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A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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The CORD

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to 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, I 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 Commernium
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



A Graduate Gives Thanks

THIS YEAR OF THE 800th anniversary of Saint Francis has, so far, been extremely grace-filled and joy-filled with the promise of more of the same in a heightened degree as we approach October! Personally, for me it has been illuminated by my own solemn profession of vows in March, which sealed my final commitment to the second Order.

Reflecting upon all of this preparation and jubilation to honor the little poor man, I realized that my own personal joy comes from sources outside of myself: i.e., my education in Franciscanism, which had been wanting for many years. I could never have arrived at the great love and devotion I feel for Francis by myself—and now, I would like to acknowledge those to whom I owe thanks for this grace.

In 1972, as a member of the Syracuse Franciscans, I and five others of my community were granted the privilege of attending a new program just beginning at St. Bonaventure University's Franciscan Institute. There were only eleven students in that first summer program—but the genuine devotion, enthusiasm, and love for Francis, of our friar-instructors exploded and electrified each of us to such an extent that ensuing summers seemed to bring the whole Franciscan world to attend the Institute to catch more of the Francis-flame for themselves.

Holy Name Province, well known for its academic standards at the University, had developed a new response in education—a response for Franciscan living—as Francis himself once mentioned to Saint Anthony: "It pleases me that you should teach the friars . . . so long as they do not extinguish the spirit of prayer and devotedness over this study, as is contained in the Rule" (*Omnibus*, 164).

Education in the Franciscan Institute meant studying with and from Franciscans of every type: Capuchins, Conventuals, Friars Minor, Sisters of St. Francis, T.O.R.'s. Such an education proved to me that all Franciscans are one in the spirit of Francis.

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Therefore, it is my sincere desire to express my appreciation to the Franciscan Institute and to St. Bonaventure University for the foresight in producing a program geared to high educational standards plus personal holy living out of the Franciscan ideals—indeed, a combination unknown anywhere else; a combination for which many blessings will be extended throughout the world wherever Franciscans live—and that is everywhere.

I would like to ask those of you who have been or are in attendance at the Franciscan Institute to join me in celebrating Francis this year by expressing, in some way, your own deep gratitude to God and Saint Francis for his 20th-century followers in Western New York who "minister spirit and life" to students of the Franciscan Institute.

*St. Francis Ann Thom,
O.S.C.*

Jesu Hostia

My arms raise in adoration—awe
To Him who sits enthroned.

Your mirrored beauty shines concealed
In what is more than bread.

As Bethlehem's Babe of Jesse's line was
Once Incarnate in secret poverty,
So now shielded in sacramental love-gift is
Your Sacred Body of Calvary resurrected.

Thou Bread of Life gathering our scattered lives
As loaves are multiplied before blind eyes.
Jesus, yesterday, today, and forever. You are . . .

. . . You are given to us all, kept whole.

Yester's manna is hope of the morrow
Memoried in today's eternal now.

Break the fast of hunger's shore,
"Give us this bread always!" we cry.

Indwelling Lord who sups with me,
You plant within the wheatseed of Resurrection,
Spreading Your table-white feast of joy,
Pledge of eternal banquet halls.

"Take and eat" were words You said at
Last Supper of many yet to be.
Firstborn of the house of Bread,
Easter in our yearnful Emmaus hearts.
Come!

Barbara Doria

Saint Clare and Prayer

SISTER MARY HELEN, P.C.C.

WHEN THE VARIOUS WRITINGS of our holy mother, Saint Clare, on prayer are gathered together and arranged hypothetically to form a relative whole, a surprising cohesion emerges.

Beyond this intriguing factor, which is rather amazing, since most likely there are lost writings intermingling with what we have, and surely valuable instruction on prayer would be among them, there is seen a style that is eloquent, lyrical, swift, sure, and concise.

In Clare's Rule there are few prescriptions concerning prayer, as such, and they are briefly put. Nonetheless, everything that is needed in such a document is covered, and is said to the point (cf. chapters 2, 7, and especially 10).

It is in her letters to Blessed Agnes of Prague, however, that the mind and heart of Saint Clare is most fully expressed. And while the expressions are not lengthy, they are precious gems of the Franciscan ideal and spirituality. In the second letter we read: "Keep your eyes fast on [Christ] who for love of you was reckoned of no account and let your part be to be willing to be held of no account for Him."

Here we catch a glimpse of the soul of Franciscan piety: that simple gaze upon Christ without pretense or shrinking back, and the necessary response that flows from that encounter.

Saint Clare's spirituality is eminently positive. It is always a looking at her divine Spouse and Savior and modeling her behavior on what she sees. In this she is a most faithful disciple of Saint Francis, and I feel certain she knows this. Virtue for Saint Clare is never a negative element, even when that virtue is penance. Rather, it is the response of her love to the love of Christ.

An example of her eloquence is given in the following passage from the same letter: "Your spouse is He Who is of comeliness beyond all the sons of men and who for your salvation became the least of men and despised and smitten and wounded in all of his body and dying under the hard requirements of the cross."

Sister Mary Helen, P.C.C., is a member of the Poor Clare Colettine Community at Los Altos Hills, California.

In this passage, our holy Mother vividly portrays the self-emptying of Christ and brings it down to a very personal level. There follows a passage which sums up in amazing clarity and swiftness of expression the essence of our private prayer: "It is Him you want to see, to gaze upon fixedly, to think upon deeply and with desire to imitate."

This jewel of wisdom is so simply expressed that it may take several readings, even several ponderings, to penetrate into the riches it contains. It seems to me that passages like this one point out the depth of Saint Clare's spirit of silence, a silence that enables her to bring forth the kernel of what she wishes to say in as few words as possible. Surely in this she is a faithful imitator of our blessed Lady.

Clare's spirituality is eminently positive . . . always a looking at her divine Spouse and Savior. . . .

In the third letter, Saint Clare speaks of the prayer of contemplation. Her sureness of approach leads us to conclude that she knew well her subject through personal experience:

Set your mind on the Mirror of Eternity. Direct your soul to the Splendor of Glory. Fix your heart on the Image of the Divine Substance. By contemplation transform yourself totally into the likeness of divinity itself. Then you will feel what those who are friends feel when they taste a hidden sweetness which God Himself from the beginning has reserved for those who love him.

Here is an unabashed sharing of Saint Clare's own prayer life. Otherwise, how could she advise with such simple confidence and conviction as to the outcome of praying in this manner? And yet, her imagery is sufficiently vague so as to keep hidden "the secrets of the King."

A point that is entirely fascinating is that, though a long passage of time separates the third and fourth letters, the images of the third letter: "Mirror of Eternity," "Splendor of Glory," and "Image of the Divine Substance" blend well with the images used in the fourth letter: "Splendor of Eternal Glory," "Brightness of Everlasting Light," and "Mirror without Spot," thus linking both exhortations into a smooth, flowing exposition on prayer.

It has been said that in these letters, Saint Clare's own thoughts are hidden beneath the style of her century, and that it is necessary to sift through the language in order to unearth her own feelings and expressions. But the more I ponder these letters, and especially Clare's expressed ideas on prayer, the less I can agree with this statement. Rather, I believe that Clare is truly a child of her time and that the romantic imagery she uses, is a recounting of her own lived experience of her dramatic conversion and vocation. I think Saint Clare was very much at home with the images she used and that they express her warm heart quite adequately.

