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The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The illustrations for our June issue have been drawn by Sister Donna Weber, F.S.P.A., who teaches art at Sacred Heart High School, Miles City, MT, is Head of RENEW and of the Liturgy Committee in her parish and Vicar for Religious Women in the Miles City Vicariate of Great-Falls/Billings Diocese.

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 Superiors1 EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo EpMin: Letter to a Minister EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father

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 1. Il refer to First and Second Editions.

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221

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 Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis

FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

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



One Is Your Teacher— One, Your Magisterium

NE OF THE THINGS I share about myself on marriage encounter weekends (an apostolate I have worked in and praised for years) is that visiting speakers don't seem to get me as angry any more. In the decade 1968-1978, I judged that much of what was being passed off as "continuing education" was continuing miseducation. And I was often on my feet at a meeting reminding speakers their views were not what the Catholic Church teaches. Over the past five years or so I personally have come to tolerate 90 percent orthodoxy and try to profit from the positive insights our "continuing educators' might have. And there does seem to be less nonsense uttered than before.

Some recent "horror stories" have given me second thoughts. When a speaker addressing a group of religious educators advises, nay commands. that pupils be forbidden to read the first eleven chapters of Genesis "because they are all story"; and when a "reputable" faculty seeking to update priests is defending views about sexual morality condemned by the Holy See, then those charged with providing for the (indeed necessary) ongoing professional development of religious and clergy need to re-read Pope John Paul's Address to the Bishops of the United States (given October 5, 1979). There he reminds our bishops that the "sensus fidelium," the people's "feeling of faith," so often appealed to by experts teaching contrary to the Pope, is not independent of the Magisterium of the Church, but depends on their 'receiving intact the deposit of faith.' Nor is there room. in the Catholic faith, for a "theologians' magisterium," at odds with the Universal Magisterium headed by one who bears the title vicar of Christ.

Pope John Paul II in America, ed. Lucius Anness, S.F.M. (Andover.) Charisma Press, 1980), 41-42; The Pope in America: Addresser of Pope John (Wanderer Press, 1979), 53-58. it Thiresally

I am familiar with the common defense of "deviations": they exist in the minds of the hearers, not the speakers." I don't generally accept it, for it is the responsibility of an educator—particularly an educator in faith—to communicate accurately. Nor do I accept the weaseling and waffling by which "reputable" theologians try to say that they are not disagreeing with the Pope, only interpreting him. I resent people thinking that I am so stupid I can't tell when their "interpretations" are outright denials. Recently a sign outside the Church up the street carried the slogan, "We often find what will do, by finding what will not do." Catholic moralists have often used this maxim in treating of sexuality and life questions like abortion, and it seems to me the approach that is being taken in the debate on nuclear arms. After all, to be a follower of Jesus, we need to know what kinds of things he would never do.

Plato long ago suggested—wrongly—that education was the answer to all men's problems. Twentieth-century religious may be making a similar mistake. The need all we religious have is for ongoing formation, formation in the Gospels. The direction that formation might well take is outlined nicely in the allocutions of John Paul II to Religious.² We have probably experienced some "horror stories" in this area too: the discouraging of confession and daily communal Eucharist, for example. Superiors to have to be vigilant in selecting those who will further educate their charges. Some of the charges may have to be more militant in challenging what is not of faith, and all are called to be more obedient to the one Teacher, Christ, and to the One Magisterium, that of the Church.

Ir Julian Davies ofm

Meet and Love Fra Jacopone da Todi

RAPHAEL BROWN, S.F.O.

WITH THE LONG overdue and happily welcome publication in the last two years of a first-rate biography and a very readable modern English translation of the poems of our great but little known Franciscan poet and mystic Fra Jacopone da Todi, it is indeed opportune to repeat and act on these truer than ever lines which the Secular Franciscan Frederic Ozanam wrote back in 1852: "It is time to open his book and to seek beneath the dust of its sadly neglected pages some of the most beautiful inspirations of Catholic mysticism."

Retired professor of Italian literature Dr. George T. Peck (a member of the Society of Friends) has given us in his splendid *The Fool of God, Jacopone da Todi* the only book in English on Jacopone—shame on us!—in the sixty long years since Evelyn Underhill's rich and still valuable "spiritual biography."

Peck's fine contribution was a Choice Outstanding Academic Book for 1980, and in my opinion fully merits a Franciscan "Pulitzer Prize" for Biography. I could not agree more with the Best Sellers review: "It is a rare treat indeed to have a scholarly work that is eminently readable and thoroughly enjoyable. This book is precisely that: sound scholarship that successfully holds a reader's interest through clear language and lively style." Two of its features which especially impressed and delighted me are its vivid treatment of the historical backdrop of social and economic conditions in Todi during Jacopone's time, i.e., the age of Dante, and its skillful tracing of the poet's psychological growth, that "makes that most turbulent inner world navigable" (Hughes).

²The allocutions have been collected in a volume entitled Allocutions of Pope John Paul II to Religious 1979-1980 and distributed by the Little Sisters of the Poor, 2325 N. Lakewood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614.

The Fool of God, Jacopone da Todi. By George T. Peck. University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1979. Pp. 246, illus. Cloth, \$16.75.

Jacopone da Todi, The Lauds. Translated by Serge and Elizabeth Hughes. Classics of Western Spirituality Series. New York: Paulist Fress, 1982. Pp. xxi-296. Cloth, \$11.95; paper, \$7.95.

This review-article should have appeared in 1980, but was postponed so as to include the new Hughes English version of Jacopone's poems, the equally excellent twin of Peck's book. Both books are almost like over-rich tasty fruitcakes, and both require and reward months of rereading and reflective study. Peck's biography is buttressed with forty pages of notes and bibliographical comments, and with numerous readable prose translations of excerpts from the poems.

I strongly urge all Franciscans to join us *jacoponati*. Take and read Peck and Hughes. Meet and love . . . Jacopone da Todi.

Before going further into the "turbulent" phenomenon of Fra Jacopone, I should briefly outline its main dramatic features for those who have yet to meet him and fall under his potent spell. Just as disciples of that other great Italian Renaissance mystic, Saint Catherine of Siena, were said to have become "caterinati," so too we who have been captivated by the appeal and charm of Todi's poet can be termed "jacoponati." Those who have had this experience know how inspiriting it is.

