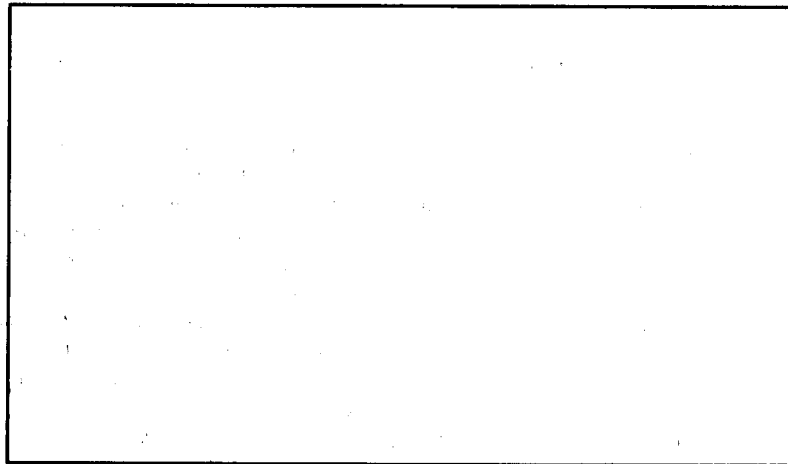


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OCTOBER, 1984

# The CORD

## A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Volume 34, No. 9

## The CORD

### A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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The illustrations for our October issue have been drawn by Sister Christine Therese Schneider, S.S.J.-T.O.S.F., an artist at the Detroit Institute of Arts.

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

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

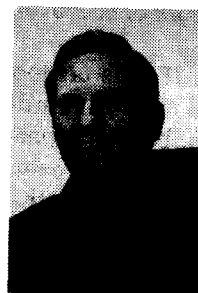
Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics <sup>1</sup>	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors <sup>1</sup>	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful <sup>1</sup>	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 St. 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 St. Clare	<sup>1</sup> 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 Commernium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

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

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).



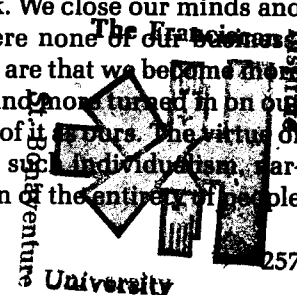
EDITORIAL

## Zeal

SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE wrote these words: "Let this, then, be the chief goal of your apostolic work, the salvation and sanctification of the greatest number of souls." In this month of October, in which the universal Church thinks not only of the Poverello and Our Lady, but also of the Missions, we do well to remind ourselves of one of the fundamental dimensions of our Franciscan life—that it is a life dedicated to bringing others to God. The Franciscan Rule has a chapter on Mission, as well as one on preaching, and Franciscans have a long tradition of effort and achievement in both areas.

The language of Maximilian quoted above may sound a bit dated to some—we hear "ministry" often instead of apostolic work; we hear "liberation" more than "sanctification" or "salvation"; we seldom hear of "souls," but rather of "persons"; and it seems that any reference to quantity is passé. Yet, no matter what words we use, we are commanded by the Lord and by our vocation to bring people closer to God, and the more people we do help to find him, the greater glory we give him and the more good we do.

Pope Paul's Encyclical on Evangelization and Pope John's Encyclical on Catechizing should have put to rest the myth, arising from a misunderstanding of the Second Vatican Council, that God doesn't really care whether or not all people have the fullness of faith he has given us through his Son Jesus and his Church. Yet some of us, some of the time, have fallen into thinking that way, or have decided that it is our little apostolate and nothing more that God asks us to be concerned about. We tend to forget there is neither my work nor anyone else's work; there is just God's work. We close our minds and hearts to what others are doing as if it were none of our business. And others do the same, and the end results are that we become more and more isolated from one another, more and more turned in on our own particular apostolate, more possessive of it. The virtue of zeal, an outcome of love, moves us beyond such individualism, narrowness, and jealousy, to an operative vision of the entire people



as invited to benefit from God's saving love by the labors of whoever is led by the Spirit of God.

Another feature of life in the Church after Vatican II saps far too much of the spiritual energies of our missionaries and mission minded apostles: bickering over the techniques of mission, both at a personal and at an academic level. The former type of dispute has been part of mission life in the Church from the beginning; witness the disputes between the Judaizers and the Gentile converts in the early Church. The battles over mission theology seem particularly acute today, although in due time, as is already happening, the clearly un-Christian views will be condemned and the insights which the Spirit wishes our age to have will emerge. The Church will benefit much more if the practice of condemning the past is laid aside. We have already experienced in the Church the harm from the knocking of the "old Mass" and it would be foolish to inflict similar damage on all by constant criticizing of past missionary efforts. Even more to be avoided is the temptation we have seen academicians in the Church give in to so often, of becoming so involved in setting forth various and conflicting theories, that the end product is confusion rather than information or inspiration. Saint Bonaventure's rules for studying come to mind here: No speculation without devotion, no knowledge without love.

We began October by commemorating in the Liturgy one who is patroness of the Missions, though she never got to be a missionary, Saint Thérèse of Lisieux. Eighty percent of us, perhaps more, will never go to a foreign land to bring Christ to people there. Yet all of us by our Christian and Franciscan vocation are "impelled by love," like Thérèse, to pray for those who leave the familiarity and comfort of their own land for the sake of the Gospel. All of us, too, are summoned to spread the Good News of the Gospel, not to confine it, to live, "not for ourselves alone, but for others." Ω

*Dr. Julian Davda ofm*

## Celano's "First Miracle" and Franciscan Self-Awareness

GREGORY SHANAHAN, O.F.M.

THE THIRD of the works forming the "Celano trilogy," the *Treatise on the Miracles of the Blessed Francis* (or 3 Celano), offers food for thought beyond the promise of its title. Only one of Friar Thomas's calibre and verve would, in an official recording of Saint Francis' miracles, deem the Order's beginnings a moral miracle deserving of first mention. Only if the Order were formally to reject, or universally to neglect, its essential charism and vital ecclesial role, could the cohesive opening chapter of 3 Celano logically be dropped from our reading of early source material. We might then relegate it to an anthology of "purple passages." But in that event, much else that is illustrative of healthy self-confidence at one time, would have to go: Bonaventure's *Disputed Questions on Gospel Perfection*, then, and his *Defense of the Mendicants*; Nicholas III's *Exiit qui seminat* (1)—not to mention Francis himself on the friars' role, especially, say, in the Earlier Rule.<sup>1</sup> The *Sacrum Commercium* would fade into unintelligibility, no longer reminding us of our inherited covenant with poverty and our role in the redemption of the world.

<sup>1</sup>The First Order, then as now, was charged with the care and expression of Franciscan identity. "The religious order which was instituted first . . . certainly has a special responsibility for the preservation of the charism. However, it does not carry the burden alone. History shows that at certain times of crisis other members of the family have sometimes shown themselves more faithful" (J.M.R. Tillard, O.P., "Founder's Charism or Founding Charism?" *Religious Life Review* [Supplement to *Doctrine and Life*], trans. Austin Flannery, O.P., Nov.-Dec., 1983, p. 318.

Father Gregory Shanahan, of the Irish Province of the Friars Minor, is a Consulting Editor of this Review. He has collaborated in a recent Irish language edition of the writings of Saint Francis and specializes in retreats to religious and mission preaching in Ireland and Britain.

The terse first chapter of 3 Celano may sound to the uncritical modern ear like a trumpeting of seraphic wares. In fact it is much more valuable if we read it in the context of on-going renewal.<sup>2</sup> Celano treats us to one of the finer statements of the biblical theology at the base of the Franciscan movement.<sup>3</sup> He shows how the hand of God is behind the survival of an Order that chooses evangelical poverty as its fulcrum. The new family expands, against all human odds, and plays its providentially allotted role in salvation history, recovering for Christianity the true religious spirit. Moreover, "within a very short time" God has produced sanctity in members of the new Order—a genuine sign of authenticity and a vindication of what is a radically evangelical form of life.

