

# The CORD

## A Franciscan Spiritual Review

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## Responses,

I BELIEVE THAT the fundamental question raised by Sister Madge Karecki is the one dealing with the reality behind the distinctions separating the three Orders. She poses a question about the founder's intention: "Did Francis distinguish them in this way or was that a canonical requirement?"

Even if some would answer that such distinctions are not helpful, I feel that it would be difficult to argue conclusively that these distinctions are sustained or prompted out of unhealthy needs to compare and compete (though, God knows, there has been enough such unkind behavior in the Order's history!).

In a thesis entitled "An Investigation of the Origins and Development of Third Order Franciscan Communities of Women," Sister Jeanne Glisky, S.F.P., made a thorough examination of the early sources for the life of Francis and the history of the Order. Documents spanning the years from Celano to Wadding amply demonstrate a conviction on the part of early and later writers that the influence and actions of Francis were centrally formative of the Third Order. There is, to be sure, no document that unambiguously states the specific intention of Francis to "found" a Third Order bearing his name. In spite of this, these early sources clearly show widespread contemporary awareness that the Third Order was the product of his preaching and direction.

When we enter into discussion of Francis as a founder, we are in a danger paralleled by discussions about the intentions of Jesus in founding the Church. We cannot prove the origin of every Church structure from an explicit saying of Jesus, and yet crucial Church structures are preserved in history. Karl Rahner offers some enlightening advice in *Foundations of Christian Faith*: "If continuity and identity are to be maintained within an entity which exists historically, then it is inevitable that in an earlier phase of this historical entity free decisions are made which form an irreversible norm for future epochs" (p. 330).

To suggest that the development into three separate branches of the Franciscan Order was accepted by Francis simply out of deference to "canonical require-

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## Responses

THE FACT THAT Sister Madge Karecki raises the type of questions she has raised in last month's editorial is the reason why, it seems to me, the Spirit is leading us to clarify so many basic issues. Many Franciscans reflect on their "being Franciscan" only in the context of today. The past disregard of the writings of Francis is not a justification for the fundamental question posed in Sister Karecki's editorial: "... is there a need for us ... to look critically at the historical expression of Francis's original inspiration?" Her suggested answer in the last paragraph is NO. The Church points out what the authentic sources of renewal are in *Ecclesiae sanctae*, §15. Only by reflecting on the historical expression of the "original spirit of the founder" can we discover the fact that Francis's spirituality was and is not something solely interior. He requires "bringing forth fruits befitting repentance" (RegNB 23). His own experience demonstrates what this meant practically then and can mean now for our life-style. The gift of charism is dynamic. While Francis's insight into salvation is what we name as his charism, his living and that of his followers down through the centuries informs us of how we may make it concretely real and lived today in our way.

What is the Franciscan charism? It seems to me and many others that there is only one charism. It is not the gospel because we can never possess Jesus Christ as our own. Rather it is *literally living* the gospel! And yes, Francis intended this for all and not only his followers in the three Orders. For his followers, however, Francis did not project one way of living the gospel, but three, to correspond to their situation in the society of his day. We mentally overinstitutionalize these ways and think of them in terms of the canonical Orders that constitute the Franciscan movement. Simply stated, Francis projected a way of literally living the gospel for men living in fraternity and committed to the canonical ministry of preaching peace and penance. He projected a way for women in enclosed monasteries who certainly could not live the gospel as the preaching lesser brothers did. Finally, he projected a way for persons: men, women, young, old.

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that it fails to meet most needs of the members. It is often found in the prisons (cell bosses), in the military (sergeants), and in factories (union shop stewards). In such contexts it works effectively in meeting many of the needs of members.

The second kind of leadership Etzioni calls *official*, or authoritarian. Such leadership is based mostly on possession of an official appointment. Its principal interest is the institution's welfare. Personal qualities of leadership, especially as they affect members, are secondary. It occurs most commonly in both compulsory and utilitarian societies. As many of us recall, it used to be quite common in the Order, and is still not entirely absent.

The third kind of leadership Etzioni calls *formal leadership*, in which occupation of an official position is accompanied by a requisite personal leadership qualification. It, in other words, combines informal and positional leadership. It is the most effective kind of leadership in voluntary societies since it respects both the needs of the institution and the needs of members.

Organizational theorists have also identified a fourth kind of leadership, which they label *laissez faire*. *Laissez faire* describes the leader who, although he occupies an official position of authority, refrains from exercising strong leadership. This kind of leadership eliminates all accountability. Moreover, since the centering power of leadership is missing, "turf-building" proliferates, and informal leadership, often viciously competitive, moves into the power vacuum. Over all, group morale and productivity are seriously reduced. Such leadership is non-functional in terms of the organization, counter-productive to the morale of the individual, and effective in no kind of organization. It is the least effective of all four kinds of leadership described here.

It is clear that the ideal kind of leadership for a religious community is what Etzioni labels *formal leadership*, where a man officially holds office of superior and in fact exercises this leadership vigorously. The impression I have, however, is that religious communities, in their rejection—however well justified—of the excesses of official or authoritarian leadership, have veered steeply into an even less effective kind of leadership, the *laissez faire* kind.

I set out to gather evidence in support of this impression by studying the local superiors in one Province of Franciscans in the United States.

The methodology was as follows. Using the threefold Etzioni typology and adding the concept of *laissez faire*, I designed an instrument for assessing what kind of leadership is actually exercised in the local communities. To this end, I wrote thumbnail sketches for each of these four typologies (cf. Appendix). Although the bias of the study is that some kinds of leadership

are preferable to others, I attempted to present all four kinds in as positive a light as possible. Local superiors are not the hypothesized leaders because I did not wish to betray to subjects the thrust of the study. Hence, the four kinds of leadership are represented by the following: a hospital chaplain, a pastor, a high school principal, and the superior of a middle-sized friary. Since all local superiors in this Province are priests, no lay brothers were included in the thumbnail sketches.

This instrument was mailed to all sixty superiors of the Province. It was not identified as a study of local superiors. Each of the superiors was simply asked to give me his age and the number of friars in the community he lives in (cf. Appendix). I considered a friary to be "large" if there were more than six friars in it, "small" if fewer than six. By this reckoning, there were 19 large and 41 small friaries in the study. I then asked the superior to answer two brief questions: (1) Which of these four kinds of leadership would he, objectively, rank as most effective? (2) Which of these four kinds of leadership most resembles his own leadership activity? The response to the study was excellent. Fifty-five of the sixty superiors—or 92%—returned usable forms.

The response to the first question—the judgment by superiors of which kind of leadership is objectively the best—is found in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Percentage of Franciscan Superiors Judging  
Four Different Kinds of Leadership to be  
Objectively the Best Kind

Type of Leadership	Superiors of small friaries (n = 36)	Superiors of large friaries (n = 18)	Total (n = 54)
Informal	14%	05%	11%
Authoritarian	11%	05%	09%
Formal	64%	90%	73%
Laissez faire	11%	00%	07%

It will be noted that both sets of superiors rank the four kinds of leadership in uniform fashion. *Formal leadership* is seen to be far and away the best kind, with *informal leadership* a distant second, and both *authoritarian* and *laissez faire* leadership favored by very few. As such, the superiors accept the thesis of this study as to which kind of leadership is most effective.