Giacomo di Benedetto, born in Todi about 1236 in a prosperous family, studied law at Bologna, became a notary in the booming business world of Todi, not just "notarizing" but drawing up all sorts of contracts and deeds and agreements. A brief marriage ended in the accidental death of his young wife. For the next ten years he reacted as an almost insane "fool for Christ," then joined the Franciscans as a lay brother and began to express his utter rejection of worldly values and his growing fervor and love for Jesus in biting satirical and soaring

Raphael Brown, S.F.O. and lay affiliate O.F.M., retired reference librarian of the Library of Congress and President of the San Luis Rey Fraternity in north San Diego County, California, has written several books and numerous articles on Franciscan themes, the latest of which is True Joy from Assisi.

lyrical poems. In more sober moods he also penned at least ten didactic poems, mostly allegorical, on the moral life: virtues and vices, faith versus reason, feeling versus conscience. Meanwhile he became intensely involved in the Franciscan Spiritual reform movement, culminating in the 1290's with active participation in the political rebellion of two Colonna cardinals against Pope Boniface VIII. After their defeat, Jacopone was excommunicated and languished six years in a friary prison. Freed by the next pope in 1303, he died on Christmas, 1306, in the arms of his good friend and fellow mystic, Blessed John of La Verna (see his life in Chapters 49–53 of The Little Flowers).

But beyond and beneath the bare, bald facts of his career burns the fiery, passionate personality of the great poet and penitent: rough, rude, even at times crude, tall, outsize, a giant, never lukewarm, tumultuous, tempestuous, tormented, fierce, fanatical, bizarre in his almost Slavic cult of folly for God, at times deliberately "crazy as a lark," much like "crazy" Brother Juniper. Yet also—ever growing, evolving, even mellowing with full maturity and mystic mastery of his inner volcano—Jacopone learned to practice Christ's crucial advice to him (in Laud 90): "Ordena questo amore"—control, set in order, discipline your passionate love of God.

Jacopone, moreover, was a calmly reasoning moralist in his didactic poems and a biting satirist in his profiles of sin-tripping Sunday-Christians and religious whose life style contradicts their profession of humility, poverty, and charity. He was a caustic critic and penetrating prophet whose poems "protest" against the decline and decay in the Church of his pre-Avignon era.

But above all, he was a marvelously inspired and insightful mystic, describing in magic music the mysteries of the inner life of the Christian seeking union with Jesus, climbing from contrition and conversion through tears and tender devotion up the Tree of Life toward the unexplored summit of transforming union and the mystical espousals and marriage. And all those steps and stages eloquently evoked from his intimate, daily experience, his own inner heart-and-soul life.

* * *

THAT IS WHAT we find and relish in the excellent new English translation by Serge and Elizabeth Hughes, in which a striking Preface by Elemire Zolla, an Italian expert on comparative mysticism, sketches some parallels between Jacopone and the Sufi and other esoteric

mystical schools. The translators' 65-page introduction ably outlines the poet's career and inner evolution, with perhaps too much attention to older Italian literature historians. A very helpful feature is the remarkably full "Index to Text," which covers in detail such topics as hope, Jesus Christ, love, etc., and yet omits folly or madness.

But the main value of this book lies in the 200 pages that bring to us the 92 authentic Lauds or poems of Jacopone in a pleasing, flowing, readable, modern English style, thus achieving for the first time a real communication between the poet and his English-language friends. (Unfortunately, the 34 poems in the Underhill biography were translated by Mrs. Theodore Beck in a conflated Victorian style that was as untrue to the stark original as would be Dante or the Gospels translated by Lord Tennyson; moreover, five of the 34 are apocryphal.)

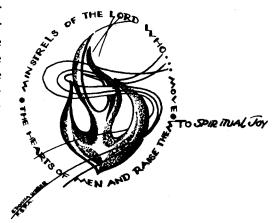
When reviewing a translation we must answer two questions: Is it faithful in style and content, and is it complete? As a whole, my impression is that the Hughes version adheres to the poet's content or meaning more than to his deliberately blunt, rough, rugged, and highly individualistic personal style. Just one example: in his Laud 62 on Saint Francis, Jacopone has the Poverello retort in these lapidary words to the Devil's urging him to withdraw to the desert: "I am not sent to flee. Rather, I come to hunt." The Hughes version has: "I did not come into this world to shirk my duty. Pressing on, I will lay siege." However, various other passages which I have checked are much more faithful in both style and content. As to completeness, the 1974 critical edition of Franco Mancini adds 96 verses to four poems from other manuscripts, and it includes seven additional poems, running to 40 pages, which he considers perhaps or probably authentic. Hughes omits this material. (One minor typo slip: the "81" on the last line of page 64 should be 71.)

The Hughes book contains the standard 91 Lauds of the 1490 and 1953 (Ageno) editions (counting but omitting the apocryphal Laud 86), plus as Laud 93 the dramatic Marian "Donna del Paradiso." It does not include the Latin Stabat Mater dolorosa, as both Ageno and Mancini deny that Jacopone wrote it.

It also retains the traditional ordering of the Lauds more or less by subject and conjectured chronology. However, it provides no classified list or guide to the subjects treated, which is regrettable, as such a breakdown is sorely needed. Without guidance, a new reader might by chance dip into the book and fall upon one or more of the nine mostly long, didactic, doctrinal-moral allegories of the virtues

which the poet probably wrote for the instruction of novices and students and which modern critics consider artificial and tedious, hardly "the real" Jacopone. Those skippable Lauds are 13, 36, 43, 70, 71, 74, 78, 87, and 88. If you want to sample them, try 13 and 36. These arid allegories remind us of Dante's dull discourses.

Among other fascinating links or parallels between the poems of Jacopone and The Divine Comedy of his more famous contemporary Dante, the collection of the former's Lauds might also be divided into a Jacoponian Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso along these lines. After the



lovely first two Marian Lauds, corresponding to the role of Mary, Beatrice, and Lucy in Canto 1 of the Inferno, Jacopone takes us—without a Virgil—through a kind of hell-on-earth of the misery of the sinning human condition in bondage to the world, flesh, and devil. Unlike Dante, Jacopone treats the dwellers of his "hell" with spicy, racy, sardonic satire, yet with Dantean mordant realism: sins having the deadly stink of toilets or being like lice with their eggs or famished fleas. These fierce, savage satires aimed at so-called Christians comprise Lauds 3, 5–9, 14, and 22–24. Allied to them are those on the medieval Dance of Death theme, i.e., the death experience of worldlings, especially wealthy materialists: Lauds 9, 12, 15, 18–21, and 25.

Then we advance into a kind of Purgatorio in which sinners pray for and obtain conversion with expiating contrition and penance: Lauds 4, 10, 11, 13, 26, 27, 34, 35, 37, 38, 47, 48. In this new life, the born again Christian enters into a personal relationship with Jesus his Savior: Lauds 39-42 and 44-46 (46 is a magnificent ode to the Eucharist). At this point he finds inner peace (Laud 49) and joy in the Cross (73, 75).