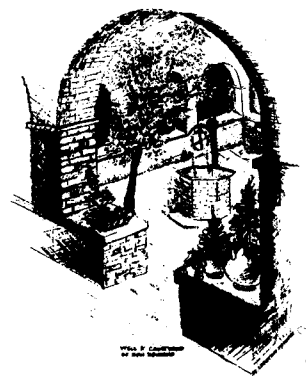
The fourth letter is especially precious to us because it was written so close to the end of her life. Considering how ill she was, we must be amazed that it is such a masterpiece of powerful writing and clarity of thought—so filled with holy challenges for her who is "the half of my soul":

Now, since He is the Splendor of Eternal Glory and the Brightness of Everlasting Light and the Mirror without Spot, O queen, spouse of Jesus Christ, look steadfastly into this mirror every day. See in it every time you look . . . and look into it always . . . your own face. This will urge you to vest yourself totally, within and without, with adornments of all the virtues as becomes the daughter and most chaste spouse of the highest King.

Does this give us the secret of Saint Clare's own vibrant prayer life and intense motivation? Continuing the image of Christ as Mirror, she says in greater detail: "In this mirror you will find poverty in bright reflection. You will see there humility and love beyond words. You will be able to see this clearly with the grace of God and to contemplate it in its fullness."

These simple and straightforward sentences tell us emphatically the characteristics of Jesus that impressed our holy Mother the most, and in this she follows closely on the heels of our holy Father Francis.

In the ensuing passages, Saint Clare says to "fix your attention" on the poverty of the Infant Savior; to "consider long and carefully" the



humility of our Lord, and to "open your mind and your soul to the unspeakable love" that motivated our blessed Savior to die for us on the cross. Not content with our Lord's earthly life, she bids us to "take a long, loving look also at the delights which cannot be described in words and which He brings to you, and the riches and the honors that have no dateline to end them."

Thus Saint Clare urges Blessed Agnes—and us, by assimilation—to look beyond this life to our heavenly home and the rewards of conforming our lives to the image of our Savior. Moreover, she holds out to us her desire that we respond "with all the fullness of desire of which your heart is capable and all the love that it can summon."

Clare asks that we respond in joy and that, like the Bride in the Song of Songs, we be ever mindful of our dignity and destined glory as spouses of our heavenly Bridegroom.

One further point. Throughout her Rule and Testaments, and in her letters, there is a constant sprinkling of texts from, and allusions to, Scripture and the Divine Office. They are like golden threads woven delicately throughout her design to heighten and underscore the motif, giving it depth and richness. In this we see how Saint Clare made the prayer of the Church her own, and in this also we see in her a bright reflection of our holy Father Francis. Indeed, for both of them, Scripture and the Divine Office formed the very atmosphere in which their souls breathed.

Thus we see the richness of Saint Clare's thought on prayer and the wholesome "method" she left us through her writings. From the sure and concise expression of her writing, may we not conclude that it is the culmination of many years of oral instruction to her daughters, as we read in Celano's *Legenda*? May this thought unite us more firmly and intimately to the heart and mind of Saint Clare, the little plant of Saint Francis, and may it inspire us to turn more frequently to this precious heritage in our search for deeper union with God. Ω

Becoming Empty: The Core of Franciscan Spirituality—II

SISTER SUZANNE THERESE HALFEN, O.S.F.

II. Francis' Experience of Indifference and the "More"

I FIND THAT IT IS DIFFICULT to present a clear understanding of the experience Francis had of indifference and the "More." While his writings and the Sources are replete with evidence of this experience, there is very little written about Francis' consciousness regarding the dynamics of indifference, or even of his actual inner process in choosing indifference. We find in Celano and Bonaventure accounts of his early life and brief references to his conversion process. However, within a year or two of meeting Francis in written history we find him presented as having almost achieved that indifference which most of us struggle for during a lifetime. I think there is a lot of truth to this, in that I believe Francis was uniquely graced for God's own purpose, so that, once he turned to the Holy in his life and tasted a little of the sweetness of God's presence, Francis was driven by a consuming hunger for Him which quickly became the source of all his choices in life. Imitating Jesus, being like Him in all ways, was the consciousness with which Francis related to all aspects of life. I take the liberty of assuming that since Francis was a man immersed in the Word, he most probably experienced much of the process described in the previous section (last month) concerning the action of the Word in bringing us to indifference for the "More."

With this in mind, we can consider the very early life of Francis and recognize some of the elements of the human experience of indifference and the "More."

Sister Suzanne Therese Halfen is a member of the Midwest Province of the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity. This paper was written for a course of study under Father Peter D. Wilcox, O.F.M. Cap., at the Franciscan Institute at St. Bonaventure University, Summer, 1980. The final part of the paper will appear next month.

Early Life.

In Bonaventure's Major Legend we find a description of the young Francis as a man who "lived among worldly people and . . . was brought up like them . . . although always ready to enjoy himself, he never followed the lure of his passions . . . he himself was quite anxious to make money, but he put no trust in his store of riches" (LM I.i.1; *Omnibus*, 635). He is generally described as being gentle, generous, and pleasant. In short, he was very much like the young men of his time, but with a certain sensitivity to the Gospel even then. Bonaventure tells us that "he refused to turn a deaf ear to the Gospel" (Ibid.). Finally, we find that Francis' focus was very much on his life in Assisi and the immediate tasks of human living:

As yet . . . Francis had no idea of God's plan for him. He was completely taken up with the affairs of his father's business and his mind was intent on the things of the earth because of the corruption of human nature, so that he had never learned to raise his mind to heaven, or acquired a taste for the things of God [Ibid., §2; p. 636].

In the mystery of His ways God visits Francis first in a dream concerning a palace full of armor. Already Francis responds in obedience and sets out to fulfill the message of the dream as he understands it. So God speaks to him again and calls for him to let go of his own vision so that he may see the vision of God. In this we find the first act of indifference, in which Francis begins to remove himself from his ways in order to see more clearly the ways of God.

Having once experienced the distance between his way and God's, Francis commits all of his energy to pursuing the will of God. He prepares himself to hear the call of the Holy by going apart and spending time in prayer. Bonaventure presents Francis as already having a consuming thirst for God such that he is ready to become indifferent at once! He describes Francis' experience briefly as follows:

He withdrew from the busy life of his trade and begged God in His goodness to show him what he should do. He prayed constantly until he was consumed with a passionate longing for God and was ready to give up the whole world in his desire for his heavenly home and think nothing of it. He realized that he had discovered the treasure hidden in the field . . . and he could think of nothing but how he might sell all that he had and buy the pearl he had found . . . he was forced to conclude that a spiritual venture could only begin by rejecting the world and that victory over himself would mark the beginning of his service of Christ [Ibid., §4; p. 638].

Very quickly Francis had experienced, in solitude with God, that the longing of his heart would be quieted by leaving everything behind, letting go of all that defined his life until now, in order to follow Jesus.

A second key experience of the invitation of the "More" came when Francis first encountered the leper on the road. This experience was not the radical conversion we find later. Rather, it was a call to forget himself. Bonaventure tells us: "One day as he was riding on the plain below Assisi, he met a leper . . . and Francis felt sick at the sight of him. Then he remembered his resolve to be perfect and the need to overcome himself first. He immediately dismounted and ran up to kiss the poor man" (Ibid., §5).

Very quickly Francis had experienced . . . that the longing of his heart would be quieted by leaving everything behind . . . in order to follow Jesus.

Bonaventure adds that after this act of letting go of himself, Francis experienced deep joy and a gift of praise . . . a taste of the "More." It is important to recognize that at this stage in Francis' journey he is still motivated by his own purpose, his own desire. Later he will meet the leper with a poverty of spirit that changes his perception entirely.

