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NOVEMBER, 1985

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Volume 35, No. 10

The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., has illustrated his own article on St. Elizabeth of Hungary.

Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

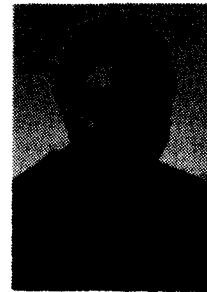
I. Writings of Saint Francis

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 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 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	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 St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection
Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., <i>St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies</i> . 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., <i>Francis and Clare: The Complete Works</i> (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).	

EDITORIAL



Strangers to Silence

WE LIVE IN AN AGE that is characterized by constant movement, haste, and noise. People today seem to exist in an atmosphere generated by a sense of urgency to do things, to meet deadlines, to be always occupied with one thing or another, to be strangers to silence. Noise pollution has become a national problem that has invaded our cities, homes, and monasteries as well. The air is constantly being assaulted by sounds of every kind coming from the babble of voices, radios, stereos, tape decks, and the classic intruder upon the peace and quiet of any community, television. These represent only a few of the occasions in which silence is driven from our homes. Our modern society, with all of its constant sound and movement, certainly not all of it bad or useless, is simply no longer accustomed to silence and in general is not very comfortable with it.

And yet silence should be an indispensable element in all of our lives. Why should the absence of activity and noise be so important for us? Because silence represents much more than a mere absence of something. More than anything else it represents an attitude of mind, a spirit of sensitive receptivity which must be cultivated and used properly in order to effect a full and meaningful experience with those among whom we live and work, and more importantly with God in prayer.

First of all, we need to be silent with people in order to hear what they are saying. We must learn how to give the other person the room to think, feel, and express himself or herself without interrupting with questions, interjections, and judgments. Through our silence we create the atmosphere for much to happen in the area of better human understanding, development, and communication. To listen in silence is to open oneself to the other in love, respect, and understanding.

University

Essential as it is for true human development, silence is even more essential for our life of union with God. The principal means of effecting that union is prayer, and since prayer is often described as conversation or dialogue with God, it means that we must be prepared not only to talk to God but to listen to him as well, and to just be quiet in his presence. In this attitude of receptive silence we can open ourselves more readily to God with the certitude that he will communicate with us. In fact, our listening in silence is more important than our talking, since our talking is usually controlled by self-centeredness while our prayerful listening is controlled by God-centeredness. God will reveal himself to us in ways that could happen only in the life of a person who prepares himself or herself to listen prayerfully in silence. These precious moments of silence enhance our ability to hear God when he does speak to us. It is only in these moments that we cannot avoid meeting God face to face in honesty and humility—that we therefore experience true conversion. This cannot occur when our lives are filled with non-stop distractions and noise.

How well Saint Francis understood the value of this reality as he constantly sought solitude and silence in order to more faithfully hear and carry out the will of God in his life:

He made himself insensible to all external noise, and, bridling his external senses with all his strength and repressing the movements of his nature, he occupied himself with God alone [1Cel 71].

Whenever it was possible to free himself from his very busy apostolic life, Francis “always sought a hidden place where he could adapt not only his soul but also his members to God” (2Cel 94). It was through this life of prayer rooted in solitude and silence that he was able to direct all his attention and affection “with his whole being to the one thing which he was asking of the Lord, not so much praying as becoming himself a prayer” (2Cel 95). Francis was never trying to escape from people; he was simply trying to live in the presence of God.

As Christians, as followers of Francis, we must learn to do the same. Our personal lives, our homes, monasteries, and convents must insure an atmosphere of prayerful silence where our lives in union with God can truly grow. We must learn to understand God’s word in our lives so that we in turn can be messengers of his word to the world in which we live. This is often a very difficult task for us because we are poor listeners, because we are strangers to silence and solitude. There is a great need for us to find our moments of quiet and solitude in order to hear God whispering his word to us. We must listen for that word, or we will miss it. The Sacred Liturgy tells us that:

The purpose of silence is to allow the voice of the Holy Spirit to be heard more fully in our hearts, and to reunite our personal prayer more closely with the word of God and the public voice of the Church [General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, art. 202].

It takes humility and wisdom to listen for and to understand God’s word in our lives. This can happen only in silence. And it is out of that silence that we will be able to speak God’s word with authority and knowledge to a world desperately in need of that word. Ω

Fr. Dominic F. Scott, T.O.P.

Patience

At La Verna
I got stuck in the door
of the chapel of
Bonaventura
hitting my head
as I struggled to lift
my bulk clear.
A smile played
across my lips
as freedom came near
And through it all
the tuneful call
of the birds outside
made my headache subside
as the smile broke
to laughter
and the holy walls
of the chapel of
Bonaventura
with quiet acceptance
caught my prayer
with Job’s patience.

Séamus Mulholland, O.F.M.

Triple Dante Breakthrough:

The Divine Comedy Born Again in Soaring
New Translations, Mini-Paraphrase,
and Spirituality Survey

RAPHAEL BROWN, S.F.O.

YES, HERE I GO AGAIN: another "rave review," after the Jacopone and Fortini lauds.¹ Please bear with me as I share with you my overflowing enthusiasm for these recent Dante publications which form a momentous milestone in our appreciation of *The Divine Comedy* as a living, personally relevant masterpiece of Christian spirituality.

To rescue that monumental poem from its museum status as a crumbling cathedral of medieval culture, we have needed three essential tools, two of which have been completely lacking. They are (1) first-rate, readable modern English versions; (2) a handy streamlined digest; and (3) a popular commentary stressing and explicating the heart of the poet's message, our climb toward union with God.

True, we already have five excellent contemporary English translations of *The Divine Comedy*: those by Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds (Penguin), by John Ciardi (Mentor), by Charles Singleton (Princeton), by Charles Sisson (Gateway), and by Mark Musa (Indiana U.), with so far only the *Inferno* paperbound from Viking-Penguin. Only Singleton's is in prose and includes the Italian text. I find Sayers rather "British" and "literary," but her notes on the all-important allegorical meanings are most helpful. Ciardi reads very smoothly, but occasionally adds a few lines for the sake of rhyming (a total of 39 in *Purgatorio*!). Singleton's prose is the most literally faithful. Sisson and Musa are both eminently readable; the latter's language really sings, becoming "as it should, a religious experience . . . a lofty Dante, a lifting Dante" (Karl Keller). Sisson's all-in-one volume is a best-buy bargain.

¹In *The CORD*, June 1983 and May, 1981, respectively.

Secular Franciscan Raphael Brown, LL.D., is the author of The Roots of St. Francis and True Joy from Assisi, which includes an appendix on Dante and Franciscan spirituality.

And now we have a sixth modern English translation in the California Dante, by Allen Mandelbaum, published in three bilingual, hardbound volumes by the University of California Press and paperbound by Bantam Books (its *Paradiso* is not due until February, 1986). Both editions have (rather ugly) drawings by Barry Moser; but only the Bantam has notes. Eventually the California Dante will also comprise three volumes of commentaries on each canto by an international group of scholars. Mandelbaum's version has been termed "tough and supple, tender and violent . . . a Dante with clarity, eloquence, terror, and profoundly moving depths."

"Dante demands to be read
theologically," and spiritually and
mystically, I would add. . . .

