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FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS  
St. Bonaventure University  
St. Bonaventure, New York 14778, U.S.A.

# The CORD

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Volume 32, No. 2

## The CORD

### A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The CORD (ISSN 0010-8685) (USPS 563-640) is published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, Bonaventure, NY 14778. Editorial offices are at Siena College, Loudonville, NY 12221. Subscription rates: \$8.00 a year; 80 cents a copy. Second class postage paid at St. Bonaventure, NY 14778, and at additional mailing office.

### Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions  
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo  
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun  
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony  
EpCler: Letter to Clerics  
EpCust: Letter to Superiors  
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  
RegB: Rule of 1223  
RegNB: Rule of 1221  
RegEr: Rule for Hermits  
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady  
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues  
Test: Testament of St. Francis  
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare  
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy  
I, 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  
Flor: Little Flowers of St. Francis  
LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis

LMIn: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis  
LP: Legend of Perugia  
L3S: Legend of the Three Companions  
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).

## EDITORIAL



### Needed—Some Quiet Types

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN the glory of the Franciscan Order that it had room for any and every kind of personality and people from every class—rich, middle, and poor—educated and illiterate. And although Francis initially thought the Gospel required that all the brethren go forth two by two to preach the Gospel, by the time of the Rule's final approval in 1223 preaching was limited to those examined and approved by the General of the Order. And even before that, we have the account of Francis's silent sermon—his mere walking through the streets with a fellow friar. It became evident to Francis that not all friars are suited to the proclamation of the Word of God among the people. Some are called to wait on God in silent solitude. Others are called to serve the brethren, as did Juniper by his rather eccentric style of cooking.

In the renewal efforts in our communities sparked by Vatican II, the potential for apostolic, exterior public service of many of our religious brothers has been tapped. Teaching, liturgical ministry, and catechizing are works now done by brothers which would not have been done by a brother years ago, except perhaps in the Missions. It seems that more and more candidates for the brotherhood in the brotherhood are opting for that type of service which perhaps, humanly speaking, satisfies the active impulses of young Americans and the need to do something with people, something which will bring positive feedback.

In addition, positions of authority and in formation in the internal community have become part of the lives of many Franciscan brothers.

What concerns me in this new and newly developing situation is that the Franciscan vocation be unduly limited and restricted to the types of people who would be judged suited for exterior apostolate or formation work, or authority. Such a restriction would greatly impoverish our future, for we would miss the models of humility and contemplation offered us by the many brethren who are quite comfortable with serving the community in a physical way: by cooking, maintenance, housekeeping, tailoring, chauffeuring, or what not. Do not misunderstand me—I am not arguing we won't have anyone to perform household tasks so that we with an exterior apostolate can devote full time to that—although a legitimate argument can

(Continued on page 60)

# The Contemplative Dimension of the Franciscan Charism

JAMES CURRAN, O.S.F.

ALTHOUGH THE PERSONAL contemplative character of Saint Francis is beyond dispute, few people realize that perhaps the majority of his early followers were contemplatives. Francis was indeed one of the Church's outstanding mystics whose contemplative contribution to the Church is undeniable. However, the late and highly respected Franciscan historian, Father Cajetan Esser, O.F.M., maintained in his references to the origins of the whole Franciscan Order: "A tendency towards the contemplative life, towards solitude, can [also] be observed from the very beginning (p. 225). "That tendency towards the contemplative life, [which] right from the beginning was characteristic of the Franciscan movement," (Ibid., p. 162) is one of Francis's greatest gifts to his followers throughout the world.

We must not confuse contemplation exclusively with the cloistered life which has always been characteristic of the Poor Clares. Pontifical or Constitutional Cloister, although valuable and supportive, is not essential to the contemplative life as was well demonstrated in the lives of Saint Francis and his early followers. Without going into detail about the value of those limited forms of enclosure or "poustinia" which are necessary to support the life of prayer and contemplation, we might simply recognize the historical fact that Francis lived contemplatively from the moment of his first conversion (metanoia) until the end of his religious life. In fact, he spent at least fifty percent of his time in the hermitages which he had founded in the Umbrian hills. As Raphael Brown points out in his introduction to the Fioretti, "By the year 1282 the small Province of the Marches had the amazing total of eighty-five friaries . . . the majority of those houses were undoubtedly isolated hermitages, for the friars of the Marches were preeminently contemplatives. It is therefore obvious that those friars had effectively grasped the essence of the spirituality of Saint Francis: the absolute unconditional primacy of the interior life, the life of ceaseless inner union with God, constant humble contemplation of the Savior, and intimate loving communion with Him which the Poverello called "the spirit of prayer" (*Omnibus*, p. 1274). Mr. Brown also states: "That this small-community contemplative

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life was in fact the ideal of Saint Francis is proved by the exultant praise he bestowed upon it at various times (see LP 71; 2Cel 178; 2Cel 194)" (*True Joy*, p. 180).

## The Tertiary Contemplative and Eremitical Tradition

THAT FROM THE very beginning there was a contemplative dimension to the tertiary movement should not surprise us, since the Order of Penitents of Saint Francis of Assisi took their inspiration not only from the penitential and eremitical movements of the previous century but also from the personal contemplative example of Saint Francis and the early friars. Groups of Penitents, Recluses, and Hermits had indeed existed before the time of Francis. In fact, the Church officially recognized the faithful of these groups as religious since the religious state was not at that time determined by the taking of vows, but by public investiture with the penitential or monastic garb and the profession of a rule of life. We see this clearly in the life of Saint Francis when he embraced the life of penance and put on the hermit or penitential garb. Such a simple act placed him immediately under ecclesiastical rather than civil law as was demonstrated by his appeal to the court of the Bishop of Assisi (L3S 6, 19; *Omnibus*, p. 908). In fact, for the first few years of his conversion (1206) until the arrival of the first Brothers and the verbal approbation of their way of life by Pope Innocent III (1209), Francis became an integral part of the Penitential Movement—the penitents (*conversi*), hospitallers, and hermits of his day (Esser, p. 206). Later, it was Francis himself who drew many of them into the Franciscan Tertiary Movement. He recruited his tertiaries, not only from single and married secular citizens of the surrounding cities and villages, but from groups of penitents, hospitallers, and hermits who were already living in communities or fraternal associations.

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Francis lived contemplatively from the moment of his first conversion until the end of his religious life.

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As early as 1221, Francis himself visited and gave the Franciscan habit to Blessed Verdiana of Castelfiorentino, a Recluse, and later to Blessed Gerard of Villamagna, a Hermit (Habig, pp. 117, 383). In 1222, a fraternity of Her-

mits was established near Gubbio by Blessed Bartholomew Haro who was influenced by Francis. Francis himself gave followers to this group and authorized it to receive other members in the future (Pazzelli, pp. 42-59). This contemplative tradition in the Franciscan Tertiary Movement is further attested by the long list of canonized and beatified Franciscan Tertiary Hermits and Recluses up until the end of the eighteenth century. Even in our own day, among Tertiary Religious, are included not only 400 Congregations of Franciscan Sisters and 30 Congregations of Tertiary Friars, but 70 monasteries of Cloistered Nuns who all profess the same Rule of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis, revised and approved by Pope Pius XI in 1927 (cf. Pazzelli and Temperini [1980]). That this contemplative charism is of the essence of Franciscan spirituality has been universally recognized even by the Secular Franciscan Order whose members, although they are called to remain vitally involved in the world as a special Franciscan "leaven," are reminded in their new Rule: "As Jesus was the true worshipper of the Father, so let prayer and contemplation be the soul of all they are and do" (Rule of the S.F.O. [1978], ch. 2, n. 8).

