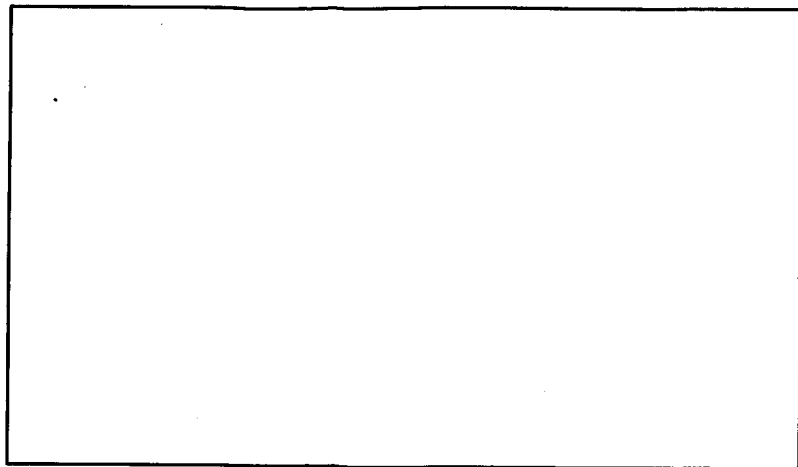


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FEBRUARY, 1986

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

ARTICLES

THE PRAYERS OF FRANCIS—I	35
<i>Berard Doerger, O.F.M.</i>	
WHOM SHALL WE SEND?	46
<i>F. Edward Coughlin, O.F.M.</i>	
AVE MARIS STELLA	59
<i>William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.</i>	

FEATURES

EDITORIAL: NOT JUST FOR FRATERNITY.....	33
<i>Julian A. Davies, O.F.M.</i>	
POETRY:	
MORNING PRAYER—I	34
<i>Robert Barbato, O.F.M. Cap.</i>	
MORNING PRAYER—II	43
<i>Robert Barbato, O.F.M. Cap.</i>	
FOUR POEMS IN HONOR OF BERNARD J. F. LONERGAN	44
<i>Patrick G. Leary, O.F.M.</i>	
BOOK REVIEWS	63



Volume 36, No. 2

The CORD

A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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Standard Abbreviations used in The CORD for Early Franciscan Sources

I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics¹
EpCust: Letter to Superiors¹
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful¹
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare

Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
OffPass: Office of the Passion
OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB: Rule of 1223
RegNB: Rule of 1221
RegEr: Rule for Hermits
SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
Test: Testament of St. Francis
UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
¹I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

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

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

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *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



Not Just for Fraternity

ONE OF THE THINGS that has probably been understood by most religious for some time but which has recently been articulated quite strongly is that community prayer, particularly the Divine Office, recited in common is intended to express and create brotherhood. When we assemble as a community of faith to worship the Triune Godhead together, we affirm each other in our profession, and we show we care about each other. And conversely, failure to pray with the community is perceived, not as a lack of devotion or proper religious concern for which we would not dare to fault an equal, but rather as a lack of caring for us in the community, something we do feel freer to complain about.

Healthy as this increased perception of the relation between common prayer and community is, we must not become unmindful that the Divine Office is a personal prayer as well. As I read it each day it seems that the very personal, even private, dimension of the Office becomes clearer. The psalms are generally words of an individual in joy, or sorrow, or praise, or complaint, or need. The responses and hymns and the petitions speak to personal issues: my own sanctity, the sick of my community, the need I have for forgiveness, the great value of the Franciscan friendship with God. In fact, my current "problem" with the psalms (people always seem to have problems with the psalms—years ago it was the Latin language, more recently the curses, since eliminated) is that the psalms praise and worship God with an enthusiasm I do not feel, and address him with a tenderness that I wish I had. I "solve" my problem by recalling that the Office is the Prayer of the Church, and that I do not express what lots of people feel, and where lots of people are, and what I believe and hope in.

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As life moves on I have become increasingly aware of my position (as priest and as religious) as a special pray-er, intercessor. The office, and of course the Mass, offer me the chance to fulfill this role—this task which is mine as a priest-religious friend of so many. Even the most casual of meetings with people on buses or planes, or in stores and malls, at schools or outside church, brings with it requests for prayers for special intentions, as all of us have, I'm sure, experienced.

In the course of our formation as friars, we were always taught that the Office was a public prayer even when said alone, in private. I have verified this through my own experience, and reflection on my vocation in the light of faith has continued to convince me of it. Experience and faith-ful reflection has also shown to me that the public prayer of the Church, the Divine Office, is a private, personal prayer as well, one that expresses my own needs, one that allows me the opportunity to intercede for those who want and need my prayers, and—finally—one that beckons me to greater intimacy with God. Ω

Dr. Julian Davas ofm

Morning Prayer (I)

Jesus, Lord of the morning
These mornings
My head feels like chocolate pudding.
Yet I strive
To offer you now pure sentiments and arrive
At half-hearted struggling.
Lord, accept my half heart;
Maybe with it
I can give you more than I think I give you
With the whole one.

Robert Barbato, O.F.M.Cap.

The Prayers of Francis—I

BERARD DOERGER, O.F.M.

Almighty, eternal, just, and merciful God, grant us in our misery the grace to do for You alone what we know you want us to do, and always to desire what pleases You.

Thus, inwardly cleansed, interiorly enlightened, and inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, may we be able to follow in the footprints of Your beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

And, by your grace alone, may we make our way to You, Most High, Who live and rule in perfect Trinity and simple Unity, and are glorified God all-powerful forever and ever. Amen [EpOrd].

Introduction: Francis and Prayer

1. *Francis: A Man of Prayer.* Every saint that has ever been canonized has been, I believe, a man or woman of prayer. And I believe too, as a general rule the degree of anyone's holiness is in direct relation to his or her degree of prayerfulness.

Certainly Saint Francis was a person of deep prayer. It was in his long hours of prayer in the caves outside Assisi that he first discovered what God wanted him to do. Also, it was only after much prayer of his own and the prayer of others that Francis made any important decisions or undertook any important tasks. It was only by constant prayer that Francis was able to be always joyful and patient and kind, even in times of great suffering and trial. It was, likewise, only by retreating often to the hermitages in the mountains, where he spent whole days and weeks in prayer, that Francis was able to rekindle and sustain his great love for God and his love for all God's creation. It was while praying at one such hermitage, Mt. Alverna, that Francis received the stigmata of the Lord in his own body. And finally, it was with prayer on his lips and in his heart that Francis Bernadone passed from this life to the glories of heaven. Yes, Francis of Assisi can certainly be called a "man of prayer"!

Father Berard Doerger, O.F.M., is Pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish in Cuba, New Mexico. His study of St. Francis' Letters appeared in last September's issue of The CORD. The present article will be continued in next month's issue.

All the early biographers of Saint Francis speak long and eloquently about his prayer life. Perhaps Saint Bonaventure, another great Franciscan saint and man of prayer, sums up as well as any other author the importance of prayer in the life of our Father Francis:

Saint Francis realized that he was an exile from the Lord's presence as long as he was at home in the body, and his love of Christ had left him with no desire for the things of this earth. Therefore, he tried to keep his spirit always in the presence of God, by praying to him without intermission, so that he might not be without some comfort from his Beloved. Prayer was his chief comfort in this life of contemplation in which he became a fellow-citizen of the angels, as he penetrated the dwelling places of heaven in his eager search for his Beloved, from whom he was separated only by a partition of flesh. Prayer was his sure refuge in everything he did; he never relied on his own efforts, but put his trust in God's loving providence and cast the burden of his cares on him in insistent prayer. He was convinced that the grace of prayer was something a religious should long for above all else. No one, he declared, could make progress in God's service without it, and he used every means he could to make the friars concentrate on it. Whether he was walking or sitting, at home or abroad, whether he was working or resting, he was so fervently devoted to prayer that he seemed to have dedicated to it not only his heart and his soul, but also his efforts and all his time [LM X.1; *Omnibus*, 705-06].

