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MARCH, 1983

# The CORD

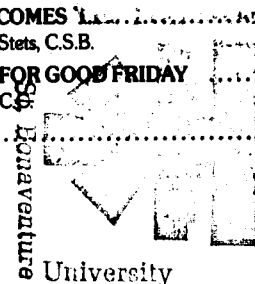
## A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

### ARTICLES

- SERMON ON THE ANNUNCIATION ..... 66  
Saint Anthony of Padua
- BIBLE INTERPRETATION BY FRANCIS  
AND HIS FOLLOWERS ..... 74  
Knut Willem Ruyter, O.F.M.
- THE APOSTOLATE OF WORSHIP  
ACCORDING TO SAINT BONAVENTURE ..... 85  
Bonaventure Hinwood, O.F.M.

### FEATURES

- EDITORIAL: FIDELITY ..... 65  
Julian A. Davies, O.F.M.
- POETRY
- WHEN THE GREEN COMES ..... 84  
Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.
- WORD AND MUSIC FOR GOOD FRIDAY ..... 93  
Sister M. Mercedes, P.C.S.
- BOOK REVIEWS ..... 94



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# The CORD

## A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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

### 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  
CL: Legend of Saint Clare  
CP: Process of Saint Clare  
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



## Fidelity

“THE GREAT QUALITY of a steward is to be faithful to his duty.” These words of Paul, used in the Office for the Common of Pastors, have a meaning for all religious who are by vocation servants of the Lord. They remind us that living out day by day responsibilities, whether in classroom, or kitchen, or parlor, or chapel, or hospital, is something very pleasing to God. “Duty” is not a dirty word; it does not imply lack of love. Faithfulness to duty requires the continued giving of self, and what else is love, except the gift of self? Granted it is possible to use the works of God, such as preaching or teaching, or ministering in any way, as a way of escaping the God of works; yet being concerned that what needs to be done is done, is what we call fidelity.

Faithfulness and duty are quite closely akin, and so is their combination. What each separately and together connotes is effort and accomplishment undertaken in season and out of season, regardless of personal moods, feelings, or new interests. It helps you if you like your duties, but it isn't necessary, and it isn't even possible all the time. That Jesus, for instance, prayed so often by himself indicates to me not only that he—like all of us—needed time alone, but also that he—like all of us—found dealing with people a trial at times. And Jesus' constant reference to his Father's will, particularly in the Garden of Olives, indicates faithfulness to duty was compatible with human perfection.

As we near the mid-point of Lent, let us rejoice in that we have been through the grace of God “faithful to duty,” and let us repledge the continuing gift of ourselves in our horarium of responsibilities. Ω

*Fr. Julian Davies OFM*

# Sermon on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA

## Translator's Introduction

*See, I place my words in your mouth! This day I set you over nations and over kingdoms—to root up and to tear down, to destroy and to demolish, to build and to plant (Jer. 1:9-10).*

IN THIS SERMON in praise of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Franciscan Doctor, Saint Anthony of Padua, employs his customary style of locution: he plays with words in Latin exposing what he feels to be their etymology; he employs alliteration and homonyms (consonance). He stresses morals, providing practical applications for the commoners to whom he is speaking, and referring his opinions to Sacred Scripture.

In many of his sermons, Anthony uses imagery borrowed from nature and analogies in order to drive his argument home. This he does by referring to nature, that is, by using examples of characteristics of animal life and comparing them to the daily doings of the common folk.

Saint Anthony decided to join the Franciscan community when he saw the bodies of the first Franciscan martyrs in 1220. Having studied as a canon of St. Augustine, Anthony gained a vast knowledge of Holy Writ. Once he entered the Franciscan Order, he reached out to the people of the countryside, spreading the Word of the Lord, expounding on it so that people could truly share in the graces of the Christian life.

---

*This translation, done by David Blowey, O.F.M.Conv., with the assistance of Claude Jarmak, O.F.M.Conv. and Germain Kopaczynski, O.F.M.Conv., is reprinted with permission from The Saint Hyacinth Studies (published by the Conventual Franciscan Friars at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary, Granby, MA), volume 18 (1981), pp. 17-24.*

*It is to Anthony's expositions that we are also heirs. Through his extensive writings, the deep spiritual insights of this popular man of God are passed on to us that we may grow in our understanding of the faith.*

An excellent collection of his various sermons can be found in Locatelli's book, *S. Antonii Patavini Sermones* (Padua, 1905); the "Sermon on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary" is taken from this edition, pages 701-03.<sup>1</sup> The divisions belong to the translator, not to the Saint. As Mary carried Christ in her womb, so too Anthony brings the risen Lord to us through his sermons. In some small way, the translator wishes to carry the same Christ to the simple of his own day just as Anthony did in his.

## Introduction

"LIKE THE SUN SHINING . . . and the rainbow appearing in the cloudy sky, what a wonderful vessel, the work of the Most High." In these words from the Book of Sirach (50:7; 43:2), the Blessed Virgin Mary is described as a wonderful vessel. She received this title due to her personal relationship with God: a relationship that made her the dwelling of the Son of God, the home of the Holy Spirit, and the resting place of the Holy Trinity. Sirach also says that "he who formed me chose the spot for my tent . . . (Sir. 24:12, Vulgate), referring to the eminent place in which the Most High placed her when He made her a wonderful work. In this position she is more beautiful than any other mortal, and holier than any of the saints. In her, Christ became incarnate—"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn. 1:14).

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<sup>1</sup>The translator realizes that, at the time of this publication, the Locatelli edition of St. Anthony's sermons is obsolete. The latest critical edition of the *Sermones Dominicales et Festivi* (3 vols.) was published in Padua (1979), edited by Beniamino Costa, Leonardo Frasson, and Ioanne Luisetto with the help of Paolo Marangon. Any serious student of Saint Anthony will find this work invaluable.

Just as Solomon sculpted "two doors . . . with carved flowers of cherubim, palm trees and open flowers" (1 Kgs. 6:32), making a wonderful work (as recorded in the First Book of Kings), so too the true Solomon carved his Cherubim, Mary, the door to heaven and the gate of Paradise. This gate is Blessed Mary; the Cherubim denote an angelic life and an abundance of charity; the palm trees represent her victory over evil, her continually refreshed perseverance and sublime contemplation; and the open flowers symbolize her humility and virginity. All of these were sculpted in the Blessed Virgin through the artistry of Wisdom. For this reason she can truly be considered like a shining sun.

---

. . . Our Lady, we cry to you our one  
hope, that you may illumine our minds  
with the brilliance of your  
grace. . . . Reconcile us to your Son  
so that we may merit to enter into the  
brilliance of his glory. Together we  
stand before him, who today at the  
Angel's announcement, assumed his  
humanity through you. . . .

---

Note well: Mary is like the shining sun in the Annunciation, like a brilliant rainbow in the conception of the Son of God, and like a rose and lily in his Nativity.

We discover in the sun three natural characteristics: brilliance (*splendor*), radiance (*candor*), and warmth (*calor*). These three traits also correspond to three of Gabriel's phrases at the Annunciation. The first, "Hail, full of grace," refers to *splendor*; the second, "Do not be afraid," refers to *candor*; and *calor* is referred to by "The Holy Spirit will come upon you" (Lk. 1:28, 30, 35).

### I. Splendor

BEHOLD THE BRILLIANCE of the sun in these words: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women" (Lk. 1:28). The brilliance of the sun is signified by four virtues (temperance, prudence,

justice, and fortitude), each with three branches.

From temperance, Mary has prudence in behavior, modesty in speech, and humility of heart. She shows her prudence when, during the Annunciation, she remained quiet, even though perturbed by Gabriel's greeting until such time as she understood his message and was able to respond to the situation.

It is a mark of her justice that she gives to everyone who asks her for favors his due. She melts the hard-hearted by the merits gained through her betrothal, her Son's circumcision, and her legal purification. She looks with compassion on these afflicted, as when she said: "They have no more wine" (Jn. 2:3). Finally, she implores God perseveringly in prayer in union with the apostles and other holy women.

Fourthly, due to her fortitude or her greatness, she took a vow of virginity; she kept it; and she displayed its greatness in example for others.

