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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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### 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

<sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup> refer to First and Second Editions.

#### II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

**Col:** Colano, First Life of Francis

**Col2:** Colano, Second Life of Francis

**Col3:** Colano, Treatise on Miracles

**LP:** Legend of Saint Clare

**L3S:** Legend of the Three Companions

**SC:** Sacrum Commercium

**SP:** Mirror of Perfection

**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

**A. Habig, ed., St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Om-**

**for the Life of St. Francis** (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

**Fr. Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., Francis and Clare: The**

**Works** (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

## EDITORIAL



1984

**S**EVERAL YEARS AGO, while riding on a bus, I overheard some young people talking about the coming world disaster—the date was to be 1984. 1984 is also the title of a novel describing the loss of freedom in America, particularly through the manipulation of the communications media. 1984 is also an election year, and it is a “leap year” and, no doubt, the centennial year of several political, social, and religious events. For most of us, it will be “just another year.” And that is what it should be.

Our Lord indicated to us that we should not worry about when he was coming again, and advised us to live life one day at a time: “Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” There is in us, however, a fascination with the future and its secrets. Not only do horoscopes and psychics flourish in our country, but religions with defined claims about the end being in sight seem to attract many. Psychologists would say that the preoccupation with a defined future is a mark of intolerance for ambiguity, and likely a mark of immaturity. Adults know that whatever comes along can be handled—with the help of some friends. From the faith perspective, we need the same conviction. “My grace is sufficient for thee” is a revelation to all of us. Why not take God at his word?

Faithless fear of the future isn't the only thing a New Year's resolution should counter. Faithless fretting about the past is something else we all could do without. Try as we might, we can't take back the stupid, mean, or silly words we have spoken, or rewrite the incidents of our lives when we were less than we wanted to be. Nor will going to confession less frequently or excusing ourselves on the ground that “it was only human” assuage the intelligent and faith-lighted judgment: “we have sinned.” But if the “mercy of God” is to be anything more to us personally than an

empty phrase, we have to believe that the words "I absolve you," when we hear them, are God's words. And we have to believe that if we have the ability to forget what it was that we were fighting about with our friends, so does God. Jesus did say, too, that those who put their hand to the plow and look back are unfit for the kingdom of God.

"Who then can be saved?" For don't we all tend to fear the future and fret about the past? Have we no faith? We do have faith; we ask Jesus to "increase our faith." We can't change our temperaments by a word or even by lots of words, but that doesn't mean we have to surrender to our tendencies. God already has transformed us a great deal by his graces. He changes hearts. Let 1984 mark the rededication of ourselves to Jesus' comforting invitation and command: "Seek first the kingdom of heaven and its justice, and all other things will be given you besides." Ω

*Dr. Julian Davies OFM*

## The Magi

Brass would not do; it must be gold.  
A real king would surely know the difference.  
Wise men would not risk scorned gifts.  
Strong camels, packed, stood patient in the starlight.  
Burdened with wealth, they gazed at the quiet night.  
They were ready for a long journey.  
Through bitter nights and burning days  
they dreamed of opulent welcome;  
watching the star, speculating without end.  
Now they lurk like sheep by the stable.  
They have nothing to say,  
while the shepherds, the poor, are at home.

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

## The Eradication of Avarice: A Way of Liberation according to Saint Francis—I

ROBERT STEWART, O.F.M.

The Emergence of Avarice as the Cardinal Vice  
during the "Commercial Revolution"<sup>1</sup> (A.D. 1050-1300)

PATRISTIC THEOLOGIANS, who were to a great extent biblical commentators, taught that either pride or avarice was the chief cardinal vice from which all others flowed. They based themselves on the scriptural texts: "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Ecclus. 10:13), or "Cupidity is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10). The Greek term *φιλαργυρια* is rendered by Jerome as *cupiditas*, but the majority of medieval commentators used the word *avaritia*.

Most early medieval writers, following Cassian and the Benedictine tradition, asserted that pride was the greatest vice. This tradition was best expressed by Gregory the Great, who wrote in the *Moralia in Job*: "The root of all evil is pride, of which it is said, as scripture bears witness: 'Pride is the beginning of all sin.' But seven principal vices, as its first progeny, spring from this poisonous root, namely: vainglory, envy, anger, melancholy, avarice, gluttony, and lust."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The term "Commercial Revolution" is used to identify the period between 1000 and 1350, when virtually all the basic structures of Europe's commercial economy developed. It is marked by the renewal of the phenomena of living among strangers and using money. Cf. R. S. Lopez, *Cambridge Economic History*, II, 289-93.

<sup>2</sup>*Moralia in Job* 31:45; PL 76:620-21.

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Pride is given priority of place because it is the sin of rebellion against God, the sin of exaggerated individualism. "In a disciplined and corporate society which the middle ages held as ideal, exaggerated individualism, rebellion against the will of God, was considered particularly heinous."<sup>3</sup>

But from the eleventh to the fourteenth century there is a shift of emphasis from pride to avarice. Hurzinga has observed "a furious chorus of invectives against cupidity and avarice" in the literature of the expiring Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> He traces this indignant attitude back to the twelfth century, when people began to find the principle of evil in avarice rather than pride. The latter was the characteristic sin of the feudal age, when property was for the most part not liquid and power was not yet predominantly associated with money. Starting in the twelfth century some fortunes were rooted in money. But by the thirteenth century the radical transformation is more marked: "The pace of trade and business was rapidly accelerating a development which was accompanied by the reintroduction of money as the common medium of exchange and the revival of urban society."<sup>5</sup>

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Nakedness, which is a symbol of being totally denuded, of having a completely non-avaricious attitude, was to mark the beginning and end of Francis' life.

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Avarice also becomes more and more widely depicted in art.<sup>6</sup> It is

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<sup>3</sup>Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, 1952), 74-75.

<sup>4</sup>Johan Hurzinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, tr. F. Hopman (Garden City, 1954), 27-28.

<sup>5</sup>Richard Lenz, Q.F.M., "Thoughts on Poverty in an Age of Reform," *The Catholic World* 23 (1922), 22-29.

<sup>6</sup>Paul Kupperellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art: From Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century* (London, 1939).

personified and shown at a counting table placing the coins in sacks and chests. The chest often belongs to the rich man in the Lazarus scene or to the vilest of all merchants, Judas. Avarice is a compulsive accumulator; he clutches his sacks with tight fists and with an attitude of grim desperation. Later he is symbolically presented as an alimentary canal, open at the receiving end and closed at the other. By the later eleventh century attacks on simony came to include, and eventually to concentrate upon, attacks against money and avarice.<sup>7</sup>

With the appearance of hermits in Italy at the start of the eleventh century there began a movement that was to pass through numerous eremitic, monastic, clerical, and evangelical poor brotherhoods, until it blossomed into the mendicant orders of the thirteenth century. This movement stressed as the chief virtue total and literal poverty as the antidote to the avarice of society.