Here is a version of that chapter, *minus* the last line, which is but a lead-in to the next chapter on the Stigmata.<sup>4</sup>

#### Miraculous Was the Rise of his Order

AS WE UNDERTOOK the task of recording the miracles of our most holy Father Francis, we decided to allot the very first place in the account to the momentous miracle, before which the world stood reprov'd and by which it was aroused and alarmed. This, of course, was the *dawning of the*

---

Celano . . . shows how the hand of God is behind the survival of an Order that chooses evangelical poverty as its fulcrum.

---

<sup>2</sup>Celano sees the Order's appearance as a timely factor in Christian renovation. But the charism needs to be continuously reaffirmed and appraised anew. *Novitas* (newness) is a recurring note in the trilogy (see an outstanding statement of it in 1Cel 89). It is contrasted with *vetustas*, which in context is not simply "old age," but *wearied and dismal old age* as here in 3Cel 1, line 8: *Cogitabat veterem mundum . . .*). For the liturgical usage of the *vetustas/novitas* contrast, see, e.g., the Collect for the sixth day in the Christmas Octave, December 30.

<sup>3</sup>The "evangelical beginnings" of an *Order* are already alluded to in the Testament—"And after the Lord gave me some friars" (see *Omnibus*, 68); cf. 1Cel 38a. In the *Sacrum Commercium* (*Omnibus*, 1549-96), probably composed as early as 1227, Francis and the brothers have a salvific role in giving expression to a covenant made with Poverty, which in the Old and New Testaments was the key to understanding God's saving plan. Throughout the 13th century Franciscan self-awareness was to be imbued with this idea.

<sup>4</sup>*Analecta Franciscana X*, 271-72.

*Order, fruitfulness in a barren woman and the birth of manifold progeny* (cf. 2Cel 17). He pondered a world in its dismal old age, getting dirty with the scabs of wicked ways (Rev. 22:11); the Orders no longer keen on following the apostles' footprints; the night of sin halfway through its course (cf. Wis. 18:14-15); instruction in holy living all hushed. When, look! Suddenly, a "new man" leaped on to the earth, and in no time a "new army" came in view, so that people were awestruck at signs of apostolic newness. All at once, brought to the light of day is the buried perfection of the early Church, of whose great acts the world had read though it failed to see the example it set (Acts 2:11). So, why not regard as first those who were last, seeing that now in a wonderful fashion the hearts of fathers are turned towards their children, and those of children towards their fathers (cf. Mt. 19:30; Lk. 1:17)? Who is to despise these *two Orders*, ambassadors of honor and renown as they are, and not see them as the harbinger of something great soon to occur?<sup>5</sup> Since the days of the Apostles never was the world admonished in so emphatic, so remarkable a manner.

The next extraordinary thing was a barren woman's fruitfulness. By this I mean that poor little religious order, sterile and dry, far removed from all moist ground. Barren, to be sure, since she neither sows nor gathers into barns, nor does she carry a well packed bag along the way of the Lord (cf. Mt. 6:26; Lk. 9:3; 10:4; Acts 18:25). There was, however, that holy man [Abraham] who believed, hoping against hope, he would gain the inheritance of the world. He gave no thought to the want of life in his own body, nor to the deadness of Sarah's womb, but trusted the power of God to bring him to beget through her the Hebrew race (Rom. 4:18). Such a man has no crammed cellars, no bulging storehouses, no extensive holdings to manage. Yet the same poverty that renders him fit for heaven, looks after him amazingly while he is still in the world. O, so much stronger than men is God's weakness that while it adds the prize of glory to the cross we bear, supplies our needs in our poverty (1 Cor. 1:25).

Finally, what we have seen is a vineyard enlarge itself within a very short time, reaching out with its spreading branches from sea to sea (cf. Ps. 79). People came from all quarters, crowds of them poured in, and in

<sup>5</sup>The *Analecta* editors see the "two Orders" as referring to the Friars Minor and the Poor Ladies. Plausibly, it could mean the Franciscans and the Dominicans (Friars Preacher). Both new orders of friars were highly regarded by the Popes as instruments of Church renewal. Moreover, 3 Celano, written in the early fifties, might possibly echo the wish of men like Celano in Italy to vindicate the role of the friars in the Church, an issue which exercised both Orders around this time in a conflict with the university and clergy of Paris. Nevertheless, the case for the other order being that of the Poor Clares remains very strong, on account of the whole argument of the chapter.

no time they were brought together to form the living stones making up the eminent structure of this marvellous temple (1 Pt. 2:5). Nor is it only [the Order's] numerical increase in children, over a brief period, that we have observed, but we have also seen her glorified in them. For we know that many of those she bore have already acquired the martyrs' palm. And we venerate several who have been listed as Saints for their perfect confession of consummate holiness.<sup>6</sup>

That piece of writing breathes hopefulness. It is all the more striking in that Celano was not one to gloss over actual deviations from the ideal (see 2Cel 145-49). He seems to take his stand with those who, in any age, hold that enthusiasm and idealism need never be defeated by human ambition or by a blurred conception of the ideal. Today, if "temptations" beset the Order (and the entire family), they can perhaps be classified:

- a blurred understanding of our *raison d'être* in the Church and the world—a failure to allow our *basic form of living* to take priority over works.
- a complacency which refuses to acknowledge any devious developments.



- a "lyricism" that enables us to say "all the right things" (especially about poverty and *minoritas*, but to do nothing about them in practice.

- a conformism which vitiates the essential and characteristic contribution of Franciscans to the work of the Church.

It is all about the viability and the *significance* of the Franciscan brand of Gospel living. With some matters, compromise can be made

<sup>6</sup>The protomartyrs of the Order died at Morocco 16 January, 1220; a friar who died with the Rule in his hands is honorably mentioned in 2Cel 208; Daniel and seven companions were killed in Mauritania 10 October, 1227; John of Perugia and Peter of Sassoferrato were martyred in Valencia in 1231. Gregory IX had permitted the memorial of Roger of Todi, and Anthony of Padua was canonized on 30 May, 1232 (the last two were among the "confessors"). Celano, therefore, had a fair number of holy friars to recall, and it was an impressive number in a young Order.

without damage to the fundamental charism, e.g., areas in the pastoral field, media of communication, areas of education. But when we allow politics, economics, and property to distort our Franciscan approach to life, we may cause a *sea-change* from which there is no recovery. In these things we have a bad spiritual track record, and we truck with them at our peril. But to liberate through acceptance of the poverty of the human condition, to serve with humble means, to rely on divine providence, cannot be outdated notions. And many modern Franciscan statements would have us believe that Celano's pen-picture of the miraculous beginnings of the Order was not written in vain.<sup>7</sup> Ω

<sup>7</sup>E.g., "It is our firm belief that, for these times, the life of Fraternity in imitation of Christ and Saint Francis can be the means of great service to mankind; and what we want to see is our Fraternity actually serving the needs of the men of today" (*The Medellin Documents*, Extraordinary General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor, Medellin, Colombia, August 21-September 24, 1971, p. 48).

Our existence as a fraternity depends on the historical experience of Francis and of his Order and we intend to remain faithful to him. Francis received the Gospel of Jesus Christ in faith and was aware that he and his brothers were sent to the world to proclaim by life-style and word conversion to the Gospel. . . . The call addressed to this man in the past is our concern and still calls us today; it is up to us to hear it and to live accordingly, thus replying to the expectations and needs of men of our day" (*Madrid 1973*, General Chapter Documents. English-speaking Conference, Order of Friars Minor, 1974, pp. 58-59).

## Our Fault

Our fault is not the dreams we dream  
With gaze set on the distant stars.  
It's not the dreams we vision, no;  
Our fault lies in our petty pride.  
We dream a brave and bright tomorrow  
And hate the world when men deride;  
We march our stubborn ways before untrod;  
Forgetting all we need to win is God.

Joyce Finnigan, O.F.M.