Bernard speaks of the twelve stars in the crown of a woman (stated in Revelation) referring then to twelve prerogatives of the Virgin: four of the spirit, four of the body, and four of the heart. Each of these glisten like the stars of the sky.

Her bodily privileges are her lineage, her annunciation, the intervention of the Holy Spirit, and the remarkable conception of the Son of God. The prerogatives of heaven gave her a privileged virginity, one without physical destruction, undue gravity, or pain in childbirth. Finally, the four prerogatives of her heart refer to her devout humility, her gentle modesty, the strength of her faith, and a martyr's heart, for her soul was pierced by a sword.

These privileges correspond to the Angel's salutation. Gabriel's words, "The Lord is with you," refer to those of heaven: "Blessed are you among women" to those of the body; and those of the heart are referred to by "Hail, full of grace."

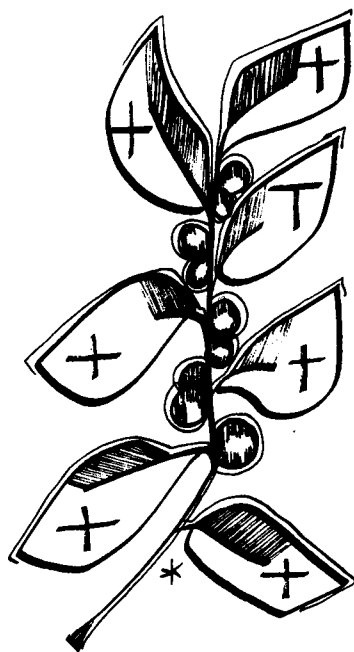
### II. Candor

THE RADIANCE OF THE SUN is expressed in the words: "You shall conceive and bear a son and give him the name Jesus!" (Lk. 1:31). How could a mirror without blemish reflect the radiance of the eternal light, unless the mirror itself were sparkling? This brilliance is spoken of in the Song of Songs: "Your body is a work of ivory covered with sapphires" (Song 5:14). Ivory, taken from an elephant, is brilliant white, signifying both the purity of the mind and the purity of the body, which are found in the Virgin Mary.

It has been said that an elephant is more easily trained than any other wild animal. It is also more tame and obedient. Because of this docility, an elephant can be taught to do homage to a king. In this instance, an elephant is a type for the Blessed Virgin Mary, for she too is more humble and obedient than any other mortal, and she also adores the King whom she bore.

An elephant, however, is also known to flee from mice; indeed, the very smell of a mouse will send an elephant to flight. In this instance the mouse is not unlike concupiscence, since both spring forth from the scum of the earth or illicit pleasure. So too the Blessed Virgin (to continue this analogy) flees from concupiscence and each of its manifestations. It was precisely for this reason that the Virgin was afraid when Gabriel appeared to her.

We, who wish to live chastely in Christ Jesus, ought to follow our Blessed Lady's example. We should not only flee from the mouse of concupiscence, but even from the slightest trace of its stench of sinful inclination. Therefore, it is not surprising that we should flee from fornication, for an elephant, which is as big as a mountain, flees from a little mouse. The Lord has given us an example of this through the Prophet Isaiah: "I will . . . cut off from Babylon name and remnant, progeny and offspring" (Is. 14:22). In this Scripture passage, Babylon the mouse represents concupiscence, and all that sin involves (its stench) are Babylon's children. Any person who wants to do good in the sight of the Lord must destroy the name of Babylon, for Scripture also has it, "No longer let arrogance issue from your mouth" (1 Sam. 2:3), and also "My mouth has not transgressed after the manner of man" (Ps. 17:3-4). A just man should also destroy any remnant, that is, any remembrance of sin which might remain after it has been forgiven. He even ought to destroy Babylon's progeny or lust-filled roaming eyes.



Isaiah speaks of the progeny when he says: "For out of a serpent's root shall come an adder, its fruit shall be a flying saraph" (Is. 14:29).

From the root of the serpent, which is actually diabolic suggestions or mental arguments, shall come an adder (concupiscent eyes), because, as Saint Augustine says, a lewd eye is the messenger of a lewd heart. Its fruits are voluptuous words and flirtatious laughter, which devour a just man, the flying saraph. Ugh! How many birds are caught in this trap, they and their offspring! Such is the danger that surrounds concupiscence. The offspring must also be cut off and destroyed so that the body or mind may be as ivory. It is well said, therefore: "Your body is a work of ivory covered with sapphires."

A sky-blue sapphire is important. In any home where it is found, the devil cannot enter. Here we mean that a sapphire is divine contemplation—any mind that is involved in contemplation cannot be entered by the evil one. However, since we are not able to contemplate continuously, our bodies are only partially covered with sapphires. The body of the Virgin Mary, on the other hand, was ivory, covered completely with sapphires, and so her soul is superior.

### III. Calor

THE WARMTH OF THE SUN is shown in the phrase: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." Heat is the food and nourishment of every living thing. When it leaves, death comes quickly. Death is the end of the natural warmth in one's heart, due either to a lack of moisture or to the presence of its opposite—cold. This relationship can be seen in trees during wintertime. A leaf falls from a tree because of lack of food or heat. Its warmth, in fleeing from the cold, hides in the roots. The larger and more extensive roots help collect the moisture by storing it in the trunk. In this way the heat is contained. Since the heat flees to the roots, the leaves die.

This warmth is the grace of the Holy Spirit, which, if it departs from the heart of a man in whom the moistness of contrition is not present, leaves an evil soul to fall to a sinful death. Indeed the warmth of the Holy Spirit flees from its opposite to overcome the coldness of iniquity. And so, a soul is robbed of all good things. Truly, when sin enters, virtue is displaced. This is why Wisdom says: "For the holy spirit of discipline flees deceit and withdraws from senseless counsels; and when injustice occurs, it is rebuked" (Wis. 1:5). In other words, injustice is incurred; the spirit and all its gifts are seized.

When warmth arrives, the land conceives life, brings it forth, and produces fruit. And so, Mary is like the shining sun in the Annuncia-

tion, for where the Holy Spirit comes upon the blessed land, which is free of all defilement, it produces blessed fruit. Aptly, therefore, we can say that "the Holy Spirit will overshadow you."

#### IV. Arcus

MARY IS ALSO LIKE a splendid rainbow in her conception of the Son of God. The rainbow which we see in the sky is made when the sun passes through the clouds, producing colors of grey, blue, red, and gold. Today, on the other hand, Mary becomes a rainbow as the Sun of Justice—the Son of God—enters her womb. In Christ's Incarnation, Mary becomes a glorious rainbow, sign of the covenant of peace and reconciliation between God and sinners.

We read in Genesis: "I set my rainbow in the clouds to serve as a sign of the covenant between me and the earth" (Gn. 9:13). This rainbow bridges the anger of God and man's sins, for man is continually fighting God. God bears down his sword of anger, raining eternal death upon man. Likewise, a man in mortal sin fights against God through his offenses. After the true Sun entered the Virgin, peace and reconciliation were established. God the Son, Child of the Virgin, offered himself as a recompense to God the Father for man's faults.

This reconciliation between God and man, represented by a rainbow, bursts forth in fourfold splendor: the four colors, grey, blue, gold, and red, are signs of the virtues found in our Lady. In the rainbow there is grey because it represents Mary's poverty, blue for her humility, gold for her charity, and her incorrupted virginity—a flaming sword which cannot be divided or broken—is shown by red.

Sirach has also spoken of this rainbow: "Behold the rainbow! Then bless its Maker, for majestic indeed is its splendor; it spans the heavens with its glory . . ." (Sir. 43:11-12). Behold the rainbow! Indeed, examine the beauty, sanctity, and dignity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Then, bless her heart, her prayers, and her work with the Son, who made her so great. In this brilliance, the intensity of her sanctity is more precious than any of God's other daughters. Mary spans the heavens surrounding the Divinity in the bounds of her glory, her glorious humanity.

#### Conclusion

**THEREFORE, OUR LADY**, we cry to you our one hope, that you may illumine our minds with the brilliance of your grace, emitting the radiance of your elegance, and refreshing us with the warmth of your presence. Reconcile us to your Son so that we may merit to enter into

the brilliance of his glory. Together we stand before him, who today at the Angel's announcement, assumed his humanity through you and deigned to dwell in your womb for nine months, he who is the honor and the glory for ever and ever. Amen. Ω

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## Bible Interpretation by Francis and His Followers:

### Some Hermeneutical Principles—I

KNUT WILLEM RUYTER, O.F.M.

