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#### FRANCISCAN PATHWAYS

The Franciscan Institute St. Bonaventure University St. Bonaventure, NY 14778 **JUNE, 1984** 



# The CORD

#### A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW



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Volume 34, No. 6

#### The CORD

#### A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

Editor: Fr. Michael D. Meilach, O.F.M. Associate Editor: Fr. Julian A. Davies, O.F.M.

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The CORD (ISSN 0010-8685) (USPS 563-640) is published monthly with the July and August issues combined, by the Franciscan Institute at Saint Bonaventure University Saint Bonaventure, NY 14778. Editorial offices are at Siena College, Loudonville, NY 12211. Subscription rates: \$11.00 a year; \$1.10 a copy. Second class postage paid at Saint Bonaventure, NY 14778, and at additional mailing office.

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

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

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to Saint Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: 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 Saint 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 Crucif
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 Saint Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
1I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

#### II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis 2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis 3Cel: Celano. Treatise on Miracles CL: Legend of Saint Clare CP: Process of Saint Clare Fior: Little Flowers of Saint Francis

LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis LP: Legend of Perugia L3S: Legend of the Three Companions SC: Sacrum Commercium SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., Saint Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies. English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of Saint Francis (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1973).

AB: Regis J. Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap., and Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., ed., Francis and Clare: The Complete Works (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).



# God Is Where You Are

The "quest for God" is a favorite theme, of course, in religious writing of various sorts: autobiographical accounts of conversion, descriptions of mystical experiences, and the more detached—academic, theoretical—accounts of the spiritual life all treat the "quest for God" as a necessary aspect of what it means to be religious.

The theme can, however, be misunderstood with results that are, while certainly not fatal, still rather stultifying for the person seriously seeking spiritual growth. "Quest for God" does, after all, seem to involve a "setting out," a "journey," and a more or less "distant" goal which one hopes to attain.

It's not that the person seeking God really thinks God is physically distant; surely, if asked, he or she would be able immediately to explain that "God is everywhere," and many of us could go well beyond that, into a disquisition on the meaning of "definitive" and "circumscriptive" presence, carefully distinguishing the divine omnipresence from both. None of which, of course, would get at the psychological problem, which has very little to do with theoretical philosophy or theology.

We know, of course, that God is everywhere, including right here, where we are now standing or sitting, walking or lying; but so often we feel the need to work out complicated and expensive arrangements to find him. For instance, we travel long distances to make a retreat "in quest of God's presence." But as Sister Sheila shows clearly and forcefully, in her article on "pink magnolias" in, of all places, the South Bronx, this is really not needed at all: God can be found right in the here and now if we but have eyes to see him.

This somewhat misconceived "quest for God" need not assume connotations of space or distance. It may, at times, lead us to think we have to do something extraordinary, not to mention glamorous or heroic, to fulfill God's will and as it were get him to "show himself"—to give us some unmistakable ratification of the validity and efficacy of the special means we have chosen to "reach" him and make his prescribe Factoria (see Could this be what Francis sought to do in accompanying the critical sees. Do we never feel a similar urge toward the glamorous and heroic in atting up our strategies for practical service of the Lord.

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University

### Pink Magnolias

01

# Assisi Revisited in the Bronx SISTER SHEILA PATENAUDE, F.M.M.

LONG AGO AS A TEENAGER, I saw the movie, A Tree Grows in Brooklyn. It had a valid message to convey, but I later discovered that many trees grow in Brooklyn and that the film title gave rise to an incomplete stereotype. Then, during this Easter week, I saw a pink magnolia bloom in the South Bronx, and I realized why one of my students, fiercely proud of living there, reacts so strongly to one-sided "Fort Apache" images of the area.

Sometimes contemplation of a flower spurs "satori" or enlightenment in a Zen Buddhist, but I discovered that a pink magnolia awakened me to my Franciscan heritage. During Easter week I made a Franciscan Hermitage Experience in the South Bronx at the Little Portion, a new retreat house serving the poor in the area and those who work with the poor. Since I teach daily at a high school only three blocks away, I had not planned to go there for a retreat. But I did want once to make a retreat that would span both Holy Week and Easter week, so as to relive prayerfully the death/resurrection mysteries of Christ. Four places where I had applied were closed during Easter week, but then I learned that Fr. André Cirino, O.F.M., was directing a Franciscan Hermitage Experience at that time. I consoled myself that during my Holy Week Triduum elsewhere I would gaze at beautiful trees and a lake; so the inner city atmosphere of my daily work grind would not be too bad for a few days!

Sister Sheila Patenaude, F.M.M., teaches at a South Bronx high school. The present article is here reprinted from the May, 1983, issue of Sharings with the kind permission of the author and the editor.

Little did I realize what I was getting into. The first morning I looked out my street window—gazed at the desolate, garbage-ridden vacant lot across the street, where once had stood a gutted building—and muttered, "O Lord!" But that afternoon I went out on the roof, and two doors away in the back yard of a neat, renovated apartment, were a children's swimming pool and a fully blooming pink magnolia tree! I could hardly believe my eyes, and I felt like crying when I realized not only the pride and sense of beauty of the residents, but how much they cared—to stay and stubbornly rebuild in beauty where others had moved out.

When Father asked us to reflect on what the Hermitage Experience meant for us, by an association of ideas that pink magnolia tree reminded me of the pink Easter tulips in Little Portion's chapel, sign of love and resurrection. It reminded me, too, of the pink rosebushes I saw in the F.M.M. garden of Assisi years ago, blood-stained "descendants" of the rosebushes in which Francis himself rolled during temptation. And the curly redwood Saint Francis shrine in an upstairs sitting room, where I often prayed during the hermitage experience, brought me back to my first Franciscan roots in California, a Palm Sunday procession at Santa Barbara's Old Mission when I was 15, and where the first desire to become a Franciscan was born within me. Yes, truly these hermitage days were a rediscovery of my Franciscan roots, and of an indigenous Franciscan style of retreat now starting to be revived in practice. It is one thing to read or pray about Franciscan spirituality, but quite another thing to live out this aspect of it in the actual simplicity of radiant Franciscan joy and transparency.

> Christ is dying still in the South Bronx . . . but Christ is also rising in the myriad signs of determination to emerge and rebuild. . . .

Francis himself spent about half his life in hermitages, but his "Rule for Hermitages" is not too well known, because it was voluntary and thus not incorporated into the official 1223 Rule approved by Pope Honorius. Saint Bonaventure and Saint Bernardine of Siena, in their zeal for many friars to pray the hermitage style, built larger enclosures

than the ones Francis intended for four at the most, his idea being to maintain poverty and simplicity. I was also unaware of the community atmosphere of his Rule for Hermitages and expected merely a few days of private, silent retreat. The first evening, however, Father André went over the Rule with us, sharing spiritual insights from Fathers Damien Isabell, Murray Bodo, and others during their own Assisi experience together. Then we heard a tape of Father Dacian Bluma, former Provincial of the Assumption Province, on the spirit of the hermitage way of living. Not only was it to be an in-depth time of silence, prayer, and deepening of one's own spiritual life, which it certainly was, but it also had a period of sharing built right into the Rule. We did this each evening in the form of faith-sharing, and although I was the oldest participant, it was a real learning experience to listen to the prayerful, simple, and deeply Franciscan insights of the other three: Father André, a young woman preparing to enter the Franciscan Sisters of the Poor, and a young man preparing to start a group of Secular Franciscans. We also shared after the psalms of Office and the Gospel homily at Mass, by song or by the equally strong bond of silent pauses, by words, liturgical gesture, and guitar. This community experience, as well as the interdependence of "Martha/Mary" and "mother/son" roles, brought us all closer to the risen Lord, to Saint Francis, and to one another. (Ironically, the two men were the "mothers" and the two women the "sons," but in true Franciscan simplicity, everything worked out fantastically in our "hermitaging" experience!)