2. *Francis' Practise of Prayer*. How did Francis pray? What was his method of prayer? Where did he pray? When did he pray? What forms of prayer did he use? All these questions are concerned with what we might call Francis' "practise of prayer." The answer to them is not simple, for Francis prayed in a great variety of ways and in a great variety of circumstances.

He prayed a great deal, for example, in times of crisis in his personal life or that of his Order. He prayed more earnestly on special feasts and during the seasons of penance like Advent and Lent. He prayed intensely before preaching to the people and also in times of suffering.

Where did Francis pray? He loved to pray in solitary places: in caves, in the woods, on the mountaintops. But he liked to pray also in churches, especially the prayers of the Divine Office with his brothers. And he prayed, likewise, in the midst of the ordinary townfolk or peasants of the countryside, wherever he happened to be. Francis sometimes prayed prostrate on the ground, but also kneeling or walking or standing.

As to the kinds or forms of prayer: here, too, Francis made use of a wide assortment of forms of prayer. He loved to sing the praises of God; he also loved the formal prayers of the Divine Office and the Mass, the official prayers of the Church; and he insisted that these liturgical prayers

be the official community prayer for his Order.

But Francis also liked other types of prayer. He sometimes prayed with his brothers in a kind of shared prayer, but more often he seemed to pray by himself, either in silence or by repeating over and over some phrase like: "O God, be merciful to me, a sinner" (1Cel 26) or "My God and my all." Celano says that when Francis prayed in the woods or in solitary places, he would fill the woods with sighs and groans, water the places with his tears, and speak to the Lord with words as to a friend (1Cel 95).

There is, then, no pin-pointing of Francis' practise of prayer—no limiting it to any one form, method, or type of prayer. And perhaps the lesson for us, his followers, is that we need not limit our forms or methods of prayer, either. Probably what most of us need to do is just to spend more time in prayer, with whatever method, form, or manner; and at whatever time or place best suits us.

3. *Prayers composed by Saint Francis*. Francis left us a number of prayers that he either composed or used frequently. These prayers are what we intend to discuss in the present, two-part, article (to be concluded next month in these pages). Such a study of the prayers of Saint Francis can give us some insight at least into certain aspects of Francis' prayer life, and the use of these prayers composed by Francis can, I believe, also enrich our own prayer life.

In studying these prayers of Francis, I shall try first to give the historical context or some information about the background from which the prayer arose, as far as that can be determined. Secondly, I shall read over the prayer and try to analyze and summarize its content. Finally, I intend to add some comments on the prayer, pointing out what I see as its spiritual value for our lives today.

A. Prayer before the Crucifix of San Damiano

1. *Historical Background*. The introduction of Fathers Armstrong and Brady give us a good account of the historical setting for this Prayer before the Crucifix:

The biographies of Saint Francis written by Thomas of Celano and Saint Bonaventure characterize the early years of the saint's conversion as a struggle to discern God's will. Both of these authors, as well as the Legend of the Three Companions, describe the scene in the deserted church of San Damiano in Assisi during which the young Francis heard a command of the Crucified Lord while he was absorbed in prayer. "Francis," the voice told him, "go and repair my house, which, as you see, is falling completely into ruin." The remainder of his life was spent consciously or unconsciously responding to that command.

Almost all of the manuscripts that contain this simple prayer indicate its origin at the foot of the crucifix in the church of San Damiano. It clearly reflects the struggle of the early years of the saint's life as well as his ever-present desire to fulfill the will of God. Thus it is a prayer that can be seen as characterizing the Poverello's entire life [AB 103].

2. *Analysis of the Text.* (AB 103; this prayer is not found in the *Omnibus*).

- a. Most high, glorious God,
- b. enlighten the darkness of my heart and give me, Lord, a correct faith, a certain hope, and perfect charity, sense and knowledge,
- c. so that I may carry out Your holy and true command.

a. Note that the prayer is addressed to God with the title: "Most high, glorious God."

b. We then have a petition that is twofold:

- enlighten the darkness of my heart,
- and give me four things: a correct faith, a certain hope, a perfect charity, sense and knowledge (= understanding).

c. Finally we have the reason for the petitions: so that I may carry out Your holy and true command (= God's will).

3. *Commentary.* We don't want to draw out too much from such a short prayer, but I believe we can distill from this prayer the following points:

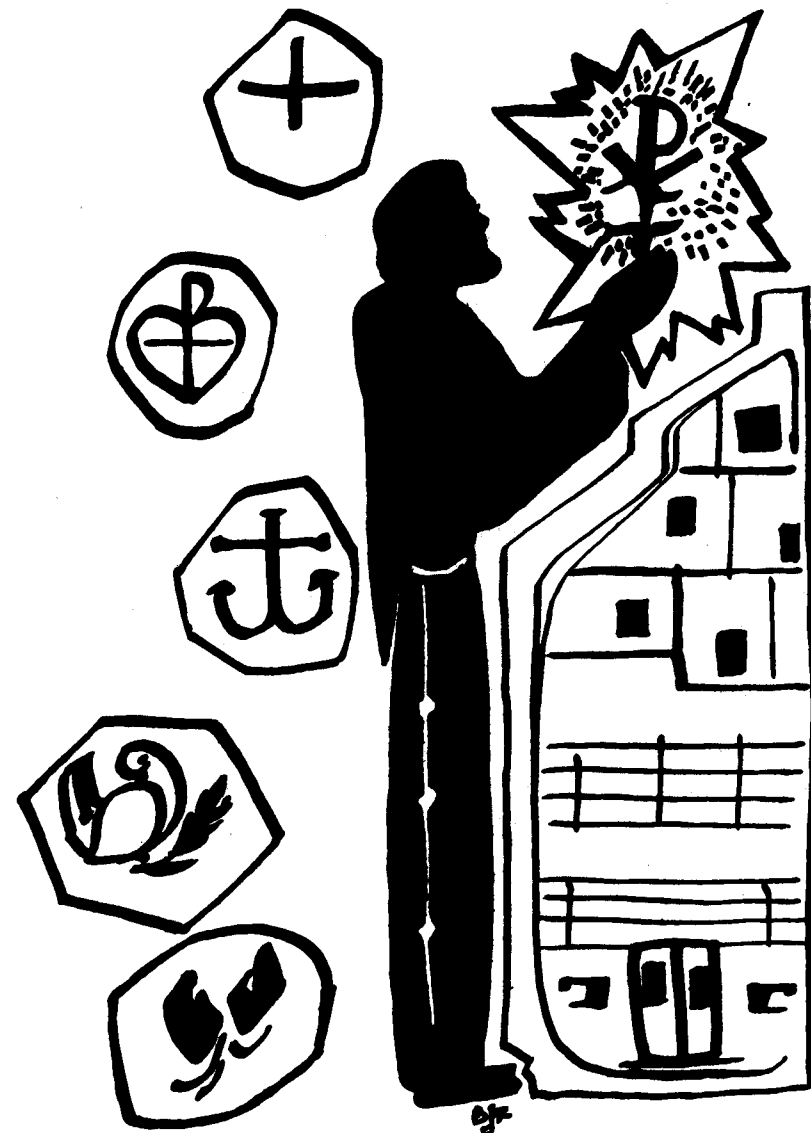
a. We see in this prayer something of Francis' great respect and reverence for God, and his recognition that God was so much above him, who depended upon God totally. God is the "most high, glorious" One.

b. We also discover in this prayer Francis' deep desire to seek and do God's will always in his life. This is one of the great desires that motivate Francis' whole life: to seek and fulfill whatever God wants of him.

c. I believe we can use this prayer of Francis at various times in our own life, especially when we are seeking to know what God wants of us. (Our Province distributed this prayer on a prayer-card to be used in preparing for an important planning process in the Province.)