Next, as in The Divine Comedy the last Cantos of the Purgatorio deal critically with the Church, so we find in Jacopone's Lauds 50 through 62 a searing treatise on the sad state of the Catholic Church around the year 1300; to which should be added Lauds 32-34 warning against the then rising heresy of the Brethren of the Free Spirit. After deploring—and making Christ deplore—the spreading moral decay among the clergy, Jacopone with all the prophetic daring of a Jeremiah wrote one poem-epistle to Pope Celestine V and three to his arch foe, Pope Boniface VIII, plus another (55) from his foul friary prison cell packed with wry and realistic irony, making it one of the finest examples of Gulag literature.

Organically related to this Church section are his specifically Franciscan poems: Lauds 61-62 on Saint Francis, 59-60 on Lady Poverty, and 17 and 28-31 on proud, over-intellectual, and otherwise unworthy friars. Also Laud 63, a prose and verse Letter to Blessed John of La Verna on true Franciscan joy in suffering.

Only now, like Dante, are we duly prepared to soar with Fra Jacopone heavenward, or as he puts it in three Lauds (69, 88, 89) to climb up the branches of the mystic Tree of Life which is Christ himself. It is in these last very great Lauds 64–68, 73, 75–77, 79–85, and 89–92, that the fiery Franciscan poet and mystic, whom Saint Bernardine of Siena aptly called "our holy modern David," attains that Everest-like summit of experience of intimate union with God which some saints have reached but very few have described at all or so fully.

MUCH COULD AND should be written about the mysticism and contemplative spirituality of Jacopone, his major achievement and contribution. But unfortunately, as with Saint Bonaventure, all too little is available, especially in English. The best and "most important recent study" (Peck) is by Professor Alvaro Bizziccari of the University of Connecticut, "L'amore mistico nel canzoniere di Jacopone da Todi," in Italica (UC Santa Barbara) 45.1 (1968), 7–24; it should be translated or at least abstracted in **The CORD**. In English we have only some

still valid pages in Underhill's Jacopone da Todi, two good articles by Arrigo Levasti, and some fine pages by Peck and Hughes.

It is the greatest glory of Fra Jacopone that he did exactly what Saint Francis wanted his friars to do: be "minstrels of the Lord, who must move the hearts of men and raise them to spiritual joy" (LP 88). Thus he has an honored rank in that merry line of Franciscan troubadours that began with the Poverello and extends through Brother Pacifico, Raymond Lull, and Saint Charles of Sezze down to Louis Le Cardonnel, Emile Ripert, Sebastian Temple, Eric Doyle, Murray Bodo, John Michael Talbot, and Colettine Mother Mary Francis.

Jacopone has rightly been called "ever the troubadour of God" and "that Laureate of Folly." I would add "the Laureate of Franciscan contemplation." For in his personality and life and writings I find and relish more and more a beautiful synthesis of much—not all—of what I have most loved in Saint Francis and Brother Giles and Saint Bonaventure: that soaring, loving, joyful Franciscan "spirit of prayer and devotion" rephrased and sung in simple, powerful, profound, prayerful poetry. So I strongly urge all Franciscans to join us jacoponati. Take and read Peck and Hughes. Meet and love our great mystic Brother Jacopone da Todi. Climb with him to God. Ω

Prayer for Good Will

Dear Lord, please give me the grace to renounce and overcome my self will by applying my free will to doing Your Holy Will here and now with good will because only in Your Will is our peace and our joy now and forever. Amen.

Raphael Brown, S.F.O.

Franciscan Spirituality

ALOISIO CARDINAL LORSCHEIDER

ONE OF THE MOST important occasions in my life was the day when for the first time I met a priest and conversed with him. I very much wanted to be a priest, without, however, having ever revealed that desire, for when I was small we lived at a good distance from the priests.

Early Vocation and Training

THIS PRIEST who first spoke to me about my vocation was a Dutch Franciscan. I was accepted for the minor seminary when I was but nine years old. With great affection I recall those years in the Seraphic Seminary at Taquari, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. It was my good fortune always to have had wonderful teachers; they were men of exemplary life, those Dutch Franciscans. In 1942 I entered the novitiate in the Franciscan Order. That year of novitiate made a great impact on me. It was the year in which I came to know the surpassing worth of the life of grace. I made my solemn profession in 1946 and was ordained to the priesthood in 1948.

It was my privilege to have lived for two long periods in Rome—one from 1949 to 1952 as a student priest; the other from 1958 to 1962 as professor and Director of Students at the International Franciscan College, the Antonianum. During those years in Rome new horizons opened up for me, enlarging my vision of the Franciscan Order, of the Church, and of the world in general.

These reflections on Franciscan spirituality have been selected and translated from the Portuguese by Father Alexander Wyse, O.F.M., from a wide-ranging interview published in the monthly review Vozes, vol. 75, n. 9, and are here reprinted with permission. Father Alexander served for many years on the staff of the Academy of American Franciscan History in West Bethesda, Maryland, and is currently assigned to Saint Anthony Shrine in Boston.

I consider it a very great grace to have been called to the religious life in the Franciscan Order. When I entered the minor seminary of the Franciscans, in truth I knew nothing about Saint Francis of Assisi. My family was more acquainted with the Jesuits, and at home it was rather Saint Ignatius and the three Jesuit Martyrs of Rio Grande do Sul who were the object of our veneration and thoughts. At that time, I wanted above all else to be a priest—I didn't have the least thought of any other vocation. I wanted to be a priest, because I believed that a priest would not be lost. God, it seems, uses the most diverse means to realize His loving plan in the life of each one of us.

Life in the friary, life in the fraternity, I have always loved and esteemed. Living in large communities, everywhere I found the same spirit of brotherliness, simplicity, generous service in the communities in which I successively lived: Daltro Filho (Garibaldi, Rio Grande do Sul), Divinópolis (Minas Gerais), Taquari (Rio Grande do Sul), and Rome. Even today in my life as a bishop I perceive my religious family as an important factor. Though outside the community, I feel that the Franciscan fraternity accompanies me. Where I am most at ease is in the friary.

His weapon is humility, meekness, pardon, perfect joy, the love of Lady Poverty. This is the highest efficiency of the inefficient Francis.

I always had a great interest in the life of Saint Francis of Assisi, in Franciscan thought and spirituality. The greater part of my years in the fraternity (when already trained in dogmatic theology), I spent in teaching my young confreres. I think of that as among the most beautiful and delightful periods of my life.