Another little known aspect of Franciscan hermitages is that although the Carceri were out in the Umbrian hills, some of Saint Francis' hermitages were built near outcasts, lepers, or the poor districts of towns—not out in the wilderness. Our experience in the heart of the South Bronx, therefore, was not out of keeping with the original intention of Francis. Indeed, despite his legislation of silence, the "hedge" enclosure (the only part of the Rule we did not implement), and the "mothers'" protection of their "sons" from outside distractions, Francis insisted that the hermitages be open to hospitality. For him, they were never an ivory-tower escape from "the world," but were a temporary withdrawal in order to return to balanced activity with the spirit of the Risen Christ, bringing the cell and cloister of the heart along, encountering reality with his sacramental view of the universe. One day I especially realized this when I went out for a short walk in the neighborhood to get some exercise. My first thought

was that if I happened to meet two of my students who lived around the corner it might break my hermitage recollection. One moved to the South Bronx and a Catholic school only recently, and in ignorance still attends a Pentecostal church even though she is a Catholic. The other, a women ex-offender whom I taught last year in Harlem, spent time in prison for embezzlement, is a recovered alcoholic, but is still struggling to overcome habits of cheating and dishonesty that were survival tactics from childhood. As I walked past these two students' apartments, I suddenly realized that the Jesus Prayer I was saying in rhythm to breathing exercises was not merely a means to maintain recollection outdoors, but also a powerful way to "reach out and touch someone" with the power of the Risen Jesus, using his Name so tangibly and forcefully as Saint Peter did in his post-Easter sermons and healing.

Yes, as Fr. André mentioned once during those days of retreat, the South Bronx is similar in some respects to the desolate ruins of Jerusalem that the Israelites returned to after the Babylonian Captivity. Yet the Jews did not give up on the ruins, but set to work to rebuild on them, just as many Bronxites are doing today. (A special magazine section of the March -20, 1983, New York Daily News is entitled "A New Day in the Bronx"). The South Bronx is being febuilt spiritually as well as physically, as witnessed by the



houses of prayer proliferating there—not only Little Portion, but "Christ House" a few blocks away, a combination house of prayer for the neighborhood and hostel for young men from the streets. It is being reborn in the magnificent and moving liturgies of Saint Augustine's Black Gospel Choir and Hispanic parishes, in the loving warmth and determination of families who refuse to move from the area because they nourish the seeds of hope, and within them intuitively sense the death/resurrection mystery being re-enacted there. It is being reborn in pink magnolia blossoms in back yards, and in the

pink, blue, and yellow renovated apartment buildings on 142nd Street, springing up amidst the gutted and burnt ruins around them.

Christ is dying still in the South Bronx, in families that disintegrate when encountering hardships after immigrating from Latin America or the Caribbean, in families frustrated by unemployment, in youth sucked into drugs or crime, in the general death throes characteristic of urban decay everywhere. But Christ is also rising in the myriad signs of determination to emerge and rebuild, in the spiritual rebirth of hearts and souls, in the empowerment and healing provided by teachers, counselors, and pastors. And where the Crucified and Risen Christ is, there also is Francis, his follower, and the followers of Francis. That is why, for me, those days were really an experience of "Assisi revisited." That is why, amid the experience of being evangelized and gifted by the poor in the South Bronx, I shall never forget the pink magnolia blossoms in a back yard. . . .  $\Omega$ 

# An Analysis of the Admonitions of Francis of Assisi

#### **ANN-MARIE STUART**

At first glance the Admonitions of Francis of Assisi give the impression of being a collection of random sayings, until a more detailed study reveals a close packed unity of thought underlying them. From this emerge central themes which seem to provide a key to the mind and heart of the man Francis.

"What a man is before God, that he is and no more" (Adm XX). According to Saint Bonaventure, these words were constantly on the lips of Francis (LM VI.1). They could well be described as a pivotal statement of the Admonitions. A man comes into this kind of knowledge only as a result of a mystical relationship with God, which reveals to him God as Lover. For, intrinsic to the love experience is the true and therefore humble recognition of the self as revealed in the eyes of the other. When this image is revealed in the Otherness of God, then the self is reflected most effectively and accurately, as an incarnation of the Love of the Creator. The unity of such a relationship provides a secure basis for a mature and healthy acceptance of a selfhood so poor as to possess nothing which has not been bestowed upon it. For Francis, this particular effect of the unitive relationship provides a basis upon which his radical insight and interpretation of the Christian life may be built. And it is for this reason and in the light of this insight, I would suggest, that Francis continually links the three notions of love, humility, and poverty. In the Admonitions it would seem that these words are often interchangeable and that they add up to acceptance of the Cross, the way of obedient suffering (Adm V.11).

Ann-Marie Stuart, a member of an active Franciscan community until 1977, is the author of a new Rule, approved by her local Ordinary in Kent, England (himself a Franciscan). She holds a degree in theology and has taught it for a few years, while also preaching retreats. Currently she is a member of an interdenominational team responsible for the Epilogues on Independent Television for the South of England.

ment and self-depreciation equally inappropriate and unnecessary.

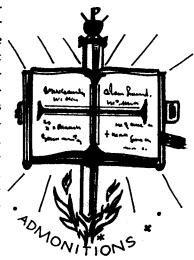
It can be no coincidence that paragraph I of the Admonitions is given over to a discussion of the Eucharist. In the Eucharist, as Francis sees it, is found the poor Jesus who comes in love and humility, yet who is at the same time our genuine security and riches. The personal presence of lesus in the community at once gives significance and strength both to the individual and to the community. It is the Love of God which first bestows significance upon the individual and empowers him or her to live the Gospel-life, and it is in turn the same power-filled Love which moulds each individual into the community by making his or her love fruitful, bound to the others by a common lot of poverty. So Francis notes that the only appropriate virtues are those of humility and love. He thus lays bare the dual aspect of the Gospel-life: viz., (1) personal relationship with God interacting with and for (2) fellowship among the brethren. Again, the Trinitarian theology of Francis can be seen. The Father's love for the individual empowers him or her, in the Spirit, to grow in love in and for the community, thus rebuilding the Church. The will-full laying out of the whole personality, which attitude can be attained only progressively, can be touched and healed by the unitive love of the Trinity, thus setting the individual free to live the Gospel-life more effectively. To the extent that the individual is thus freed, to that extent is fellowship fostered.

For Francis recognizes that there is a threat to the Gospel-life, a threat built deep within us which would undermine the rebuilding of the Church. He discerns that this threat proceeds from our self-will (Adm II, IV). He recognizes that we cannot bear too much reality. The reality of our poverty and nothingness appear so to confuse and humiliate man that he consistently seeks to replace his poverty with false securities. He hides behind false façades designed to impress others with his dignity, his independence, and his self-sufficiency. These three deep misunderstandings run clean contrary to the Gospel values of poverty, obedience, and love. Francis notices that this threat to the Eucharistic life takes the form of pride (Adm V) and that it emerges from what he calls our lower nature (Adm X): that is, that part of our nature not yet transformed by God's love for us, which distorts out judgment (Adm XI).

