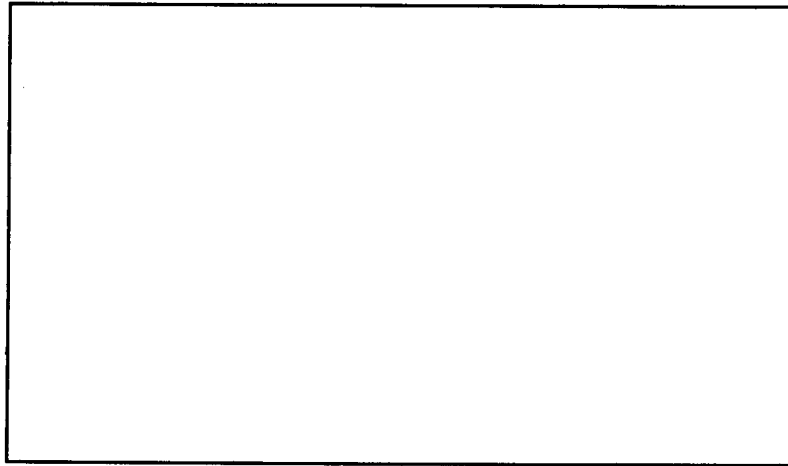


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JULY-AUGUST, 1984

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	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to Saint Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics ¹	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors ¹	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful ¹	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of Saint Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for Saint Clare	¹ I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of Saint Francis	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).

GUEST EDITORIAL



Reflection for the Feast of Saint Clare

THE FRANCISCAN LECTIONARY gives us three readings for the Feast of Saint Clare, the themes of which indicate the key doctrines for which the Little Plant of Francis is noted.

I. Clare as Bride of Christ

THE FIRST READING, from the prophet Hosea, centers on the doctrine of the Lord's steadfast and faithful espousal of his people through the making of a covenant. This flows naturally into the doctrine of the mystical espousal of Christ with his Church. Saint Clare pointed to this idea of espousal as being a central theme of the Franciscan life, a way of life that aims at union with the Father through the Son in the Spirit. Mystical union represents the highest state of contemplation and is the goal of those who walk freely in the footsteps of Christ and thereby share in his life and redemptive mission. As Clare writes in her Second Letter to Blessed Agnes:

This is the perfection which will prompt the King Himself to take you to Himself in the heavenly bridal chamber where He is seated in glory on a starry throne because you have despised the splendors of an earthly kingdom and considered of little value the offers of an imperial marriage. Instead, as someone zealous for the holiest poverty, in the spirit of great humility and the most ardent charity, you have held fast to the footprints (1 Pt. 2:21) of Him to whom you have merited to be joined as Spouse [AB 195].

The Prophet Hosea writes:

I will espouse you to me for ever;
I will espouse you in right and in justice,
in love and in mercy;

Father John Harding, O.F.M., writes from the Franciscan Study Centre In Canterbury, England.

I will espouse you in fidelity,
and you shall know the Lord . . . [2:19-20].

The same covenantal relationship is affirmed throughout time, the center and meaning of which is to be found in the Incarnation of the Word who is Christ. Saint Francis, who perceived this clearly, writes in his Letter to All the Faithful: "We are spouses when the faithful soul is joined to our Lord Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit" (AB 63).

To be united with Christ means to take up his yoke and to follow him. It means to *put on Christ*, as Saint Paul says. In writing to Blessed Agnes of Prague, Clare reflects on what it means to "put on Christ":

Inasmuch as this vision is the splendor of eternal glory [Heb. 1:3], the brilliance of eternal light and the mirror without blemish [Wis. 7:26], look upon that mirror each day, O queen and spouse of Jesus Christ, and continually study your face within it, so that you may adorn yourself within and without with beautiful robes and cover yourself with the flowers and garments of all the virtues, as becomes the daughter and most chaste bride of the Most High King . . . [AB 204].

Saint Clare goes on to single out three aspects of the life of Christ which she and her sisters were to cultivate: poverty, humility, and ineffable charity. These must be cultivated if the life of Jesus is to be revealed in the world through us who claim to be his followers.

II. Clare as a Follower of Christ

SAINT CLARE CONSIDERED Jesus to be the mirror wherein we can study what we must become. In our second reading Saint Paul tells us: ". . . God let light shine in our hearts that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ . . ." (2 Cor. 4:6). This suggests that we must not only seek to conform ourselves to Christ, but must also seek to mirror him to others. For Saint Clare, in her contemplative way of life, this took the form of imitating the poverty of Christ for the sake of the Kingdom. This meant that she had to suffer with him, weep with him, and die with him. Through this experience she understood that she would be participating in the great event of redemption and so could hope to rise to new life in glory with him whom she loved and faithfully served. In her Second Letter we read:

If you suffer with Him, you shall reign with Him, [if you] weep [with Him], you shall rejoice with Him; [if you] die [with Him] on the cross of tribulation, you shall possess heavenly mansions in the splendor of the saints

and, in the Book of life, your name shall be called glorious among men
[AB 197].

This is another way of affirming what Saint Paul teaches when he writes: "Continually we carry about in our bodies the dying of Jesus, so that in our bodies the life of Jesus may also be revealed" (2 Cor. 4:10). Saint Clare adored the lowliness of Jesus, his humble birth, his simple life-style, his agonizing death, because they were openings into the sacrament of love through which mankind could attain to everlasting life. By following in the footsteps of Christ people can begin to understand something of the poverty, humility, and unutterable love which is reflected in Christ and, through this, become ever more united with him in our imitation and contemplation.

III. Clare as Lover of Christ

THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN has Jesus speaking with his disciples. He compares himself to a vine and them to the branches. Apart from him there can be no life and no fruit. We are familiar with this image, and it picks up some of those referred to above: the spouse and the mirror. They all stress the character of inseparability as applied to the relationship between Jesus and his followers. This relationship is identical with being in love. Clare grasped this and saw it as the sure way to salvation. She writes to Blessed Agnes: "O most noble Queen, gaze upon [Him], consider [Him], contemplate [Him], as you desire to imitate [Him]" (AB 197). This picks up the theme of the Gospel, where we read: "He who lives in me and I in him, will produce abundantly, for apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15:5).

Saint Clare is very much aware of the utter dependence of all creatures on the Father and praises the Father for sending his Son. The Son feeds us in the Eucharist and brings our lives to perfection in him, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship is accomplished by keeping faithful to the commandments and by living according to these in a free act of love. This is truly an "engagement to liberty," leading to eternal life: "You will live in my love if you keep my commandments, even as I have kept my Father's commandments and live in his love" (Jn. 15:110).

Like Saint Francis, Clare lived in the love of Christ and, by keeping his commandments, brought Christ closer to those she met. By her example she gave birth to Christ, as Francis spoke of it, and surrendered herself to Christ as his bride. Saint Clare was totally apostolic, and her way of life complements that of Francis. Jesus is both the meaning and the center of the Franciscan way of life, for through him we come to share in the Triune Life of God Ω

John Harding, O.F.M.

What God Hath Joined Together

Adam's ewe lamb
Slept on his breast
And drank from his cup
 But she heard
 The voice
 Of another

The careless shepherd
Let his lamb stray
Did not lay down his life
For his sheep
 Thirst came
 Loss came
 The first day

Along the road
The Good Shepherd
Spoke to the ewe lamb,
"Give me to drink. I thirst"
 Recognition came
 Hope came
 The new day

The wedding feast
Of the ewe lamb
Had no wine
 A plea came
 The Hour came
 (The wolf came)
 The final day

His Nuptial Day
The Shepherd gave His Life
That His Ewe Lamb
Might drink on His breast
And hear only His Voice
 Today came
 Life came
 Eternal Day

Sister M. Mercedes, P.C.C.

Creative Spiritual Leadership as Outlined by Saint Clare

MOTHER MARY FRANCIS, P.C.C.