The conversion of Francis seems to have been very intense and over a relatively short period of time. Bonaventure tells us that after Francis met the leper on the road he began to seek seclusion for prayer. This experience is alluded to more than described. But from the effects of this time apart it is apparent that Francis grew profoundly in the indifference he was drawn to and in his experience of the "More":

After that he began to frequent secluded spots where he could mourn for his sins, and there as he poured out his whole soul with groans beyond all utterance, he was eventually found worthy to be heard by God, after long and importunate prayer . . . he became completely absorbed in God in the excess of his fervor. Then Jesus Christ appeared to him, hanging on His cross. . . . "If you have a mind to come my way, renounce yourself, and take up your cross, and follow me." Francis

now developed a spirit of poverty, with a deep sense of humility, and an attitude of profound compassion [Ibid., §6; p. 639].

Francis had entered the cave of his own heart and wrestled with the spirit of the world and the Spirit of God. He saw himself in his utter poverty and sinfulness, so that he "mourned" for his sins. I believe that this time was one of the two critical conversion experiences for Francis. It was in the darkness of his own heart that he saw his true image apart from God. I believe Francis experienced himself as a leper when he saw himself apart from Jesus, and focused on himself. The culmination of this invitation of the "More" came, not only in the privacy of his own prayer experience, but when he publicly embraced the leper in himself while embracing and serving the lepers of Assisi. He could embrace his leprous self and serve the leper in others because he had let go of his own self-image, and, naked before the Lord, had allowed the "More" to penetrate his being so that he was transformed. His perception of self and others was transformed by the presence of the "More" so that he began to see Jesus, the More, in everyone.

Bonaventure tells us that after this Francis served them devotedly and kindly, and "distributed alms among them generously, kissing their hands and lips with deep compassion" (Ibid.).

The second most significant experience of conversion for Francis came when he was faced with choosing his identity. This went beyond a conversion of his self-image to the roots of who he was. The instrument of this conversion was his father, from whom he had always claimed his identity. Bonaventure shows us clearly that Francis experienced the depths of his humanness in grappling with this issue of identity. Francis could not belong radically to Jesus while he was still bound by the duty of obedience and by the affections of his heart to his father. Even though he feared his father, it required time alone with his Lord for Francis to see clearly what was asked of him:

When he heard the threats of those who were looking for him and realized that they were drawing near, Francis hid in a secret cave; he was new to the service of Christ, and he wished to avoid his father's anger. He remained in hiding for a number of days, imploring God continuously in a flood of tears to deliver him from the hands of his persecutors and enable him, in His goodness to fulfill the desires He himself had inspired. Eventually he was filled with overflowing joy and fell to reproaching himself as a coward, lacking in determination. At that, he laid aside his fear and left his hiding place . . . [Ibid., I.ii.2—emphasis added].

Following this experience Francis is then enabled to go willingly

before the Bishop, renounce his relationship with his father, and call himself son of the Father of Jesus. Francis now belongs totally to the triune God: lover of Jesus, Son of the Father, and disponible to the Spirit: "And so the servant of the most high King was left stripped of all that belonged to him, that he might follow the Lord whom he loved, who hung naked on the cross" (Ibid., §4; p. 643).

By this point Bonaventure presets Francis as being "free from the bonds of all earthly desires" (Ibid.) and "firmly established in the lowliness of Christ" (Ibid., §7; p. 644). For the most part the biographers of Francis after this time use the superlative, and speak of him as having achieved the indifference required for the experience of the "More." In fact, Francis continued throughout his life to free himself from his own desires in order that he could know Jesus fully. In the reception of the Stigmata the Saint is totally available and receptive to the "More," who penetrates every part of him, leaving His image clearly on the body of Francis as in his heart.

Indifference and the "More" as Reflected in the Writings of Francis

The experience of becoming indifferent and of making a home for the "More" which permeated Francis' life is clearly reflected in his writings. Volumes could be written on this subject, but with present space limitations in mind, let us consider indifference in relation to four pivotal aspects of our human experience: (1) body/senses, (2) power, (3) image, and (4) will. Before we look at these separate aspects, however, let us recognize in his writings Francis' commitment to indifference on the part of the whole person: "No matter where they are, the friars must always remember that they have given themselves up completely and handed over their whole selves to our Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (RegNB 16; Omnibus, p. 44).

Indifference of the Body/Senses. The writings of Francis and the Sources are overrun with references to Francis' insistence on indifference in relation to the body. I will point out a few examples regarding his favorite subjects: food, clothing, and shelter.



Regarding food, Francis came to indifference primarily through fasting. Fasting was an integral part of Francis' own life, and he exhorted his brothers to fast regularly. Chapter 3 of the First Rule addresses the regulation of fasting specifically: "All the friars without exception must fast from the feast of All Saints until Christmas, and from Epiphany, when our Lord began his fast, until Easter . . ." (Ibid., c. 3; p. 34). In the Second Rule (chapter 3) Francis sets down the same regulations and then encourages those who can, to fast in addition to those times prescribed.

There are anecdotes throughout the Sources regarding Francis' attitude about food—its preparation, simplicity, etc. The classic story reflecting this stance is the well known one about Francis adding ashes to his food. Though there are many other such examples, it is not necessary to belabor the point.

Regarding clothing: again, we find the Sources and the Writings contain many references to Francis' experience and teaching regarding indifference or poverty of spirit. In the First Rule Francis devotes a chapter to describing the clothing that should be given upon admission to the Order, and what should be worn by the professed:

. . . [the professed] may have one habit with a hood, and, if necessary, another without a hood. They may have a cord and trousers. All the friars must wear poor clothes and they can patch them with pieces of sackcloth and other material, with God's blessing. . . . They should avoid expensive clothes in this world in order that they may have something to wear in the kingdom of heaven [Ibid., c. 2; p. 33].

This attitude of Francis is repeated throughout the Sources and in his own writing. Not only was the manner of clothing oneself an act of indifference, it was also intended to reflect the inner life of the friar. In this respect Francis would remove a friar's privilege of wearing the habit if the latter's behavior did not reflect a proper attitude of heart.

Regarding shelter, Francis constantly enjoins the friars to consider no place as their own, and to live in humble surroundings. Again, he speaks not only of the physical act of detaching themselves from any place, but also of the attitude of their hearts when he says that "they should occupy those places only as pilgrims and strangers" (*Test; Omnibus*, p. 68—emphasis added). He sums up his stance regarding poverty in fact and poverty of spirit as follows:

The friars are to appropriate nothing for themselves, neither a house, nor a place, nor anything else. As *strangers and pilgrims* (1 Pet. 2:11) in this world, who serve God in poverty and humility, they should beg

alms trustingly. . . . This should be your portion, because it leads to the land of the living. 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 [RegB 6; *Omnibus*, p. 61].

Indifference Regarding Power. We find Francis' stance in regard to power most clearly expressed when he speaks about money and position. Regarding money, Francis repeatedly and vehemently exhorted his brothers never to accept money in any form for any purpose. In the First Rule, e.g., we read:

. . . all the friars, no matter where they are, or where they go, are forbidden to take or accept money in any way, or under any form, or have it accepted for them. . . . We have left everything we had behind us; we must be careful now not to lose the kingdom of heaven for so little [RegNB 8; *Omnibus*, p. 38].

Similarly, ownership of property is strictly forbidden throughout his writings. The friars are not to acquire anything which would give them power or which would not be readily given to anyone in need: "No matter where they are, in hermitages or elsewhere, the friars must be careful not to claim the ownership of any place, or try to hold it against someone else. Everyone who comes to them, friend or foe, rogue or robber, must be made welcome" (Ibid., c. 7; p. 38).