B. The Praises of God and The Blessing of Brother Leo

Our next prayer of Saint Francis is generally called "The Praises of God." This is one of the Writings of Francis of which we still have the



original, written in Francis' own handwriting. It is preserved on a small parchment of 10 by 14 centimeters in the convent of Assisi. It was evidently folded over twice by Brother Leo and kept in his breviary along with a piece of the tunic of Saint Francis.

On one side of the parchment is the copy of "The Praises of God," and on the other is the Blessing of Saint Francis to Brother Leo, along with the sign of the Tau, which crosses through the name of Leo. On the parchment is also some writing in red ink by Brother Leo, saying: "Blessed Francis wrote with his own hand this blessing for me, Brother Leo."

1. *Historical Background.* We find the historical situation for the composition of this prayer and blessing both in 2Cel 49 (*Omnibus*, 406) and in LM XI.9 (*Omnibus*, 717), as well as in the third annotation that Leo wrote in the upper margin of the manuscript.

Combining these three sources, we get this picture. The prayer was written by Francis two years before his death while he was making a Lenten retreat in his cell on Mount La Verna. He had already received the Stigmata. Brother Leo had a great desire to have some short phrases of the Bible in the Saint's own handwriting, for he was being troubled by a violent temptation of the spirit, and Leo was confident that if he had these words in the handwriting of Saint Francis, they would put an end to the temptation, or at least make it easier to bear. Although Leo was too shy to ask Francis for what he wanted, Francis learned from the Holy Spirit what Leo was afraid to tell him. He asked Leo one day to bring him a pen and paper and then wrote a number of phrases in praise of God. Celano says specifically: "He wrote down with his own hand the "Praises of God" . . . and lastly a blessing for that brother, saying: 'Take this paper and guard it carefully till the day of your death.'" Leo took the paper he had wanted so badly, and his temptation vanished immediately. Celano and Bonaventure both mention in closing that the paper or parchment was preserved by Leo, and that a number of miracles were worked in connection with this parchment that Francis had given to Leo.

2. *Analysis of the "Praises."* (AB 99-100; *Omnibus*, 125-26).

a. This prayer is addressed directly to God and spells out in a number of very brief but powerful sentences all that God meant for Saint Francis. Thirty-four times we find the phrase, "You are."

b. Sometimes the "You are" is followed by adjectives describing God; more often it is followed by nouns describing what God was for Francis: You are the almighty King, you are Wisdom, you are humility, you are our hope, etc.

c. In line 1, I would prefer the English translation: "You are holy, Lord, the only God, the one who does wonders." And in line 4, I would prefer: You are all our riches and you suffice for us.

3. *Commentary on the "Praises."* (AB 99-100; *Omnibus*, 125-26).

a. What I think we see or find in "The Praises of God" are the fruits or

results of Francis' meditation on what God meant to him in his life. This prayer is the fruit of Francis' time in prayer on Mount La Verna and of his whole life.

b. These "Praises of God" by Francis seem to me to be a beautiful elaboration of the shorter prayer that is ascribed to Francis, which he would repeat over and over: "My God, my all!"

c. For us, I believe this prayer can serve as a source for our meditation on God and the meaning of God in our life. We could also use it in our personal prayer life or in Prayer Services of various types, or possibly as a substitute for one of the psalms or canticles in the Liturgy of the Hours. I have found that laymen love it.

4. *Blessing for Brother Leo.* We shall consider here also the Blessing for Brother Leo which is found on the other side of the parchment of "The Praises of God" (AB 100; *Omnibus*, 126).

a. This blessing is, of course, also a prayer—a prayer of petition for God to bless Brother Leo.

b. The blessing, taken almost completely from the Book of Numbers in the Bible, is the one used by Aaron the High Priest in blessing the people.

c. The footnote on AB 100 points out that Francis probably became acquainted with this blessing not from his study of the Old Testament, but rather from the rite of ordaining clerics, which Francis would have heard when some of his friars were ordained by one of the bishops in central Italy.

d. This blessing of Aaron, made specific for Brother Leo, also shows us Saint Francis' concern and love for his good friend, confessor, and secretary, Leo. In this parchment, therefore, we find not only a witness of Francis' great insights into the mystery of who God is for us in everyday life, but also a witness of Francis' love and concern for a concrete human brother.

C. The Exhortation to the Praise of God

THE NEXT PRAYER we want to examine is called "The Exhortation to the Praise of God," not to be confused with "The Praises of God" we just considered or "The Praises That Are to be Said at All the Hours," which we shall discuss shortly.

1. *Historical Background.* As is indicated in the Introduction to AB (42), this prayer is found in a manuscript by a Franciscan historian, Marianus of Florence, who wrote in the early 1500's. Marianus claims that the prayer had been written by Francis himself on a wooden panel that formed an antependium in a small hermitage chapel in Umbria, built in imitation of Francis' favorite chapel, St. Mary of the Angels. It is

possible that Francis had placed the wooden panel of Praises at the altar at the time of the chapel's consecration; this supposition might help explain some of the verses that don't otherwise seem to fit in very well, such as v. 4, which greets Mary, and the last verse, calling on Saint Michael the Archangel to defend us in battle. Since the church was a replica of St. Mary of the Angels, these verses would then have some reason for being in the prayer.

According to Marianus' description of the prayer, there were also some pictures of various creatures on the wood panel, illustrating some of the creatures exhorted to praise God in the prayer.

2. Analysis of the Text (cf. AB 42-43; not found in the *Omnibus*).

1. Fear the Lord and give him honor (Rev. 14:7).
2. The Lord is worthy to receive praise and honor (Rev. 4:11).
3. All you who fear the Lord, praise him (Ps. 21:24).
4. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you (Lk 1:28).
5. Heaven and earth, praise him (cf. Ps. 68:35).
6. All you rivers, praise him (cf. Dan. 3:78).
7. This is the day which the Lord has made, let us exalt and rejoice in it (Ps. 117:24)! Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! O King of Israel (Jn. 12:13)!
8. All you children of God, bless the Lord (Dan. 3:78).
9. Let every spirit praise the Lord (Ps. 150:6).
10. Praise the Lord for he is good (Ps. 146:1); all you who read this, bless the Lord (Ps. 102:21).
11. All you creatures, bless the Lord (cf. Ps. 102:22).
12. All you birds of the heavens, praise the Lord (cf. Dan. 3:80; Ps. 148:10).
13. All you children, praise the Lord (cf. Ps. 112:1).
14. Young men and virgins, praise the Lord (Ps. 148:12). 15. The Lamb who was slain is worthy to receive praise, glory, and honor (cf. Rev. 5:12).
16. Blessed be the holy Trinity and undivided Unity.
17. Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.

a. We should note first of all that practically all the lines in this text are not original with Francis, but are taken from various psalms and other books of the Bible, specifically Daniel and Revelation. We will see this trait in a number of the other prayers of Francis—a trait which Cajetan Esser appealed to in establishing the authenticity of this particular prayer. The originality comes in Francis' selection of these passages and unifying them into one prayer of praise, or better, into an exhortation to praise God.

b. If we study closely this prayer, we will find that the majority of the

verses or lines are just that: exhortations to various creatures to praise God and give him honor. First, in line 1 there is the general exhortation: "Fear the Lord and give him honor." Then: "All you who fear the Lord, praise him" (line 3); "Heaven and earth praise him" (line 5); "All you rivers praise him" (line 6); and seven more groups are exhorted to praise or bless the Lord.

c. Some of the other lines give reasons for praising God: "The Lord is worthy to receive praise" (2); "This is the day which the Lord has made," etc. (8—this too might be a reference to the consecration rite of the altar); "Praise the Lord for he is good" (10); "The Lamb who was slain is worthy," etc. (15).