### Vatican Council II and the Contemplative Dimension

AS RECENTLY AS January of 1981, the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes issued a document on the *Contemplative Dimension of Religious Life*. With substantial reference to the documents of Vatican Council II, the Congregation reminded us that "the contemplative dimension is the real secret of renewal for every religious life." In the guidelines, the Congregation affirmed the primacy of the contemplative dimension for Institutes of the active life as well as for specifically contemplative Institutes. In their directives, one can almost hear the echo of Francis's voice down through the ages exhorting and admonishing his brothers and sisters to be faithful to the primacy of prayer in their lives: "These friars are my Knights of the Round Table, who remain hidden in deserts and lonely places in order to devote themselves more completely to prayer and meditation, lamenting their own sins and the sins of others, living simply and behaving humbly, whose sanctity is known to God, and at times to other friars, but unknown to the world" (SP 72; *Omnibus*, p. 1203). "The friars to whom God has given the grace of working should work in a spirit of faith and devotion and avoid idleness, which is the enemy of the soul, without however extinguishing the spirit of prayer and devotion, to which every temporal consideration must be subordinate" (RegB 5; *Omnibus*, p. 61).

As we celebrate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Francis, we must take care to spend this commemorative year, from October 4, 1981, to October 4, 1982, seeking to discover the contemplative dimension in the life of our Seraphic Father, Saint Francis, and draw on his inspiration to open our own lives to the spirit of prayer, which alone can make us more attentive to the demands of the kingdom and help us to see the salvific plan of God with the eyes of faith. We must listen to the words of our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II: "Your houses should be especially centers of prayer, of recollection, of dialogue—personal and, above all, communitarian—with him who is, and must remain, the primary and principal person with whom you converse in the busy round of your daily lives. If you succeed in cultivating this atmosphere of intense and loving union with God, you will be able to carry out, without traumatic tensions or dangerous aberrations, the renewal of life and discipline to which the Second Vatican Council has called you" (Address of 11/24/78, cited in *The Contemplative Dimension*).

Nearing death, Saint Francis wished to make arrangements, as a testament to his brothers, to preserve the life of silence, continuous prayer, and contemplation that had already made the Portiuncula a "holy place." "Why do I make these arrangements?" he said. "Because, if the brothers and the friaries where they reside stray some day from the purity of life and holiness that are befitting, I wish that at least this community be a beautiful mirror of the Order, a candelabra before the throne of God and the Blessed Virgin" (LP 9, 10; *Omnibus*, 985-87). Ω

### 7

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# Penance in the Writings of Saint Francis—II

SISTER JOYCE BRANDL, O.S.F.

HAVING EXAMINED Saint Francis's use of the notion of penance outside its sacramental context in his Testament and his Letter to all the Faithful, last month, we continue our study this month with his first Rule.

## C. The Rule of 1221.

The Rule of 1221 contains the notion of penance nine times in a non-sacramental sense. The first time it is used in this sense occurs in Chapter Twelve.

### 1. Live [her] life of penance.

The friars are absolutely forbidden to allow any woman to profess obedience to them, but once the spiritual direction has been given her, let her live her life of penance where she chooses [sed dato sibi consilio spirituali, ubi voluerit agat poenitentiam—RegNB 12; Omnibus, 42].

The context of the chapter concerns itself with the relations of the friars with women, especially in sacramental Confession and in spiritual direction. Prior to the above quotation, the friars are told to "avoid the sight or company of women, when it is evil." The object of the exhortation is to protect the integrity of the friar.

The indication of "live her life of penance" is that the woman does not require a relation of obedience to a confessor or a spiritual director. Francis emphasizes this to the point that he absolutely forbids the friars to allow women to profess obedience to them, a procedure which definitely would set up special ties. Even though the passage was intended for the welfare of the friars, it indicates that a unique tie, such as obedience to the friar, is not essential for anyone who freely "lives a life of penance." Had this obedience been essential for the woman's ability to live such a life, Francis would certainly have permitted it.

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From the fact that Francis "absolutely forbids professing obedience," one can conclude that living a life of penance is possible without special ties to any human person. The implication is that the only essential relationship for a person is that to the Lord himself.

2. Do penance. In the second quotation of this series Francis urges a friar who has sinned to "do penance" for his sins.

If a friar is tempted and commits fornication, he must be deprived of his habit. By his wickedness he has lost the right to wear it and so must lay it aside completely and be dismissed from the Order. Then he should do penance for his sins [Et postea poenitentiam faciat de peccatis—RegNB 13; Omnibus, 42].

The serious sin of fornication severs the friar from his Order. He has forfeited the right to wear the habit. Francis admonishes that he convert from his evil way and "do penance" for his sins.

It is assumed that the friar would first of all require sacramental Confession to absolve him from his sin. Francis frequently advises Confession in his writings. In Chapter Twenty of the Rule of 1221, e.g., he expressly exhorts them to confess their sins to a priest (Omnibus, 46).

"Do penance" presupposes falling back into sin from time to time, and Confession is the means available to reconcile the alienated sinner with the Lord and put him back on the right path.

In the time of Francis, in addition to private Confession, the sinner as represented by the friar under consideration, was expected to perform the non-solemn public penance for fornication. Solemn public penance, also in vogue, was never imposed on the clergy (Isabell, 36). The person commissioned to perform the non-solemn penance was given the knapsack and staff prior to making the penitential pilgrimage. This type of "penance" may be implied by Francis in this passage, since he himself had been a conversus, a member of the penitential movement.

3. Repent. Bring forth fruits befitting repentance. In penance. Saint Francis in the following quotation uses the term poenitentia four times and encourages the friars to preach the reality.

Whenever they please, all my brothers may with God's blessing openly give the following or a similar exhortation and act of praise among whatever people: Fear and honor, praise and bless, thank and adore the Lord God almighty in Trinity and Unity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Creator of everything. Repent [agite poenitentiam], bring forth fruits befitting repentance [facite dignos fructus

poenitentiae], for mind that you are going to die soon. Give, and it shall be given to you. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. And, if you do not forgive people their sins, the Lord will not forgive you your sins. Confess all your sins. Blessed are they who die in repentance [in poenitentia], for they will be in the kingdom of heaven. Woe to those who do not die in repentance [qui non moriuntur in poenitentia], for they will be children of the Devil, whose works they do, and will go into everlasting fire [RegNB 21; Omnibus, 46-47].

The following diagram will help to relate the positive and negative elements present in this quotation with the implied ideas in parentheses:

"blessed are those who"		(woe to those who do not)
"praise God, Triune, Creator"	—	(praise God, Triune, Creator)
"repent"	—	(repent)
"bring forth fruits befitting repentance"	—	(bring forth fruits befitting repentance)
"give"—(God gives back)	—	(give—God does not give back)
"forgive"—"Lord forgives"	—	"forgive"—"Lord does not forgive"
"confess sins"	—	(confess sins)
"die in repentance"	—	"die in repentance"
↓		↓
(children of God)		"children of Devil"
↓		↓
kingdom of heaven		"cast into everlasting fire"

The Gospel message, Repent, is always a timely topic for exhortations. The Triune God, Creator, Father, is to be praised, honored, blessed, and thanked. Furthermore, "Do penance" is demonstrated by "bring forth fruits befitting repentance." This is done by giving to others in a broad sense as one's time, talents, material goods. God pays back according to one's own generosity in giving. "Repent" includes the notion of forgiving others even as the Lord forgives. If one cannot do this, neither will God forgive. "Repent" reminds all that we are sinners in God's sight. All ought to be aware of their sins, not try to hide them, but confess them openly. Those who live in this way are children of God who inherit "the kingdom of heaven." Those who fail to live in this manner "are children of the Devil, whose works they do." They reap "everlasting fire."