Regarding position and authority, Francis always taught that no friar should seek positions within the community, and whoever did hold one ought readily to give it up when asked to do so (Adm 4; *Omnibus*, p. 80). When the friars are in authority they must act as servants of all the brothers (RegNB 5; *Omnibus*, p. 36). The First Rule extends this admonition against accepting positions of status or authority to all areas of ministry as well (Ibid., c. 7; p. 37).

Indifference Regarding Status/Image. Francis calls his brothers to true humility and poverty of spirit in both Rules, and most clearly in the Admonitions. He speaks of the importance of patience when those around them do not cooperate (Adm 13) as a sign of true humility. He admonishes his brothers that a true humility and poverty of spirit reflects itself when we are threatened and feel we are losing something of our self-image (Adm 14). Finally, Francis touches the heart of humility when he speaks about the attitude of a friar towards the gifts he is given by God, and those given his brothers. He says we are especially not to appropriate the goodness in us, since all goodness comes from God:

Blessed the religious who takes no more pride in the good that God says and does through him, than in that which He says and does through someone else . . . [Adm 17; p. 84].

. . . and so when a man envies his brother the good God says or does through him, it is like committing a sin of blasphemy, because he is really envying God, who is the only source of every good [Adm 8; p. 81].

Indifference Regarding Will. All of Francis' life was a journey in which he grew daily in the practice of setting aside his own will in order that the will of the Father might be made manifest in him. It is clear that obedience is of central and sacred importance for Francis. It is in obedience that we become indifferent to our own will—we let go of our own way—to act on the will of another. Father Wayne Hellmann describes the importance of obedience in the life of the friars and its intimate connection with poverty: "St. Francis establishes the priority that in obedience one must first rid himself of any and all possessions. In Francis' mind there can be no obedience without poverty. In fact, poverty is fulfilled and completed in obedience" (Hellmann, 340).

Obedience, he continues, is the "active poverty of stripping oneself of possessions. Francis reminds the friars 'that they have renounced their own wills for God's sake' " (RegB 10; Omnibus, p. 63). This indifference of the will is most potently expressed in Admonition 3: "A man takes leave of all that he possesses and loses both his body and his life when he gives himself up completely to obedience in the hands of his superior" (Omnibus, p. 79).

There are numerous references to the priority of obedience as a means of stripping ourselves from our own wills. It seems this is the most difficult area of indifference, as well as the way in which the "More" opens us most profoundly for the divine Presence. Francis constantly refers to the self-emptying of Jesus and to His obedience to the Father as his model in living a life of poverty. I believe it is in the context of the Incarnation (Phil. 2) and the Cross of Jesus that we come to the deepest and clearest understanding of the meaning of obedience as we seek to die to our own will for the sake of the will of the Father.

Finally, let us turn to the Praises of the Virtues, which were written after Francis' most profound experience of the "More" in which he received the Stigmata of Jesus. The Praises offer a summary of all those aspects of the human condition which must be "shamed," or from which we must distance ourselves, if we are to give glory to God

with our lives. As we become indifferent regarding these aspects of ourselves—natural wisdom, greed, avarice, anxiety, pride, etc.—we begin to experience the "More" in their opposites: Holy Simplicity, Holy Wisdom, Holy Poverty, Holy Humility, Holy Love, Holy Obedience (SalVirt; Omnibus, p. 125). Through growth in this becoming indifferent, we allow within ourselves that which Francis exhorts us to seek above all else: "We should make a dwelling-place within ourselves where He can stay, He who is the Lord God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" (RegNB 22; Omnibus, p. 49). And, finally,

We should wish for nothing else and have no other desire; we should find no pleasure or delight in anything except in our Creator, Redeemer, and Savior. . . . 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. . . . [Ibid., c. 23; p. 52—emphasis added].

This has been a very cursory presentation of the experience of indifference and the "More" in the life of Francis and those who follow him. We can at least, however, begin to understand how Rahner's understanding of indifference and the "More," and Metz's understanding of poverty of spirit can cast light on the heart of our Franciscan life. These realities, properly understood, are at the core of the Franciscan spiritual life, and as such have implications for spiritual direction. In the final section of this paper, to be published next month, we will briefly consider a few of these implications. Ω

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For Saint Francis of Assisi

Circe my cat is sick,
Can only sneeze,
Dream of a kill at dawn,
Croak, make her teeth click-click
At the starlings she sees
Picking seeds off the lawn.
Before Saint Francis taught
These birds Gospel,
They didn't sing at all.
Now, blessed with seed, or caught,
At least they can grackle;
Though a cardinal's call,
Finch's or song sparrow's
Is far sweeter.
Still, Circe's mauled them too.
So all Creation goes—
Scales, bare flesh, feathers, fur.
And I can only do
As Saint Francis, who prayed
Hard and hopeful
That his life showed the Word
Of God's love and was made
Flesh to be eternal.
His sermons made the birds

Sing; so I grackle praise,
Never secure
Or safe from death. I need
More than my animal ways
To live long in nature.
I must make myself feed
On God's bleeding body:
Image I want to love
In each human being,
Creation and in me.
Francis is patron of
Animals, yet seeing
How much he craves
That love Incarnate save
And make Creation new
Helps all mortality
To taste and see
Nature in eternity—
And Circe will get better too.

Charles Cantalupo

MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Francis and the Leper: Our Conversion to Justice

SISTER MARGARET CARNEY, O.S.F.

AS FRANCISCANS ENGAGE IN THE Church's call to internalize the message of liberation and justice for all people that flows from the Gospel, the image that most often surfaces in our conversation is that of Francis' encounter with the leper. We have, in fact, invested the word *leper* with a renewed power to evoke those persons and situations that most often figure in ministry to the poor and oppressed.

It seems, however, that we are in danger of limiting the power of the metaphor. It is easy enough to recall the story of Francis on the plain below Assisi—first startled, then conscience-stricken, then converted to love—when we are describing our need to engage in service to the outcast. Let us be clear: this power is well used if it helps us to strengthen our resolve to be about such direct service whether individually or corporately. Let us also be realistic: we need to acknowledge the fact that many members of our communities will not necessarily have the opportunity to mirror the metaphor in such concrete ways.

Whatever paths our corporate wisdom forges in the near or far future, many of us will be engaged in ministries that are not direct service to the economically poor. A variety of reasons account for this: prior professional training, institutional commitments, advanced age, limits of physical and emotional health, the existence of a clear call to some other aspect of the Church's mission. It would be a terrible pity if such members of Franciscan communities wasted time in unhealthy guilt or self-pity, feeling somehow less Franciscan or less responsible for the over-all mission to the poor.

Sister Margaret Carney, O.S.F., is a Consulting Editor of this Review. This conference continues the series in commemoration of the Eighth Centennial of our holy Father's birth.

It would be equally sad if we failed to re-read the account of Francis' meeting with the leper in order to discover there a crucial element that we can easily overlook. Remember that what Francis describes as the quality of that act of love was the transformation of his inner bitterness towards the very presence of lepers in his society to an overflowing sweetness. The call to conversion to justice for the sake of peace is part of the call to every one of us, regardless of the circumstances of our ministry. If it is difficult to learn through careful examination of conscience where is that bitterness in ourselves that cries out to become sweetness under the guidance of the Spirit, about this, at least, there should be no mistake: the journey towards justice takes each person who makes it through desert lands of bitter and arid inner and outer trials. For instance. . . .



