaconate, we are now in a position to explore the relevance of that ministry to the Franciscan Order.

Permanent Deacons and the Franciscan Order

1. St. Francis the Deacon. We should be careful not to neutralize the importance of the historical fact that Francis was a permanent deacon, by thinking that he did not become a priest out of humility before so exalted an office. There is no evidence for this. That Francis had great reverence for priests issued from his deep love of the Church and the Eucharist; it tells us nothing about his personal attitude towards becoming a priest. He was a deacon, and that should be taken to mean that he wanted to be a deacon. As a possible interpretation of this I would suggest that being a deacon, for him, assimilated his life more closely to Friar Jesus Christ the Deacon, the Servant of all, who washed the feet of his disciples.

It is probable that Francis received the diaconate on the occasion of his visit to Rome in 1209 to obtain approval of his new way of life from Innocent III. Prior to the approval Francis and his first followers had preached penance and worked among lepers, and there is evidence that they continued in these ministries afterwards.

In the light of this it would be fully consonant with the Order's specific mission to receive a candidate who wished to be a deacon in imitation of St. Francis and to work, for instance, in a hospital for terminally sick patients.*

2. Relevant Elements of the Original Charism. In becoming a Franciscan a man commits himself to a life according to the Order's charism. This charism is multi-faceted. Here I wish to select two facets which have immediate bearing on the diaconal ministry.

Father Eric Doyle, O.F.M., a Consulting Editor of this Review, teaches at the Franciscan Study Centre (Canterbury) and the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure, New York).

a. The Gospel of Peace. The Franciscan friar pledges himself in imitation of St. Francis to preach peace. Evangelical peace is personal and social, both of which are derivatives of justice.

There is a peace surpassing all understanding which the world cannot give. It proceeds from righteousness in regard to God, self, and others. The grace of righteousness or justification is the beginning of integration and liberation (that is, salvation), which involves the whole of our being, and not only our spirit. Acceptance and true love of oneself, the healing of memory, commitment to the future in the face of anxieties, awareness of the value of the now, are all intimately bound up with integration. The pace and pressure of life in the West have made it frighteningly clear that the meaning of salvation is considerably wider than the remission of sins and interior spiritual renewal. In so many cases it is intertwined with the need for counseling, psychotherapy, spiritual direction, and discernment. These are concerned precisely with self-acceptance and self-awareness, healing, and contemplative peace. Peace in this sense—as involving every level of human existence—is defined by the signs of the times, and it can be proclaimed effectively and with credibility only if we take seriously that grace is given to a human being as a totality. Counseling, psychotherapy, spiritual direction, and discernment are works of mercy and love. For this reason, as pathways to personal peace they may be numbered rightfully and most fittingly among the ministries of the permanent diaconate in the Franciscan Order.

Social peace is impossible without social justice. Peace is not the absence of war; it is the sacrament of integral liberation. Freedom, equality, and brotherhood are the pillars of justice. To proclaim peace in our world means to set people free. In the First World, to set free means to deliver ourselves from greed, from the aimlessness of consumerism, from the arms race, and from the idols of money and the craving for ever higher economic standards of living. In the Third World, to set free means to remove oppression, poverty, disease, and exploitation, so that men, women, and children may find dignity and have hope. The profession of poverty as freedom from economic and political power, obliges a Franciscan to work for social justice. Poverty freely chosen is the implacable enemy of the poverty that is enforced and destroys.

It would be an eloquent witness to the Order's charism for Franciscan deacons to be involved in work for social justice either at the local or at the

national level, under the auspices of Church or government, or at the international level through the United Nations.

b. The Love of Creation. The ecological awareness of St. Francis is one of his most distinctive features. He formulated it beautifully in the stanzas of The Canticle of Brother Sun. In the poetry of that remarkable song there is a word of reproof to our selfishness. We, the Creator's image, are destroying the Creator's work, and thereby defacing his image in ourselves. Any participation in efforts to re-establish our fraternal relationships with all creatures and to lessen our malicious domination of Sister Water and Brother Air, is a sharing in Francis's attitude to creation.

The ecological crisis poses a particularly acute problem for those who believe in God the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. As a grave moral issue it places obligations on the Church to proclaim the authentically Christian attitude to creation, which is, in fact, fraternal, and to make this message credible by doing everything possible to solve the crisis.

As the Franciscan Order is committed to proclaiming that the earth is our sister and our mother, and that the stars are our sisters, the ecological awareness of our time is an eminently appropriate area for the ministry of Franciscsan deacons.

3. Sanctification of the Structures of the World. St. Francis writes in his First Rule that the friars "should exercise the same skill which they already know, provided it is not contrary to the salvation of their souls and can be honestly pursued." This provision may be applied to the arts, crafts, and professions. The text envisages that a man comes from the world with all his talents, gifts, and skills, to enter the brotherhood. Having become a friar he then returns to the world bringing with him a new kind of existence: his friarship. Moreover, the text introduces us to that area where Church and world meet and mutually influence one another.

What St. Francis says here can be linked in a given case with the permanent diaconate, dependent on the situation and the experience and call of the individual friar. The place of this form of the permanent diaconate in the Order should not be hastily dismissed, for it would be a most efficacious way of bringing the world to the Eucharist.

Concluding Remarks

IT MIGHT BE objected that the suggestions I have made about areas in which permanent deacons of the Franciscan Order may fittingly exercise their

To the first I would answer that my reflections have been written in the light of what I observe to be a new, wider, and developing appreciation of the meaning of ministry, and of an emerging outline of what the Church's presence will be in the world of the not-too-distant future. These have already influenced the Order's apostolate, and they will do so ever more radically as time passes. The Order has experienced a certain 'declericalization' over the past ten years. More and more candidates entering the Order have no desire to be priests. However, it should be noted that to be a priest does not necessarily mean to be clericalized, and in the Franciscan Order it should not mean this anyway. With fewer priests two results will follow. First, some exclusively priestly apostolates will be curtailed. Secondly, the priests of the Order will have to concern themselves more extensively with the Church's liturgical life and with all the ways in which that is developing, in particular with preaching the Word and celebrating the Eucharist. Concern with the Church's liturgical life can be a full-time apostolate, and indeed ought to be. In this way the quality of liturgical celebration will be enhanced. Yet I must agree that the areas specified are certainly open to priests of the Order and friars who have no wish to receive the sacrament of orders. But these would not be exercising the diaconal ministry.

With regard to the second objection: I would concur that the diaconate is not necessary for the exercise of these apostolates. But then I would refer the objector to what I have written above about the character of the episcopal office in the Church. This objection derives from the restrictive understanding that the deacon has no specific powers. I have been arguing that the diaconate is a ministry to which the Church is committed. To say that ordination to the diaconate is not necessary for the exercise of these apostolates misses the whole point. It is necessary that the Church publicly manifest to the world that she has been pledged by her Lord to its service. Ordination to the permanent diaconate is the formal proclamation that service of the world is of the essence of Christ's mandate, and it is the official commissioning of men in the Church to fulfill it. Q



¹⁰D. Flood, O.F.M., and T. Matura, O.F.M., The Birth of a Movement: A Study of the First Rule of St. Francis, trans. by P. Schwartz, O.F.M., and P. Lachance, O.F.M. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975), 75.

Angelus

Avel... Swift flutter of angel wings,
... arriving and seeking...
God's herald bedewed in the Spirit
that broods over endless shores
Bows low in human homage as
Father-Gardener digs deep in fertile soil
to shelter His tiny wheatseed.