SAINT FRANCIS INTRODUCED most of us Franciscans to the Bible and to the life of the gospel and made us want to follow its message. We are all, more or less, familiar with his conversion and how he diligently tried to live according to the gospel way of life. His interpretation of the biblical texts was unique and distinct in his own time, and we know from history that his interpretation attracted tens of thousands of followers from all over the world. His charisma, his way of life, his interpretation still attract followers. In terms of numbers the Franciscan family is one of the most important religious movements in the Church. According to recent statistics (1980), there are worldwide 37,285 friars of the First Order, 26,680 contemplative sisters of the Second Order, approximately 200,000 sisters and 868 brothers of the Regular Third Order, and about one million Secular Franciscans.<sup>1</sup> But does this presence in the world and in the Church make a significant difference? What does it mean for us today to be converted to the gospel way of life? How do we read and interpret the Scriptures? What kind of response is demanded of us today?

---

Knut W. Ruyter, O.F.M., born 1955 in Oslo, Norway and a member of the Dutch Province of the Most Holy Martyrs of Gorkum, earned his M.Div. and Th.M. at the Weston School of Theology, Cambridge, MA. He has published articles on Franciscan themes in German and Norwegian.

For Francis, it was the message of the gospel that finally answered and confirmed his search for God, his embrace of the leper, and his restoration of dilapidated churches. One day, probably on the Feast of the Apostle Saint Matthias (February 24, 1209), his biographers tell us that he heard these words proclaimed from the pulpit at the church of Saint Nicholas:

And preach as you go, saying, "the kingdom of God is at hand." Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying, give without pay. Take no gold, nor silver, nor copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor a staff . . . [Mt. 10:7-10a, RSV].

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Poverty . . . has a relative significance [for Francis]. The following values are emphasized much more: prayer and worship, love of God and faith in Jesus Christ. . . .

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After an explanation of the text, Francis rejoiced and cried out exultingly: "This is what I wish, this is what I seek, this is what I long to do with all my heart" (1Cel 22; *Omnibus*, 247). From this joyful discovery the Franciscan way of life unfolds. The sacred Scriptures gave and still give answers to deeply felt existential questions. But before we try to discover what our interpretation of biblical texts—and therefore our response to them—may be, we must first try to find out what Francis knew about the Bible, how he read it, and how he related to it.<sup>2</sup> To this end, we shall focus on Francis' relationship to the Bible (Part I) and then analyze the authentic writings of Saint Francis<sup>3</sup> in terms of his selection and use of Scripture (Part II). Next month we shall examine his actual exegesis of some biblical texts (Part III)—an outline which I hope will unfold a complete vision of Francis' gospel project<sup>4</sup>—and, in a final section, discuss some hermeneutical principles for a contemporary Franciscan reading of the Bible.

## I. Francis, a Layman, and His Relationship to the Scriptures

WHEN FRANCIS, INSPIRED BY GOD, embarked upon a life of penance (Test 1), following the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ (RegNB 1:1), he was a layman in the eyes of the Church. This fact meant that two barriers were erected between the Scriptures and himself: a barrier of language and that of the book itself.<sup>5</sup>

a. **The Barrier of the Book.** Most lay people, and clergy as well, did not possess their own copy of the Bible, mainly because its cost was extremely high. Remember that every book of the Bible was copied by hand. Consequently a copy cost approximately as much as a horse. In this connection, the *Legend of Perugia* relates a significant episode (LP 56; *Omnibus*, 1033). A poor, old woman, whose two sons were in the Order, came to the friary to beg alms. Finally, she was given a New Testament from which the friars read the lessons of matins, in order that she might sell it to take care of her needs. It was the only thing of value which was to be found at St. Mary of Portiuncula. Significantly, Celano, who relates the same story, concludes: "It was thus that the first Testament which had ever belonged to the Order left it" (2Cel 91; *Omnibus*, 437). When we consider the date of this episode, "at the time when Brother Peter Catanii was Minister General" (LP 56; *Omnibus*, 1033), that is from 1220 to 1221, it becomes very clear how poor access the friars had to the Bible. And this at a time when the Order was already more than ten years old and the Chapter of Mats had just gathered five thousand friars (LM IX.8-9; *Omnibus*, 703-05).

More importantly, there were certain disciplinary measures imposed by the Church in deterring people from possessing and reading the Bible. Because of the "depths of the Holy Scripture," a church document declared that "laymen are not permitted to have in their possession the books of the Old and New Testaments, except for the Psalter and the breviary and the hours of the Virgin; prosession of these books translated into the vulgar tongue is most strictly prohibited" (Synod of Toulouse, 1229).<sup>6</sup> Such measures, combined with the frequently reiterated separation of clergy and laity, had the effect of implanting in people's minds the notion that the Bible was something reserved for the clergy, whose task was to interpret the biblical texts for the laity.

b. **The Barrier of Language.** The other barrier erected between Francis and the Bible was that of language. Francis was not a man of letters and not very conversant in Latin. The chronicler Thomas of Eccleston

mentions a letter of Francis written in *falsum Latinum*.<sup>7</sup> This is confirmed by the authentic handwritten Letter to Brother Leo which is marred by Italianisms. It is probable that Francis had learned to read by reciting the Vulgate Psalter at the cathedral school of S. Giorgio where he went to school as a boy (LM XV.5; *Omnibus*, 744). This does not mean that he had a good knowledge of Latin. In any case, scholars have surmised that people in twelfth and thirteenth century "Italy" must have understood Latin, though it was no longer spoken. Each region spoke its own distinct dialect, but we should note that it is around this time that Italian emerges as an independent language. The first vernacular (Italian) versions of substantial parts of the Bible existed from around 1250, scholars have conjectured, though none of the preserved manuscripts is older than the 14th century.<sup>8</sup> Various parts of the Bible, however—especially the Psalter and the Gospels—translated in part from the Latin Vulgate and in part from French and Provençal versions, may have been existent early in the thirteenth century.<sup>9</sup> For our purposes it means that the vernacular text of some parts of the Bible may have been accessible to Saint Francis. Though the Church "strictly prohibited" the reading of vernacular Scriptures, this possible accessibility to the vernacular texts of the Bible may explain the remarkable familiarity of Francis and the early friars with the Bible.

c. **The Mediation of the Priest.** The biographers of Saint Francis show us that he came up against these barriers, especially in liturgical worship. Vernacular Scriptures were never used when the Word of God was proclaimed in the liturgical worship of the Church. The case is particularly clear when/we consider two liturgical events which initiated the whole Franciscan movement. They show that Francis' knowledge of Latin was not sufficient to grasp the full meaning of the readings.

The first event took place at S. Maria degli Angeli in 1209. Four biographers narrate it in terms which are substantially the same. All of them say that it was the priest who translated and explained the words of Saint Francis. This is Celano's account: "[Francis] understood somewhat the words of the Gospel; after Mass he humbly asked the priest to explain the Gospel to him more fully" (1Cel 22; *Omnibus*, 246, *emph. added*). Hearing the explanation (of Mt. 10:7-10), Francis rejoiced and immediately "put off his shoes, put aside the staff from his hands, was content with one tunic, and exchanged his leather girdle for a small cord" (*ibid.*). Undoubtedly, the priest played a decisive role in Francis' discovery of the gospel way of life. The presence of the

comparative ("more fully") implies a rather vague ability to understand Latin. There was a need to remedy this by translating into the vulgar tongue, and that, no doubt, is what the priest did for Francis. Did the priest also "explain," that is, interpret, the text for him? It is, of course, possible, but hardly very likely, if we consider the fact that the practical consequences which Francis was to draw from the text were very far from the exegesis which was current at the time (see below).