- ✓ Am I called to break with the middle class patterns of consumption to which I have become accustomed? In my eating habits? wearing apparel? travel and leisure pursuits?
 - ✓ Am I called to deal with political issues intelligently and actively? How much time do I devote to becoming informed? To voting with real discretion? To communicating with elected officials?
 - ✓ Am I called to contribute service to organizations working for justice? Am I willing to commit myself to the asceticism of membership on boards, committees, task forces?
 - ✓ Am I called to give real, not just verbal, support to members of my community involved in direct ministry to the poor? Do I feel "left behind" with corporate burdens because of the options others have exercised? Does this resentment cause me to judge motives and outcomes harshly? Are these feelings the bitterness that needs redemption in me?
 - ✓ What about my witness to justice in my own place of work? Among students? Friends and family members?
- The list only begins here.

Let us not excuse ourselves from naming the bitterness of the unconverted comfort, affluence, apathy in our hearts that keep us from becoming the fragrant work of Christ's Gospel.

Francis began with the leper. His ministry did not endure in that form. But he never forgot the impact of those early days of service and longed to return to this ministry even as he neared death (LM XIV.1). Let us not, then, be rigid in our definition of what constitutes the Order's ministry for justice, lest we run the risk of exempting ourselves if our daily task is not a one-to-one ministry to the visibly marginalized person. Let us not excuse ourselves from naming the bitterness of the unconverted comfort, affluence, apathy in our hearts that keep us from becoming the fragrant work of Christ's Gospel that we are to be for others (EpFid II.2-3).

Let us be patient as we find ourselves suffering through the cycle of Francis' journey—at first, startled, then conscience-stricken, and, at last, converted to love. Ω

Perfect Joy and the Presence of God

SISTER FRANCES ANN THOM, O.S.F.

ONE OF THE PRIME factors in perfect joy is the conscious awareness of the presence of God in one's life, in the lives of others, and at all moments in time. While it is true that one cannot ever escape the presence of God, it is not true that one cannot close God off from one's relationship. There seem to be three elements involved in the closing off of this relationship with God. The one we are most aware of is the extreme or deliberate offense against God which we call sin; next is the fact of ignorance of Who God really is and the fact that there should be a personal relationship with Him; and last is the most common, but the hardest to combat—carelessness or inattentiveness in one's relationship.

Today's world feeds the mind with so much tension regarding prestige, equal rights, inflation, insecurity, etc., that the Franciscan concept of perfect joy which is also the old-fashioned Christian concept of turning one's cheek, is a most unpalatable element; in fact, in some quarters, it is totally foreign. The preoccupation with "how to survive" materially in this life creates an atmosphere of carelessness about the next life and allows little time for real attention to the presence of God.

A working definition for perfect joy might be as follows. Perfect joy is an interior love for God which extends itself to others while being fed by the Holy Spirit and does not permit the individual who possesses it to accept anything as an injury or an insult but persuades the individual always to live within the embrace of the Father while keeping one's mind and heart on the crucified Spouse.

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That sounds like a tall order! We know, however, that many holy persons have done just that and that among these are Francis and Clare. It is because of the effort to live with, in, and for the Trinity that both of these saints were able to experience perfect joy—not the kind of joy which produces the ever-present smile on one's face (can one actually picture Francis smiling as the mice crawled over him and stole his food, or Clare, with a grin, as the Sister accidentally kicked her in the mouth?), but the kind of spiritual joy which cannot be seen nor stolen. The kind of joy which is able to wish well to all and lends a helpful hand to those in need.

Christ's recognition led to his crucifixion. . . . Those who are called to profess Him overtly to a hostile world will not suffer less than He.

Perfect joy contains within it true interior peace which enables one to enter into the daily combat with full knowledge of sure victory. It is the only possession of a Franciscan, and it grows greater by frequent use.

Is it possible to become proud of the fact that one can and does exercise the "use" of perfect joy? Everything is possible. The real test of the validity of its use would be the results: a kinder disposition and a more merciful approach to others.

How is it possible to develop one's ability to make "use" of perfect joy, since such incidents do not occur frequently and would most often occur spontaneously? Many persons cannot be "on the spot" adherents to perfect joy.

Here, let us take heart by realizing that neither Francis nor Clare was an immediate client of perfect joy and its value in their lives. A perusal of the Gospels will show us instances in the life of Christ upon which to meditate, and there should also be a study of the lives of Francis and Clare. The fruit of such meditation and study should be an awareness of step number one: the effort to cultivate an awareness of God's presence in one's life. It is only by a conscious development of that awareness that one can ever learn the total sacrifice entailed in the pursuit of perfect joy.

If we look more closely at the writings of Francis and Clare we are constantly being confronted with God, His Presence, the presence of Mary and of the saints and angels. These were the really real in their lives. It is by a continuous communication with the heavenly personages that one's mind and heart become more sensitive to one's real role in life. Through this sensitivity one begins to understand one's own foibles and those of others better, and also to find it easier to excuse others' lack of sensitivity—as in the case of a perfect joy experience.

Let us look seriously at the instances of the awareness of God's presence in the lives of Francis and Clare. In the very beginning of Francis' conversion, even before he realized what was happening to him, a reference is made to a sensible feeling which "filled [him] with such divine sweetness, as he himself said, that he became speechless and was totally unable to move from the place" (*Omnibus*, p. 367).

By using these sensible consolations, God was drawing Francis to Himself—allowing him to see the emptiness and the vanity of the world as opposed to the beauty and simplicity of those natural things which God had created. This was yet an early stage in Francis' awareness of God's presence. As the saint faithfully responded to each new grace, God changed the presence which he experienced so that it would not be just the consolation needed by a weak youth, but the strong support of a mature man who would suffer much for daring to live the Gospel.

Less and less Francis depended upon these sensible manifestations of God's presence as he grew to know and understand Who it was Who visited him. Often, we are told, he was caught up in a rapture or ecstasy and was given the gift of knowing the "secrets of the hearts of others" (*Omnibus*, p. 270). The extraordinary appearance of the Infant Jesus to him is well known; yet this was but a side-effect, as it were, of his complete and continuous practice of the presence of God. He would at times draw up his hood and place his hands within his sleeves as if to be alone with his heavenly Visitor.



Clare, too, must have found the close living at San Damiano rather difficult when she felt the Spirit of the Lord come upon her. Somehow she was able to grow beyond the exterior of things and allow the Lord to take over, such as the time when she was not aware that an entire day had passed. Another instance of the Lord's care for her occurred when the others had gone to the oratory for Matins on the Feast of the Nativity and she was left alone in her illness:

... she began to think on the little Jesus and grieve sorely that she could not be present at His Praises, she said with a sigh: 'Lord, God, behold I am left alone with Thee in this place.' And lo! suddenly the wondrous music that was being sung in the Church of San Francesco began to resound in her ears; she heard the glad voices of the friars at their psalms, she listened to the harmonies of the singers; and even perceived the sound of the organ. Yet the place was by no means so near that she could have heard all this in a purely human manner [*Legend and Writings*, p. 39].

In essence, Clare and Francis, being counterparts of the same ideal, filled up what was lacking of love within the mystical body of the thirteenth century. In each period of time, it seems, God raises up certain persons from among the many thousands He has called, for special recognition, for a definite work, and for the edification of the faithful. This can be and often is a dangerous, though a privileged position. History testifies to the fact that even during Francis' day there were others who began, as he did, living Gospel poverty and simplicity, but, succumbing to the adulation of others, eventually fell away from Christ's precepts.