## Our Father

Our Father—  
Who art in Heaven...  
Heaven...  
On earth—  
Sanctuary walls confine Thee not,  
Thou art everywhere...  
Even in the abyss,  
On land,  
    At sea,  
        in heaven—  
Thou art there.  
Treasuries of gold  
Thou dost not wish;  
They come from Thee—  
Man but holds these earthly gifts  
    in fee...  
Man...  
    Man...  
        Who is he?  
A fragment of eternity—  
God's creative being...  
God...  
    God...  
Who is like unto God?  
Am I really acquainted with this  
    God?  
Do I know Him truly?  
Thoroughly?...  
Why do I call Him Father?  
Man...  
    Man...  
To man, my Lord,  
Thou didst entrust the revelation  
    of Thyself...  
Thou didst endow him with a  
    soul...  
Soul...  
A soul to disclose the fluidity of  
    feelings

And frequent overflowings toward  
    infinity...  
Infinity!  
Yes, it is my soul that makes me  
    aware  
That the more it seeks to plunge  
    itself  
Into the abyss,  
The infinity of God,  
The more completely does it lose  
    itself  
In the world of splendor.  
So multiple are its aspects!  
So numerous the questions it  
    arouses!  
Why three Divine Persons?  
Why a God incarnate?  
Why a suffering Redeemer?  
Truly, what folly is the Cross!  
What a poem the Eucharist!  
What sweetness, Mary!  
What is the power  
Of an act of charity  
That it can redeem  
A whole life?  
Have I plumbed the depths  
of all that?  
Yet  
Still  
I know nothing!  
I understand  
Nothing!  
My Lord,  
Let me know Thee,  
Thy majesty...  
Thy sovereign grandeur!  
Our Father,  
Who art in Heaven,

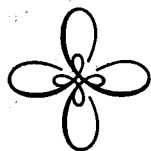
Hallowed be  
Thy Name...  
A storm—  
A storm has broken—  
Sudden,  
Terrific,  
Driving,  
Pursuing,  
Shattering—  
Caught in the tempest's  
Whirling blast,  
The proud fanes  
Of the Druids  
Totter and fall...  
The holy groves  
Tremble;  
The scared elves  
Vanish  
From the surface  
Of the lake,  
And lightning flashes  
Burn  
The sky—  
A strange thrill,  
Dolorous,  
Ecstatic—  
Omnipotent God,  
Hallowed be  
Thy name...  
Spring?  
Ah...  
"For Thy glory  
Spring  
Spreads flowers  
Upon the plains."  
Summer?  
"For Thee  
Summer  
Garlands her fair self

With enjoyment  
And grain."  
Lord,  
Waves of harvest  
Song  
Are on the air:  
From marsh  
And pasture  
Comes the echo  
Of the herdsman pipe;  
Not far away  
There  
Is  
Hum and bustle  
At the wayside inn—  
"Gaudemus igitur;  
Juvenes dum sumus."  
In the little church  
An organ sounds...  
Mass—  
Eucharistic Celebration....  
Someone once said,  
"Let my life  
Be  
A Mass.  
Lord,  
Dear Father,  
What do  
I  
Say?  
Lord,  
Let my life  
Be  
a "Missa Cantata,"  
A SUNG MASS.  
Music...  
Tuned Emotions...  
Thy Hand,

O God,  
Strung the harp  
Of the soul  
With chords,  
Tender,  
Mysterious,  
Mighty,  
Compelling. . . .  
Music!  
Ah!  
'tis a part  
Of immortality  
Itself.  
It harbors all,  
Great or small,  
Strong or humble,

Famed or nameless—  
Stripping them  
Only of errors and guilts  
Of their earthly coverings,  
And bringing them  
Forth  
Anew  
From the cleansing depth  
Of the soul,  
Beautiful . . .  
Ennobled.  
"Sing to God, you kingdoms of the  
earth  
Sing you to the Lord. . . ."  
Lord, if this be the joy on earth,  
What must be the bliss of Heaven!

Sister Mary Doloria Jaracz, C.S.S.F.



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## Our Profession and Christ

IGNATIUS C. BRADY, O.F.M.

TO THE PEOPLE of the Middle Ages, according to Bartholomew of Pisa in his *Chronicle*, Saint Francis appeared as *Christus revivescens*, Christ come alive anew among the children of men.

This is illustrated by a vision which one friar had the evening Francis died (2Cel 219). A certain friar of holy life—whose name is not given—was in prayer at a distant place when Francis died at Assisi the evening of October 3rd (as we reckon time, or October 4th according to the medieval calendar wherein the new day began at sundown).

As he prayed he saw Saint Francis clad in the tunic and/or the dalmatic of a deacon, and followed by a great crowd of people. Many of them turned to the friar and asked: "Is not this man Jesus Christ, O Brother?" And he answered: "Indeed he is." Then others questioned him: "Is not this man the holy Francis?" And again he answered: "Yes." For truly it seemed to him and to the crowds that Christ and the blessed Francis were, so to speak, one person.

Then he and the crowd came with Saint Francis to a most pleasant place where they found a magnificent palace. Francis entered (taking leave of the crowd) and found many of his brothers already within the palace—and a great banquet prepared, which Francis and the others ate with great delight.

---

Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M., has taught for many years at the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure, NY) and at the Collegio S. Antonio in Rome. His series of conferences on Saint Clare, originally published in the early volumes of this review, have been reprinted and are still available in paperback from The Franciscan Institute.

Can we not see in this too the fulfillment of Saint Francis' dream many years before: the dream of a palace filled with arms and a troop of followers, and the understanding given to Francis that he was called to be the Knight of Christ (in a spiritual way) who would follow and imitate Christ his Leader as closely as possible?

### Conformity to Christ for Saint Francis

TOTAL CONFORMITY—as far as humanly possible—was indeed to be the characteristic—the key—to his whole life thenceforth. *Mihi vivere Christus est*: For me to live is Christ, he could say with Saint Paul. This he tells us himself was the call he received from Christ: "The Lord revealed to me that I should live according to the form (= teachings, words, ideals, etc.) of the holy Gospel, and I had it written down in few and simple words, and the Lord Pope confirmed/approved it for me."

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Christocentricity is . . . indeed the key to our Rule, whether of the friars or of the Clares.

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In consequence, he would write in RegNB 22: "Let us hold fast to the words, the life, the teaching and Holy Gospel and the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ."

What indeed was the life of Saint Francis after his conversion save his gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ? Every action, every penance, every prayer, every virtue, was but a step and a help to that goal.

Near the end of his life (two years before his death), he was to receive the Sacred Stigmata on Alverna. In the view of Saint Bonaventure (and others) this gift is none other than the divine stamp of approval, the "authentic" (or documentary) proof to confirm and approve the total conformity Francis had attained to Christ by the grace of God.

Bonaventure puts this most aptly in his *Legenda Minor*:

Truly worthily did this holy man, this Saint, appear marked by this singular privilege [of the stigmata] since his whole desire . . . and devotion . . . centered on the Cross of Christ. What indeed were his many virtues, his wondrous kindness to others, his rigor toward himself, his deep humility, his prompt obedience, his absolute poverty, his shining chastity, his bitter sorrow for sin, and flood of tears, his heartfelt piety (toward

God), his zeal and desire for martyrdom . . . in a word, his total compass of Christ-like virtues, what where these but so many ways in which he was made like to Christ, and thus so many steps likewise whereby he was prepared to receive the final likeness to Christ in the Sacred Stigmata?"

### The Key to Our Life in the Seraphic Order

SAINT BONAVENTURE SUGGESTS somewhere that there almost seem to be two Franciscan Orders: one, of Saint Francis alone, the other which embraces the rest of us. Nonetheless, in the total conformity of Saint Francis to Christ we have the key of our own life, our own mission in the Church.

Francis—or really, God through Saint Francis—calls us also to total conformity (save the stigmata as such) to our Blessed Lord. This Saint Bonaventure clearly saw as our vocation, as he describes it in the Prologue to the *Legenda Maior*: "The grace of God our Savior has appeared in these last days in his servant Saint Francis, that, instructed by his holy example, men might reject ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live conformed to Christ."

Saint Clare, the "little plant . . . and follower" of the Poverello, had already expressed our vocation in the beginning (n. 2) of her Testament: "The Son of God became for us the Way; and that way our Blessed Father Francis, his true lover and imitator, has shown and taught us by word and example."