So we now have a rich choice of flowing, readable modern English *Divine Comedys* through which Dante the fervent and forceful Christian humanist-poet and mystic conveys his pressing ethical and religious message to us. Dante was truly one of history's "master communicators." And just as he deliberately chose to write in the then scorned vernacular, so today he must share his message with non-Italians in their own current language. In these six contemporary English versions, across nearly seven centuries, he truly communicates and speaks directly, superbly, to us.

However, being by nature and genius a proto-Renaissance man with a passion for knowledge and a dream of reforming society by means of an epic philosophical poem, Dante stubbornly built into his *Comedy* two major obstacles to our communication: a number of baffling conundrums designed to challenge scholars, and a massive encyclopedia packed with data on science, history, and mythology designed to provide a kind of personal computer education for the general public. Consequently modern readers have a serious problem in trying to distill the core or essence of his message, which is basically theological.

Now at last we have in Father James Collins' *Meditations with Dante Alighieri* (Bear and Company, P. O. Drawer 2860, Santa Fe, NM 87504; 1984, 130 pp., \$6.95) a remarkably beautiful and simple paraphrased digest-summary, not of every one of the poem's 100 cantos, but of the inner experience and journey of Dante the spiritual pilgrim. In 120 brief pages of only four to twenty cadenced lines per page, in the poet's own

words or insightful rewriting, the author condenses Dante's autobiographical *Vita Nuova* and *The Divine Comedy* in four "Paths" with these apt titles: "Beginning the Journey: Gazing with Love on God's Creation," "The Detour: Becoming Lost in the Dark Forest," "The Breakthrough: Recreating the Divine Image within Us," and "The Ecstasy: Basking in Divine Love." This lyrically soaring little prose-poem provides a perfect introduction to and digest of Dante's theology and ever relevant spirituality. a real gem!

Father Collins is a gifted young American who earned a licentiate in theology at the Pontifical Lateran University and a doctorate at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. In Rome he imbibed a passion for Dante and an appreciation of the mystical vision of the *Comedy* from Monsignor Giovanni Fallani, a distinguished teacher and author of five dense studies of Dante's theology. Father Collins is chairman of the Religious Studies Department at Holy Family College in Torresdale near Philadelphia.

He is also the author of the finest commentary for the general reader and student on the spirituality of Dante and his *Comedy* which I have found in an extensive search: *Pilgrim in Love. An Introduction to Dante and His Spirituality* (Loyola University Press, 3441 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago IL 60657; 1984, 312 pp., cloth, \$12.95). In studying and relishing this meaty masterpiece I had to mark in red ink not occasional sentences but entire paragraphs or pages. Very few books have spoken so convincingly to me and have so amply enriched and expanded my appreciation of a subject.



This smoothly readable, semi-popular work is an ideal introduction to Dante, which I would urge be brought to the widest possible public, I hope in a mass-market paperback edition. Certainly it belongs and should serve as a valued textbook in all Catholic and many secular colleges.

It provides a succinct biographical sketch and a rapid overview of Dante's major works, then a brief introduction to *The Divine Comedy* and a running commentary on most of the cantos. A short bibliography of useful works in English is included, but alas, amazingly and deplorably, no index.

Two striking features come out in my working index: about fifty quotable passages, and over thirty references to twentieth-century problems, figures, or movements. The principal theme is the feature which I

find most impressive and enlightening. Briefly, Father Collins brilliantly demonstrates that the essence and heart of *The Divine Comedy* is the drama of the inner psychological experience of Dante the man, his conversion and growth as a Christian, and that the great poem thus becomes a profoundly insightful autobiography not just of the medieval Italian poet but of Dante as "Everyman," every Christian engaged in the lifelong daily ego-reducing climb up "the seven storey mountain" toward mystical union with God here and hereafter.

This striking theme of the *Comedy's* powerful personal relevance for all of us here and now resounds throughout *Pilgrim in Love* as its basic keynote and message, making it an in-depth study of applied, practical Christian ethics and spirituality. That is the almost unique greatness of Father Collins' contribution.²

"Dante demands to be read . . . theologically," as Professor Robert Hollander has rightly stressed. And spiritually and mystically, I would add. No one, to my knowledge, has done so more magnificently, more sensitively, and more radiantly than Father James Collins. May God richly bless and reward him for that pure heavenly light and love and joy which he has experienced in *The Divine Comedy* and which he marvelously shares with his grateful readers:

Light intellectual, filled with Love,
Love of True Good, filled with Joy,
Joy that transcends every sweetness.

Par. 30.40-42

²Note: My heartfelt endorsement of Father Collins' *Meditations* . . . does not extend to the bright yet flawed "creation spirituality" of its publisher, Father Matthew Fox, O.P. We must never downplay the Redemption, especially today!

Canticle of Praise and Gratitude

The Canticle of Creatures is Francis' great shout of praise lifted toward the Almighty, the most high, good Lord. It is an enthusiastic celebration of all life and an expression of becoming a new person, a new creation. This glorious hymn to life speaks of gratitude to the Creator for the beauty, the gifts of all creatures and creation. Today we "jubilee," and jubilee means "shout"—so we shout out our joy and gratitude for being called by God into his Fraternity to live in simplicity, servanthood, and joy:

Most High, good Lord, we reach out to you in gratitude and joy.

To you we give our total being.

Thank you, my Lord, for creating us in your image.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for our parents, whose love and example sparked within us a desire to follow you in poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all those persons who illuminate our lives by their holiness and wholeness of being.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for giving us happy and generous hearts with which to carry your love to all.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all the gifts and talents you have given us to be used for your glory and in your service.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all our sisters in this Franciscan community who have encouraged and cared for us during these past 50 and 25 years.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of laughter as well as for the gift of tears.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of prayer through which you touch us.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for your WORD in Scripture, which calls us to be women of the Gospel.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the Eucharist, through which we are nourished and sustained.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for the gift of our feminine spirituality and for all the gifted women in the Church today.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all those who are celebrating with us today.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all that you have graced us with these past 50 and 25 years.

Praise be to you, my Lord, for all that has been and for all that will be.

Amen. Amen!

Sister Maureen Boyle, F.S.S.J.

Elizabeth of Hungary:

For Everything There Is a Season

WILLIAM HART MCNICHOLS, S.J.

DID YOU KNOW that when her husband Louis left the castle for some journey or necessary business, Elizabeth of Hungary would wear black, in mourning, until his return? And when he returned she ordered trumpets to be sounded and she herself would sail down the castle stairs and was said to have "covered him with a hundred kisses."

Elizabeth, daughter of King Andrew of Hungary, was born in the year 1207 and betrothed to the son of Hermann of Thuringia, whose name was Louis. The children grew up together and were practically married as children—she was thirteen, and he was twenty. All accounts say that he worshipped the ground she walked on, as we say, and she loved him intensely and worshipped God alone.

Like Clare or Thérèse of Lisieux, or Aloysius Gonzaga, and a handful of others, Elizabeth was one of those people smitten with the love of God from earliest childhood. She was often taken to ceremonies of great opulence and instructed on how to behave, how to dress, and the rest of court etiquette. On one memorable feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Mother, Elizabeth was taken to the great church of Mary in Eisenach and was to parade into the church in her regal costume and crown of jewels. The event was a display of the Church Militant in the form of a Mass for the Teutonic Knights. As the child entered the church her eyes immediately located the Cross, and she stepped forward, removed the crown, and laid it before the image of the crucified King, saying she would wear no crown as long as Jesus wore only thorns. Her relatives were furious and humiliated; the others thought she was simply showing off—ostentatious piety. This was the beginning of a long and devastating misunderstanding between Elizabeth and the world that would increase and finally explode into violence later in her life.