Fiat! . . .

Each word a song, each step a dance,
Heaven cleaves to earth in her Virgin-Yes.
This hour of glory builds a bridge of
. . . yesterday's history
today's promise
tomorrow's eternity . . .

Earth's footstool quivers under a woman's
turningpoint of choice.

Gratia plenal . . . Life fills a child's fragile womb, Love fills a chaste heart as His Kingdom, And a Little One is cloistered tenderly.

Sh-h-h . . . Do you hear it?

Yes, my soul . . . His inmost Life stirring . . .

Like the lark in the songless egg,

Like the bud in folded seed,

I lift up my hands in Eucharist.

Barbara Doria

Blessed Maximilian Kolbe and The Missionary Vocation

VITALE M. BOMMARCO, O.F.M.CONV.

DURING THE almost eight centuries since the death of St. Francis, many of the Poverello's followers took up the missionary paths which he opened. For this reason, the Franciscan Order in all its branches was and still remains the strongest religious missionary group in the history of the Church. The missions are a special glory of the Franciscans, and it would be useful to have, from the time of St. Francis until today, a synthesized and summarized history of the beginning of the Franciscan presence in all the Continents and among all peoples.

Without wishing to diminish the specific missionary contribution of the first great Francisan"travellers of Christ," who as bearers of peace and brotherhood penetrated the great Asiatic world, such as Friar John da Pian of Carpine, Friar William of Rubruk, Friar John of Montecorvino, and Blessed Odoric of Pordenone, I wish to fasten my and your attention on the missionary work of Blessed Maximilian Kolbe, not only because we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversity of his arrival in Japan, but above all because of the new ideas which he knew how to introduce in our time into the concept of mission.

The fundamental motivation of the missionary action of St. Francis was based on his submergence in the highest degree in the most high God and in Christ the Lord incarnated and crucified for us. It was from this love that arose the desire to save all men. Father Kolbe also began from this mystical basis, but he added a characteristic of his own: complete surrender to the Immaculate in order better to win souls for Christ the Lord.

We know that this consecration to the Immaculate was carried by Father Kolbe to the highest degree because of which there arose necessarily the need to communicate this passion to all souls to conquer the world for Christ through the Immaculate. The Franciscan missionary ideal which began and developed from the little church of St. Mary of the Angels in Assisi, and the constant devotion of the Franciscan Order to the Immaculate, found in this Knight of our time that zeal, that courage, that

Father Vitale M. Bommarco is the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual. The present article is a slightly adapted version of "Mission in Blessed Maximilian Kolbe," Part III of the encyclical letter of October 4, 1980.

boldness, to dare everything which brought to life in him the genius of St. Francis.

The Mariology of Father Kolbe is not something sentimental or added on to the work of creation, but it is based on the love which unites God with man and man with God. As St. Francis sang about the love of God in "The Praises of the Most High God," so "Father Kolbe accentuates that God is Love and that, calling creatures into existence, he wants from them a response to his love and with a love which will be as great as possible. Only one creature has given to God an 'equal' response which is the apex of love in all of creation. This creature, the most perfect of existing beings, is Mary" (Swiecicki, 315).

As the Seraphic Father acted and worked as the great lover of Christ and told his friars: "The Lord will fulfill his designs and will keep his promises" (1Cel 29), so did Father Maximilian dare the unthinkable because he considered himself an instrument in the hands of the Immaculate who would bring her plans to completion.

"The action of Mary is a most perfect action of the holy Spirit," and He, "through the Immaculate Virgin, manifests outwardly His own participation in the work of redemption" (Kolbe, Scritti, III, 535). Niepokalanow would never have been founded, and there would never have been a Kolbean missionary activity without this Marian theological basis which we have scarcely touched upon and which deserves to be studied in depth and better known.

The second pillar of missionary action in St. Francis was the witness of his life—the development of fraternity and the spirit of absolute poverty.

We see with admiration, with wonder, and with a certain nostalgia, that Father Kolbe had traced faithfully and firmly the footsteps of St. Francis in the most absolute poverty and in the heroic witness of living the fullness of Franciscan fraternity in his country and in the missions.

Francis was in love with poverty in its highest ascetical and mystical sense, while Father Kolbe, as the son of an industrial age, gives to Most High Poverty, loved and lived, a technical working sense: "O truly holy, very holy is our Franciscan poverty, the poverty of Niepokalanow" (Scritti, I, 792). "The Immaculate is the end, and poverty is the capital: these are the two things which Niepokalanow cannot at all abandon under any pretext" (Scritti, I, 455). "Only the limitless funds of Divine Providence can cover the colossal expenses of the battle for the conquest of the entire world for the Immaculate" (Scritti, I, 449).

Francis went to the Orient with five companions, giving witness to fraternity "by means of the example of their holiness and of a perfect religious life" (J. de Vitry, in *Fonte Francescane*, 2223). Father Kolbe founded his

Niepokalanows, not as great centers of activity and industry, but as fraternities united in unconditioned self-giving to the Immaculate, through a "total exclusion of any reservation in the consecration of themselves in regard to food, dress, occupation, state (brother or cleric), place (in one's own country or among the enemies of the faith where perhaps certain death awaited them," etc. (Scritti, I, 538). "Our community has a style of life a bit heroic, which is and ought to be Niepokalanow, if it truly wishes to acquire its predetermined objective, that is to say, not only to defend the faith, to contribute to the salvation of souls, but with a fearless attack, not paying any attention to themselves, to win over to the Immaculate one soul after another, one outpost after another" (Scritti, I, 326).

This "living spiritually among themselves," recommended in the First Rule to the friars who go among the infidels, was put into practice in a marvellous way by Father Kolbe and his first companions in his own country and in the Japanese mission in such a way as to manifest the divine seal of Christianity through an authentic religious life.

Francis preached and communicated "the peace of the Lord" to the men of his time, and Father Kolbe, always taking his beginning from this fundamental Franciscan message, wished to bring peace by capturing the heart of man through love.

"Hatred divides, separates, and destroys, while on the contrary love unites, brings peace, and builds. It is not to be wondered at, then, that only love succeeds in making men more perfect. Therefore, only that religion which teaches the love of God and neighbor can perfect men" (Scritti, III, 763). Wishing to work actively to communicate the love of God to his brothers, Father Kolbe founded the great movement, "The Militia of the Immaculate," which he presents in this way in one of his articles:

It is called 'of the Immaculate' because its members are consecrated without reserve to the Most Holy Immaculate Virgin Mary so that she may work in them and by them and pour out through them on other persons the grace of supernatural light, strength, and happiness. Moreover, it is called 'Militia' because it cannot permit itself rest but rather intends to conquer through love all hearts to the Immaculate and, by means of her, to the divine heart of Jesus and, finally, to our heavenly Father [Scritti, III, 549].

The missionary spirit of Father Kolbe, based on the very principles of St. Francis and reinforced by the chivalrous and apostolic attachment to the Immaculate, has produced marvellous results and has indicated some lines of action which anticipate modern evangelizing activity in the Church.