In this quotation Francis describes fundamental conversion. God is Father and Creator; human beings are his sinful creatures who must honestly acknowledge who they are in relationship to God. They must bring forth fruits worthy of repentance: give, forgive, to be worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

4. Who did not practice repentance and served you in repentance. The following passage of the Rule of 1221 contains the term "penance" or "repentance" twice, with elements similar to the previous quotation.

And we give you thanks because this your Son is to come again in the glory of his majesty to send to the eternal fire those accursed ones who did not practice repentance [qui poenitentiam non egerunt]; but to say to everybody that did acknowledge, adore, and serve you in repentance [et tibi servierunt in poenitentia], "Come, you blest of my Father, take over the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world" [RegNB 23; Omnibus, 50].

The context of this passage ends in a paragraph which has just summarized the functions of the Trinity in relation to salvation history. The concluding thought of that paragraph is expressed in this passage in which the Son appears as Judge at the end times. The following diagram illustrates the parallelism found in this passage, with the implied ideas in parentheses:

"the damned"		"the blessed"
"did not practice repentance"	—	"did acknowledge you"
(did not adore you—?)	—	
(did not serve God in repentance)	—	"serve God in repentance"
↓		↓
"Send those into eternal fire"		Welcome those to "take over the Kingdom prepared for them from the beginning of the world."

When the Son comes "a second time in his glory and majesty," his judgment will be based on four points: (1) those who "have practiced repentance" or "have not practiced repentance"; (2) those who did acknowledge" or "did not acknowledge" God; (3) those who "did adore" or "did not adore" him, and (4) those who "did not practice repentance" or served you in repentance." Each of these will be discussed in turn.

In the first point, why does Francis begin with "practiced repentance"? We can understand the quotation better if we consider its fuller context in the twenty-third chapter of the Rule of 1221 (Omnibus, 50). By the phrase "have practiced repentance" (literally, acted repentantly or in repentance), Francis implies first of all the recognition of who humans are with respect to God. He states, "We are all poor sinners and unworthy even to mention your name" (God as Father—Omnibus, 51). And again, he says, "wretched and pitiable as we are, ungrateful and evil, rotten through and through . . ."

(*Omnibus*, 52). Left to ourselves, we humans are sinners, wretched, pitiable, ungrateful, and evil; we are creatures who refuse to open ourselves to God. "Have practiced repentance" includes the notion of being sorry for one's sins, turning away from sin, a radical changing of direction with a returning to God to be reconciled with him and healed by him. "Have practiced repentance" implies a change of heart and mind such as Francis experienced at his conversion. "Have practiced repentance" initiates the recognition of sin's gravity as opposed to God's holiness. There is acknowledgment of self as sinner. Anyone who refuses to admit this invites eternal damnation.



Does asceticism have any connection with "have practiced repentance" in Francis's mind? God himself told Francis, "Despise yourself, if you wish to acknowledge me" (2Cel 9; *Omnibus*, 369). In Chapter One of the Rule of 1221 Francis quotes Mt. 16:24: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (RegNB 1; *Omnibus*, 31). Thus it is evident that Francis bids his followers to live a life of some type of self-abnegation. But what kind does he have in mind? Dukker indicates that for Francis the term "penance" or "repentance" had the broad meaning which it possesses in Holy Scripture. He points out that Francis marks the

beginning of his own "beginning of doing penance" with the great act of charity, the care of the lepers. Hence, he says, one can conclude that "penance" indicates something positive which animates Francis and others more than a mere consideration of sin and weakness. Francis summons us to follow Christ and to enter God's kingdom (Dukker, 9). Esser and Grau enlarge on Francis's notion of self-abnegation when they state that it is a life in which one empties self of every attachment, a life of constant dying to self (Esser and Grau, 191). They summarize Chapters Twenty-two and Twenty-three of the Rule of 1221 as

follows:

To die to self is to deny oneself, to keep back nothing of self for oneself, to be wholly "pure" of heart, to live in total poverty of spirit. Only when we practice such a living death can our life be truly religious and centered on God [*ibid.*].

The appropriate virtue resulting from the recognition of one's sinfulness is humility, which acknowledges the truth of who I am and who God is.

With the acceptance of God's grace in the act of "penance" (fundamental conversion), the sinner turns from evil ways to begin a new relationship with the Lord. Francis points out in the following quotation that God is worthy of acknowledgment because of who He is and what He has done for sinful mankind.

Almighty, most high and supreme God, Father, holy and just, Lord, King of heaven and earth, we give you thanks for yourself. Of your own holy will you created all things spiritual and physical, made us in your image and likeness, and gave us a place in paradise, through your only Son, in the Holy Spirit. And it was through our own fault that we fell. We give you thanks because having created us through your Son, by that holy love with which you loved us, you decreed that he should be born true God and true man, of the glorious and ever blessed Virgin Mary and redeem us from our captivity by the blood of his passion and death [RegNB 23; *Omnibus*, 50].

Adoration of God appropriately flows from a grateful heart that contemplates who God is: Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier.

The last point Francis makes in the primary quotation under discussion is that the damned failed to serve God, while the blessed did serve him. What does Francis have in mind when he says, "served you in repentance"? The conclusion of his statement from Matthew's Gospel suggests the answer: "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mt. 35:34). Francis must have been aware of Jesus's criteria for attaining the kingdom: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me" (Mt. 25:35-39).

To serve our Lord "in repentance" means not only turning to God but also turning to those especially in need. The invitation is to feed the hungry, to share bread with those who have less than ourselves, to give drink to those who thirst, to provide clothes for the needy, to care

for the sick, to offer companionship to the lonely, the foreigner and stranger, to visit the isolated and the prisoners. The followers of Francis are asked to serve our Lord in this same way. A change of heart is manifested by appropriate deeds, as suggested above. This type of conversion is of course an "on-going" one.

Father Thaddeus Horgan summarizes what Francis intends to convey by the phrases "have practiced repentance" and "in repentance":

From his [Francis's] reading of Scripture . . . [he] learned that Salvation History and Jesus mean one thing . . . God's will to pardon, to bridge the gap of estrangement and alienation, to be compassionate with his people who struggle for life in abundance. The Lord not only exhorted men and women to repentance, he welcomed them to his Father. He healed them, manifesting that God's power to pardon was in the world and alive. He instituted a new covenant relationship in himself by identifying with humanity. He accomplished this in his blood, the source of life in Hebrew understanding. He rose, and with him all humanity, to a new life of union with the Father [Horgan, 61].

Thus "have practiced repentance" suggests, for Francis, the beginning of a whole process of conversion. Through the merits of Jesus, the Father, who longs for sinners, calls them to fundamental conversion. Once these are ready to admit having abandoned God by a life of sin, he repairs the estrangement and welcomes them back. God is ever ready to effect a covenant relationship with the repentant sinner. "So shall you be my people, I will be your God" (Jer. 11:4b). If this was true in the Old Testament, how much more is it true since Jesus came into our world, identified himself with humanity, and established for all who choose it, a new, deeper, relationship of love with himself and through him with the Father! It is the deepening of this relationship with God, the living out of the conversion experience, that constitutes "in repentance."

To summarize: Francis, in this quotation, outlines the basic elements of what he means by "practice penance" and "in repentance." To practice penance or repentance represents a fundamental conversion—the recognition of the basic sinful human condition of willful self-alienation from God. In Salvation History Jesus earned the Father's pardon. Consequently the sinner no longer needs to be estranged from God. So long as he/she turns from sin and gives up inordinate attachments, the Father pardons and welcomes the sinner. The estrangement is ended. A new relationship is begun. God is acknowledged for who he is in himself and for what he has done for us. The appropriate stance for the sinner is one of humility, the

truthful acknowledgment of this sinful condition. Sincere conversion is manifested by self-abnegation, taking up one's cross daily to follow Jesus.