Franciscan Bishop

ELECTED BISHOP IN 1962, in the beginning I was lost. The first difficulty I had was in managing money. In all my life I had never had to deal with money: whatever was strictly necessary was provided for me. My second difficulty was to undertake the ministry of the episcopacy without the slightest preparation—and this for the first time in my life outside the friary. Named residential bishop of Santo Angelo, I would

have preferred a nomination as auxiliary bishop. It would have been easier to start that way and then later become a residential bishop. But, as the proverb has it, one learns to swim by swimming.

It was thus that bit by bit I got used to the idea of being a bishop and went on learning the art. Now a bishop almost twenty years, I have learned the following: it is easier to be the bishop of a diocese than the Director of Student Priests in an International College! Likewise, to date I have not come to suffer much from the so-called "episcopal cross." I see people with other jobs suffering much more than I. This talk of the "episcopal cross" must be a bit of poetry!

To be a bishop has been another of the riches of my life. When I entered the college of bishops, our bishops were not united as they are today. I was even scandalized with certain manifestations of failures in brotherly charity, of distrust, of misunderstanding. Vatican II was a good school for our episcopate. The difficulties faced by the Church, beginning especially in 1968, greatly contributed to uniting our episcopate. In the measure in which this union has grown, I have come to admire our bishops more and more. And the initial scandal was transformed into admiration and esteem.

Frankly I confess that the exercise of the episcopal ministry both in the Diocese of Santo Angelo and in my present post in the Archdiocese of Fortaleza has been for me very enriching. Another significant experience was the period of ten and a half years that I was able to give more direct service to the whole Brazilian hierarchy, first as Secretary General and then as President of the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). Included in this service also is the period during which I worked in the Latin American Bishops' Conference (CELAM) for a good six years.

In these years as bishop I have had the joy of dealing with many priests of our Brazil. The experience which I have had in relation to them is very positive: although numerically few, they are, by and large, very dedicated, open to sacrifice, very zealous, very much united to their bishops. As bishop, I enjoy preaching retreats to priests; as often as I can, I accept this task. I also like to attend to priests in confession: as bishop, I have always had consolation in priests' going to confession to me. In a word, one of the great forces in my life is the esteem I have for priests.

Franciscan Cardinal

IT IS NOT EASY for me to speak of my being a cardinal. I think of myself more as a bishop than as a cardinal. I often ask myself if the Church ought not, in the spirit of renewal that animates her since Vatican II, re-examine certain structures of a purely ecclesiastical character, which can obscure more than show forth the true faith in its living witness to today's world. I think, for instance, of the institution of canon, monsignor, cardinal. Our faithful, no matter how much these honorary titles are explained, hardly understand them. When I was named a cardinal, many people thought that I would be earning more money, and that I would in the future have greater ease, more conveniences, more privileges. There were even some priests who thought that the time had come to get me a bigger car, a more comfortable one! Does the cardinalate mean this? What should one think of these institutions in the context of a Poor Church? Not only that, but Vatican II seems to emphasize more the role of the Episcopal Conferences and, consequently, the importance of the President of the Episcopal Conferences.

It cannot be very easy for the Holy Father to make the selection of cardinals. He must undoubtedly suffer a great deal beforehand—and perhaps even more afterwards! The very human side of this is understandable. There is always someone who will feel that he has been passed over, though he may keep quiet. He suffers interiorly, not knowing why another and not he was chosen. One who is a cardinal—at least, it is so in my case—has to struggle a bit not to be overtaken by vanity and pride. Without willing it, the temptation is there, and he begins to think he is entitled to certain privileges. The real fact is that a measure of personal freedom is lost, and we become the object of fawning and flattery.

My most interesting experience as cardinal was taking part in the two conclaves in which John Paul I and John Paul II were elected. Another aspect of being cardinal—and this is more negative—is that as cardinal I have a less exact and less large vision of the life of the Church than I did when I was Secretary General and President of the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil.

Franciscan Spirituality

ATTEMPTING TO DESCRIBE my experience of the Absolute, may I say that I sense greatly the presence of God in my life. I sense God as Goodness, Mercy, Providence. I am very much aware of God as

Father. What at the present time engages me most is the effort to penetrate Jesus' intimate soul, to know what "his Father" meant to him. This Father of Jesus Christ, who is also our Father, attracts me greatly. Whenever I pray the Our Father, I make an interior effort to feel the filial warmth and force with which this prayer must have come from the heart of Jesus Christ. By preference I read the Gospel according to Saint John, since it seems to me that in this Gospel one finds more clearly expressed the relationship between the Son of God and God the Father.

I often ask myself about the meaning of that expression of Jesus: "No one knows the Son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the Son—and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him" (Mt. 11:27). How I should like a fuller revelation of this Father!

What does "to pray" mean? The definitions or descriptions from the spiritual authors are not unknown to me, but this does not mean that I am capable of saying exactly what it is to pray. How do I pray? I make an effort not to miss the Liturgy of the Hours, taking advantage of the Office of Readings as a special period for daily meditation. More and more I try to integrate the Eucharist and the Divine Office. I reflect a great deal on the meaning of the Eucharistic Prayer and how it should be prolonged for the whole day. I take a special pleasure in reading Holy Scripture; I find it a delight. In the midst of my work, of my travels, of my caring for the people, as often as I can in my own heart I make short spontaneous prayers. I frequently invoke the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. Toward Saint Joseph and Saint Francis of Assisi I have a special love. I direct my study and my reading as much as possible toward the exercise of my pastoral ministry. I seek to abandon myself utterly into the hands of God, who loves me much more than I am capable of loving myself. Frequent confession continues to be my habit.

Day by day I feel myself more drawn in solidarity for the poor and sick, to their service. In this connection I have not succeeded in realizing that identification which Jesus made between himself and the poor person: "As often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me" (Mt. 25:40). To me it does not seem difficult to love God or Jesus Christ—but to love one's neighbor as if he were Jesus, that I do not find so easy. A short time back I spent two and a half days in a hospital of lepers. All of the patients were disfigured, with the signs of the disease stamped on their face and their whole body. Within myself I began to think a lot on that saying of Jesus. I frankly admit, however, that I need much asceticism and great faith to overcome in

my heart what is of fallen nature rather than of nature raised up by grace. While there, I took my precautions so as not to be contaminated with the disease. I was very far from the generosity of Saint Francis. The kiss which he gave to the leper came to my mind many times. But the courage to do the same—I was a long way from that!

Being a Franciscan religious is a sort of bulwark for my life. I think of Franciscan spirituality as an ever-present force. I try not to forget this Franciscan background in my work. Likewise I have the clear impression that my Franciscan community is a constant support. Although outside the Order by reason of the ministry of the episcopal office, I do not feel myself isolated from my brethren.