The response to the second question—a self-report of what kind of leadership the superior actually exercises—is found in Table 2.

**Table 2**  
Percentage of Franciscan Superiors  
Actually Practicing Four Different  
Kinds of Leadership

Type of Leadership	Superiors of small friaries (n = 33)	Superiors of large friaries (n = 18)	Total (n = 51)
Informal	15%	00%	10%
Authoritarian	18%	06%	14%
Formal	39%	39%	39%
Laissez faire	28%	37%	37%

The results presented in Table 2 change the picture considerably. Here I did not ask superiors to make objective judgments, but to tell me how they actually function in practice. Among the superiors of the small friaries, *formal leadership* still holds the lead, but by a far smaller margin. In a strong second place is the least desirable kind of leadership, *laissez faire*. Among the superiors of large friaries, the situation is even more dramatically changed. Among these men, *laissez faire* leadership takes a commanding lead as the most widely spread kind of leadership, *formal leadership*, drops to second place. Combining both groups, we find that only 39%, or about 2 in 5, of the superiors in this Province exercise effective leadership. Three kinds of less effective leadership account for the other 60%, dominated by the least effective leadership, *laissez faire*, which accounts for 40% of the superiors. The situation is particularly bad in the larger friaries, where over half the superiors confess to practicing the least effective kind of leadership.

The implications of these findings are sobering. Superiorship of local friaries is potentially the most significant leadership role in the lives of the friars since local superiors are in constant day-to-day contact with the members of their communities. Consequently, they are in a good position to do the most harm or the most good. In the living of the life of the friars, they are more significant than provincials, definitors, and general leaders in Rome. If considerably fewer than half of them offer good leadership, then we need look no further for one of the basic causes of the problems highlighted in Koser's report to the Order.

What needs to be done about such a situation? Leadership training for religious leaders has fortunately begun to take hold not only among the orders generally but in the Franciscan Order in particular. Training, however, has only limited usefulness. Selection of superiors is of greater importance. And probably less attention is given to the selection of local superiors than any other leadership role. We agonize over the selection of pastors, especially of the larger parishes, principals, definitors, directors of retreat houses, college presidents, et al. But when it comes to the leadership to be exercised in the area which the General Constitutions call the most significant aspect of our life—brotherhood—we rely on unsupervised local elections which frequently take the least common denominator approach to selection, and are generally quite bereft of objective criteria.

It would seem that the Provinces might well reconsider the process of local selection of superiors. The election of superiors is indeed a heartwarming democratic gesture, and a healthy expression of the decentralizing process that has been introduced into the Church since Vatican II. As with all democratizing processes, however, the granting of the right requires education in the exercise of that right, an important second step often overlooked by egalitarian reformers. Provinces, it seems, ought to publish clear, concrete criteria for the selection of superiors. A process of applying these criteria to potential candidates ought to be submitted to. Some supervision of the actual election process ought to take place. Finally, the provincial administration ought to make it very clear that they are ready to exercise their right to veto any local selection if it does not conform to the criteria or the process.

We ought also to pay some attention to the fact that the selection of local superiors is usually the last official position to be considered in a community. We turn to the election of superiors after all the big jobs, such as pastor, president, coordinator, department head, director, etc., have been handed out, and after everyone has made his own determinations of how he will spend time. When we finally get to superiors, the most gifted leaders have



already received tasks which will consume most of their time and energy. We are left then with the choice of either the less competent leadership types, or the competent ones with almost no time to devote to the job.

Following selection ought to come a training experience. No superior ought to be allowed to assume office until he has undergone considerable intensive training in what it means to be a superior. Such programs do exist, and their failure is not in their content, but in the fact that they are not mandatory. Only the already competent superiors tend to take them. And that, as we have seen, is a minority of our superiors.

Perhaps most important in raising the quality of our superiors is a legitimation of the kind of leadership Etzioni calls *formal leadership*. We need not, however, appeal to Etzioni. Our General Constitutions do a rather adequate job in setting forth the broad requirements of leadership. Phrases describing the role of the local superior as "guaranteeing fraternal communion," "safeguarding good relations and unity," "alerting others to Christian responsibilities," "strengthening vocations," "governing the entire community" (Art. 294) make it quite clear that our General Constitutions have roughly the same thing in mind as good social scientists.

As did St. Francis of Assisi. Francis is best remembered as a kind, gentle, servant leader. In Chapter 10 of the Rule of 1223, ministers are instructed by Francis to treat those who do not observe the Rule with kindness, charity, and sympathy, and are told that "that is the way it ought to be; the ministers should be the servants of all the friars." But Francis could be firm as well. In the same chapter, ministers are instructed to "admonish" and correct the brethren, and in Chapter 7 provincials are told even to impose penances. Francis understood that leadership is not just a matter of good housekeeping and letting the friars do what they want. Unlike, unfortunately, many local superiors today. Q

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- Koser, O.F.M., Constantine. *Fulfill Your Vows to the Most High, the State of the Order Report to the 1979 Assisi General Chapter*. Trans. Justin Bailey and Stephen Yonick. Pulaski, WI: Franciscan Publishers.

### Appendix: Leadership Study

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Friars in the Community I Live in \_\_\_\_\_

Below are brief descriptions of four styles of leadership. Read them carefully, and then answer the two questions at the end.

A. Fr. M., a 44-year-old priest, is one of seven chaplains at a large city hospital. Because of his intelligence, his knowledge of the hospital, and his obvious sensitivity to patients, he exerts strong influence on pastoral policy and practice at the hospital. He also spends considerable time breaking in and helping new chaplains. For these reasons, both chaplain and medical staff consult him and seek his help more than they do the head chaplain. Since he does not always conform to regulations, he is not considered likely to succeed the current head. Anyway, he says he'd rather not, since he does not like administration.

B. Fr. R, 48, is a pastor, hard working, devout, and conscientious. Two associates, a religious education director, and a school principal form the parish staff. There is a "rubber stamp" parish council. R, a somewhat aloof man, makes most decisions himself, trusting his own judgment rather than that of his younger and less experienced staff. His infrequent consultations are perfunctory and most of his time with individuals on his staff is spent in evaluating their work and outlining future directives. He tends to do work himself rather than delegate. But he gets a great deal done, and the chancery is quite satisfied with him.

C. Fr. L, 36, is principal of a large Catholic high school. A personable man, he is also known for his dedication and hard work. Although he demands regular accounting from his staff, he is famous for his lavish praise of even the smallest achievements. School-wide decisions are usually made by majority decision of administration and faculty, though L will at times make personal decisions that go counter to the majority. He meets regularly with staff and faculty, and often visits their offices and classrooms. The school is positively rated by accrediting agencies and the diocesan school board.