What of the rest of the thousands who have been called? In particular, what of those who have remained faithful to their unassuming vocations? They should, indeed, thank the Lord for the grace of anonymity and, further, pray intensely for those whose lives must be manifested to the world. Let us remember that Christ's recognition led to His crucifixion. Surely those who are called to profess Him overtly to a hostile world will not suffer less than He! Perfect joy finds its dwelling with such souls. Ω

Book Reviews

Saint Francis of Assisi. By Dennis Stock (photographs) and Lawrence Cunningham (text). San Francisco and New York: Harper and Row, 1981. Pp. 128, including Chronology and Color Plate Captions. Cloth, \$20.95.

Reviewed by Brother Bill Barrett, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province who lives and works at Saint Francis Inn, a soup kitchen and house of hospitality in Philadelphia.

The 800th anniversary of Francis' birth has awakened, reawakened, and enlivened interest in him in all quarters. From new scholarly researches to dramatic scripts, the various new publications of the year continue to reflect the influences of Assisi on each generation. But not every effort deserves our unabated applause; Francis is such a complex person that he is as likely to be misunderstood as to be appreciated.

There is no doubt that both collaborating authors of *Saint Francis of Assisi*, Dennis Stock and Lawrence Cunningham, hold Francis in the highest regard. The intensity of their esteem is genuine, but the accuracy of their portrait could use a few minor adjustments.

It is interesting that the book seems designed to a large extent as a vehicle

for the color photographs of Dennis Stock, interesting especially in that his are a minority (19 of a total 50) of the color photographs beautifully reproduced in the book. A member of the French photographers' collective Magnum, Dennis Stock is perfectly capable of sustaining a book like this. His romantic interpretations of Francis' world through contemporary photographs are able to hold their own alongside reproductions of important frescos and artworks on Francis, Clare, and their story. But Stock fared better in his fine illustrations for the original hard cover edition of Mario von Galli's *Living Our Future: Francis of Assisi and the Church Tomorrow* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), and was as evocative of the romantic side of Franciscan spirituality in his beautiful *Brother Sun: A Photographic Appreciation* (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1975).

The four groups of photographs, which surround the three essays of the book, are well enough edited, but do not have the impact they promise. The power of Francis' life, which the medieval reproductions try to evoke, is so understated that it is lacking in the visual portion of the book. Nor are these reproductions entirely ac-

curate in their captions. For example, the famous fresco in the lower church of San Francesco in Assisi (p. 21) is attributed to Cimabue, but the wood panel painting in the Portiuncula (p. 20) is of highly uncertain attribution and is perhaps a copy of the fresco by a student of Cimabue; in the present volume both are attributed to Cimabue. The reader needs to bring some background to the reading of this medieval artwork, for there is little help provided to appreciate the tremendous significance of these works. Not many of the works are unfamiliar, though there are some real gems, such as an anonymous fourteenth-century fresco of "Francis with the Wolf of Gubbio" from Pienza (p. 45).

Stock's photographs, intended more as evocative than illustrative, can simply be savored. It is nonetheless unfortunate that the last photograph in the book, which also serves as its cover picture, entitled "A Franciscan monk [sic] in meditation in the hills of Assisi in springtime," seems to steer Francis back to the birdbath from which he has been emerging in recent years. (The confused reference to monasticism comes as no great surprise since the only other contemporary photograph in the book of a person in a religious habit precedes this one by three pages. Titled "A priest in Assisi," it shows a Benedictine monk!)

Lawrence Cunningham has also published testimony to his affection for Francis before, perhaps most notably in his 1972 anthology, *Brother Francis*. In this latest book, he offers his own translations of the Canticle of Brother Sun, the Rule of 1221, and the Testament of Saint

Francis as well as essays on his life, "Lady Poverty and Mother Earth" and "The Franciscan Revival."

Cunningham's versions of the three documents seem to suffer from a parallel to what has been called Francis' "bad Latin." They can be accused of bad English. There is no real reason for mixing usage of "thee" and "you" for the second person singular familiar, as Cunningham does in the Canticle (p. 11). (An archaic usage in a contemporary translation is a curious device in itself, but inexcusable when done incorrectly.) Similarly, "brethern" [sic] used alongside "brothers" in the same paragraph of the Rule of 1221 (p. 13) is entirely out of place. But still more unfortunate is the rendition of a verse of the Testament on p. 14. When the Lord gave Francis brothers, according to Cunningham, "Nobody told [him] how to treat them"; this has a quite different ring from "There was no one to tell me what I should do." (The Latin reads: "Et postquam Dominus dedit mihi de fratribus, nemo ostendebat mihi, quid deberem facere. . .") "We remained with alacrity in the churches," as Cunningham puts it, does not much improve on "We were only too glad to find shelter in abandoned churches" ("Satis libenter manebamus in ecclesiis"). But perhaps most significant is Cunningham's translation of the Latin "cingulum" as "belt" instead of "cord" in Francis' description of the brothers' clothing. The Legend of the Three Companions, the *Expositio super Regulam* attributed to Saint Bonaventure, and other thirteenth-century sources make it specifically clear that unlike everyone else, the friars did not wear belts, which

customarily held both money purse and a knife or sword; the knotted cord was an unmistakable sign that the Franciscans were unarmed and poor.

The biographical essay that really opens the written portion of the book has several notable insights, despite some minor inaccuracies. Cunningham will not allow a Francis "meant to nestle innocuously among the backyard rosebushes near the birdbath" (p. 25). He correctly insists that Francis' "life was not charming; it was prophetic" (p. 39). It is good that he mentions the ivory horn Francis received from the Sultan Melek-el-Kamel, now one of the most valuable relics of the Saint preserved at San Francesco in Assisi. That Francis, who renounced every possession, kept this carved horn with him until he died shows how much he cherished this reminder of his contact with Islam. The thorough treatment Cunningham gives Francis' 1223 Christmas celebration at Greccio is emphasized by his very insightful description of the Cantic of Brother Sun: "A highly complex work that echoes the canticles of the Bible, Francis' own profound sense of God in the world, and his deeply felt conviction that the world, in its own manifold beauty and variety, is itself a hymn of praise to God" (p. 36).

It is not very critical that Cunningham mistakenly reports that when Francis received Clare, he immediately established her at San Damiano (p. 30); the Chronology at the book's end correctly notes (p. 117) that she first lived with some Benedictine nuns. Nor is it of major importance that he reports Francis as dying at the Bishop's palace in Assisi

(p. 38), since the Chronology, p. 123, corrects this error, telling us that the dying Francis asked to be taken to the Portiuncula and did die outside Assisi's walls.

This leads to two interesting questions: Who wrote the epilogue Chronology, and who took its photographs? If the text of this section corrects several (albeit somewhat technical) flaws of the book's opening essay, its dozen black and white photographs are reproduced too small and too poorly to stand in comparison to Dennis Stock's work of quality. For those interested in the flavor of the life of Francis, the brief essay by Cunningham will suffice. The Chronology can serve as a corrective to his occasional lapses of fact.

But do not too quickly conclude that this book is fatally flawed. It is not. The prophetic Francis has many sides, and the second and third essays of this book offer some good insights into them. This is where Cunningham is at his best, and that is very good. A substantial essay on voluntary Gospel poverty goes to the heart of Francis's life, "the basic desire to live completely under the aegis of God's care and providence" (p. 58). Cunningham explores the way Francis' poverty influenced his view of the world as total gift of God—and how that view burst into song in the Cantic. Indeed, he realizes that it is only alongside the Praises of God, written at La Verna, that the theological depth of the Cantic can be experienced: "We learn from creation and Christ" (p. 80).