IF WE ARE GOING TO TALK about creative leadership, we shall first of all want to clarify what we mean by leadership and what we mean by creative. That these are not self-evident terms or even presently readily understandable terms should be obvious from an imposing current witness to creative leadership envisioned as an abolition of leadership, and a transversion of creativity into annihilation. While it is true enough that, theologically and philosophically speaking, annihilation is as great an act as creation, hopefully we do not analogically conceive of our goal in leadership as being equally well attained by annihilation or by creativity!

As God's creativity is to cause to be, something that was not, our creativity as superiors who are quite noticeably not divine, is to allow something that is, to become. As a matter of fact, we assume a responsibility to do this by accepting the office of superior. Much has been and is being written and said about the superior as servant. This is so obviously her role that one wonders what all the present excitement is about. Quite evidently, this role, this primary expression of leadership, has been forgotten by some superiors, even perhaps by many superiors, in the past. But why should we squander present time and energy in endlessly denouncing such past forgetfulness? Let us simply remember truth now, and get on with our business. One characteristic of creative leadership is to point a finger at the future rather than to shake a finger at the past.

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C., Federal Abbess of the Poor Clare Colettine Federation in the United States and Abbess of the Monastery of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Roswell, NM, has for many years been a contributor to our pages.

Saint Clare wrote in her Rule more than seven hundred years ago that the abbess must be the handmaid of all the sisters, not pausing to belabor so evident a fact but simply going on to give some particulars which have a very modern ring: the abbess is to behave so affably that the sisters *can* speak and act toward her as toward one who serves them. That dear realist, Clare of Assisi, who passes so easily from blunt warnings about such unmonastic "natural virtues" as envy, vainglory, covetousness, and grumbling, to airy reminders that it is no good getting angry or worried about anyone's faults as this merely deals charity a still severer blow—that dear realist had obviously run up against some personalities who were "handmaids" sufficiently formidable to discourage anyone's rendering them personal recognition in this area.

The superior's highest creative service is in allowing and assisting others to realize their creative energies.

The abbess is supposed to be lovable, for Saint Clare envisions a community where sisters obey a superior because they love her and not because they dread her. This was quite a novel as well as a radical theology of superiority in Clare's day. And if it remains radical today, it is a great shame that it sometimes remains novel also. The medieval saint makes so much of this point of the loveliness of the superior that she returns to it in her dying Testament, begging her successors that they behave themselves so that the sisters obey them not from a sense of duty but from love. It's not just the same thing she is saying again, however. You note that whereas in the Rule she does not want any fear or dread of the superior, in the Testament she rules out dutifulness as well. It has got to be a matter of love itself. Who, after all, would want to be loved out of a sense of duty? It would be insulting, really. Any normal superior would rather be loved in spite of herself than because of her office. Saint Clare makes quite a point in her brief Rule and Testament of describing the manifestations of this loveliness she so insists upon. She gives us her idea of creative leadership. And its present practicability may make us want to pause and clear our throats before the next time we utter that bad word, "medievalism," as an indictment.

Besides the general affability which Clare describes in the Rule and Testament, she underscores an availability rather beyond and considerably more profound than the "Let's sit down in the cocktail lounge and talk about salvation history" mentality. Saint Clare wants an on-site superior who is "so courteous and affable" (there's that word again) that

the sisters can tell her their troubles and needs, seek her out "at all hours" with serene trust and on any account—their own or their sisters'. This last point is particularly arresting, considering again that this is a medieval abbess delineating the characteristics of a creative superior as she conceived those characteristics in about 1250, not a 1970 progressive-with-a-message.

Clare did not favor isolationism in community. Each of her nuns was supposed to notice that there were other nuns around. And she called them "sisters," which was quite original in her day. She favored coresponsibility quite a while before the 1969 synod of bishops, taking it for granted that the abbess was not to be the only one concerned for the good of the community, but that it belongs to the nature of being sisters that each has a loving eye for the needs of all the others. Again, there is her famous saying: "And if a mother love and nurture her daughter according to the flesh, how much the more ought a sister to love and nurture her sister according to the spirit!" Yes, it does seem she ought. And maybe we ought to be as medieval as modern in some respects. For some medieval foundresses did an imposing amount of clear thinking on community, on sisterliness, on the meaning of humble spiritual leadership which we, their progeny, could do well to ponder.

So, there's affability, availability, accessibility. When we read Saint Clare's brief writings and savor the droll confidences given in the process of her canonization, we can conclude that this superior often toned her sisters down but never dialed them out.

Then, Saint Clare insists that the creative spiritual leader be compassionate. There is no hint of a prophylactic detachment from human love and sympathy nor of that artificial austerity which pretends that to be God-oriented is to be creature-disoriented. No, Clare says of the superior: "Let her console the sorrowful. Let her be the last refuge of the troubled." Note, she does not tell the contemplative daughter to work it all out with God, and that human sympathy is for sissies. And she warns that, "if the weak do not find comfort at her [the abbess's] hands," they may very well be "overcome by the sadness of despair." Those are quite strong terms from a woman who did not trade on hyperboles or superlatives and was no tragedienne.

Again, she has something very plain and very strong to say about responsibility. For we had better not talk about coresponsibility unless we have understanding of primary responsibility. "Let her who is elected consider of what sort the burden is she has taken upon her and to whom an account of those entrusted to her is to be rendered." So, Clare will have the superior clearly understand that she has a definite and comprehensive responsibility to a particular group of people, a responsibility which is immeasurably more demanding than counting votes to determine the consensus. She is supposed to create and maintain an at-

mosphere in which sisters can best respond to their own call to holiness. Obviously, she cannot do this alone. But she is the one most responsible for making it possible for each sister to contribute her full share in creating and maintaining this atmosphere. She is the one who is particularly responsible for not just allowing, but helping the sisters, and in every possible way, to realize their own potential.

If I may deliver to any possibly frustrated or depressed superiors some glad tidings out of my own small experience, I beg to announce this finding: Sisters are not as hard on superiors as many dour authors make them out to be. They do not expect perfection in the superior. They are, as a matter of fact, quite ready to pass over the most obvious faults and failures in the superior as long as they know she loves them and would do anything in the world for them, and is herself struggling along with them to "walk before God and be perfect," and having just as hard a time as they with this quite exacting but certainly thrilling divine program. Isn't it, after all, singularly exhilarating to have been asked by God, who has witnessed all one's past performances, to be perfect as he is perfect! But that is an aside of sorts. The point I was making is that sisters will sooner forgive the faults of the warmhearted than the "perfection" of the coldhearted. At least that is my personal observation. It is not faults that alienate people, it is phoneyess. And may it always alienate them, for it is nothing to make friends with.

Now, if the superior is set to create and to make it possible for the sisters to help create an atmosphere suited to the response to a divine call to holiness, this atmosphere will have to be one of real human living. For the only way a human being can be holy is by being a holy human being. I believe one of the more heartening signs of our times is the accent on humanness. For one of our tiredest heresies is the proposal that the less human we are, the more spiritual we are. Another aside I am tempted to develop here is a reflection on how we describe only one type of behavior as inhuman. We never attribute that dread adjective to the weak, but - only to the cruel. But I had better get on with what I was saying, which is that dehumanized spirituality is no longer a very popular goal. This is all to the good. However, we shall want to be sure when we talk enthusiastically about the present accent on real human living in religious life that the qualifying "real" is not underplayed. It needs rather to be underscored.

Certainly we would evince a genuine poverty of thought to equate real human living with ease. On the other hand, there is evidently a direct ratio between sacrificial living and real human fulfillment, between poor, obedient living and joy, between ritual and liberty, between the common task and real (as opposed to contrived) individuality. Genuine common

living in religious life is not the witness of the club, but of the community. Its real proponents are not bachelor girls, but women consecrated to God as "a living sacrifice holy and pleasing to God." Our blessed Lord emptied himself, taking the form of a servant. And no one yet has ever been fulfilled by any other process than kenosis.