D. Fr. W, 41, is superior of a large religious community of 17 men working in diverse ministries. He is friendly, intelligent, devout, dedicated, and gets along well with most people. His basic theory of superiorship is to provide basic services—good food, comfortable house, adequate money, etc.—and otherwise let people do what they want to do. They are after all adults, he says, and this allows their potential to develop unfettered. Consequently, he issues few directives, holds few serious discussions on community issues, and does not expect subjects to be accountable to him for their work or lifestyle. To do more, he argues, would be to invite a return to authoritarianism. After his first term, he was re-elected by his community by a margin of 12-5.

1. Objectively speaking, in terms of effectiveness, I would rank the four styles of leadership in the following order (place an "A" in the appropriate box, a "B" in the appropriate box, etc.):

- Number 1 ☐  
 Number 2 ☐  
 Number 3 ☐  
 Number 4 ☐

2. As a leader, I see myself as most similar to (check one):

- A (Fr. M) ☐      B (Fr. R) ☐      C (Fr. L) ☐      D (Fr. W) ☐

## A Franciscan Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come  
Holy Spirit  
from  
our Father  
and  
our Savior  
through  
our Mother  
into  
our hearts  
to repair  
Your "destroyed House"<sup>1</sup>  
in us  
and through us  
in others  
by self-overcoming  
prayer and example  
word and action  
as You did  
in Francis and Clare  
Louis and Elizabeth  
and all our Saints  
whose help we ask.  
Amen.

Raphael Brown.

<sup>1</sup>See my *True Joy from Assisi*, p. 160.

## Sermon II on the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

SAINT BONAVENTURE

### Translators' Introduction

Hail, holy Lady  
Most Holy Queen,  
Mary, Mother of God,  
Ever Virgin;  
Chosen by the most holy Father in Heaven,  
Consecrated by him,  
With his most holy beloved Son  
And the Holy Spirit, the Comforter.  
On you descended and in you still remains  
All the fullness of grace  
and every good.

AS THESE WORDS from his "Salutation of the Blessed Virgin" clearly attest, St. Francis of Assisi dearly loved the woman who bore Christ the Lord. Through her, God becomes man; through her divine Son, man becomes reconciled to God. Chapter twelve of Francis's definitive Rule concerns preachers, and it seems only right that those who follow their Franciscan vocation through preaching should speak of the holy Virgin. Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio certainly did.

Called by some the "Second Founder" of the Franciscan Order, Bonaventure preached frequently and well. In those sermons which have come down to us in his *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi, 1882-1902, in ten volumes), twenty-four pertain to Our Lady. The present sermon is one of them. As with other Bonaventuran sermons, this one possesses a *leitmotiv* running all through the work: in this case, Bonaventure's stress is on the concept of light, a concept dear to Bonaventure as a philosopher as well as a theologian. Likewise in true Bonaventuran fashion, the present work is replete with citations of sacred

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*This translation, done by David Blowey, O.F.M.Conv., and Scott Kershaw, O.F.M.Conv., with the assistance of Claude Jarmak, O.F.M.Conv., and Germain Kopaczynski, O.F.M.Conv., is reprinted with permission from The Saint Hyacinth Studies (published by the Conventual Franciscan Friars at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary, Granby, MA), volume 17 (1980), 5-14.*

Scripture and abounds in triads, in keeping with the Seraphic Doctor's trinitarian outlook in general.

Though the brevity of the work and especially the suddenness of its conclusion lead us to suspect it is more of an outline of a sermon than a sermon itself, it possesses a great charm nonetheless, and we hope our translation helps bring this out. For those who prefer their Bonaventure in the original Latin, the sermon is found in *Opera Omnia*, IX, 691-93.

### Introduction

*She is more beautiful than the sun.*

*She outshines all the constellations of stars.*

*Compared with light she takes first place.*

*Wisdom 7:29*

IN THESE WORDS the Holy Spirit is exalting the glorious queen of heaven above all the other dwellers of the celestial city. Her Assumption is further proof of her preeminence.

Any woman would be immeasurably ennobled by the possession of the three qualities scripture attributes to Mary in this passage: perfect beauty, supreme nobility, and an enlightened wisdom. Because of her unparalleled beauty, she is declared to be more splendid than the sun; because of her surpassing nobility, she is to be ranked higher than all the stars, that is, than all the saints; and concerning her illuminated wisdom, whenever she is compared to the light of eternal wisdom, Scripture says she is closer to God than any other creature.

### I. Perfecta Speciositas

IN THE FIRST PLACE, Mary is exalted for her perfect beauty: "She is more beautiful than the sun." There are three reasons why the fairest Virgin in her Assumption is truly more beautiful than the sun. First, she was more similar to the source of all beauty than was the sun; second, she was closer to the source of all beauty than was the sun; and third, she was more noble by her beauty than was the sun.

Mary can be called more beautiful than the sun in her Assumption because, first of all, she was more similar to the source of all beauty than was the sun. For just as that star is brighter than all others which is most like

<sup>1</sup>The Quaracchi editors refer us to Hugh's *De Arrha Animae*, where we read: "Ea vis amoris est, ut talem esse necesse sit, quale illud est quod amas, et qui per affectum conjugeris, in ipsius similitudinem ipsa quodammodo dilectionis societate transformaris." Text found in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 176, p. 954b. The thought is neither original with Hugh nor exclusively Christian. We find it expressed, e.g., in Arabian thought as well as by Junayd of Bagdad (d. 910 A.D.). For the text, see Ralph Woods, ed., *The World Treasury of Religious Quotations* (New York: Garland Books in arrangement with Hawthorn Books, 1966), p. 559.

the sun of this world, so among rational creatures is that being more beautiful who is found to be most similar to the sun of the eternal light, source and wellspring of all beauty. Precisely such a creature was the royal Virgin. If it is true, according to Hugh of St. Victor, that "the power of love transforms the lover into the likeness of the beloved,"<sup>1</sup> it stands to reason that Mary has been transformed into God's likeness above every creature. Scripture brings this out quite clearly: "She is the brightness of eternal light, the unspotted mirror of the majesty of God and the image of his goodness" (Ws. 7:26). For that reason, she stands forth as more beautiful than the sun and all other creatures. When we read, "I have likened you, Daughter of Sion, to a beautiful and graceful woman" (Jr. 6:2), it is as if the sacred writer had said: "I have likened the daughter of Sion to the beauty and grace of the Trinity." The "daughter of Sion" is, of course, to be understood as the Virgin Mary.