The total impression is that during this period, when the foundations of our modern society were being established, avarice replaces pride as the principal cardinal vice. This change is natural, for the change in economic values from agrarian to mercantile and the increase in total national income would lead to a mounting appearance of avarice. Avarice could now be measured. This acceptance of avarice as the cardinal sin is expressed by the great English thirteenth-century Franciscan and scholastic, Roger Bacon, who lists the cardinal sins in an unusual order with avarice at their head and traces them all, except anger, to avarice.<sup>8</sup>

### The Challenge to Avarice of Biblical Poverty<sup>9</sup>

ON THE EVIDENCE of the Judeo-Christian tradition as culled from the scriptures, it appears that as a basic principle those with means at their disposal should share them with others. Care of the needy members of the community is important. Exploitation of the poor by the rich is openly attacked. But ultimately poverty is a question of God being God: that he should be acknowledged as God. "No man can serve two masters; you cannot serve God and Mammon" (Lk. 16:13). The

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Cf. Rosemond Tuve, "Notes on the Virtues and Vices," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1964), 148-58.

<sup>7</sup>This development is traced by Jean Leclercq, "Simoniaca heresis," *Studi Gregoriani* 1 (1947), 523-30.

<sup>8</sup>Roger Bacon, *Opus Majus*, ed. John Henry Bridges (Oxford, 1907), II, 266.

<sup>9</sup>Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, tr. L. A. Manyon (Chicago, 1964), 60-71.

crucial question is to know in whom, absolutely and ultimately, one puts one's trust. Since the avaricious man trusts in his wealth, he is an enemy of God. He has failed to put to death, therefore, what is earthly: *πλεονεξια*, the desire to have more), which is idolatry (Col. 3:5). He has excluded himself from the Kingdom, for as Paul says, "Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (*πλεονεκτης*, one who always wants more) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).

The absolute model of the non-avaricious, worshipful man is Jesus Christ. Jesus always said that everything was due to his Father: "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me" (Jn. 7:16). This attitude is also the basis of the *κενοσις* expressed by Saint Paul in his letter to the Philippians (2:6-11). In his life Jesus was born poor; he often had not even a place to lay his head. He died on the Cross, thus completing a life of self-abnegation, which was as total as it was unselfish.

The cause of poverty was never called into being, beyond the bold statement that "the love of money [*φιλαργυρια*] is the root of all evils" (Col. 3:5), while the poor are called blessed (Lk. 6:20-26; Mt. 5:3-12). The people who first heard this proclamation of the gospel were probably simple people from Galilee, lacking in many things and so awaiting the Messiah of the poor (Is. 61:1; 58:6). They knew that they could trust in God and call on him for support (Is. 25:4; Ps. 69:34; 72:4). They are blessed because the God of the poor has come to transform their poverty with a gift of the Kingdom. Their present situation may be characterized by poverty, oppression, and persecution; but as long as they trust God and not Mammon, their situation will be reversed sometime.

While Jesus addressed the poor as blessed, he taught that the love of possessions is destructive because it leads to a state of blind acquisitiveness which smothers true life. The good seed of the Kingdom of God is crowded out by worldly cares (Lk. 16:13; Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19). The Kingdom of God cannot enter into the lives of the rich. Their wealth separates them from the poor. They concentrate on amassing possessions in this world instead of giving alms which would build up treasure for them in heaven (Lk. 12:15--21). They put wealth before humane considerations and as such stand to lose their eternal salvation (Lk. 16:19-31). The only legitimate application of wealth seems to be its use for charitable purposes (Lk. 16:12; 12:33; 11:41).

Jesus felt himself compelled to preach the Gospel to the poor (Lk. 4:17, 19). He sent out his disciples empty handed to proclaim the good news to the poor (Lk. 9:1-6).

In the early Church the Christians shared their belongings or placed them at the disposal of all (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-34). There was not a needy person among them (Acts 4:34). James issues a reprimand to those who judge a person by what he has and not by what he is (Jas. 2:1-4). He issues strong warnings to the rich and censures them for exploiting the poor (Jas. 5:1-3). Nevertheless he calls upon the poor to be patient and wait upon the Lord rather than taking things into their own hands (Jas. 5:7-10). Paul constantly calls upon the faithful to overcome covetousness and be responsible, for all those who are avaricious are excluded from the Kingdom (Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:5; 1 Cor 5:10-14; 1 Thess. 4:6-11).

The key, then, to understand biblical poverty lies in Matthew 6:19-21: "Remember, where your treasure is there your heart is also." It is a question of "where is your heart?" not "who has money?" Nevertheless there are dangers in riches, in ambition: above all, possessiveness destroys while there are the poor, the afflicted, the marginal people with whom those who have been gifted by God must share. The first beatitude and the allegory of the camel and the eye of the needle must not be explained away. Above all, biblical poverty is a worshipful acknowledgement of the good God, who has blessed us with so many goods that we may administer them to build up his Kingdom.



#### Francis' Own Experience of the Effects of Avarice

MARC BLOCH MAINTAINS<sup>10</sup> that there were two "feudal ages," the first from A.D. 800 to 1050 and the second from A.D. 1050 to 1300. He characterizes the first of these ages as having a low density of population which was relatively stable, with poor means of intercommunication and a trade that was "irregular in the extreme" and small in volume. The second, he describes as the "economic revolution," a period marked by an intensive movement of repopulation, a closer association of human groups, an accelerated rhythm of circulation, and an overall revival of commerce. The result was that the cities with

<sup>10</sup>Cf. Saint Jerome in *PL* 22:10815.

their distinctive merchant middle class cash economy took shape and a new spiritual crisis occurred as a gulf emerged between the new economic and social realities and the traditional values.

This second period was the milieu in which John Bernadone, nicknamed Francis or "Frenchie" by his father, was born. He grew up within the cadre of the distinctive merchant middle class cash economy, as his father Peter Bernadone was a cloth merchant in the city of Assisi. "He was brought up by his parents proud of spirit, in accordance with the vanity of the world; and imitating their wretched life and habits for a long time, he became even more vain and proud" (1Cel 1). "When he entered his father's cloth business he learned the pressing ambitions of trade. His father and many others sought to impress upon him the near sacredness of money, which might legitimately be spent on a gentleman's pleasures but never squandered on poor churches and despised paupers" (1Cel 2).

There was a time during which Francis had to struggle to find a norm, "for he was very rich, not however avaricious but prodigal, not a hoarder of money but a squanderer of his possessions, a cautious business man but a very unreliable steward" (1Cel 2). He was not avaricious, but he was living in a society where money was used as a universal norm of value. Money was fast becoming the basis of power and security, and the "nouveaux riches" were clamoring to replace the aristocracy. Money was the key to happiness and success and was the way to power.

Gradually under "divine inspiration" Francis came to see that the pursuit of money and of the prestige and power it could buy was an empty ambition. He took some bales of cloth and sold them in Foligno. Then, leaving behind even the horse he was riding, he returned to Assisi a poor man, thinking only of how he could rid himself of this money, "considering the advantage he might get from it as so much sand" (1Cel 4). When he finally returned to the city after his sojourn with the poor priest, the citizens "reviled him miserably." His father, hearing the noise and shouting and being informed that it was at his son who was dressed as a beggar, rushed to the place, not to free him from the mob but rather to destroy him" (1Cel 5). He imprisoned him, "thinking to bend his spirit to his own will" (ibid.).

The conflict of values, between the father who valued money, prestige, and power and the son who had learned to despise money, reached its climax in the scene before the Bishop of Assisi. First, his father, realizing that he could not draw Francis back to the avaricious ways of the new economy, settled for the return of his money. Then he

publicly repudiated his son for love of money. Francis returned the money, and "the thrust of his avarice was somewhat allayed." But still his father demanded more. He wanted everything, and Francis responded with that marvellous, dramatic gesture. There, before the Bishop and all the people, he stripped. "Naked to follow the Naked Christ."<sup>11</sup> He expressed his disgust at the avariciousness of his father. Nakedness, which is a symbol of being totally denuded, of having a completely non-avaricious attitude, was to mark the beginning and end of Francis' life. Here he repudiated his father's goods and thenceforth would have only his Father in heaven in whom to trust and on whom to rely (1Cel 15). At the end of his life he asked his companions to strip him so that he could face death unclothed, lying naked on the naked earth (1Cel 214; 2Cel 217).