3. Commentary on the Exhortation to Praise God.

This prayer, I believe, shows us a number of traits basic to Francis' prayers and prayer life:

a. Francis borrows verses or lines from the Psalms and other books of the Bible or liturgical books and rather skillfully blends them together into a unified prayer.

b. Francis joins himself with all of creation in his prayer of praise to God. All creatures are invited to join with him in praising and blessing the Lord and Creator of all.

c. Prayer of praise seems to be one of Francis' favorite types, both to use himself and to encourage others to use. 7

Morning Prayer (II)

My God,
I paint you so many
Pretty rose promises,
And think, "If I had been there
I never would have crucified him."
And by that
Drive the nails
Deeper into your waiting flesh.
O Lord,
Let me show my so fragile love for you
By saying, "Yes,
I would have."
And recognizing
The hammer in my hand.

Robert Barbato, O.F.M.Cap.

Four Poems in Honor of Bernard J. F. Lonergan

I. Renewal

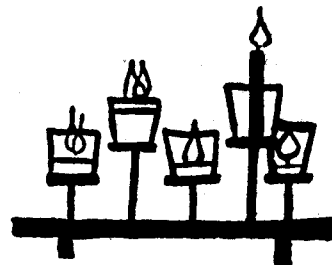
Who would ever think
that wisdom
involves the pause
that refreshes?
Most people think
that care-fulness is
caution.
Care-fulness is not
caution.
It is starting and
stopping. It is
going to bed when
you are tired.
It is going to
the window, when
you are bored.
It is knowing enough
to give up and
begin again tomorrow.
Progress means building
on the past, after
the past has had
a rest.
Everyone knows that
paint changes color
when it dries.
Let the paint
dry, and
begin again.

II. Diminished Returns

Second best
takes first prize!
Strange, but true.
We settle for
a single
piece of pie,
when the whole pie
looks good.
All goals are
spelled
with a capital "G,"
but we settle
for a small "g,"
when the time
for decision comes.
When the child
indicates the desire
for "water,"
the child wants
all the water,
but something less
is satisfactory.
We are always
settling for less,
and we are happy
with it.
First prize goes to
the pie we eat—
not to the pie with
the ribbon on it.

III. Displacement

There is a time
and a place
for everything.
If things are
out of whack,
you might be doing
the right thing—
but it should be
done otherwise—
at some other time,
or at some other place.
Doodling in class
is out of whack.
Sleeping on the job
is obvious!
The point is to
salvage the right
thing from inappropriate
circumstances—and then
do it up in style!
Make time for a nap.
Doodle between classes.
Everything we do is
probably right some time,
some place.
We have hidden energies
which are waiting
for their chance.
The first time they
peek out, it is
usually for a
"look-see," when we should be
doing something else.



IV. The Limit

Were you ever
up against
a brick wall?
It can be depressing.
It is like waiting
for the seedlings
to sprout,
after you realize
that the seed-packets
were mislabeled.
When you are
"up against it,"
there can be no
forward progress.
You must move
to right or left.
Every real problem
puts us in this
position, but
death and the
annual income tax—
these can become
like permanent fixtures.
We don't move them.
We must get around them.
Coping with these
problems turns them
into painless scars,
or ornaments,
in our life.
If God decides
to rain on your
parade, then paint
the bathroom, or
read a good book,
but by all means,
do something!
The rain brings
the flowers, and
you will have
happy memories.

Patrick G. Leary, O.F.M.

Formation for Mission in the Franciscan Tradition

Whom Shall We Send?

F. EDWARD COUGHLIN, O.F.M.

"WE ARE SENT: The Franciscan Missionary Vocation in the World Today" was an important document for all Franciscans from the Order of Friars Minor 1971 Medellin Chapter. Concerned with the missionary character of the Franciscan vocation, the document challenged all Franciscans to consider, once again, their presence and understanding of their mission in the world today.

To consider the Franciscan vocation and mission in the world today, one would have to do what Francis did: viz., consider his position before the Lord. Then, and in light of that consideration, one would have to strive in word and deed to live in greater conformity with the demands of Gospel life. For those who might wish to follow Francis more closely and desire an intense life with God in the context of fraternity and minority, there is the possibility of choosing to live one of the different forms of Franciscan life that exist in the world today.

The reflections that follow are concerned with understanding the issues, dynamics, and stages that are integral parts of formation for Franciscan life and preparation for carrying forward its mission in the world. It might also serve as a model for other types of formative experiences within and outside the Franciscan tradition.

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Whether one desires to be formed or to lead others in discovering the meaning, value, and potential significance of Franciscan or other forms of Gospel life, each form must not only be abstractly understood but also be experienced and lived in its uniqueness. By entering into any form of the Christian life, those who profess it in faith and live it in truth are empowered and enabled to proclaim the message of Jesus to all, wherever they are.

Francis: The Example

FEW CHRISTIANS HAVE responded so radically and totally to the prompting of the Spirit of God as did Francis of Assisi. As is evident in Thomas of Celano's biography of the saint, the change that took place in Francis' manner of life was neither easy nor automatic. In the beginning of the biography, Celano describes the young Francis as someone who was quite typical in terms of his times and given his position in life. Francis is depicted, on the one hand, as someone who was kind, easy-going, affable, and attractive in the eyes of men. On the other hand, Celano also depicts him as someone who squandered and wasted his time, outdid his contemporaries in vanities, came to be a promoter of evil, was abundantly zealous for all kinds of foolishness, strove to outdo the rest in pomp and vainglory, in jokes, in strange doings, in idle and useless talk, in songs, in soft and flowing garments, squanderer of his possessions, cautious in business, a very unreliable steward (1Cel 2).

We are told that the sudden onset of a serious illness prevented the young Francis from fulfilling his dream of being a knight and a warrior. The illness became a significant turning point in the life of Francis, for, as Celano says, it was during this time that Francis "began to think of things other than he had been accustomed to thinking upon them" (1Cel 3).

Left in doubt and confusion as a result of his illness, the young Francis began to question the direction of his life, the commitments he had made, and even those things which he considered to be his greatest strengths. In the midst of the struggle and pain that these questions surely involved, Francis began to see himself in new ways and do things that seem to be out of character for him. At one point, for example, he sold what he thought belonged to him (1Cel 8) and went to live in a poor little church (1Cel 9). He endured the angry reaction of his father (1Cel 10) and others who knew him (1Cel 11).

Although Francis does not seem to have understood all that was happening within him, his story gives some clear indications of how he must have looked deeply within himself, asked some penetrating questions, and begun to come to terms with who he was and how he would choose to live his life from that point forward. In addition to what he learned

about himself, he began to believe that God was at the heart of what was taking place within him. It was not long, however, before he began to preach penance (1Cel 23) and form others in the way of holy poverty and blessed simplicity (1Cel 26).

Whatever our reaction to or assessment of Celano's biography of Francis, we would do well to realize that it is an attempt to recount one man's effort to discover the meaning of God's presence in the events of his life. Celano's account not only tells us something of what happened in the life of Francis; it also gives us some idea of the pain, struggle, and confusion that were involved in the process of becoming a man of faith. In these and other ways, the story of Francis, as told by Celano, provides us with a model for understanding (1) how a person can discover his true identity in Christ, (2) what it means to reform one's life in the light of the Gospel, and (3) how one may be prepared to preach the Good News and form others in the Gospel as a way of life.

Those who would hope to follow Francis must, therefore, enter into a similar process of changing, reforming, and redirecting the energies of their lives. They must confront the demands of the Gospel, not only in moments of joy but also in moments of doubt, conflict, and confusion. They must, like Francis, enter the darkness, be willing to take risks, be ready to fail, and resist the temptation to abandon the journey into God, wherever it leads them.