Through the mouth of the prophet, God himself speaks of "the graceful daughter" in the passage: "No tree in God's paradise can be likened to her and her comeliness because I have made her beautiful" (Ezk.31:8).<sup>2</sup> Along the same lines Bernard notes:

The Virgin, then, adorned like a queen with the jewels of virtue, shone with glory in both body and soul. And seen on high as radiantly beautiful, she so attracted the inhabitants of heaven that she even moved the heart of the King with desire for her.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise she can be called more resplendent than the sun because she was closer to the source of all pulchritude. She was more disposed to receive perfect beauty by reason of the manifold graces bestowed upon her. And it is in a most special way by dint of her virginal purity that she is closer to God than is the sun. Set up, as she was, above the sun and stars, she was joined with superabundant charity to her dearest Son, and she obtained a beauty more resplendent than that of any other creature. Keeping this in mind will help us understand the hidden meaning of this passage of Scripture: "Let us seek for the lord our King a youthful virgin to be with him and keep him warm. And they sought this beautiful virgin to the ends of Israel" (1 K. 1:3). Here we see clearly the disposition of virginal purity (*adolescentulam virginem*) and we behold the approach of charity (*foveat*

<sup>2</sup>The Seraphic Doctor has taken some liberties with the text, changing the *him* of the original into the *her* of his translation. Such a practice was not unusual in medieval exegesis.

<sup>3</sup>The reference in the Quaracchi edition is to one of St. Bernard's sermons: *Homil. 2 super Missus est*, n. 2. Our translation comes from *The Liturgy of the Hours* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1975), IV, 30.

eum).

To proceed with our argument, Mary can be called the more beautiful because she was more noble than the sun. It is by her beauty that she is called to the regal dignity of the eternal King. Thus the psalmist can say: "With your comeliness and your beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign" (Ps. 44:5). Neither the sun nor any other creature is in possession of a comparable dignity. No matter how much it may shine outwardly in this life, no creature possesses such dignity; all creatures lack something of the inner beauty of grace and virtue that belongs to the Virgin.

## II. Superexcellens Nobilitas

IN THE SECOND PLACE, the opening passage of Scripture with which we have begun our sermon exalts Mary for her supreme nobility. In comparison to all the stars, she is more sublime. That by "stars" we should understand "saints," illustrious in their splendid glory, we glean from a text in Baruch: "The stars were called and they said: Here we are. And with cheerfulness they have shined forth to him that made them" (Ba. 3:35).

Since, therefore, Scripture tells us that the holy Virgin is more sublime than all the starry constellations, this is a signal to us that she has been made more noble in her Assumption than all the saints in heaven, and this for three reasons which both ennoble and exalt her person in a spiritual sense: first is the *wealth of spiritual delights*, second is the *abundance of everlasting riches*, and third is the *excellence of dignity*, that is, the *excellence of birth*.

Mary is said to have been made more noble and sublime than all of the saints as far as the *wealth of spiritual delights* is concerned. Indeed, they flowed to her more singularly than to any of the saints. It is precisely for this reason that the angels, admiring her in her Assumption, never tire of saying: "Who is this who comes up out of the desert, filled with delights, leaning on her beloved?" (Sg. 8:5). These delights which Mary enjoyed over and above those enjoyed by the saints were not only of a spiritual but also of a bodily nature. And well it should be, since we piously believe her to be assumed into heaven both soul and body.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Though one of the most spiritual and mystical theologians of his—or any—era, St. Bonaventure never makes the mistake of forgetting how important the body is in God's plan of salvation. Indeed, the best Christian thinkers of the Middle Ages—though they tried successfully to prove by reason the immortality of the soul—were always aware that the Apostles' Creed spoke of belief in "the resurrection of the body." On the Seraphic Doctor's favorable appraisal of man's bodily nature in general, see Alexander Schaefer, O.F.M., "The Position and Function of

Concerning the *abundance of everlasting riches*, Mary likewise is said to have been made more noble than the saints. Far more than all the saints she has abounded in the richness of glorious graces, prized virtues, gifts, and beatitudes by which she has enriched the world and elevated the universe. Through her prayers she administers glory to some, grace to others, to others the impetus to confess their sins, to still others the entire spectrum of virtues.

The Book of Proverbs makes mention of this theme: "Many daughters have gathered riches together; you have surpassed them all" (Pr. 31:29). We can rightly understand the Virgin speaking in the following text: "I love them that love me. And they that early in the morning watch for me shall find me. With me are riches and glory, splendid works, sublime riches to go along with justice" (Pr. 8:17-18).

Finally we may say that she has received a nobility greater than that of all the saints as far as her excellence of dignity, that is to say, her nobility of birth, is concerned. Precisely because she is the mother of the most high ruler of all, she is more noble and excellent than all other creatures. And on that account it is not without reason that she is exalted above every other creature at the right hand of her Son and is seated on a lofty throne, a fact wonderfully prefigured in Scripture: "Then Bethsabee came to King Solomon and the king arose to meet her. He bowed to her and sat down on his throne. A seat was brought for the mother of the king who then sat at his right hand" (1 K. 2:19). Bethsabee coming to King Solomon—what is this but a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary in her Assumption to the eternal Son, the Prince of Peace? *The king rising to meet her*—while accompanied by hosts of saints—bows to her, that is, shows her filial reverence. *She sits at his right hand* and justly so because of her noble lineage: "I am the root and stock of David, the bright morning star" (Rv. 22:16). From her womb came the infant of the most noble lineage of all: "Indeed he who shall be born of you will be called Son of the Most High" (Lk. 1:35).

It was truly fitting that, to be adequate to the grace and glory of him, the fullness of dignity and glory be lavished upon her. Though graces were bestowed on others in some degree, her fullness of grace demands a plenitude where others have received only in part. We read in Scripture: "A great sign appeared in the heavens: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars" (Rv. 12:1). The woman, needless to say, is the regal Virgin; *clothed with the sun* tells us her raiment was the sun of justice; *the moon under her feet* shows how she

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Man in the Created World according to St. Bonaventure," *Franciscan Studies* 20 (1960), 261-316; 21 (1961), 233-382, especially 373ff.



has completely trampled down all mundane glory which, like the moon, waxes and wanes. And on her head a crown of twelve stars is Scripture's way of teaching us that all honor and dignity, all glory and sublimity of birth, all the nobility of the twelve orders of saints designated by the twelve stars have been granted to her. Of the twelve, nine represent the ranks of angels while three stand for the triple states of men: the active, the contemplative, and the prelate.<sup>5</sup> Whatever dignity and glory partially bestowed on these is bestowed on the Virgin totally and without reserve.

### III. Claritas Sapientiae

THE THIRD REASON why the Virgin is exalted concerns her enlightened wisdom. When compared to the light of eternal wisdom, she is found to be closer to it than any other creature. Her wisdom is found to be superior to that of any other creature. Just as the uncreated light, that is to say, divine wisdom, transcends all creaturely insight concerning illumination, cognition, and governance, so does the Virgin supersede all others in these same three instances.