Francis' life between those two naked moments was one that was lived joyously in that total poverty of absolute worshipful dependence on God. Ω

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<sup>11</sup>Bruce Malina, "Saint Francis of Assisi's Attitude toward Money," *The CORD* 12 (1962), 53-58.

## New Year's Eve

I must not stand remembering  
Each painful loss of now-gone year;  
I should not stand dismembering  
Each throbbing pain and tiny fear.  
Tomorrow life is born again;  
This is no time for silent tear;  
Tomorrow at the stroke of twelve  
Beings a bright and hope-filled year.

Joyce Finnigan, O.F.M.

## Gifts for the Magi

His Only Begotten given  
in marriage to mankind  
the Eternal Father looks afar to find  
men of faith on earth  
that He might kindle fire in their hearts  
to celebrate this humble birth.

From Orient He calls His guests,  
Come, come to the wedding feast.

The firmament He sets ablaze,  
speaks within of mysteries  
hidden from the wise;  
a new star their sacrament  
in the skies.

Toward Israel—  
O quick to believe—  
seek the young Emmanuel.

What prize blest  
yours who leave each familiar thing  
on mad search for a poor Jew King?  
The awful, fled Face of every man's quest,  
waiting, small on His Mother's breast,  
and brighter than your star!  
O drink the wine of Mary's liquid lullaby.

Her Son adore,  
breathless telling pour  
into wondering heart for store  
only briefest rest.

Then across the sands'  
Back to your oblivion,  
for escort—indelible vision,  
remembered feel of God in hands,  
soft pulsing through swaddling bands;  
a woman's song to buoy the years;  
taste of His Name  
under salt of tears  
in homelands  
never quite the same.

*Sister Mary Agnes, P.C.C.*

## Prayer and Community Life

JOHN C. FRAMBES, O.F.M.

PRAYER AND COMMUNITY are inseparable if we are to be true Franciscans, true Catholics, true Christians. Through faith and baptism, we are "one body, one spirit in Christ." The Mystical Body is a reality . . . or we are, sadly, very much alone. None of us approaches God without carrying his brother along.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the meeting place of the entire human race. Whether we pray alone or in a formal liturgical and communal way, we are joined in the Sacred Heart, and our prayer has a communal character. We would, then, be well aware of the importance of community prayer even if we did not have the many explicit exhortations we do have available to us in the writings of our holy Father Francis.

As friars, moreover, we are a commonwealth, not only of goods, but of spirit.

Whenever the friars meet one another, they should show that they are members of the same family. And they should have no hesitation in making their needs known to one another. For if a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly [RegB 6].

What is our greatest need? What is our greatest wealth? What is most precious to each of us? I hope the answer for each to this question is our faith—our life with God. We share our faith, our life, especially when we pray. As we read in chapter 2 of our General Constitutions, "The experience of faith in God in the personal encounter with Jesus Christ is central to Franciscan life."

To recapitulate, prayer and fraternity are mutually dependent. Each may exist separately, but it will in that event be neither Franciscan nor Christian.

In a discussion like this we need to work to find a common ground. We have had different experiences of formation and theological train-

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ing, different experiences of Liturgy and prayer. We have grown up in different milieus. We have different ideas, therefore, of what is normative for community life and Liturgy. If that is a weakness, we can make it a strength by sharing what is important to each of us.

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Our life is one of commitment to prayer and brotherhood based on the Gospel, rather than a life of dreary obligation.

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The obvious place to start is a frank and emphatic insistence that as in everything else so here, as regards prayer and community, the divine initiative precedes anything we can say or do. God speaks to us and gives us life in the Liturgy and the sacraments. It is important to stress this precisely because it is not what I intend to concentrate on in the following reflections, and it would not do to infer from this emphasis that I intend in any way to minimize the primacy and priority of the divine initiative. I want, at any rate, to concentrate here on our human response to that initiative.

#### A Sign to Ourselves: Liturgical Prayer

OUR LITURGICAL PRAYER (Office and Mass) is a sign of what we are as a community, as a fraternity. You may find it helpful to use this, or a similar, list to check on what is and what is not important to you in this context: fidelity, charity, joy, tradition, peace, piety. Also: convenience, time, routine (as contrasted with creativity), fatigue, obligation (or the lack of it).

The Liturgy is, or certainly ought to be, a rich human experience of ourselves as Church. This is, of course, not all that it should be, but I am trying in these reflections to avoid dichotomies and every sort of exclusivism. "Both-and" is the ideal, rather than "either-or."

Anything we do will have a human quality about it if we give reasonable attention to it, but I am concerned here with Liturgy as a rich human experience. Let me suggest four levels, each touched by grace in its own way, which should be considered (this is not intended to be a complete anthropology). First, the objective/intellectual level. Words and matter lead us to a human understanding of the grace com-

municated by God. This level is satisfied by the words and gestures prescribed in the liturgical books.

The other three levels are not so precisely articulated. There is, in the second place, the emotional level. Gestures, drama, color, music, and light all affect our emotional involvement in Liturgy. To exclude either emotion or intellect or to overemphasize either is to slight an important part of our nature in one of our most important human activities: worship. The third level may be termed the poetic; it is the level of intuitive analogy, where the meanings of words and symbols deepen beyond what is at first apparent. This is the level of beauty. Finally, there is what may be termed the mystical level—a level beyond our control since it belongs in the realm of grace.

These levels are not intended to be a completely elaborated synthesis; omitted, e.g., is the physical level. I want only to show that Liturgy should appeal to the whole person. That, of course, takes effort. "You shall love the Lord your God . . . with your whole self." I am against artificially induced religious experiences, but Liturgy is a kind of dance with God, and being a wallflower just won't do.

Liturgy is, then, a richly human activity. But it is also an experience of Church: a communal activity. As a fraternity we are a "little church." The way we pray should show that we are a community in the mainstream of the larger community, the Church. The following prescriptions of the General Constitutions (O.F.M.) may cast some light on this point:

The Eucharist, the Liturgy of the Hours and other celebrations, following the directions set by both the Church and the Order, should be celebrated by the friars together, and with the People of God wherever this is possible [Art. 16].

§1. All the friars shall celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours as the Rule enjoins.

§2. The Liturgy of the Hours is the common prayer of the friars. Ordinarily it should be recited in common wherever the friars live together or whenever the friars get together. . . .

§3. The common celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is not attached to a specific place but to the brotherhood. Still, a church or oratory is ordinarily to be preferred both because it is a holy place and because in it the witness of prayer is better given the People of God [Art. 17].

Common celebration of the Hours and Mass is the norm, not the exception. Without prejudice to a priest's right to say Mass or belittling the private recitation of the breviary, we must admit that the norm for Liturgy is communal celebration.