The Foundation: Formation for Christian Living

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN is essentially a matter of (1) hearing and believing the message of Jesus, (2) allowing the message of Jesus to penetrate and challenge every aspect of life, and (3) witnessing to that message in word and deed until the Lord comes again.

The response to the Good News proclaimed by Jesus is revealed in the life-story of everyone who claims to believe. Few life-stories have so consistently appealed to the imagination as that of Francis of Assisi. His response to the message of Jesus continues to challenge some of our most basic attitudes about what it means to be a genuine believer, about a person's capacity for change as a consequence of his beliefs, about what ultimately a believer can become in the course of his life. In fact, the story of Francis is so powerful, perhaps overwhelming, that we may be tempted to ask: Could the Lord be asking that much of me?

If this question does occur to us, we might consider, once again, Luke's account of Jesus' encounter with the rich young man (Lk. 18:18-24). When the man informed Jesus that he was an essentially good and obedient man, Jesus replied: "You still need to do one thing. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor . . . then come, follow me." As we

know, the rich young man went away sad because his possessions were many. What response would we make if we encountered this question from Jesus today?

From the earliest times, the Christian community evinced a deep understanding of the response that was demanded by Jesus. Filled with hope and the joyful awareness of what God was doing in their lives, they willingly assumed the complex and demanding task of reforming their lives. They also developed a process through which others could be introduced to and formed in the Christian life. Known as the catechumenate, the process was a concrete and practical program of instruction, guidance, personal experience, support, and challenge to others—and themselves as well—to live the Gospel as their way of life.

The pattern established in this ancient rite served as the basis for the recently restored *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA)*. This Rite demands that the Christian community (1) give witness to the form of life proposed, (2) provide adequate instruction with regard to its beliefs, and (3) guide the candidates in their attempts to embody and express in their lives what they are coming to believe through faith in Jesus. Rooted in faith and centered on the response of the whole person, this process takes time; it continually demands that the candidates give witness, in word and deed, to what they believe and how they intend to live their lives. By inviting and leading others through this formative process, the community is also challenged continuously to reform their lives and to give a more authentic witness to the meaning of "life in Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. 1:30). Against this background and within this broader context, religious formation can effectively be organized while special emphasis is given to the unique charism and tradition of a particular community. (Pertinent documents from the Order of Friars Minor will be used to illustrate and develop this point in the sections that follow.)

Formation for Franciscan Life

FRANCIS AND THE first Franciscans expressed and embodied a radical desire to give themselves completely to God. Their story gives eloquent testimony to their struggle. While remaining very much in and working in the world, they refused to conform themselves to its standards and resisted doing so especially through the encouragement, support, and mutual challenge that they gave to one another through their life in fraternity and minority.

The commitment to life with God led Francis and his brothers to an inner transformation that expressed itself in their changed minds, hearts, and manner of life. The penance they preached and the witness of their lives moved many to believe and reform their lives as well. The life and

mission of the first Franciscans is their legacy to their followers in our day. Formation to and for this unique form of Christian life is an enduring challenge.

Franciscan formation, then, must be (1) rooted in faith, (2) concerned with the whole person, (3) carried out in the context of community, and (4) validated by an assessment of readiness to carry forward the Franciscan message to the world today.

Rooted in Faith

LIVING FAITH both presumes and demands a continuous conversion, that is, a turning of the whole person freely to God. It calls for an active response on the part of the individual to whom God is continually revealing himself through the action of the Spirit. More specifically, a Franciscan person's response in faith is reflected in two related ways: (1) a deepening awareness of God's presence, and (2) the embodiment of attitudes and values in conformity with the Gospel and expressed most especially in fraternity and minority.

Attitudes and values are most clearly and authentically revealed in the pattern of an individual's behavior. Whether through his own efforts or with the assistance of others, each individual must, in the first place, be open to the truth of what he does or does not do. In the second place, he must be ready to face the truth as to how others experience these facts. This awareness and readiness to seek and to find the truth of who a person is, especially in relationship situations, must be welcomed in faith as an opportunity to grow and become more centered in God.

Growth and maturity in the Franciscan tradition demand that an individual enter into an active-contemplative relationship with himself, God, others, and all of reality. Who he is challenges him to consider his actions. The contemplative dimension then challenges him to consider his actions in the light of his faith commitment as tested by his responsiveness to the Spirit's presence in his life. Together, these movements—in their seeming opposition—form the life-giving tension that enables and empowers the Franciscan person to be himself in the presence of God for the sake of others, as Francis was in his own life.

Person Centered

THE *MIRROR OF PERFECTION* (§85) reports Francis as maintaining that "a good Friar Minor should imitate the lives and possess the merits of [his fellow] holy friars." He is then said to have described the virtues that he saw as most understanding in the lives of his companions: e.g., the simplicity and purity of Leo, the courtesy and kindness of Angelo, the gracious mien and good sense of Masseo.

The emphasis on perceiving and imitating virtue is very much a part of the Franciscan tradition. It continues to be a helpful approach today for a number of reasons. First, it serves as a constant reminder that God's presence is embodied in unique and specific ways in the life of each person. Second, it stresses the fact that virtues, perceived and received as gifts from God, are the specific ways in which a person is enabled and empowered to be an effective witness of God's presence in the service of others. Finally, it reminds us that virtues must be developed and brought to maturity in the course of one's life.

Franciscan formation must, then, be person centered. It achieves this goal by (1) accepting the uniqueness of each person, (2) encouraging and nurturing the discovery and development of individual gifts, (3) holding an individual accountable and responsible for using his gifts in the service of others, and (4) encouraging the individual to be who he is within the fraternity.

In light of this emphasis, the formative community, and the formation directors in particular, must be concerned with knowing the candidate as an individual. Through their interrelationship and life together, both the professed friars and the candidates must continually seek to discover their internal motivations, attitudes, and values, especially as they are revealed in the choices that each one makes. In addition, by affording the individuals in formation "a gradual and correct use of their liberty and sense of responsibility, formation will help them to make decisions that will enable them consciously to order their lives" (IPV, §22).

In Community

THE ROLE OF THE community and their shared responsibility for the formation of candidates, as well as their own ongoing formation, is a critically important aspect of Franciscan life. The rationale for this emphasis is found in the pattern of relationship that was evidenced in the life of the early friars. Their example justifies the stance of the Order's Medellin Chapter (1971) when it said that "it is within the community and because of the community that our vocation is brought to maturity, for it is the privileged place of our encounter with God" (VOT, §12).

A basic sense of interrelationship and cooperation, therefore, must be reflected in the way the friars structure their lives together, no matter what the stage of formation. The specific elements or special concerns of a particular program should express and promote a special concern for the uniqueness of each individual.

This insistence on personal initiative, active participation, coresponsibility, and the common good will give both professed friars and candidates the greatest insurance of the reality of the lives they hope to live

as individuals and as a community. Thus every member is invited to reflect on and reform his life through the shared experience of fraternity and minority. And so, liberated and matured through faith in Jesus and through their life together, all are readied to proclaim to others what they believe and have begun to experience in their own lives. In this way the formation experience can be expected to establish a true brotherhood that may in fact become "the nucleus of a vast brotherhood embracing all of creation itself" (IPV, §25).

Progresses in Stages

THE PROCESS, tasks, challenges, and stages of the formation process, as has already been indicated, are clearly articulated in the RCIA. It provides, therefore, a practical, systematic, and progressive means whereby the community of believers may give witness in and through their lives to the message of Jesus. The goals, concerns, and issues that are integral parts of the stages articulated in the RCIA provide the background and essential framework for the following discussion of the stages of Franciscan formation.

Stage 1: Prenoventiate Formation.

This stage begins with the community's willingness to invite others to share their life. It presumes that after proper inquiry and investigation, the community has made a positive judgment with regard to a candidate's (1) having achieved a satisfactory level of self-acceptance, personal worth, and identity, (2) being motivated by faith in Jesus, and (3) expressing a readiness to be challenged to grow in faith and live in fraternity and minority.

