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OCTOBER, 1986

The CORD

A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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Volume 36, No. 9

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
Fior: 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



Oversimplifying Spirituality

I AM A SLOGAN or motto person, and so the pithy sayings of the Bible have meant a lot to me over the years, e.g. "Seek first the kingdom of Heaven, and all things will be given you besides;" "In patience you will possess your soul;" "Fear not, little flock." And the phrases of spiritual writers have also influenced me, e.g. Father Faber's "Our thoughts are better measures of ourselves than our actions;" and Van Zeller's "Happiness is a by-product of activity." And retreat masters have given me a couple of one-liners, too: "if you cut corners, you will end up going in circles," and "one step beyond mediocrity and you have got it made."

As comforting, inspiring, and helpful as all of these remarks are, I do have to remind myself that living in relationship with the Lord is not reducible to following an exact prescription, or as easy as shouting a motto. In particular, I would like to address the view that was expressed in the adage, listed last above, "One step beyond mediocrity, and you have it made." I think it expresses an assumption we make, or want to make. "If only I could do something heroic, like going off to the foreign missions, or giving up meat, or praying eleven hours a day, then I would have the closeness to God that I desire." I think the illusion of such thinking is shown by the story of the Chinese missionary on his death bed surrounded by his fellow religious, reminding him of the long years of service he had in that foreign land. The ex-missionary said, "If the Lord doesn't mention China when he meets me, neither will I." Older religious who have tried the austerity short-cut to God can also testify they are as far away as ever. And do not the words of the Lord, "Come to me, you who are heavy-burdened" and the petitions of the prayer He taught us. "Give us this day our daily bread," and "Forgive us our trespasses

as we forgive those who trespass against us," imply that struggle and need are ongoing. We just cannot put our spiritual life on cruise control and watch life roll by.

The spiritual life, then, is a question of relating to God as the persons we are, not the hero that our imagination supplies as another of America's saints. God has made each of us unique, and He is unique, so our relationship with him will have the mystery of all personal relationships. We are a lot deeper with our friends than we realize—their death often shows us that. We are a lot deeper with God than we realize, so why can't we begin to lay aside the desire for the "Grand gesture" that will establish us in His Love. After all, we don't look for the heroic from our friends. What makes us think God does?

Dr. Julian Davies ofm

The Leper

A chance encounter—during a solitary ride.

You crossed my path. . . .

Impulsively, I sought to look away.

Your stench and physical decay were too much to bear. . . .

Or so I thought.

Why. . . .

Were you too powerful a reminder
of this earthly sojourn's final resolution?

Or did your flesh mirror the condition of my soul?

Despite my revulsion,

I dismounted and stepped toward you. . . .

An outstretched hand sought alms.

With coin in hand you turned to walk away. . . .

My kiss was beyond your comprehension.

I glanced away for only an instant.

Turning back . . . you'd disappeared.

Or was your presence my wild imaginings?

It didn't matter,

for the sweetness of that encounter

filled my heart with joy,

my soul with peace.

Darkness had lifted. . . .

I walked in the Light.

William J. Boylan, O.F.M.Conv.

St. Francis' The Canticle of Brother Sun and Joseph Haydn's The Creation

*The Fatherhood of God and the
Brotherhood of all creatures*

MICHAEL CHANDLER, O.F.M., Cap.

THE IDEA of comparing St. Francis' *The Canticle* with Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* first came to me more as a passing thought than as a deliberate intention. It came as I was listening to a performance of *The Creation* on BBC television at the end of March 1982 in honour of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Haydn's birth - March 31st 1732. As the performance made headway I began to sing fragments of *The Canticle* almost by reflex action in response to music just heard: "Be praised my Lord with all your creatures." It was then that the idea of comparing the messages of these two works materialized.

I wish at this point to acknowledge my deep gratitude to the late FR. ERIC DOYLE, O.F.M., lecturer at the Franciscan Study Centre, Canterbury, England, and a well-known Franciscan author and teacher. Without his help and encouragement—and his friendship—this article would never have seen the light of day.