Father William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O., maintains an art studio at St. Ignatius Retreat House in Manhasset, New York.

J. Janda, that master of a kind of "Christian-Haiku Poetry," begins his poem on Elizabeth with these words: "She was known for mismanagement. . . ." Now, this could mean simply a lack of the managerial or administrative skills expected of her as the wife of the Landgrave of Thuringia, but in this case she was giving away her own jewels, clothes, and anything else that wasn't nailed down, in the extravagant manner of blessed Brother Juniper. This created extreme anger and resentment in her own castle, and put Louis in the awkward position of always having to defend her (because he let her do anything she wanted to do) and of trying to protect her from the rising anger of the court; either she was passing out baskets of bread or baskets of blankets. Elizabeth was a victim of that infectious joy Jan Ruysbroeck describes in his *Spiritual Espousals*. It seems that on the way to union of the soul with God, one experiences a kind of euphoria that appears crazy to those around, and in this state one abandons concern for what people think. Imagine the Apostles after Pentecost, or Francis shedding his father's clothes. This was Elizabeth of Hungary, deliriously happy in her charity.

This is a simple way of defining the
Secular Franciscan Order: we come to
God wrapped in Francis' presence. . . .

Franz Liszt, in his musical oratorio about Elizabeth, includes one of the legends of this period of her life. Apparently Elizabeth once put a man infected with leprosy into hers and Louis' bed. A chamber maid found the man and flew into an hysterical fit. Finding Louis, she dragged the beleaguered husband up the stairs and flung open the door of the master bedroom, only to find the naked and bleeding crucified Christ in the bed.

There is another story about the marriage of Louis and Elizabeth which is of particular significance for this sad age of ours which has learned to separate human sexuality and the love of God. Instead of experiencing a synthesis we have been put in the dangerous position of choosing one or the other, and this false dichotomy is a scandal or a stumbling block to those people whose vocation it is to find God via the way of human love. Lift this story, then, from the whole and place it before your imagination as a profound icon of human sexual love in harmony with love of God. We see Elizabeth quietly trying to leave her husband's arms and bed in the middle of the night to go off to pray alone.

Louis, knowing his wife's soul as well as his own, takes her hand and holds it tightly for a sustained moment, fearing to have her leave him even for a brief time. At other times it is said he would let her go, pretending to be asleep, and the two souls would pray together in a trinity of love with the Lord.

The most famous sign from God concerning Elizabeth's ministry to the poor is, of course, the legend of the roses. It seems that once Louis did get overworn by the nagging and complaints of his court about his "impractical and fanatical wife," and he succumbed to pressure. So he forbade Elizabeth to give out any baskets of food for a short time. Within days of the order a vagrant woman and her children came to the castle looking for the "mad princess of charity." The woman told Elizabeth that if she and her children were not fed she was going to commit suicide. The girl dashed off to the kitchen for some bread and was carrying it through the door to the woman outside just as Louis was coming up the pathway. He was exasperated and sad as he looked at his wife and then at the covered basket. He asked her, hoping against hope, what was in the basket. Elizabeth's only answer was, "Louis, see for yourself," and in mid-winter out tumbled plump summer roses. He broke into tears, promising never to doubt her vocation again; and he never did.

Louis died young, and it is difficult to describe Elizabeth's grief. This was no case of stoic acceptance or ascetic serenity. She literally went through the halls and rooms of the castle sobbing in disbelief. She refused to accept the death, and it was absolutely the most difficult trial of faith in her life. She loved the man so much that there seemed to be no hope for comfort. Her cries remind us of those of the grieving and abandoned Poor Clares at the death of Francis. They were entirely sure that no one could replace him in their lives, and it was true. It was true, too, for Elizabeth with Louis.

In some ways this death of her husband freed her, after a lengthy trial of grief, to discover an expansion of her vocation through the Secular Franciscan Order. She had been well aware of a new spiritual revival, far away in Italy, which centered around a man who had a reputation like her own for madness and mismanagement. In 1221, the same year Francis gave a rule to his "Third" Order, Elizabeth opened a convent for the Franciscans in Eisenach. Everything she heard about Francis thrilled her; she felt an immediate kinship and could not get enough news about him from the Franciscan missionaries. Francis, for his part, had heard about the Hungarian princess from Cardinal Hugolino, who encouraged him to send Elizabeth some gift of love which would foster her vocation because he knew that at times she was quite alone. He suggested that Francis send



his own poor mantle, and Francis spontaneously agreed. One could say Elizabeth received it, cherished it, and was comforted by the presence of Francis in a way one could imagine, but which doesn't need description. Whenever she had something very important to ask of God, she wrapped herself in the poor man's mantle and received whatever she asked for. In this way Elizabeth becomes all of us who love Francis from afar. And in a way, too, this is a simple way of defining the Secular Franciscan Order: we come to God wrapped in Francis' presence, amazed at what God can do in one person. Yet, like Elizabeth, we remain ourselves, knowing Francis always leads to Jesus.

After Louis' death, the home situation deteriorated. Without the protection of her husband, all the resentment and jealousy of years were free to boil high and explode. Louis' own brother, Henry, evicted her and her three children from the castle on a moment's notice. An order followed her that no one else in the kingdom was to take them in, either. The little group went homeless, begging from the very people Elizabeth had fed and clothed, until finally a man put them in his tool shed and pig sty for the night. The next day Elizabeth and the children stumbled into the convent at Eisenach, and she told the Franciscans there to sing the "Te Deum," for she had experienced "perfect joy."

The final part of Elizabeth's short twenty-three years is probably the most difficult to understand today. It is impossible to grasp with reason or the mind unless you keep envisaging the "narrow door" Jesus told us about. Elizabeth put herself at the mercy and whim of a rather demanding and highly ascetical spiritual director named Master Conrad of Marburg. It is doubtless true, as one old sage put it, that "anyone who attempts to direct himself in the spiritual life has a fool for a director." But why did Elizabeth pick so severe a director? Stories abound about the strange and repugnant penances and inane tasks to which she submitted during this time. Some sense can be made of it, perhaps, if you travel just a bit to another religious tradition of ancient asceticism: that of the Zen Master and pupil. The pupil purposely submits to a master whose purpose is to break the student's self-will through seemingly absurd tasks in order for the student to be enlightened—a goal which is reached only when one is, so to speak, "not looking," whereas the *self* is always looking!

Toward the end of her life one of the most poignant and beautiful of the Elizabeth stories occurs. She found a little waif of a boy who had scurvy. This skin disease brought on swollen spots and sores and had also caused the boy's hair to fall out, leaving only patches of it here and there. Elizabeth swaddled the boy in her arms and nursed him back to health in her own room. This child alone was allowed to sit by her side as

she lay dying. Elizabeth died on the night of November 17, 1231, not yet twenty-four years of age. Elizabeth, the Hungarian princess, is patron along with a king, St. Louis of France, of the Secular Order of the Little Poor Man. Canonized in 1235, she is also the patroness of widows. Ω



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- Jessey, Cornelia, *The Prayer of Cosa: Praying in the Way of Francis of Assisi*. Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985. Pp. iv-103. Paper, \$5.95.
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- Manton C.S.S.R., Father, *A View from the Steeple*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 172. Paper, \$7.95.
- St. Romain, Philip A., *Jesus Alive in Our Lives*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1985. Pp. 102, including Appendices & Bibliography. Paper, \$4.95.