In chapter twelve of the Second Rule, Francis indicated three norms for the friars who wished to follow him in his missionary action. Father Kolbe considered all his work missionary and so bound all the friars who consecrated themselves to that same chapter of the Rule:

Our father, St. Francis, is the model for the missionary; his example, his Rule are highly missionary, and they allow the greatest thrust to be directed to the salvation and the sanctification of souls. Niepokalanow, with its vast program of winning the entire world for the Immaculate, is subordinate to Chapter XII of the Rule, and, under the threat of losing its reason for existence and the betrayal of its ideal, it cannot change its own finality [Scritti, I, 454, 459].

But Father Kolbe, completely taken by his ideal of winning the world for Christ through the Immaculate, took one further step in respect to the Rule and wrote to his Father Provincial (February 19, 1932): "I enclose a letter with the petition of all the friars of the Japanese Niepokalanow (those presently professed), asking authorization to bind themselves with a vow to go to any place and under any condition for the Immaculate" (Scritti, I, 692). Having received this authorization, Father Kolbe and his confreres in Japan made this fourth vow as a personal, private bond. Father Kolbe later wrote to the friars of the Polish Niepokalanow:

I also imagine that those who have consecrated themselves unlimitedly to the Immaculate in conformity with the prescriptions of the statute of the Militia of the Immaculate will ask the Most Reverend Father Provincial to permit them to bind themselves absolutely with a vow to go, for the sake of the Immaculate, anywhere holy obedience will send them, be it to the most difficult mission and an encounter with certain death. In that way, they would join to the three religious vows this one also, even though the Rule does not expressly oblige them" [Scritti, I, 701].

"Thus I picture Niepokalanow. Perhaps it is an exaggeration, but it seems to me that, without this magnificent ideal, Niepokalanow cannot have a reason for existing" (Scritti, I, 327).

From these and from many other passages in the writings of Father Kolbe, the secure foundations of his action appear very clear, as well as the way in which the Niepokalanows which he built and dreamed of building would be "missionary cities of the Immaculate." The Saints can be judged to be dreamers, but it can be an encouragement to us to acknowledge the projects of this man who in only twenty years of activity was able to see them realized at least in part:

Concerning projects for the future, I am thinking—having in mind the purpose of the Militia of the Immaculate—that is, the winning of the whole world for the Immaculate—of developing our outpost in the most vigorous possible way so that the Kishi can be delivered as soon as possible to every Japanese home. But at the same time, I am also thinking of beginning the Knight in the Chinese language. But I am also thinking of India, of Annam, of the Syrian 'basin' for the following languages: Arabic, Turkish, Hebrew. Nevertheless, I am not

thinking of abandoning the *Knight* in English, etc., until the entire world belongs to the Immaculate. At the same time, however, I hold it indispensable to multiply Niepokalanows in Europe . . . in Germany, in France, in Spain, in England, and in the other countries in which our confreres are few or are not found at all; and afterwards in other countries also [*Scritti*, I, 449].

Just as St. Francis understood the needs and the movements of his time and knew how to accept them, sublimating them to the praise of the Most High God and his creatures, in love for the brotherhood, for poverty, and for peace, so also Father Kolbe, living in an industrial age and basing himself on the same principles of St. Francis, knew how to transform work, machines, and men for the glory of God.

And just as the mission of Francis in the Orient gave new and challenging impulses in respect to the position of the Church of his time, so the missionary ideal of Father Kolbe inaugurated new methods and anticipated the reforms in evangelization carried out by Vatican II.

It is useful here to recall briefly the new organizational and apostolic methods which Father Kolbe introduced in his missionary activity.

Fifty years ago, for those religious orders who wished to open a mission, the Sacred Congregation "for the Propagation of the Faith" assigned a territory in which total jurisdiction was given over to the Institute. Father Kolbe did not want a territory, a mission *Procura*, property, a parish (cf. Scritti, I, 367), but he did want to have the freedom to evangelize, by means of the printed word, an entire nation, or a group of nations having the same language. "I said to my dearly beloved Japanese: Let the Jesuit Fathers and others work only for the cultured classes in the 'mandarin' language; we, on the other hand, will go among the people with the Knight written in the language of the people as one of their own" (Scritti, I, 368).

Anticipating the ideas of the Second Vatican Council and of Evangelii Nuntiandi, Father Kolbe had himself invited by the local hierarchy and placed himself at the service of the local Church, asking only for the liberty to witness to a heroic life of fraternity and to be able to spread the gospel through the written word.

It is interesting to reread the postulatory letter for his beatification sent on April 7, 1948, by the Bishop of Nagasaki, His Excellency, Paul Yagamuchi:

On April 24, 1930, Father Kolbe arrived unexpectedly at Nagasaki with three friars. This was, without a doubt, an arrival in conformity with a poor missionary of Jesus. The most noteworthy aspect of his activity certainly was the firmness of his faith, the foundation of his unshakable confidence, thanks to which he was a man of sacrifice and a missionary filled with great fervor. The work of Father Kolbe was certainly and remains still an innovation in the fact of its rapid progress in the Japanese world.

In our Order, sixty years ago, missionary activity was organized and assisted from the central headquarters of the Order itself through the General Procurator for the Missions. Father Kolbe came to Rome in 1930 with the proposal that his Polish province "create its own mission dependent on the Province and that it turn its activity to the Orient" (Scritti, I, 313). At Rome, he found that ideas were to the contrary: "The Father Procurator of the Missions wants to assume the task of sending this and that person; on the contrary, I affirm that it will be only we who undertake to accept or not to accept. In this way, already in conversation, there appeared fundamental divergences concerning the finality and the organization of missionary outposts" (Scritti, I, 367). But the far seeing ideas of Father Kolbe found a welcome, confirmation, and blessing from the Most Reverend Father Alphonse Orlini, the Minister General, and so Father Kolbe became the forerunner of that missionary activity which depended on the Province which is now common in our Order.

Kolbe knew how to find and to train his collaborators because he was not an individualist but worked with others and was able to rouse their enthusiasm and involve them in his ideas. . . .

But, even though desiring and wanting the missionary action undertaken to be dependent on the Province, Father Kolbe writes clearly: "I am of the opinion that it is not at all expedient to establish here in Japan a religious Province of our Polish Fathers and Brothers, but rather that we here be the seed which itself be spent to form, according to our spirit, Japanese religious. Only they will develop the activity" (Scritti, I, 128).

His preoccupation with vocations and the formation of native religious is one of his most constant concerns and is expressed in various letters.

On February 11, 1935, he wrote to the Niepokalanow community: "Launch an attack of prayer for vocations for Japanese religious brothers because without them there can be no guarantee for the future. And also for vocations to the minor seminary or absolutely for the major seminary. You are numerous; therefore it will be easier for you to implore insistently,

beseeching the Immaculate" (Scritti, II, 151).

Foreseeing the difficulties which arise today from problems of nationalism, he wrote in 1938 to the Superior of the Japanese mission: "It would be well if the number of Japanese brothers increased, because, when the Europeans have formed the native brothers religiously and professionally, they will have almost fulfilled their task because it is difficult to rely upon a long and fruitful activity in a foreign climate, as statistics indicate" (Scritti, II, 280).

Kolbe knew how to find and to train his collaborators because he was not an individualist but worked with others and was able to arouse their enthusiasm and involve them in his ideas.

Some make a distinction between the problems of evangelization and the establishment of the Order, while Father Kolbe was equally concerned about communicating the gospel and stimulating native vocations, the first source of the development of the Church.