Masterpieces

All creation is a reflection of its Maker. This is above all true of God's creation—everything that exists—and it is also true of the results of man's

Fr Michael Chandler O.F.M.Cap. is a member of the Capuchin Province of Great Britain: he took final vows in September 1982 and was ordained priest in March 1983. Before joining the Capuchins he studied at the Royal Academy of Music, London, receiving the degree of "Graduate of the Royal Schools of Music" (G.R.S.M.) and the diploma "Licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music" (L.R.A.M.). He is currently studying in Paris (France) for a Master's degree at the Institut Supérieur de Liturgie (Institut Catholique de Paris).

creative activity. Both *The Canticle* by St. Francis and Haydn's *the Creation* are reflections of their author's own beliefs and life-experiences. In the lives of both these men—one a saint, the other a composer—these two works stand out as special among all their other creative works. They are their masterpieces. Both are the climax and highest expressions of their personalities and of their attitudes and beliefs concerning God, the meaning of life, and the created things which they experienced around them and of which they felt themselves to be a part. In consequence, to appreciate their works we have to understand the men who created them.

St. Francis is distinguished by a deep relationship with God, especially as revealed in littleness in the person of Jesus, his Lord and Saviour. He is also distinguished by a love for his fellow man and for all created things, his brothers and sisters, because all creation, including man, has its only source in the one heavenly Father of all, and in Jesus, King and Lord of all creation and our Eldest Brother. St. Francis is well known. But, to make the comparison, we need to know something about Haydn, the "creator" of *The Creation*, and about *The Creation* itself.

Joseph Haydn and THE CREATION

Joseph Haydn was born on March 31st, 1732, in Rohrau, a small village on the border of Austria and Hungary. He was the son of a wheelwright. At an early age he began to show signs of musical talent and was eventually sent to Vienna to become a choirboy in St. Stephen's Cathedral. At the age of eighteen he was dismissed from the choir and spent nine years virtually unemployed until he secured a position as musical director in the household of Count Morzin, a German princeling. In 1761, at the age of twenty-nine, he secured a position as "Vice-Kapellmeister" (deputy musical director) at the court of Prince Paul Eszterhazy, one of the most powerful noblemen in the Austrian Empire. Haydn became Kapellmeister there three years later. He spent more than forty years of his life in the service of the Eszterhazys, composing on command symphonies, Masses and operas. During this time his fame began to spread throughout Europe, and, on the death of Prince Nicholas Eszterhazy in September 1790, Haydn took the opportunity to travel abroad, making two visits to England (1791-93; 1794-95). It was for London audiences that he composed his twelve symphonies. When he returned to Vienna from London in 1795, Haydn, although now sixty-three years old, was about to enter the last and possibly the greatest period of his creative life. It was in this period that he composed his masterpiece *The Creation*, which took two years to complete (1796-98). It was first performed in April 1798 at the Swarsenberg Palace in Vienna.

Why is this oratorio the crowning achievement of Haydn's creative life? *The Creation* expresses in sound his whole outlook on life in a way so complete as no other single work of his does. It is a summary of Haydn's creative work. This gives rise to further questions: What was Haydn's outlook on life? and What were his beliefs?

He was devoutly religious; he was brought up in the Austrian Catholic tradition and throughout his life practiced his faith. He had a deep sense of God's providence and believed that God's goodness as Heavenly Father was to be seen in a world that He called very good. Despite the darkness aspects of life, Haydn saw the world as a good and beautiful place. Both these values—love of God and love of nature (including man)—had an effect on his life. He was a kind and honest man, very human, and free from envy, as is evident in his friendship with the younger Mozart whom Haydn treated as an equal even though he was old enough to have been Mozart's father. These values also had an effect on his creative life and work.

Haydn realized that every composition he "created" found its source in God and gave praise to God. He was present at a performance of *The Creation* in Vienna in honour of his seventy-sixth birthday in March, 1808. When the audience thundered applause at a particularly dramatic point in the work—the unexpected "And there was LIGHT" at the beginning of the oratorio—he was heard to exclaim: "Not I, but a power above, created that." In honour of his heavenly Father he composed several Masses, an oratorio and a *Te Deum*. Moreover, he began his manuscripts almost always with the words "In nomine Domini" (In the name of the Lord) and ended them with either "Laus Deo" (Praise God) or "Deo Gratias" (Thanks be to God).

As for his love of nature, many of his works are filled with a rural atmosphere due to the inherent simplicity of his melodic and harmonic style. There are also explicit musical representations of the sounds of nature and of country life in his works; for example, the junting horns in the Symphony "with the Horn-signal" (no.31), and most especially in his cantata *The Seasons*, written in 1800-01.