The Volterra Letter:

The First Letter to All The Faithful

THADDEUS HORGAN, S.A.

Francis' highest intention, his chief desire, his uppermost purpose was to observe the holy Gospel in all things, and through all things and with perfect vigilance, with all zeal, with the longing of his mind and all the fervor of his heart, in order to follow the teaching and the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. He would recall Christ's words through persistent meditation and bring to mind his deeds through the most penetrating consideration [1Cel 84; *Omnibus*, 299].

THIS CITATION FROM Thomas of Celano is, I believe, significant to our purpose. Seeking to deepen our appreciation of the Volterra Letter¹ is for each of us the beginning of a persistent and ongoing reflection on the life-filled words of the new Rules of the Franciscan Third Order Regular and of the Secular Franciscan Order. The Volterra Letter centers the Gospel in Franciscan life. It makes us conscious of the efficacious *word* of God. Through it Francis shows us the way to incarnate the Gospel's basic reality into daily living. Further, it points out the sources Francis used to keep lively within himself, humanly speaking, the Good News who is Jesus Christ. These were reflection, memory, and ongoing meditation. Even a quick look at his other writings reveals Francis' clear perspective on the Gospel. It is always Jesus Christ. He is our way to the Father.

¹The Volterra Letter in English can be found in **The CORD** 29:6 (1979), 166-68; in Cajetan Esser, *The Rule and Testament of St. Francis* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977), 221-26; in AB 62-65; and of course in the new Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Rules.

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Again, as Celano puts it, Jesus "occupied" Francis. Francis carried the Lord in his heart, his mouth, his ears, his eyes, his hands, and all his members (1Cel 115; *Omnibus*, 329). He did so because God's unerring words of Spirit and Life state that no one comes to the Father except through Christ (Jn. 14:16). Jesus' life is the way God's love literally entered our world and touched the hearts of men and women. Such love must be responded to. This is the uncomplicated substance of Franciscan spirituality. This is why Francis preached penance, or conversion of heart, and directed that it was to be proclaimed and lived by his followers (RegNB 23:1). The matter was simple: whoever has received the gift of salvation must live as a new creation, alive in Christ (Rom. 6:11). This is the response God wants.

To be a penitent . . . means to be a living vessel of God's transforming presence and power in the world.

While there is a simple directness to Francis' awareness of salvation, let us not think that it was simplistic. On the contrary Francis' awareness was not only persistent but penetrating. We see this—as with all things concerning Francis—in his deeds. His followers had to proclaim repentance because Francis knew that all people *need* God. All people are intrinsically poor, or gospel poor, without Christ. All people also are the object of God's selfless love. All, then, should respond to God. Again, cumulatively looked at, Francis' writings show that he understood *metanoia* as a continuous process of abandoning the effects of sinfulness throughout life, especially that of being separated from God, and of embracing the life of union with God in Christ by the power of the Spirit. To use Francis' words, all men and women need to replace the "spirit of the flesh" (EpFidII 65; cf. AB 72) with the "Spirit of the Lord" (ibid., 48; AB 70).

The "spirit of the flesh" is a Pauline expression meaning that the person to whom it is applied is in the full range of his/her personality separated from God. As such, that person is the subject of sin and death. But God's creative, redeeming, and sanctifying will has destined all people for

²Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, *Theological Dictionary* (London: Herder and Herder, 1965), 60.

transformation to glory.² It is in this sense that Francis uses the term in his writings. This demonstrates theological insight, we might say, but it more likely means that Francis was inspired to understand the process of redemption as it is presented in the whole of Scripture (especially the New Testament). He apparently reflected on it, kept it in the forefront of his memory, and made it the subject of his ongoing meditation. It seems to me that if we want to know well the Prologue to the new Rules of the Franciscan Third Order Regular and Secular Franciscan Order, all of this should be borne in mind because these truths are what underlie the words of the text.

Implicit Content: Covenant and Cross

REDEMPTION UNFOLDS in Salvation History as a series of covenants between God and his People. The covenants were unique relationships between the Lord and his chosen—relationships based on God's choices. The fact that God chose us utterly fascinated Francis. The Lord made certain people his partners so that in and through them he would restore to humankind its original destiny of eternal life with him. God is always the initiator of covenant. Because he is God, his covenants are irrevocable. This fact awed Francis of Assisi especially in view of the fact that, as Genesis points out, humanity chose the way of "the flesh." Yet God pursued his people, establishing partnerships with Noah (Gen. 9:8–17), with Abraham (Gen. 15:9–12), with all of Israel (Ex. 20:34), and with the Davidic Dynasty (2 Sam. 7). It was God who established these partnerships, pushing his people (if you will) toward that moment when the Person of the Word established not only a partnership, but a relationship between God and humanity. In Christ we become the children of God. What Jesus is to the Father we now become: viz., children of God. Moreover, we receive God's life or the living relationship within the Godhead, the Spirit of the Lord. This relationship both draws us into the very inner life of God and bonds us together into the relationship of fraternity with the Lord. Jesus now is brother to all men and women who share his life. Behind the Volterra Letter's words is Francis' living consciousness of this most gracious choice and gift of God. These must be responded to and received. This is what Franciscan life is all about.

The call to turn from the spirit of the flesh to the spirit of the Lord meant for Francis to submit oneself totally to God's salvation *and* to become part of God's salvific activity in the world. This is why deeds are so essential, in Francis' view, for anyone committed to the life of evangelical conversion. Deeds are concrete responses to the goodness of God. God's love and goodness are expressed above all in the deed of his

only Son come into the world. He is near. He is concrete. In the Incarnate Son we know the way to the Father. To do the Gospel literally, Francis' charismatic insight into Scripture, became for him (and his followers) the path to eternal life because in Christ God becomes brother to us (EpFidII, 56; AB 70) and among us. This is the core of Gospel life.

The Redeemer on the Cross was Francis' perception of the Christ. This was so not only because salvation was effected there (Adm VI and EpFidII 11-14; AB 29, 68), but because there the Son totally gave himself to the Father out of love for us. One of the reasons Francis emphasized the Eucharist is that it makes present again to us our Redemption. It is a source of redeemed life constantly being renewed in us. Celano and Bonaventure, particularly, point out Francis' devotion to the Crucified Christ (2Cel 211; LM IX.2, XIV.4; *Omnibus*, 533, 699, 739), a devotion that led him to want totally to return in kind the selfless love of God for us expressed by Christ. Just as the Redeemer emptied himself for our sake, Francis wanted his followers to empty themselves of all selfishness and worldliness as their concrete response to God's Goodness. Nothing less than Jesus's poverty and humility is projected as the way to respond. Such a deed manifests both one's awareness of and one's reception of God's new and eternal covenant relationship into one's own life. Not to accept it is mere foolishness, as the story at the end of the Volterra Letter points out.

Explicit Content

THIS STORY and its style make one wonder if the Volterra Letter truly is a letter. There is much internal evidence to support the claim that it is actually a sermon. Bernard Tickerhoof states the case:

What we have . . . is a didactic tool. The letter is the means Francis has chosen to reach a wider audience. . . . The letter form has been imposed upon the material which seems to have a more primitive oral form behind it. . . . In short, there is present in the Volterra Letter sufficient evidence that the basic content of the piece existed first in oral form, and seems to have many of the characteristics of homiletic material. The bulk of the letter may well be an early example of Francis' preaching, and perhaps the purest example of it that we possess.³

Celano implies that in his preaching Francis gave norms to those who heeded his call to *metanoia* (1Cel 37). Could this be where he did so? It is very possible. The simple teaching style conveys a strong message:

³Bernard Tickerhoof, T.O.R., "A Gospel Spirituality," *The CORD* 29:6 (1979), 170.