Saint Francis and Today

ON THE OCCASION of the eighth centenary of Saint Francis' birth, it seems to me that for today's world and today's person the chief contributions of the Poverello's witness are these:

- 1. The contribution of joy. Saint Francis lived that perfect joy which he described for Brother Leo.
- 2. The contribution of the *spirit* of *liberty*. Francis was a free man in Christ. His liberation began the day when he had the courage to kiss the leper, the most abandoned outcast of the time. In this gesture Francis overcame his natural repugnance and himself, for he had already found the Absolute One.



- 3. The directing of his whole life toward his God and All. A whole night was not enough for him to proclaim that God was All, and that he, Francis, was nothing, a vile little worm. In this God, his All, the only Good, the whole Good, Francis learned increasingly to love his neighbor, made to the image and likeness of God, and to love the world created beautiful and good by God for the benefit of all. A free man, a freed man, a selfless man, a man filled with God, he was able to see in all things and in all persons the purity, the grandeur, the goodness of God the Father who had revealed himself in Jesus Christ, the Poor One. Francis celebrated with such love that Christmas night in Greccio, that the manger-crib of Jesus has entered into the devotion of the people.
- 4. His quality of being a man of the people. Francis was always sensitive to the aspirations and desires of the simple and the lowly, always at hand and intent on doing good for his fellow human beings. He was the man of the people without ceasing to be respectful of legitimate authority both within and outside the Church. Especially in relation to the Roman Pontiff, he wanted to be always obedient to the Holy Roman Church; in relation to the bishop, he did not want to preach or work contrary to his determination; in relation to the priest, he always reverenced him no matter how lowly or sinful he may appear.

It is in this framework of the spirit and action of Saint Francis that to be a Friar Minor is to be understood. In this, his love for the Word of God played an important part (his writings are a collection of passages from the sacred text), as well as his love for the Eucharist. He, the Lesser Brother, the Poverello, the suitor of Lady Poverty, was consumed by love, meditating on the immensity of the divine love which was manifested in the Incarnation of God's Son and was prolonged in the sacred Word and in the Most Holy Body and Blood of the Most High Son of God. Before the Word of God, Francis was a radical: "without gloss, without gloss, without gloss." As he read it, he wanted to live the gospel, radically. Today we know the same phenemonon: the little people, the poor ones, the lowly are in tune with the Word of God, not needing profound exegetical explanations.

To be poor today in the Franciscan perspective means to be simple, modest, austere, in search for effective ways of living justice and brotherly love in all their dimensions. It means to have in relation to all—to Christ, to the Church, to one's neighbor, to the world—the attitudes and the behavior of a Lesser Brother.

Franciscanism in Today's World

IN VIEW OF THE violence that characterizes the social, economic, and political relations in the world in which we live, there is need of a specifically Franciscan ethic. I know no better way to bring that spirit of Francis to the world so full of strife than the study and diffusion of the writings of Francis himself, as well as of what his contemporaries wrote about him, and what these centuries of literature, beginning with the medieval period, in interpreting the life of this great saint, have transmitted to us. In a special way, I think of the Fioretti. And what a happy summary of Francis' spirit is that prayer so well known: "Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace. . . ."

If Saint Francis were living today, in this age of technological progress, what suggestions would he have for our contemporaries? He would, I think, make three grand proposals:

- 1. a profound respect and love for God, the Most High;
- 2. a profound respect and love for our fellow human beings, the living image of the Living God;
- 3. a complete respect and love for all the gifts of God spread through the universe, which means respect and love in the use of material resources.

Only in the harmonious relating of these three proposals will the person of progress and technology find perfect equilibrium.

In this age of conflict, Franciscan non-violence is a force not to be overlooked. In the time of Saint Francis (it was the age of Innocent III) there did indeed exist a situation of institutionalized injustice, though Francis and his contemporaries did not perceive it as such. But the movements of poverty at that time were of another style and another sensitiveness: they were movements within the Church, within a Church which presented herself as rich and powerful. The political and economic struggles of that age were between the Guelfs and the Ghibellines. It was strife of commune against commune, of the merchant class against the noble class, with merchants aspiring to obtain by their wealth the social status of the nobles. And there was, on the part of the Church, a rediscovery of the poor man, without however the larger social sensitiveness of today.

Keeping in view these preliminary observations, I would say that Franciscanism does not approve the concentration and accumulation of wealth. Whatever begets domination, whatever fosters worry about the morrow, contradicts the Franciscan spirit. The guiding Fran-

ciscan principle is this: "Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest" (Mt. 20:26). It is necessary to respect the dignity and the freedom of others. It is necessary to use God's gifts in a spirit of gratitude.

On various occasions Francis' way of being non-violent manifested itself. His was the time of the crusades, the era of the conquest of the holy places by arms. What did Francis do? He went to meet the Saracen leader in a simple and peaceable manner. He obtained permission for his friars to go and come freely, a safe-conduct which lasts until today.

Before the demands of Pietro Bernardone, his father, Francis stripped himself completely. He did not fight; only from then on, his father was not any more Pietro Bernardone, but Our Father who is in heaven.

And the thieves who were driven away by a friar—Francis went after them, called them back, asked their pardon, and gave them food to eat.

The story of the Wolf of Gubbio is another example, perhaps too well known to need elucidation.

And then the command which Francis gave to his friars: "When they expel you by one door, come back by the other." This non-violence ought not be confused with mere passivity: if they expel you through one door, come back through the other. Saint Francis is not alien to using pressure for claiming rights in a peaceful and persistent manner when someone unjustly denies them.

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, who won the Nobel Peace Prize, speaks of the "efficiency of the inefficient." The world considers worthwhile only efficiency, productivity, profit. But in the person of Francis this world has another example: the value of complete trust in Divine Providence, the value of work as a way of avoiding laziness, the example of possessing nothing. "Let the brethren have nothing of their own!" His weapon is humility, meekness, pardon, perfect joy, the love of Lady Poverty. This is the highest efficiency of the inefficient Francis. Ω

The First Encyclical Letter of Saint Bonaventure

TRANSLATED BY REGIS J. ARMSTRONG, O.F.M.CAP.

Translator's Introduction

One of the most important figures in the history of Franciscan spirituality is Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoreggio (c. 1217–1274), who was elected to succeed John of Parma as Minister General of the Order at the Chapter of Rome, 2 February 1257. Many contemporary authors, e.g., Moorman, Little, et al., have placed Bonaventure in a controversial position since they see him as greatly institutionalizing the Order to the degree that it lost much of the charism of Saint Francis. In fact, this mystical theologian who was called to serve his brothers at a crucial juncture of history emerges as a force of renewal and reform without whom the unique spiritual vision of the Poverello might well have been lost.