Father Kolbe never appeared to be a colonizer even if he ardently dreamed of conquering the world; he was a lover who desired to communicate the beauty and riches of his faith through the printed word and the media of social communication which are free forms of dialogue. And he truly held a dialogue with everyone, especially with the pagans: "The Kishi was not addressed as are other publications generally, to Catholics, but to pagans, to Protestants, and to other non-Catholics; in the beginning, they received it with curiosity, then with unusual appreciation, to such an extent that already a good number of them have even received the grace of holy baptism" (Scritti, III, 501). Patiently ingrafting the Church of Christ among the pagans "without abusing the baptismal water"—this was the original method of Father Kolbe, who trusted in God totally through the Immaculate, but at the same time did not spare himself and did everything which was in his power.

The Conciliar Decree Ad Gentes speaks extensively (§20) of the missionary activity of individual Churches and urges that the young Churches be not simply the object but also the subject of mission. Father Kolbe anticipated this decree in practice because the Polish Niepokalanow substantially helped with manpower and materials the birth of the Japanese Niepokalanow which, on the other hand, also contributed to the enrichment of the missionary spirit in all of Poland. His Excellency, John Wosinski, Auxiliary Bishop of Plotsk in Poland, in an article dedicated to the missionary contribution of Father Kolbe, writes:

In the symbiosis of the two centers, what is taken up in the Conciliar Decree, Ad Gentes, was verified, and that is that the young missionary Churches reanimate by their presence the older Churches from which they receive help.

In fact, the Japanese Niepokalanow greatly enlivened and made the Polish Niepokalanow more missionary, whether the strictly Franciscan cloistered one or that larger one disseminated throughout Poland and beyond its frontiers in the ranks of the Militia of the Immaculate. . . . We see here Father Maximilian not only as a missionary but as one fully dedicated to organizing help for the missions and missionaries and as an apostle who wished to make all of us in Poland missionaries [Miles, 1980, nn. I-II, pp. 135-36].

And this same Polish Bishop summarizes his analysis of the missionary characteristic of Father Kolbe in this way:

He is for us a splendid example of the complete Christian according to the measures of our time, one who left nothing untried to exploit the 'signs of the times' and the possibility of the moment. For this reason, he is so rich in his personality and so difficult fully to understand. How much spiritual energy was contained in his frail body! How much spiritual good was accomplished in his short life! [ibid., 138].

This total Franciscan, religious, priest, martyr, is a magnificent example whom the Immaculate made the apostolic type, the ideal missionary of our times! Ω



Purity

Purity of thought has a root in the heart of a man Who fought and won the battle Of earthly pleasures, and walked in the light of peace and freedom.

A pure mind is like a blue sky, With no clouds that can block its beauty. It is untied by strings Of passions and base desires. Therefore it can fly up above, Aim for high realms, reach the stars.

A pure heart is like a magnet; It is the attraction of many, A tower which cannot collapse, A challenge to those who appear So strong, but at its presence Are so frail.

Sister Rosemary Di Lauro

The Franciscan Experience of Kenosis—I

ANSELM W. ROMB, O.F.M.CONV.

HEN IT COMES to explaining the meaning of Francis, no doubt every Franciscan in the world has some hidden agenda or some axe to grind. Every idea of "Franciscanism" tends to bear the impress of the person who claims to possess it.

I want here to zero in on Francis's lifelong experiences of God, his family, society, the world at large, his new Order—as his process of growth—through his many failures, his ambivalence, the tentativeness of his life. Francis's experience in some degree becomes our own experience, because we are his followers; yet the events of his life certainly find few parallels with ours. Each of us has a different personal history, background, education, bonding, ethnicity, spiritual insights.

This article is not about the charism and mission of Francis, but it is valuable to define them at the beginning. Charism (and its correlative, mission) was the gift of the Spirit to Francis, made to him personally as its chief beneficiary, yet intended for building up the Church and becoming a child of God with a new spirit of Jesus. This article is about one aspect of the charism of Francis and Franciscsanism, that is, spirituality. It appears that all of these terms and subjects are clouded by ancillary issues, such as legitimate personal bias, nostalgia, and Francis's own personality. Often mingled with charism and spirituality are such descriptive elements as emotionality and poverty and preaching. Yet, in effect, any of these three elements might exclude great numbers of Franciscans from our common charism or spirituality, because not all of us are emotionally demonstrative or really low-class poor or able to preach with credible witness.

Many Greek words whizzed through our "pop" theology vocabulary during the sixties and seventies, such as diakonia, hamartia, parousia, askesis, charis, glossolalia, agape—and let's not forget Kyrie eleison! They gave a certain respectability and supposed "difficulty" to popular writings. Never-

Father Anselm W. Romb, O.F.M.Conv., author of The Franciscan Charism in the Church (Paterson, NJ: St. Anthony Guild, 1969), is Minister Provincial of the Conventual Province of St. Bonaventure (Chicago).

theless one word, kenosis, has become rich in meaning and overtones that a simple translation, "emptying out," cannot convey. Allow me, then, to subtitle the first part of this article "The Kenotic Francis" or "Francis Emptied Out."

I. Francis Emptied Out

EVEN BEFORE THE "evangelical conversion" of Francis in 1208, when he heard, as if for the first time, the tenth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Francis had experienced kenosis through his failure and indecision. Let us rehearse a few events of his early life (until he was about 28 years old!) that are well documented. He tried merchandising cloth with his father for several years in Assisi. He had a one-day career as a knight, just to the borders of the "county" at Spoleto. For one winter he was a lazarist at Gubbio, caring for lepers. We remember how he interpreted the Lord's words and became a stonemason in restoring just three chapels before that venture wore off. Some time through all these mini-careers he attempted to live as a kind of lay-monastic, but the scullery was not for him. During the early wandering years he tried to assume the solitary life of a hermit and wore the traditional garb of that status. Perhaps we should call these the stages of a journey rather than failure. But the point I wish to make is that Francis's growth into Christ was largely the result of confronting himself and coping with failure even while maintaining his joyful hope.

If likeness to Jesus is the measuring stick of spiritual success, then Francis must be seen as one who—to paraphrase Philippians 2—

Though he was the originator and patriarch, he did not deem likeness to other founders something to cling to.

Rather he emptied himself out and kept the attitude of a Minor, considering himself the servant of the rest of the friars.

He admitted his ignoble and unlearned status, and thus it was that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even the death of his primitive ideal, which was his death on the cross!

Because of this God highly exalted him in the Church and bestowed on Francis the name of being "the saint most like to Christ"!

We are so conscious of "waiting in joyful hope" that we do not always understand or accept too completely the failures that typically precede the final, triumphant Day of the Lord. The mark of the Christian is to be a struggler rather than a success. One may never achieve a certain virtue or

complete a particular project or even understand what God expects. But none of this is really important (unless it implies the willful contravention of Providence). For example, I tell young religious who are experiencing difficulties over their motives for answering God's call that it is of minor importance why they came to God's service. What is important is why they stay.

We see already early on in Francis's life a succession of careers and apparent failures. Yet he *stayed*. What he *did* was of minor importance in comparison with the *kind of person* he became, because so much of his life's work, even after his "evangelical conversion" in 1208, was devoid of permanent success. Francis's world asked for productivity and results. God expected emptiness of himself, no matter whether that was accomplished by success or by failure. The triumphs of the spirit are not related to visible victories because faith derives from truths higher than the mere events of history.