The vocation of Bernard of Quintavalle and Peter of Catanio is the second event which must be examined. Only a few weeks after the preceding episode, Bernard revealed to Francis that he wanted to follow him. Francis, Bernard, and Peter went together to a church where they interrogated the (Latin) Scriptures three times as they tried to find out what to do. They read in the Missal the texts concerning the renunciation of the world (Mt. 16:24; 19:21; Lk. 9:3,23). Six different accounts relate the same events, and they are increasingly colored by miraculous elements the later they are. The *Legend of the Three Companions* says that "they went in [to the church of St. Nicholas] to pray, but being simple men, they did not know how to find the passage in the Gospel telling of the renunciation of the world" (L3S 28-29; *Omnibus*, 917). The author of this legend says that "they besought God that he would show them his will the first time they opened the book." It is, however, more likely that they sought the help from the parish priest, rather than randomly opening the book. They already had a plan, and now they wanted to see if their plan was in conformity with God's will. This is affirmed in the *Legend of Perugia*: "Sir," they said to the priest, "show us the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." The priest opened the book for them, for they were not yet able to read it well (i.e., they couldn't find their way about in it!).

These two instances show that Francis and his first companions shared the experience of the ordinary faithful. In reality, they had only two ways of obtaining religious instruction, that is by looking at the *Biblia Pauperum* and by listening to the homilies and exhortations of the priests in which they expounded the meaning of the readings.<sup>10</sup>

Knowing this crucial role of the priest, we also see more clearly why Francis saw God's hand in these men who had stewardship of the Word of God and the Eucharist. Repeatedly, Francis stresses his reverence for the priest: ". . . no one can be saved except by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the holy Words of God, and it is the clergy who proclaim to us his words and administer the Blessed Sacrament and they alone have the right to do it, and no one else" (EpFidII;

*Omnibus*, 95). There are instances of Francis' behavior which can be explained, really, only in the light of what is said here. His insistence on gathering together in some worthy place the manuscripts which contain the names and the words of the Lord, bespeaks a situation in which the difficulty of obtaining access to the books bestows on them a very high value. Over and over again Francis urges his followers to have the greatest possible reverence for these sacred writings (EpCust and EpOrd; *Omnibus*, 107; 113-14; cf. 1Cel 82). Similarly, the respect which he wished his followers to pay to theologians and priests is no doubt partly motivated by this reverential awe of a layman for the men who have the right to handle the Book and to translate its content and explain its meaning (cf. Test, EpCler, EpAnt [Anthony of Padua was a theologian at the University of Bologna], and EpOrd; *Omnibus*, 67, 100-01; 104-05; 164).

## II. Francis' Selection and use of Scripture

BIBLICAL TEXTS OCCUPY a very central place in the writings of Saint Francis. There is no doubt that Francis sought and obtained help from friars well versed in the Bible to embellish the writings with scriptural quotations. Caesar of Speyer, e.g., embellished the Rule of 1221 with scriptural quotations,<sup>11</sup> and other friars had a hand in other writings. We may assume, however—I think—that these writings contain only the verses which Francis wanted and approved of. A few statistical data will provide us with a basis for discerning the choice, the relative importance of different texts, and the way they are understood.<sup>12</sup>

In the authentic writings of Saint Francis, 153 different passages from the Hebrew Bible and 275 different New Testament passages are quoted explicitly or alluded to in the text. This simple enumeration shows the great importance of the Scriptures in the writings of Saint Francis. The use of Scripture, then, constitutes the manifest for the life of all Franciscans. As we know, the Rule admits of no other authority than the Gospel: "The Rule and the Life of the friars is to live in obedience, in chastity, and without property, following the teaching and the footprints of our Lord Jesus Christ" (RegNB 1:1).

In the following we shall limit the analysis to the use of New Testament quotations in the writings of Saint Francis. Undoubtedly, these quotations present all Franciscans with extreme and total demands. They are deeply radical, calling for conversion and demanding a complete change of heart. The words of the Holy Scriptures are "spirit and life" (Jn. 6:64) which set the hearer free to renounce worldly concerns so as to walk in the footprints of Jesus (cf. 1 Pt. 2:21). Reading the

writings of Saint Francis makes it clear that Francis shows fondness for certain texts, since he uses them repeatedly. The frequent repetition reveals, I think, the importance these texts enjoy in his experience and in his life. Francis approached the Bible only in prayer and with reverence, because in it the good God would make known his will to him (see 1Cel 92-93; *Omnibus*, 307-08). Understanding the book as a guide to the Christian life, we shall find it very interesting to look more closely at these texts. They form, it seems to me, the backbone of the way of life which God inspired Francis and his companions to follow.<sup>13</sup>

a. Twelve times. Jesus' prayer for his disciples that they might persevere in faith and be united in worship is repeated twelve times (Jn. 17:11).

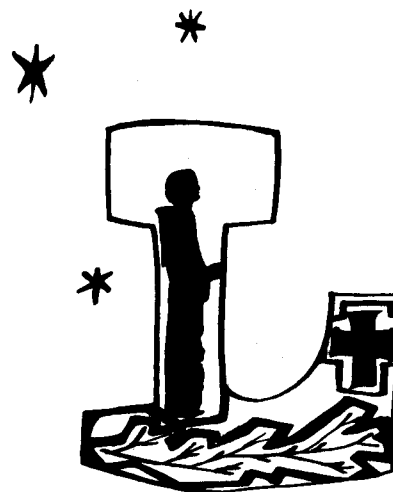
b. Seven times. The text of Jn. 4:23-24 is concerned that the believers worship in spirit and truth.

c. Six times. Of two texts, the first speaks of the love that God has for us and the promise that whoever abides in love abides in God (1 Jn. 4:16). The other text reiterates that the Word of God (as interpreted by the ministers of God's Word) gives us spirit and life (Jn. 6:63).

d. Five times. The one text describes the gospel life as a following in the footprints of Jesus Christ (1 Pt. 2:21).

e. Four times. Among sixteen texts which are repeated four times, three of these are concerned with the concrete demands of the Gospel: go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor (Mt. 19:21); take nothing for the journey (Mt. 10:10); whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother, and sister, and mother (Mt. 12:50). Three texts describe appropriate behavior towards others as a way of witnessing to the Gospel: love and pray for your enemies (Mt. 5:44); forgive if you have anything against anyone (Mk. 11:25); and be subject to all for God's sake (1 Pt. 2:13). Five texts emphasize the importance of faith in the lordship of Jesus Christ: he is Christ, the Son of God (Jn. 10:27); a Brother who laid down his life for his sheep, i.e., us (Jn. 10:15); through him God's name has been manifest for us (Jn. 17:6); and we are enabled to believe in the glory of Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:24); and finally we are promised that if we make our home in Jesus, he will make his home in us (Jn. 14:23). Faced with human weakness and sinfulness, we find that five texts stress the holiness of God and our desperate need for repentance and conversion: no one is good but God alone (Lk. 18:19), and so we should refer all the good we have to God. If we do not do that, even what we have will be taken away (Lk.

8:18). We are exhorted not to live as children of the devil (Jn. 8:41), because on the day of judgment we will have to render account for every useless word (Mt. 12:36; Mk. 7:21).



f. Three times. Twenty-one texts are repeated three times. Four are related to the importance of Jesus Christ for our salvation: he is blessed forever (Rom. 1:25), and he is praying for all those who recognize that he was sent from God (Jn. 17:8-9). The promise for the believers is that the Lord is always with us, to the end of the world (Mt. 28:20), and that we shall be led to eternal life (Ac 13:48). Three texts emphasize prayer: the Our Father (Mt. 6:9), the praises of God (Rev. 4:11),

and the exhortation that we should pray always and not lose heart (Lk. 18:1). Three texts describe appropriate behavior and attitudes: if anyone strikes you, do not resist (Mt. 5:39); give without expecting anything in return (Mt. 6:2); and you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Mt. 22:39). One text proclaims the persecuted blessed (Mt. 5:10). Two texts deal with fraternal love between the friars: If a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh (1 Thess. 2:7), a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more; and the friars should practice hospitality ungrudgingly (1 Pt. 4:9). Two texts deal with the permanence of commitment: no one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God (Lk. 9:62); whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple (Lk. 14:27). One text stresses the importance of mission: those who lose their lives for Christ's sake, will save them (Lk. 9:24). Three texts exhort the reader to repentance: bear fruit that befits repentance (Lk. 3:8); unless one is born of water and the Spirit one cannot enter the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:5); repent, because God reproves and chastens those whom he loves (Rev. 3:19). One text proclaims the faithful servant blessed (Mt. 24:46), and finally, one text is an invitation to confess one's sins (Jas. 5:16).

g. Two times. Seventy-five texts are repeated twice.