Beginning with the Old Testament, history affords us a widescreen testimony to the truth of the binding and liberating power of sacrifice. It binds the individuals in a community together, and it liberates both individuals and the community as such into the true and beautiful expression of self-ness which is what God envisioned when he saw that each of his creations was very good. History shouts at us that self-ness is not a synonym but an antonym for selfishness. May we have ears to hear! Just as nothing so surely situates persons in isolationism as establishing a mystique of ease and a cult of comfort, so does nothing so surely both promote and express genuine community as sacrificial action, whether liturgical or domestic. This generation feels it has come upon the glorious new discovery that the world is good. It is indeed a glorious discovery, but not a new one. Saint Francis, for one, discovered this in the thirteenth century. But if joyous Francis owned the world, it was precisely because he never tried to lease it.

It is essential that the creative superior be a living reminder that our situation in time is not static but dynamic, our involvement in the world urgent but not ultimate, our service of others indicative rather than determinative, and our earthly life not a land-lease but a pilgrimage. Somewhere or other I recently read that the one good line in a new play whose name I happily cannot now recall is the one where a character looks at a plush-plush apartment hotel and remarks: "If there is a God, this is where he lives." I seem to detect a bit of this mentality in some of our experimentation. This would be only mildly disturbing if it pertained to the kind of luxuriousness that keeps periodically turning up in history until a new prophet-saint arrives on the scene to denounce it and expunge it from the local roster. What is deeply disturbing is that we are - sometimes uttering brave and even flaming words about identifying with the poor at the same time that we are rewriting just this kind of past history. But that is another small aside from the large issue, which is real human living and the sacrificial element that is one of the most unfailing preservatives of that "real" in human living.

The material poverty and inconvenience just alluded to is but a minor facet of the idea, but I do think it is a facet. Do any of us lack personal experience to remind us that the poorest communities are usually the happiest? Nothing bores like surfeit, nothing divides like ease.



If it is true—and it *is*—that the religious community does not rightly understand its vocation unless it sees itself as part of the whole ecclesial community, the cosmic community, it is equally true (because it is the same truth turned around) that the religious community will be to the ecclesial community and the cosmic community only what it is to itself and in itself. The creative leader will want to accent this to her sisters so that they can accent it to one another. Not verbally. Just vitally! We shall be to the Church and to the world only what we are to each other, no more and no less. And what we are to each other will inevitably serve the Church and the world.

Every superior is called to be a prophet. Perhaps we could even say that this is her highest creative service in allowing and assisting others to realize their potential and release their own creative energies. Now that we are all nicely educated to understand that the prophet is not the one who foretells the

future so much as the one who says something about the present, the creative superior's prophetic role becomes not only clear but uncomfortable. Jeremiah would doubtless have had a much higher popularity rating if he had limited his observations to a pleasant, "Shalom!" It is so much easier to say "Shalom" than to say, "Do penance, or you shall all perish." Of course, it is best of all to prophesy both penance and peace, but we shall have to keep them in that order. And our own efforts to achieve that real human living which has to be rooted in penance and sacrifice give abundant testimony that peace is indeed a consequence of penance performed in love, of sacrifice as a choice of life style rather than just a choice among things.

Obviously, obedience is the profoundest expression of sacrifice. And maybe one of the biggest mistakes that eventuated into that maternalism in religious communities which has had us running such high temperatures in recent press years, is that of supposing that obedience is for subjects only. Allow me another aside to interject here another small idea I have been nurturing. It is this: that *subjects* is a very poor word substitute for *sisters* and of itself precipitates a whole theological misconception of what and who a superior is. Subjects are persons ruled over. However, a servant does not rule. We need to get rid of the monarchical connotations of *subject*. And if we begin by getting rid of the term *subject*, we may be already better equipped to understand that the

superior, as servant, is the first "object in the house of the Lord." Once we establish her as subject, we shall perhaps be less ready to label her "reject."

A creative superior will have to excel in obedience. It is part of her role as prophet. She must obey others' needs at their specified time according to their manner and manifestations. She must respond not just to the insights God gives her, but to those he gives her sisters. She should obey their true inspirations as well as her own. She ought to be obedient to the very atmosphere she has helped the sisters to create. For we can never establish a communal *modus vivendi* and then sit back to enjoy it. Life, like love, needs constant tending. Life needs living as love needs loving. This very thing is essential to creative leadership. Charity is a living thing and, therefore, always subject to fracture, disease, enfeeblement, paralysis, atrophy, and death. The prophet is more called to proclaim this truth and to disclaim offenses against this truth than to wear a LUV button on her lapel. It is much easier to wave a LUV banner at a convention than to tend and nurture love in those thousand subtle ways and by those myriad small services for which womanhood is specifically designed, in which religious women should excel, and to which religious superiors are twice called.

Real human living which the creative superior is called to promote, can never be anything but spiritual, sacrificial, intelligently obedient, and—yes—transcendent. We need not be wary of the word, nor of the concept. The new accent on horizontalism is well placed, for many of us seem to have got a stiffening of the spiritual spine with past concentration on verticality. Still, if we adopt a completely horizontal mentality, we are likely to drift off to sleep as concerns genuine spiritual values. After all, the position is very conducive to sleep.

We are most fully human when we are vertical. Yes, we reach out horizontally, but our face is upturned to Heaven. The really lovely paradox is that it is only when our eyes are upon God that we are able to see those around us and recognize their needs. They are, after all, each of them "in the secret of his Face." It is a vital service of creative leadership that it emphasize the essentiality of the transcendent element in real human living. In fact, we could more accurately talk of the transcendent character of full human living than of any transcendent element of it in particular. The term of our destiny is not on earth. Therefore, we shall never rightly evaluate anything that pertains to earthly existence unless we see it or are attempting to see it from an eternal perspective. And we shall never really live humanly unless we are living spiritually. Certainly we shall never have a religious community that abounds in warm human affection and mutual concern unless it is a religious community concerned primarily with the kingdom of God. We can properly focus on one another only when we are focused on God. For to be fully human is to

share in what is divine: "He has made us partakers of his divinity."

The most natural superior is, therefore, the most supernatural. And real human living must be based on a value system that is transcendent. In these days one need scarcely look far afield to discover what becomes of community when the value system is not transcendent. A group of individual women, each doing her thing, is by no means the same as a community which has a thing to do. To such a community, each sister brings her own creative contribution, and in it each realizes her creative potential. And a servant of creativity is needed for all this.

There is much more to be said about creative leadership, and others are equipped to say it much better. One can speak only out of one's own experience and with one's own limitations. However, it has been my observation that cloistered living does offer a certain insight into humanity which is sometimes different from that of persons whose professional qualifications doubtless exceed those of the cloistered nun. It's quite predictable, really. We ought to anticipate expertise in human living from those who have chosen to achieve human living in such close quarters. We should expect some special insights into humanity from those who see it at such close range and on such limited acreage. So perhaps these simple thoughts of a daughter of Saint Clare may have some small point to make. Ω

Saint Colette

Dawn is a recluse
Whose radiance,
drawn forth from
her glowing dark,
illuminates the dwindling light
of Francis and Clare;
heals, restores, invigorates—
then gladly fades
into their enduring day.

Sister Mary Agnes, P.C.C.

The Family of Clare in the United States

EDITED BY SISTER FRANCES ANN THOM, O.S.C.

CREATIVE FIDELITY TO the ideals of Francis and Clare, a healthy diversity rooted in real unity of spirit, and vibrant attunement to the needs of the contemporary American Church—all these mark the life of the Poor Clares in America. Rather recent emphases on enhanced cooperation and communication among the various Poor Clare Communities in the United States prompted us to solicit these brief but informative and inspiring accounts from the various groups of Poor Clare Nuns in the country—*ed.*

The Poor Clare Federation of Mary Immaculate

Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.

THE POOR CLARE Federation of Mary Immaculate was the first contemplative federation erected in the United States of America following the directives of the Holy See for the formation of federations of monasteries of nuns. The first chapter assembly was convened on March 11, 1958, and the following year the new federation was canonically erected by the Holy See.