Take a look at Jesus. He failed to convert his immediate world, change his own nation, and attract the leaders of his time, Roman, Greek, or Jewish. He failed to inspire and persuade very profoundly his own disciples, so that he was betrayed, accused, ensnared, denied, and abandoned by those he chose to be his "alter egos." "The historical success of the Christian movement did not occur within Jesus's historical lifetime . . . [The resurrection itself was Jesus's] trust in a divine solution," not his own. In fact, ". . . to attempt to insulate ourselves from the possibility of failure is a betrayal of the christian spirit. . . . Jesus revealed that the achievement of genuine human freedom is incompatible with anxiety and crippling fears regarding the prospect of failure" (Navone).

The key to Francis's holiness—in my view—is that after so many changes of direction in his life, he could never be sure even of his charism as "founder." His "evangelical" charism (to show it was possible to live the Gospel life according to one's state in life at any time or in any place) was not questionable after 1208. But his growing distance from the general membership of the Order, his surrender of administration, and his feeling of rejection specifically as "founder" all added up to his heartbreak, his agony in the garden, his final preparation for La Verna and the stigmata.

I turned to that old master, Bartholomew of Pisa, for help in analyzing the "conformity" between the lives of Jesus and Francis. I won't bore you with the details of his complex masterwork, but will refer only to one passage in Volume V of the Analecta Franciscana, which contains the second part of Bartholomew's Book of Conformities. The comparison that struck me as considerably relevant is known as "Fruit Seventeen": "Jesus submits to all" and "Francis is made less"—from minoratur, a play on Friars

Minor (V, 129-45).

Bartholomew cites eleven qualities of Francis that one could rightly term *kenotic* in our present sense and develops them in some detail:

- 1. Love of humble and abject persons.
- 2. Joyful acceptance of injuries.
- 3. Shrinking from praise.
- 4. Declaration of personal worthlessness.
- 5. Flight from high station.
- 6. Prompt submission to everyone.
- 7. Heartfelt embrace of humility.
- 8. Adaptation to others.
- 9. Denial of his own will.
- 10. Observance of God's precepts.
- 11. Meek and gentle lifestyle.

Bartholomew's outline is a good start and triggered some of my own thoughts. But I am here attempting to focus on one particular aspect of "conformity," and hence my remarks related to kenosis will be distilled into the following points:

- 1. Self-professed lowliness of Francis.
- 2. Breaking with his family and class and healing of these memories.
- 3. Identification with marginal persons.
- 4. Letting go of friends and romantic notions and his own administration.
- 5. Accepting illness and suffering.
- 6. The living death of the stigmata and welcoming Sister Death.
- A. Francis the Creature. Holiness takes its start from a sense of creatureliness. This is how we begin to "be perfect as [our]... heavenly Father is perfect." He is the All-holy, the Totally Other than ourselves. It is not a question of calling oneself a "worm," however true that may be at times because of sin. Our awareness of creaturehood or contingency or irrelevance or transitoriness leads us to be emptied of ourselves to make room for God. Many passages from Francis's life and writings reflect this attitude, but the Canticle of Brother Sun deliberately places mankind within the family of God's dependents down to the least creature. In this poem Francis uses creatures to praise the Almighty. In the second strophe he proclaims, "No mortal lips are worthy/To pronounce your name."
- B. Francis Uprooted. Behaviorists point out that children, when they grow up and achieve reasonable independence, return to and reinforce the values inculcated by their parents and class in society. Few escape this pattern, no matter how much the young protest that they do. The point, of course, is to escape whatever is contrary to Gospel values: to reject the

earthbound and time-serving values of money, prestige, advancement, productivity, power over others, pride of status, the importance of "connections."

Francis's protest began when he sold his father's cloth and gave away the money. That certainly wasn't Gospel poverty, but it was a start. He was learning to break with family ties and burghal values. Pietro Bernardone, his father, did not share this novel viewpoint. When his son returned home from his hideout near San Damiano, Pietro tossed him into a locked cellar and apparently beat him with some regularity.

The final break, we recall, occurred when Pietro dragged Francis into court before Bishop Guido. The drama ended in Francis's being not only emptied out, but also uncovered. Henceforth his only father would be God the Father. Humanly speaking, he was alone, without even a family, that most basic of communities. It would be a mistake to think that Francis was jubilant at the prospect of his "freedom" and loss of family. He was surely suffering. After all, Francis had had Pietro's love and approval, his purse and home, his indulgence and pride in his son. Pietro had ransomed Francis from prison in Perugia for a nobleman's price and showed legitimate concern for his boy's harebrained and constant failures. Francis so missed his father's approval that he asked a beggar to bless him when Pietro cursed him.

Francis did not easily rid himself of his class consciousness, either. When he and his first handful of followers left for Rome to seek Innocent III's approval, perhaps still unsure of himself and his ignoble origin, Francis had the group elect another as spokesman. The choice fell upon the formerly wealthy Bernard of Quintavalle, although he does not figure in the accounts of the papal audience. On one hand, Francis as a young man felt embarrassed that he was not born to nobility, so he "tried a little harder" by lavish expenditures on parties. On the other hand, he became equally embarrassed before God that he was more than a peasant, a poor man, or a leper.

Francis was therefore taking a new tack in religious life. In the Church both bishops and "major superiors" were typically chosen from the nobly born. This is not necessarily evil, of course. Those who had experience of money, better social education, and familiarity with administration were undoubtedly better suited to rule. Now Francis, however, rejecting money and class distinctions, considered superiorship as service, "because the ministers are the servants of the other friars" (RegB). He worried about his own sensitivity; it cost him dearly to embrace a leper the first time. This rejection of caste and class must have stayed in Francis's mind, because he wrote, "They should be glad to live among the social outcasts, the poor and the helpless, the sick and the lepers and those who beg along the road"

(RegNB).

A somewhat more subtle escape from the pretensions and arrogance of his class was Francis's unequivocal support of the Catholic Church. All classes of his time made the clergy and monks the butt of their diatribes. The venality of churchmen, even the highest, was well known. Privileges, dispensations, offices, benefices, and indulgences were for sale. Yet at a time when many groups of "poor men" roamed Christendom and preached against the Church, at a time when the old Manicheism was widespread under the name of Catharism, at a time when absentee bishops and their clergy rarely preached a sermon and heard confessions, Francis reversed the contempt in which many, if not most clergymen were held.

He "uprooted" himself. He went against the times and the superiority feelings of the newly "liberated" middle class from which he came. He subjected his followers to the authority of the Roman Church. He insisted that every follower be a full-blooded Catholic. Francis honored all priests above the angels, he said, and asked for interpretations of the Gospel from even "unimportant" priests, as at the Portiuncula on the Feast of St. Matthias. He placed himself under the protection of Bishop Guido of Assisi, who had a consistent history of arrogance and contention with his own canons and the town authorities. And if Innocent III and Honorius III were not arrogant, they were at least worldly and fixed on temporalities—for such was the spirit of their time.

C. Francis the Poverello. The consequence of being uprooted from and emptied out of his parents' and society's values was necessary acceptance of radical poverty and identification with those on the edge of this world's power structures. The *kenosis* of poverty in Francis's time was more than a loss of a little security or a "nest-egg." When you were poor then, you were really poor—as so many millions in the Third World are today. There were no out-of-work benefits, no public dole or welfare. Instead there were the humiliations of begging and the helplessness of starving and the indignity of accepting handouts at the whims of donors. When everyone depended on fair weather to grow food and hence to eat, bad weather and a poor harvest or plague deprived everyone, but the poor had no stockpile.