"In repentance" implies a deepening of the new relationship established with God. God is appropriately adored, honored, loved, and served. This life demands continuous daily conversion of oneself to God. It means coming to know in an ever deepening way what it means to be a person capable of sin, one constantly struggling with the law of nature, while following the call to a more intense union with God in love. Love of God is demonstrated by a life of self-abnegation and service. Self-abnegation is freedom from all inordinate attachments, the daily dying to self.

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[A life of penance] demands  
continuous daily conversion of  
oneself to God . . . the daily dying to  
self.

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The specific type of service Francis requires of his followers is that with which Christ will judge all at the end times. It is the service rendered to the needy, the poor, the downtrodden, the lonely and abandoned. "Repentance" is not so much the performing of penitential practices for one's own sins and the sins of others, as a life in love, the forgetting of self and the devoting of oneself to the poor for the Lord's sake.

5. *In the true Faith and in repentance.* In the previous quotation Francis stressed the need to serve God "in repentance." In this last passage from the Rule of 1221 he and the friars implore all Christians to persevere "in the true Faith and in repentance."

And all who within the holy Catholic and Apostolic Church wish to serve God the Lord; and all the ecclesiastical orders, priests, deacons, subdeacons, acolytes, exorcists, lectors, ostiaries, and all the clergy; all the religious both men and women; conversi, all boys and girls and little children, the poor and needy, kings and princes, laborers, farmers, servants and masters; all virgins and continent and married women, all lay men and women; all infants, growing people, youths, and old people, the healthy and the sick; all persons of low and high rank; and all peoples, races, tribes and tongues, all nations and all men all over the



world now and to come—all we lesser brothers and useless servants humbly beg and entreat them that all of us may persevere in the true Faith and in repentance, for there is no other way for anyone to be saved [ut omnes in vera fide et poenitentia perseveremus, quia aliter nullus salvari potest—RegNB 23; Omnibus, 51 lacks the final phrase—cf. Opusc. 291].

**All Clerics**  
priests  
deacons  
subdeacons  
acolytes  
exorcists  
lectors  
ostiaries

**All Peoples**  
tribes  
families  
languages  
nations

**All Religious**  
men and women

**All Men**  
**Everywhere**  
now living  
and to come

**All Lay People**  
conversi  
boys and girls  
little children  
poor and needy  
kings and princes  
laborers, farmers  
servants and masters  
all virgins and  
continent and  
married women  
infants and grow-  
ing people  
youths and old  
people  
healthy and sick  
low and high rank

It seems that Francis attempted to include all categories within the Christian Church. These listed are surely all inclusive and overlapping: non-religious clerics, all religious, all lay people; male and female; virgins, single, married; healthy and the sick; little and the great; a life continuum from infants to the aged. Regarding the general categories the Opuscula indicates that these came from Rev. 7:9. They are the ones who stood before the throne and before the Lamb. Hence it follows that Francis is referring to Christians. He invites all these to live "in the true Faith and in repentance," first individuals, then groups of peoples. Though it is obvious that he is speaking specifically to Christians, it also appears that he directs his appeal to all, since he includes "peoples everywhere now living and to come." Repentance is for all mankind, not only for a select few.

Two other omissions might be noted. Francis names all the orders of the priestly ministry with the exception of bishops and the pope. Was this simply an oversight? It does appear strange, as Francis had excellent relations with his bishop and the pope at all times, and these surely are leaders of this group (cf. 1Cel 15 and 32; Omnibus, 241 and 254). Another group he overlooks are the merchants (his father was a

member of this class), who rose to prominence at this time of history, though he does include laborers and farmers (cf. Gannon and Traub, 81-82). Did he deliberately exclude them as an example of the worldly-wise of his day?

The categories listed are self-explanatory except for the conversi or penitents, a group appearing as early as the fifth century. They were determined to break with a former way of life which today is characterized as worldly, though not necessarily sinful. They committed themselves to a mortified, entirely chaste or continent life-style. They were lay, religious, single, and married. They might live in monasteries, their own home, or attached to a church. Francis was a conversus for the first two years after his conversion, during which time he was attached to a church (cf. Pazzelli, 10-11; 27-30).

The present quotation comes from the concluding chapter of the Rule of 1221. In the preceding paragraph he addresses the Church Triumphant; in this paragraph, the Militant. He and the friars implore all these Christians and non-Christians "to persevere in the true Faith and in repentance." Both are essential for salvation; "there is no other way for anybody to be saved." Repentance is associated with the acceptance of God's free gift, faith in him. Francis was converted when he allowed the Lord to lead him. This was his act of faith. To renounce self and determinedly follow Jesus is to fulfill the first demand of Christ's preaching. "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mk. 1:15). Since repentance presupposes at least a beginning relationship with the Lord, faith in God is a cornerstone for this life.

Francis may be referring to "true" faith because of the prevalence of heresy, especially within the penitential groups such as the Waldenses and the Cathari. These groups were extremely anti-clerical, so much so that some were excommunicated. Francis stressed to both his lay and religious followers adherence to Catholicism and fidelity to the true Church (cf. Pazzelli, p. 53; the author actually uses the term anti-ecclesial).

Francis stresses service as a fruit of conversion in the Testament, the Letter to All the Faithful, and the Rule of 1221—as we have seen in the foregoing pages. Here he emphasizes that the service requires an ecclesial dimension, that is, service rendered within the holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Church spelled people for Francis. This is seen in his conversion experience with the lepers. It took him a while to understand it in the incident where he set about repairing San Damiano, but he did realize, later, that "the divine command concerned

itself with the Church that Christ had purchased with his Blood" (2Cel 10-11; *Omnibus*, 370-71). For Francis the call to a fundamental conversion is ecclesial. It is through the Church that the repentant become people of God. Through baptism they become its members. The sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist sustain the life of conversion. While Francis does not specifically mention these sacraments in this passage, his writings are replete with references and exhortations to their reception as necessary for salvation (cf. *Omnibus*, 46, 62, 94, 134 on penance; 46, 94 on the Eucharist).

Penance or repentance is a lifelong process. Francis exhorts all Christians to persevere in it to the end. This was his own attitude. Toward the end of his life he exhorted his brothers: "Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up to now we have made little or no progress" (1Cel 103; *Omnibus*, 318).

It is clear that Francis envisioned the dying to self and the rising to new life as a daily event for anyone choosing penance as a way of life, and this way of life is absolutely essential to enter God's kingdom.

To summarize: the entire twenty-third Chapter of Francis's Rule of 1221 expresses the Saint's awe and thanksgiving to the Father for the redemptive work of his Son. He understood in a profound way that true faith, the belief in God and his divine plan of salvation and our response, the living of a life of repentance is essential for salvation. It is not meant for Christians only, but is intended for all mankind, present and to come. In other words, the daily dying to self, a life of on-going conversion in repentance, is required of all.

This saying brings out the need of an ecclesial dimension. Christians are asked to serve the Lord God in the "holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" by the living out of the conversion experience "in penance" and by serving one another on a daily basis. Likewise they are asked to persevere to the end.

#### D. The Letter to Superiors.

1. To do penance. In this final statement concerning repentance or penance used in a non-sacramental sense derived from the writings of Saint Francis, the Poverello addresses the Superiors of the Friars Minor:

In all your sermons you shall tell the people of the need to do penance [de poenitentia populum moneatis], impressing on them that no one can be saved unless he receives the Body and Blood of our Lord [EpCust; *Omnibus*, 103].