• Such Christocentricity is thus indeed the key to our Rule, whether of the friars or of the Clares. The very words Francis uses to describe the Rule shows its place in our life: for him, the Rule is the Book of Life, the Marrow of the Gospel, the Way of Perfection (how to live the Gospel to the full), the Key to Paradise (2Cel 208).

Indeed, one old legend tells us that Francis placed the observance of the Gospel (that is, total conformity to Christ) at the beginning and at the end of the Rule so that we might know it is the whole substance of our Christian and Franciscan life. Or again, we might say that the Gospel is the Alpha and Omega of the Rule, while all else in between is there to make more explicit the way we are to follow Christ.

Bartholomew of Pisa in his commentary on the Rule finds twelve chapters (= Apostles) and 72 sentences, each based on the Gospel.

• In addition, such conformity to Christ is the key to our vows. Saint Francis' approach to the vows is affirmative and above all Christocentric in character. This is of the utmost importance for our Franciscan life and way. It stands in marked contrast to an approach which is almost totally negative—or nearly so—which sees the vows as means of repressing ourselves or of removing obstacles to the love and service of God. It argues that our goal is to arrive at love (which is true) but obstacles con-



tinually stand in our way: obstacles from material things, the flesh, and self-will. Therefore the vows—to remove such hindrances. This view is legitimate enough. It is often found in books of meditation and seems to be the emphasis in the outlook of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

But this is not the approach of Saint Francis or of Saint Clare. Their emphasis is more positive: that the vows are actual and positive ways of expressing our conformity to Christ. We embrace them because of what we see: not chastity, but the Chaste Christ (and Mary); not poverty of itself, but the poor Christ and the example of Mary; and obedience that we may imitate and conform to the obedient Christ, who was obedient to Mary and Joseph at Nazareth and always to his Father in heaven.

This surely is the thought of Saint Francis in his "Last Will to Saint Clare" (See the Rule of Saint Clare, c. 6, n. 1; AB 218):

After the Most High Celestial Father saw fit to enlighten my heart by his grace to do penance according to the example and teaching of our most blessed Father Saint Francis, shortly after his own conversion, I, together with my sisters, voluntarily promised him obedience."

Hence we do not hesitate to say that the vows are our most powerful means of conformity to our Lord and our Lady. Yet here we meet a difficulty or "objection" to such a stance or interpretation—a difficulty already voiced in the 13th century by (at least) Gerard of Abbeville: that Christ took no vows and therefore our vows are not valid . . . for the imitation of Christ.

Saint Bonaventure replied to him quite plainly: in Christ there were no vows, but something higher: his total dedication to the Father. "Behold I come to do your will, O God" . . . "I do always the things that please my Father." Our Lord calls us to imitate him here, and therefore in our frailty we stir up and strengthen our will by the vows so as to be able to make that constant will of Christ our own. Surely that is conformity to Christ!

Does this mean that in theory and in practice the vows are to be considered as positive means to practice and follow what we behold in Christ and in Mary? In contrast to such fidelity, faults against the vows or the accompanying virtues are to be viewed as ways of being *un-Christlike*, as lessening or destroying the image of Christ in us.

• Somewhat parallel to this should be our attitude toward the precepts and counsels of the Rule and Constitutions: Stress the positive!

Hence our profession of the Franciscan way of life should be regarded and valued as a very positive acceptance of a duty and a privilege of total conformity to Christ. We pledge our loyalty to Christ the King. For the friar, this demands that he be, so to speak, a knight of Christ to whom he has pledged total fidelity. For the sister or nun, it is joyous surrender to



the King and Lord.

In short, by promising to observe the life and rule for the whole time of our life, we accept out of love a whole pattern of living, with Christ as the center, for the whole time of our life, in total and joyous consecration.

At the same time, it means that we thereby accept the Cross: "If anyone will come after me, let him take up his cross [daily, adds Saint Luke] and follow me."

We must be victims with Christ. Little wonder then that on the Feast of All Saints one year Saint Gertrude had a vision in which she saw the religious standing amidst the martyrs; what else can we expect? Saint Bonaventure says of Christ: *Tota vita sua crux fuit et martyrium*: his whole life was a Cross and martyrdom (words repeated by Thomas a Kempis).

The reply is again that of Saint Bonaventure: *Quotidie poenitentia crucis debet esse nova et recens*: each day the penance/suffering of the Cross must be ever new, ever alive.

### Conclusion

The key to the life of Saint Francis was Christ: his spirit, outlook, generosity. The key to the life of Saint Clare was the suffering Christ. The key to our life, then: Christ.

Our Rule, with the vows, the precepts and the counsels—with the Spirit as guide and inspiration—is a help along the way, not simply a body of laws, but means to conformity with our Lord.

Hence our religious profession contains in germ for us all the holiness and sanctity our vocation demands! We must seek holiness in our state of

life, in our profession, in our *way*, and not by other means.

Let us follow the precious advice our Lady Clare gave the Blessed Agnes (Letter II, n. 3; AB 196):

What you hold, may you [always] hold.  
What you do, may you [always] do and never abandon.  
But with swift pace, light step,  
[and] unswerving feet,  
so that even your steps stir up no dust,  
go forward  
securely, joyfully, and swiftly,  
on the path of prudent happiness,  
believing nothing,  
agreeing with nothing  
which would dissuade you from this resolution  
or which *would place a stumbling block* for you on the way,  
so that you may offer *your vows to the Most High*  
in the pursuit of that perfection  
to which the Spirit of the Lord has called you. Ω

### Shopping Bag Lady

The bag lady walks huddled  
in the leprosy of loneliness,  
of want.  
Perhaps there is no name  
in either ragbag,  
no child who dreamed  
of what she would become—  
but what moves me toward  
delight and sorrow  
is the shining forth of being.  
Here is another castle  
where the maimed king waits  
for some blundering fool to care.

Sister Deborah Corbett

## The Reverent Blasphemy of Angelus Silesius

JOHN R. HOLMES

NOTHING COULD BE more humbling than to stand in the presence of God. The saints and mystics who have been called to ~~do~~ so seem to corroborate this . . . and yet there is often that barely perceptible touch of familiarity some mystics use in addressing God. None has been more shocking in his or her familiarity—which sometimes seems more like superiority—than Angelus Silesius. "Without me," proclaimed one of his most characteristic epigrams, "God does not live." How can such seeming lack of reverence and humility do honor to God? I believe that a close look at the form of the translations offered here will provide an answer. But first, a few words on the poet.

Angelus Silesius, the "Silesian Angel," was the pen name of Johannes Scheffler (1624–1677) of Breslau, the capital of Silesia (now in southwest Poland). The German culture of his day was undergoing radical reformation, both in language and in religion. The *Sprachgesellschaften*, or Language Societies, virtually controlled all literary works, setting down strict "laws" of poetic composition. The churches, Catholic and Protestant, also insisted on strict adherence to their guidelines. Such an atmosphere of religious conflict and political power struggle, one attempting to hide behind the other, produced the Thirty Years' War. Almost half of Scheffler's life was spent in its shadow. As a Lutheran who converted to Catholicism, he experienced the persecution of both denominations. Perhaps this experience accounts for his poetry's apparent audacity in flouting conventions of religious decorum: his relationship with God was more personal than doctrinal.

John R. Holmes, an alumnus of St. Bonaventure University, teaches English at Kent State University.

Scheffler's exposure to religious disputes may be traced in the history of his medical training at the Universities of Strasbourg, Leyden, and Padua—Lutheran, Calvinist, and Roman Catholic cities respectively. Though he returned to Lutheran Silesia after receiving his M.D. from Padua in 1648, he converted to Catholicism in 1653, becoming known then as Angelus Silesius. In 1657 he published a five-volume work of poetry, which with an added sixth volume some years later (1674) became known as *The Cherubinic Wanderer*. In 1659 he entered the Franciscan Order at Breslau, and he was ordained to the priesthood two years later. From 1664 until 1671 he held high positions in the service of the Prince-Bishop of Breslau, who encouraged him in the composition of polemical pieces against the Protestants.