"Choose God or perdition." It is straightforward both in its positive and in its negative parts, and to the point. These are marks of Francis' style. But this is in a decidedly oral style. Like most of Francis' writings, it also is heavily biblical. Fr. Tickerhoof documents in his study (pp. 172-73) Francis' extensive use of Scripture, especially the Johannine texts. He sees a pattern, moreover, in their use by Francis:

In the letter's first chapter the core of the John material is positive and is drawn from the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel. John here records a prayer of Jesus addressed to the Father summarizing Christ's mission and praying on behalf of his disciples, the true believers, and for those who will come to believe through their preaching. Francis has chosen material from this chapter specifically bringing out the nature of discipleship in the lives of the penitents. For Francis the penitent has been given by the Father to Christ, and has been instructed through the words of the Son. The penitent has received this teaching and has come to believe. The life of penance is tied to belief. But not only that, for by their example and perhaps by their preaching they will also lead others to believe, and thereby to do penance.

In the second chapter we see the flip side of the coin. The material is drawn extensively from the eighth and ninth chapters of John's Gospel, and is decidedly negative. The references are now no longer to the disciples of Jesus but to the Jews, representing for John those who are not true believers. The thrust of the Gospel is that while claiming to be begotten of God these non-believers are really children of the devil. Moreover, they have gone beyond the point where they can truly see their own origin. They are spiritually blind, so that while claiming to have the light they show themselves to be unaffected by it. Francis has drawn from this image of the unbeliever and has applied it to those who refuse to take up the penitential life. While they claim to be Christians, their very actions show that they are self-deceived. They have lost true wisdom, and so they have created a black future for themselves.

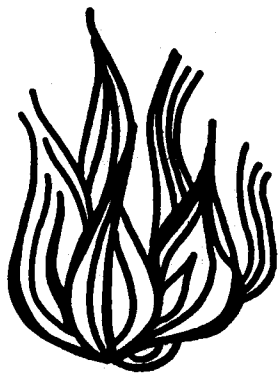
In the Letter there are two key lines, it seems to me, that spell out its explicit teaching. These are Chapter I, line 1, and Chapter II, line 8. They summarize the pattern that Fr. Tickerhoof sees. Both call for faith. For Francis *true* faith is necessary for genuine conversion of heart. *That is the Letter's explicit message.*

Comparing this text with Chapter 23 of the 1221 Rule, we see the same basic idea expressed. But there it is expanded. The orthodox faith-content, so dear to Francis, is stated (RegNB 23:1-11). His consistency regarding this is evidenced by the text of the Second Letter to all the Faithful. In that Letter Francis presents the content of faith and the deeds that manifest the efficaciousness of faith in a true penitent. Historically Francis' concern was to distinguish his followers from the Waldensians,

Humiliati, and other penitential groups at odds with the Church. Francis wanted those who followed his direction to be "truly Catholic" because for him only in the Catholic Church is salvation assured. The emphasis he gives to this is so strong that, when it came to updating the religious tertiaries' Rule, the writers declared in Ch. I, article 2, that the charism of this Order is not *metanoia* alone but "true faith and *metanoia*." So fundamental is this to Gospel living after the example of Francis, that the writers of both the new Religious and the new Secular Franciscan Tertiary Rules chose this letter as the prologue to their respective texts. The historical reason is important; the obviously explicit relationship it gives to the two branches of the Third Order is important too; but both of these are secondary compared to the paramount place of faith in the life of all penitents.

The Spirit of the Lord

"TRUE FAITH and penance" are the constitutive elements in the Franciscan process of attaining holiness. Reflecting Scripture (Mt. 13:23), Francis would say that his true followers are those who hear God's word and understand it (RegNB 22:9-25). Understanding for Francis means the assimilation of the word into one's inner self. It then issues forth in deeds befitting repentance. One without the other is not authentic. In Chapter 22 of the *Regula non Bullata* Francis details the process pursued by the opening lines of the first chapter of the Volterra Letter. It is well to read the two texts together.



The first four lines of the Letter deal directly with the outward conduct of a true penitent. As always Francis has Jesus' words in mind when asked to give guidelines to the penitents. He chooses the Lord's response to the Pharisees, those self-deceived blind leaders of the blind. This is by design. In the second chapter of these guidelines Francis will once again allude to them. What is the word of the Lord that sets right their false example—and the false example of misguided, unorthodox penitents of his day? It is the *shema* (Deut. 6:4-9), the people's remembrance

creed and prayer of God's loving covenant relationship with them. Nothing less than the total turning of self to God, because God has turned to us, will suffice or ever could suffice for an authentic penitential life. This response too must be concrete. The Lord points out how (Mt. 22:39-40), and Francis repeats his words, directing us to love our

neighbor as we love ourselves.

There is a certain rhythm to the first four lines of the Volterra Letter. Within yourself, Francis directs, love God, then manifest this by love of neighbor. Within yourself, be aware of the weakness of humanity, then fortify yourself with the strength of the Eucharist, the very presence of Christ alive among and within us. Thus fortified, go forth and do the deeds that originate from your converted heart. A converted heart for Francis is one that continually turns from the "spirit of the flesh" and opens itself to the "Spirit of the Lord." Certainly the tendency to sin and selfishness remains. But what becomes the conscious quest of one filled with the Spirit is to be concerned only with what pleases the Lord. A converted person, then, is one on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests, one in whom the Spirit of the Lord dwells. Francis is not content with the biblical citation from John (14:23) which speaks of God coming to us; rather he focuses on the graced individual in his or her relationship to God and neighbor. I believe he does so to stress that one who hears the word with an open and converted heart truly "understands" that word and is inwardly transformed. What comes forth, therefore, reflects this transformation (Mt. 15:15-19; 23:25-26; Mk. 7:18-23; Lk. 11:39-42). For Francis, this must always be concrete.

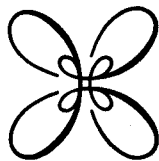
What could be more self-consciously concrete than to describe oneself as a spouse because of one's union with Christ? What could be more actual, biblically speaking, than to know oneself as a brother or sister to the Lord who, Jesus says (Mt. 12:50) does the Father's will? What is more graphic than to be a mother, one who carries life—in this case God's life—and who gives birth—in this case to Christlikeness—thanks to the workings of the Holy Spirit within the individual? This mystical language of Francis is far more down to earth than may first appear. Sister Kathleen Moffatt points out that the four fundamental values contained in the new Third Order Regular Rule are herein contained.⁴

Francis wants us always to be concrete because, as line 10 concludes, this God-giftedness must shine as an example for others. Once again we see how the life of penance is tied to belief and to its lived manifestation so that others might believe and be converted. The rest of the Chapter reinforces this notion. Lines 11 to 13 repeat, almost in rhapsody form, our faith in the indwelling of the Trinity, while lines 14 through 18 repeat Christ's High Priestly prayer (Jn. 17) for the sanctification of his disciples and for those who through them will come to believe.

⁴Kathleen Moffatt, O.S.F., "Of Penance and the Townspeople: The Language of Francis," *The CORD* 33:9 (1983), 288-89.