In the Letter to a General Chapter (*Omnibus*, 106), we find Francis saying, "And so this is my advice, this is my earnest request in the Lord: That in places where the friars live only one Mass a day be said in the rite of the holy Church. If there are several priests in a place, each should be glad for the love of charity to have assisted at the celebration of the other." (There is a long footnote to this, explaining that Francis means one Mass should be celebrated according to the more elaborate Roman ritual, but in light of modern liturgical ideals, may we not discern here a broader exhortation of real value for us today?)

In addition to the communal celebration, the ecclesial nature of our liturgical prayer is shown by a diversity of ministries. There are readers, servers, cantors, presiders; there are ordained and other ministries, which ought to be seen when we pray together as brothers.

### Obstacles to Community, Obstacles to Prayer

THERE ARE PROBABLY many obstacles to community<sup>1</sup> and prayer. In some way they all can damage our life together and lead to formalism and dehumanizing routine in our prayer.

Mobility, first of all, is a convenient escape. We can easily be away from one another, from fraternal gatherings, from prayer—and for very good reasons. I sometimes think: Take away my money, but keep your hands off my transportation.

Then there is privacy. Not only do we not want anyone to tell us what to do, but we even feel that what we do is no one's business but our own. Despite electronic invasions of our privacy we maintain it as a strong value. In this country religion has been privatized.<sup>2</sup> Faith is not something people readily discuss. The prevailing attitude is "Do what works for you, just don't impose it on me." This toleration has made it generally easier to be a Catholic in today's society, but you see the reaction provoked by a strong stand on the pro-life issues of abortion, capital punishment, and nuclear arms. I am afraid that we may too easily accept the notion of privatized religion. In fact, we usually bring in an outsider to talk to us because once he is gone we can be private again. Excuse the exaggeration; the fact remains: when our

<sup>1</sup>Some of these obstacles to community were discussed at the Formation Jamboree held at Siena College in August, 1982.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. Bishop Roger Mahoney, "The Catholic Conscience and Nuclear War," *Commonweal*, March 12, 1982.



prayer is privatized, the fraternity suffers. The same holds true for the rest of our lives.

Convenience is a third factor here. We live in the land of fast food. We get it when we want it and how we want it. (At least they do it our way at Burger King!) Needless to say, community and Liturgy are not matters of convenience, but of love. We need to question ourselves about this.

There is also the "ideal" of economy. I am all for economy of motion, but economy of time often seems to influence us too much when we pray. At Mass, for example, the celebrant sometimes does everything. More properly, another should read the first and second readings, and a deacon or another priest the Gospel. Again, we can leave the altar bare during the Liturgy of the Word and then let an assistant "set the table." Who has gone to a banquet where food is on the table when you walk in the front door? Is this "important"? Objectively, no. But it does symbolize a change in activity, it heightens drama, and it calls attention to what we are doing—not to mention the fact that it complies with the rubrics. The exhortation of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, §11, seems relevant here: "Pastors must realize that, when the Liturgy is celebrated, more is required than the mere observance of laws governing valid and licit celebration. It is their duty also to ensure that the faithful take part knowingly, actively, and fruitfully."

Respect—or rather the lack of it—is another obstacle. I think we do respect one another. We are individuals with many gifts, with different styles. If we were all identical, it really would make for a boring life together. But it is no less true that we need to make some effort, at times, to respect these differences in the context of liturgical celebration.

Work—our obligations and duties of all kinds—is a real obstacle, and it is made all the more difficult by our placing upon it the premium we do. It is the best excuse most of us have for not praying with the fraternity. The Constitutions are also concerned about work interfering with mental prayer:

Superiors have the duty to provide each friar with books, time, and whatever else is necessary for mental prayer. Moreover, they must see to it that the activity of the friars is so scheduled that the life of prayer suffers no harm because of an overactive life [Ch. II, Art. 20, §2].

“Individualism” may summarize all these obstacles. It may be a rugged American virtue, but in religion it is a hallmark of extremism in the Protestant movement.

What are we to do? A deepened commitment to fraternal life is something we already profess to have made, as is also the case with a rededication to communal prayer. Yet we could just be spinning our wheels in this effort, unless this renewal is accompanied by solitary, wordless prayer in the presence of God. This is where love of God and love of brother grow.

I like to think of the words in the Liturgy as rain. The silence which ought to be a part of the rhythm of worship is like the rain sinking into the earth. Without time spent alone in contemplative prayer, however, we cannot receive the rain of God’s Word. We will be like hard, parched earth that rain cannot penetrate.

Contemplative prayer demands discipline and a kind of death. So does fraternal life. Are we ready to accept that demand? When we feel we have met the demand, then we have fallen short. Recall Paul’s admonition: “Beware, you righteous, lest you fall!”

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TO TALK OF FRATERNITY and the fraternity’s prayer is to speak of love. It is the love of Christ that binds us to one another. Remember Paul’s hymn to love. Love is not hard to see, but it must keep growing, or it will die. As we grow in the love of Christ, we live in the Spirit rather than under the Law. Our life is one of commitment to prayer and brotherhood based on the Gospel, rather than a life of dreary obligation. That is the conversion we undertake. Ω

## The Saint and Scholars: How Chesterton, Joergensen, and Others Approached Saint Francis

LIAM BROPHY

IT WAS SAID of Francis Bacon that he moved the intellects that moved the world. The same might be justly said of Saint Francis of Assisi: he moved the intellects that moved the world of spirit. His spiritual power and vitality, his creative energy, reach into innumerable minds, not only in the obvious sphere of religion, but in literature and the arts. Dante in a deep metaphor likened him to a rising sun, and all the strength and beauty we associate with a glorious dawn: the light, the freshness, the air of hope and stimulation, cling to his memory still. Thus Dante himself, as the English poet-scholar Matthew Arnold noted a century ago, was directly influenced by the saint and initiated a magnificent era in Italian literature, while Giotto, the Tertiary artist, began a whole new age in art with his frescoes of the saint in the Basilica of Assisi.

That this benign influence continues to our own time can be shown in the works of two poet-authors, which had profound influences on their compatriots: Johannes Jorgensen in Denmark, and G. K. Chesterton in England. Of both writers it could be said that they were naturally Franciscan souls. They were poets of distinction, with all the poet’s yearning for beauty and vitality; they had a warm love of humanity; they appealed especially to youth, and they were confirmed optimists. Their very attraction to Saint Francis, and ultimately to the Church, of which Chesterton said that Francis was “a living pillar,” stemmed from their reaction against the drab, dreary, and devitalized forms of reformed Christianity into which they were born.

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Liam Brophy, a civil servant in his native Dublin, is a prolific writer of essays and articles for periodicals in Ireland, England, the United States, Canada, and Australia. He is also an established poet, having been honored by membership in the Catholic Poetry Society of America.

Joergensen was born in Denmark fifty years after the death of Kierkegaard (which in Danish means "Churchyard"). The Scandinavian countries just then were being swept by the chill winds of Existentialism and austere Rationalism. Ibsen, Strindberg, and Georg Brandes were exercising a strong malevolent influence on the minds of the young, urging them towards an atheistic neo-paganism in reaction against the harsh intellectual climate and the unlovely mercantile ethics of Lutheranism. The young Joergensen joined the intellectual elite of Denmark, searching for fullness of life, but found the neopagans plied him with stones instead of bread. After much internal conflict and long supplications to Heaven for direction, a friend and painter, lately converted to Catholicism, Verkade, destined to become a Benedictine monk, invited him to join him and a group of fellow writers and artists who were planning a tour of Southern Germany and Italy. It was to prove for Joergensen the spiritual path to Rome, via Assisi. He later wrote a glowing account of that tour in his *Livre de la Route*, which ranks with Belloc's delightful *Path to Rome*, and in his autobiography, which ought to be included in every library of Franciscan classics.