There are presently nine member monasteries in the following cities: Alexandria, VA; Aptos, CA; Cleveland, OH; Kokomo, IN; Los Altos Hills, CA; Newport News, VA; Rockford, IL; Roswell, NM; and Santa Barbara, CA. These monasteries all observed the primitive Rule of Saint Clare and the Constitutions of Saint Colette. Following the Second Vatican Council, the federation began work on a revision of Constitutions and the new text was approved by the Holy See on June 29, 1973 for an "ad experimentum" period. The finalized text was definitively approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious on March 5, 1981.

A statement of the ideals of the federation and a view of the cloistered contemplative life in the Church was published in 1977 and presented to the hierarchy and clergy of the United States. This publication, "With Light Step and Unstumbling Feet," is available from the Poor Clare Monastery, 809 East Nineteenth Street, Roswell, NM 88201.

Sister Frances Ann Thom, O.S.C., a Consulting Editor of this Review, is a member of the Poor Clare Community in Lowell, Massachusetts.

The federation sought at one of its early chapters to define the very term *federation*, to itself and to all the nuns of its monasteries. These were its findings:

The ideal of our Mother Saint Clare, to which all the monasteries are dedicated, in which all the nuns are united, is great enough to find some variance of expression in each community.

- Etymology has news to tell: *federation* is from the Latin *foedus*, meaning a league or a treaty. *Foedus* is in turn traced to *fides*, faith; and *fides* springs from *fidere*, to trust.

- It is ours to discover experientially, to express existentially, what we already are etymologically: the company of those who trust one another and so are able to be open to one another and to work together in a strength we cannot have alone.

- *Trust*, then, first of all: *trustful openness*; and out of this, made possible because of it, *peace*. In such a context, there are bound to be differences in approach and outlook, in climate and customs; and these should be seen as enriching. But suspicion and hostility, being closed to the views of others: these are destructive of federation.

- "Peace to you, good people!"—thus our Franciscan federation greets its members. *Peace*—to those who are open to one another in *trust*.

The federation also reviewed the *functioning of federation*:

- A federation presupposes separate entities which can exist apart from federation but which, for reasons conducive to both their individual and their common good, freely elect to group together in a loosely structured federal system. Here in the United States, we have a federal type of government with individual states and a central coordinating power. While there does not exist a satisfactory parallelism here, since the federation in no way includes the idea of any central government, there is still this to be learned from the comparison: alone, the states were weak; in unity they found strength. They became the United States of America.

- Autonomy is necessary so that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, each monastery is able to develop according to its own particular genius. It is only by correspondence to this inner working of the Spirit that the faithful autonomous monastery is able to extend itself into the larger community of the federation.

- By this incorporation, the limitations of isolationism which autonomy can impose are removed. But the resulting union will grow and deepen and the federation function properly only to the extent that there is true mutual sharing. For this, openness is essential. This openness includes a simple and humble willingness to receive as well as a loving desire to give.

- Each of us can grow with the other through the unique contribution of that other. To be open to our sisters is to share the inner workings of the Holy Spirit in all as he leads us to the good, but to a good which may be expressed in various ways by different monasteries.

The ideal of our Mother Saint Clare, to which all the monasteries are dedicated, in which all the nuns are united, is great enough to find some variance of expression in each community. It should. It must. For it is alive!

We are made for the good and for the truth. Both are dynamic. In community, we move forward to the possession of greater good and fuller truth to the extent that we attune ourselves to the inner voice of the Holy Spirit speaking in ourselves but speaking also in the other. According as we understand this, realize this in our relations with others, so will we achieve perfect community in our lives. And only to that same extent will monasteries be equipped to enter into the larger community of the federation.

And so we have come back to the point of departure: again, it is trust, it is openness, it is peace—by definition and by function, too.

Because the holiness of its members is the vital concern of the Poor Clare Federation of Mary Immaculate, it sought at one of its chapters to define the term of its concern: Holiness is a state of awareness, responsiveness, openness, given-ness to God. Because we are of the race of the God-seekers, we grow in awareness of his constant presence in us and around us. Because we are aware, we seek all the more. And so seeking, in such awareness, we find him, not only in our hearts, not only in others, but in each circumstance of life. "It is the Lord!" we say, each day and hour.

Open to God, surrendered to God, given to God, wholly at his disposal, we become diaphanous to him, so that others perceive the presence of Christ among them, though they know not whence they perceive him. "It is the Lord!" they say. Of the given, God asks a continuing given-ness; of the consecratedly set apart ones, he asks a perfect docility to the Spirit; of the responders, he asks a repeated responding in every human situation.

"It is the Lord!" he says through our sisters, through our occupations, through our prayer. And so Christ lives in the totally given ones, who walk in reverential wonder before the awe-fulness of God, and in joyous recognition of his presence in others—who, in turn, greet his presence in

them, exclaiming out of the soul's silence, one to the other: "It is the Lord!"

However faltering our efforts, this is the term of our desire.



The Mother Bentivoglio Federation of Poor Clare Monasteries

Sister Marianne L. Zadrozny, O.S.C.

I CANNOT THINK OF a better way to begin a brief article on the purpose of the Mother Bentivoglio Federation than by quoting our federation Statutes. The Statutes read as follows: "The purpose of the Federation is to provide a means to implement Clare's gospel living in a visible and credible manner, with greater awareness of the ecclesial dimension and of our particular charism in the world today, in fidelity to the Constitutions and traditional usages of the Order, while respecting the diversity of customs and legitimate differences" (Article 9).

Holy Scripture tells us in the Book of Genesis (2:18) that God said, "It is not good for man to be alone." This is true also of a Poor Clare Monastery. Our monasteries are meant to be in the midst of the Church, in the midst of God's people, where we can be as Clare was, a light shining for all to see. But our monasteries also need mutual support from one another, so that the life which circulates through the Order as a whole may also bring life to each individual monastery. Alone, a monastery might become isolated, vulnerable, cut off from the richness that comes of sharing and cooperation. But joined through charity and union with its sister-monasteries, it can profit from the human, cultural, and spiritual abundance available to it through them. Thus, our federation's purpose is to enable the member monasteries to help each other to live Saint Clare's ideals in today's world and today's Church.

This is not an easy task to accomplish. There is a delicate balance to be achieved between fidelity to tradition and openness to contemporary changes. As members of a federation, we have wider resources available to us as we search out options and answers. We can call upon the wisdom, experience, inspiration, and talents of many more sisters; and we can have confidence in the fitness of our choices, because the whole is greater than any of its parts.

We experience a spiritual life that is enriched by the sharing of prayer, theology, scripture, and the wisdom born of many years in the contemplative life. We live in a bond of mutual prayer for and among our members. We grow humanly through the diversity of cultures, geographic locations, educational and family backgrounds which each member monastery brings to the federation. All these elements combine to enable us to live the Poor Clare life with our roots in the past and our eyes on the future, always learning from and with each other.

In practical affairs the Federation also serves an important purpose. We reach out to one another in need, insofar as each monastery can, according to its own resources. No monastery needs to suffer serious want, because all are ready to share whatever the Lord gives them with their needier sisters. We try especially to aid those monasteries that are bearing particularly heavy expenses, such as a building project or the financing of a new foundation.

Likewise, we sometimes help one another through the temporary or permanent sharing of sisters. Often this means the sharing of special skills for a time, such as musical or liturgical expertise, mastery of carpentry or printing, or library skills, or the teaching of Franciscan studies. Much sharing is also accomplished through our monthly Communications bulletin, which keeps us posted on events in other monasteries and, every other month, carries lengthier articles of substance on topics of interest to the sisters.

In recent years, the federation has played an important role in helping to increase the sisters' awareness of issues of justice and peace. A special issue of Communications last year was concerned with topics such as poverty in today's world, nuclear disarmament, and the problems of aging, and it included practical ways in which our monasteries are responding to these issues within their traditional framework of Poor Clare living.

Because our federation assists us "to grow from good to better" (First Letter of Clare to Bl. Agnes of Prague), it ultimately works towards the good of the entire Church.



The Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration

Sister Mary Seraphim, P.C.P.A.

THE POOR CLARES of Perpetual Adoration were founded in Paris, France in 1854. Miss Josephine Bouillevaux, a teacher, had been living with a small group of like-minded women as secular Tertiaries of Saint Francis. They soon felt called to form a more stable religious community, and her director—Capuchin Father Bonaventure Herlaut—encouraged their desire. They became a Third Order Regular community with a strong attraction to Eucharistic adoration, which they sought to combine with teaching and caring for orphans.

However, it became clear to Mother Marie Claire (Josephine's religious name) that trying to maintain both perpetual adoration and involvement in outside apostolic works was exceedingly difficult. After much prayer, the community decided to adopt the cloister, becoming a Third Order Regular, Cloister community. Some of the sisters who felt that their call was to active works had the option to leave and form their own community, which they did. This religious family is also prospering, especially in India, under the name of the Franciscan Sisters of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

Some Polish sisters, ousted from their country during the *Kulturkampf* of the 1860's, entered the cloistered house which had moved to Troyes. In 1871, they returned to Poland, establishing their first permanent house at Leopold in 1874. The Polish bishops, who found the Third Order Regular Cloister rule awkward (though it was common in France at this time) advised the sisters to adopt the Second Order Rule. They petitioned Rome and in 1912 the Polish communities were grafted into the Poor Clare family although they retained the name of Franciscan Nuns of the Most Blessed Sacrament until 1964. The Urbanist Rule was designated by Rome as the foundation for the Constitutions of the Order.

Recent research has revealed that the Order is actually living more in accordance with the original Poor Clare Rule. The only difference is the permission to have meat three times a week and to pray the Office of Readings during the day rather than at night. The Constitutions of the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration state that the sisters are dedicated to Eucharistic adoration in a spirit of thanksgiving and contemplative gospel living according to the mind of Saint Francis and Saint Clare. The sisters maintain twenty-four hours of adoration, taking one hour in turns during the day and two hours at a time during the night.

They observe Papal Enclosure (though they do not take it as a vow), and they wear a long brown habit with scapular, sandals, and a black veil. Below the round white collar, they wear an image of a Monstrance. A silver ring, cord, and rosary complete the habit.

A monastery was established in Vienna by the Leopold community around 1875. From there, the Order was brought to the United States in 1921 by Mother Mary Agnes Eichler. In 1946 the Cleveland monastery made its first foundation, Sancta Clara Monastery in Canton, Ohio. At present there are five houses in the United States, ten houses in Europe, and six on the Indian continent. The monasteries in this country are not federated but united in an Association based on the Constitutions.



The Most Holy Name of Jesus Federation of Poor Clare Monasteries

Sister M. Emmanuel, O.S.C.

POPE PIUS XII, in his Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi* addressed to cloistered nuns, dated November 23, 1950, urgently requested the formation of federations, and where needed or of great advantage, confederations of monasteries of the same Order. For the "apartness" peculiar to monasteries of our own Franciscan tradition, the idea of federation posed many and grave questions, despite the assurance that our autonomy would not be lost in such a step.

Father Pius Barth, O.F.M., a member of the Sacred Heart Province, initiated the first steps in the direction of federation among the Poor Clare Monasteries. The attempt was on a national scale. The sisters in the monasteries located on the Eastern Seaboard, namely in Jamaica Plain and Lowell (MA), Bronx (NY), Bordentown (NJ), Philadelphia (PA), and Greenville (SC), asked to form a regional federation. The petition was addressed to Father Celsus Wheeler, O.F.M., Minister Provincial of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Province of Friars Minor. Father Celsus and his Council endorsed the petition and forwarded it to the Franciscan Curia for approval, and from there it went to the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes. Father Michael Harding, O.F.M., was nominated by Father Celsus to assist the sisters in the work of helping one another to maintain the spirit of the Second Order. The Sacred Congregation granted permission to undertake the work of forming a regional federation and appointed Father Michael to act as its Delegate in the preparatory steps of setting up a meeting of the six Abbesses and the task of writing federation statutes.

On April 18, 1960, the Abbesses of the six established Monasteries and

the appointed superior of the soon-to-be-established Monastery at Delray Beach (FL), along with an elected Delegate from each of the seven monasteries, met at the Jamaica Plain Monastery under the leadership of Father Michael. Their goals were to get to know a little about one another, to write federation statutes, and to elect the official of the federation. Mother Mary Virgilius, O.S.C., Abbess of the Jamaica Plain Monastery, was elected Federal President for a term of six years; four of the Abbesses were elected to serve as her Council for the same number of years. A report of the meeting and a copy of the proposed federation statutes were submitted to the Sacred Congregation. Within a short period, Father Michael was delegated to act as the Religious Assistant; the Sacred Congregation did not specify how long Father Michael was to serve in that capacity.

In the years between 1960 and 1963, three of the Monasteries made Mission Foundations: in 1961 the Jamaica Plain Monastery made a Foundation in Japan; in 1962 the Bordentown Monastery made a Mission Foundation in Coroico, Bolivia; and in 1963 the Bronx Monastery made a Mission Foundation in Anapolis, Brazil. By the time the Federation Statutes were approved (1963), our membership had increased from seven to ten member Monasteries. (New foundations are automatically members of the Federation until the time of the first canonical election in the newly founded community. At that time, the monastery chapter of the new foundation decide by a 2/3 majority whether or not to continue membership in the federation. The Federal Assembly has the right to accept or reject the request.) The Statutes were approved for a period of seven years, at the end of which we were invited to make recommendations for desired revisions.

In the three years that remained of Mother Mary Virgilius' Presidency, she visited each of the member Monasteries in the States. The Abbesses became better acquainted with one another during this period, and in 1965, the Greenville Community invited the Abbesses to meet at their Monastery to discuss the adaptations suggested by the Second Vatican Council. The seven Abbesses in the States and the Abbess from the Mission Monastery in Coroico, Bolivia, attended the meeting. It was Vatican II and the document *Perfectae Caritatis* that brought us together in a working relationship and in the acceptance of our differences. These factors established our mutual esteem for the autonomy of each monastery and taught us to respect differences as the responsibility of persons and communities.

Each of the successive Federal Presidents and the Religious Assistants have collaborated in promoting workshops accenting our Franciscan heritage and deepening our roots in Franciscan traditions. There have been Formation Workshops since 1967, the first at Villa Cortona with in-

put from the friars at Holy Name College. Father Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., gave a workshop in Franciscan spirituality at the Lowell Monastery. There were two workshops at Christ House (Lafayette, NJ), treating of Liturgy, Prayer, and Growth as Persons; a Paterson (NJ) Workshop on Saint Clare, conducted by Father Regis Armstrong, O.F.M.Cap.; and a Rye Beach (NH) Workshop conducted by the friars there entitled "The Colorful Plant in God's Garden, Poor Clare Life Today." The Novice Directresses meet each year for a sharing and in some instances professional input; the Formation personnel enjoyed a six week Program presented in two three-week sessions by Dr. Vincent Bilotta, Director of Formation at Affirmation House. The sisters lived at the Center in Rye Beach, and Dr. Bilotta made his presentations at the Center. Smaller workshops have been offered in the specialized areas of Canon Law, Archives, Scripture, and Psychology in various member Monasteries. In some instances these were community workshops to which others were invited; in other cases, the workshop was Federation sponsored to assist the sisters working on Constitutions and starting archive projects in community.

Revision of the Federation Statutes reduced the term of office for the President and her Council to three years. The term of office of the Religious Assistant is also three years; his availability and the desire of the sisters determine the length of time he may fill the office. There is a nomination process carried out for the offices of Federal President and Religious Assistant. The President is elected in the Federal Chapter, and the Religious Assistant is approved by Father Provincial and the Minister General, then delegated by the Sacred Congregation for Religious. We do have a Delegate for the Nuns at the Franciscan Curia (this office is assigned by the Minister General, but not for any particular length of time).