However, it was only the *The Creation* that Haydn was able to express his love of God and of nature in a way that was fully satisfying. This is the one composition in which Haydn expresses himself completely; and in composing it Haydn found true happiness and a heightened sense of devotion towards God. As Karl Geiringer has written:

These years devoted to the composition of *The Creation* were among the richest and happiest in Haydn's life. He was fully absorbed by a task in which, perhaps better than ever before, he could express the innermost forces of his nature... When he worked on this oratorio, Haydn felt

uplifted and in close communion with his Creator: "Never was I so devout," he said, "as when composing *The Creation*. I knelt down every day and prayed to God to strengthen me for my work..."¹

The Creation is a setting to music of a libretto whose authorship is disputed. It was originally meant for Handel and given to Haydn in England. The libretto consists chiefly of a paraphrase of the Genesis 1-2 account of creation with passages describing the handiwork of each successive day taken from scripture, especially the Psalms, and from Book VII of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. *The Creation* is a large-scale work, set for large orchestra—including three trombones and double bassoon - and a large choir, with three soloists taking the parts of the archangels Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel, and later of Adam and Eve.

The Vision of God and of Creation

We can now turn to a comparison of the respective visions of St. Francis and of Haydn concerning God and creation.

Firstly, their *love of God*, the Creator of all. Francis begins *The Canticle* with these words:

Most High, all powerful, good Lord, Yours are the praise, The glory, and the honour and every blessing.

Francis' approach to God was such that God was for him both mysterious and yet so friendly and approachable. In *The Canticle* there is an atmosphere of closeness to the Most High. Francis proclaims God's glory in gladness and joy, just like the Psalmist: "I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart... I will rejoice in you and be glad, and sing psalms to your name, O most High" (Ps.9). Francis describes God as at one both wholly Other and yet very close to him. In the twenty-third chapter of the 1221 Rule, "The Franciscan Proclamation" (as it has been called), he describes God as "...without beginning and without end, ...unchangeable, invisible, indescribable and ineffable, incomprehensible, unfathomable, blessed and worthy of all praise, glorious, exalted sublime, most high" and yet at the same time "kind, lovable, delightful and utterly desirable beyond all else..."² Francis spent whole nights in prayer, praising God both in awe-some wonder at the incomprehensibility and majesty of his Being, and

¹K. Geiringer. *Haydn: A Creative Life in Music*, London, 1947, 144.

²Marion A. Habig. *St. Francis of Assisi: Writings and Early Biographies*. Chicago, 1973, 52.

at the same time in thankfulness and praise of the God who is friendly and accessible, especially in Jesus, His Son and our Brother, who is so close to us in the vulnerability of the Eucharistic Bread.

In *The Creation* there are many times when Haydn expresses his own love of God, and there is the same mixture of power and warmth as in Francis' prayers to God. Haydn's style in the large choruses, expressing the greatness and majesty of the God of creation, is exuberant and lofty and yet always expressive of warmth and joy. His praise of the almighty Father is blended with an affection for the Father who is close and who provides for us. A good example of this is the Trio and Chorus (No.19) to the words: "The Lord is great and great his might, His glory lasts for ever and for evermore." Here the whole orchestra, choir and three soloists join in a powerful chorus, every instrumentalist and singer here together praising the Lord. This is similar to Francis' praise of the indescribable God. The overall impression is not one of fear before this God of might but one of happiness and joy before the Heavenly Father who is close to us. Haydn's God is not a wrathful God but a God of love. This music reflects the love that Haydn, the man and the musician, had for God: "When I think of God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap form my pen; and since God has given me a cheerful heart, He will forgive me for serving Him cheerfully."³

Secondly, their *love of nature*:

"Great are the works of the Lord; to be pondered by all who love them"
(Ps. 110)

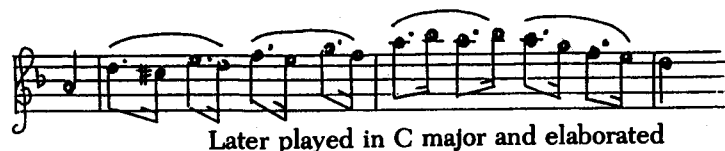
Both Francis and Haydn had a tender love for creation. Francis had a deep relationship with creatures whom he regarded as his brothers and sisters. His natural gift for seeing beauty in all creation and his artistic temperament combined to make him attuned to his fellow creatures. This must be one of the best known of Francis' characteristics. In *The Canticle* he describes poetically Brother Sun, Sisters Moon and Stars, Sister Mother Earth, Sister Water who is "so useful, humble, precious and pure." It is abundantly clear that Francis listened to the message of beauty that creation contains.