Cunningham fully realizes that Francis was a "God-haunted man," whose meek side cannot be known

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- Weiss, Gerald, *On Becoming Married: The Art of a Loving Marriage*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1982. Pp. x-96. Paper, \$2.95.



"without getting the suffering one," for both are qualities of the Christ. "To put it another way: saints like Francis are a reproach (in the deepest biblical sense of that term) to those who would live as Christians without seriousness" (p. 73). That should be repeated again and again for Franciscans.

In his final essay on the revival of Franciscanism since the nineteenth century, Cunningham points out the Franciscan influence on Jesuit theology in later years. Oddly, he mentions Bonaventure and William

of Ockham, but forgets Duns Scotus. It is appropriate that he quotes Gerard Manley Hopkins' "God's Grandeur" as a "premier example of the Franciscan notion of God's detectable presence in the world of creation" (p. 100), but it is unfortunate that the poem is marred by a typographical error in line 11 ("through" for "though"). A similar mishap calls Raphael Brown's 1967 bibliography of the Saint "a biography."

Unfortunately, this final essay is just a bit unfocused, and it wanders

from an overly brief discussion of Paul Sabatier's biography of Francis to the fictionalized (which is not to imply untrue) views of Herman Hesse, Nikos Kazantzakis, and Ignazio Silone, before it settles into some considerations of where Franciscanism flourishes today. Although he gives full due to the official branches of the three Orders that exist in the Roman Catholic Church today, Cunningham also applauds the charism of Anglican Franciscan men and women and asserts the Franciscanism of the Catholic Worker Movement "with their strong tradition of pacifism, their identification with the poor, and their simple insistence on Gospel values" (p. 108). His testimony for the vitality of the Franciscan spirit is strong.

Saint Francis of Assisi is an easy book to explore. It is a very beautiful book, an expression of love for its namesake. Sometimes that is enough.

God Is a Sea: The Dynamics of Christian Living. By David Walker. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1981. Pp. 144, Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., a counselor in the Counseling and Career Development Center of St. Bonaventure University.

David Walker, a priest of the Archdiocese of Sydney in Australia, has written a series of beautiful reflections on various images of God, images suggested by different spiritual writers of the Christian tradition. His reflections, taken as a whole, express what he calls in the subtitle of his

work, "the dynamics of Christian living." In each of twenty-one chapters, the author begins with a spiritual writer's image of God and then goes on to develop that image in a practical way for the spiritual direction of the reader.

In the presentation of these images of God, the author draws from the writings of fifteen spiritual writers. Ten of these writers Father Walker quotes but once: John Donne, Johannes Eckhart, Walter Hilton, Jean-Pierre de Caussade, Denis the Areopagite, Hannah Hurnard, Julian of Norwich, Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Jacob Riis, and Henri de Tourville. Of the remaining five spiritual writers, John of Ruysbroeck and St. John of the Cross are each drawn from twice; St. Teresa of Avila is cited three times; John Cassian has five of his images used. The most often quoted writer is Evelyn Underhill, an Anglican spiritual writer who died in 1941; nine of her images are used.

The title of the book is derived from a quotation from John of Ruysbroeck, a fourteenth-century Flemish mystic: "God is a sea that ebbs and flows. . . ." Father Walker's development of this image is cap-sulized in his statements that "this ebbing and flowing is the very nature of Christian existence . . . [and] just as it is the nature of the tide to flow in and to draw out again, so it is the nature of the Father not only to reach out in love but also to draw all things to himself" (p. 15).

Throughout his book, the author repeats his theme that the spiritual life is basically a combination of the Father's action and the soul's response to the Father's love. The

three main divisions of the book are "The Christian Life," "How to Proceed," and "Prayer." In the first part, the author uses ten images to explain the life of the spirit. The second part, eleven chapters, presents a practical application of the principles of spiritual life to the individual soul, that is, the soul's response to God's action. The soul is not passive to the Father's action upon it, but strives to become aware of itself and of its possibilities in opening itself to the Father's love. The last ten chapters, on Prayer, present images emphasizing the soul's need to be prayerful lest the Christian life be confused with Christian practice: "Christian behavior without interior prayer can lead to a style of religious living that is divorced from the heart, a religion that focuses solely on morality" (p. 100). The author concludes that "life itself is communion with the Father and life itself is service of the Father" (p. 137).

God Is a Sea is a splendid little book for anyone striving to understand the need of a spiritual foundation for the living of a Christian life. Using as stepping stones images presented by diverse spiritual writers from John Cassian of the Fifth Century to Evelyn Underhill of the Twentieth Century, the author takes the reader on a spiritual journey into the dynamics of the spiritual life. This reviewer believes that anyone interested in the Christian tradition of the spiritual life will gain much from this book for the nourishment of the soul.

Experiencing Jesus: Scripture, the Witness of Saints and Mystics,

and a **Life of Prayer Show the Way.** By John Wijngaards, M.H.M. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1981. Pp. 176. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Francis de Ruijter, O.F.M., M.A. (Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University), team member of the Burning Bush Prayer and Renewal Center, which has biblical, charismatic, and Franciscan spirituality thrusts, located at Lennoxville, Québec.

Every Christian—or simply every sincere believer—can and should experience a tangible awareness of God in his life. Prayerfully reflecting on God's word shows this. It is also discernible in the lives of outstanding saints and believers. "Believing in Christ means a living encounter with him, a discovery of the Holy Spirit in one's life, a growth in personal love for the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity" (p. 63). Just as a pregnant woman feels new life stirring within her, so we too should be aware of the divine life moving in us (p. 64). But instead of a living, personal encounter with Jesus, our faith may have gotten locked up by tradition, routine, and culture (p. 63). We then need a change in our life, a conversion, a turning-about of our heart to God. The ways to realize this are lovingly reflecting on Scripture and prayer, especially silent prayer.

The main body of this book shows how this was concretized in the lives of Jesus himself, Symeon of Constantinople, Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales, Thérèse of Lisieux, Charles de Foucauld, Mahatma Gandhi, and Simone Weil. What they did we are all called to do and

we can do it.

Let us, in this Franciscan spirituality review, examine one chapter in detail; we opt, of course, for Francis of Assisi. On the feast of the Apostle Matthias, February 24, 1208, the reading of Mt. 10 brought about a turning point in the life of Francis of Assisi. After hearing this Good News, Francis exclaimed: "This is what I desire with all my heart" (1Cel 22). It was a decisive moment for him. Francis took Jesus' words literally (p. 89), and the Good News transformed his life. Ever afterwards, Jesus poor and humble permeated his thinking and guided his decision-making (p. 160). Sacred Scripture played an important role throughout his life. As Francis said in an autobiographical text, "The Most High himself revealed to me to live according to the Holy Gospel" (Test 14). Many of Francis' "revelations" resulted from a prayerful listening to the word of God (p. 88). With his first two followers, at St. Nicholas Church, he opened the Gospel three times to know God's will (L3S 27; 2Cel 15). In these words he experienced Jesus talking to him and his brothers directly (p. 87). He was not only a hearer but also a doer of the word (Jn. 1:23, RSV—pp. 89-92): he and his friars pledged to observe the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ (RegB 1.1; 12.4).