Much to the joy of both the Mother Bentivoglio Federation Monasteries and the Holy Name Federation Monasteries, there has been a collaborated effort to share in common Workshops and Federation Chapters beginning in the seventies. In April of 1982, the first Joint Meeting of the two Federation Councils took place at the Jamaica Plain Monastery. All the Council Members of the two Federations were present, along with the Abbesses of Holy Name Federation and our Religious Assistant, Father Giles F. Bello, O.F.M. Much was accomplished at that meeting by way of defining the need for better communication with the Franciscan Curia and the OFM Conference and exchange with persons in positions to assist us in the accomplishment of our goals. Presently, we are engaged in a follow-up of the joint effort to renew our spiritual ties with the First Order, and the cooperation of the friars has been most encouraging.

For all the members of Holy Name Federation, I wish to thank our Franciscan Sisters and Brothers and the Members of the Franciscan Secular Order who have, in countless ways, reached out to the Poor Clares over the years. A special thank you to the Ministers General who have appointed a Delegate for the Nuns, and to the Ministers Provincial for the services of excellent Religious Assistants. Ω

Our God Is a Happy God

Our God is a happy God,
I mean, He has a sense of humor;
He loves to see us laughing,
And, you know, there is a rumor
 He's the life of every party
 That is gathered in His name.

And Saint Francis knew it too,
For if he saw a gloomy brother
He'd chide him, "Brother, for shame.
 If you've sin to be forgiven,
 Find a priest and get thee shriven,
 Then come and join the game.

And every Pentecostal time
He'd get the biggest shindig ever
Seen in Umbria's bright vale;
And they'd sing in joy and happy praise
To the God who made them so
 Till all the people round about
 Would throng into the dale,
 For it made them all feel happy too
 The happiness of God to know.

For it spread to every heart
That was open to receive it,
Which simply means one willing
Firmly to believe it.

Sister Clare Ellen, O.S.C.

Clare and Francis: All Their Meetings and Other Links

RAPHAEL BROWN, S.F.O.

HAVE YOU EVER come across a factual survey of *all* the major and minor meetings and other links between our two founders? I have not. Yet the subject is obviously of basic importance for our knowledge of the life and spirituality of both.

The need for such a study arises when we read Father Murray Bodo's imaginative book on *Clare, a Light in the Garden* and Heribert Roggen's *The Spirit of Saint Clare*. Clearly, we must get the facts and the record straight. The true facts convey a powerful message for all Franciscans.

This rapid outline will therefore distinguish between the three main sources of materials: (1) authentic data in the writings and early lives; (2) less reliable data in later medieval documents; and (3) folklore. The limitations of this article preclude buttressing with references and bibliography. However, I hope to provide full documentation in a book.

The connections between the two Saints fall into two groups: actual meetings like the vesting of Clare, and links not involving a meeting like her being consulted regarding Francis' calling to prayer or preaching. This condensed survey will follow a chronological outline.

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

Only the meetings and other links will be treated—not the attitude of Francis toward women in general or toward other particular women such as Lady Jacopa and the Roman recluse Prassede. Nor his concept of spiritual motherhood.

“Ever since I have known the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis, no suffering has troubled me, no penance has been hard, no sickness too arduous.

The first link between Francis and Clare, about six years before her vocation, remains one of the most striking of all: the prophecy by Francis while repairing San Damiano that “here will dwell Ladies” whose holiness would glorify God throughout the Church. We do not know but may surmise that the identity of their foundress was then also revealed to him.

Just how did her vocation originate? Of course, with everyone in Assisi, she heard about his dramatic conversion. She was about twelve when he renounced his father and inheritance before the bishop. Through her teens she must have followed reports of his begging and repairing the three chapels, and then she no doubt heard some of his sermons in the Cathedral of San Rufino adjoining her home.

Which of the two first approached the other? One of her nuns testified that on hearing about Francis, Clare resolved in her heart to follow him somehow. Her sister Beatrice said that when he heard of Clare’s outstanding faith and refusal to be married, he went to her, and according to another nun “almost constrained her” to leave the world. We have all too little information about those first crucial meetings. One minor link: at this time she sent some money to buy meat for laborers building a small house near the Porziuncola.

Only in the relatively late *Book of the Conformities* do we find this plausible but uncertainly reliable anecdote. As in those talks about her vocation Clare seemed “willing and prompt,” Francis tested her by ordering her to disguise herself in sackcloth clothing and beg for bread throughout Assisi. And she did so without being recognized.

Next that peak meeting and experience for both: her vesting as the first Franciscan nun by Francis in the Porziuncola Chapel on the night of Palm

Sunday, 1212. Yet it is not described in his sources, only in hers, with very few details. Here I have to correct a shocking error in Father Bodo’s book: on pp. 7–8 we read that Clare and Francis “had both stood naked before God and man,” he before the bishop “and she when she placed her lovely dress into the brothers’ open palms.” Father Murray’s typescript had included the crucial word *symbolically* after the first *she*, but somehow it was omitted in printing. He wrote me that this error “gives an entirely false impression and pains me deeply.” Yet it was reprinted a year later in *The Francis Book*. He called it “egregious,” i.e., outrageous; I agree.

Francis is not mentioned in the accounts of Clare’s enraged male relatives trying in vain to drag her and her sister Agnes away from the Benedictine nuns. But he is listed as escorting her to the second convent and there “with his own hands” cutting Agnes’ hair, in Clare’s presence, of course.

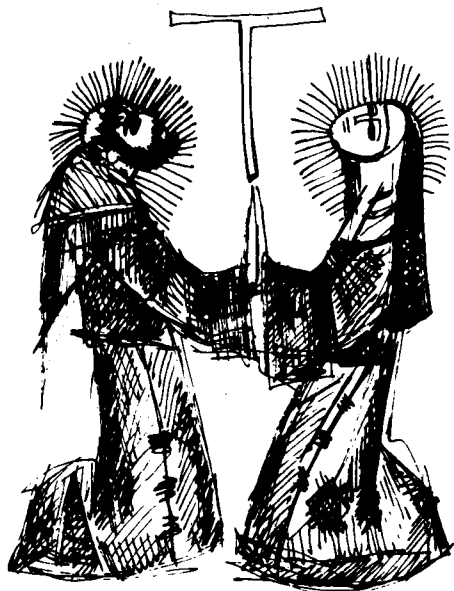
Now we have the first decisive three years of the new sisterhood at San Damiano, alas almost completely undocumented. No doubt Francis visited Clare then less rarely than later in order to teach her what she called “that way . . . the Son of God.”

It was presumably during those first three relatively less structured years that they may have had that beautiful “transfiguration” meal at the Porziuncola which is narrated only in the fourteenth-century *Actus-Fioretti* (Fior ch. 15) and which some scholars consider a folklorish myth.

Perhaps also during this period of formation Clare had a remarkable vision, reported by her lifelong friend Sister Philippa in the Process (3.29). In it Clare easily climbed up a ladder to Francis and sucked a sweet milk-like substance from one of his nipples, the tip of which remained in her mouth, and taking it in her hands she found it was gold so clear she saw all of herself in it. This wholly non-Freudian vision is rich in medieval mystical symbolism exactly like those of Saints Hildegard and Gertrude: a ladder as the soul’s ascent, milk as spiritual nourishment, gold as perfection. The vision presents Francis as a mother-figure, a theme that became important in his spirituality but is still almost unexplored (see *The CORD*, Feb. and April, 1977).

In 1215, with the Fourth Lateran Council’s decree forbidding new religious orders, “after the Lady Clare had been three years in religion, the instant prayers of Saint Francis prevailed on her to accept the ordering and government of the Sisters,” with the office of Abbess. And thereafter he “gradually withdrew his bodily presence from them” (2Cel 204). Why? As he explained to his friars, “Do not think that I do not love them perfectly, but I am giving you an example” (ibid.).