Chapter 2 not only speaks of the self-deception of persons who fail to do penance because of Satan's wiles, but also addresses the matter of those dominated by the spirit of the flesh (self-centeredness, selfishness, pride). These are totally opposite to those filled with the Spirit of the Lord. Self-centeredness causes spiritual blindness (line 7), which for Francis is thorough. In lines 11 through 18, given his turn of phrase, one can almost hear him say that the ultimate stupidity is spiritual blindness. It makes one feel that he or she has or should have everything! Therefore Francis mocks the tendency in our humanity to sin only to drive home his concluding point, which was his starting point: all should hear God's word and "understand" it because it is spirit and life (lines 19-21).

To be a penitent, then, means to be *happy in the Lord* and blessed by God. It means to be a living vessel of God's transforming presence and power in the world. It means this for all people and throughout life. That prophetic message needs to be heard today just as much as it did in Francis' day. Let us then bring forth worthy fruits of our conversion by proclaiming and living that message so that all may be one and that the world may believe. Ω



Franciscan Vocation

To Fr. Irenaeus Herscher, O.F.M. (1902-1981)

Green grass
morning dew
gliding through
with Jesus and Francis

All the air to greet me as I ride
Blood and water flow from
wounded side.

Sacred Heart of Jesus
Sweet Heart of Francis

I'm a troubadour at last
singing my praises
in the blessed woundedness
of Jesus and Francis.

Lost in the infinity of a grand embrace,
safe in the crossing of arms,
Corded in the Franciscan knot,
forever now I know I'm caught,
roped in with Jesus and Francis,
for all eternity.

Alleluia.

Rebecca Page Harper

St. Bonaventure:

Letters III and IV

TRANSLATED BY CANISIUS CONNORS, O.F.M.

With these two letters of Saint Bonaventure, we continue our series of translations of the Seraphic Doctor's writings that have been thus far unavailable in English (cf. *The CORD* 33, 179-83; 215-16; 342-46). These two pieces must be read in light of the serious question of the spiritual ministry that the friars were bound to show to the followers of Saint Clare. "I resolve and promise for myself and for my brothers," Saint Francis had written in *The Form of Life Given to Saint Clare and Her Sisters*, "always to have that same loving care and special solicitude for you as [I have] for them." A papal bull of 1277 insured that spiritual care of the Poor Ladies, but because of the heavy burden that developed with the rapid increase in their numbers, Crescentius of Iesi asked Innocent IV to relieve the friars of this responsibility. In 1263, at the Chapter of Pisa, Bonaventure appealed to the dedication and charity of his brothers in rededicating themselves to this special ministry. These two letters of 1272 and 1264 provide us with examples of his continual desire to place before the friars their responsibilities.

Letter III

Brother Bonaventure, Minister General and servant of the Order of Friars Minor sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to his most dear Brothers in Christ, the Custodian and Guardian of Pisa.

I WISH TO DO a special favor for the Sisters of the Monastery of St. Clare at Pisa for the salvation of their souls. Therefore, I grant that the following be maintained through you by Brothers suitable for this purpose. On the Feast of All Saints and of Saint Clare, and when one of the Sisters of the Monastery departs this life, send six suitable Brothers there, including the Sisters' confessor and his companion, to preach and celebrate the Office. But only the Sisters' confessor and his companion should enter the Monastery for the funeral rites of these deceased Sisters. When it happens that domestics or lay-sisters of these Sisters are sick or have died, the confessor and his companion should go there for the purpose of administering the necessary Sacraments or of conducting the funeral rites.

I also grant that from Advent to the Nativity of the Lord the confessor of the Sisters and his companion should stay for that time at the location of the Monastery for the celebration of the divine services. On the Feast of the Nativity of the Lord, however, and during the whole of Holy Week, you should add two suitable Brothers to the confessor and his companion, who should remain there for these times. The same should be done on the solemnities of the Nativity of the Lord, of the Resurrection, and of Pentecost and their Octaves for the purpose of celebrating the divine services.

I also grant that when grave danger threatens the Monastery, you send Brothers there who are prudent and discreet, in order to give the Sisters necessary words of counsel. The Brothers can also stay there for the purpose of giving aid and assistance to the Sisters in time of danger. Moreover, Brothers who are master woodworkers and stonemasons can enter the Monastery to designate and do suitable work. You, the Custodian, if you are present, and you, the Guardian, when the Custodian is absent, should see to it that the above is carried out for the Sisters in the prescribed form by Brothers who are suitable for this purpose.

Farewell in the Lord, and pray for me.

Given at Paris on the 16th of May, 1272

Letter IV

Brother Bonaventure, Minister General and servant of the Order of Friars Minor, sends best wishes for everlasting peace in the Lord to Lawrence, his most dear brother in Christ and Visitor for the Poor Ladies in the jurisdiction of Tuscany.

IT IS PROPER AND IT STANDS TO REASON that an Order of spiritual men should show itself ready to do whatever pertains to the honor of God, and whatever procures the salvation of souls or is in accord with natural piety. Since the Order of the Sisters of Saint Clare was committed by the Supreme Pontiff to our venerable Father, John, the Cardinal-deacon of S. Nicolo in Carcere, and because this same Lord has taken this Order under his care with the hope of assistance from our Order and for the preservation of our peace and independence, it is fitting and appropriate that we assist him with a ready spirit. Therefore, assured of your concern and your worth according to the advice of the Discreet Brothers, I command you under salutary obedience to execute the office of Visitor for those Monasteries of the Order of Saint Clare which are within the jurisdiction of Tuscany and which have given or will give open letters or public documents relative to our independence of them. These letters or public documents should be given according to the form indicated below.

Since this work pertains to the salvation of souls for whom Jesus Christ has shed his Blood, you should perform the work of this office so prudently, so modestly, so justly, so mercifully, and so perseveringly, that it may result in the praise of Christ, the rooting out of vices, the building up of virtues, and consolation for these devout souls.

In order that you may carry out this office, your Minister is held by the authority of this letter to provide a suitable companion for you. If it happens that your companion is impeded, then the Custodian in whose Custody you are making the visitation is held to do the same thing. When you go to visit a Monastery where the Brothers are not located, the Guardian of the neighboring place, or his Vicar, is held to provide you with another companion. Each of these companions, assigned to you especially, should enter the Monastery with you when the time is opportune for the duty of visitation.

You should diligently observe the pattern for the duty of visitation, which was transmitted to you by the Lord Cardinal both as regards the profession of the Rule and of other things contained in it, and you should efficaciously take care to follow this pattern according to the grace given to you by the Lord. You should be on guard against Brothers entering these Monasteries, except for the two associated with you in the execution of your office. You should beware of accepting any gifts and all other things which can in any manner present the appearance of evil. Do not come to me to be released from this office, but as quickly as you can, you should diligently strive to carry it out. You should so pursue what has just been solicitously and solemnly set forth, that your office may be acceptable in the sight of the divine Majesty, and that it may be fruitful and a source of consolation for these Monasteries, for the Lord Cardinal, and for our Order. The Lord Cardinal wished that assistance be offered to him on the part of the Order in bearing the burden he placed on his own shoulders, and he bears the firm conviction that you will solicitously perform your duties. Therefore, let there be nothing that could possibly be imputed to you by God or man due to your negligence. May both the conscience of the Lord Cardinal and your conscience be henceforth totally at rest, and also the consciences of the Brothers of our Order which by a special grace humbly submitted itself to do this.