Though his prose propaganda tracts were virulently sectarian, Angelus' poetic masterpiece, *The Cherubinic Wanderer*, is remarkably ecumenical.<sup>1</sup> And so is his reception today: both Protestant and Catholic congregations sing his hymns and anthologize his poems. One of the first translators of Scheffler was the co-founder of Methodism, John Wesley. A curious paradox that underscores his universal appeal is that an editor of Jacob Boehme asserts that *The Cherubinic Wanderer* is merely versified Boehme, while an editor of Meister Eckhart claims it is merely versified Eckhart.<sup>2</sup>

But Scheffler's theology is his own, though he borrows from both Boehme and Eckhart. He is much more confident in his Christian Humanism than either of his predecessors. Consider the following epigram from *The Cherubinic Wanderer*:

What God is to me, I am to Him  
 God is my God and Man; I am his Man and God.  
 I quench his burning thirst; He gives me staff and rod.

Half of this couplet is traditional Christian piety: humanity is totally dependent on God. Yet if the mystic carries the identity of God and humanity to its logical conclusion, then the converse is also true: God is dependent on man as well. This is a characteristic message of Scheffler's epigrams.

The message, however, is conveyed as much through form as through content: the true mystic, like the true artist, does not distinguish the two. It is for this reason that the translations included here follow Scheffler's

<sup>1</sup>No complete English translation of this work is presently available. Translations used in this article are the author's.

<sup>2</sup>See Peter Erb, "Introduction," in Jacob Boehme, *The Way to Christ* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 1; Raymond B. Blakney, *Meister Eckhart* (New York: Harper, 1941), xxv.

meter as closely as possible. The tightness of the classical Alexandrine with its parallelism and antithesis conveys the reciprocity of the Hypostatic Union of divine and human. The symmetries are incredibly intricate for so small a space, dividing not only the line but the half-line as well. In the epigram above, Scheffler begins with the phrase "God and Man" and builds outward from it. First he mirrors the phrase in the corresponding section of the second hemistich (—God and Man; —Man and God). Then he completes each hemistich of the first line with another symmetrical pair of quarter-lines (God is my — ; I am his — ). The second line offers only one mirrored pair (I - Verb - His; He - Verb - Me), but there is an additional mirroring between lines one and two:

God - Verb ; I - Verb  
 I - Verb ; God - Verb

Scheffler learned this cross-symmetry technique from another Silesian epigramist, Daniel Czepko (1605-1660). Finally, the sequence builds grammatically from the verbs of being and their complements in the first line to the action verbs and their objects in the second.

Not every epigram of *The Cherubinic Wanderer* is as intricate as this one, but the balance of divine and human is typical. In fact, when the balance is tipped, it is usually toward humanity rather than God, as in this epigram:

Who is older than God?  
 The one who lives one day within Eternity  
 Is ever so much older than God can ever be.

Why does Scheffler risk blasphemy in this way? Certainly he cannot believe that we, who are creatures, can be co-eternal with our Creator. Such a belief is not only contrary to the teachings of his Church, but also a logical absurdity, a contradiction. And I think that is a key to Scheffler's method. He does not want to subvert doctrine so much as reason. The orthodoxy he wants to shock us out of is an orthodoxy of logic, not of Christian dogma.

Benno von Wiese's classic study of antitheses in Scheffler's epigrams has shown how the mystic subverts the identity principle of logic.<sup>3</sup> The rationalist's principle, A is not Not-A, is the foundation of logic and mathematics. But the mystics realize that in God all distinctions dissolve.

<sup>3</sup>"Die Antithetik in den Alexandrinern des Angelus Silesius," *Euphorion* 29 (1928), 503-22.

Thus their favorite poetic device is paradox or oxymoron:

The Spirit remains ever free  
Wrap me tight as you will in tons of iron chain,  
And yet completely free, unfettered I remain.

If this sounds a bit like John Donne's famous Holy Sonnet concluding "Take mee to you, imprison mee, for I / Except you enthrall me, never shall be free," perhaps it is because Scheffler wrote shortly after Donne's time, and both poets have been accused of writing the same type of "Baroque" poetry. Just as the mystic loves to thwart worldly wisdom by blurring distinctions between divine and human, the so-called "Baroque" image or metaphor stimulates the reader's imagination by blurring distinctions between levels of reality.

For example, when Scheffler follows a number of Renaissance mystics and poets in using alchemical metaphors for spiritual processes, he is not trying to impress the reader with his ingenuity, as critics of the Baroque have suggested; rather, he is trying to transform our imaginative perception:

Love is the Philosopher's Stone  
A Philosopher's Stone is love: it takes God out of Lead; It takes the "I"  
from "NIL" and makes it GOD instead.

The same principle applies to the word-game in the second line, a popular device in later 17th century poetry. (Scheffler's actual pun is finding *ich*, or "I" in *nichts*, or "nothingness," and coining the non-word *ichts*.) The spark of intellect struck by such puzzles is meant to ignite a contemplative flame which illuminates the nature of God. By putting this one in antithesis to the alchemical image in the first line (which by the standards of neoclassical poetics makes it a bad poem), Scheffler forces us to seek the connection between two disparate elements. Typically, the antitheses in this poem are ultimately "I" and "God," the underlying elements in all Scheffler's epigrams, united in a poetic coincidence of opposites.

In the epigrams offered here, we see Scheffler's most characteristic and most successful poetic form. It was popular throughout Western Europe in the 17th century, and the iambic hexameter couplet of the French neoclassic poets was adapted to German verse by the Language Societies, on the example of Martin Opitz (1597-1639). But the logical balance and antithesis of the Opitzian epigram, inspired by the epigrams of Martial and the newly rediscovered and collected *Greek Anthology*, were turned upside down by Angelus Silesius, as I hope the translations here will demonstrate. What appears to be irreverence, then, is itself a mystical paradox: reverent irreverence, or to paraphrase Saint Francis' paradox for the Incarnation, "proud humility and humble pride."

## Translations from the *Cherubinischer Wandersmann* of Angelus Silesius

On the Gravestone of Saint Francis<sup>4</sup>  
Here lies a Seraphin: I marvel that this stone  
Can feel such flaming fire and still be left alone.

One gulf calls to the other  
The gulf of my poor soul cries out with bitter moan  
To God's: whose gulf is deeper, my maker's or my own?

From the source you must drink  
O Man, the fountain's water is cool and pure and clear,  
But drink else but the source, and you'll have much to fear.

A sob says it all  
When sobs my soul, and moans, and cries out "Ah!" and "O!"  
She calls to her Omega and to her Alpha so.

Mary  
For Mary you've high praise: to me that only means  
That she our Blessed Virgin is Queen among all Queens.

A Christian is God's son  
I too am God's own son; I sit at his right hand:  
His spirit, flesh, and blood is mine to understand.

One knows not what one is  
What I am, I know not; What I know, I am not:  
A thing and not a thing: a circle and a dot.

One holds the other  
God fits quite well with me, and I fit him just fine:  
I help him guard his Essence, as he helps me guard mine.

No "Why"  
The rose does not ask "Why"; it grows because it grows.  
It thinks not of itself, asks not who sees or knows.

It only depends on you  
Could your heart but become the manger of Christ's birth,  
God would once again become a child on earth.

Zero in front is worthless  
The creature is a zero: when it is placed before  
Our God, it is worth nothing; placed after, it's worth more.

God's other He  
I am God's other He; He finds alone in me  
His image and his like in all Eternity.

<sup>4</sup>This piece was composed at least three years before his entrance to the Order.

# A Directory for Friary Chapters

JOACHIM A. GIERMEK, O.F.M.CONV.

IN AN EARLIER article for this review, "The Friary Chapter: Problems and Perspectives" (*The CORD* 29 [1979], 144-50), an attempt was made to offer a contribution to the dialogue on the potential significance of the local community chapter in ongoing Franciscan renewal. The document recorded in these pages was, in fact, taken by the special commission organized at the Ordinary General Chapter of the Order of Friars Minor Conventual in 1978 and used in the formulation of a *Directory* for the Friary Chapter which was debated and approved by the Extraordinary General Chapter of 1981. The following paragraphs offer reflections on the contents and the implications of this Conventual Franciscan document.