The author deals with the other testimonies in a similar fashion. Some persons have indeed experienced Christ, and this vital, dynamic way of living Christ is open to all of us. To the Apostles Jesus said: "I will make you . . . into fishers of men" (Mt. 1:17, JB). To each one of us he repeats: "I will

make you . . . into a truly spiritual person" (p. 106). This is possible through internalizing God's word and through prayer. What the author of this book did not say, yet is true, is that reading this book can be an experience of God. And therefore I recommend it. Although the book never mentions the charismatic renewal or prayer groups, it can be particularly beneficial for such Christians.

Franciscan Note. I believe both I and this publication owe it to ourselves to add a note. Even a casual reader will notice the two omissions with regard to Francis of Assisi. Francis appears as the only ahistorical person—i.e., without any biographical account whatever. In addition, he is the only one whose own words or writings are not cited, but who must be content with "stories" about himself. And these stories were compiled respectively 92 and 164 years after his death (SP in 1318, and Fior in 1390), dating not from the 13th Century, as the author affirms (p. 84), but from the 14th. Even Bonaventure's LM (1263) can and should be traced back to Thomas of Celano, whom he often copies. We admit, with the author, that the facts described are historical and reliable; but Wijngaards finds it difficult to undo them from their "fanciful medieval elaborations" (p. 84). Why such a label for Francis? The author did not relegate Symeon to the "Dark Ages" or banish Thérèse of Lisieux to the "degenerating 19th century"—which would have been just as unfair. And Masseo is four times misspelled as "Maffeo" (p. 85).

To Wijngaards conclusion: "If we examine Francis' life in the way I

have done above . . . ?" (p. 91), I add: it can be done much better. A commendation for the book, and a recommendation for rewriting the chapter on Francis of Assisi.

Following Christ in a Consumer Society: The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance. By John Francis Kavanaugh. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1981. Pp. xx-167. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Raphael D. Bonanno, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province who spent 16 years in Brazil, four months in Jerusalem, and now is Commissary of The Holy Land in Washington, D.C., and editor of the Holy Land magazine.

This book is thought-provoking. Kavanaugh follows his title and subtitle very closely. He penetrates deeply into the problem of the relation between Gospel and life, Gospel and culture, and Gospel and American consumerism. It is a heady trip, but he seems right on the mark.

He divides his subject into two parts: the Commodity Form and the Personal Form. The first concentrates on things and objects; the second on persons, humanness, knowing and loving, freedom. His better chapters in Part One on the Commodity Form are on Idolatry, Culture as Human and Inhuman (or American Culture as Graced and Disgraced), the Body as Commodity (or Sexual Mechanics), Human Interaction Commodified (or Violence). In Part Two on the Personal Form, the author starts with a Christian philosophical anthropology, re-reads the life of Christ, then sets up Christ

over against the idols of capitalism and concludes this section with concrete Christian practice in community, prayer, the sacraments, marriage and celibacy, and the vowed life. Chapter Twelve, the conclusion of the book, is on Revolutionary Holiness. Kavanaugh makes the point of how counter-cultural our living of the Gospel really can be. He shows disturbingly how our "world" can even enter the cloister and unconsciously distort our Christian values.

Reading along in this book I felt a reminiscence of Martin Buber's *I and Thou*: the emphasis on persons over against "thingified thinking." Finally on pp. 66-67 Kavanaugh quotes Buber. Then in the Bibliographical Appendix, when he cites important seminal works from the various religious traditions influencing the Personal Form, he writes: "In the Jewish Tradition, one book which cannot fail to mention as having enriched my own life is Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (Scribners 1958)."

Kavanaugh's comments on the commodified gospel focus on even our own language when we talk about salvation: i.e., "earning salvation, winning salvation, proving that we are good," etc. It is amazing to realize how consumeristic our treatment of "holy things" has become. We fall into thing-knowledge, thing-willing, and thing-behavior without being aware of it.

What then are the foundations of the Personal Form? It is God himself "who is radically personal and communal in knowledge, love and freedom . . . God is within and beyond us, calling us to ourselves.

but only on the condition of freely centered covenantal life. God is consequently Absolute Being—or better, Absolute Personhood—in whom we partake by the exercise of our personhood, to whom we are beckoned by the exigencies of our being human" (p. 94). From God Kavanaugh moves to Christ and demonstrates how the Lord not only unveils God to man but also reveals man to man. "The Incarnation, as well as the entire life of Christ, is a testimony received in faith that we are redeemed by a God-made-vulnerable in loving creation, and that we are fulfilled only in our irreplaceably unique self-donation. 'Man only is Karl Rahner has said, 'when he gives himself away' " (p. 94).

On p. 96 Kavanaugh has an excellent resume of the radical differences between the Commodity Form and the Personal Form. One section centers on thing-behavior and person-behavior. The first is characterized by violence in the following modes: domination, manipulation, retaliation, punishment, defense, devaluation of life, demand, competition, and retention. The second is characterized by peace in the following modes: acceptance of weakness, respect of freedom, forgiveness, healing, defenselessness, exaltation of the least person, invitation, sharing, and giving. The Person-Reality emphasizes Being over Having and What we can be over What is.

When Kavanaugh discusses the Church, he says: "The Personal Form is not reducible to the Christian Churches and the Christian Churches are not exempt from the Commodity

Form." This is another way of saying we of the Church do not have a monopoly on salvation nor can we deny the fact that the "World" is very much with us.

Kavanaugh's critique ends with a specific program for Christian practice involving sacraments, vows, prayer, and community. In each area he points out the possibilities of growth in human personhood up to the fullness of maturity in Christ Jesus our Lord. He issues a call to radicality in the name of the Gospel. "In a culture which portrays life-commitment as impossible and undesirable, which inhibits the flowering of true intimacy, which deems a suffering love and sacrifice to be negative values, men and women who enter into a personal covenant by mature and free consent are taking a radical stance" (p. 132). It sounds like the Gospel and like Vatican II: "You are in the world but not of the world."

Frankly, I found this book very comforting, in the sense that after being outside the United States for almost twenty years, I have come to question many so-called American values. When we Americans go on mission either to the Third World or to the Old World, how much of what we transmit is American culture, and how much is pure Gospel? This book asks the same questions, not only for missionaries but also for Christians within our milieu. Except for some repetitiousness in the early chapters, there is little else on which I would fault this book. In fact, I would recommend it to all who have ever questioned whether being a super-power politically and economically affects us Americans spiritually.

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Course No.	Title	Credit	Days	Instructor
500	Bibliography	1	MWF	Sr. Mary McCarrick, O.S.F.
502	Sources for the Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	Fr. Wayne Hellmann, O.F.M. Conv.
504	Life of St. Francis (Pre-req. 502)	3	M-F	Fr. Conrad Harkins, O.F.M.
506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F	Fr. Lawrence Landini, O.F.M.
508	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	Fr. Joachim Giermek, O.F.M. Conv.
531	Women and the Franciscan Ideal	2	MWTHF	Sr. Mary McCarrick, O.S.F.
520	Spirituality and Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	2	MTWTF	Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap.
509	History of Franciscan Spirituality	3	M-F	Fr. Cyprian Lynch, O.F.M.
552	The Franciscan Contribution to Justice and Peace	2	MWTHF	Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M.
562	Dynamic Growth in Franciscan Community	2	MWF	Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M.
563	Theological Principles and Techniques of Spiritual Direction	2	MTTHF	Fr. Joseph Doyno, O.F.M.
660	Seminar—Franciscan Life: The Modern Challenge	2	MTTHF	Fr. Constantine Koser, & O.F.M.
511	Medieval Latin: Franciscan Texts	2	By arrangement	
571	Practicum in Spiritual Direction	1	Staff	
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