Haydn had a great love of nature as a child of the countryside. In *The Creation* there are many references to God's creatures, and Haydn provides musical impressions of the various creatures. One of the most expressive is to be found in the Recitative "And God made the Firmament" (No.3) in which storms, clouds driven by the wind, thunder and lightning,

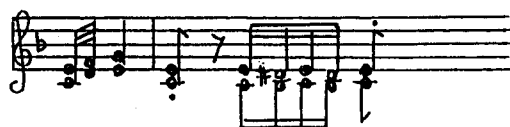
³E. Jacob, *Joseph Haydn: His Art, Times, and Glory*. London, 1950, 273.

showers, hail and snow are described in musical sounds. In the Aria "Rolling and frothing and foaming" (No.6) the boisterous sea, the flowing meandering rivers and a softly rippling brook are described musically. There is also a marvellous moment in the Recitative "In his splendour" (No.12) in which the moon making its progress "through silent night" is portrayed with music of great stillness and calm. In the Aria "The eagle flies on his proud wide wings" (No.15) Gabriel sings of the various birds, and Haydn provides instrumental "tone-painting" of the lark (clarinet), of a pair of cooing doves (two bassoons and violins), and of a nightingale (various "bird-calls" on a flute):

LARK: Clarinet (bars 51-54):



DOVES: 2 Violins/Bassoons (bars 64-65):

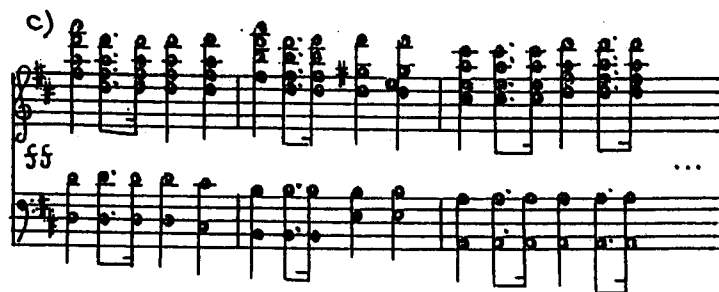
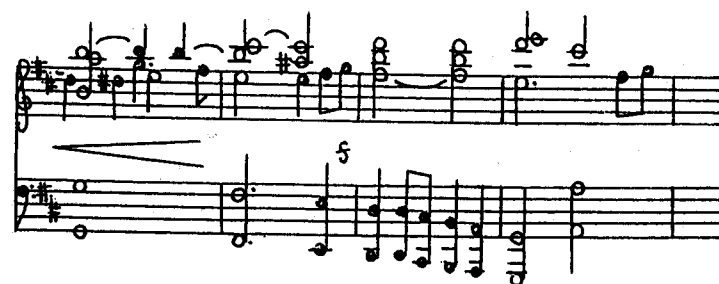
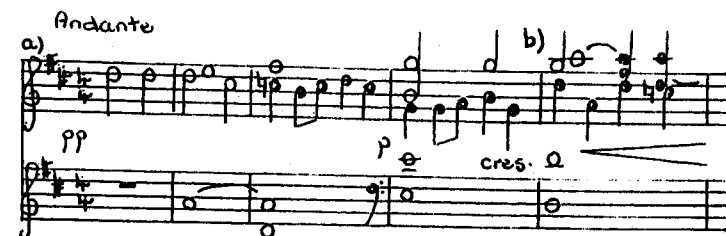


NIGHTINGALE: Flute (bars 141-42):



There are many other examples, especially the musical "tone-painting" of the various animals in the Recitative "As if from out the womb of earth" (No.21). Also particular mention must be made of the Introduction to Part III entitled "Morning" (No.29) which depicts the freshness and unviolated beauty of the first morning experienced by man.

Yet perhaps the greatest musical portrayal of them all, is of the sun at the beginning of the Recitative "In all his splendour" (No.12). The violins first begin very softly (*pp*) and with their silvery tone give the impression of the first glimmer of light shyly breaking forth on the horizon (a). Then gradually the woodwind enter as the sun gently rises in the east (b) until the sun stands there "in splendour bright", darting his rays, "a joyful, happy spouse, a giant proud and glad to run his measured course," with the whole orchestra, as loudly as it can, proclaiming the majesty of the sun in all its splendour with massive imperial chords in D major, modulating to A major, keys of brilliance (c):



Listening to this, the words of *The Canticum* come to mind: "Sir Brother Sun, who is day and by Him You shed light upon us: He is beautiful and radiant with great splendour." Francis and Haydn are here very close in spirit.