The form which the public document, or the letter concerning our independence, should take, is as follows:

We [so and so], the Abbess and Sisters of [such and such] Monastery, declare, acknowledge, and also recognize that the Order of Friars Minor, or the Brothers of that Order, are in no respect under obligation to us or to the Monastery or to persons living there, to perform services for the

Monastery. Therefore, wishing to provide for the Brothers of the Order lest a precedent be engendered over a period of time for services or ministerial functions which the Brothers actually render us in their liberality or through mere courtesy, we promise you, Brother N., who are making this stipulation and accepting it in the name of the Order and of the Brothers, that we will not at any time whatever ask that ministerial services and functions be rendered by them out of obligation, when such services are actually procured. Nor will we institute any judgment against the Order of Friars Minor because of this. In testimony of this we wish that this document be made public and be confirmed with the authority of the Convent's seal.

Given at Assisi on the 5th of October, 1264, and in the 3rd
(?) year of the Pontificate of Pope Urban IV.

Looking at a Photo of St. Francis' Robe

What is this ragged ghost?
It haunts my luxury,
my comfortable peace.
Habit of a jester, perhaps—
holey, yea, and holy, no jest—
The King would have him wear
nothing save this royal rainbow
of grey . . .
heaven's buffoon.
One final touch to the grandiose
garment, a rope entwining,
like an umbilical cord fused fast
to Mother Poverty!

Don Costello

Book Reviews

Activities of the Holy Spirit. By Edmund J. Fortman, S.J. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1984. Pp. viii-191. Cloth, \$12.00.

Reviewed by Father Sergius Wroblewski, O.F.M., who worked in Chicago's inner city and taught at the Franciscan Institute (St. Bonaventure University) during the summers, before going this past year to South Africa.

There was a time when the Holy Spirit was the "forgotten Paraclete," but in the last two decades he has come into his own. The charismatic movement as well as the biblical and liturgical revivals has raised our consciousness about the activities of the Holy Spirit. These stirrings within the Church have brought the Holy Spirit to the fore.

Fortman's book is one of a growing number of books attempting to familiarize believers with the Paraclete's place in Church life and in the individual's spirit-life. It gives an overall picture of the Church; it deals with the indwelling, the hierarchy, the Mystical Body, the sacraments, and the charismatic gifts; and it shows how the Holy Spirit operates in all these dimensions of the Church.

Each chapter gives a "composite profile from biblical, patristic, and theological and conciliar writings." There is a marshalling of texts, a monotonous series of quotations. This makes for clarity and leaves a distinct impression, but it does not make for easy, interesting reading.

Among the several neologisms in the book, the key word is *christification*, which the author prefers to the Eastern *divinization*. *Christification* is simply the goal the Holy Spirit has: viz., that of making us like Christ. The Holy Spirit's aim is, to use the author's coined phrase, "the sanctific Christification of Christians" (p. 23). In this connection the author deals with the theological problem, Are the Spirit and the Risen Christ identical since they have so many interrelated activities? Fortman replies that the identity is neither ontological nor personal; the identity of the Spirit and the Risen Christ is rather "dynamic," in the sense that Christ acts through the Spirit to make us like himself, which is "christification." Fortman takes seriously the patristic tradition and the Magisterium of the Church. Only in one instance did I find a questionable doctrinal position. It had to do with the question, Is the Mystical Body of Christ equivalent to the Roman Catholic Church? The author concedes that *Lumen Gentium* answers "Yes." But he prefers another answer: he would include in the Mystical Body those who are being christified by the Spirit, whatever their ecclesial affiliation.

I also found strange the new name he gives to the Holy Spirit. The last chapter treats of the name, "the befriending Spirit." He bases himself on the constant, traditional reference to the Holy Spirit as love, as the love between the Father and the Son. So he calls the Holy Spirit "Friend of the Father and Friend of the Son." Per-

sonally, I find that name difficult to fit in with the familial "Father and Son." It seems to me to be a case of mixed metaphors.

Those involved in the charismatic movement will appreciate Part V on the charismatic Spirit, in which the author handles deftly the ambiguous "baptism of the Spirit" and the gift of tongues.

I consider this book useful, if one doesn't mind lots of quotations.

To Come and See: Thoughts on Contemporary Religious Life. By Roland J. Faley, T.O.R. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1985. Pp. xii-158. Cloth, \$12.50.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Associate Editor of this Review.

The author brings a dual set of credentials to this work: a training in Scripture and a dozen years in the leadership (generalate) of a Franciscan religious Order. It is mostly the former that he draws on in his first seven chapters, which treat of the religious vocation as countercultural, conversion, community prayer, and the vows. His approach is not bookish, however, but rather almost colloquial as he illustrates out of his own life experiences the points that he is making.

Almost all of these chapters had for me some memorable thought: e.g., that a call to observe high ideals offends no one, so that to be truly evangelical, demands must be concrete; that all religious have the basic right to be accepted by members of their own community as having a value of their own apart from productivity, personality, or what not; that poverty is rooted in the

imitation of the self-emptying of Jesus; and that religious need to "de-escalate" the momentum of consumerism that is affecting them and society, Eastern as well as Western.

The last three chapters of the book deal with justice issues, the local church, and ongoing formation. In each of these there emerges a balanced presentation which has flowed out of considerable experience. Although one might question the author's inference that today's society is more unjust than any in the past, he makes it clear that rendering to Caesar what is Caesar's does not mean that the Church's mission is exclusively catechetical and sacramental. I hearkened to his observation that all kinds of people, unlettered and lettered, ought to be able to come to religious life. His stress on ongoing formation as involving much more than acquiring more education is good. Also pertinent are his remarks about the need for religious to cooperate with and be part of the local church, while at the same time not sacrificing their own identity and need to grow as a community.

Come and See is an educational and inspiring book. It isn't a book of "answers," but it isn't a book of just questions, either. All religious can profit from it.

Faith Is Friendship. By Josef Heinzmann. Translated by David Heinzmann. Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1983. Pp. xxx-146. Paper, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Father Luke M. Ciampi, O.F.M., a member of the Immaculate Conception Province, currently serving God's People at the Christian Forma-

tion Center, Andover, Massachusetts.

A book for daily or periodic meditation in the quiet of the soul, this is a welcome and helpful adjunct especially for retreats. It cannot be read fast or skimmed through, but should be taken in small dollops over the course of days or even weeks. There is much food for reflection and for adaptation to a living, constant faith in a changing, unstable world.

Nothing is lost by its being a translation from the German. The only real difficulty is the typeface used and the textbook-like layout of the material. Yet the latter feature and the decimal numbering of passages make it convenient to refer to specific and pertinent sections.

Using the holistic approach, the author has drawn on his extensive experience as a Redemptorist—in pastoral, counseling, and psychiatric work—to develop his theme: through friendship with God and one another we help our Church to become holier and our world more human. While the book is intended for the laity as well as clergy and religious, and while both its content and the general concept underlying the book are fascinating, it does seem a little deep for the average reader.

The human person, who desires happiness, is created for friendship. Without friendship, he or she is "a tattered bit of unhappiness." The ideal set before us as inspiration is the Beloved Disciple leaning on the Lord's bosom at the Last Supper. Step by step, we are bidden to ask ourselves these questions: Who are we? Where do we come from? Where are we going? And why? The answers place us squarely on the trail of the Infinite, as pilgrims.