Francis does not spell out what the friars are to preach except that they shall tell the people of the need "to do penance." That he does not take this lightly is seen from the fact that he asks the friars to include this message "in any preaching" they do. In several previous quotations he emphasizes its absolute need for salvation; penance always involves a life of on-going conversion and calls for a daily dying to self.

Not only is repentance needed for salvation, the friars also ought to impress the people that "nobody can be saved except him who receives the Body and Blood of our Lord." In the Eucharist Jesus comes into the heart of the converted soul. Francis, no doubt, appreciated that the life of union with God is enhanced and energy received to live a life of penance by reception of the Body and Blood of Jesus. He writes, "The man who does not eat his Flesh and drink his Blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (EpFidII; *Omnibus*, 94; cf. Jn. 6:54). Here then both repentance and the reception of the Eucharist are seen as essentials for salvation. The Eucharist is the most excellent means available to enhance one's relationship begun with the Lord in the conversion experience.

This saying does not add anything new to the notion of penance as we have so far seen it used in the writings of Francis. It stresses the need for conversion in every person's life; hence the urgency to preach this message to all. It also adds a note on the importance of the Eucharist for salvation. Its supreme value lies in the strengthening of the bond formed with the Lord in the conversion experience, and it is a source of power in living out the demands of the "penance experience."

#### Summary.

Francis, from his own conversion experience, embarked on a lifelong process of "penance" or "repentance," of on-going conversion. From the quotations studied thus far—those concerned with penance outside the sacrament of Confession—the following characteristics emerge regarding the meaning of penance in the writings of Saint Francis.

First of all, penance is a God-given invitation which implies a free human response. It initiates a change from an old life, one that is centered on self, founded on sin, to a new life with the Lord Jesus which is God-centered, other-centered, and founded on God. The new life embodies the paschal mystery, which requires a daily dying to self with a rising to a new life in Christ. Francis invites us never to forget the sinner that is in each, which demands a sense of humility together

with the wonder of our being a redeemed child of the Father. It is a mystery that needs to be lived out to the very end of our lives.

This life is other-centered. For the follower of Francis there is a special call to the service of the needy, the most neglected, especially those requiring basic physical and emotional support.

This life can be lived anywhere in the world. It requires detachment from all persons, places, and things. In fact, the less attachment there is to these, the freer is the person to develop an attachment to the God who made us.

Freedom of movement is implied, and poverty of spirit a characteristic virtue. All peoples everywhere are called to live this life. No one is exempt. It is a sure road to the kingdom of Heaven.

### III. Penance in the Sacrament of Confession

THE TERM "PENANCE" is used six times in the writings of Saint Francis with the meaning of sacramental satisfaction. The first of these appears in the Letter to All the Faithful.

#### A. Letter to All the Faithful.

*Undertake penance.* This first quotation from the Letter to All the Faithful concerns doing penance for one's sins. "Are you willing to undertake penance [Vis recipere poenitentiam] for all your sins?" (Ep-Fid II; Opusc. 126; Omnibus, 98 has "be absolved"). In the context of this passage a dying man who has placed all his possessions in the hands of relatives refuses to make restitution to persons he has defrauded and cheated. He is willing to perform the penance; yet he condemns himself because he is not just. He refuses to make satisfaction. Francis indicates that performing the penance is not enough. When a person is sincere about doing penance he is willing to make the restitution demanded.

#### B. Rule of 1221.

*Received penance . . . performed the penance.* Francis emphasizes the importance of performing the penance imposed during Confession. He implies that the efficacy of the sacrament hinges on this condition:

My friars, both clerics and lay brothers, are to confess to priests of the Order. If this is impossible, they may confess to any other qualified Catholic priest and they should be convinced that once they have received penance and absolution [acceperint poenitentiam et absolutionem] from any Catholic priest their sins are forgiven, provided that they perform the penance enjoined on them, humbly and faithfully [si

poenitentiam sibi iniunctam procuraverint humiliter et fideliter observare—RegNB 20; Omnibus, 46].

It is not clear why Francis would need to emphasize to his friars the need to perform the penance imposed in sacramental Confession. The need could stem from the fact that many of the friars were simple layfolk and hence may have been ill informed about the sacrament. Confession was infrequent at the time, since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 had to legislate annual confession and communion. Another factor might have been the stress placed on the performance of the penance at the time:

Through the centuries one sees an unmistakable shift in the estimation of what constitutes the actual substance of the sacrament. During the first stage of the existence of the aural confession (early middle ages) the emphasis clearly lay upon atonement. Achievement of the penance was seen as the actual forgiving element [Tomlinson, 34].

#### C. Rule of 1223.

*They should impose a moderate penance.* The third use of sacramental "penance" in the writings of Saint Francis stresses the value of Confession for the forgiveness of sin.

If any of the friars, at the instigation of the enemy, fall into mortal sin, they must have recourse as soon as possible, without delay, to their provincial ministers, if it is a sin for which recourse to them has been prescribed for the friars. If the ministers are priests, they should impose a moderate penance [cum misericordia iniungant illis poenitentiam] on such friars; if they are not priests, they should see that a penance is imposed by some priest of the Order [iniungi faciant (poenitentiam) per alios sacerdotes ordinis]; as seems best to them before God [RegB 7; Omnibus, 62].

Francis is well aware of the frailty of humans who are inclined at any time to fall into serious sin. Should they be so unfortunate as to sin they should have recourse to the minister. In Chapter Four of the Rule of 1221 Francis reminds the ministers of Mt. 20:28: "I have not come to be ministered to, but to minister"; the souls of their brothers have been committed to them (RegNB 4; Omnibus, 34-35).

In his Letter to a Certain Minister, Francis states:

If any one of the brothers at the instigation of the Enemy should sin mortally, let him be bound in obedience to have recourse to his guardian. And all the brothers who might know he has sinned, should not cause him embarrassment or loss of honor, but have pity for him and

## francis

pierced,  
    he kept vigil.  
his blood  
mingled with  
heaven.  
a sign:  
the wonder  
of union.  
gentled and consumed  
by celestial fire,  
    the unquenchable desire  
    for his lover,  
francis  
submitted his body  
to love's branding  
and sealed the passion  
in holy consummation.

Sister Lynda Michel Castronovo, O.S.F.

keep the sin of their brother very secret; for it is not the healthy that need the physician, but the ailing [EpMin; Omnibus, 110].

Thus the minister (the physician who represents Christ) is there to support the fallen brother. At the same time Francis acknowledges that only the priest in Confession can absolve the friar. The performance of the penance is recognized as an integral part of Confession required for its efficacy.

### Letter to a Minister.

To impose a penance. The final use of the term "penance" in Saint Francis's writings comes from his Letter to a Certain Minister:

A friar who falls into venial sin should confess to a confrere who is a priest; if there is no priest present, he should confess to another friar, until he meets a priest who can absolve him sacramentally, as has been said. . . . The other friars have no authority to impose a penance [iniungendi poenitentiam], but must be content with the advice: Go thy way, from now on sin no more [EpMin; Omnibus, 111; cf. Jn 8:11].

Francis stresses the admission of sin as an important aspect of penance or on-going conversion. So he advises confessing to a con-

frere if no priest is available. It helps to keep one aware that all are sinners. Even though one has undergone conversion, the possibility of sin is a constant reality. The sacrament of Confession was given humans by a merciful Savior to absolve them from sins committed after converting to a life of repentance and is another means of grace to live a life of repentance.