The *Directory* itself is divided into sections which consider the legislative norms for the Friary Chapter selected from the Order's Constitutions and General Statutes; give directions for celebrating the Friary Chapter, review a proposed model for the celebration of the Friary Chapter, and offer explanatory notes on the celebration itself. An appendix to the text lists suggested readings from Sacred Scripture and Franciscan sources which play a role in the execution of the Chapter.

A substantial part of the text outlined in the earlier article cited above found its way into those sections referring to the directions for celebrating the Friary Chapter and the explanatory notes. Additional suggestions emerged in the proposed model for the Chapter, a celebration in three parts, with an introduction and a conclusion. The outline of the model is as follows:

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Father Joachim A. Giermek, O.F.M.Conv., Ph.D. (Philosophy, Georgetown University), is Definitior General for the English Speaking Coetus of the Conventual Franciscans. He has for some years been on the staff of the Franciscan Institute.

- A. *Introduction: Opening Song, Greeting, Presentation of Agenda.*
- B. *Part One: Common Spiritual Reading, Meditation, Prayer:*
  1. A selected reading from Sacred Scripture or from the Franciscan sources relevant to the given theme.
  2. Shared reflections by the Guardian and the other friars.
  3. Common prayer with spontaneous intentions referring to the theme.
- C. *Part Two: Common Examination of Our Community Life and the Communication of Information.*
  1. Verification of the resolutions approved by the preceding Chapter, based on a reading of the minutes.
  2. Examination of the administration of the friary, prepared by the local treasurer (procurator, econom) who reports on income and expenditures.
  3. Sharing of information by the Guardian and the other friars concerning each one's activities, particularly pastoral ones.
- D. *Part Three: Common Deliberation on the Agenda.*
  1. An examination of the individual items on the agenda as well as others, should they arise, with respect to the following:
    - a. consecrated life (the practice of the religious vows).
    - b. fraternal life in community.
    - c. spiritual life (liturgy and devotions).
    - d. apostolic life (ministries and assistance rendered).
- E. *Conclusion: Prayer of Thanksgiving, Closing Song.*

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What the model clearly highlights in the celebration of the Friary Chapter is the primacy of the spiritual in defining the nature of the Chapter.

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What the model clearly highlights in the celebration of the Friary Chapter is the primacy of the spiritual in defining the nature of the Chapter. This is made evident by the content of the first part, a true prayer service for the community.

Earlier experimentation and, even more so, later compliance with the *Directory* has resulted in two important expressions. On the one hand, many communities are identifying this first part of the monthly Chapter with a monthly day of recollection.

Part of this "day" (which may, in fact, for various communities be several hours, an overnight, or a weekend) is spent in the manner

prescribed by the *Directory*, the major thrust of which lies in the shared reflections by the members of the community on the theme suggested by the readings and the presentation of the day's leader.

The value of the experience, in those communities in which it is attempted and perseveringly practiced, is impressive. The shared prayer and the shared reflections become, in such a setting, a means for ongoing spiritual formation of both the individual members and the community as a whole. In addition, the level of trust and commitment of the members to one another is gradually built up as they use the forum provided for revealing values that strike at the very core of Franciscan religious life in the Church. Few, if any, other similar opportunities are available to the community to address issues of spiritual substance. The occasion and the environment generally provide a non-threatening atmosphere where a communal dialogue in and of the spirit can take place. Many religious who have expressed the desire for such a setting rejoiced in the potentialities of the regular prayer sessions. One of the keys to the "success" of this primary aspect of the Friary Chapter, it must be noted, is the viewing of this part, in particular, as "celebration" rather than "legislation." On the other hand, the desire to maintain the seriousness and sacredness of this part of the Chapter has led many communities to separate the prayer session proper from the remainder of the Chapter. Such a division is commendable and actually desirable, provided the remaining two parts are seen in the context of the whole and do not become viewed, through the divorce of time and space, as the essence of the community meeting. It is for this reason that the explanatory notes caution that "sometimes, given a special reason, the Friary Chapter can be called solely to celebrate a religious activity (Part One) or only to discuss some pressing concerns (Part Three). For the most part, however, in so far as it is possible, the Friary Chapter should contain all three aspects indicated in the outline above and these three should normally be carried out."

Of the two sections remaining, Part Two in particular reviews the past month, while Part Three considers the present with a glance toward the future. In doing these things, the merits of the monthly Chapter are again apparent. There are, it is true, many communities where the items listed in the descriptions of Parts Two and Three are carried out on a regular, if not daily, basis. The added benefit of the more formal monthly gathering, however, for prayer, review, and projection, is that of assessment. Things have a way of escaping reflective consideration as one gets absorbed in the rhythm of daily life. A periodic assessment—a month appears to be a suitable length of time for this—affords the possibility of evaluating whether progress or regress has occurred in the spiritual and fraternal dimensions of community life. It also creates an arena for pro-

jection and commitment to the limited future (the next month). Thus the entire community and each member of it are given the possibility to escape the complacency and downward drift that can enter religious life when no provision is made for real assessment.

There is an obvious obstacle to the functioning of the Friary Chapter along the lines envisaged, however, particularly in the topic cited in common deliberation of the agenda in Part Three. This obstacle is the very level of trust which has developed among the members of the community and which often may be at a low point or even non-existent. It must, however, be allowed to develop if there is to be any hope of progress in the life of the religious family.

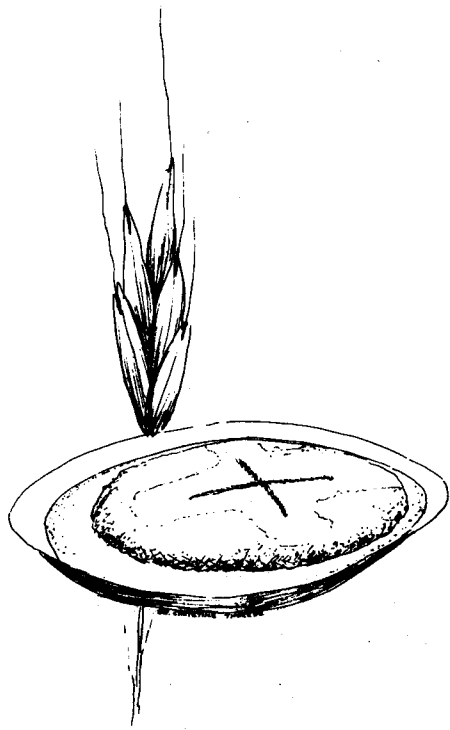
But it is this essential obstacle which, paradoxically, is at the core of a successful community Chapter. The Chapter requires the confidence of its members in each other to function properly. Yet, at the same time, the Chapter can be the principal means of strengthening and developing that common trust.

At this point, it becomes apparent that the Friary Chapter cannot work miracles on its own. Further, it must be seen in relation to the totality of the lived experience of the community. What this means is that one cannot look to the Friary Chapter to create common trust, a spirit of prayerfulness, and a desire for evangelical perfection in a setting where these values are not sought on a daily basis. If the community members are not consciously striving for these ideals in their regular interactions, they cannot hope to achieve them in their irregular monthly encounters. In fact, they positively cannot achieve them in this way.

The Chapter can only build upon and strengthen the values that are brought to it. If the quality of Franciscan religious life is limited solely to the mundane, the financial, the social, or purely apostolic (in the sense of "work") aspects of daily cohabitation, this will all be reflected in the quality of the monthly Chapter.

If, however, the good will of each member of the community and his desire for encouraging trust and solidarity is made apparent through daily expressions of sharing and reconciling, the monthly Friary Chapter can only further and deepen the desires which are so expressed from day to day.

Not much, if anything, has been said about the role of the local minister of authority, the local "superior" (to use the technical term), because the focus of attention has been on the community gathering itself. Suffice it to say, at this point, that the tenor of the *Directory* makes it clear that the Chapter never was nor ever should be viewed as supplanting or even supplementing the personal ministerial authority residing in the local minister. "Complementing" is the proper term here. The Chapter functions in consort with the minister as his or her counsel. As



brother among confreres with the additional responsibility that comes from the charism of ministry, the minister "serves" within the context of the Chapter. The ideal is attained when the legitimate authority of the minister, far from being denied, denigrated, or suspended, is always respected and a climate of moral collegiality is created wherein the authority of the minister need not be invoked because the community is of "one mind and one heart."