\* \* \*

IN MY OPINION, these somewhat tedious enumerations and examples allow us to draw the following conclusions:

1. Despite the many barriers, it seems that Francis' extensive use of scriptural quotations strongly attests to the familiarity of this man with the Bible.

2. The choice and use of texts are balanced and correct. Except for a few instances,<sup>14</sup> all the texts seem to be applied according to their original intention. They are not forced into the context of the writings as a way of "proving something." On the contrary, the writings function as a commentary and a guide to bring out the meaning of the biblical texts more clearly.

3. For Francis the Bible serves as a guide to the Christian life because its message reveals the will of God. This message, the Word of God, is "spirit and life," the foundation for the Franciscan way of life.

4. The majority of the quotations are taken from the farewell discourse in St. John (13-17), from the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6), and from the missionary discourse (Mt. 10; Lk. 9-10).

5. In contrast to the commonly held view that Francis let himself be guided exclusively by the earthly Jesus of the Synoptic tradition, the choice of texts is much broader and more comprehensive. Francis was deeply influenced by the Gospel of Saint John<sup>15</sup> (from which there are 42 different citations), by the Letters of Saint Paul (38 different texts), and by the Letters of Saints Peter and James<sup>16</sup> (9 different citations).

6. The sacred Scriptures were always read in the context of worship and prayer (i.e., they were never used as a basis for academic studies). In this regard the biblical requirement for worship in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23-24) seems to have been of special importance to Saint Francis.

7. Though there are some texts related to Christology, many more deal with the demands of Jesus toward those committed to following him.

8. Finally, again in contrast to a commonly held view that Francis was primarily concerned with poverty and mission, this examination disputes such a claim. Undoubtedly, poverty is a concern for Saint Francis, but it has a relative significance. The following values are emphasized much more: prayer and worship, love of God and faith in Jesus Christ, gospel freedom, service of neighbor (peace making, caring for the lepers and the poor), fraternal relations, and the invitation to confess one's sins and the call to conversion. Ω

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Cf. The official statistics in *Annuario Pontificio Romano*, *Dizionario degli Istituti di Perfezione*, I-IV, Roma, 1974-1980. Here quoted from T. Matura, "Die Erben des Hl. Franz im letzten Viertel des 20. Jahrhunderts," in Franz von Assisi. Ein Anfang und was davon bleibt, eds. A. Rotzetter, W. C. van Dijk, and T. Matura (Benziger Verlag, 1981), 293-333, here pp. 298-99.

<sup>2</sup>The most comprehensive bibliography on Saint Francis and the Bible was put together by Ignace Schlauri, "Saint François et la Bible. Essai Bibliographique de sa spiritualité évangélique," *Collectanea Franciscana* 40 (1970), 365-437. The bibliography contains 466 entries.

<sup>3</sup>See Kajetan Esser, *Die Opuscula des Hl. Franziskus von Assisi* (Grottaferata, Rome: Collegii S. Bonaventurae ad Claras Aquas, 1976), and Regis Armstrong and Ignatius Brady, *The Collected Writings of Francis and Clare* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

<sup>4</sup>The phrase is taken from Thadée Matura, *Le projet évangélique de François d'Assise aujourd'hui* (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Some of the following points are taken from Théophile Desbonnets, "The Franciscan Reading of Scriptures," in *Concilium* 149 (1981), 37-45.

<sup>6</sup>Quoted from T. Desbonnets, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>*De Adventu Fratrum Minorum in Angliam*, cap. 5; ET by F. Cuthbert, *The Chronicle of Thomas of Eccleston* (London: Sands and Co., 1909), p. 44.

<sup>8</sup>See Kenelm Foster, "Vernacular Scriptures in Italy," in the *Cambridge History of the Bible*, II, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Cambridge at the University Press, 1969), 452-64, here p. 452.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, 455, 459ff.

<sup>10</sup>See S.J.P. van Dijk, "The Bible in Liturgical Use," in the *Cambridge History of the Bible*, 220-51.

<sup>11</sup>See the *Chronica Fratris Jordani a Giano*, cap. 15. German trans. by L. Hardick, *Nach Deutschland und England* (Werl, Westfalen: Dietrich-Coelde Verlag, 1957), 51.

<sup>12</sup>See the scriptural index (of the authentic writings of Saint Francis) in Esser, *Die Opuscula* . . . , 465-69. The idea and some of the following points are taken from T. Matura, "How Francis Reads and Interprets Scripture," in *The Gospel Life of Francis of Assisi Today*, ET by P. LaChance and P. Schwartz (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1980), 31-44.

<sup>13</sup>In the following I have listed only the scriptural references for the sake of clarity. The numerous references to the writings of Saint Francis can easily be found by looking up the scriptural index in the *Opuscula*. Since I have not used a computer in preparing this, please bear with me and allow for ± in accuracy.

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Matura, art. cit., 38-39.

<sup>15</sup>See Optatus Van Asseldonk, "San Giovanni Evangelista negli Scritti di S. Francesco," *Laurentianum* 18 (1977), 225-55.

<sup>16</sup>This can be traced in the following biblical ideas: to follow in the footsteps of Christ; to be subject to all human creatures; to gain victory over the bad by doing good; to live as pilgrims and strangers. See Van Asseldonk, "Le Lettere di S. Pietro negli Scritti di S. Francesco," *Collectanea Franciscana* 48 (1978), 67-76).

## When the Green Comes

You know it's time  
when you look up at the once bare branches  
and see the pale scattered patches,  
that miracle green that means the leaves have finally come.  
(You can smell the green;  
you can smell it growing and being cut.)  
Then the wind doesn't whip the air anymore.  
It pushes it,  
gently chasing itself around the tops of the trees,  
while the flowers  
and all the fragile growing things hug the earth below.  
The magnolias are foaming with new petals, cream and pink,  
and soon new green will break through here too,  
so the foam will spill down  
and lay around the tree like a fragrant carpet,  
and be soaked up into the grass.  
The morning sun comes early these days,  
and lingers longer,  
melting slowly in the western sky.  
And the songbirds  
replace the black winter crows that used to fly.  
All of this and the new green too,  
for you.

*Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.*

## The Apostolate of Worship according to St. Bonaventure—I

BONAVENTURE HINWOOD, O.F.M.

EVERY TIME I READ through Saint Francis' writings, I am struck once again by the amount of time and space he devotes to the Sacrament of Penance, the Office, the Mass, preaching, the veneration of the Blessed Sacrament, and reverence for priests because they are its ministers. Even when writing to politicians and civil servants his message is about Mass and Communion, not social justice.

Saint Francis started off his ministry repairing church buildings, buildings in which the Liturgy is celebrated and Christ's Body is reserved. He is concerned that chalices, corporals, altar linens, and all the ornaments of the altar used for the sacrifice of the Mass should be suitable and clean (EpCler, EpCust). He wants the Blessed Sacrament reserved in richly ornamented places (Test, 2Cel 201). He is anxious that the Church's liturgical law be observed and that devotional bodily postures express one's reverence (EpCust). The priests of the Order he wishes to be holy and celebrate Mass with reverence and fervor (EpOrd). He himself took part in at least one Mass a day (2Cel 201), and he wanted one solemn Mass a day celebrated in each Franciscan community (EpOrd).

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Saint Francis made the divine Office in some form or another obligatory on all members of the Franciscan family (RegNB 3; RegB 3; RegEr); and he laid down severe penalties for those who would not say the Office or changed it to suit themselves (Test). When recited in common, he wanted the friars to sing the Office devoutly, in such a way that "their words would be in harmony with their hearts, and their hearts with God" (EpOrd). Even when saying the Office in the course of traveling, Saint Francis would stop and give himself time to recite it with care (2Cel 96).

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If . . . the Office, longer [in the middle ages with their problems] than today, was seen as an essential dimension of the gospel life of Franciscans, it can hardly be a less important aspect of evangelization today.