The Prenoventiate stage is essentially a period of probation within the fraternity, lengthy enough to allow the candidate to (1) make a more experiential judgment about his sense of vocation, (2) evaluate and complete if necessary his basic catechesis in the truths of the faith, (3) make a gradual transition from one style of life to another, (4) discover his deepest motivations and desires, and (5) know and experience directly and in a personal way the meaning and value of Franciscan life in fraternity and minority (cf. IPV, §38).

This special emphasis on personal development as well as human and Christian maturity makes this stage of formation both critical and foundational. The community must be conscious of this fact and take seriously its responsibility to make the necessary judgments about the candidates' readiness and suitability to live the Franciscan form of life. A genuine understanding of individual needs, as well as the community's expectations, will demand some flexibility, adaptability, and creativity.



One place and one program with limited options will rarely respond to the real diversity of candidates' needs. Failure to achieve the basic goals of this stage in a very real and personal way on the part of each candidate will undermine and ultimately jeopardize the goals of the subsequent stages.

Stage 2: Novitiate Formation.

CORRESPONDING IN MANY WAYS to the catechumenal phase of the RCIA process, the novitiate is a time for the candidate to "learn those things which are primary and essential to Franciscan religious life" (IPV, §40). It is to be a special period during which the candidates can integrate and solidify their commitment to Christ through their life in fraternity and minority.

The primary concern of the novitiate stage of formation is the spiritual development of the person. While concentrating on the total personality of the candidates, this stage must provide them with instruction and the freedom to cultivate and enter into the contemplative aspect of their lives. It must, therefore, invite and enable the novices to articulate and reflect in a serious and consistent manner on (1) what they believe or are struggling to believe, (2) what their experience of God has or has not been, (3) what the experience of God means to them, and (4) how their experience of life in fraternity and minority is leading or is failing to lead them to a deeper faith in Jesus and a genuine willingness to live for the sake of others by the profession of the Franciscan rule of Gospel life.

The novitiate is also an important time during which the community must (1) tell its story, (2) speak clearly and consistently to its demands and expectations, and (3) explain its mission in a more complete way. By so doing in the context of fraternity and minority, the community both challenges the candidate to develop his vocation and affords itself the time and opportunity for an honest and realistic assessment of the candidate's motives, talents, and potential for incorporation into and commitment to its ideals, message, and mission.

The emphasis on the contemplative dimension during the time of novitiate must not totally eclipse concern for the active dimensions of life. Because it is an active-contemplative pattern of life, the Franciscan novitiate should include meaningful, even if limited, ministerial experience. In fact, some ministerial involvement can enable the novice to know more fully the diversity and demands of the life to which he hopes to commit himself. The struggles, challenges, and problems occasioned by such experience can also contribute to the integration that all Friars Minor are called to achieve.

Given its purpose, duration, and intensity, the total novitiate experience should make significant demands upon the individual's personal gifts, resources, and strengths. The presumption about an individual's human and Christian maturity and emphasis on the contemplative dimension of life will raise serious questions about the candidate's (1) openness to change and growth, (2) personal freedom and responsibility,

and (3) readiness to be deeply committed to the Franciscan form of life. Separated from situations and circumstances that were comfortable or familiar to them, novices are challenged to discover new resources, ways effectively to be with their brothers as "minores," and their desire to be in the presence of the Lord.

The central concern of the novitiate is fundamentally an adult experience of faith, life. It demands, therefore, free and responsible choosing on the part of those who embrace it; it consequently manifests the freedom, the care, the ultimate acceptance of self, others, and the Lord. The goals, demands, and expectations of the novitiate oblige the community, and those members who are especially responsible for implementing the formation program, to evaluate conscientiously the novice's readiness, ability, and willingness to live out the Franciscan charism in a prayerful, joyful, responsible, peaceful, and life-giving way. The temporary profession made at the conclusion of the novitiate testifies publicly that an individual, with the approval, support, and encouragement of the community, is prepared to live out the Franciscan rule and form of life and is essentially ready to be sent to share with others what he believes and has experienced.

Stage 3: Postnovitiate Formation.

The final stage of initial formation is a period of even "more intense preparation of the heart and spirit" (RCIA, §22). Taking into consideration an individual's unique background, needs, abilities, potential, and desires, as well as the community's needs and priorities, the postnovitiate period of formation is expressly concerned with the questions: What further time, training, or experience is either necessary or desirable as preparation for a particular individual to live the Franciscan life fully and meaningfully—to carry forward the Franciscan life and message?

A prominent concern during this time of formation is theological education that is both theoretical and practical. The program must be suited, in its structure, content, and extent, to the capabilities of the individual and the type of ministry, work, or service for which he is being prepared.

The practical dimension of this education demands both the experience of ministry in different situations under the guidance of a qualified director and regular, shared, formal reflection upon the ministerial experience. This reflection can both further the personal integration of the individual friar and challenge him to deeper awareness and appreciation of his faith in God's action within himself, the community, the Church, and the world.

The goals of the postnovitiate stage of formation presume their being

accomplished over an extended period of time. Its flexible nature is intended to provide the space and context wherein the change demanded of an individual through deepened faith and the experience of life in fraternity and minority can be confirmed and be more deeply rooted within him. This stage terminates with the profession of solemn vows, the decisive moment of freely and permanently embracing, and being embraced by, the Franciscan life. All that has taken place in the preceding stages of formation thus becomes the basis of continuing for a lifetime what was begun in less structured but no less real ways.

Assessment of Vocation, Maturity, and commitment

THE VOCATION OF every Christian can be understood in the light of three distinct but related questions: viz., (1) what is the meaning of the call to love? (2) what are the ways in which God has gifted an individual to be loving? and (3) in what context may a particular individual best actualize and realize his potential to be a loving person?

The call to love is revealed in Jesus, the Word made flesh. In his words and through his deeds, he challenged others to find means not only to do the works that he did, but even greater ones (Jn. 14:12).

Before Jesus left his disciples, he promised to send the Spirit, who would prompt the hearts of men and women to love. The Spirit's presence was to be manifest in the world in many ways, one of which would be the gifts "given to all, for the good of all" (1 Cor. 12:7). These gifts would enable those who received and developed them to be powerful and effective witnesses to God's continuing action and presence in the world, especially when they were used in the service of others.

Christian *maturity* is manifested by the free and responsible ways in which an individual uses his gifts, proves his love, and offers himself and his talents to others. This is evidenced in the attitudes, choices, and decision-making patterns that are recognized as characteristic of him by himself and others. Maturity is, therefore, a process of becoming more of who one is and what one is called to become through faith in Christ Jesus.

To determine whether God has called and gifted an individual to live a religious life, and the Franciscan form of life in particular, is a task entrusted to the individual and the community he contemplates joining. The final judgment must be made in the context of God's call to love for the good of the individual, the community, and the Body of Christ which is the Church (cf. Col. 1:24).

With patience, humility, and perseverance, then, the community and those responsible for formation within it must carefully lead the candidates to take an active role in their own formation to and within the

chosen form of life. Whatever means are necessary and available must be used so that the candidate can be better known, loved, and helped to discern the pattern and direction of his life. The data for shared decision making in this regard can be obtained by offering the candidate a variety of experiences of life, fraternity, minority, instruction, time for reflection, and opportunity for service and for making free and responsible choices. Individual candidates and the community as a whole must, however, be cautious about making judgments that are self-serving, safe, comfortable, and secure.