This first encyclical reflects the state of the Order of Friars Minor at the time of Bonaventure's election as Minister General. It was written shortly after he received word of his position, i.e., at the beginning of April, 1257, and must have been written with the insights of his councillors. This frequently quoted letter provides important insights into the means of renewal advocated by the Seraphic Doctor and suggests means which might be considered as applicable in today's world.

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 ${\bf B}^{\text{ONAVENTURE}}$, the elected Minister General, To all the Ministers Provincial and Custodians of the Order of Friars Minor:

Brother Bonaventure, Minister General and servant of the Order of Minors, sends greetings of salvation and [that] peace which exceeds all understanding (Phil. 4:7) to all ministers and custodians most dear to him in Christ.

1. I obviously know my own inadequacy for carrying this burden because of [my] physical weakness, [my]intellectual limitations, [my] lack of experience in the active ministry, as well as [my] reluctance to accept it. Nevertheless, because it is difficult to kick against the goad (Acts 26:14) of such a congregation and of a Supreme Pontiff, and through this to persistently resist as well the will of God, I have placed upon my weak shoulders heavy and almost intolerable burdens, hoping for the help of the strength of the All-Powerful [God] and relying on your solicitous support while carrying [this] burden. For although it may be impossible for a human being of whatever strength, energy, and expertise to carry the entire weight of such a burden upon his shoulders, if [that] burden is divided into parts and distributed on other shoulders, it will be carried firmly by each one and with not as much horror and desperation for the weak head who may be unaccustomed to such a task.

Therefore, I am counting on your industry, eagerness, and lively zeal to be prompt in removing evil, promoting good, fortifying weakness, and confirming strengths. Looking upon myself as a watchman given for the house of Israel (Ez. 3:17), I have decided to describe briefly for you those things which I would have spoken of more fully and freely had I been at the General Chapter. [I do this] so that [as a watchman] I will not be responsible for the blood of souls (Ez. 33:6). But now, because of the dangers of [our] times, the wounds of [our] consciences, as well as the scandals [given to those] of the world by which the Order-which should be a sign of holiness for all [men and women]—has become an object of contempt and disgust in various places throughout the world, these things have been shown to me by the council of discreets as worthy of correction. [I do this] neither by being totally silent nor by expressing everything nor by placing new [items] nor by bringing upon [us] chains nor by imposing heavy burdens on others, but as a proclaimer of the truth who briefly expresses these things since I see nothing to be gained by my reticence.

Let us look carefully at the truth, fulfill our profession, and keep it purely with all our strength.

- 2. I have been openly examining the reasons that the splendor of our Order has been tarnished in any way or has been stained outwardly as well as [why] the luster of our consciences has been obscured inwardly. These reasons have emerged:
- The multiplication of business transactions in which money, which is above all things the enemy of the poverty of our Order, is eagerly sought, rashly accepted, and even more rashly handled.
- The idleness of certain friars which is a cesspool of all vices and through which many are lulled to daydream, choosing that certain strange state between contemplation and active [life, while] feeding themselves on the blood of souls not carnally so much as cruelly.
- The rampant wandering of many friars who become a burden to those through whom they travel because of their love of creature comforts and [who] do not leave behind them an example of life so much as a scandal of souls.
- The improper begging because of which all those who travel about the world fear the friars as if they were robbers.
- The cost and unusual construction of expensive and pretentious buildings which disturbs the peace of the friars, places heavy burdens on [our] friends, and greatly exposes us to the adverse criticism of men and women.
- The multiplication of familiarities which our Rule prohibits [and] from which rumors, suspicions, and many scandals arise.
- Also, an avarice for funerals and legacies which is an invasion of the clergy, especially parish priests, [which is] not without great annoyance.
- Frequent and expensive changes of residence with some violence and disturbance to the neighborhood [indicating] a sign of restlessness and a lack of an earlier consideration of poverty.
- A certain rise in expenses, finally, for, since the friars do not wish to be content with a few things and the love of men and women has

grown cold (Mt. 24:12), we have become more burdensome to all, and, more than this, will become even more so in the future unless a remedy is quickly found.

3. Although there may be many who are not guilty of what has been said, nevertheless, this list of abuses involves everyone, unless the guilty ones are restrained by those who are blameless. It is clear that the abuses which have been mentioned above are inflicting severe damage on the Order. [This] damage can in no way be glossed over by the excuses offered by the lukewarm and the disloyal, and by [those who are] wise according to the flesh (Jn. 2:16), who appeal to long standing custom and look upon such practices as inevitable, acceptable, and of little consequence.

Therefore, the devotion and fervor of our heart is stimulated to zeal, so that, having thrown the money-changers from the house of the heavenly Father, you may instill in all the friars an eagerness for prayer and devotion [and] restrict the reception of the multitude [of young men]—for I wish that the constitutions concerning admission [into the Order] be observed strictly and in every detail. Although this action may seem drastic to the brothers, take courage and cut out these vicious practices. The perfection of our profession demands this; so does the present distressing situation. [Furthermore,] Saint Francis cries out for this, as well as the Blood of Christ [which has been] poured out [for us], and the Most High Lord [shouts] for this.

4. You should stimulate the lazy to work. Bring to rest those who wander about. Impose silence upon those who beg inconsiderately. Bring low those eager to erect lofty houses. Bring to solitude those who seek familiarities. Bestow the offices of preaching and hearing confessions with great care. See to it that the earlier constitutions concerning funerals are observed. Do not grant a change of residence to anyone before the General Chapter. For, because of the advice of the Discreets concerning the prevention of scandal, I am reserving to myself, according to [the practice of] my predecessor, this command—and strictly obedience—that from now on no one may



change his residence without [my] special permission. Also, the friars should learn to be content with a few things, because as wise men vehemently and reasonably fear—as it should be—they will have to

be satisfied with little whether they like it or not.

5. Therefore, I shall be grateful to the Creator of all things, and to you, if I hear from the Visitators that you have complied with these instructions. It is my wish that the Visitators carefully supervise the correction of the aforesaid abuses both in the chapters and among the individual friars. But you should know without any doubt that in no way will my conscience allow me to permit by my silence the [continuance of] the points delineated, if it is otherwise. For, although it is not my intention to impose new obligations upon you, nevertheless I am compelled by my conscience to attempt to root out the practices mentioned above with all [my] strength, so that, avoiding scandal, we may observe the Rule which we have promised; for without its observance we cannot be saved. And let us look carefully at the truth, fulfill [our] profession, and keep it purely with all our strength, [for] it opposes everything mentioned above.