In the Admonitions Francis indicates what he sees to be the peculiar danger of pride: that it displaces the proper emphasis of trust in God's love for us, with a promotion of the ego. Self-dependence and the exaltation of personal attributes are accepted as bestowing stability and

security, thus constituting a refusal to face the starkness of our poverty, which is the reality of our human condition. More than that, it gives rise to the fear and inhibition which seeks to defend the ego at the expense of others. An extension of this self-exaltation can be the improper or inappropriate exaltation of another person. To place our security in another human being, to exalt him or her and to be surprised when he or she appears to fail us, is to demand things from a human being that he or she is not designed to give. It places man where God should be. And this argument is in the Augustinian tradition, rooted especially in Augustine's Confessions.

In the eleventh Admonition Francis refers to the Gospel text, "Render to Caesar the things which are · Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Mt. 22:21). In the context of the Admonitions what is appropriate between human beings is fellowship and love, and what is appropriate between God and a human being is the Love which empowers faith and trust. The man who attempts to live the Gospel-life will be free to wonder at the marvellous things God has worked in him and to realize that the credit belongs to God and not to himself.



He will recognize, as Mary did in the Magnificat, that such gifts fill up his poverty:

he looks on his servant in her lowliness: Henceforth all ages will call me blessed. The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy is his Name!

The Magnificat provides a perfect example of the kind of humility which is pure and open and thus able to accept the things that God can bestow upon man. In the Praises of God this is put into Franciscan language:

You are love, You are humility, You are endurance, You are rest, You are peace, You are joy and gladness, You are justice and moderation, You are all our riches And you suffice for us [LaudDei].

Because Francis is aware that we have a dual nature at war within our being, he insists upon the need to develop the capacity to discern the spirit of God at work in a man. It is possible that this need was highlighted by the fluidity of the early beginnings of the Franciscan way of life. While the life was clearly innovative, as has already been noted it was also in line with the lives of the Desert Fathers, who also found that it was important to be clear concerning the discerning of spirits. It was necessary to ensure that such a charismatic way of life was safe for those who followed Francis. So Francis points out how to discern the man of God as opposed to those who may be deluded and yet may also give the appearance of orthodoxy. The man who lives the Gospel life can be recognized, says Francis, by certain signs:

We can be sure that a man is a true religious and has the spirit of God if his lower nature does not give way to pride when God accomplishes some good through him and if he seems all the more worthless and inferior to others in his own eyes [Adm XII].

The man whose eyes are so dazzled by the beauty of his Lord the Most High God, really sees little of himself, except as an object and the recipient of God's love, and so he sees all other men in a similar light. Thus a proper and appropriate love of the self is linked with a proper and appropriate love for all men and for all created things. For Francis extended his notion of fellowship to include all things created by God (cf. CantSol; SP). Such a man, Francis maintains, will be recognized by his patience under trial (Adm XIII), and no doubt this stems from Francis' own experiences during the early days of his conversion and later on in his own inner struggle and the difficult relationships within his own Order. The man of God will be recognized also by his poverty of spirit (Adm. XIV) and his capacity for peace-making (Adm XV). He will be pure of heart, humble, compassionate, and contented with his lot, so that his serenity will reflect the security of his inner relationship with God (Adm XVI, XVII, XVIII).

Running through all the descriptive reflections concerning the manifestation of God's work in man there seems to be a statement concerning attitudes. It is not so much what a man does or says that reveals the spirit at work in him, as it is his attitudes:

There are many people who spend all their time at their prayers and other religious exercises and mortify themselves by long fasts and so on. But if anyone says as much as a word that implies a reflection on their self esteem or takes something from them, they are immediately up in arms and annoyed. These people are not really poor in spirit [Adm XIV].

Francis' unique perception here seems to be that the mystical relationship with God results in an altered and transformed consciousness, manifested in the attitude of the religious to things and people and events, and that it is at this level rather than at the level of superficial activity that the Spirit of God at work in man is revealed. Those who assess men by what they say or do or appear to be, may miss the man. The yardstick which Francis uses to assess the work of the Spirit in man may appear to be a harsh one, particularly to a generation who have the tendency to assess men more by external appearances and by social norms derived from this misconception.

The man of God, Francis tells us, will ponder within himself the things that God has revealed to him and worked within him (Adm XX-VIII). For such a man does not need to reveal such details to others in order to be honored by them. Such a man, rather—like Francis himself—will prove attractive to others mainly by what he is, rather than by what he says or does, although paradoxically he may also be very much misunderstood.

In the light of what has already been discussed, it seems that Francis, like the Desert Fathers before him, considered that only God could effect such a sublime transformation in man. Only the "Empowered Love" which comes to us in the Eucharist and in prayer and in the common life, can empower a man to live in such a manner. Yet the role of the Franciscan is not passive; it entails a cooperation with God's activity, more difficult because more restrained than direct action: viz., the activity of allowing God to act in him. Man may set himself the task of rectifying his actions, but only the Creator God himself can transform a man's consciousness and alter what a man is, for "what a man is before God, that he is and no more."

In spite of this intuitive and affective knowledge of who we are in relationship to God, Francis recognizes that our weakness and our limitations are such as to prevent us from understanding its significance adequately. So he tells us that we have to look at Christ, as the One who will show us who we are and what we are called to be (Adm I.1).

So Francis posits the life of Christ as our paradigm: a Christ who in his loving relationship with his Father, shows us what it is to be Man at one with God. So Jesus is in his personhood our Way, the Lord, and the one in whom we can place out trust. Such faith will pull him down to us and strengthen us, if we aspire to the Gospel life (Adm I.3). For Francis recognizes that our human frailty is such as to be overwhelmed by the demands of the Gospel-life. He reminds us that our very weakness can be our chief asset, in that our poverty can act like a vacuum attracting the power of God to come to our aid (Adm I.5). So Francis urges us to reverence and receive the Eucharist, which he sees as the loving response of "Fullness" to our emptiness, the life of him who is the Gospel and whose vitality it is that will enable us to overcome our weakness and so live out our commitment. For Christ our Eucharist, is the strength which promotes life in us. He will enable us to live the Gospel life, and he will build us into a community (Adm I).

Francis' document bespeaks a vision of life so sublime as to be beyond the power of ordinary men and women.

Radical commitment to the Gospel-life which is the Franciscan ideal can be lived only when "empowered" by Divine Love itself. Unlike the Benedictine Rule, expressly devised so that even the weakest member of the community may follow the Rule, Francis' document bespeaks a vision of life so sublime as to be beyond the power of ordinary men and women. The life is patterned upon the main thrust and attitudes manifest in the life of the God-man, Jesus Christ. We cannot hope to live in such a manner unless (1) we recognize and confess our poverty and our incapacity and (2) we put our faith and trust in the power of the Love which is God, who alone can fill up our emptiness and weakness with the strength of his Love, which is all powerful (Adm

Since we are so poor, the Gospel-life proclaims a way of living which is utterly dependent upon God in faith. We dare to live with no other security than that bestowed upon us by the Love of the Father, through the Son, empowered by the Spirit. This Trinitarian ideal could be said to be the essence of Christian living and so of Franciscan life. But Francis takes this to an extreme practiced previously only by the Desert Fathers. Gone are the securities of Benedictine Monasticism, lovely as they are. In their place, Francis urges us to take the Gospel injunction seriously: to sell all that we have and to distribute it to the poor, so that unencumbered, we are free to follow Christ anywhere, joyfully. For the Franciscan, Christ is encountered not in one place alone, nor in one set of circumstances only. Rather, securely rooted in a loving relationship with God, the Franciscan is free to enter into a continually changing and maturing dialogue with the world, in any circumstance or place.