The light of her wisdom, when compared to that of other creatures, is said to be prior or preeminent because she transcends all things as far as the illumination of creatures is concerned. It is divine Wisdom who enlightens and illuminates by the light of reason as well as by the light of grace. We read in John: "That was the true light which enlightens every man coming into the world" (Jn. 1:19). Made lustrous by her participation in this wisdom, the Virgin is able to illumine the entire universe by her holy prayers over and above all others by the light of grace.<sup>6</sup> Precisely on ac-

<sup>5</sup>The hierarchical universe of Neoplatonic thought is very much in Bonaventure's mind when he speaks of the three states of men. His *Collationes in Hexaëmeron*, 22, 16, tells us the following: "Tertia ordinatio est secundum rationem exercitiorum, quae sunt tria: actuosum, otiosum, et utroque permixtum; vita activa, vita contemplativa, et utroque permixta. Et licet ordo praelatorum secundum ordinem ascensuum ponatur in summo, tamen secundum istum processum ponitur in medio, ex quo permixtus est. Est ergo ordo activorum in infimo, ordo praelatorum in medio, ordo contemplativorum in summo.—Ordo activorum respondet Patri, cui competit generatio et productio; ordo praelatorum Filio; ordo contemplativorum Spiritui sancto." Text in *Opera Omnia*, V, 440a.

<sup>6</sup>Following the lead of St. Augustine, St. Bonaventure in his gnoseological doctrine has made it quite clear that he regards Christ as the one teacher of all mankind. Man can come to know something with certainty only because God has enlightened man in and through Christ. Cf. Bonaventure's sermon, "Christ the One Teacher of All," in Zachary Hayes, O.F.M., ed., *What Manner of Man?* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1974), pp. 21-46. The thought of the Seraphic Doctor in the passage at

count of this, Scripture tells us: "We ought to adore you at the rising of the sun" (Ws. 16:28). "You shall shine with a glorious light and all the ends of the earth will adore you" (Tb. 13:13). It is as if the sacred writers were telling us: "You, O holy Lady, will shine with the splendid light of eternal wisdom. You will obtain for others the splendor of grace." Witness this other passage from sacred Scripture: "Show us the light of your mercies, and send your fear upon the nations that have not sought after you, so they might know there is no God but you" (Si. 36:1-2). When likened to the light of eternal wisdom she, above all other creatures, is more luminous because her light is closest to that of the divine light which transcends all as far as the knowledge of reality is concerned:

He knows what makes up the darkness and light is with him [Dn. 2:22].

The eyes of the Lord are brighter by far than the sun, beholding all the ways of men and the bottom of the deep and gazing into the hearts of men, into their most hidden recesses [Si. 23:28].

O eternal God, you know hidden things, you know all things before they come to pass [Dn. 13:42].

Thus, our Lady is found to be prior, preeminent to the rest of creation as far as her comparison to divine wisdom is concerned. To her, then, we can apply the scriptural verse: "I will bring to light knowledge of her" (Ws. 6:24).

Once again, using the light of eternal wisdom as our guide, we can say that her wisdom outshines that of the rest of creation just as the divine light transcends all things as far as the governance and ordering of all things. We read in Isaiah: "I have made you to be light to the Gentiles that you may be my salvation to the ends of the earth" (Is. 49:6). Luke expresses the same idea: ". . . to illumine those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to direct our feet into the way of peace" (Lk. 1:79). This is the role the holy Virgin plays and this explains why she excels all earthly things in the way her wisdom is able to govern and order:

I proposed to possess her instead of light because her light cannot be put out [Ws. 7:10].

I have made you a covenant for the people, a light for the Gentiles, that you might open the eyes of the blind and lead the prisoner out to freedom [Is. 42:6-7].

hand seems to be that, because of her intimate relationship to Christ, Mary participates in a creaturely manner in this divine prerogative of illumination. In other words, Bonaventure regards Mary as a mirror of God's illumination. Wisdom 7:26, used earlier in this sermon, would be a scriptural basis for Bonaventure's position.

May she obtain what we ask for in prayer from her Son who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.' Ω

<sup>7</sup>This rather abrupt ending leads us to suspect that what we have here is an outline rather than a full-blown transcription of one of Bonaventure's sermons. A further corroboration: Section III, "Claritas Sapientiae," does not seem to be as polished stylistically as the first two sections. The translator earns his keep working on this final section.



## Portrait

Little Poor One,  
barefoot,  
rope-girt Clare,  
your joyous  
freedom  
sings through  
all my days.  
Unfettered lark  
of Francis,  
Little Plant,  
and gentle-  
hearted  
Clare,  
your spirit  
lights  
my ways.

It is this  
shining  
at the heart  
of you,  
essential  
part of you,  
compels my gaze.  
Little Poor One,  
Christ-clasping,  
Spirit-full  
and  
Jesus-radiant  
Clare. . . .  
To Him  
be praise!  
Amen.

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

## Ontological Humility in the Thought of Gabriel Marcel and the Life of St. Francis

JAMES KEATING

To experience finitude in the essential order is to experience the continued duration of a being which is not the master of its own being, and which therefore must appear to itself as a gift renewed through time [Gallagher, 5].

THIS POSITION recognizes a depth in being which surpasses and includes us as it demands our acknowledgment of our own finitude and dependence. Gabriel Marcel, the well known twentieth-century existentialist, calls this attitude "ontological humility." This humility is of paramount value in all of Marcel's philosophy on being, and it is upon this humility that Marcel builds his highly relational ontology: an ontology so dependent upon the other that his discoveries lead him to proclaim "what is deepest in me is not of me" (ibid., 65) and "my self apart from other selves quite simply is not" (ibid., 8). Self comes to me in communion. At the center of being is another in whom being is sustained and fostered. Marcel recognizes this sustainer as God, and he looks to this "someone other" to reveal his own identity and answer the question, "Who am I?" (Marcel, 125).

A man lived seven hundred years previous to Gabriel Marcel and asked the same question, "Who are you, Lord, and who am I?" (cf. Terbovich, 171). This man, Francis of Assisi, had also given humility a similar foundational position in his understanding of man. We must see this humility, not as a narrow, pious notion of debasing oneself, but rather as Marcel and Francis saw it: as the cornerstone which saves meaning from collapsing into absurdity.

"What a man is before God, that he is and no more," Francis was wont to say. What a man is before God is known only to God, however; and just as Francis refused to judge others, so Marcel refuses to answer the question "Who am I?" by himself. "To this question I cannot . . . give an answer for myself" (Marcel, 153). Only God can truly answer this, for it is He who gives us our identity. Both Francis and Marcel knew that whatever their

James Keating wrote this paper in partial fulfillment of the requirements of a Philosophical Influences on Theology course at Siena College.

status before God, the very fact that they were at all was due to His sustaining power. Their identity was intimately wrapped up in the one who sustained them in being. Therefore their idea of what it means to be was essentially relational or communal. (Even though Francis was no formal philosopher, we can discern through his writings and recorded actions his emphasis on human interrelatedness.) Within this realization of dependence comes a more clearly recognizable, although hardly exhaustive, answer to the question, "Who am I?" I am one dependent upon Another.