Our Christian Faith is therefore a faith in a Person, God—whom we are to know, whose works we are to understand, whose word(s) we are to encounter, and whom we are to recognize. This approach takes us across a broad spectrum of mystical, dogmatic, and sacramental theology. Inevitably, it leads us to a faith that is oriented towards community, is open to the world, promotes the kiss of justice and peace, and places history in its proper perspective. It is thus that we arrive at our goal of Faith, Friendship and Freedom with God. In this pilgrimage Mary, as always, is our model of faith.

Faith, we are told, is a matter, not primarily of the mind or of understanding, but of the inmost being, an affair of the heart. The Latin verb *credere*, it is pointed out, derives from the phrase *cor dare*, i.e., to give one's heart. We are thus reminded of Saint Augustine's restless heart which finds repose only in God. A human being believes with his/her heart and thus finds true friendship in loving self-surrender to and bond with Christ. In other words, faith is as simple as loving each other is for two people in love. Faith in God is faith in a Person; as a result, God and a man or woman become partners, friends.

In the last analysis, then, we can grasp God only in faith and with the heart, for when we love we can never get enough of whom or what we love, even if it is incomprehensible. Friendship knows how to grasp, penetrate, or cope with what is incomprehensible. Faith refines Friendship with God into a loving relationship that transcends all problems of living in community and in the world. It becomes simply a matter of YOU, God, and ME. Faith is Friendship.

The Psalms: Prayers for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens of Life (A Literary-Experiential Approach). By John F. Craghan. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1985. Pp. 200, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Father Daniel A. Hurley, O.F.M., National Chaplain of the St. Bonaventure University Alumni Association and Campus Minister at the University.

John F. Craghan is a Scripture scholar and teacher and the author of the second book in the series called *Background Books* published by Michael Glazier, Inc. In the present volume he has "arranged the Psalms according to their literary types . . . [and has shown how these] different types correspond to various cycles in our life of faith" (p. 9).

In his first chapter, the author does three things: he explains his understanding of the nature of prayer; he shows how the Psalms are a form of prayer; and he explains what he means by the rhythm of life. "Prayer," he writes, "forces us to interiorize and reflect" (p. 14). Prayer "allows us to think thoughts of God, not of humans . . . [and] to brush up against God" (p. 15). The Psalms are "Israel's typical experience of prayer . . . [they] are also our prayers. . . . As prayers, the Psalms deal . . . with basic human problems and situations . . . at prayer we are truly ourselves; weeping and rejoicing, praising and cursing, hearing and being heard" (pp. 1-17).

According to Dr. Craghan, the basis of Israel's prayer is covenant, that is "a triangular relationship: Yahweh, the community, and the individual Israelite" (p. 18). Such an understanding of

the nature of prayer "presumes that the individual can truly interact with God only by including the community. Even the most personal and intimate prayer of the individual is bound up with the good of the community" (p. 18).

The author explains the rhythm of human life as made up basically of three stages: orientation, disorientation, and reorientation. In the light of these three periods of human life's rhythm, Craghan treats the Psalms under six categories. In the area of orientation are four kinds of Psalms: Psalms of descriptive praise, Psalms of confidence and trust, wisdom Psalms, and royal Psalms. For disorientation, there are the laments, both individual and communal. With reference to reorientation, the author presents the thanksgivings or Psalms of declarative praise, both individual and communal.

Dr. Craghan devotes a chapter of his book to each of these six categories. In each chapter, the author selects five Psalms (ten in the chapter on Laments, five individual and five communal) that express the particular attitude of the pray-er. He shows how the words are appropriate, not only for the Psalmist and the time the Psalm was written, but also for people and situations of our own day. All in all, the author presents an exegesis of thirty-five Psalms and lists other Psalm numbers appropriate to each of the six areas. He also presents eight New Testament readings that relate to the orientation, disorientation, or reorientation that a particular chapter deals with.

For individual prayer and for communal prayer, the Psalms have long been a part of the Jewish and the Christian traditions. Since they are so widely used today in liturgical and community prayer, this reviewer suggests that Dr.

Craghan's book will be most beneficial to all believers who make use of the Psalms when they turn their hearts and minds to God in prayer. Dr. Craghan's clear analysis of the Psalms will give the individual at prayer an appreciation of the Psalmist's intent to express his relationship with God and with the community. Praying the Psalms today can help each pray-er unite himself/herself with God and the community of the world.

A possible criticism of the book's plan is the omission of a concluding chapter that could draw the author's reflections together as a kind of summary of his work. The summary at the end of each chapter is beneficial to the reader, but a final summary chapter might help him or her to appreciate more deeply or more fully the beauty of the Psalms and the clarity of the author's work.

Getting It All Together: The Heritage of Thomas Merton. Edited by Timothy Mulhearn. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984. Pp. 109. Paper, \$4.95.

Reviewed by Father Vianney M. Devlin, O.F.M., Ph.D. (English, University of London), a member of the Retreat Team at St. Francis Retreat Center, Rye Beach, New Hampshire, and Assisi Experience, which conducts Study Pilgrimages to Rome and Assisi each summer.

[T]he hagiographers and image-artificers have . . . set about sculpting a towering figure of the twentieth century's most famous monk. And . . . that is expected, even necessary, for a figure of reliable yet creative transition in a world of turmoil. . . . There remains a staggering

interdisciplinary task ahead in systematizing and integrating the multifaceted personality of Thomas Merton.

So writes George Kilcourse in his essay, "Pieces of the Mosaic, Earth: Thomas Merton and the Christ" (p. 82).

This book is a collection of four essays which attempt to explore how Merton, "dedicated to being 'poor with the poor Christ' and [yet] so socially conscious, put it all together" (p. 14). Far from being another collection of personal reminiscences (although such are interwoven), this book attempts to suggest avenues of approach to that task.

Here are collected essays by Amiya Chakravarty, who knew Merton for many years and "was with him on his eastward journey both intellectually and, in the last days, physically" (p. 14); David Steindl-Rast, who interprets some of the most significant passages of the posthumous *Asian Journal*; Richard Cashen, who reflectively analyzes some of Merton's early writings in terms of Merton's search for solitude; and George Kilcourse, who explores Merton's poetic insights and experience of integration in Christ. As Merton himself wrote,

Whatever I may have written, I think it can all be reduced in the end to this one root truth: that God calls human persons to union with Himself and with one another in Christ, in the Church which is His Mystical Body [quoted, p. 81].

Taken together with Michael Mott's wise and wonderful biography, *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton* [a review is in preparation—ed.], this book of essays ought to be serviceable for those readers who are undertaking the task of "integrating the multifaceted personality of Thomas Merton."

Cassette of the Sacred Music Composed by Cardinal Merry del Val

LITTLE KNOWN among Cardinal Rafael Merry del Val's manifold activities is his personal contribution to the revival of sacred music, given great impetus by Pius X, the Pope whom he served as Secretary of State with absolute fidelity throughout his pontificate from 1903 until 1914.

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Jacques Chailley (writing in *Diapason*—Paris, 1971) thought some of the motets "better than the professional, specialized compositions of the times in this genre, even of Gounod, César Franck, and Fauré. . . ."

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* * *

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Let God Act

*Selections from the Spiritual Writings and
Correspondence of Rafael Cardinal Merry del Val*

This booklet with introduction by Bishop Peter Canisius Van Lierde, Vicar General of His Holiness for Vatican City, is available from:

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