When we look at Jesus, Francis tells us, we can see particular characteristics which turn accepted values upside down. Whereas in the world riches, honor, and status-in other words, the lust for power-bestow significance and a justification for existence, in the Gospel-life we see a poor Jesus who is impotent to reverse his lot, who is lovingly humble, in the sense that he is sensitive and true to the spirit and intuition that dwells within him. Whereas in the world domination, pleasure and success rule, in the Gospel-life we see a Jesus who accepts the Cross and who is obedient even to death (Adm I, III, VI), a Jesus for whom apparent failure crowns his life with success. This is the humility of the dying Jesus, that he experiences failure prompted by love while we inherit the success, the outpouring of Love. This is the life of naked faith, manifested in the life of the dying Jesus, bringing about benefits for the community in direct proportion to the trustful abandoning of himself into the hands of the Father. This Jesus is our paradigm.

In the light of this understanding of the Gospel, Francis urges his followers, those who wish to live the Gospel-life, to be poor (Adm. V, XIV), humble (Adm I, XVII), and loving (Adm VIII, IX, XVII). The man or woman who lives thus will find him- or herself, will become him- or herself. Here is no mock humility which disclaims God-given gifts or belittles the greatest gift of all: viz., that of self. These expressions of heroic virtue are securely rooted in the healthy acceptance of the self, as experienced in the stable relationship initiated by God, which spills over into everyday life, rendering both self-aggrandize-

#### **At Pentecost**

Gather petals of pasture rose Like hope we now can see While the returning swallows Fly like eternity.

Deer weaving through tall grasses Blue from inches of rain, And each wildflower that passes, Teach me to kneel again.

In mountain fields of strengthening corn I'm standing with my love Where gold flowered spirit's born, A dove brooding above,

Perched on high tension wires Echoing flooded streams Of God's and creation's desires Flooding into our dreams.

But when there is no trace Of how things shine and rise, And dead, in a desolate place, Still I open my eyes

To no rose, rain, swallow, pasture, No deer, nor corn, no dove, To no spirit, no nature, And I'm without my love,

I'll need the hope I don't see, As a fistful of dust Reveals our desperate glory. Yet while I can I must

Gather petals of pasture rose And all the hope we see While the returning swallows Fly like eternity.

Charles Cantalupo

## Sing to the Lord a New Song—III

THOMAS K. MURPHY, O.F.M.

ASKING THE LORD for our daily bread, we have seen in the preceding section of this study, really means asking him for every one of our bodily and spiritual needs. But for one need in particular, there are both a special petition in the Lord's Prayer and a special set of Psalms that correspond to that petition.

## Forgive Us Our Sins As We Forgive Those Who Sin Against Us.

BEFORE WE TAKE UP the penitential psalms, perhaps we should remark that they are relatively few in number. Although their general tenor indicates a high awareness of the presence of sin in the human scene, at the same time, in my opinion, the general tenor of the categories of psalms we have already discussed implies at least that the psalmists—thanks perhaps to the blessing of the Covenant—consider themselves largely free of the bane of human sin. Several psalmists in their encounter with human wickedness make explicit claim to personal innocence (cf. Ps. 7:9; 17:3–5; 26:3–6; 44:18–19; 59:4–5; 73:13; 101:1–8).

From the perspective of Christian redemption from sin through Christ, the psalmists' perfection in walking in the ways of the LORD presents a theological problem. Perhaps this innocence on the part of the Psalmist is a very subtle indication by the Holy Spirit that the Book of Psalms was composed principally for the use of the sinless Messiah.

However the innocence of the psalmist is to be understood, there are in fact several psalms in which the psalmists are highly aware of their own sinfulness before God. They openly confess their sinfulness and beg the Lord's forgiveness. These psalms are referred to as penitential psalms. In addition to the seven traditional penitential psalms (6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143), I would include in this category also Psalms 25, 39, 50, and 106.

Father Thomas K. Murphy writes from Saint Joseph's Friary, Warwick, New York, the House of Prayer for Holy Name Province. This is the last in a series of three articles discussing the relationship between the Psalms and the Lord's Prayer.

The classic penitential psalm is Psalm 51. Some authorities on the psalms consider that Psalm 51 should be conjoined with Psalm 50. They argue that in Psalm 50 God summons his covenanted people to a trial because their worship of him has been only superficial and because they have failed to keep his commandments. In this context, Psalm 51should be considered as the plea made by the individual covenantee in the face of the divine indictment. The plea is, of course, "guilty as charged": "Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness" (v. 3).

The opening plea for divine mercy is followed by a flood of self-accusations:

For I acknowledge my offense, and my sin is before me always:

"Against you only have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight"—

That you may be justified in your sentence, yindicated when you

That you may be justified in your sentence, vindicated when you condemn.

Indeed, in guilt was I born, and in sin my mother conceived me" [vv. 5-7].

Next there follows a plea for cleansing and renewal of the psalmist's life. Towards the end of the psalm the psalmist pledges to "proclaim [the] praise" of his merciful God, and to make his offering of "a heart contrite and humbled" (vv. 17, 19). Thus the psalmist appears confident that he has been reconciled with the LORD through this open admission of his failure to keep the ways of the LORD.

It is no coincidence that Francis . . . chose to highlight his final hour by praying a psalm that reflects the last verse of the Lord's prayer.

Whereas the Book of Psalms presents Psalm 51 as the model of penance for the individual who on occasion falls into grave sin, the New Testament would have Psalm 51 the model for all people who would seek their justification in Christ. The opening words of Psalm 52, "Have mercy on me, O God, in your goodness," are remarkably like the words put by Jesus in the mouth of the publican ("O God, be merciful to me a sinner") in the parable of the public sinner who went up to the Temple, prayed there, and—unlike the self-righteous

Pharisee in the parable, returned to his home justified (Lk. 18:9-14).

Why is it that we human beings find it so difficult to realize and admit human weakness and sinfulness in our efforts to walk in the ways of the LORD? Why do we blindly act like the Pharisee in the parable mentioned above? One reason could be the very hiddenness of our faults. So often unconsciously operating defense mechanisms cover our faults even from our own view.

Psalm 19, a beautiful hymn in which the whole of creation is pictured as praising the Creator, treats of the matter of the hiddenness of our failings and faults. It begins: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (v. 2). In the second part of the hymn, human beings are called through the law of the LORD to become the spokespersons of the silent universe in its praise of God. The guidance of the law of God proves highly beneficial to the psalmist. The law brings him refreshment, wisdom, joy, light, and much consolation (vv. 8–11).

In the last strophe of this hymn the psalmist raises the all important question of human frailty:

Though your servant is careful of them [the ordinances of the LORD], very diligent in keeping them,

Yet who can detect failings? [vv. 12-13a].

Then in a passage that anticipates the clear New Testament teaching on the universality of human sinfulness (see Lk. 18:9-14; Rom. 3:23-25; 1 Pt. 3:18; 1 Jn. 1:8-10) as well as Freud's observations on psychological defense mechanisms, the psalmist trustingly calls upon God to rescue him from his inevitable human frailty:

Cleanse me from my unknown faults!

From wanton sin especially restrain your servant; let it not rule over me.

Then shall I be blameless and innocent of serious sin (vv. 13b-14].