In fact the sources for both Saints specifically mention only three particular meetings through the remaining eleven years of the Poverello's life, though no doubt there were a few more, yet only *coacta et rara*, "compelled and rare" (2Cel 207).



A perfect illustration of that "compulsion" appears in a bright nugget discovered in a fourteenth-century codex by Giuseppe Abate, O.F.M.Conv. (see *Misc. Fr.* 56:399) which adds significant information to Thomas of Celano's account of the dramatic ashes sermon given by Francis to the Sisters at San Damiano (see 2Cel 207). Note especially the end of the following sentence for its profound insight into Clare's loving heart: "Saint Clare, whenever she heard that Blessed Francis was going away, sent for him, saying, 'Go tell Brother Francis that he come to speak with me,' because she believed she would not see him

again." (Just think how many times he went away from Assisi!) This time (among others?) he told the messenger: "Tell her I will speak to her on my return." But of course she knew very well that he could easily be "compelled" to yield by adding: "She is asking you for the love of God."

Another fourteenth-century text (*AFH* 20:106) reports another visit which Francis actually initiated: "Brother Leonardo recounted that once Saint Francis called to Brother Angelo at the Place of Saint Mary, saying, 'Let's go to see Sister Clare.' And as he extended the conversation until lunch time, Saint Francis ate there, and certain friars were at table with him." But he was rapt into an ecstasy. However, though Francis first spoke to Clare and the sisters, it would seem that the meal with the friars took place in the nearby chaplain's house, since the nuns are not mentioned.

Again in that house, staying within a little cell made of rushes (LP 43), the Poverello lay sick for about fifty days in 1225, suffered the pains of his stigmata and blindness, was overrun by field mice, received assurance from God of eternal life, and in gratitude composed the Canti-

cle of Brother Sun and also "some holy words with song" to console the Clares, because he knew they were grieving over his illness and he was unable to visit them personally (LP 45). Those words are the recently discovered Message to the Poor Clares.

In some older lives of both Saints it is alleged that Clare built the little rush cell in the tiny "Garden of Saint Clare" at San Damiano and that she actually nursed Francis there. Yet the only source which connects her with the cell is the late *Actus-Fioretti* (Fior ch. 19), which, however, states only that she had the cell made (*fecit fieri*) for him, with not a word about the garden or nursing. So the cell was as specified in part of the house, and the house of the chaplain was not in San Damiano but "outside" where "the friars stayed," as described in her Process (6.16). However, we know that Saint Clare made a pair of special sandals for Francis' wounded feet.

Turning from their meetings to indirect links, we find more of the latter than the former. The outstanding one is his sending Brother Masseo to consult Clare and Father Sylvester regarding his persistent longing to spend most of his time in contemplative prayer (see the full account in Fior ch. 16).

Two links involve bread. When Clare fell ill, Francis and Bishop Guido ordered her to reduce her severe fasting and to eat at least an ounce and a half of bread every day; and he also told her to use a straw sack as mattress. Only the late Minocchi *Leggenda Antica* (ch. 42) reports that once Francis had only one loaf of bread left for thirty friars; so "that true poor man of Jesus Christ sent to the poor Saint Clare" for some loaves, if she had some, and she gave them two of her remaining three, and it sufficed for the thirty friars.

Francis once sent her five ladies as candidates, but she correctly foretold that one would not persevere. He also sent to her the delirious Brother Stephen, and he was healed when she made the sign of the cross over him. This Brother Stephen reported that Francis used to call Clare "Christiana," and he preferred to call her nuns Ladies instead of Sisters. He liked to call her his "little plant."

For their formation Francis gave Clare a Form of Life. She must of course have received copies of his various writings, but the only one specified in the sources is his Office of the Passion, which she "learned and often recited devoutly." Before dying, he sent to her a last will for the sisters. At one time he advised her to be ready in case he should decide to send her to found another community.

Before taking up their last meeting in this world, we should mention in passing three charming folklorish stories which are not found in the

sources. Once in the early years he worried about her until in a well near Siena he saw her shining face reflected, "so pure that all my doubts have vanished." According to Fortini, people in the Assisi countryside still tell a story about Francis and Clare walking on opposite banks of a river in flood, he being unable to cross to her side, until she threw her mantle on to the water, stepped on it, and rapidly went across. The third legend, involving roses blooming in winter at her prayer for another meeting, is vividly retold in Father Bodo's book (pp. 50-53).

It has been plausibly suggested by Ignacio Omaechevarria, O.F.M., that Clare and her sisters may have played a role in Francis' adding the pardon verses to the Canticle because the mayor then in conflict with Bishop Guido had a daughter among them.

The last link and meeting between Francis and Clare took place at his death (see the full account in LP 109 and 1Cel 116-117). She was so ill that she feared she would die first and not see him again; so he wrote her a letter and promised that she and her sisters would see him. As they did . . . when his body was carried to San Giorgio Church in Assisi by way of San Damiano. While "they held him at the window for a good hour," Clare took in her mouth one of the stigmata nails protruding from his hand and tried to draw it out, but could not. This incident was first reported in Fra Jacopone da Todi's *Laud* 61 late in the century, but it may be authentic as one of his relatives had been a Poor Clare at San Damiano. Before the body was carried on, Clare dipped a cloth in the blood of the wounds and had the body carefully measured for a future painting in a niche.

We may only surmise that the two Saints may have had further mystical meetings during the twenty-seven years that she lived on in San Damiano, until their final permanent encounter and reunion in Heaven in August of 1253.

Saint Clare's ultimate tribute to the Poverello was uttered during her last days: "Ever since I have known the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ through his servant Francis, no suffering has troubled me, no penance has been hard, no sickness too arduous." Ω

Book Reviews

To Serve as Jesus Served: A Guide to Servanthood. By Clem J. Walters. South Bend, IN: Charismatic Renewal Services, 1983. Pp. viii-128. Paper, \$3.95.

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

To Serve as Jesus Served is a stimulating challenge to modern-day Christians to understand service as the proper role for the followers of Jesus Christ. The book is primarily a guide that formalizes the teachings in the Servant School of the People of Praise, a charismatic Christian community in South Bend, Indiana. The teachings are practical applications of scriptural norms that have been taught to each adult entering the community during the last ten years.

In the Introduction, there seems to be an arbitrariness in the selection of some definitions. For example, ". . . in this book the adjective 'secular' denotes what has traditionally been called 'the world': not the created order God instituted and loves, but that system of relationships and values which is hostile to Christ and his kingdom." Why not the created order God instituted and loves? Certainly there are those who prefer the positive denotation of the adjective *secular* as an impetus to learn more about Christian service. Members of the Secular Franciscan Order, for example, are professed to go ". . . from gospel to life, and life to gospel" in order to

carry out their various apostolates of service. The Secular Franciscan Order, parish organizations, secular institutes, and other Christian groups can use *To Serve as Jesus Served* as an effective teaching source, but their definition of *secular* may be radically different from that proposed in the book. In fact, Mr. Walters contradicts his own definition later in the book when he says, "There is no justification in the life or teaching of Jesus for denigrating secular work" (p. 55); and, "The New Testament is unequivocal in its attitude toward secular work. Work is not only necessary but honorable and blessed by God" (p. 56).

Mr. Walters advises the teachers of this course, "Scripture should be the foundation and constant point of reference" (p. 91). This method, especially in using the New Testament, has the distinct advantage of keeping the Christian's attention fixed directly on the life and message of Jesus—the foundation and norm of all Christian living. A suggested addition to this method is to incorporate the examples and teachings from the faith experience of the Church into the general pedagogy. There is a great deal to learn about Christian service from the lives of the saints, particularly the Ever Virgin Mother of God, the writings of the early Church Fathers, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, etc.

Cursillistas will probably recognize the suggestion that the essential ingredients of the Christian life are prayer, study, and action. The ingredients seem to be modeled on the teaching

format of the Cursillo weekend: viz., piety, study, and action.