### Summary.

It can be concluded that Francis sees the efficacy of the Sacrament of Confession as dependent upon the achievement of sacramental satisfaction. This was the accepted position of the theologians of his day, and it is probably why he so strongly suggests carrying out the prescribed penance. He values Confession as a means of reconciliation with the Lord, especially in the case of serious sin, and as an on-going source of strength. He encourages the use of the sacrament for venial sins and even the confession of sins to one another as a constant reminder of our proneness to sin and infidelity to the Lord. Ω

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The illustrations for our February issue were drawn by Brother John Francis Tyrrell, F.F.S.C., who teaches at St. Joseph's in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

## Herald

"Why should I of all people  
keep quiet,  
who know God's love?  
Brigandage comes from an empty heart;  
from a soul overflowing, song.  
My clothes are borrowed  
my words are free—  
you shall catch little booty in me."

Francis  
juggler of stones  
jongleur, now, de Dieu  
juggles words and deeds  
into chuckling rhyme  
till booed, shooed and booted  
(not worth a kill)  
he does curtain call in the snow.

Ten fingers and a tongue  
nimble, aquiver in love  
play, staged,  
to an empty valley.

"Well, you retired rag-vendor,  
it's time you put this show  
back on the road."

With a shoulder-shrug  
and a "Hark a lark!"  
and a "Yea no silver!"  
he skips for another town.

*Hugoline A. Sabatino, O.F.M.*

## MONTHLY CONFERENCE

## Francis and Living the Gospel

SISTER MADGE KARECKI, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F.

ONE OF THE MOST FAMILIAR responses to the question, "How would you define the Franciscan charism?" is "Living the Gospel." This is a true, but inadequate answer. It is true since this is surely what Francis had in mind when he heard the missionary discourse from St. Matthew's Gospel read on February 24, 1208, for the Feast of St. Matthias. Celano tells us that he cried aloud in joy: "This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart." The text from Matthew's Gospel gave shape and form to the desires of his heart.

But the answer to our question is inadequate because it is the intention of every religious founder to live the Gospel. They each had a vision of how they could act upon God's Word. This vision is the legacy shared by each of their followers and renders each religious family's way of living the Gospel distinct.

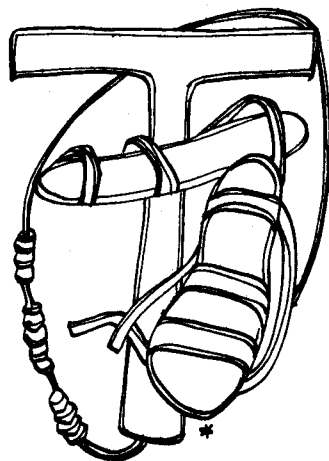
No one of us lives the whole Gospel; our lives are simply not long enough, and usually our hearts are not quite large enough to take in all the wisdom of the Gospel. Francis knew this intuitively. He also knew that the Church is served best when its members live and experience the various nuances that make up the whole Gospel. Francis was convinced of this and for this reason would not accept a Rule of life from one of the older Orders of the Church. His words are recorded in the Legend of Perugia (114):

My brothers, my brothers, God called me to walk in the way of humility and showed the way of simplicity. I do not want to hear any mention of the rule of St. Augustine, of St. Bernard, or of St. Benedict. The Lord has told me that he wanted to make a new fool of me in the world, and God does not want to lead us by any other knowledge than that.

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Matthew 10 became the springboard for Francis's living of the Gospel and the basic melody line for the variations on the theme which Francis composed under the Lord's own inspiration. It formed the "how" of his living of the Gospel. It was a fresh, new rendition of a very old song first sung by Jesus himself. Francis merely picked it up, wrote a whole new arrangement for it, and with the boldness that only faith and love can supply he rendered it the theme song of a new movement in the Church.

Francis's vision of the Gospel emphasized some essential principles that had become obscured as the Church interacted with culture. By emphasizing these values he formed a way of life for his religious family "the likes of which the world had never seen."



For Francis living the Gospel meant taking it up radically. From the very beginning of his conversion it seems that Francis seized upon the hard sayings of the Gospel. He would have no part of what Bonhöffer, centuries later, would call "cheap grace." It could be no other way since his image of Jesus was the one who spoke to him at San Damiano. The poor, suffering Christ would dominate his living of the Gospel and it was in his footsteps that Francis would follow. Because of this Francis defined living the Gospel in terms of a way of living for himself and

his followers. If one searches his writings these values are seen very clearly.

**Poverty by Choice.** Life among the lepers taught Francis the dignity of all people in Christ and God's preferential love for the poor. From that time on he refused to define himself in terms of goods. Possessions would not shackle him to some arbitrary definition of himself based on economics. He was a son of the Father, and that was security enough for him. He had renounced the patrimony that was his as a son of Pietro Bernardone in front of the Bishop of Assisi and had made a choice in favor of another sort of patrimony. He chose the riches of poverty. In his person the words of the *Sacrum commercium* take on flesh: poverty is the "better and easier way of going to God."

**Pilgrimage Way.** For Francis living the Gospel meant movement. It meant living for the day without any concern about housing or securi-

ty. It meant being free to put one's gifts at the service of the Church, especially the poor. Most importantly it meant living the Gospel and preaching the Gospel among ordinary people. Francis needed no special housing or food, for the world was his cloister. Unlike the older Orders whose members lived their lives apart from ordinary people and developed a stable and "regular" way of Gospel living, Francis and his followers would live as a community, but in rented, borrowed, or even abandoned dwellings, without any rules about what they would eat or drink, doing work according to their individual gifts and talents. All of this enabled Francis and the early community to be a people on the move, passing over from this world as Jesus had done. They took seriously their identity as strangers and pilgrims en route to their true homeland.

**Centered in Worship.** Poverty and pilgrimage freed Francis to live a life of worship among the poor of Yahweh. His example spoke even more eloquently than his words. Here was a man who not only prayed, but had himself become a prayer through the attention he gave to the Lord. Just like Jesus, he wanted to be united with the Father, and so he spent long hours, even whole days, weeks, months in prayer. He called his community to that same kind of faithfulness to Jesus.

Nothing, then, must keep us back, nothing separate us from him, nothing come between us and him. At all times and seasons, in every country and place, every day and all day, we must have a true and humble faith, and keep him in our hearts, where we must love, honor, adore, serve, praise, and bless, glorify and acclaim, magnify and thank, the most high supreme and eternal God, Three and One, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit . . . [RegNB 23; Omnibus, 52].

This kind of fidelity to prayer was necessary if the friars were to live by God's Word. Prayer, poverty, and pilgrimage became the context of their mission.

**Life among the Poor.** Like Jesus, who renounced his status as the Son of God, Francis renounced the status of his birth. He could not deny or change his background, but neither would he consent to let it stifle the grace of God within his heart. That grace led Francis among the lepers. There he learned how to be that "new kind of fool." Francis's decision to live among the lepers was the beginning of a series of choices in which he exchanged the bitter for the sweet. It was so significant an event in his life that the pattern of his conversion became the way of life for the community. All those joining him

would have to dispose of their property and possessions and come to him as poor persons to live with him among the poor, so that they too might be able to exchange the bitter for the sweet. He and his community would seek out the poor and live among them as brothers and sisters witnessing to the truth of Jesus's words, "Blessed are the poor. . . ." They themselves were to be the poor of the kingdom with only one thing in mind: "to bear witness to Jesus's message and convince everyone that there is no other almighty God besides him" (EpOrd; Omnibus, 104).