Having discovered his own identity as related to God, Francis gave all glory to Him as the source of his very existence. "Humility keeps reminding him [Francis] that he is a creature; it thus reestablishes man's truthful and rightful relationship with God" (Lapsanski, 61). The earliest biographer of Francis, Thomas of Celano, highlights the pivotal role played by humility in the early admonitions of Francis to his friars:

I wish that this fraternity should be called the Order of Friars Minor. And indeed they were lesser brothers, who, being subject to all, always sought a place that was lowly and sought to perform a duty that seemed in some way to be burdensome to them to that they might merit to be founded solidly in humility and that through their fruitful disposition a spiritual structure of all virtues might arise in them [1Cel 38; *Omnibus*, 260]

From here we can begin to look at the values and virtues which did arise and trace their dynamic unity to give us a clearer conception of Marcel's and Francis's common ground—ontological humility.

The most essential realization stemming from humility for Francis and Marcel is communion or love, specifically, communion with God through humanity:

The more I love you, the surer I am of your eternity: the more I grow in authentic love for you the deeper my trust and faith in the being which founds your being. There is no question of loving God or creatures since the more I really love the creature the more I am turned to the Presence which love lays bare [Gallagher, 126].

Francis echoes this in his First Rule: "The friars are bound to love one another because our Lord says, 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you'" (RegNB 11; *Omnibus*, 41). The friars are bound to love because of their relation to Jesus. The citation from John 15:12 focuses on this relativity of being loved and responding to that love in action. It is because Christ first loved his disciples, that they must love others. This notion of communion for Marcel is a "primary mode of being"; only in communion is the self realized: loving creates the lover. This communion is so central that Marcel claims that love reaches the being of the

beloved and not merely an idea of him.

These two modes of being, humility and communion, can be viewed as necessary consequences of discovering one's dependence on God for being and identity. Communion is founded upon humility, which is in turn founded upon the truth of our essential relationship to God as sole Sustainer.

Practically we can see this dynamic being lived out in Francis's emphasis on the role of brotherhood within his community:

Jesus Christ . . . was also a man of love. He loved the Father with total abandonment: and he loved people to such an extent that he "laid down his life for his sheep" . . . studying the life of Christ as they did, Francis and his brothers wanted to become persons of love, loving the Father and one's neighbor [Lapsanski, 59].

They sought to surrender into the hands of the Father and become persons of love. A life of realized humility before God, lived out as love: this was the result of Francis's contemplation. One cannot live an autonomous existence after realizing one's necessary relationship to God. Therefore both Francis and Marcel insisted upon this communion and dependence between persons and, in fact, all creation. They saw an essential unity and balance in the universe which demands that one live in love and concern for this delicate and dependent universe. Francis's "Canticle of Brother Sun" is a good place to see this unity expressed. All things in the universe, Francis observes, can become media through which one can praise the sole Sustainer—God (*Omnibus*, 130–31). As a medium of praise, then, all being thus confirms its dependency; to be dependent is to live in truth. Marcel says:

As soon as we are in being we are beyond autonomy. That is why recollection, in so far as it is regaining contact with Being, takes me into a realm where autonomy is no longer conceivable. . . . The more I am, the more I assert my being, the less I think myself autonomous. The more I conceive of my being, the less subject to its own jurisdiction does it appear to me [Marcel, 132].

Ontological humility, as later conceptualized by Marcel, can thus be seen as the basis for Francis's exhortation in his Rule:

The friars should have no hesitation about telling one another what they need, so that they can provide for one another. They are bound to love and care for one another as brothers, according to the means God gives them, just as a mother loves and cares for her son [RegNB 9; *Omnibus*, 40].

The more deeply one realizes Francis's "I am what I am before God and no more," the more deeply one can appreciate "the truth of his being" as depen-

dent and the less one will hesitate to communicate one's need to another. The claim of autonomy becomes a gross lie in the face of this revelation. We are not independent of the Other, God, and since we are dependent on Him we are all in need of one another. All being hangs together in an interdependent unity.

From humility and interdependence we can see two more virtues arising: service and poverty.

In *Being and Having* Marcel meditates at length upon the subject of death and suicide (see p. 127). Within his comments on suicide we can detect an attitude which reveals his belief that people ought to be instruments of availability or service for one another. This is viewed in a vocational sense derived from Marcel's basic understanding of man in relation to God. We can begin to see how this idea of availability to serve is contingent upon previous notions of communion and humility. Each of these: communion, humility, and service, must be seen, not as independent of the others, but rather as integrated so as to culminate in an attitude of awe and gratitude at the reality of Being.

This integration is most essential for understanding Francis's idea of service and its contingency upon a person's being in relation to God:

From the first days of his conversion Francis established himself with God's help on the firm rock of the perfect humility and poverty of the Son of God. . . . So at the commencement of the Order he wished the friars to live in leper houses to serve them and by doing so to establish themselves in holy humility [SP 44; *Omnibus*, 1169].

Within this passage from *The Mirror of Perfection* we can see the creative unity of relatedness (with Christ) leading to humility, to service, and back to humility. Within the sobering dynamic of relationships the truth of being is humility before God. This truth, though, can be preserved only through people serving each other and thus acknowledging our unity and mutual dependency.

Whatever good is worked through them the friars must attribute to God, for the only thing they can glory in is their weaknesses. Each friar was to wash the feet of the others as befits true *fratres minores*, while the ministers were to recall that Christ came to serve and not to be served [Lapsanski, 60].

Flowing from this service is the next component of this schema for understanding our relationship with God—poverty:

The friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves, neither a house, nor a place, nor anything else. As strangers and pilgrims in this world, who serve God in poverty and humility, they should beg alms trustingly. . . . And to this poverty, my beloved brothers, you must cling with all your heart and

wish never to have anything else under heaven, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ [RegNB 6; *Omnibus*, 61].

This is a most important passage for an understanding of Francis's mind on how one who recognizes God should practically live out his life. The basis of the excerpt is an exhortation "never to have anything else under heaven" except poverty. Can anyone have poverty? What I think Francis means here is an ontological poverty, analogous to the ontological humility discussed above. ". . . there exists an intimate link between poverty and humility in Francis's scale of values" (Lapsanski, 61). Francis, of course, is exhorting his friars to be poor. In essence, they must be "who they are before God." For it to be a real sign of our true nature and identity, this being "who we are before God" must be lived out and not just assented to mentally. What Francis did was to build his whole understanding of how one should live his life interiorly and exteriorly upon the solid foundation of his understanding of our identity as "loved nothings" before God. Francis felt we should live without anything of our own (*sine proprio*), which includes both spiritual possessions (pride, for example) and material possessions.

It is in this ideal of poverty that we see an even deeper correlation between Francis's life and Marcel's thought:

We are tempted to think that no longer having anything is the same as no longer being anything; and in fact the general trend of life on the natural level is to identify one's self with what one has and here the ontological category tends to be blotted out. But the reality of sacrifice is there somehow to prove to us in fact that being can assert its transcendence over having: I am sure of . . . the hidden identity of the way which leads to holiness and the road which leads the metaphysician to the affirmation of Being; also that it is necessary above all . . . to realize that here is one and the same road [Marcel, 84-85].

Marcel minimizes the notion of having for a positive emphasis upon being. Both men (Marcel even refusing to say that we have our own body) seem to be aiming toward an identical understanding of the need for one to profess himself as ontologically poor and therefore really poor and dependent in practice.