The candidate's intentions and aspirations must, therefore, be realized and expressed in his choices and the observable patterns of his life. In addition to the qualities already referred to, the signs of a mature vocation to the Franciscan form of life would include the following:

- (1) the ability to know and express one's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions to and within the fraternity,
- (2) the ability and inclination to spend time with the community when it gathers formally and informally for prayers, meals, recreation, and faith sharing,
- (3) the ability and willingness to participate actively in and to promote the welfare and development of the community by taking the initiative in creating conversation and engaging others in it, responding to emerging needs, calling the group to greater faithfulness, and leading others to a fuller knowledge, understanding, and willingness to serve the needs of others.

Both the candidate and the community must in faith ask: What do we see? What have we heard? If someone is continually jealous, conceited, selfish, irritable, concerned primarily with himself; if he eats and drinks of the community's goods and resources in a careless way; if he is the center of disagreements and disturbances; if he consistently chooses to be alone; if he never quite understands what is expected of him, etc., then such an individual must be seen as lacking the disposition or the personal gifts to live up to the demands and expectations of the community.

The fraternity must not only be able to express its vision of life; it must also provide models and guides so that candidates can see and experience the life as it is being lived at the present time. Within these situations formation can take place and the necessary judgments can be made. The communication, challenge, and support that are an integral part of this life are indeed the cornerstone for making those judgments possible.

Conclusion: Whom Shall We Send?

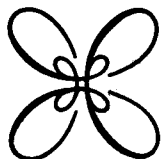
"WE ARE SENT—AND WE GO, as heralds of the Great King, offering all that

we have; and we hope that we will be living witnesses among all nations to the great truth that there is . . . only one Father, and through his divine Son, Jesus, there is one people, one fellowship, one brotherhood, and one communion in the Holy Spirit" (WAS, §22).

This statement from the Order's Medellin Chapter summarizes the noblest hopes and aspirations, and the primary goals, of the entire formation process. It is rooted in the example of Jesus, who gathered (Mk. 3:13) and sent (Mk. 6:7) the disciples. It follows the pattern of Francis so succinctly described and handed down by Saint Bonaventure:

With his companions Francis [now] went to live in an abandoned hut near Assisi, where they lived from hand to mouth according to the rule of poverty, in toil and penury. . . . Christ's cross was their book, and they studied it day and night, at the exhortation and after the example of their father, who never stopped talking to them about the cross. . . . The friars obeyed his teaching to perfection [LM IV.3].

After this, at God's prompting, Francis brought his little flock of twelve friars to St. Mary of the Portiuncula. It was there that the Order of Friars Minor had been founded by the merits of the Mother of God. It was there, too, that it would grow to maturity by her intercession. From the Portiuncula, Francis set out as a herald of the Gospel to preach the kingdom of God in the towns and villages in the vicinity, "not in such words as human wisdom teaches, but in the words taught him by the Spirit" (1 Cor. 2:13) [LM IV.5] Ω



Ave Maris Stella

Hail Star of the Sea, Teach Us to Pray

WILLIAM HART MCNICHOLS, S.J., S.F.O.

THE PRESENCE OF Mary has always been one of silence for me. I witnessed this quite coincidentally one day when asked to speak about Mary, and I found myself wondering how to speak of one who renders me so silent. So I drifted back to childhood, hoping to see some pictured memory which I could relate without betraying the silence Mary seems to bring to me. What I saw was a whole line of Marian images which taught me of her ever present guardian motherhood.

I see myself, a child before her image. It is the late 1950's in the preconciliar era of the Church. I have placed a statue of Mary on a small end table to the left of the top of the stairs, on the second floor of our house. This little May shrine is at the intersection of all the upstairs rooms and faces a long hallway which seems to be a natural road of procession. There are spring flowers spilling out of two small vases—lilacs and forget-me-nots which, when dry and fallen, look like scattered ochre stars dotting the table and floor around the statue. I am quiet yet imploring; gazing hard at Mary I remember that she smiled at Thérèse of Lisieux, dispelling the nightmare of the child's physical and mental suffering. With a child's confidence, I take for granted she will smile or speak to me. And as I wait for her to move, I become quiet inside and some fears go away. The violence of grade school children begins to soften. I look at Mary and see that her face is one of contemplation. She is gazing back at me with outstretched arms, and from the palms of her hands beams of light fall to the base of the statue. And as I see her pray, I begin to pray.

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I see myself as a child during Advent, visiting the area churches with my family. My brothers and sisters and I are all tumbling over one another to see the different lights, wreaths, ribbon-wrapped roping, and the cribs surrounded by tiny pine trees that are perfectly cone shaped like train board trees. Our final stop is reserved for the church of the Friars Minor: St. Elizabeth of Hungary. This church displays a crib which is a veritable little town of Bethlehem. We kneel before the crib, and I look at Mary. This time she is not looking at me, but at her baby. She is rapt in contemplation, which as a child—not even knowing what the word means—I see only as love. She is looking without distraction at her child, and as she looks, I look. As she contemplates and loves, I love.



It is 1968, and I see myself as a Jesuit novice, trying to fit into an Order so beyond my natural abilities and scope, that I am made aware by sheer association of my limits. I begin to become obsessed with a feeling that I will never "make it," in any sense, and cold despair pours into my heart, body, and spirit. I am lost and sinking in an immensely vast and dark inner sea. There is only one place to go, one refuge, one last hope. I sneak out into the spring night, and see in the distance the small Mary Chapel on the grounds of the novitiate, the gift of a benefactress. The night is heavy with the scent of Japanese magnolias, and the chapel of cool grey stone reflects the light of the moon, which is not warm and incandescent, but faint and blue. The

waxen magnolia petals cover the ground, and the scent seems ironically unpleasant by night: funereal and stifling. I open the door and see the image of Mary facing me directly. She seems cold herself, lit by the fluorescent moon, and I imagine we both shiver as the visit begins. She is standing on a crisp crescent moon, and her hands are folded in prayer. I weep and beg and repeat the *memorare* over and over again. My eyes grow puffy and red, my feet are stiff and cold, my hands are damp and white, and I am in that familiar state of spent grief. I look up again at this Mary and see that there is more beneath the sharp sickle moon than I had seen.

Mary's right foot is planted at the base of the head of a serpent, and she has trapped and frozen its action. She is delicate, simple, thoughtful, serene like the Buddha; yet she has the strength and courage to arrest something so cunning, so deadly, so quick. I notice again her hands are folded in prayer. Her simplicity and light and strength come from within, and are weapons against the bite of despair, against the drowning spiral of sin. These folded hands are weapons I never dreamed of, and as she begins to pray, I begin to pray.

It is the late 1970's, and I am now a deacon at a French church near Boston. Being on the other side of the altar is not at all what I saw in my daydreams during the years of waiting. I feel afraid to preach. I am confused by the invisible wall between the altar and the people. I feel ashamed of being a cleric, alienated from the status of the people. I long to be in the seats with them again, in harmony. I don't know how to bridge the gap this first ordination has created. People act visibly differently now; they are no longer themselves around me. I fear my humanity will somehow slip away. On February 11th, I give my first homily. I tell the story of the feast of the sixteen year old French Madonna of Lourdes. She smiles through the ecclesiastical examinations, she speaks the local patois, she directs little Bernadette Soubirous to eat grass, to pray surrounded by throngs of people, to dig in the mud up to her elbows looking for water. This lady has two gold roses on her feet, and calls herself the Immaculate Conception—words Bernadette cannot even understand. She keeps her promise to Bernadette, and she makes healing water gush in the city dump, the garbage cave of Massabielle, the grotto of Lourdes. Her hands are folded in prayer, and she teaches us to pray.