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Such is the stress on the Liturgy we find in the Franciscan family's Founder. The Liturgy was for Saint Francis one of the fundamental forms of living out the gospel life and bringing others to Christ. It is not surprising, then, that "the second founder of the Order," as Saint Bonaventure is sometimes called, should also have been concerned with the Liturgy as an apostolic activity. How he expanded upon Saint Francis in a genuine way in this matter, as he also did in others, we will now see.

Genuine religion always starts with God. Genuine religion starts when God out of his own goodness, his own generosity, his overflowing love makes an approach to human beings. He makes himself known to them, he shares his life with them. And the purpose of it all is to draw them into a communion with himself, a friendship, an intimacy. Hence man has to answer God's loving initiative with a love that shows itself towards God and towards other people. This is because the knowledge that we are loved with God's ever-faithful and limitless love should make us loving people in return. This is the great Good News of the Bible (Dt. 7:6-11; 10:12-22; Jn. 19:31-37; Rm. 5:1-11; Ep. 1:3-16). And it is this that we celebrate in the Liturgy,

which is one way in which we give a response to God's love.

Personally, I like the way that the psalm writer puts this particular aspect of our response to God in Psalm 99:

Sing to the Lord, all the world!  
Worship the Lord with joy;  
come before him with happy songs!

Never forget that the Lord is God.  
He made us, and we belong to him;  
we are his people, we are his flock.

Enter the temple gates with thanksgiving,  
go into its courts with praise.  
Give thanks to him and praise him.

The Lord is good;  
his love is eternal  
and his faithfulness lasts forever.

It is this attitude towards God which Saint Bonaventure sees as expressing itself in a number of practices which are part of the Liturgy or at least are associated with it. He writes:

God ought to be highly feared, honored, and loved by us. First, thinking about his omnipotence and justice should make us greatly fear him, because he is perfectly within his rights to condemn us or to spare us. Out of this fear come sorrow for our sins, remorse, sighs, tears, striking the breast, petitions, fasting, penances, pilgrimages, and the like. Secondly, thinking about his wisdom and excellence should make us greatly honor him. Out of this honor come veneration and reverence, genuflections and bows, prostrations, prayers, purifications, consecrations, the cleaning of sacred vessels along with the decoration and beautifying of vestments, feasts, celebrations, and solemnities with many lights, the singing of psalms, hymns, and readings, and other similar activities. Thirdly, thinking about his goodness and mercy should make us love him without limit. Out of this love come thanksgiving, praises, hymns, blessings, sacred vows, the use of incense, and so forth [De Praep. ad missam, 17; 8, 105a-b].

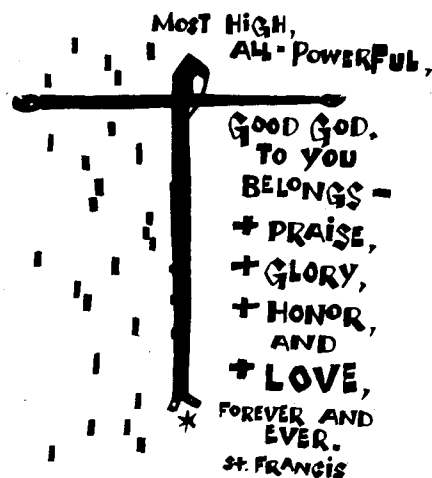
The attitudes of fear, honor, and love express themselves also by calling to mind the wonderful deeds of God. Indeed one might almost say that this is the favorite way in which the Jews and the early Christians expressed their worship. In the Old Testament telling of the wonders of God's goodness forms the theme of many of the Psalms (e.g., 17 [8, 102-06]). The New Testament contains all those poems which we recite as canticles in the divine Office. Saint Paul's introduc-

tion to the hymn to Christ as Creator and Savior at the beginning of his Letter to the Colossians sums it up:

With joy give thanks to the Father, who has made you fit to have your share of what God has reserved for his people in the kingdom of light. He rescued us from the power of darkness and brought us safe into the kingdom of his dear Son, by whom we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven [Col. 1:12-14].

The Church has from the earliest times given expression to this way of worshiping God by means of liturgical feasts, and later, liturgical seasons. Among the feasts are those which recall the main saving events of Jesus' life, and the consequences of these "for us men and for our salvation" (Nicene Creed). Others bring to mind the saints in whom Christ's saving power achieves its full effect, and who are among the greatest signs of God's goodness and power.

It is interesting as we go through Saint Bonaventure's sermons to see how nearly all of them belong to particular Sundays and feast days of the liturgical year. Consequently it comes as no surprise to find that the general constitutions which come out of the general chapter held at Narbonne in 1260 under Saint Bonaventure contain several provisions about liturgical feasts. The Feast of the Holy Trinity is introduced on the octave day of Pentecost. There are special regulations about the Office for the commemoration of the four doctors of the western Church, Saints Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, and Ambrose, as well as for Saint Bernard and Saint Clare, whose name is also added to the litany. The hymn to Mary after Night Prayer is introduced into the Office, as well as Saint Francis' name in the formula for the confession of sins at the beginning of Mass. These constitutions also have various detailed instructions about how the Office and Mass are to be celebrated on various feasts of our Lord and on saints' days (Definitions, 8, 465b-67b).



Saint Bonaventure was equally aware of the liturgical seasons as each emphasizing some or other aspect of God's saving work in men.

He sees Advent, for instance, as the season in which people can open themselves to and expect to receive five graces that are most necessary for living the Christian life successfully. These are *serenity*, whereby one even now tastes something of eternal bliss and the joy that goes with it; *tranquillity*, or the quiet of silence in the devoted person's mind and heart, which is peace; *sincerity*, which gives one purity of faith in Christ's divinity and humanity; *solidity*, or the firm hope of eternal happiness; and lastly *firmness*, which is perseverance in the courage of love (Dom. 2 Adv. sermo 7; 9, 55b). If you and I could make even a little of that our own each Advent, the Church would soon be swamped with candidates for canonization.

If Advent is the season which gives us some foretaste of eternal happiness and encourages us on our pilgrim way, Lent is the time for putting right our failures to live up to this. Saint Bonaventure uses the following comparisons to show the purpose of this penitential season. Referring to God leading the Israelites out of slavery (Lv. 23:42), he says, "By Egypt is meant that state of sin, from which the Lord has led us out by the blessed Lent which is just past" (De s. Marco evang. sermo 2, 2; 9, 527a). So he can pick up a social custom of the time to show how this action on God's part should affect us:

On Easter day it is the custom for people to put off their old clothes and put on new ones, as well as eat new food. So we too in this paschal season should cast off our old sins and clothe ourselves in new garments, that is, virtues. This is what it means "to live a new life" (Rm. 6:4) [Dom. 2 post Pascha sermo 5; 6, 304b].

Having exchanged past sin for newly acquired virtue, however, the Christian can really celebrate his own liberation and that of all believers. Saint Bonaventure leaves us in no doubt about how exciting this new freedom is. He says:

Today the festival day of exultation and happiness has dawned upon us, the paschal joy of great delight has come to us, because we are invited to the wedding feast of the risen Lamb and his bride, our mother the Church. So rejoice in spirit, my brothers, exult in the sacramental celebration, giving glory to God with our voices as we sing sweet and joyful praise to Christ our Redeemer and his bride. Let us rejoice, I say, for the increase of our happiness, let us exult for the fruit of our confidence, let us give glory to God for the triumph of victory [In resurr. Domin sermo 1; 9, 272a-b].

God's saving love and power does not work only on special days and in certain seasons. Day by day, and throughout each day, God is busy freeing people from all that can separate them from him and filling them with his life. It is by regularly recalling God's saving goodness throughout each day, and responding to it with praise and thanksgiving, humble asking and deep sorrow, that the Church lays hold on this saving work and new life for her members. She does this in the divine Office and the Mass. The Office is, then, one of the Church's main power stations from which she draws the energy to carry on Christ's work in the world.

Saint Bonaventure spells this out in the six reasons he gives in *The Six Wings of the Seraph* why the Holy Spirit inspired the Church to introduce the divine Office (7, 1-2, 5-9; 8, 147a-49b).