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To our Protestant friends I would say,  
for your love of Saint Francis to be  
consistent and complete you should  
love the things he loved, and he loved  
the Catholic Church and its Supreme  
Pontiffs most ardently.

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Almost every potential convert has a stumbling block, the "one thing necessary," which he must overcome before he romps home to Rome. With many it is the Real Presence, with others it is papal infallibility, with Joergensen it was the fear of having to renounce poetry, the light of his life. His friends had little trouble in convincing him that poetry and prayer went together, that close to Assisi in particular, poetry was lived. "You thought you were giving up poetry, Giovanni," he heard a voice say. "Behold, she is coming towards you fairer than ever before!" He began to attend Mass in the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Assisi.

It took time for the seed of faith to mature in Joergensen's soul. Meanwhile he returned to Denmark, where his literary friends expected a witty and flippant travel book from him in the epigrammatic manner of Oscar Wilde, who, incidentally, was buried in Paris with a picture of Saint Francis placed, at his request, in the coffin with him. He told his friends that in their search for truth, happiness, and liberty they were on the wrong track. He sought those too, but did not find them until he returned to the fullness of the Christian Faith. He offered to show them the way to the sunlight of the mind.

Joy of the Seraphic kind seems always to bring an air of vitality and creativity with it. It is said of English converts in particular that they turn to writing comic verse as soon as they get Home. Certain it is that Joergensen poured out a vast quantity of literature after his conversion, much of it aimed at misguided youth and persuading them that the cult of aesthetic beauty finds its highest expression in Christianity. Beauty lovers like himself need not fear that Catholicism, unlike Calvinism, would deprive them of the beauty they sought. Instead, they would find, in the words of Francis Thompson:

All which thy child's mistake fancies as lost  
I have stored for thee at home.

Joergensen entered that Catholic Church in 1896, persuaded that he had been drawn there by the stigmatized hands of his favorite Saint. In gratitude he wrote what has proved to be one of the most popular of the many "Lives" of Saint Francis, as well as a literary masterpiece called "Franciscan Pilgrimage," telling of the journey of body and soul towards the Church. Joergensen had hoped to be buried in Assisi, where he spent much of his time, but the hounds of war chased him, not for the first time in his life, till he lay down for his last long rest in his native Svebborj, where he died in 1956 at the age of 90.

G. K. CHESTERTON WAS ONE of the most brilliant stars which formed the constellation of Catholic writers in England at the beginning of the century, and which included such shining geniuses as Francis Thompson, Hilaire Belloc, Alice Meynell, Maurice Baring, and Ernest Dowson. Students of English literature will be aware of how frequently they refer to Saint Francis in their work, especially Francis Thompson.

It is difficult to realize that Chesterton's truly delightful "Life" of Saint Francis was written while he was still an Anglican. Doubtless poetic intuition had a lot to do with it, added to a sunniness of nature.

It is obvious from these words in the first chapter of his book that Chesterton had been attracted to the saint a while before the book was published in 1915:

Long ago in those days of boyhood my fancy first caught fire with the glory of Francis of Assisi. . . . The figure in the brown habit stands above the hearth in the room where I write, and alone among many such images, at no stage of my pilgrimage did he ever seem a stranger to me. . . . His figure stands on a sort of bridge connecting my boyhood with my conversion to many other things; for the romance of his religion had penetrated even the Rationalism of that vague Victorian time.

The romance of Saint Francis' Religion had indeed penetrated the chill fogs of Victorian England, beginning with the famous essay of Matthew Arnold entitled "Religious Sentiment." What renders that essay remarkable is its intuitive appreciation of Saint Francis' influence, and the fact that the saint was almost totally unknown to non-Catholics in England. Arnold corresponded with Cardinal Newman for years, and a brother of his, under the Cardinal's direction, entered the Church. The essay begins thus:

In the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the clouds and storms had come, when the gay sensuous pagan life was gone, when men were not living by the senses and understanding, when they were looking for the speedy coming of Antichrist, there appeared in Italy, to the north of Rome, in the beautiful Umbrian country, at the foot of the Apennines, a figure of most magical power and charm, Saint Francis. His century is, I think, the most interesting in the history of Christianity after its primitive age . . . and one of the chief figures, perhaps the very chief, to which interest attaches itself, is Saint Francis.

John Ruskin, Arnold's friend, also a professor at Oxford, was most enthusiastic about Saint Francis. He came to know the saint through his art criticisms, for which he became so famous. He realized what a profound influence the saint had on the art of the Renaissance, starting with Giotto, and reacting against the lusterless Puritanism in which he was reared and of which he had some harsh things to say, he clung avidly to the memory of Saint Francis, whose Religion, as he saw, had all the warmth and creative energies which satisfied an artist and lover of beauty. He spent his vacations with the friars at Fiesole, treasured a piece of the saint's habit, and thought of entering the Church for the express purpose of becoming a Franciscan Tertiary.

Thus began what might be called the modern secular interest in Saint Francis. On the Continent of Europe a similar interest had begun with the work of two non-Catholics: Karl Hesse's "Life" of the saint with the significant sub-title *Ein Troubadour*, a sign again of the reaction against the dourness of Lutheranism, and Paul Sabatier's "Life" published in France at a later date. As Sabatier was a scholar of note and wrote in a most attractive style, like Renan, he had a deep influence on non-Catholic attitudes to Saint Francis. But he perpetrated one grave heresy against which the Saint would have protested vigorously. He depicted him as the forerunner of the Reformation, the spiritual ancestor of



Luther. This, we know, is not merely ironic but truly preposterous, for the *vir Catholicus et totus Apostolicus* was one of the most loyal sons of the Church and a staunch supporter of the papacy. It is curious that a scholar so deeply versed in Franciscan sources should have missed the many appeals Francis made to his followers to be ever submissive at the feet of the Holy See. The "incredulous Saint Francis," as Pope Pius XI called this caricature of the saint, was ably refuted by that eminent American friar, former journalist, and later Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, Pascal Robinson, in his essay "The Real Saint Francis."

These brief comments on the non-Catholic attitudes to Saint Francis were necessary for the proper understanding of Chesterton's conversion by the saint. To this false picture of the saint we might add the polite caricature on the part of those who set up little statues of him in boudoirs and on bird baths, adopting him as their pet and the patron of all pets. There is an element of worth in this, and the writer, who is a patron of the Catholic Study Group for Animal Welfare, is happy to applaud all attempts to combat cruelty to animals. But to our Protestant friends I would say, for your love of Saint Francis to be consistent and complete you should love the things he loved, and he loved the

Catholic Church and its Supreme Pontiffs most ardently. Then I would ask them to realize that he "looked through Nature up to Nature's God" and his top priority was the salvation of the souls of men. It would be well if our kind hearted non-Catholic friends could be persuaded to read Pope Pius XI's Encyclical *Rite Expiatis*, which puts the saint in perfect perspective.