In the concluding verse, after the LORD, the "redeemer," has rescued him from his own human frailty, the heart and mouth of the psalmist are ready through the favor of the LORD to take up their appointed task of leading creation in its symphony of praise to God (v. 15).

After examining what the Psalter has to say on the matters of repentance and forgiveness, we can now turn to the corresponding phrase of the Lord's Prayer.

There are two general situations in which we can find ourselves in need of the forgiveness of sins mentioned in the Lord's Prayer (Lk. 11:4). One situation obviously is when we ourselves are the *active* agents of wrongdoing, when we break the commandments of God and violate the rights of others. In these matters we are quite capable of owning up to our culpability; but even in this regard we have the notable examples of King David and Saint Paul, whose repentance took time because their culpability was hidden from themselves for some time under an exuberance of passionate desire and prejudice (cf. 2 Sam. 11-12; Acts 9:1-2).

The other situation of finding ourselves in need of forgiveness is when we are not the agents but *the recipients* of wrongdoing, when our rights are violated, when we are offended and hurt, perhaps even unwittingly, by others. Under these circumstances, like Hamlet, we are left wondering at

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune . . .

The heartache and the throes and natural shocks that flesh is heir to . . . the whips and scorns of time,

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,

The insolence of office . . . [Hamlet, Act III, Scene i].

We are likely to be stirred with anger and resentment, with confusion and depression. As we all know from personal experience, our interior disturbance can very readily lead our personal disposition far from the love of God and love of neighbor. In our upset, also, we are seldom apt to assume personal responsibility for our emotional and psychic state. For practical purposes, it seems to me that this passively entered state of uncharity may be even more widespread among the human family and also far more difficult to emerge from, than actively entered states of uncharity. I believe, too, in reference to the Lord's Prayer, that it is of the utmost importance to be keenly aware of this latter condition of uncharity.

No one could claim with certainty that the author of Psalm 38 was speaking as an innocent victim of injustice as we have described in the preceding paragraph. But the words of lament in this psalm could be understood in that sense:

O LORD, in your anger punish me not, in your wrath chastise me not; There is no health in my flesh [discouragement?] because of your indignation;

There is no wholeness in my bones because of my sin,

For my iniquities have overwhelmed me [uncharitable thinking?]...

Noisome and festering are my sores because of my folly [resentment?],

I am stooped and bowed down profoundly; all the day I go in mourning,

I am numbed and severely crushed [depression?];

I roar with anguish of heart [anger and self-pity] [vv. 2, 4-7, 9].

Also, the words of repentance in the final strophe of the psalm could be understood in the sense that the psalmist has taken responsibility for his emotional and psychic state, has admitted before his God his powerlessness to do anything for himself, and in his plight has made appeal for divine salvation:

. . . for you, O LORD, I wait. . . . Indeed, I acknowledge my guilt;
I grieve over my sin . . . [resentments and uncharitable thinking?]
Make haste to help me, O LORD my salvation! [vv. 16, 19, 23].

I have mentioned above that the distinction between actively and passively entering into states of uncharity seems to be involved in the phrase of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." When Jesus teaches us to seek the forgiveness of our sins from the Father, we might expect the measure of the Father's forgiveness to be (a) the same measure as our repentance for the deeds of which we have been the agent; but there is no mention in the second part of the phrase of our sorrow for our own misdeeds. Instead Jesus teaches us to seek the forgiveness of our sins from the Father in (b) the same measure as our forgiveness of those of whose hurtful deeds we have been the recipients.



In wording the petition for forgiveness from the Father in this way, Jesus is challenging his disciples to a greater resemblance to their heavenly Father. If the measure of our own forgiveness has been merely the measure of our repentance for our own sins, we would be the grateful recipients of his loving kindness. Since the measure of forgiveness we seek from the Father is rather the measure of our forgiveness of "those who sin against us," however, we are required ourselves to become by the grace of God active agents of his loving kindness and mercy. Jesus seems to take it for granted that, if we have learned to imitate the mercy of the heavenly Father in this greater matter of our willingness to forgive others, then we must already have become contritely aware of our own sinfulness and can thus be assured of the Father's willingness to forgive us.

## Save us from the Time of Trial and Deliver Us from Evil

THE FIRST SIX PHRASES of the Lord's Prayer contain God's program for human salvation and deliverance: viz., a return to the loving Reign of God the Father through Jesus Christ. The seventh and last phrase of the Lord's Prayer deals with the matter of remaining and growing in union with God as we in our human frailty encounter the trials and obstacles along the path of our lives. In this phrase, Jesus, knowing that "the spirit is willing, but nature is weak" (Mk. 14:38), warns us that we should always entrust our journey and our destiny into the care of the Saving God who says to his people:

. . . I have witnessed the affliction of my people . . . and have heard their cry of complaint. . . .

Therefore I have come down to rescue them . . . and lead them out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey . . . [Ex.3:7-8].

At the time that Jesus taught his disciples the Our Father, they were of course experiencing difficulties in adjusting their own traditional religious mentality to the fresh and daring teachings of their new rabbi. Some of the difficulties were understandable. How could they have immediately accepted that Jesus would save the world by his suffering, death, and resurrection (cf. Lk. 9:22)? Or how could they ever understand at first how Jesus would nourish them with his Body and Blood (cf. In.



6:54)? They were understandably slow to begin to comprehend the enormity of many of the issues of Justice and Peace that had to be engaged if the Reign of God was to be inaugurated in their lives—issues such as the duty to help the truly helpless in their need (cf. Lk. 10:25-37), the danger of riches (cf. Lk. 18:18-27), the need to forgive (cf. Mt. 6:14-15), the need to love one's enemies (cf. Lk.

6:27-36), the indissolubility of marriage (cf. Mk. 10:2-12), and the primacy of the child and the servant in the Reign of God (cf. Mt. 18:1-4; Lk. 22:24-27). It would seem that just as they were unable to grasp the immense challenge presented by Jesus in his teaching on the Reign of God, so they may have failed to appreciate his closing admonition in the Our Father that they humbly rely on the abiding help of the heavenly Father lest they succumb in the trials ahead of them.

Just before the great trial of their lives, at the Last Supper, the Apostles were showing their customary confidence in their loyalty to the Master. Peter bragged—and very likely his brother Apostles would have made the same declaration themselves—"Lord, at your side I am prepared to face imprisonment and death itself" (Lk. 22:33). In the Garden of Gethsemane later the same evening, Jesus, knowing the spiritual weakness of his disciples and aware that Satan desired to sift them like wheat, gave them two separate warnings on the impending trial. He used words highly reminiscent of the words of the last phrase of the Our Father, "Pray that you may not be put [subjected] to the test [trial]" (Lk. 22:40, 46). Before he had issued the second warning, the human strength and good will of his followers were beginning to unravel under the test of events.

By the evening of Good Friday the distraught Apostles had a very clear appreciation of the last phrase of the Lord's Prayer, "Save us from the time of [Subject us not to the] trial and deliver us from evil." They had miserably and completely failed their beloved Master. On the previous evening at Gethsemane they had fallen asleep when he asked them to keep vigil with him. When Jesus was arrested, they had "all deserted him and fled" (Mk. 14:50); Peter, who returned shortly to the house of the high priest to find out what was happening to Jesus, in the courtyard outside had sworn that he did not even know Jesus. Against a most dreadful series of injustices inflicted on Innocent Humanity that night and the next day in the holy city of Jerusalem they had failed even to make a feeble protest. By events and by their own tragic behavior they found themselves as the poorest and most forlorn of human beings, much as their ancestors had found themselves in their bondage in Egypt and in their captivity in Babylon.