1. Christ is present with us on earth both sacramentally and spiritually. It is only right, therefore, that we should offer him reverence, honor, and praise in our own humble way, and in union with the heavenly choir of angels and saints constantly sing God's praises. Although we cannot continually sing his glory as they do, nonetheless we can put our heart and soul into serving him at the times set aside for the Office. In this way our life is brought into line with the Church in heaven in our own earthly way. Saint Bonaventure sums this reason up neatly in one of his sermons on the angels: "Let us praise the Lord our God. For what reason indeed are intelligence and a tongue given to a person, except to praise God and proclaim his greatness?" (*De ss. angelis sermo 5*; 9, 630a).

2. As we remember God's goodness to us we should never give up thanking and praising him and praying to him at regular intervals. Certain times of the day and night suggest to us Jesus' various saving actions and sufferings on our behalf. It is only right that we should never forget these deeds of his generosity towards us, and commemorate them at the times the Church lays down.

3. The fire of our love for God can easily burn down through laziness or the activities and troubles of daily life. It is important, therefore, that we add the wood of the divine praises regularly to make our love for God burn up high again. As Saint Bonaventure puts it,

The third way of acquiring salvation is by the abundance of divine praise. As is said in Proverbs: "The soul who blesses will be enriched" (11:25) and this with divine blessings. This should be done with all one's heart, for all one's tasks, and at all times [*De Assumpt. B. V.M. sermo 6*; 9, 686b].

4. The regular times of the Office encourage the simple faithful to pray. When they know that religious are praying the Office in church, they feel drawn to go there too and to stay there praying as long as it lasts. This helps the people to develop the habit of praying regularly at fixed times.

5. By the Office we give witness that our faith is the true religion. People of other religions gather at various times for worship. How much more should not we, who have the real Sacraments, gather frequently to celebrate and venerate them, and sing fitting praise to their Creator? In this way we open ourselves to receive a greater share of God's grace plus eternal life, and attract others to reverence and love the true faith.

6. Lastly, the office is an important means of building up one's devotion to God. This devotion brings light to the mind so that it can think as Jesus would. It makes the will thirst for Jesus and the good he wants from us, making good works pleasant to carry out. It makes us strong to go forward in spiritual growth, and gives us endurance when things are difficult. It makes us hate sin and strive for virtue, so that we can behave and speak as we should. It stimulates us to want to know more about the faith. It fills us with hope and confidence, especially that our prayers will be answered. It makes a man kind and affectionate. It makes us desire heaven, and so not get caught up in the things of this world.

So we can understand why the divine Office is so important for the individual's spiritual health, the welfare of the Catholic community, and as a witness to those who do not belong to the Church.

This is the reason why Saint Bonaventure is so insistent that the Office deserves our full attention, and should be performed in an orderly manner with each one doing his own part properly, with enthusiasm, and reverently in a clear voice but without noisy disturbance: "At other times we act on God's behalf, but here we stand before him, direct ourselves towards him, and speak to him, while at the same time we also beg his assistance in all our needs" (*De sex alis seraphim* 7, 9; 8, 149b).

It is in order to make sure that the divine Office is recited that the Holy See wants the friars to live together as communities in fixed houses. And one of the reasons why the friars prefer large communities to small ones, is that the divine Office can be performed more beautifully in a larger community (*Determinationes quaestionum* 2, 11, 15; 8, 366a, 367b).

While all that has just been said about the Office may be true, it is

not always so easy to be convinced about it in practice when there is pressure of work, especially work for the good of other people. This is by no means only a problem of the twentieth century. Even in the thirteenth century people were asking why Saint Francis burdened his friars with an Office which took up so much time and energy, when he expected them to be busy preaching, with all the time for study that is needed if that job is to be done well. Saint Bonaventure replied:

Saint Francis wanted his Order to do all it could to keep its way of life one with that of the Roman Church. This is because he knew that the Church was directly subject to God, that it had been set up by the Lord himself, and ruled over by the holy fathers of the Church, who had the wisdom and the authority to guide the whole world. This did not, however, stop them praising God by means of this long Office, as the Roman Church still does today, even though it has to govern the whole Church. Although these men had such a grave responsibility for other people's welfare, they nevertheless appreciated the great value of praising God. They knew that praise in short measure means merit in short measure. No one else has anywhere near the same responsibility as the Roman Church has, which requires wisdom for ruling and enlightening the whole Church. So no one should cut down on the office for the sake of the ministry or study [Expos. super reg. frat. min. 3, 2; 8, 407a].

Again, we might be tempted to think that was all right for "the age of faith," as the middle ages are sometimes called, but that our situation is so much more difficult. I do not think Saint Bonaventure would agree. When answering the question why Franciscans preach and hear confessions, he describes the state of the Church and the pastoral needs at that time. The Holy See had instituted the Franciscans and Dominicans and sent them out to preach and administer the Sacrament of Penance because the people were not being properly looked after. There was a rapid growth of population, especially among the less educated people. The good living people were few, and sinful ways were spreading. Heretics were busy trying to draw the people away from the Church to their sects and false teachings. There were many new and bewildering problems. There was considerable social unrest, which threatened to affect the Church itself. This difficult situation was further complicated by the insufficiencies of the clergy: they were too few; some were a cause of scandal due to the bad example of their lives; and many were simply not equipped to handle the current problems (*Quare frat. min. praedicient et confessiones audiunt* 9; 8, 377a).

Does this sound all that different from the world we live in? If in all this, the Office, longer at that time than today, was seen as an essential dimension of the gospel life of Franciscans, it can hardly be a less important aspect of evangelization today. Ω

## Word and Music for Good Friday

Bread from Heaven  
born from the womb  
of our earth  
be the Staff of our song  
Pure note of Mary  
tuned to eternity  
fiat forth  
hymn God's Word  
Prison-held voice  
sing free  
"Look not on my sins  
but the faith of Your Church"  
Chant of the Church  
rising for captives  
(note: Peter barred  
escapes to rest)  
Composer Christ  
cached in cacophony—  
faith  
holds promissory note  
Bride's pure note  
(Spirited movement)  
cymbals salvation  
"Come Lord Jesus"

Sister M. Mercedes, P.C.C.

## Book Reviews

*Saint Francis of Assisi: Essays in Commemoration, 1982.* Edited by Maurice W. Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap. St. Bonaventure, NY: The Franciscan Institute, 1982. Pp. xiv-194. Paper, \$12.50.

Reviewed by Brother John-Charles, S.S.F., who has taught at the General Theological Seminary in New York and served as Assistant Bishop of Adelaide (South Australia) and Bishop of Polynesia, as well as Guardian of the Friary in Brisbane.

This first volume in a new series, *Franciscan Pathways*, brings together in convenient form a notable collection of eleven essays written in this century in honor of Saint Francis. From different ecclesiastical traditions and backgrounds eminent interpreters of the Seraphic Father Francis challenge us with their insights and the questions they raise. The volumes in which the essays first appeared are either out of print or not readily obtained. Their reappearance is therefore all the more welcome. This book is an excellent start to what promises to be a valuable on-going contribution to a wider understanding of Saint Francis and Franciscanism.

"Francis's ideal, overwhelmed in every encounter with practical circumstances during [eight] hundred years, can still prick the cheap vanities of a civilization deceived by material success . . ." (p. 145). Under that challenge we stand today perhaps more naked and condemned than previous generations. These

essays help us to face it.

"Whenever a man of prayer, a man of God, appears, whenever a man achieves the authentic religious relationship with God, others come to join themselves to him; a community comes to exist" (p. 69). All three Orders today claim that inspiration. Yet, now as always, the same charism granted to Francis challenges afresh to renewal and rediscovery. These essays plot the course of any genuine endeavor to respond.

What does it mean to be a Franciscan? There are in these essays, as in all such attempts, many diverse answers to the question. All of them have some validity. Each of them is partial. How do we hold them in balance? This is perhaps the greatest issue raised by a careful and prayerful reading of this book. Because our age has so much in common with that of Francis our responsibility to make an adequate response is all the weightier. These essays emphasize, in varied ways, that his concerns are, or ought to be, ours. Not least is this true if we accept Professor Ray C. Petry's conclusion that Francis "made it perpetually embarrassing for a few men to enjoy rights and to wield powers made possible by the deprivation of the many" (p. 143).