This book is indispensable in coming to a clear vision of what true Christian service is. For the servant who is never called upon, the servant who seems to be called upon all the time, or the servant who sincerely wants to make the gift available, *To Serve as Jesus Served* contains instructions and encouragement straight from the Word of God. Another benefit of the book is that the role of servant applies to both leaders and followers, and both can prosper in their effectiveness as servants from this same book.

The Appendix is written in the format of an instructor's guide. The author obviously intends for the book to be used, not placed on a library shelf as a decorative reference. Mr. Walters is to be commended for making this functional resource available to the general Christian readership. Especially noteworthy is the "Homework" section of each teaching session, which contains scriptural references, suggestions for prayer and meditation, and questions to stimulate group discussion on the various aspects of Christian service. Instructors who use *To Serve as Jesus Served* are well advised to complete the



"Homework" assignments not only for their own spiritual growth but also to ensure the quality training of future Christian servants.

Shorter Book Notices

JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

Proclaiming the Good News: Homilies for the 'A' Cycle. By John Jay Hughes. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1983. Pp. 217, including Index. Cloth, \$14.95.

In his excellent introduction, Father Hughes reminds us that "the Gospel is not just good advice, but good news,"

and he shares the techniques that he has found successful in preparing homilies—writing down thoughts early in the week, writing down word for word the homily, and sticking to one spiritual goal, as Cardinal Newman suggested a century ago. Then follow the author's homilies: three to five small pages each, for each of the Sun-

days and Holy Days of the year. This handy-sized and well bound volume can be an asset to any friary library or to any priest looking for homily helps.

Seeking Jesus in Contemplation and Discernment. By Robert Faricy, S.J. Ways of Prayer Series, n. 7. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazer, Inc., 1983. Pp. 132. Paper, \$4.95.

This book is really two short groups of essays about prayer and discernment. Chapter three, on "Contemplation, Gift of the Holy Spirit," and chapter six, on "The Trajectory of Prayer," impressed me most. The chapters on discernment as a whole strike me as edifying rather than instructing. I hoped for more from them. Franciscans can learn something from the mystic traditions of John of the Cross and the Directives of Saint Ignatius—but not everything.

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

This short work is composed of seventeen reflections in stanza-like form, suggesting ways of thinking that can heal ourselves and others. The listen-hear distinction is, of course,

central. Some of the topics are silence, humor, music, compliments, self, potential, love, and God. Four classes of people are singled out as specially needing to be heard: teenagers, the divorced, the elderly, and the bereaved. Photographs and drawings enhance this little book of Christian wisdom.

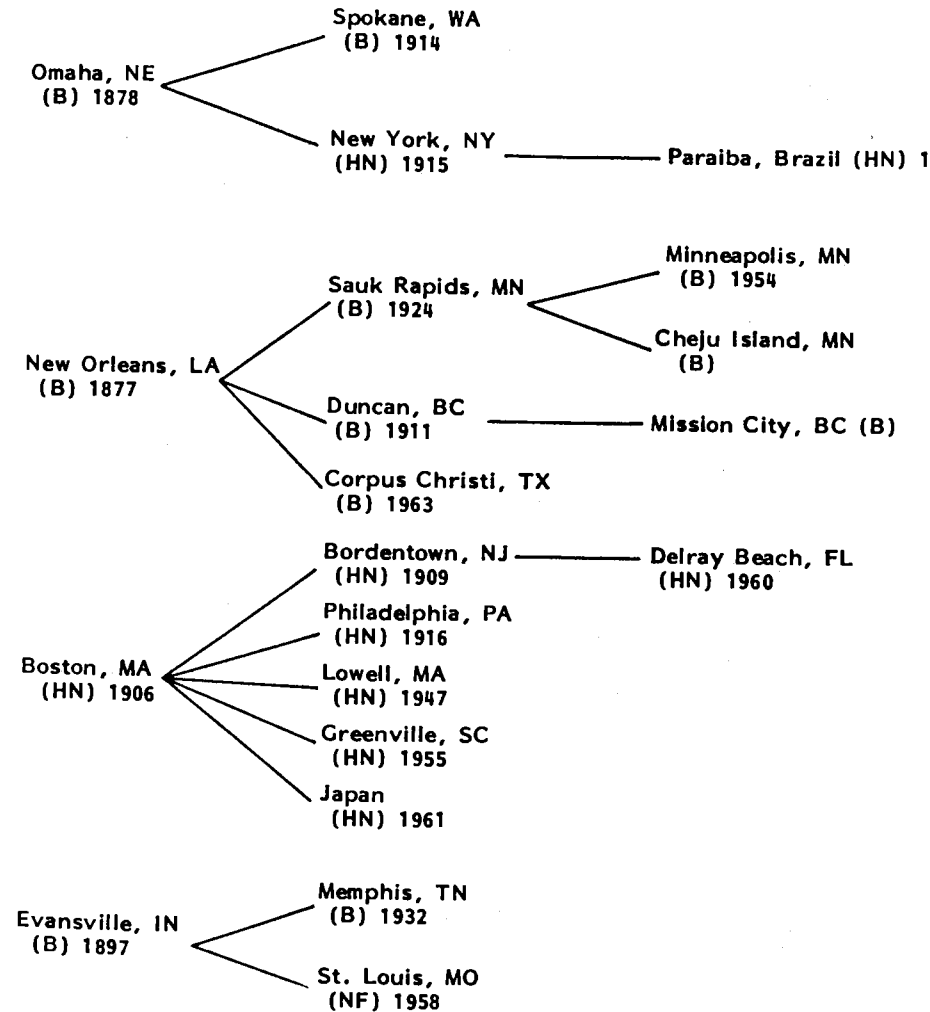
How to Live Life to the Fullest: A Handbook for Seasoned Citizens. By Mary Lewis Coakley. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. vi-133. Paper, \$4.95.

This is a book for senior citizens by a senior citizen with a spiritual, not just a medical or social-service, outlook. Preferring the designation *seasoned citizens*, the author points out some of the advantages of being over sixty and then addresses herself to some of the issues faced by those of that age: retirement, health problems, the death of a spouse, relationships to children, fears (her citation of the Russian proverb, "With God go across the sea; without God, don't go across the threshold," summarizes that chapter in a nutshell). Many of her examples are from her association with seniors in Florida, and most are geared to the lay state. This is an excellent book for our relatives or friends—is there a religious out there to write about life in religion for the seasoned citizens?

Books Received

- Beer, Francis De—, *"We Saw Brother Francis"*. Translated by Maggi Despot and Paul Lachance, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983. Pp. viii-145. Cloth, \$12.00.
- Carthy, Sister Margaret, O.S.U., *A Cathedral of Suitable Magnificence: St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. xiv-193, including Index. Cloth, \$15.00; paper, \$6.95.
- Coakley, Mary Lewis, *How to Live Life to the Fullest: A Handbook for Seasoned Citizens*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. vi-133. Paper, \$4.95.
- Doyle, Eric, O.F.M., tr. and ed., *The Disciple and the Master: St. Bonaventure's Sermons on St. Francis of Assisi*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983. Pp. xviii-202, Goetz, Joseph W., *Mirrors of God*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. x-94. Paper, \$4.95.
- Leclerc, Eloi, O.F.M., *Francis of Assisi: Return to the Gospel*. Translated by Richard Arnandez, F.S.C. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983. Cloth, \$12.00.
- Matura, Thaddée, O.F.M., *Gospel Radicalism: The Hard Sayings of Jesus*. Translated by Maggi Despot and Paul Lachance, O.F.M. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1984. Pp. x-198. Paper, \$8.95.
- McBride, Alfred, *The Story of the Church: Peak Moments from Pentecost to the Year 2000*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1983. Pp. viii-168. Paper, \$7.95.
- Sloyan, Gerard S., *Rejoice and Take It Away: Sunday Preaching from the Scriptures*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. 2 vols.: pp. 226 + 238. Paper, \$15.00.

HISTORY OF THE POOR CLARE NUNS (O.S.C.) IN THE UNITED STATES



B = Mother Bentivoglio Federation

HN = Holy Name Federation

NF = Non-federated