Such would have been the final fate of the Apostles had not the God of the Covenant raised Jesus and had not Jesus appeared to them and graciously accepted them again as his chastened disciples. Later, by the light of the Holy Spirit, they were able to recognize God's ultimate plan of salvation and deliverance from captivity for all of weak and

sinful humanity in the text of the Suffering Servant in the Book of the Prophet Isaiah:

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings glad tidings,

Announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation. . . .

He was spurned and avoided by men, a man of suffering. . . .

But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins,

Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed.

We had all gone astray like sheep, each following his own way;

But the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. . . .

Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear. . . .

And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses [Is. 52:7; 53:3, 5-6, 11-12].

The psalmists of old certainly learned in their own way to pray according to the last verse of the Lord's Prayer. Psalms whose theme is an impassioned plea for divine assistance in all sorts of trials are known as "psalms of lament" and all together constitute more than a third of the psalms in the whole Psalter.<sup>1</sup>

In the New American Bible translation all except five of the 38 psalms which are referred to in this paper as *deliverance psalms* contain terms such as "save," "rescue," "help," "redeem," "preserve," "keep," "deliver," "defend," "restore," "have pity," "give aid," or "give light." The appeals for help in the other five psalms (5, 58, 83, 137, and 141) are spoken in a more negative vein; these appeals appear in the form of dire imprecations against the enemies of the psalmists:

O God, smash their teeth in their mouths; . . .

Let them vanish like water flowing off; . . .

Let them dissolve like a melting snail,

Like an untimely birth that never sees the sun.

Unexpectedly, like a thornbush, or like thistles, let the whirlwind carry them away [Ps. 58:7-10].

Similar caustic imprecations against enemies and "the wicked" are also sprinkled generously among all the psalms of this whole group.

These psalms for the most part are the prayer of the poor, the humble, the oppressed. They are the prayer of the *Anawim*, the lowly ones among God's people who have come to depend totally on God for

their safety and well being. The hope of the *Anawim* rests only in God, who has promised his help to those who fear him and hope in him.

You are my help and my deliverer . . . [Ps. 70:6].

I know that the LORD renders justice to the afflicted, judgment to the poor [Ps. 140:13].

. . . I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful because of his salvation.
All my being shall say,
"O LORD, who is like you,
The rescuer of the afflicted man from those too strong for him, of the afflicted and the needy from their despoilers?" [Ps. 35:9-10].

But I am afflicted and poor:

O God, hasten to me!

From the New Testament perspective of the concept of universal human sinfulness (cf. Rom. 3:9-19) and the divine command to love one's enemies (cf. Mt. 5:44), there must be a shift in our understanding of the psalmists attitudes towards their enemies. Appeals for divine salvation must be understood to include salvation from our own personal human sinfulness as well as from evil outside of us. Imprecations must be understood as directed, not against the person of our enemies, but against the wickedness found in our enemies and also against that found in our own hearts.

#### Conclusion

PERHAPS IT IS NO coincidence that Saint Francis of Assisi, whose whole life from the time of his conversion was a life of prayer, and who had highlighted the initial period of his conversion by praying the first verse of the Lord's Prayer in the courtyard of his bishop, also chose to highlight the final hour of his earthly life by praying a psalm that reflects the last verse of the Lord's Prayer. In this prayer, Psalm 142, the Poverello expressed his resolve to consummate his union with his heavenly Father by entrusting his salvation and deliverance in this final hour to the merciful care of the same heavenly Father.

The scene has been touchingly described by Jorgensen:

Towards evening he began to sing with unusual strength. It was no more the Sun Song, but the 141st [142nd] Psalm of David. . . . As the October evening fell rapidly, and it grew dark in the little hut in the Por-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Leopold Sabourin, S.J., The Psalms (New York: Alba House, 1974), 444.

tiuncula woods, Francis prayed in the deep stillness, among the disciples listening breathlessly:

I cried to the Lord with my voice:
with my voice I made supplication to the Lord.

In his sight I pour out my prayer,
and before him I declare my trouble:
When my spirit failed me,
then thou knewest my paths. . . .

I cried to thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope,
my portion in the land of the living.

Attend to my supplication: for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name:
the just wait for me, until thou reward me.

While Francis prayed it was quite dark in the little cell. And as his voice ceased all was still as death—a stillness which this voice was never more to break. Francis of Assisi had closed his lips forever; he went into eternity singing.  $\Omega$ 

#### God Is Where You Are

(Continued from page 161)

We should not like these reflections to be misinterpreted in a negative sense: as a diatribe against travel or against the heroic in the spiritual life. On the contrary, we simply want to make a case, positively and psychologically, for the theological and philosophical truism that God is indeed "everywhere" and that all we have to do is open our eyes to see him. We see him wherever there is life, as in magnolia trees; wherever there is concern for the life he lives in others—yes, in the faraway Sultan but equally in the brother or sister with whom we live our day-to-day, hour-to-hour life. We may indeed be called to—but surely do not need to—do the glamorous, the extraordinary, the heroic, to find the living God in those with whom we live and work and play. Wherever we are, whatever we do, we can and must allow the God-within-us to transform us, to do his work in us—in Ann-Marie Stuart's words at the end of her article in this issue, to "transform our consciousness and alter what we are." Ω

Fr. Michael D. Miled , for

## **Book Reviews**

The Biblical Foundations for Mission. By Donald Senior, C.P., and Carroll Stuhlmueller, C.P. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1983. Pp. xii-371, including Indices. Paper, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Father Cassian F. Corcoran, O.F.M., L.S.S., S.T.D., Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Washington Theological Union.

Lest anyone conclude that the purpose of this book is to hammer out a spirituality or theology for persons interested in the home or foreign missions as we have known them, the authors define the term mission as they intend to discuss it. Mission is "the God-given call to appreciate and share one's religious experience and insights, first within one's own community and tradition, and then with people and communities of other cultural, social, and religious traditions" (p. 3). The authors search the Scriptures and show how this understanding of mission throbs throughout the Bible. At the same time, they share their profound grasp of the Bible and its theology, their control and understanding of contemporary scholarship, and their personal faith.

There are three major sections to this book. In the first major section, C. Stuhlmueller lays the foundation

for mission in the Old Testament. Although the entire section is highly informative and commendable, it may be helpful to single out two topics treated in this section. Acculturation is a process whereby one people learns and borrows from another so as to result in a new, blended pattern. Israel did just that. Many Israelite secular and religious structures such as temple and monarchy were adopted and adapted from their pagan neighbors. Now we refer to these structures as the plan of God. Any culture that Israel may have borrowed was purified and strengthened by Mosaic religion so that Israel in turn was able to unite and absorb others, especially disenfranchised peasants, to share her faith and become amalgamated into the nation and faith of Israel. Another fascinating example of how biblical mission may achieve its purpose appears in the Psalms. Some Psalms were originally Canannitic hymns. Israel took these hymns. honed, and tailored them to its prayer life and worship. Some Psalms have been edited and reedited so as to speak to a later time. The Psalms are more than another literary form in the Old Testament. They reek with the gamut of every human emotion and experience. The psalmists are very open and honest about their personal experience of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>Johannes Jorgensen, Saint Francis of Assisi (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image Books, 1955), 275.

God. They commit their feelings about God to poetry and reveal how God has worked in their lives. Nowhere does Israel share its experiences of faith and its conviction that God had abandoned and rejected it, more eloquently than in the Psalms. This is one of the reasons why the Psalms have so much to say to men and women of faith in any day and age.