Taken as a whole the collection recalls us to fundamental Franciscan imperatives and reminds us of the charism without which response is impossible. The incarnational emphases of an authentic Franciscanism, its Eucharistically-centered life, the brand of a conception of poverty puzzling to practical

minds and "elusive to logical reasoning" (p. 100) are all highlighted. Above all else Christ as the center, Christ as Lord of all, is proclaimed as the hallmark of the true follower of Francis. That discipleship will lead all who are faithful to it to a prophetic announcement of "transcendent values" (p. 146).

In these pages Francis, through contemporary voices, calls us to the risks of openness to God, to others, and to ourselves; openness to nature and to events. To respond demands prayer for the gift of discernment. The authors represented here all have a claim to be a part of that process of discernment.

The ecclesial fidelity of Francis, as many of these authors show, is an essential element in the permanence of his vision. Reflection on this will challenge all who sit lightly to authority to rethink its place in our vocation. That remains true whatever our ecclesiastical obedience.

Francis, who is doubtless surprised and delighted, has brought into being, as several essayists note, Anglican and Lutheran Franciscans as well as those of the Roman Catholic obedience. This fact, as Friedrich Heiler, a German Lutheran, noted in 1926, provides a ground of unity which transcends, without obliterating, differences. As "the great apostle of reconciliation" (p. 130) Saint Francis certainly invites his children in all three communions to be more active together in building on what we have in common as a way towards that unity for which we all long. It is that conviction which is the strongest impression left on me after reading this book. Under that

hope we all stand in judgment.

All who use this book will join me in gratitude for Father Sheehan's judicious choice of the essays.

*St. Francis: Model of Wholeness.* By John Pilch. Kansas City, MO: NCR Cassettes, 1981. 5 cassettes (4 hours, 40 minutes) in vinyl album, \$44.95.

Reviewed by Father Stephen Malkiewicz, O.F.M., M.A. (Liturgics, University of Notre Dame), Guardian at Holy Name Friary, postnovitiate student friary of the Assumption Province, and Associate Director of Formation of the same.

1981/82 have certainly been years of celebration for Franciscans. Now we have a series of five cassettes by Dr. John Pilch on Saint Francis as a model of wholeness. Pilch writes extensively on health, wellness, and Scripture (his first love). While the lectures recorded on the tapes appear to have been originally delivered to religious women in the health field, they are suitable to all who are interested in the spiritual journey framed by the wellness theory and contemporary research on the stages of life. In addition, Francis is given the honor of illustrating the points raised by the author. Pilch defines wellness as "an ever-expanding experience of pleasurable and purposeful living that you and I create and direct for ourselves in any way we want but especially as motivated by spiritual values and religious beliefs." The values and beliefs raised are those close to the heart of Francis. But I wonder if they would have been

different for any other well integrated person—say, Teresa of Avila?

The first two tapes concentrate on an orientation to wellness as a holistic spirituality. Pilch singles out five key elements: purpose in life, joys and satisfaction of life, freedom of self determination, motivation, and life as (constant) change. His method is first to seek out some commonly held assumptions, then listen to what the Scriptures have to say, and finally to correlate the point with writings either of or about Francis. Pilch's insights into Scripture are particularly enlightening; his handling and acquaintance with Franciscan sources is rather vast: Francis himself, Thomas of Celano, Saint Bonaventure, the *Sacrum commercium*, the *Speculum Perfectionis*, and, especially, the *Floretti*.

The last three tapes deal with wellness and the stages of life: young adulthood (forming the dream), middle adulthood (integrating polarities), and late adulthood (reconciliation, wisdom, and holiness). He first summarizes research on the stages of life (primarily that of Daniel Levinson, Gail Sheehy, and Alfred McBride) and then puts Francis through these same stages. What emerges is a picture of Francis particularly human, well integrated, and yet changing by the grace of the moment.

As mentioned above, Pilch knows and integrates his material well. He consistently gives credit to his sources and peppers his lectures with amusing anecdotes from his own past and from religious life. However, some might find his colloquialness abrasive. Also, at times, he is rather

quick on the draw. For example, in speaking about the Rule of 1223, he states that it is "obviously not from the heart of Francis."

In sum, the taped lectures raise challenges and celebrate the memory of Francis in terms of life's journey and crises. Pilch invites the listener to apply the information to him/herself as well as to become better acquainted with fundamental Franciscan sources.

**The Franciscan Revival in the Anglican Communion.** By Barrie Williams. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982. Pp. 241. Paper, U.K. £6.95.

Reviewed by Brother John-Charles, S.S.F., whose account of Anglican Franciscanism appeared in our April, 1981, issue.

This is the first attempt to tell at length the story of the origins, growth, and development of the Franciscan movement in modern Anglicanism. Barrie Williams has made good use of original sources and documents as well as of the memories and writings of those who still survive the early days of some of the communities involved. He also makes some wise judgments and asks some provocative questions. This is a valuable addition to Franciscan history and a fitting Anglican present to Saint Francis in the recent anniversary year. The complicated story and the interweaving of many strands are skillfully dealt with, engagingly told, and clearly set out. The story lives in this well written work on which future scholars will depend for guidance.

## Franciscan Studies M.A. Program Summer 1983 Offerings

The student may pursue a general course of study or specialize in research or in spiritual direction within the program of Franciscan Studies.

All courses meet daily, Monday through Friday, in Plassmann Hall, except as noted.

NEW STUDENTS who are studying for a degree and who will be at The Institute during the year and are enrolled in the Spiritual Direction Track must take courses FS 500 and 539 this summer.

ALL OTHER NEW STUDENTS pursuing a degree must take FS 500 this summer.

STUDENTS ENROLLING in the Spiritual Direction Track must attend two summer sessions because some required courses for this track are not offered during the year.

Course	Title	Credits	Days	Instructor
FS 500	Bibliography	1	MWF	To be announced
FS 502	Sources for the Life of St. Francis	3	M-F	Fr. Maurice Sheehan, O.F.M.Cap.
FS 504	Life of Saint Francis	3	M-F	Fr. Conrad L. Harkins, O.F.M.
FS 506	Survey of Franciscan History	3	M-F	Fr. Lawrence Landini, O.F.M.
FS 508	History of Franciscan Thought	3	M-F	Fr. Joachim Giermek, O.F.M.Conv.
FS 509	History of Franciscan Spirituality	3	M-F	Fr. Cyprian Lynch, O.F.M.
FS 539	Spiritual Direction and the Franciscan Tradition	2	MWF	Fr. Maury Smith, O.F.M.
FS 561	The Development of the Franciscan Person	2	MTTHF	To be announced
FS 517	Introduction to Palaeography	2	By arrangement	Dr. Girard Etzkorn
FS 520	Writings of St. Francis and St. Clare	2	MTWF	Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap.
FS 650	Seminar	2	MTTHF	Fr. Constantine Koser, O.F.M.
FS 527	Pioneering Franciscan Sisters of the 19th Century		One week only	Five professors to be announced
FS 524	Theology of Christ according to Franciscan Masters	2	MTWF	Fr. George Marcil, O.F.M.
FS 534	Franciscan Reforms and Renewal Today	2	MWTHF	Fr. Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M.
FS 570	Practicum	1	By arrangement	Staff
FS 599	Independent Research	1-2	By arrangement	Staff
FS 699	Master's Thesis	6	By arrangement	Staff

STUDENTS MAY FULFILL A MAXIMUM OF SIX CREDITS FROM COURSES OFFERED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GRADUATE THEOLOGY.

### CALENDAR

Registration .....	Monday, June 27
Classes Begin .....	Tuesday, June 28
Modern Language Exam .....	Friday, July 8
Final Exams .....	Friday, August 5

### FEES

Tuition per graduate hour .....	\$120.
Room and Board .....	\$510.
Fees are subject to change without prior notice.	
Individual courses are subject to cancellation because of insufficient enrollment.	

### PRE-REGISTRATION

Pre-registration forms are available from the Office of Graduate Studies, St. Bonaventure University, St. Bonaventure, New York 14778. Students who pre-register need not report for registration on June 27.

### ACADEMIC YEAR OFFERINGS

THE FRANCISCAN STUDIES M.A. Program may be pursued during the Summer, Autumn, and Spring Semesters. The required number of course credits can be obtained in two Summer sessions and the intervening academic year, or in six Summer sessions.