Francis realized the embarrassment implicit in begging when he wrote, passing along his own experience, "The friars should beg alms with trust. And there is no reason why they should be embarrassed to beg, because God made himself poor in this world" (RegB). It is not that the poor necessarily possess some great truth or have penetrated some divine mystery—a frequent error in Franciscan history—but they have the occasion and facility to *learn* the truth of "Jesus emptied out." Maybe that is

why Francis called the moon and stars, water and earth, and even death his brothers and sisters; but to him poverty was a beloved teacher about Jesus, and so he called her a "Lady."

D. Francis Loses Clare. Clare was the most perfect follower of Francis, sometimes called by biographers the loveliest "flower of the Franciscan garden." Yet we read how Francis resisted the pleas of Clare and her sisters to visit, to pray with them, to take a meal. In one narrative Francis acceded to their request and came to San Damiano. He said nothing, but simply sat on the floor with ashes strewn about him, then left without a word. Was he fearful of scandal or of his own weakness and fantasy life? In the final Rule he forbade the friars to enter the monasteries of nuns, unless they had some special task imposed on them. Perhaps this injunction was Hugolino's doing, and yet Francis apparently did not contest the prohibition. We may never know why he sequestered himself from Clare in spite of the fact that she was dearer to him than anyone else on this earth. Perhaps he sensed that God wished him to detach himself even from this noble association.

The kenosis of poverty in Francis's time was more than a loss of a little security or a "nest-egg." When you were poor then, you were really poor. . . .

Fr. Van Corstanje, in Francis: Bible of the Poor, reports a legend that reflects the attitude of Francis's contemporaries. When Francis and Clare were out begging together (which probably never happened because of Clare's enclosure), they noticed the suspicious looks their benefactors gave their association. Francis therefore directed Clare to go ahead; he was to follow at a distance. A legendary minor miracle followed, but the point of the story is that Francis had to let go even of Clare. The Master kept pressing Francis for an even deeper kenosis.

E. Francis, the Tired Romantic. No doubt Francis kept his adolescent romantic fantasies later in an altered, spiritual form; yet his last years record no more such romantic, idealized notions. Take the attempts to become a crusader, for example. He first took ship for Syria in 1212, but was cast upon the Dalmatian coast across from Italy. Two years later, undaunted, he tried to reach the Moslem world (like propagation) and his Companions, our Protomartyrs) through Spain and his companions are supplied to the spain and his companions, our Protomartyrs) through Spain and his companions are supplied to the spain and his companions, our Protomartyrs) through Spain and his companions are spain and his companions.

St. Bonaventure

When Francis finally did reach the Moslem world where the crusaders were besieging Damietta, the port of Egypt, on his third attempt, he was a total failure. He persuaded no one to make peace nor at least to invade the Holy Land, the objective of the crusades, rather than plunder rich Moslem cities. His trip to the Sultan generated many legends, but no apparent conversions. Francis could not even get martyred right! In addition he had a recurrence of either malaria or tuberculosis. Finally he was disillusioned by Emperor Frederick II; his repeated promises to sail to the Holy Land were never kept—and he was the Holy Roman Emperor! Francis was through with the crusades. Frederick later led the Sixth Crusade and struck the treaty of 1229, which granted Christians access to the Holy Places, but Francis did not live to see this event. In his own lifetime he was emptied of his romantic plans and fantasies forever. If the Holy Land was to be liberated, it would be in God's time, not by Francis's design.

F. Francis Lets Go of His Own Order. During Francis's absence in the East, his vicars introduced changes, while other friars sought papal permissions or were dividing the Order. When he returned to Italy, he asked the Pope for a Cardinal Protector, Hugolino. Nevertheless, Francis was unable to reverse the trends of the Order; Hugolino himself endorsed some of these trends.

The magic had gone out of Francis's heart. His simple Gospel life ceded to complex organization. The clericalization of the Order had begun. Despite the warning of the final Rule that the friars without learning ought not be anxious to acquire it, Francis must have seen the handwriting on the wall after the IV Lateran Council, which expressed the authentic needs of the time. Francis could no longer reach out and touch the life of each new member directly. No doubt, particularly when his health precluded administration, Francis felt he was being gently but definitely put aside—a mystic hero to admire mor than imitate. One way to destroy the "human realness" of a hero is to place him on a very high pedestal. The rest of the Order wanted a forceful and healthy leader who could travel and animate the friars, settle problems, and clarify the demands of the times.

Celano wrote that

Francis was filled with sorrow that some of the friars had left their former occupations and surrendered their prior simplicity of life after they found new ways. So he mourned over those who had once been fixed on higher matters with all their heart, but who had now succumbed to low and irrelevant pursuits. They had abandoned true joy to dally with empty and vain matters in the areas of foolish freedom.

Twice in the First Rule Francis reflects his unnamed fear of the "new"

superiors (ch. 5). "No friar is bound to obey if a minister orders something contrary to our way of life or to his own conscience; there is no obligation to obey when it is a question of sin." And

the friars subject to the ministers, who are their servants, should scrutinize the conduct of their ministers-and-servants with reason and charity. . . . If he declines to change, they must carry their accusation to the minister general . . . no matter what the opposition.

Francis had a way of saying that the Holy Spirit is the minister general of the Order; perhaps this was his solution to his anxiety and allowed him to let go the reins of authority. He wrote five years before he died, "The ministers and preachers must remember that they do not have a right to the office of serving the friars or of preaching, and so they must be prepared to lay it aside without objection the moment they are told to do so" (RegNB). Therefore he had to be willing to surrender his own leadership, except the moral kind. The Order belonged to God, its true founder. Francis had to be emptied of thinking that it somehow belonged to him. Many religious founders were rejected by their communities, generally more violently or uncharitably than Francis was. Some were excommunicated; others were hidden away in obscure positions by the second and third generations of members. The Jews once demanded a king who would lead their armies and give them laws, as other nations, to replace the prophets and judges. Now the friars wanted legislators and commanders to replace the patriarch. Once more, it becomes clear that charism is not for oneself alone, but ultimately for the whole Church. So the Franciscan Order with its scholars and preachers was designed not by Francis, but by God to reform the Church and uplift morality. Francis's task was seminal: he made the Gospel credible.

G. Francis Sick unto Death. The debilitation of Francis's health began in the fall of 1202 when he fought with the cohorts of Assisi in the battle with Perugia and was taken prisoner to the damp and airless dungeon of the palazzo off the square of the enemy town. Here he contracted the first of many ailments, either malaria or, more likely, pulmonary tuberculosis. After many months he was ransomed by his father, but took the better part of a year to recuperate, until the spring of 1204.

Perhaps recurrent tuberculosis was what struck him down on his second attempt to reach the Saracens through Spain. At Damietta, finally on crusade, Francis contracted the febbre quartanaria, which was either malaria or some other kind of fever. He developed a flux of the bowels and stomach pains as well. Some biographers think he was filled with cancer, too. After having been marked with the stigmata in 1224, he grew weaker

from the loss of blood.

But his worst agony was his blindness. During the last four years of his life his eyes became very sensitive to light. He who loved Brother Sun and Sister Moon and Stars and brilliant Brother Fire and called them "beautiful" and "fair" in the Canticle could barely stand brightness. There were periods of acceleration and remission with occasional total loss of vision and severe headaches. According to the Three Companions he suffered an infectious flow of pus from his eyes. Sante Ciancarelli traces all this to a development of tuberculosis or some other disease, common in Egypt, contracted at Damietta. When his eyes were being cauterized, the friars ran from the room, for which Francis later reproved them. Red-hot irons were drawn over the side of his face from the top of the ear across the temple to the eyebrow. As a result the veins were cut and sealed off, supposedly to stop circulation and hence pain in the head and face. None of this helped.