Given at Paris on the Feast of Saint George, 1257, A.D.

This letter should be read in each of the houses of the Province. Ω

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Lament for Mother Francis Bachman, O.S.F.

(Died June 30, 1863)

(with indebtedness to Dante Alighieri, his Vita Nuova)

Mother Francis has gone up into high heaven, The kingdom where the angels are at peace, And lives with them.

And to her friends is dead.

Not by the frosts of winter was she driven away, like others, Nor by the summer heats,

But through a perfect selflessness instead.

For from the lamp of her meek lowliness such a seraphic fragrance went up hence

That it awoke great wonder in the Eternal Lord,

Until a sweet desire seized Him to summon up such blessedness—

So that He bade her to Himself aspire, counting the idle glitter of the times

unworthy of a soul so full of grace.

Wonderfully out of her tired and aching form soared her clear spirit, waxing glad the while.

Now she is in her first home . . . with Jesus . . . and Franciscan saints, musing, in gentle awe . . . at us . . . who search, in feeble hope,

where she is not.

BUT we are left with quickened faith and swift joy . . . $\ensuremath{\mathsf{KNOWING}}$

THAT WHICH SHE WAS . . .

AND HOW SHE WENT FROM US . . .

Sister Jeanette Clare McDonnell, O.S.F.

A Franciscan Approach to Education: A Personal-Theological Reflection

PETER JAMES STUHLMILLER

This greeting and wish of Francis for all of creation which so pervades his life and mission seems to me as good a place as any to speak a beginning word on how his particular charism is embodied in the educational mission of the Church. A look at each of these well-wishes of Francis' blessing in light of my own experience of Franciscan education at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, New York, will be the basis for my few thoughts in this reflection. At the end of this article, I will offer some practical conclusions which my experience leads me to believe flow from such a Franciscan educational methodology.

I. Pax, Peace (Shalom)

THE FIRST WISH in Francis' greeting is as telling biblically as it is personally of how Franciscanism may authentically approach the educational project. The biblical shalom is reflective of the ultimate unity or wholeness of the diverse aspects of creation, indeed of our human experience, in the plan of God. To wish peace for another is to pray for that person's integration, wholeness, and attunement to the plan of God for His creatures, which plan is fully revealed in the person and work of His Son, Jesus, the Christ.

Father Peter J. Stuhlmiller, having completed his theological studies at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, New York, last year, is an Assistant Pastor at Holy Family Parish, in South Buffalo, New York. While there is an undeniable thrust towards unity in this greeting, there is also a real recognition of the diversity of created experience and so an authentic diversity of the ways in which the shalom of God is expressed by the various aspects of created reality. In other words, there is a certain individuality which flows from the dynamic unity of the shalom, a certain feeling for the uniqueness of the incarnation of the shalom from individual to individual. "Union differentiates," Teilhard counsels us; so for the biblical person, an ever deepening communion with the shalom of God in and through His community of creation is the internal dynamic of the biblical imperative/indicative complex, "Become who you are!" The promotion of individual wholeness and human community seems to be the praxis which flows from the blessing, "Pax," true wisdom always being tested against this measure:

Furthermore, the Lord Jesus, when praying to the Father "that they may all be one . . . even as we are one" (Jn. 17:21-22) has opened up new horizons closed to human reason by implying that there is a certain parallel between the union existing among the divine persons and the union of the sons of God in truth and love. It follows, then, that if man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake, man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself [Gaudium et spes, 24].

Francis' own experienced expression of that uniqueness which is the fruit of communion is illuminating at this point. For when, in the "Canticle of Brother Sun," Francis expresses his own experience of the shalom of God internal to His creation, he does so in poetic fashion. Like the Old Testament prophets, Francis employs that thought form of human expression which has the power to unite human beings because it so well articulates the depth of their experience. Thus, in his own union with the Lord, Francis expresses by means of a unifying method his appreciation for the diversity within unity of God's Wisdom in creation, His shalom, emphasizing how, as Paul says, "all things work together for the good of those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). This spirit is certainly evident as well in Bonaventure's Itinerarium where he maps out our human journey in terms of its various stages of ascent into union with God in contemplation, beginning with the awareness of God's vestiges in ordinary created reality in all its diversity, and ending in mystical ecstasy where the eternal shalom shabat is experienced in the here-and-now.

Franciscan education is oriented to knowledge of myself and all of created reality as creation-in-God, as good, and as gift.

How has this Franciscan approach influenced my education in that tradition? An orientation towards the uniqueness of the individual stands out as of paramount importance here. The Franciscan incarnational thrust seems so to value the individual's self-expression on two counts: first, as the basis for the appropriation of the image of God within the individual's own life, and, following from this, secondly, as the means by which other individuals in the human community become who they are, find a clearer self-understanding, and so deeper levels of divine and human communion which is the plan of God. My experience leads me to say that the Franciscan approach to persons (and so to their education) is one which understands them explicity as "individuals-within-community," unique in their incarnational diversity, but responsible to one another for the mutual development of that uniqueness in each other as the means of fulfilling the plan of God for creation: communion with one another as the fruit of deepening communion with the Lord. Perhaps this second point is better explicated by the second wish in Francis' greeting.

II. Bonum, Good (Tov)

"GOD LOOKED AT everything he had made, and found it very good" (Gen. 1:31a). The biblical mind sees through the eyes of God as it looks upon creation as the first instance of God's revelation of Himself. Alive from the very life of God, His breath, creation can be no less than good in itself and for the good of itself. Radically recreated through the Incarnation, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, all of creation is now literally swimming in that grace which first ordered it. But, since the original alienation from God, self, and others in the Fall, appropriating this goodness which is our core as creatures of a good God now becomes the life project of human beings, each one's continuing education, as it were. This education

begins and ends in hearing the Gospel preached to us, in knowing that we are already redeemed by the Lord Jesus, and allowing our lives to be made ever more consonant with His image and likeness within each of us. This is the essential mission of the Church in the world and the core meaning of Christian education, whatever form it may take. It is an education in "spirit and in truth" (cf. Jn. 4:24) or it is lifeless, a poor excuse for a humanitarian cause. Specifically "Christian" education begins in assisting one to appropriate his or her redemption, core goodness, through the grace of Jesus Christ.