Chesterton saw these inconsistencies, and few writers have used such incisive wit or clear logic to expose all forms of falsehood. Here is one example out of many. It occurs in his essay, *Lunacy and Letters*: "Francis must not be exhibited to the modern world as a sort of modern aesthete, with garments of a Rosetti picture and the ethics of a vegetarian restaurant." Whenever the occasion arose Chesterton defended Saint Francis against his attackers and those who falsified his image and message. To the fastidious, he addressed his pointed verse:

If Brother Francis pardoned Brother Flea,  
There still seems need for such strange charity,  
Seeing he is, for all his gay good will,  
Bitten by funny little creatures still.

There was a striking similarity of spirit between the English poet-journalist and the poet-saint of Assisi. It was noted by Karl Pflieger in his book *Die Geister die um Christus ringen*, translated into English under the title *Wrestlers with Christ*:

If he [Chesterton] had any definite ambition it is, if I read aright between the lines of his "Saint Francis," this: to be like the Poverello, God's fool, and on his own initiative; and in his own way to praise the work of His omnipotence, the permanent miracle of the world. Ω

## The Universal Prayer of Jesus

SISTER EDMUND MARIE STETS, C.S.B.

ONE COOL SUMMER evening, when the day's work had been put aside, I decided to take a walk with another sister along the quiet paths of our campus. The news that evening had been pretty grim; so our conversation picked up on that theme.

"What do you think will happen," I said, "to all the people who do not know Christ, do not believe in God, and seem destined to be 'lost souls' at the end?"

"I don't know," she said.

"Think of all the derelicts and criminals who are, even now, living out their days ignorant of the real true purpose of life, ignorant of salvation and the mercy of God. Is there any hope for these people? How can they be reached?"

"I don't know," she said again, not without interest, but with a kind of patient resignation.

"The conversation went on like this a few minutes longer, rather one-sided, as we tried to grapple with mysteries beyond our understanding. But it was obvious that I was searching for answers without knowing the real questions.

Later that evening, praying the Scriptures, I opened to Luke, Chapter 11:1-4. I reflected that perhaps the Apostles had experienced exactly the same kind of frustrating conversation, and were just emerging from the thick of their conclusions, when they met the Lord returning from prayer. At once, they recognized how he dealt with these mysteries, and they turned to him for instruction.

"Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

The words of Jesus to his Apostles were:

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Sister Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B., who has often contributed poetry to our pages, teaches English at Alvernia College, Reading, Pennsylvania.

Father, may your name be held holy.  
Your kingdom come;  
Give us each day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our sins,  
for we ourselves forgive each one who is in debt to us.  
And do not put us to the test.

This was the Lord's response to the needs of all men everywhere, his universal prayer for humanity. It is a prayer of absolute trust, faith, and surrender to the Father as he offered himself for the salvation of man. Christ prayed for us, and with us, then and now, and especially for those who can't, who won't, who don't know how to pray. When I unite with Christ in praying the Our Father, my prayer assumes his universal dimension, and I too pray that the Father be loved and adored by every heart in every age. I pray for the kingdom to be accomplished for which Christ gave his very life, for the daily needs of the poor, the homeless and forsaken, especially their need of Jesus, the Bread of Life. I ask forgiveness for the whole world, crimes of nations and of individual hearts, especially my own sins, and I personally forgive all men for their hurts to me, as I am, in the Mystical Body of Christ, hurt by their sins. I pray to be delivered from the sin that controls the evil in the world, as Christ struggled with the evil powers of his world, and I pray for the coming of his kingdom as he promised, and as it will be.

The universal prayer of Jesus, in the words of the Our Father, is a gift to all men for all time. It is more than a prayer; it is the answer to the questions which remain unsolved for us because of the ignorance of sin. The universal prayer of Jesus is the flickering light in a darkened world, as steady as a star in the night sky, shining until the end of time, and we are never more consoled, never more humbly certain, than when we pray with the words that Jesus taught us. Ω

## Book Reviews

**Twentieth Century Christian Heroes: No Strangers to Violence, No Strangers to Love.** By Boniface F. Hanley, O.F.M. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1983. Pp. 224; photos. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., M.A. (English), a member of the campus ministry team at Saint Bonaventure University.

In this book Franciscan Father Boniface Hanley writes about eight Christians who lived in our own century and whose lives "became for us a source of hope and joy" (p. 8). These eight men and women experienced great pain and sorrow, but they not only endured such experiences, but used them to grow in their love of God. We can call these men and women Christian heroes and heroines because they lived heroic Christian lives. A hero is called "a person of distinguished valor and fortitude," and all of these persons exhibited strength of character and faith in God that make them worthy of our admiration and, in some respects, of our imitation.

Thomas Dooley was a doctor and an officer in the United States Air Force who courageously ministered to the poor and war-afflicted people of Laos, both during and after his period in service, until he died of cancer at the age of thirty-three. Edith Stein was a brilliant German Jewish philosopher, who became a Catholic and a Carmelite nun. She was put to death in a gas chamber at Auschwitz. Charles de Foucauld was

a French soldier, engineer, and Trappist, who became a hermit in the Sahara and was murdered by Moslem tribesmen of the desert. Vincent Lebbe was a Belgian Vincentian missionary in China. In an unpopular fashion, he constantly advocated a native Chinese clergy and happily saw the first native Chinese bishops consecrated by Pope Pius XI in 1926. Worn out by his labors and by his suffering at the hands of the Communists, he died in China in 1940.

Franz Jaegerstaetter was an Austrian farmer who refused to accept the domination of the Nazi regime in Austria. He was imprisoned and condemned to death as an enemy of the State for his refusal to enter the military service. Eva Lavalliere was a popular French actress who endured a painful childhood and early adulthood that led her to give up her practice of the faith. Through the grace of God, she returned to the faith, gave up the theater, and became a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis and a lay volunteer in Africa. Her intense suffering during a lingering illness she offered to God in reparation for the sins of her early life, and she died peacefully in the Lord. A scholarly Dutch Carmelite educator and administrator, Titus Brandsma became spokesman for the Dutch Bishops in protesting the anti-Catholic and anti-Semitic actions of the occupying German Nazi regime. He was put to death in the concentration camp at Dachau.

The final report in this volume is

about Miguel Pro, a Mexican Jesuit priest who, despite warnings from the government, continued to minister to the spiritual needs of the people in opposition to the anti-Catholic constitution of the Mexican government. His dying words before a firing squad of Mexican police were, "Long live Christ the King."

All the men and women whose stories are told in this book were victims of misunderstanding, injustice, and persecution. Father Hanley presents the account of each of them in a direct and personal way. Photographs of persons and places make the accounts all the more interesting to the reader. "Finding God, they came to love themselves and to forgive and even to love their persecutors and murderers" (p. 8). All of us can be edified and encouraged in our own lives by the stories of these eight Christian men and women. This reviewer recommends Father Hanley's book to anyone seeking to lead a God-fearing, Christian life. He considers the present volume the equal of *Ten Christians*, an earlier work by the same author.

#### *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi.*

By Hilarin Felder, O.F.M.Cap.  
Translated by Berchmans Bittle,  
O.F.M.Cap. 800th Anniversary  
Reprint Edition. Chicago: Fran-  
ciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp.  
xvi-518, including Index. Cloth,  
\$12.50.

One view, by Terry McCook, S.F.O.,  
M.A. (Education, The American  
University), a businessman and for-  
mation director for Saint Peter's  
S.F.O. fraternity in Richmond

Virginia, who maintains a special in-  
terest in the history of Franciscan  
spirituality.