It is 1980 now, and I am in the West, an ordained priest in an angry and scattered church. I am helping out at a cathedral named for Mary which was once the house of worship for elegant upper class Catholics. Now it is largely the pilgrim spot for the elderly, for Hispanic Americans, single people, and a handful of homosexual and lesbian Catholics. The area is no longer fashionable, and there are warnings, to those attending evening services, of danger and violence. There seems to be little consolation in the lives of these people who were not endowed at birth, by religion or state, with a wedding garment for the feast. There is a palpable sense of vulnerability, of fear and guilt for just being alive. Yet in the sanctuary, to the right of the main altar, stands an image of the dancing girl of Guadalupe. She is a fourteen year old Aztec Indian princess whose clothes alone inspire hope. She has a delicate salmon colored robe stamped with swirling floral lines that look like acanthus leaves and opening flowers. Her waist is circled with a deep violet (near black) band, tied in a bow signifying maternity. And her mantle!—this is some-

thing I will never get used to as it shocks and wakes the soul, makes one cry or laugh aloud. The mantle falls around Mary from head to toe in the most beautiful curves and waves. It is a vibrant blue-green—turquoise—and there are gold stars all over it, with a band of gold winding around the outer edges. This Lady of Guadalupe is set against a mandorla of tongues of fire. She has driven out an old religion of oppression and given birth to the new in a whirling dance of fire, with all the native energy of the Hindu Shiva Nataraja. She has left her image on the clothes of a poor man. She is the Madonna of the outcast, the destitute, and her message to them for four hundred and fifty years has been: "I listen to their lamentations and solace all their sorrows and their sufferings."

Finally it is the present, and we walk anxiously beneath the dark, haunting nightmare of a nuclear holocaust. Providence has introduced me to an artistic genius whose poetry and writings burn with the fire and truth of the scriptural prophets. He is small and very thin, he is mischievous and broken-hearted, and yet there is a light of pure life in his eyes. He and a little company of fringe people work for the kingdom, calling us to Peace. He is Jesuit Father Daniel Berrigan, and he makes war only on the Beast who waits ravenous and insatiable to eat our earth, our past, our present, and all our dreams. Simultaneously, across the globe, a nineteen year old Croatian girl in an iridescent robe of blue-grey, a mantle of white light, curly black hair, and a halo of stars, speaks to six children in Medjugorje, Yugoslavia. Sometimes she brings her child with her, and sometimes she shows the suffering adult son. She begins every visit with "Praised be Jesus," she asks us to pray, she says that prayer can do anything. She begs us to depend on God, she smiles as at Lourdes when asked who she is. She calls the children "my little angels." She grieves over the ideas we have of destroying God's earth. She calls herself the Queen of Peace. She calls us to repentance of these and all thoughts of rebellion. Her hands are folded in prayer, and she teaches us to pray. Ω

Book Reviews

Mary's Immaculate Heart: A Way to God. By Gabriel M. Allegra, O.F.M. Translated and adapted from the original Italian (1974) by Joachim Daleiden, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1985. Pp. xv-141. Cloth, \$9.50.

Reviewed by Father Juniper B. Carol, O.F.M., S.T.D., former President of the Mariological Society of America and author of many monographs on Christology and Mariology, including A History of the Controversy over the "Debitum Peccati" (The Franciscan Institute, 1978).

Of a book by Father Allegra one does not write a critique but an appreciation. This holds true especially now that the cause of his beatification has been officially introduced less than ten years after his untimely passing on January 26, 1976, at the age of 68. The present reviewer, who was privileged to be a personal friend of the Servant of God, is understandably honored to bring his book to the attention of our English-speaking readers.

The first part of the treatise sketches the Church's teaching and cult relative to Mary's Immaculate Heart, citing numerous witnesses known for their doctrinal value, and culminating with the Fatima apparitions in 1917. It also offers some very solid reflections on Our Lady's unique position in God's overall plan of creation and salvation according to the mind of the Franciscan (Scotistic) School of theology, of which the author was an enthusiastic promoter.

Part Two deals with the Immaculate Heart of Mary in our spiritual life. Here is where the author reveals his thoroughly Marian soul, the exquisite filial tenderness that permeated every fiber of his being. He dwells at length on the concrete manner in which Mary's activity, as our spiritual Mother, brings about the sanctification of souls, purifying them first, and then transforming them into Jesus through the unitive way. Every aspect of this whole process is illustrated with numerous examples taken from a plethora of saints and distinguished clients of Mary through the ages.

Part Three, entitled *A Joyful Summons*, focuses our attention on the various obligations we have, as spiritual children of Mary, to this loving Mother, how we ought to respond to her love, how we should comply with our Savior's wishes to save the world through the honor paid to his and our Mother. Particular stress is given here to "The Guard of Honor of the Immaculate Heart," which originated in Munich through the instrumentality of Father Bonaventure Blattman, O.F.M. (†1942) and Archbishop Eugenio Pacelli (later Pope Pius XII). The statutes of the Guard of Honor, approved by Pius XII in 1951, are actually a joyful summons to love and venerate Mary by consecrating ourselves to her, to make reparation for sin, to work with Mary for the salvation of souls, and to spend one hour a day in union with Mary. All this is explained at length by the author.

An Appendix contains a brief history of the Guard of Honor, plus a collection

of appropriate prayers by Father Blattmann, Pope St. Pius X, Pope Pius XII, and other prominent devotees of Our Lady. The book closes with a prayer, approved by the Bishop of Hong Kong in 1977, for the beatification and canonization of the Servant of God, Father Allegra.

It is hoped that this beautiful Marian treatise will be widely read and relished, especially by the spiritual children of Saint Francis. They will find the reflections and insights of their saintly brother Gabriel refreshingly stimulating and amply rewarding.

The Courage to Be Chaste. By Benedict J. Groeschel, O.F.M.Cap. New York: Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. viii-114, including Bibliography. Paper, \$3.95.

Reviewed by Father Julian A. Davies, O.F.M., Ph.D., Head of the Philosophy Department at Siena College and Associate Editor of this Review.

This small but most substantial book is both a handbook for counselors and a manual for all Christian believers called to a single life, whether the call comes from circumstances of widowhood, vowed life, sexual orientation, divorce, or whatever. After making clear at the outset that a chaste life is possible with the grace of God, the author (a well known spiritual guide) goes on to discuss the obstacles to the

single life, the various reasons for being single, and sexuality and the chaste life (including sections on intimacy in single life, infatuation and attraction, and chaste expressions of sexuality).

In the second part of the book, "Suggestions for a Chaste Single Life," there is a chapter dealing with sexual problems of single persons—problems which can be solved. Another chapter deals with techniques for promoting the chaste single life, such as having a wide variety of interests, giving to others, and service. Another helpful chapter deals with fantasies and temptations, and the final chapter treats of chastity and spirituality, emphasizing prayer as foundational to the chaste life.

Throughout the book Fr. Benedict Joseph alludes to examples of people who have struggled with and overcome sexual difficulties. He seasons his writing with aphoristic statements, e.g., "No one has to apologize for being single" (p. 34), "If you take time to be interested in people, your worst problem will be trying to control your Christmas card list" (p. 81). His annotated bibliography at the end of the work is most helpful for those looking for more reading in this area, and the Introduction by Dr. Susan Muto is also very appropriate. About the only complaint I could make about the book is that there isn't more of it. Every director of people should read *The Courage to Be Chaste*, and bookstores ought to give it prominence.

Books Received

- D'Alatri, O.F.M.Cap., Mariano, comp., *The Capuchin Way: Lives of Capuchins*. Vol I, Part 1. Trans. Ignatius G. McCormick, O.F.M.Cap. Pittsburgh: North American Capuchin Conference, 1984. Pp. viii-231. Paper, \$10.00.
- Marbach, Ethel, *The White Rabbit*. Illus. by Tim Kemp. Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1985. Pp. 12. Paper, \$3.95.
- Ruffin, C. Bernard, *The Days of the Martyrs*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 232, including Index. Paper, \$7.95.
- Stevens, Clifford, *The Blessed Virgin: Her Life and Her Role in Our Lives*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1985. Pp. 182, including Index. Paper, \$6.95.