There can be no doubt that this fundamental living of the Gospel of Jesus is the meaning and message of Francis' life and legacy. Any learning which did not assist people in more deeply living out the Gospel was regarded by Francis as useless vanity (cf. LM XI.1; 2Cel 195). Certain as he was that ". . . man would easily move from knowledge of himself to a knowledge of God" (2Cel 102), Francis' struggle to know himself in all his personal poverty became his educational goal so that the grace of Jesus might more freely flow from his merely mortal frame. His own selfknowledge led him to show others their goodness, simply by being who he was; it also led others to a personal knowledge of their own estrangement from their good God. His belief in the

power of example empowered others to live the Gospel, to begin to see and to experience the lack in their nature so that they might begin to experience and enjoy by grace all of that which God created for them as good, no longer disordering creation, but seeing, in Thomas Merton's potent phrase, "God's order in our disorder." In his poetic "Praises of God" Francis hymns: "You are Good, all Good, supremely Good," whence his delighting in possessing by poverty all of the good God's good creation.

Bonaventure takes up this theme in the sixth chapter of his Itinerarium, where he posits that since God is supremely good and since that divine goodness is therefore the most self-diffusive, its expressions must also be therefore most good.

To know oneself as loved by God is to know the redemption that is ours in Christ. To begin to live from that reconciled center is to preach the Gospel, to mediate God's grace and goodness to all of creation. The goal of Christian education is nothing less than this continuing incarnation.

How has this sense of goodness become clear to me as a result of my experience of education in the Franciscan tradition? Knowing oneself as good at core because of the grace of God means living a life of prayerful reflection as the basis of the integration of study with and for Gospel living. The Franciscan method of attunement to our experience, when coupled with prayerful reflection upon that experience, leads to that kind of self-knowledge and self-appropriation to which the Gospel impels us so that, freed from our personal illusions which lead us to grasp at power over, possession of, and so the prostitution of God's good creation, we may begin to enjoy self as gift as well as the others in our lives in a way which treats all of these as gifts to be shared and cherished and not hoarded and debased. Selfknowledge of this type leads to a prophetic challenge to false selves in me and others, simply by being truthful about who I am before my God. And it is in seeking to be and become myself, that good which He makes me, that I actually become that good with and for others.

III. Some Practical Conclusions

FRANCIS' REFORM of the Church of his day took place very much on the local level of ordinary human interaction and became finally irresistible to the Church as institution. In this way, his was a call to moral or spiritual reform, constantly asking others into the life of the Gospel to which he had been led. And this means a call to ongoing conversion which is the heart of the Gospel message. If anything seems to me to be at the heart of Franciscan educational methodology, it is this call to ongoing conversion on the level of people's universe of interpersonal relationships with an ever-broadening outward thrust to see more and more of the others touched by my existence. I think we are now in a position to suggest some practical applications of the foregoing reflections on Franciscan education and conversion.

A. Encouragement of Self-Knowledge and Self-Acceptance. As opposed to that seeking of knowledge for the inflation of the ego, a defense against the Gospel, Franciscan education is oriented to knowledge of myself and all of created reality as creation-in-God, as good and as gift. The challenge to ego-inflationary data gathering whose tendency is towards filling up a void in an empty existence, is

to assist me to know myself as loved by God and to move towards the acceptance of that love as a gift, freely given. A Franciscan education is one not impoverished by lack of knowledge of the world but one which chooses a poverty of ego defensiveness through self-knowledge so that the whole world may enter into the self and become integrated therein as the gift of God.

B. Respect for the Goodness of All Life. Flowing from a deep knowledge of the graced goodness of my own life as the first and most immediate expression of God's love which I can know, I am led by my Franciscan education to the acknowledgment and cultivation of the expression of the goodness of all life; to affirm by this knowledge of goodness in myself all else that is good, and to challenge by that same knowledge all that would dehumanize or disorder God's good creation.

C. Leadership through the Example of Service. The acknowledgment of my good creatureliness allows monotheism to be the experienced reality and core of my own life in the context of my fellow good creatures. As opposed to gaining an education for the purpose of manipulation, Franciscan education encourages leadership of my fellow creatures by my powerful example of service to them and not by giving service to contemporary examples of power lorded over others.

D. Incarnational Materiality. Freedom from false selves leads to an ability to enter into life-giving, non-abusive relationships with self, others, and the world of things. Franciscan education teaches at all points an attitude of gratitude for all that we come to know as the gift of God. As opposed to an education towards narcissism, Franciscan education does not value knowledge for its own sake, but seeks that responsible use of all of created reality which lives so deeply attuned to and immersed in the here-and-now that it points by its lifestyle always in the direction of Transcendent Reality in acknowledging the sacramental nature of all creation.

E. Evangelization. A final aspect which is hinted at in each of the other "methodologies" above is that of preaching the Gospel to all creatures—Jesus' injunction to all his disciples. Francis wished that all of his disciples, his brothers and sisters, be powerful preachers of the Word by their example (cf. RegNB 17). The goal of all of Christian conversion is always conversion of others by who I am becoming in Christ; the acid test of my Christian becoming is always the articulate

lifestyle I am living more than how articulate a speech I possess. The purpose of all of the other methods outlined above is simply and clearly to hear the Gospel myself so that who I become with and for others preaches that Gospel by who I am. Ω

Love's Forest

In ancient forests Crickets sing: "Will you listen to our tale of Love?" "Roam unbridled paths til vou hear silent footsteps approach. God is nigh! Heart, wild with laughter, Leaps with joy and skips a beat: 'Tame the fox in me!' Seek not fame, fortune. For Poverty claims your soul— Earthen Vessel's gold! Violets meekly nod. Knowingly deck path you trod-Feet caught in briars! Beyond Redwood trees. Nesting rattlesnakes hissing— Heart abruptly stops. Days, nights, quickly go-Sun, gentle Wind, lift me high; Let me live, not die! Blaze a trail, follow-Share all you are with others, For Love, your Brother! Beyond mountain's peak. Silent footsteps await you. 'My Heart, I am love!' "

Sister Barbara Mary Lanham, O.S.F.

§The Anniversary

Baby, I put wildflowers on your grave. That's all I have this year. Once cut. Like you they live a day. And holding them I'm in tears. Here's Queen Anne's lace: white like your soul Except for a purple spot at its core; And so I baptized you. Here's golden rod Because you now sit at the throne of God. Pink blazing star Reminds me of your skin. Here's chickory: this afternoon shut But tomorrow morning deep bright blue As your parents' sorrow. Here's thistle to console The flesh you tore. We put these flowers in a mossy jar. Your grave marker is tin. Haze thickens over us, dry grass, red clay And your body below. What God in His love gives We try to give Him back in love to live. Your little life makes us so brave.

Charles Cantalupo

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