Among other contributions to the 800th Anniversary celebration of the birth of Saint Francis of Assisi, this book is perhaps the singular reminder to modern day Franciscans that there are unique and essential characteristics that define the Franciscan way of life, and a periodic reflection on these definitive characteristics is necessary to revitalize the vocation of "littleness" that serves to "rebuild the Church."

The use of the word *Ideals* in the title may appear a little confusing to the general reader. Common language and conventional understanding probably attach an abstract meaning to the term *ideal* as that which essentially defines what human life is, yet is removed or stands apart from lived experience. The situation is similar to Jesus telling the rich man, who was a righteous and upstanding individual, to sell all he had and to follow Him. There was no argument that this was the "ideal" thing to do, but the rich man's actual circumstances dictated that this was not a practical thing to do. The common person may be able to accept that there is an impractical dimension to an ideal, but the attempt to describe several ideals that compose a single way of life may appear totally unrealistic. Father Felder is not always careful whether he is attempting to discover the essential ideal of Franciscanism or to describe a variety of ideals that have been ascribed to the Franciscan way of life over the course of nearly 800 years.

Early in the book Father Felder

writes, "The IDEAL of Francis was therefore a life 'ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL,' 'AFTER THE MANNER OF THE GOSPEL,' 'ACCORDING TO THE PERFECTION OF THE GOSPEL' (p. 11). The friars were consequently to observe exactly all those things which the Saviour demanded of His apostles, and all of those who are called to evangelical perfection" (p. 12). He seems to suggest that the Ideal (singular) of Franciscan living is imitation of the Gospel life of Jesus which is manifested in the living out of certain evangelical ideals (plural). If this is an accurate assessment, *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi* is an invaluable resource for all Franciscans. We have in one volume a concentrated attempt to define the essential Ideal of Franciscan living and the ideals that serve as benchmarks to indicate what progress is being made in moving closer to the essential Ideal. This general approach is confirmed by the layout of the book. Chapter One is "Francis and the Gospel," Chapter Two is "Francis and Christ," and the remaining chapters use the foundation of Gospel and Jesus to discuss Eucharist, Church, Poverty, Humility, Simplicity, Penance, etc., as unique, evangelical ideals in the life of a Franciscan.

The book is noticeably written from a "First Order" perspective. This reviewer gets the impression that the Gospel life of Jesus, according to Father Felder, is most clearly expressed in the life of a Friar Minor. Father Augustine Donegan, T.O.R., recently told a group of Third Order Franciscans, "A father makes a family, not households." Father Felder leaves one with the impression that our holy Father Francis

was in the business of making households instead of a family. The "First Order" perspective militates against current efforts to present Jesus and Francis to the world as brothers to all regardless of rank or position. The family nature of Franciscanism is briefly and succinctly declared in the recently revised rules for the Secular Franciscan Order and the Third Order Regular.

Every committed Franciscan should have access to a copy of *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi*. A Franciscan who seeks a valuable resource that contains many references to a wide variety of Franciscan scholarship will find it in this book. A Franciscan who is willing to be challenged in his/her own understanding of what Gospel living really means will be stimulated by this book. A Franciscan who wants to grow in his or her vocation will find guidance and encouragement in *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi*.

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Another view, by Father Stephen Malkiewicz, O.F.M., M.A. (Liturgics, University of Notre Dame), Guardian and Associate Director of Formation at Holy Name Friary in Chicago, post-novitiate student friary of the Assumption Province.

To those of us who became interested in Francis of Assisi before Vatican II, *The Ideals of Saint Francis of Assisi* was a well known and read map in identifying the Franciscan charism. It was interesting to read the book again after nearly twenty years. Much water has passed beneath the bridge, including the work of Felder's

fellow German scholars (Kajetan Esser, Englebert Grau, Oktavian Schmucki, to name a few) and the momentous event that was Vatican II.

Originally written in 1923 and first published in an English translation in 1925 by Benziger, *The Ideals* has been reprinted in 1982 by the Franciscan Herald Press to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the birth of Saint Francis. Hilarin Felder, like many before and after him, has attempted to delineate and apply the Franciscan charism to contemporary followers of the Poor Man from Assisi. The author puts it well in the Preface: "My entire and sole endeavor was to portray quietly, respectfully and lovingly the Ideals of Saint Francis in the light of available sources, and to give these ideals their proper place in the frame of his environment and time (p. x). The question is not how well the author has accomplished his task, but rather, for whom? The proof of the pudding, as concerns the first question, is that the book helped form innumerable followers of Francis. In terms of the second question, I wonder why the book was reprinted. After all, it is readily available on library shelves for research purposes. Who is the intended reader?"

In terms of Felder's *Ideals*, one has only to look over the Table of Contents to recognize topics easily identifiable with the Franciscan charism: Gospel living, imitation of Christ, obedience to the hierarchical Church, poverty, fraternity, the peace movement, etc. Realizing that the book was originally published in 1923, one is likewise amazed at the author's marshalling of sources. Obviously,

the "Quest for the Historical Jesus" left its mark on Felder's scholarship. Each chapter largely amounts to a composite of texts written either by Francis, by his early biographers, or by contemporary or later sources. On the other hand, the critical value of discerning the bias of different sources (Celano, the Three Companions, the *Speculum Perfectionis*, Bonaventure, Matthew of Pisa, etc.) is not yet raised.

Two principal difficulties that I encountered rereading the book in 1983 had to do with the language and the theological bias of the author. Both are the result of the fact that this book was written in 1923! The contemporary Franciscan might have difficulty with language such as "Under the impulse of divine grace his [Francis'] innate tenderness now rises to the heroic heights of Christian charity" (p. 6). Yet, more troubling to the modern reader are the theological categories that formed Hilarin Felder's questions. Thus, in the third chapter, "Francis and the Eucharist," Eucharist is understood and consequently read into the texts as localized presence. No attention is paid to the performative verbs used by Francis (consecrate, celebrate, administer, sacrifice, receive, etc.). Of course, this is a contemporary observation and not entirely valid in relationship to Felder's book. The point is, however, that it is our observation. Felder can then write: "The faith of Francis beholds behind the crystal of the monstrance, on the linen of the altar, and on the tongue of the communicant, the hands and feet, the eyes and mouth, the flowing blood and throbbing heart, the majestic personality and saving grace of Him

who once walked the fields of Galilee and Judea, and to whom he himself had sworn allegiance as a knight of the Cross" (p. 44). The author presents Francis' ideal in terms of his own (1920's) theology: tabernacle, monstrance, and devotion. He could not do otherwise. For a book printed in 1982 there are three different theological agendas operative: the medieval (Francis), the late tridentine (Felder), and the post-conciliar (the contemporary reader). My impression is that in terms of specifically ecclesiological and sacramental theology the author reads the medieval Francis in terms of his late tridentine categories. Thus the ideals, as presented by Felder in terms of Eucharist, might turn out as medieval and/or late tridentine rather than specifically Franciscan.

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*Catholic Social Thought and the Teaching of John Paul II. Proceedings of the Fifth Convention (1982) of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.* Edited by Paul L. Williams. Scranton, PA: Northeast Books, 1983. Pp. 107. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Paul C. Eckler, O.F.M., M.Div. (Washington Theological Union), campus minister at Siena College and a member of the Holy Name Provincial Committee on Peace and Justice.