A last reflection on the *Directory* for Friary Chapters concerns a personal desire for what is lacking in it.

The history of the development of the Chapter system in the Franciscan movement reveals that the essence of the Chapter—whether universal (General), regional (Provincial), or local (Friary)—resided in the fraternal community gathered around its spiritual father (at first Francis himself, then later the General, Provincial, or local Minister) for the primary purposes of listening to reports from all the members on their personal, spiritual, and apostolic activities; for "confessing" individually to the other members of the community the personal failures and difficulties in living up to the ideals of the Rule; for a spiritual exhor-

tation by the spiritual Father to the community which would admonish and encourage them in this way of life.

The second aspect of the Chapter: the confession of personal failures against the spirit of the Rule and against the community, which was at first an integral part of any and every Chapter, was later separated out of the whole and constituted as an independent "Chapter of Faults." In an even later stage of development, this particular Chapter was relegated to the status of a paraliturgical ritual.

Those who have had experience with any form of the Chapter of Faults may recognize that it merited the passage into oblivion which has almost universally occurred. The falling into desuetude was a good thing; the Chapter of Faults in its last stages was not accomplishing its original purpose. That there has been no attempt to resurrect that initial inspiration in a new form, however, appears regrettable.

At its best moments in the distant past, the spirit of the "confessional" aspect of the Chapter was an openness to the manifestation of the state of one's soul, with its complementary components of communal trust and freedom, leading to support, affirmation, and when necessary healing.

Although frequently acknowledging the need for such a forum to express difficulties and even personal failures, and to receive encouragement and reconciliation, not all Franciscans are conscious that these important elements of community living were addressed traditionally in the setting of the Chapter.

Granted, there are areas in some persons' lives which will require on occasion a professional counseling or psychological setting. For almost everyone, however, the conflicts between the ideal and the real in community call for an environment where these issues can be addressed, and direction, gathered from others' compassionate listening and shared experience, can be offered.

Many Franciscans can pass a lifetime in religion desiring to communicate on these levels of interiority without ever achieving their desires. Saint Francis, it appears, drawing upon the sound tradition of religious life in the Church, acknowledged the benefits that could accrue to the soul if an opportunity to reach out for healing were provided. Thus, the early Chapters in the Order afforded the time to confess and to be healed as an integral part of their composition. It is an expressed hope that the spiritual sons and daughters of Francis may come to recognize these benefits and opportunities for today and to shape a new forum to express them. Ω

## Welcome, Sister Death!

Amid the gentle forces in my life,  
My Sister's voice is sweetly heard.

In the busy, playful days of my youth  
She very seldom spoke.  
If she did, I never heard!

Among the moments of discovery,  
In the passing faces of life,  
I'm sure that I have seen her.

Throughout the fibre of my life,  
Her voice is quietly woven.

Her presence in my mind and heart  
Give voice to my spirit's song.  
In the celebration of my canticle,  
She is heard, sweet and low.

The calming theme of coming home  
Anoints and heals my heart.  
Her fragrant melody rests my weary soul  
In the comforting warmth of lasting joy.

I am a pilgrim, a wandering prayer.  
My Sister's voice directs my journeying,  
Strengthens my pace, brightens my eyes.

The time will come when my Sister's voice  
Shall be given a face.

She will greet me, when others have forgotten me.

My Sister's voice is always near,  
Or is it that I now have ears to hear!

The calming theme to the melody of our hearts  
Will embrace and free my spirit.

In her gentle, fragile embrace, she will take me home.

*Brother Sean Mary, T.O.R.*

Written for Sister Mary Bernadette, O.S.C.  
of the Poor Clares in Langhorne  
who died January 31, 1983, of cancer

## Book Reviews

*Saints Are Now*. Edited by John J. Delaney. Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image Books, 1983. Pp. 224. Paper, \$4.50.

*Reviewed by Brother Bill Barrett, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province who has recently returned from Honduras, where he served as representative of the American Friends Service Committee.*

When I was in college, a friend gave me a copy of *The Catholic Worker* to read one evening. I still remember how I devoured its too short eight pages, astounded that there were other people, they who wrote its varied articles, who not only seemed to share my point of view but who were clearly pushing me beyond it to a more radical analysis. Before long I was one of the 90,000 or so subscribers (its circulation is now a little over 100,000), and from that point on my life was ruined. I could never again be content to live according to the values and standards of the middle class North American society into which I was born. Instead of trying to achieve a good job and a high standard of living, I'm trying, and failing to a remarkable extent, to measure my life according to the Gospel.

About eight years after I began receiving the *Worker*, I met Dorothy Day. I had moved near to New York City, and had begun volunteering time at the CW soup kitchen in the Lower East Side. As I recall, the day had ended and we were gathering for an evening liturgy in the first floor room that served as kitchen and dining room for the poor who came to the daily soup

line, when Dorothy came in. I am sure my first reaction to her was awe, but as I grew to be part of the CW family, and got to know Dorothy a little better, my feelings toward her have grown into love for a great woman who simply lived the life Jesus showed us to the best of her abilities.

I still have a birthday card she gave me a month before her death (we shared the same birthday, 55 years apart), and I will always be grateful for her fine advice to me some years earlier: "If you're serious about working in the Church in these days, then you'd better go out and learn Spanish."

I know that Dorothy was an extraordinary grace to the Church in this century, but I'm very uneasy with the campaign being begun by some (mainly those who *didn't* know her when she was alive) to formally canonize her. I think Dorothy's intuition was correct: being called a saint means one doesn't have to be taken seriously. But perhaps the notion of saint can be rescued by our acquaintance with holywomen and men who were quite able to say, "Oh, damn!" when they dropped a pill—or who had illegitimate children, and still went on to live a Gospel life.

The eight twentieth-century people whose stories are told in *Saints Are Now* are largely that kind of example that gives hope. At least two of them did have children in their unmarried pre-conversion days; at least two had major differences with their religious superiors that nearly drove them out of their communities; at least two others (though the book doesn't say it) took stands disagreeing with the



Catholic Church's exclusion of women from the ordained ministry. I say "hope," not to imply that we should imitate them in all things, but rather to point out that, yes, saints are like us in all things *including* sin! (And I will emphatically add that I personally am convinced that the hope for an inclusive ministry in the Church is not erroneous but prophetic.)

If anything, this book can be criticized for the narrowness of its choice of examples. Six of the eight people written of were in religious communities (and a seventh was a pope), all of the five men were priests, and of course all eight were Roman Catholics. One wishes there had been a few less expected choices—a Mohandas Gandhi or a Martin Luther King, or someone from the Third World (of whom there is no shortage, as the martyrdom of literally thousands of lay men and women "Delegates of the Word" in El Salvador by the right wing government there attests).

But the stories *Saints Are Now* tells are worth hearing and worth remembering, the more so thanks to the excellent writing by contributors such as Eileen Egan, Gary MacEoin, and Naomi Burton Stone. And although many more stories yet need to be told and remembered, we should be glad for what the Russian anarchist Nicolai Berdayev wrote, a line Dorothy Day loved to quote: "Every moral act of love, of mercy, or sacrifice brings to pass the end of the world where hatred and selfishness reign supreme."

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**The Catholic Faith.** By Robert J. Fox. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1983. Pp. 315. Paper,

\$7.95.

*Reviewed by Father Evan Roche, O.F.M., Professor of Philosophy at Siena College and Director of the local Padre Pio Group which meets at Siena College.*

Refreshing! The word kept coming to mind as I read in leisurely fashion through this latest and, in the opinion of this reviewer, best of Father Fox's many writings. For those schooled in the teachings of the Catholic Church, it should prove a real refresher course. For beginners it will be a delightful introduction and foundation. As always, Father Fox is clear and easy to follow. His simple presentation is ideal for the kind of book he obviously had in mind: a basic yet updated catechetical work. In an almost deceptively artless way the author manages to present an enormous amount of teaching and make it easy and pleasant to digest.