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**Francis's way of living the Gospel is just that: a way. It demands action on our part.**

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Yes, living the Gospel is what Francis had in mind; it was in fact what he had been called to do. To do so Francis was inspired by certain key values from the Gospel which eventually took over his whole life. These values, taken from Gospel texts, shaped both his understanding of the meaning of the "hidden treasure" he had found and his way of living it out. He bequeathed to his followers a spirituality which challenges the orientation of our lives, brings us poor to Christ, and offers us a way of living which gives concrete expression to that very spirituality. It was his gift to the Church, and it is ours when we are faithful to his vision. Francis's way of living the Gospel is just that, a way. It demands action on our part. It is simply not a spirituality divorced from a lifestyle. Both are necessary. One without the other gives a distorted version of the story of Francis and of his way to live the Gospel. Ω

## The Shack

**SISTER MARIE KATHLEEN ABBOTT, O.S.C.**

**S**AINTE FRANCIS was an empty shack. But along with the buildings around him, he thought he was a fine structure that had the makings of a great palace.

One day a Monument was erected across the street and facing the shack. The Monument was in the likeness of the Great Builder's most Belovéd Who had chosen to be the most demolished ruin of a building, with great steel girders, twisted and torn, huge panes of broken and shattered glass, and jagged, jutting beams of bronze.

The Monument became as a mirror to Saint Francis, who now saw with clearer vision his own deplorable condition: how he was really a shack overrun with rats, snakes, and spiders. He was moved by the love of the Belovéd and desired to truly be like him. He opened the doors and windows and let the rain and wind blow through him, chasing out the things that had deceived him. Always, across the street, the Monument remained ever before his eyes. Always he saw that he was an empty shack, a welcome habitat for deception and illusion.

The storms were many—fierce ones and mild ones—and always the doors and windows stayed open.

The Great Builder was very pleased with the empty shack that had opened its windows and doors. As the Monument caught the light and sent its brilliance gleaming in all directions, the opened doorway to the shack received it. The radiance passed through the windows and the many spaces and cracks in its walls and roof.

As time passed, the shack became even shabbier. But this only let in more of the Monument's light, so that eventually the shack could hardly be seen. The Great Builder put the seal of the Belovéd on the little shack—on its roof and four walls.

Saint Francis was an empty shack (though he didn't always know it), an empty shack that received the glory of the Great Builder, was filled with it, yet never grasped it. He remained an empty shack, poor and rundown, but he reflected the beauty and splendor and greatness of the Palace across the street.

Yes, Saint Francis was an empty shack—a great little empty shack. Ω

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## Needed – Some Quiet Types

(Continued from page 33)

be made on that ground. I am claiming that good people can be called to be Franciscan who are not articulate before a group of people, who aren't bookish, don't want responsibility over others, and want to find God in a Franciscan community they serve. Zeal for souls does not demand one work with people or be an extrovert; it does demand spiritual depth and prayerfulness. The Franciscan vocation must, then, be wide enough to include those who wish to express their concern for souls through prayer and service of the community, as well as those who judge God calls them not only to the vowed life in common, but also to a specific external apostolate. Ω

*Dr. Julian Davies ofm*

## Book Reviews

**The Absolute Primacy and Predestination of Jesus and His Virgin Mother.** By Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981. Pp. xiii-177. Paper, \$7.95.

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

In this priceless volume Father Juniper Carol, whom William Marshner rightly calls in the preface the "Dean of American Mariologists," furnishes the serious theologian with an invaluable guide to the plethora of writings over the centuries of the Christian era on what has been variously called the Primacy of Christ, the primary motive for the Incarnation, and (more correctly) the primary reason for the Incarnation.

In an introductory section Father Juniper outlines deftly the six possible positions theologians can take on the question of how Jesus and his Mother fit into the divine plan for

creation. Having discussed the matter with him before the book's publication, I fear I still cannot perceive any substantive difference between, not (as the author suggests) the traditional Scotistic view, but rather Bonnefoy's adaptation of that view and that of Professor Marshner.

The latter development of the Scotistic position is, however, much more subtly nuanced.

At any rate, the book's main contribution is not speculative theology, at which the author so excels, but chronological and systematic documentation. A full "Part" of the book is devoted to Duns Scotus, his predecessors, and his immediate followers. A much longer "Part" is given to the proliferation of treatments on the subject after Scotus and a century-by-century cataloguing of subsequent contributions. All entries are coded to indicate to which of the six main views they belong, and each century's section is preceded by a helpful introductory note.

## Il Poverello

O Father Seraphical  
our joy and our pride  
lead us, O glorious One  
to serve the Crucified  
in lowly humility  
in true holy poverty—  
What if the world deride?  
Earth has its dark allure—  
aid us in the Now  
self fights to endure  
but grace can endow—  
You have conquered all  
You have reached the goal  
Triumphantly crowned!  
Shine on from shore to shore  
O Victor of the Fight!  
shine on forevermore—  
Christ is the Light!  
beloved of the Crucified  
wounded counterpart  
Golden Star of our Night!

Sister M. Colette Logue, O.S.F.

In a concluding section Father Juniper provides (a) a numerical, century-by-century synopsis of the relative popularity of the various opinions, and (b) a fine, if brief, series of observations on how to interpret the wealth of data he has provided.

The book concludes with a very helpful index and an impressive list of the author's other publications. I cannot recommend it too highly, not only for its obvious value as a research tool, but also as a fascinating, panoramic view of the development of a fundamental question for any Christian: Why did God become man?

**Rule for Hermitages: Way of Life of the Little Brothers of St. Francis.** By James Curran, O.S.F. Still River, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1981. Pp. 106. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C., a Consulting Editor of this Review at the Lowell, MA, Poor Clare Monastery, who adapted the Rule for Hermitages for use by the Fayetteville (NY) Franciscans and has lectured widely on that Rule and conducted workshops on it in three states.

The "Rule for Hermitages" expresses a lifestyle very dear to my heart, coming, as it does, from the



very hand of Francis himself—a rule in its entirety and originality, as far as can be determined.

Like all of Francis's writings, the rule is brief, open, and simple, thus lending itself to various adaptations for times and circumstances.

Brother James has aptly studied, prayed, and interpreted the Rule for Hermitages as a true follower of Francis, placing a balanced emphasis on both action and contemplation. For ten years now the Little Brothers have graced the streets of Boston with their presence among the poor ones of the Lord. In a well written, concise, interesting, and experiential account, Brother James tells of God's work in his soul and of his ready response to his discernment of God's will for him.

Bringing the reader up to date on his own life, progress, conviction, and continuing vision, Brother James then outlines the community horarium, prayers, and ceremonies of dedication as a Little Brother.

Even though this commentary on and adaptation of the Rule for Hermitages was written specifically for the Little Brothers, it appears as an excellent source of information for anyone who wishes to know, understand, and possibly live out the Franciscan ideal as Francis himself styled it.

May God continue to bless the "new shoot" on the Franciscan tree.

**Church, Eucharist, and Priesthood: A Theological Commentary on The Mystery and Worship of the Most Holy Eucharist.** By Edward J. Kilmartin, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1981. Pp. 100.

Cloth, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Vincent B. Grogan, O.F.M., J.C.D. (Catholic University of America), a member of the faculty at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, New York.

To comment intelligently on any official Church document, a knowledge of its history, its particular genre, and its overall purpose (as well as something of the theological stance of the author) are absolute essentials. In this regard, Father Kilmartin acquits himself well. His entire first chapter is devoted to providing the necessary background; thus we learn that the style of *Dominicae Coenae* is quite personal, rather than an arid, doctrinal approach; that the document resembles more a theological reflection on the Eucharist than a dogmatic essay; that the papal Letter constitutes John Paul's personal faith-witness to this sublime Mystery. A particularly interesting comment made by Kilmartin focuses on the Letter's seeming preoccupation with Trent's pronouncements on the matter—its extensive use of Tridentine quotations and the discussion of the various aspects of the Eucharist within a Tridentine framework. The Pope took this approach in order subtly to counteract objections of reactionaries to the revised *Ordo Missae* and to emphasize the essential sameness of the Tridentine Mass and the post-Vatican II Eucharist; in so many words, the Pontiff, in his Letter, is seeking to defuse the tensions caused by the liturgical reform.