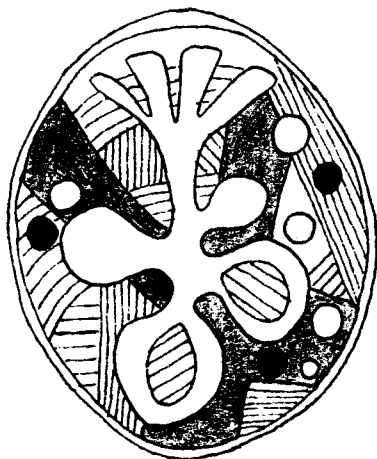
It is impossible to miss the power in Marcel's insistence that "the hidden reality of the way which leads to holiness [Francis] and the road which leads the metaphysician [Marcel] to the affirmation of Being . . . is one and the same road." Both men have met at Francis's most beloved component in this schema for understanding our identity before God—poverty.

For both Marcel and Francis, the very fact that we are at all is the most important notion on the way to ontological humility. The consequence of possessing this ontological humility is a life led in continual praise and

thanksgiving:

Every creature in heaven and on earth and in the depths of the sea should give God praise and glory and honor and blessing . . . he is our power and our strength and he alone is good, he alone most high, he alone all powerful, wonderful and glorious; he alone is holy and worthy of all praise [IIEpFid; Omnibus, 97].

To Francis and Marcel humanity is important but not ultimate. We do not take center stage in the universe, and it is this fact which becomes our greatest source of joy and peace because it leads us to experience that we are loved by God. It is only in the embracing of truth, in the acceptance and acknowledgment of our real place in the universe, that we become who we are and become able to answer the question, "Who am I?" I am one who is loved.



Arriving at this fact of being loved illuminates Marcel's own reason for resisting the objectification of Being. He rather chooses to highlight Being as participation or mystery: that in which we are taken up. In reviewing the preceding schema, realization of Being, who am I?, relatedness, dependence, communion, service, poverty, and the overall attitude of humility, we can see that all the components are overwhelmingly subjective, subjective in a way which makes evident the inauthenticity of someone who

stands back and tries to be autonomous, uninvolved, and independent. As we have noted, Marcel and Francis saw humility as the indispensable presupposition for a correct or truthful attitude toward Being: a humility which gently acknowledges its dependence—"I am because of you." It does not grasp at existence and claim a right to it, but rather it remains overwhelmed and caught up in the mystery of Being in relation to God and all creatures.

The avoidance of objectification of being and, therefore, the denial of personal autonomy are clearly seen to be lived out in Francis's reverence for the community of friars. The very existence of fraternity was looked upon as *gift* (Test; Omnibus, 68). This, of course, is the same way that Marcel characterizes Being itself.

Thus, from both Francis and Marcel we can attain a fresh perspective on life: a perspective which views our dependence on God as the key to a truthful mode of existence. The sin, we must repeat over and over, is autonomy and indifference. Life is found in honestly sharing our *selves* and recognizing that in the sharing is the presence of God and His sustaining power.

From these reflections our hearts and minds should fill with joy and satisfaction and overflow in prayer. To discover this truth of who we are we must employ our whole knowing faculty, reason and faith. We must be disposed to receive God's word, to listen to His voice, and, most importantly, to respond to His calling. Francis certainly made his response an intense one. As evidenced in the following passage, so did Gabriel Marcel:

I have no doubts. This morning's happiness is a miraculous thing. For the first time I have experienced grace. A terrible thing to say but so it is. I am hemmed in at last by Christianity. In fathoms deep. Happy to be so! I feel a need to write. Feel I am stammering childishly . . . indeed this is a birth. Everything is different . . . a world which was there, entirely present, and at last I can touch it [Marcel, 15].

Now the schema is complete. In rationally recognizing our true nature and therefore discovering through our relatedness with God who we are, unconditionally loved people, our hearts overflow with praise and quite surely we can begin to live in truth.

*Praise and bless my Lord and give him thanks and serve him with great humility* (CantSol; Omnibus, 131). Ω

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## Secret

You knocked at my door last night.  
... but I was too unbusy to answer.  
The nameless, formless grace of Your power  
Sighs sweetly to my soul

Why is it so hard to wait?  
... To wait ... and wait ... and wait ...  
Like children piping in the street  
mimicking elders supposedly wise.

Past layers of security melt away  
As time flows over my nakedness.  
Knock ... please knock again.  
I wait I know not what.

*Barbara Doria*

## Book Reviews

*Claims in Conflict.* By David Hollenbach, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1980. Pp. 219. Paper, \$5.95.

Reviewed by Father Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., Ph.D. (Duke), Assistant Professor of Moral Theology at the Washington (DC) Theological Union.

Among the victims of change in the postconciliar era was the well respected Jesuit theologate founded at Woodstock, Maryland. After its closing, the Maryland and New York Provinces of the Society of Jesus decided to establish a think tank utilizing the library and some of the faculty of the school. The Woodstock Theological Center, established in 1974, is an institute that carries on the fine tradition of theological scholarship associated with the original Woodstock. Five volumes to date have been published under the auspices of the Center. *Claims in Conflict*, the fourth book in the series, unlike the others is not a collection of essays by several contributors, but a work by one author. This study by David Hollenbach is similar to the others in the series, in that it is a balanced and scholarly piece of writing. The book's subtitle identifies the author's purpose: "Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition."

In recent times we have heard and read much about human rights. The United Nations, presidents and premiers, activists and academics, have all spoken on the subject. Few in any society can call upon as rich a human rights tradition as Roman Catholics. There are many ways in which Catholics can participate in the quest for a more

just world, but beyond doubt one of the best theologically grounded and authoritatively endorsed means is a defense of human rights. Hollenbach provides a real service to the Church by reminding us of the richness of our tradition and also by attempting to advance development of the tradition in a creative way.

The book consists of five chapters which constitute three parts. Chapter 1 (Part I: Context) lays out the present climate of the human rights debate. Hollenbach outlines the two dominant theories of rights in the Western world—liberalism and marxism—and concludes that they are incomplete. One might quibble with the author here and ask if he is being fair to these traditions or drawing caricatures. Still, the point of the chapter is to introduce the reader to the human rights debate and for the sake of clarifying the lines of debate some simplification is justified.

In Chapters 2 and 3 (Part II: Retrieval), Hollenbach presents the Catholic human rights position. Chapter 2 is an excellent history of Church teaching on human rights as it is embodied in the modern papal social encyclicals and conciliar documents. This chapter demonstrates the author's thorough familiarity with the important literature in Catholic social thought.

Chapter 3 analyzes the theology that undergirds the historical development of the Catholic position on human rights. Hollenbach is correct, I believe, in his theological rationale for human rights, as he grounds those rights in a theological anthropology which highlights human dignity. He is,

however perhaps too quick in his treatment of the change in argument that occurred in Roman Catholic thought when we moved from natural law to a more biblically based theology. That change is more significant than Hollenbach seems to indicate.