A few months before his death Francis's ulcerated stomach worsened and ruptured. He vomited blood. Then he developed edema. Years of malnutrition had taken their toll. When his bones were exhumed early in 1978, Time magazine reported, "Pope Paul asked scientists to study them. Their findings: the saint, who died in 1226, was short and frail and his bones 'very porous, denoting a form of malnutrition.'"

Francis had written in the First Rule, ch. 10, "I ask the sick friar to thank God for everything and be content as God wills him to be in sickness or in health. It is those who are 'destined for eternal life' that God instructs by their illness and affliction and spirit of compunction." In his own final sick condition he was to become a kind of movable "tourist trap" and a curiosity. Others wanted to "use" him; so Assisi sent soldiers to conduct him home so that his ravaged and stigmatized body might not fall into the hands of another town in the event of his death.

Of course, the last major "conformity" of Francis with Christ was being almost literally nailed to the cross. He had prayed for two favors from the Lord: to feel the pains of crucifixion and to feel the love that prompted the acceptance of such pain. At La Verna this favor was granted by his stigmatization. He no longer lived; he was truly empty of himself. Jesus lived within him and through him because kenosis was complete. Now he could write the final lines of the Canticle. "May all praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death, from whose embrace no mortal person can escape." The ultimate kenosis is saying "yes" to dissolution and losing control over one's life itself. There was nothing left of Francis for himself; now he could belong to the ages.

(To be continued.)

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Transfigured Night

"And we, with our unveiled faces reflecting like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, all grow brighter and brighter as we are turned into the image that we reflect" (2 Cor. 3:18—Jerusalem Bible).

Look into my eyes; let the glow there mesmerize and captivate your own, till you hear my heart's deep spiralled sighs surge out, a molten moan.

Gaze into my eyes; till the fire there enkindles and incites your own, while, biazoned, all is sliver-struck, transmuting shades to shining Form.

Sink into my eyes; surrender sight to total light, that blind, my touch may trace your way through gravid places not in space, to limn on you the outline of my Face.

Sister M. Felicity Dorsett, O.S.F.

At Last: Fortini's Massive Francis of Assisi in an Excellent English Digest by Helen Moak

RAPHAEL BROWN, S.F.O.

Twenty LONG YEARS we have patiently awaited this work. Now we welcome it with true and perfect joy as a most timely birthday present to Assisi's Little Poor Man.

Often while perusing multi-volume biographies of great statesmen or writers I have wondered why we did not have a comparable in-depth life of the most popular and famous of all the Saints. Surely the materials are rich and abundantly available. Of very few great figures in history do we have so many reliable and vivid anecdotes, because very few were so mimetic, so literally dramatic, so dramatically didactic as was the Poverello.

Hence we are given a happily unending series of standard normal-length biographies, such as those of Jörgensen, Father Cuthbert, Englebert, Sticco. Salvatorelli, Piat, and Longpré—culminating in the latest by Bishop, Smith, Mockler, and Holl, But how many really comprehensive, fulllength life-portraits have we had? All too few, of which only Sabatier's is well known. Who has studied those by Chalippe (almost a translation of Wadding's, the first), the Bollandists', Facchinetti's (over 700 pages), Sarasola's (over 600), Sparacio's (over 500)—to say nothing of Friar Bartholomew of Pisa's in his Conformities (over 1000, though much treats of Christ as model)?

Despite all the wealth of data in those lengthy works, very few students have explored them. Yet only two are abstruse, being in Latin. All the others could be used by educated general readers, though only Chalippe and Sabatier have appeared in English.

To those seven we might add Jörgensen's and Father Cuthbert's as their total length, with appendices, runs to over 400 and 600 pages, respectively. And lastly, of course, our 1965 Englebert (over 600).

So it would seem that we actually have what Queen Victoria would call "an elegant sufficiency" of in-depth biographies of St. Francis: a total of eleven.

But there is still one more: Fortini's. And it is in several ways the richest, most massive and monumental, and certainly the most readable of all the twelve.

First appearing in one volume of 483 pages in 1926, this Nova Vita di San Francesco was greatly enlarged into five volumes (in four), totaling 2269 pages, in its definitive 1959 second edition, published first by the author's Edizioni Assisi, then also by the Edizione Porziuncola. For analysis and

Raphael Brown, lay Affiliate, O.F.M., is a retired reference librarian of the Library of Congress and a "non-retiring" writer on Franciscanism whose latest book is True Joy from Assisi. A Secular Franciscan with his wife since 1943, he is President of the San Luis Rey Fraternity in north San Diego County, California.

bibliographical data, see the 1965 Englebert, pp. 5 and 526.

Now at last it has become available to the English-speaking public in a thoroughly excellent condensed edition superbly translated by Mrs. Helen Moak of Philadelphia: Francis of Assisi (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 1981; xxi-720 pp., \$29.50; also from Franciscan Herald Press, +\$1.00, perhaps for less from discount bookstores—in any case well worth the price).

First a few words about the author who is not well known outside of Italv. Arnaldo Fortini was born in Assisi in 1889, an orphan after 1896, obtained his doctorate in law at the University of Perugia in 1912, served in World War One as military attorney, returned to practice law in Assisi and served as its podestà (mayor) from 1923 to 1944, hence during the 700th anniversary in 1926 of St. Francis's death and during the Fascist era and German and Allied occupations: in 1940 he arranged to have Assisi be given the status of an "open" and hospital city. Friend of Paul Sabatier and Johannes Jörgensen, Fortini became President of the International Society of Franciscan Studies in Assisi in 1933, and in 1957 promoted the establishing of the Franciscan Studies Chair in the University of Perugia. For four decades he launched a series of initiatives and messages to statesmen and international organizations advocating the extension of the Franciscan ideals of world peace and brotherhood, thus earning a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize by that University in 1960. When he died in Assisi on May 15, 1970, he was acclaimed for having restored its past glories, respected its mystical spirit, and interpreted its religious heritage.

But Fortini's writings will long remain his greatest contribution to the enduring

fame of St. Francis and Assisi. He is the author of about a dozen books and of over fifty articles and booklets—all on various aspects of the city and its Saint. His bibliography in this book contains forty-six entries.

Of all those works his 1959 biography of the Poverello stands out as the prolific author's monumental master-work.

The Italian original comprised, besides the biography, a collection of documented studies on sources, the homes of Francis and Clare, their families, the war against Perugia, the history of San Damiano, the Canticle of Brother Sun, etc., as well as detailed descriptions of Assisi and its district and municipal government, plus a hundred pages of texts or abstracts of archival documents. All this rich material of interest only to researchers has been wisely omitted from the new English edition.

Helen Moak has not just translated Fortini's life of St. Francis from Italian into beautifully readable English. She has also skillfully edited and condensed his often florid and verbose text. She has also contributed a large number of unusually interesting and helpful footnotes dealing with historical data and with local information based on interviews and observation. Fortini's footnotes are conveniently relegated to the back of the book (over 40 pages). The 30-page Bibliography has been appreciably enriched and updated. Lastly, the 20-page Index has been made especially valuable by the inclusion of a number of important medieval Italian terms. Unfortunately the place-names of the two maps are so tiny as to be almost illegible. The copy editing is remarkably efficient; even with so many Italian names. I have yet to come across a single typographical slip, unlike so many current books.