Kilmartin's expressed purpose (p. 1) is to situate the theological aspects of *Dominicae Coenae* within contem-

porary Eucharistic theology, which relates the Eucharist to both the Church and the priesthood. In this area, he gives the Pope mixed reviews; i.e., John Paul, for whatever reason, has not picked up many of the nuances of twentieth-century thinking on the Eucharist and operates, at times, from a more traditional stance. For example, the Pope develops his approach by starting with the Eucharist and priesthood, rather than beginning, as did *Lumen Gentium*, with the relationship of the Eucharist and the Church and thereby placing the priesthood within the broader ecclesiological context. Too, the Pope restricts the sacrificial action to the consecratory narrative proclaimed by the celebrant, who offers the Mass *in persona Christi*. Similarly, the papal Letter adopts Trent's almost exclusively cultic perspective on the priesthood. In defense of the papal approach and emphases, Kilmartin recognizes that the Pope had no intention of presenting a systematic treatise on Eucharistic theology.

The author does, of course, admit that areas of the Letter do reflect a Vatican II understanding of the Eucharist: e.g., that the whole Christ, Head and members, is the active subject of the Eucharistic celebration. One indicator of this community participation, mentioned by John Paul, is significant: the Procession of the Gifts is meant to symbolize and dramatize the offering made by the assembly of the "spiritual sacrifices" represented by the bread and wine. (It seems, in recent years, once the novelty of the practice wore thin, that the priest and

congregation look upon this ritual in a purely pragmatic mode—simply as a way to get the bread, wine, and collection to the celebrant at the altar.) This emphasis on the assembly's participation serves to balance the stress on the differentiation of roles within the Liturgy and genuinely respects the difference between the common and the ministerial priesthood.

The author's commentary on each section of the Letter is for the most part brief, and in my view somewhat bland; much of the actual commentary says nothing that is enlightening. It is my distinct impression that this book represents an attempt to rush into print perhaps too quickly.

What this book does have to recommend it are the important background material of *Dominicae Coenae*, as noted above, and the actual text of that Letter, as an Appendix. A third value are the wide-ranging footnotes which Kilmartin provides for his own comments.

All in all, this book is a helpful preliminary interpretation of *Dominicae Coenae*, but by its very nature, it is certainly not the ultimate word.

**Father Gemelli: Notes for the Biography of a Great Man.** By Maria Sticco. Trans. Beatrice Wylczynski. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980. Pp. viii-302. Cloth, \$8.95.

Reviewed by Father Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., author of the recent *Sons of St. Francis, Get Together and several other important publications from Franciscan Publishers, Pulaski, WI, a member of*

the Sunnyside Franciscan Community in Chicago.

Forty years ago the most exciting book on Franciscanism was written by Father Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M., entitled *The Franciscan Message to the World*. At that time very few knew anything about the man, except that he had been a medical doctor, a psychologist, and an anticlerical socialist before his conversion and entrance into the Franciscan Order.

Now at last we have a biography about him by a gracious lady I had the pleasure of meeting, Maria Sticco, who knew Father Gemelli personally and worked closely with him for forty years. She was one of the first members of the Missionaries of Divine Kingship, a secular institute founded by Father Gemelli.

The subtitle of the book, "Notes for the Biography of a Great Man," gives the impression that this biography is a sketchy one. Actually, these "notes" are so copious that they give a vivid, exciting, and moving picture of the man and of his varied activities.

His enterprises were so numerous that they render the reader speechless. Father Gemelli never seemed to rest and was ever creative. He was the editor of several periodicals, a military chaplain under dangerous field conditions, an internationally known psychologist, and the founder of Sacred Heart University. All these accomplishments are described in a detailed and dramatic way. For Father Gemelli was a person always on the move—one who made things happen.

I met Maria Sticco a decade ago at Bethesda, Md., and never imagined that this gracious, slight lady could produce such a manly portrait of so great a man. What is remarkable is the way she could depict the times before and after World War I: the events, the atmosphere, and the personalities. In a way this was possible and necessary because Gemelli was right in the middle of all those events.

As devoted as Sticco is to the man, she does not gloss over his deficiencies. She portrays him as rude as well as sensitive; as dictatorial as well as open-minded; as unpredictable as well as organized. Nor does she gloss over his partial approval of Fascism or the one glaring instance of anti-Semitism.

The most heroic moment comes when Gemelli suffers serious injuries in an automobile accident. He barely recovers when the University is shell-ed during World War II and heavily damaged. Under these extreme conditions he strives mightily to keep the University going. He does not falter even when the Allies take over and try to get rid of him as an apparent friend of the previous regime. About this time he is involved in another automobile accident. And yet this succession of blows does not crush him; he remains indomitable under the most severe circumstances.

One reason he was able to bear up under this mountain of difficulties was that he had great friends in Vico Necchi, Olgiatti, Ida Barelli, Pius XI, and Pius XII. Their support and his faith enabled Gemelli to endure the worst.

This biography offers the reader a great story about a great twentieth-century Franciscan.

## Books Received

- Alexandra, Mother, *The Holy Angels*. Still River, MA: St. Bede's Publications, 1981. Pp. xiv-196. Paper, \$8.50.
- Bacigalupo, Leonard, O.F.M., *The American Franciscan Missions in Central America: Three Decades of Christian Service*. Andover, MA: Charisma Press (St. Francis Seminary, Box 263), 1980. Pp. xx-484. Cloth, \$14.50; paper, \$9.95.
- Bodo, Murray, O.F.M., *Letters from Pleasant Street*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1981. Photos by John Quigley, O.F.M., Susan Saint Sing, and Murray Bodo, O.F.M. Pp. viii-119. Paper, \$3.25.
- A Book of Prayers*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1981. Pp. viii-180. Leatherette, \$4.95.
- Cronin, Gaynell, *Sunday throughout the Week: Ideas, Activities, Prayers, and Projects . . . to Make the Gospel Message More Relevant [to] Children*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981. Pp. 173. Paper, \$5.95.
- Delaney, John J., ed., *Saints Are Now: Eight Portraits of Modern Sanctity*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1981. Pp. 190. Cloth, \$12.95.
- Harrington, Wilfrid, O.P. (Scriptural Commentary), Thomas Halton (Patristic Readings), and Austin Flannery, O.P. (Church Documents), *The Saving Word: Sunday Readings, Year B*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1981. Paper, \$10.00.
- Marbach, Ethel, *Saints Budding Everywhere: Saints of the Seasons for Children—Winter, Spring*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1981. Pp. viii-64. Paper, \$3.50.
- McBride, Alfred, *Staying Faithful: to God, Ourselves, One Another*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1981. Pp. v-143. Paper, \$3.25.
- McNeill, Donald P., Douglas A. Morrison, and Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Compassion: A Reflection on Christian Life*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1982. Pp. xiv-145. Cloth, \$12.95.
- O'Donnell, Christopher, *Life in the Spirit and Mary*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1981. Pp. 126. Paper, \$4.95.
- Peck, George T., *The Fool of God: Jacopone da Todi*. University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1981. Pp. xiii-246. Cloth, \$22.50.
- Stock, Dennis (photographs), and Lawrence Cunningham (text), *Saint Francis of Assisi*. San Francisco: Harper & Row Scala Books, 1981. Pp. 127. Cloth, \$20.95.