In the second major section, Donald Senior reviews the books of the New Testament and presents a solid, basic treatment of mission as it appears in Jesus' Kingdompreaching, Johannine Christology, and the Paraclete texts, to mention a few examples. Although the post-Easter Church was mission minded and reached out to the Gentiles. Jesus himself exercised his ministry to Jews and on behalf of Israel. The apostolic community realized that Jesus' resurrection was his vindication and the revelation that lesus is the Son of God and the Lord of the universe. The realization of this sparked the vibrant mission program and the theology of the early Church preserved for us in the New Testament.

The third and final major section is a collaborative work that spells out four implications of this study:

- (1). The God of Israel is sovereign to all people and is a saving God. This principle should undergird the mission of the Church today.
- (2). God acts and reveals through history to save both Jew and Gentile. We find the sacred in the secular. God works in world events. Consequently, just as Israel could not consider God as its God alone, so too, Christians must realize this and recognize their responsibility to share their

faith with a spiritually starved world and see the hand of God in various cultures.

- (3). God reveals himself in this created, material world. The most outstanding example of this is Jesus' resurrection, which is the transformation of the corporeal human entity. Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that "all reality is to be purified, judged, transformed, redeemed" (p. 328).
- (4). The dynamic of mission is religious. Religious encounters with God give the motive, thrust, and vision that launch a dynamic mission.

This book is well written, easy to read, informative, interesting, exciting. It is for mature adults. On the one hand, it is a biblical theology of mission. Yet, it is more. It is an introduction to contemporary scholarship regarding the fundamental themes of both Old and New Testaments that relate to "mission." The authors are well balanced in their judgments. It is to be hoped that a reading of this book will prompt people to read the Scriptures in a new light and discover how a theme such as mission joins the two Testaments. The book begins with a citation from Gen. 12:2-3 which affirms the universality of God's revelation. This point is developed throughout the entire book, and it stands as a challenge to all men and women with faith in God in this ecumenical age.

Sacraments and Passages:
Celebrating the Tensions of
Modern Life. By Gerard Fourez,
S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria
Press, 1983. Pp. 165, including
Appendix. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Theodore Cavanaugh, O.F.M., Pastor of Holy Name Church, Garfield, New Jersey.

In this book Gerard Fourez gives us an interesting and stimulating approach to the sacraments. Modern man has separated private life from his work relationships and thus made it difficult to have rites where the whole community meets. Neither the work place nor the private home satisfies fully. So, ultimately, people approach their parish priest. He is, after all, heir to traditions which prevent his own celebrations, no matter how impoverished they may be, from being totally empty.

Vatican Council II made an effort to render the sacraments more meaningful to the people of God. To effect this, the Council commissioned the revision of the rites for each sacrament. Since then, many authors have written or lectured on the administration of the sacraments for a better understanding and a more meaningful administration of them. There is need for such education, especially for those of us who were trained in pre-Vatican II theology.

The author attempts to update our understanding of the sacraments, telling us clearly that his purpose is "to contribute to the restoration of the sacraments as celebrations that have real meaning in the lives of christians today" (p. 7). His intent, he says, is not to present a theoretical or philosophical analysis of the sacramental system, nor to dwell on the historical development of the sacraments; instead, he begins with communities that celebrate rites-sacramental and nonsacramental; he even suggests that

the reader less interested in his methdology may skip the technical and more difficult pages of his Preface.

Father Fourez concentrates on a specific aim addressed to a society obsessed with output and efficiency to the detriment of symbols, rites, and rituals. Overly rationalistic thought categories tend to stifle nearly every kind of celebration, and Fourez hopes to provide "some space for sacraments to be and to act on society with all the power of their dynamics."

Sacraments and Passages deserves wide readership from those involved in the sacramental ministry of the Church today. His approach is fresh and challenging. Familiarity with the sacraments and adaption to the new rituals is not enough to bring to the pastoral ministry. Fourez sees the sacraments as rites of human passage that call us to celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ. Sacraments are linked to individual or collective transitions and to tensions of existence and society; sacramental celebrations become insipid and pointless when seen without reference to these tensions, transitions, and conflicts. To me, this is the freshness and challenge Sacraments and Passages. The author takes each of the sacraments and discusses them as celebrations giving meaning to our complex lives and relating us to Christ in his death and resurrection.

The book does not try to reconstruct the sacraments. On the contrary, the author admits in Chapter 1 ("Let the Sacraments Be") that "taking everything into account, in the face of sociological and

phenomenological assessments, the sacraments are not doing badly" (p. 155). "To let the sacraments be" means allowing a proliferation of different traditions which will reveal depths unknown to psychosociological management techniques; it means refusing to allow previous formulations to block the dynamism of the Gospel.

Sacraments are celebrations of the community. Building these communities is important for the development of the sacraments. Celebrating together what they live is a "must" for the community, and this cannot be done purely on the basis of intellectual development. Successful celebrations work only by living them, not by merely studying them. Finally, it will be necessary for leaders of rites to be trained in order to bring about celebrations that are in touch with what is lived.

Sacraments and Passages concludes with a cogent criterion of authenticity for their celebration:

Celebrations are meant to get people in touch with the deepest realities of their lives, even to the conflicts, contradictions, tensions, and oppressions which are always there (whether they are individual or collective). Then, and only then, will people come out of celebrations in peace, as did the publican of the parable. Otherwise, celebrations are distorted (which is in the interest of those who want, consciously or not, to use them to conceal their domination of others and have it legitimated [p. 165].

Fundamental Things Apply: Reflecting on Christian Basics. By Clyde F. Crews. Foreword by Paula Ripple, F.S.P.A. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1983. Pp. 104. Paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Terry McCook, S.F.O., M.A. (Education, American University), a businessman in Steubenville, Ohio.

This book is a double treat. First. the reader is presented with profound theological reflections from a young and well-trained scholar of the Church. There is informational grist here for all Christians to mill in their own prayer and reflection. Second, the reader is confronted with the actual person of the author, who is courageous enough to share his inmost thoughts about Christian living in today's world. Indeed, many readers might finish this small book and feel they know more about Father Crews than the various subiects about which he writes. In this regard Fundamental Things Apply is reminiscent of Father Michel Quoist's book Prayers.

The term reflecting in the title is most illuminating about the content of the book. Father Crews offers his own reflections about Christian basics like fidelity, holiness, hope, sin, suffering, virtue, etc., but he does not present his conclusions as a series of reasoned, theological arguments. Rather, his thoughts seem to be a contribution to the accumulated faith experience of the universal Church and a catalyst for other Christians to reflect prayerfully on their own experience of Christian basics. In short, Fundamental Things Apply is a personal offering to the dynamic, ongoing process of the Church's growth in holiness. As

Sister Paula Ripple, F.S.P.A., observes in the Foreword, "Meaning flows from the inside out. Meaning does not come all at once; it grows in nearly imperceptible ways."

Father Crews is obviously well read in Romantic and Existentialist literature. He provides many literary references and his own poetry throughout the book. While his writing does not follow the format of tightly reasoned argumentation, there is a compelling attraction to his approach and presentations. Perhaps the risk of exposing oneself in total openness evokes from another a willingness to plumb the depths of self and to share these realities in a spirit of trust and confidence. It is easy to draw the analogy here with Eucharistic celebration and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In any event, Father Crews writes within an existentialist framework that this reviewer found most inviting. He not only stimulates intellectual deliberations, but he also elicits personal commitment to the process of growing in holiness.