This volume is the collection of major papers, workshops, and speeches of the fifth convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, held in March of 1982. As such it contains wide variations in the quali-

ty of its scholarship. For example, Rev. Ronald Lawler, O.F.M.Cap., provides some valuable background material on the Personalist themes in the social encyclicals and oral statements of the Holy Father. Regis Martin, on the other hand, offers some literary reflections on work in the world that do a disservice to C.S. Lewis (his primary subject) by doing little more than bemoaning the shortcomings of contemporary fiction found in the *New York Times Book Review*. Especially well done is a short piece by Maura A. Daly on Eric Gill. Gill's sculpture and essays on contemporary man and the morass of modern society offered a reflection on the working world that is downright insightful.

One shortcoming in the entire project is the quality (quite absent) in the final production of the book. Pages are out of place, typographical errors abound, etc. This carelessness in the printing process detracts from the depth of scholarship in this otherwise well done collection.

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*Living Divine Love: Transformation, the Goal of Christian Life.* By Dominic M. Hoffman, O.P. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1982. Pp. xiii-200. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Father Placid Stroik, O.F.M., Director of Post Novitiate Formation for the Assumption Province.

This book by Father Hoffman is principally an explanation of the spiritual life as seen from the point of view of its perfection. It is not intended as a detailed description of the



person in the transforming union, but rather as an attempt to establish a few central ideas and give some practical advice.

For example, Father Hoffman clearly and with frequent repetition explains that the goal of Christian life is to come to want God for His own sake and not for self-glorification or self-adulation. This theme is picked up to stress that as transformation takes place, God comes more boldly to the fore as the one sought. Less emphasis is on union with one's neighbor, yet not to the neglect of love for and duty to one's neighbor.

Transforming Union is a synonym for the journey into God, desired by the human person; and God's love alone brings about that transformation. It is love, trust, and dependence. Its essence is the heroic degree of virtue, especially love of God and neighbor. Mystical prayer, constant contemplation, and desirable familiarity with God are not essential characteristics of Transforming Union, but they may accompany those characteristics.

Father Hoffman has a fine discussion on ecstasy and rapture, highlighting the distinguishing qualities of intensity of presence and the reaction of the person on the spiritual, psychological, and physiological levels. He also puts to rest the thought that sexual passion and hysteria could be the cause of contemplation.

This is a fine book for the seriously minded person seeking to grow spiritually. It makes concepts and experiences understandable. Above all, it keeps the focus on God as the goal of the spiritual adventure. For us, Father Hoffman says, it means total

and complete giving of ourselves to God, understanding that we give "all" we can give and are. In this sense we give infinitely.

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**Saint Francis: A Model for Human Liberation.** By Leonardo Boff, O.F.M. Trans. John W. Diercksmeier. New York: Crossroad Books, 1983. Pp. viii-178. Cloth, \$12.50.

Reviewed by Father Joseph Kiernan, O.F.M., Executive Secretary of the Justice and Peace Committee of Holy Name Province.

Father Leonardo Boff has written a challenging book, especially for the followers of Saint Francis living in

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Fr. Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M.  
Editor

the developed nations of the First World.

As he tells us in the Introduction, the book's five chapters are like concentric circles moving inward from the more general to the particular. Thus he starts with the notion of system and moves through society and the Church to the individual. The entire process is read from the perspective of the poor, since they are the ones most interested in qualitative change in society, and because Francis tried to read the Gospel and all reality from the same perspective (p. 2).

The author addresses three major questions. First, he is engaged in social analysis. What is the present structure of global society with its underlying dynamisms, and what has been (should be) the Church's role in society? Second, what is the essence of Francis' charisma, and what resources does he provide us in helping meet society's needs? Third, how may we tap these resources in our own attempts to minister to today's social situation?

Father Boff reads the social situation from the "underside of history," from the side of the poor. Since the author comes from the Third World and is steeped in liberation theology, this is to be expected. His analytical framework is Marxian, in which the underlying cause of social evil is seen as capitalism, which fuels the sharp social divisions between the numerous poor and the minority rich. The battle lines are clear and sharply drawn.

This Marxian critique is difficult to swallow for someone living, like myself, in the First World. I do not doubt that capitalism is seriously

flawed in theory and practice, but to see it as the cause of all social evil seems simplistic. In addition, the historical incarnations of Marxism up to the present, i.e., totalitarian communism, offer little hope as an alternative. This is not to say that Boff is suggesting as his own solution totalitarian communism as such.

He states that liberation is the strongest impulse in modern culture, citing among its most significant promoters Marx and Freud (p. 82). The first may be questioned for the reason stated above. Freud may have helped liberate the psyche from interior bonds of neurosis and psychosis, but at least some Freudians have promoted something Boff is trying to overcome, i.e., a narcissistic preoccupation with oneself. Some Freudians would see some of the social evils which he decries as mere symptoms of sickness and therefore non-culpable.

The author is much more successful in explicating the charisma of Francis. Compassion, gentleness, humility, joy, prayer, love for the poor and the poor Christ, the ability to see all creatures as sacraments of the loving and merciful God, and stress on communal living, are all qualities we have come to know and admire in the life of Francis. They are his legacy to us. Boff does a good job of exploring these qualities in Francis and of pointing out their timeliness for all ages, especially our own.

Boff does not give a clear blueprint for how modern Franciscans are to help transform the world and Church. He does, however, give a good portrait of Francis, and he shows skillfully how Francis' charisma can energize us at the deepest levels

of our being to minister to a troubled world. Particularly helpful is his exploration of the centrality of poverty in the life of Francis. "Poverty is never for Francis an end in itself or a purely ascetical path to be followed. It is the means to an incomparable good: union and fraternity with the forgotten and with the suffering servant, Jesus Christ" (p. 72). Such poverty leads to true freedom, joy, and unselfish service.

We need to hear from someone like Father Boff, to be shaken from our lethargy. Our first impulse may be defensiveness and the feeling that yet another Third World spokesman is laying a guilt trip on us comfortable First World Christians. This is not his intent. Rather, as he notes in the last chapter, all believers must

acknowledge their sinfulness and frailty. We have no better model for this than Francis himself. If we can bring our wounded selves before the merciful Lord and believe that we are truly forgiven, then we are free to be about his ministry. In quoting an aged confrere, Boff says:

... if in the end, you can be neither holy, nor perfect, nor good, nor wise because of the weight of your sins, then carry this weight before God and surrender your life to His divine mercy.

If you do this, without bitterness, with all humility, and with a joyous spirit due to the tenderness of a God who loves the sinful and ungrateful, then you will begin to feel what it is to be wise, you will learn what it is to be good, you will slowly aspire to be perfect, and finally you will long to be holy [p. 130].

## Books Received

- Carberry, John Cardinal, *The Book of the Rosary*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1983. Pp. 120. Paper, \$4.50.
- Learte de Aspurz, Lazaro, O.F.M. Cap., *Franciscan History: The Three Orders of Saint Francis of Assisi*. Trans. Patricia Ross. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. xl-603, including Index. Cloth, \$25.00.
- Learte de Aspurz, O.F.M., *Upon This Rock*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. 255, including Index. Cloth, \$12.00.
- Learte de Aspurz, O.F.M., *The Parish Help Book: A Guide to Social Ministry in the Parish*. Introd. Philip J. Murnion. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1982. Pp. 112. Paper, \$3.95.
- Learte de Aspurz, O.F.M., *More Answers to Your Questions*. Introd. Fr. Bonaventure Hinwood's book, *More Answers to Your Questions*, is featured on page 328 of last November's issue, is R8,40, and is available for \$7.50 without postage.

## Fool's White

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