Of course we could list a few surprising omissions in the updating of the Bibliography, notably Esser's Opuscula and Brooke's Scripta Leonis and Bigaroni's definitive new edition of the latter, i.e., the so-called Legend of Perugia, now renamed Compilatio Assisiensis. It is a delicate matter for me to determine just how many data should be added from our 1965 Englebert Notes and Appendices, which have been used, though rather minimally. But in two striking instances (on pp. 108-09), Fortini's rather amazing errors regarding the German Count Conrad and the Colonna family non-connection of Cardinal John of St. Paul should at long last be clearly corrected; instead the first seems to be left open, and the latter is allowed to stand.

This brings us to the essence of Fortini's work: its outstanding good qualities and its minor defects. Among the former at least three must be stressed. First, his uniquely profitable mining and exploitation of Assisi's rich treasury of archival documents. Fortini aptly described himself as "the poet whom a passion for vanished things had led to rummage in the dusty solitude of the old cathedral archives" with "nostalgic loyalty." Second, his minute, affectionate knowledge of practically every square yard of Assisi, town and district.

However, those two technical proficiencies without his third talent would produce only a dry-as-dust research treatise. As a true son of mystical Assisi and Umbria and as a true heir of Italy's first poet, Fortini was gifted with the genius and creative imagination of a poet. Hence he deliberately sought inspiration in the ideal of the great modern Italian poet Giosuè Carducci, who wrote that historians should "infuse into the writing of history a soul or spirit of

poetic imagination." That is exactly what Fortini has accomplished both in his life of St. Francis and in his history of Assisi in the Middle Ages.

With all the creative imagination of a Felix Timmermans or Murray Bodo—or an Irving Stone or André Maurois or Emil Ludwig-Fortini will take a minor incident from a source and bring it to life with an infusion of vivid local color and dramatic animation; as a minor example, see his lively treatment of the Saint's asking the birds on the island near Venice to suspend their "overwhelming paean . . . sonorous hymn . . . great echoing symphony," so that he and his companion could recite their vespers office (p. 439, from LM 8.9). Thus too Fortini has only to pick up one of those dusty archival deeds, whether a marriage contract or donation of land, to recreate for us the setting, the weather, and the social and even personal background of its signers. Time after time he recreates, animates, dramatizes. and brings to life the events and personalities of the world of St. Francis. This is indeed popularized hagiography at its best, rightly hailed by secular American reviews as "reverential and intensive . . . classic . . . wonderful."

Naturally, this "poetic" approach can have its failings: Fortini's Italian original was occasionally "romantic," florid, and verbose. But the translation has ably eliminated nearly all such "purple passages." And who would demand that poets be one hundred percent accurate in every detail of chronology or transcription of Latin texts?

In effect Helen Moak and her publisher are giving us a definitely improved version of Fortini's life of St. Francis, for which we can only be deeply grateful. This may remind some of us of the claim, allegedly made by certain German literary critics, that Schiller's German translation of Shakespeare is superior to the original. . . . But in this case, the improvements are undeniable.

One understandable limitation, however, should be noted. As a citizen, mayor, historian, and glorifier of Assisi, Fortini suffers somewhat, in his biography, from the well-known Italian campanilismo (from campanile: church belltower) or local patriotism possibly tainted by civic chauvinism. As a result of this altogether forgivable pride in Assisi, his life of the Saint is really almost a life of Francis within the town and district of Assisi. Events occurring beyond that beautiful region are downplayed-with one striking exception: the Crusade in Egypt. No attempt is made to trace the Poverello's frequent preaching missions in other regions of Italy.

But here an incisive insight of Giovanni Papini is perhaps relevant. Just as he claimed in his very readable Dante Vivo that only someone who was a fellow Catholic and artist and poet and native of Florence could fully appreciate Dante, so too maybe only a native of Assisi who is also a poet and a mystic is best equipped to write a comprehensive, in-depth biography of the Saint. After all, despite Francis's frequent apostolic wanderings, he spent most of his days within sight of little Assisi.

For the record, here are three incidents which throw light on the personality and work of Arnaldo Fortini. My friend Father David Temple still marvels at the fervor and eloquence with which the historian delivered a formal speech in

Latin to an international assembly of nearly eighty Provincials in Assisi in 1957. And when I visited him in his office just off the Piazza in 1962, I caught him in the beautifully Franciscan act of feeding bread crumbs to the birds on his window-sill. I was also impressed by the enthusiasm with which he described the joy of the people of Assisi when they go on the steep climb and all-day excursion to the summit of Monte Subasio every year on Ascension Day.

As a most fitting conclusion to this review welcoming with similar enthusias mthenew American Moak-Fortini Francis of Assisi, let us quote these forgotten yet timely words of that past master of Franciscanists with which Paul Sabatier welcomed the first Italian edition in 1926 in a letter to the author:

Your precious manuscript reached me yesterday morning. You can imagine with what sympathy and joy I set about devouring it, for I sensed in it, in addition to the scholarly research crowned by the discovery of so many unknown documents, a work which will make you the author of a Life of St. Francis of a wholly new conception.

St. Francis is not dead! That is the conviction which inspired you and which your readers will come to share. You desire that his achievement be known right down to its most intimate details, and that this knowledge should once again become a ferment of contemplation and life for Assisi, for Italy, and for all other peoples. In these pages you fulfill the dream which I have long had for you and which I have often discussed with you. But you fulfill it to a degree that goes beyond my hopes. 1 \(\Omega \)

^{&#}x27;Published in Fortini's valuable autobiographical Quelli che vinceranno (Foligno, 1946), pp. 57-58, and in the equally important biography of Fortini by Professor Giuseppe Ermini, Rector of the University of Perugia, Au Comité Nobel du parlement norvégien (Santa Maria degli Angeli, 1960), pp. 18-19.

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	FI 534	Franciscan Referms and Re 2 cr. hrs., Fr. Sergius Wroblewsk	newal Toda	v .
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o ,	FI 538	The Theology of St. Bonave 2 cr. hrs., Frs. Regis Armstrong, Conv., D.Th.; Joachim Glermek, O	nture O.F.M. Can.	Ph.D. Wayna Hallmann, O.P.W.
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Books Received

Geissler, Eugene S., ed., The Bible Prayer Book: All the Prayers, Songs, Hymns, Canticles, Psalms, and Blessings in the Bible. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981. Pp. 528, incl. index. Paper, \$4.95.

Hinwood, Bonaventure, O.F.M., Your Question Answered. Cape Town, South Africa: The Catholic Bookshop, 1980. Pp. viii-188. Paper, R5.80.

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Pope John Paul II: Catechist. Text, with Commentary and Discussion Questions, of Catechesi Tradendae. Foreword by Terence Cardinal Cooke. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980. Pp. x-233. Paper, \$4.50.

Roberts, William P., The Prophets Speak Today. Selections on Contemporary Themes for Prayer and Reflection. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press. 1981. Pp. ix-117, including index. Paper, \$2.75.

7

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

1. 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 Faithful 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 FormViv: 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 ReaB: 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 Joy

11. II refer to First and Second Editions.

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

LP: Legend of Perugia L3S: Legend of the Three Companions

LMin: Bonaventure, Minor 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).