While the book is primarily a record of Father Crews' reflections, there seems to be a thematic pattern that emerges periodically in his writing. I call this theme the privilege of the Christian perspective. Father Crews writes:

The Father had sent Jesus to consecrate the world to a new vision of meaning, to a profoundly new way of looking at things. The disciples were now called to see and lead others in turn—to see a depth and possibility in living that many thought impossible. They were to insist that life is more than it merely seems to be, to insist that death itself is a process, a transition and not a finality [p. 43].

The Christian in the modern world participates in a life (the Mystical Body) that offers a radical alternative to selfish and worldly pursuits. And in the midst of worldly clamor and demands, Father Crews reminds us, grace is available to live as Jesus calls us and helps us to be open to God's grace while under pressure. Despite the struggles of this life's pilgrimage, "We [Christians] are made for more" (p. 68).

Father Crews is adept in discovering the "more" of Christian living. In looking at the basics of our faith, he consistently exposes new facets that make our faith the gem of great price contained in earthen vessels. For example, in the chapter on sin, he does not merely see forgiveness as wiping the slate clean in order to try to do better, although this is an elementary part of the forgiveness process; rather, he envisions forgiving and being forgiven as "the refusal to be frozen out of that future to which God calls each of us by name and without exception. To be forgiven ourselves means unavoidably to see no one else as beyond forgiveness. beyond redemption" (p. 80). For another example, resurrection is usually described as a core tenet of the faith in high-level theological terms. Father Crews seems to grasp the awesome sense of resurrection that enlivens every Christian heart. He savs.

While there is doubtlessly joy in the resurrection narratives, we find the principal witnesses "half overjoyed, half terrified" in Matthew's account. Some think they were frightened because their leader had recently been executed and they might be next. That is a fairly reasonable supposition; yet

the fear seemed to increase as the news got better. It is precisely the resurrection that frightened them. And who was in the middle of it all? Who was being asked to internalize and share and spread this reality? The frightened followers . . ." [p. 42].

This reviewer believes that Fundamental Things Apply is a book that a reader will read many times over. Reflections tend to be sketchy, and Father Crews provides numerous opportunities for readers to complete

a reflection in their own prayer, meditation, and study. Consequently, a reader will probably want recourse to this book on a consistent basis. More importantly, a reader will probably want to return to this book frequently for the pure joy and clarity of being reminded of the primary basic of Christian living: viz., "In his life—and most specially in his death—Christ shattered the narrowness of our human imaginings about the range of human possibility" (p. 101).



#### **Books Received**

Bodo, Murray, O.F.M., The Way of Saint Francis: A Spirituality of Reconciliation. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1984. Pp. x-180, including Bibliography. Cloth, \$12.95.

Gutierrez, Gustavo, We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People. Foreword by Henri Nouwen, Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984. Pp. xxi-181, including Indices. Paper, \$7.95.

Hufstader, Anselm, God's Time Is the Best Time. Ways of Prayer Series, n. 11.
Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 130. Cloth, \$8.95;
paper, \$4.95.

Lienhard, Joseph T., S.J., Ministry. Message of the Fathers of the Church Series, n. 8. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 183, including Bibliography. Cloth, \$12.95; paper, \$7.95.

McManus, Jim, C.S.S.R., The Healing Power of the Sacraments. Foreword by Robert Faricy, S.J. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 123, including Appendix. Paper, \$3.95.

Nimeth, Albert J., O.F.M., To Listen Is to Heal. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984. Pp. 127. Cloth, \$5.00.

Pennington, M. Basil, O.C.S.O., O Holy Mountain: Journal of a Retreat on Mount Athos. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. xx-291, including Glossary. Paper, \$7.95.

Phan, Peter C., Social Thought. Message of the Fathers of the Church Series, n. 20. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazer, Inc., 1984. Pp. 268, including Bibliography. Cloth, \$12.95; paper, \$8.95.

# The Franciscan Image for the Twenty-First Century

SISTER MARY ARTHUR VAN LANCKER, O.S.F.

WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, I have literally "raised the hackles" of a priest-editor simply by questioning the image of the Church in today's world that is almost totally controlled by images. The Franciscans certainly are a very important if not a major portion of that Church; so I feel that questioning might also validly be asked of the Franciscans as the next century approaches. What image do the Franciscans of all four Orders have in God's world today? Is the Franciscan image akin to that of the larger Church: one of pomp, splendor, and wealth more in line with that of the priesthood Jesus deplored and often attacked, or have the Franciscans retained the New Testament image of a counterculture movement seen in the servant life of Jesus which he inculcated in his immediate followers and the early Church?

In other words, have the Franciscans become assimilated into the secular culture of today's world which places appearance before reality and financial success before human needs? How does the Franciscan image relate to the Franciscan reality taught by the founder, Francis of Assisi? Are the Franciscans suffering from the same malaise as much of the Church seems to be feeling? Personally, I suspect that the bishops of the country are defeating themselves because of their medieval imagery which is very nice pageantry like that of the British royalty, providing enchanting theater but nothing more. The reality of the most knowledgeable body of professional leaders in the religious area may thus be made ineffectual when those men seek to speak in response to today's crying needs. Might not this account for "good" Catholics questioning the right of their bishops to speak about such questions as nuclear arms, abortion, poverty, and the other human-and, consequently, moral-issues? "How can medievalists understand this century?" is implied by this questioning. Are the bishops medievalists? Or do they merely have the medieval image?

Sister Mary Arthur Van Lancker, O.S.F., has returned to Immaculate Conception Convent in Peoria, Illinois, after devoting several years to establishing the Franciscan Pathways series of publications at the Franciscan Institute.

As a teacher, I often introduced a unit on consumerism by asking the students to name brands of cigarettes, cars, liquors, etc., with which they had become familiar from sources other than the media. That proved an impossible challenge. A similar technique was used by the Franciscan Federation survey some years ago which raised—in a non-threatening manner—the question of the acculturation of the Franciscan religious communities and which raised the consciousness of these groups to the fact that they had moved with rather than against the culture. The survey revealed that the early history of most communities showed the leaders responding to the needs of the times and begging for funds to carry out their work. (My own religious community was founded late in the last century by Archbishop John Lancaster Spalding to care for the indigent orphans and the elderly of the newly formed Peoria diocese covering most of central Illinois. Our pioneer sisters recall the begging!) Then, as the immigrants began to get jobs, the religious also received salaries for their support even though the laity continued to respond with donations from time to time in the original pattern. Later the religious communities began to move into the investment pattern as their contemporaries did. They also followed the prevalent pattern of institution building and erected motherhouses and other structures that reflect the middle class milieu. Along with that, the sisters also adopted the corresponding life style. Thus they moved from the counter-culture stance that marked their

The same question may thus be raised of the religious communities as is raised of the clergy: How true to the counter-culture image of Jesus and Francis is the Franciscan image today? Does the image reflect a change that has led to the demise of many other communities in the history of the Church? Can youth be expected to respond to a life style which offers no alternative, no real choice? Or is the image distorting the reality and, again, proving a barrier?

following of their founders.

Will the Franciscan image of the twenty-first century reflect Jesus and Francis, or a false alternative? How will the Franciscans attract the generous hearts which God inspires to lead a truly Christian life style, unless those religious portray the counter-culture thrust of Jesus and his follower Francis that once drew a Peter and John and Andrew, a Bernard and Sylvester and Juniper?  $\Omega$ 

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