For Hollenbach, the concept of human dignity is a more comprehensive, and hence more satisfactory, underpinning for rights-language than either liberalism or marxism can offer. In his understandable desire to distinguish the Catholic position from these competing philosophies, Hollenbach gives a narrow view of liberalism and marxism. Certainly, some liberals have argued for a broader understanding of liberty than what Hollenbach contends is the liberal position. One need only recall the nineteenth-century Oxford philosopher T. H. Green to witness to the fact that liberals do not always define freedom as merely the absence of constraints. Still, it should not be thought that this criticism seriously affects Hollenbach's thesis, since the purpose of the chapter is to give a theological justification for human rights, not a history of liberalism.

The final segment of the work (Part III: Renewal) is the most original section. One of the weaknesses of the present Catholic theory is that it fails to take conflict seriously. Not all rights-claims are easily harmonized with each other. The Catholic tradition, perhaps as a legacy of its natural law thinking, seems too ready to presume agreement is forthcoming on the priority of competing claims. Hollenbach wants to take the fact of conflict seriously and attempt to work out some axioms that would guide our ordering of rights. Chapter 4 gives the theoretical background for those axioms by the author's analysis of

justice, love, the nature of human community, and the relationship of these to rights. The final chapter brings this analysis to the more concrete level of proposals for policy-making. Hollenbach's position here is thoughtful, nuanced, and neither over-reaching nor over-cautious in its conclusions. What we find is a good example of constructive theological work.

Those who are familiar with the philosophical literature on human rights may wonder at Hollenbach's lack of attention to recent work in that area. Analytic philosophers have developed some considerable amount of writing on the meaning of the term "right" which includes some disagreement over the very meaning of the expression "human right." Hollenbach does not attend to these questions. That is not said to detract from his achievement or to discourage readers of *Claims in Conflict*. My intention is quite the contrary, for he has written a very fine book which can be enthusiastically recommended.

**Darkness in the Marketplace: Mature Prayer and the Active Life.** By Thomas H. Green, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981. Pp. 128. Paper, \$3.95.

*Reviewed by Father Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M., Editor of this Review.*

This superb book is a fitting sequel to the author's earlier *Opening to God and When the Well Runs Dry*, reviewed in these pages in April, 1978, and September, 1980, respectively. In those books, Father Green had furnished a fully traditional discussion of the interior life in attractive, modern terminology. In this one he has given us an equally interesting, highly practical, and quite il-

luminating treatment of the Lord's purifying activity in the active life.

St. Martha of Bethany is of course the symbol in many spiritual treatises for the active Christian, as Mary is for the contemplative. Father Green focuses on the "darkness" in her kitchen—the confusion and frustration she felt on returning there after the Lord's rebuke. Then he devotes a chapter to showing that we, like Martha, may seek to give the Lord what he does not really want from us. We want to "work for God" rather than "do God's work."

We too, therefore, experience darkness, not only in our interior life as it progresses, but also in the marketplace (a fine metaphor applied as narrowly as the individual's own life of activity). Only when we have reached the darker and more passive stages of the interior life, however, can we recognize the Lord's "sandpaper" polishing us in the

frustrations of our active life as well as in his painful absences in prayer.

Three main types of such darkness are explained: (1) inability to proceed any further on our own in doing the Lord's work, (2) a far more painful experience of frustration and rejection of our efforts and motives by good people, and (3) being held of no account.

Excellent practical advice, including some explicitly addressed to religious, an engaging first- and second-person style, abundant and well chosen metaphors and similes, and the evident experiential roots of what Father Green writes all combine to make this a book I cannot recommend too enthusiastically for every individual seeking progress in the spiritual life. Small wonder that it has been chosen as this coming September's Spiritual Book Association selection.

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## Responses, ○○○○○

(Continued from page 194)

ment" seems to miss the point that Francis actively sought the Church's juridical guidance. He accepted that guidance even when it did not square with his spontaneous wishes. That coalescence of charismatic and ecclesial elements is not a distortion, but a development of the Franciscan charism. The various structures and relationships which Francis countenanced regarding the three Orders represent those kinds of "historical decisions in an earlier epoch" which become part of our spiritual patrimony.

True, any reduction of the charism to single word labels (minority, penance, poverty) is full of danger. I share Madge Karecki's concern fully. But I do not believe that we can develop a healthy unity in diversity by eliminating categories which are part of our history. If we believe that the Spirit preserves the charism, then we must take these historical developments very seriously, aware of the possible deformations that they have harbored and may harbor, but equally aware of the good that they have served. The men and women who have lived out of the concrete choices, structures, and life-styles of the three Orders for seven centuries are a "cloud of witnesses" calling us to pay close attention to the living tradition as well as the written sources of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

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## ••••• Responses

(Continued from page 195)

lay, clerical or religious, who continued to live various life-styles in the marketplace, field, home, hospital, or hermitage. Francis's followers were not just Friars Minor. He perceived his charism as inclusive, yet distinctly expressed. Why can we not do likewise today? Why do we think of *propria indolis*, specific charism, as a "subtle distinction," or a reduction of charism to a single characteristic and suggest it means "divorce" in the Franciscan movement? The *propria indolis* of each of the ways Francis projected literally living the gospel in fact shows the expansiveness and clarifies his vision of gospel living. It is an inclusive vision that even goes beyond the Franciscan movement! Neither those involved in the Madrid process, nor those in the current TOR Rule Project—I have been part of both—are insisting on the distinctiveness of the three Orders in order to separate them. Quite to the contrary, distinctiveness is stressed to manifest the rich variety and mutuality of the Franciscan charism so that the unity with diversity of the movement can be strengthened, not obscured by unclarified generalities.

The *propria indolis* of the Third Order Regular is that aspect of gospel living, the very initial preaching of Christ, which we call *μετανοια*. The official name of the Order states and always has stated this. But more important are those who proclaim it by their living: people in the world who are not to be of this world. How are they to live their ongoing life of conversion in the world? For Francis there is only one answer: literally living the gospel. He gave these people guidelines and a Rule which addressed their situation just as he did for the Friars Minor and the Clares in theirs. Franciscan congregations founded in the 18th and 19th centuries were meant to witness and minister "in the world." Today we call them Congregations of apostolic life. They are Third Order Regular because of their apostolic nature and because their founders or the Church saw how fitting it was [is] for them to be this type of Franciscan.

It strikes me that to "... examine [our] own way of living to see to what extent [we] are reflective of a canonical understanding of religious life and to what extent [we] reflect the life-style Francis had in mind for his followers" would only amount to a theoretic examination of conscience. And we have to be careful when we look at ourselves. Are we Friars Minor, or Clares, or religious or secular Franciscan penitents? After all, Francis has words for each. Despite the fact that we may have vested interests in an institutional way of living religious life and ministering to people, we just may be called anew by this process to a radical reform. Francis was called to "Rebuild my Church"! Ω

*Fr. Phaddeus Morgan, S.A.*