The contents of this book need not be enumerated in this review. The author has simply taken the most important and fundamental teachings of the Church and covered them in 24 suitable chapters. At the end of each chapter he summarizes the material in question and answer form. He gives no space to dissident or dissenting viewpoints. His only mention of dissent is an excellent warning against Modernism on pp. 174-75.

The book contains a Nihil Obstat and an Imprimatur given by the Bishop of Sioux Falls, the author's Ordinary. Bishop Dudley need never worry that he will receive an order to remove his Imprimatur from this or any of the writings of Father Fox. In fact, we can hope and pray that this catechetical work of Father Fox will

surpass in number of sales the recent widely used Catechism that has been ordered recalled by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.

Father Fox's work, while solidly orthodox and traditional, incorporates many of the latest authoritative and official statements of the Catholic Church. The documents of the Second Vatican Council, recent Papal Encyclicals and pronouncements, the General Catholic Directory, and the National Catholic Directory are frequently cited. Unsurprisingly they all support and confirm the doctrines of the Church in such a way as to confirm and strengthen the faith of the reader.

Is there, then, nothing in this masterful book to criticize? Yes, there is. Although the bulk of the author's presentation is marvelously clear, there are many individual sentences which are awkwardly or carelessly worded, not in their content but in their syntax. Also, some of the references are incomplete, and there are a few misprints.

It is to be hoped that this wonderful book will sell so well that it will require a second printing. But good as it is, it can be even better. So this reviewer suggests to Father Fox that he start planning and preparing a Second Edition. In the meantime, we wholeheartedly recommend to every reader this First Edition of *The Catholic Faith*.

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

*Reviewed by Father Francis de Ruijter, O.F.M., M.A. (Franciscan Institute), team member of the Burning Bush Prayer and Renewal Center, Lennoxville, Quebec.*

Without referring to either the charismatic renewal or Christotherapy, Fr. McManus has many points in common with them. Jesus still heals today through the ministry of the Church, that is, concretely, through the sacraments and prayer. The book deals with three sacraments only: the anointing of the sick, reconciliation, and the Eucharist. They are viewed from the texts of the new rituals. If this is not the strongest theological backing, it certainly is a practical approach, for the Church expresses her faith in her prayers and liturgy (pp. 38-39).

Fr. McManus insists not only on the need for forgiveness of sins, but also on the healing of the wound of sin. Besides, the reader will welcome his development on discernment and the confessor's role. There is no healing when the penitent is interested only in a "quick absolution" and no time is taken out between him and the confessor to celebrate the word of God and to pray together (p. 55).

Chapter Seven details a service of prayer for healing, in two parts. Four readings, followed by silent meditation, spontaneous prayer, and singing take up the first half hour. The second part contains healing of memories (10 minutes), healing of relationships, spiritual healing (5 minutes), physical healing, and the blessing with blessed oil (one hour or more).

Fr. McManus also speaks of Mary's intercessory role and healing our self-image through personal prayer in-

cluding three steps: acceptance of the word of God, acknowledgment of God's action in us, and allowance for our weaknesses.

Three introductory chapters lead up to the author's discussion of the sacraments. I find particularly valuable Chapter One: "The Healing Ministry of Jesus." Jesus' ministry and healing took place through the power of the Holy Spirit (too often overlooked); and it is in the same power of the Holy Spirit that we today can and should minister.

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**Catholic Bishops: A Memoir.** By John Tracy Ellis. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazer, Inc., 1984. Pp. 182, including Index. Cloth, \$10.95.

*Reviewed by Father David Francis Sweeney, O.F.M., Ph.D. (Catholic University of America), Spalding Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Saint Bonaventure University.*

Gracefully crafted, tinged with humor, always honest, this slender volume is vintage Ellis. More than a "divertissement" à la Graham Greene, it is a further contribution to the telling of the American Catholic story. It is a trip down memory lane which begins with the nineteen year old collegian at Saint Viator's in Illinois and ends with this remembrance of things past by the Dean of American Catholic Church historians, the gracious gentleman, priest and scholar as he approaches his eightieth year.

Aware of the pitfalls of this literary genre, Ellis tells us of bishops, cardinals, rectors of the Catholic Univer-

sity of America, apostolic delegates that he has met and known down through the years. They are all dead, but they come to live again in these pages as the author recalls their foibles as well as their virtues, their style of episcopal leadership or lack of it, the intramural fisticuffs as the bishops swung hard and often in the defense of a Church basically immigrant. Ellis has been frank but strives as always to maintain if not the letter, at least the spirit of the axiom: "De mortuis nihil nisi bonum." Whether he has succeeded will, of course, be debated. As one critic put it, this memoir is "one long memory with one long needle."

No stranger to debate, Ellis has never eschewed controversy. The 1955 essay on *American Catholics and the Intellectual Life* was for its day regarded as a "bombshell" and scattered throughout this memoir are reflections of some of the episcopal displeasure that persists to this very day. A chance remark by one of the rectors of the Catholic University of America in introducing Ellis to a prelate from South Africa: "This fellow writes books," is cited as an example of the attitudes of otherwise intelligent bishops toward scholarly endeavors on a university level.

In the tradition of John Dawson Gilmary Shea and Peter Guilday, John Tracy Ellis has indeed written books that will stand the test of time and will continue to enrich the historiography of the American Catholic Church. The memoir is delightful reading, fragments of knowledge that recreate the past with fidelity and sincerity, the déjà vu for many of us that were there.

## Books Received

- Berry, Karen, O.S.F., *Beyond Broken Dreams: A Scriptural Pathway to New Life*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. x-62. Paper, \$3.50.
- Donahue, Lois, *Dear Moses . . . Letters to Saints and Other Prominent People*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. 112. Paper, \$4.95.
- Eno, Robert B., S.S., *Teaching Authority in the Early Church*. Message of the Fathers Series, n. 14. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 168, including Bibliography. Cloth, \$12.95; paper \$7.95.
- Foy, Felician A., O.F.M., and Rose M. Avato, *A Concise Guide to the Catholic Church*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. viii-158, including Index. Paper, \$6.95.
- Galot, Jean, S.J., *The Person of Christ: A Theological Insight*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984. Pp. viii-Paper, \$4.50.
- Green, Thomas H., S.J., *Weeds among the Wheat—Discernment: Where Prayer and Action Meet*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 204. Paper, \$4.95.
- Hardick, Lothar, O.F.M., *The Admonitions of St. Francis of Assisi*. Trans. David Smith; Appendix by Sr. M. Ethelburga Häcker, O.S.F. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1982. Pp. xxiv-316, including Appendix. Cloth, n.p.
- Janda, J., *Julian: A Play Based on the Life of Julian of Norwich*. New York: Seabury Press Vineyard Books, 1984. Pp. 109. Paper, n.p.
- Luebering, Carol, *Your Child's First Communion: Reflections for Parents on the Meaning of Eucharist*. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1984. Pp. 32. Paper, \$1.35.
- May, William E., *Sex, Marriage, and Chastity: Reflections of a Catholic Layman, Spouse, and Parent*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1981. Pp. xii-170, including Index. Paper, \$6.50.
- Mazziotta, Richard, C.S.C., *We Pray to the Lord: General Intercessions Based on The Scriptural Readings for Sundays and Holy Days*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 203, 8½x11 inches. Roncote, \$9.95.
- Morris, Daniel, *Beatitude Saints*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1984. Pp. vi-95. Paper, \$4.95.
- Neal, Marie Augusta, S.N.D. de Namur, *Catholic Sisters in Transition: From the 1960s to the 1980s*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 173, including Appendices. Paper, \$7.95.
- Pawlikowski, John T., O.S.M., and Donald Senior, C.P., *Biblical and Theological Reflections on "The Challenge of Peace"*. Theology and Life Series, n. 10. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 295. Paper, np.
- St. Romain, Philip A., *Praying the Daily Gospels: A Guide to Meditation*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 247. Paper, \$5.95.
- Tylenda, Joseph N., S.J., tr., *The Imitation of Christ, in Four Books, by Thomas a Kempis*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 272, including Index. Paper, \$6.95.
- Zimney, Connie Fourré, *In Praise of Homemaking*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1984. Pp. 144. Paper, \$4.95.