Thirdly, their vision of the *dignity and vocation of man*:

Francis had a sense of man's dignity above all other created beings. In the fifth Admonition he says: "Try to realize the dignity God has conferred on you. He created and formed your body in the image of his beloved Son, and your soul in his own likeness..."⁴ Yet there is a realistic sting in the tail for man: "...And yet every creature under heaven serves and acknowledges and obeys its Creator in its own way better than you do..."⁵ Francis realised that man's God-given vocation, like that of other creatures, is to serve, acknowledge and obey his Creator in humility. Yet he also realized that fails in his vocation even more than other created beings, becoming arrogant and proud, ruining the friendship and love that should exist between man and God, and between man and all creation, especially his fellow man.

The section of *The Canticum* devoted to man illustrates this very well. Firstly, Francis composed *The Canticum* to express in words and music the vocation of man to love and appreciate God and his fellow creatures. In the *Legend of Perugia* (43) Francis gives the reason why he wrote *The Canticum*: "...for his glory, for my consolation, and the edification of my neighbour, I wish to compose a new *Praises of the Lord*, for his creatures. These creatures minister to our needs every day; without them we could not live; and through them the human race greatly offends the Creator. Every day we fail to appreciate so great a blessing by not praising as we should the Creator and dispenser of all these gifts." He sat down, concentrated a minute, then cried out: "Most High, all-powerful, and good Lord..." And he composed a melody to these words which he taught his companions.⁶

Francis also realized that man serves and obeys his Creator by loving his fellow man, by which he gives praise to God. Later in the *Legend of Perugia* (44) the story is told of the time when Francis heard of the hatred between the bishop and the podestà (mayor) of Assisi:

On this occasion he added the following strophe to his canticum:

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon For love of you; through those who endure

⁴Marion A. Habig, *op.cit.*, 80.

⁵*ibid.*

⁶ed. Marion A. Habig, *op.cit.*, 1021.

Sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,

By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

Then he gathered his brothers together and said:

"...Go, and in the presence of the bishop, of the podestà, and of the entire gathering, sing the *Canticum of Brother Sun*. I have confidence that the Lord will put humility and peace in their hearts and that they will return to their former friendship and affection."⁷

The brothers did so and reconciliation resulted.

Francis sees man's vocation as one of praising and appreciating God, of loving his neighbour, and of appreciating all the good gifts of creation. In Francis' vision there is no room for arrogance and pride in man, but only humility and love. Love of God, love of neighbour, love of all creation. This is man's vocation and dignity in the eyes of God.

Haydn's vision of man in his relationships with God, with his neighbour and with all creation is strikingly similar to Francis'. Man is introduced by the Recitative (No.23) sung to the words of Genesis 1: "And God created Man in his own image and likeness... male and female he created them..." There is something special about this recitative. It has a dignity and a heightened sense of awe and wonder at this new creature, the centre and crown of all creation, a dignity unique among all the other recitatives in this oratorio, with the exception of the Recitative 'And mighty whales created He' (No.16) in which God commands all creation to be fruitful and multiply. These two recitatives, expressing the mystery of life, rival those in Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* for depth of feeling and devotion.

From this Recitative (No.23) onwards one of Haydn's main musical concerns is to attempt to describe in sound the mystery of human life. Haydn approaches this in two ways. Firstly, he describes musically the masculinity and femininity which is present in human nature. An example of this is to be found in the Aria "In fair renown and honour clad," (No.24) in which these two complementary elements are portrayed musically as distinct and yet equally indispensable human characteristics. Secondly, Haydn, in his characterisation of Adam and Eve in Part III of the oratorio, portrays musically the unity and equality of mankind in its fundamental vocation to love God and all God's creation. It is this second aspect of Haydn's musical portrayal of mankind which is of chief concern in the comparison between *The Canticum* and *The Creation* regarding the vocation of man.

One of the most important characteristics of the musical portrayal of Adam and Eve in Part III is the way the music describes the unity and

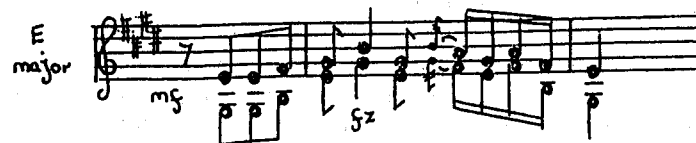
⁷Marion A. Habig, *op.cit.*, 1023.

mutual love of the first couple. Throughout most of Part III, the major exception being the Recitative "Our bounden duty first was this" (No.31). Adam and Eve sing together, in harmony or in unison, or else one sings a melody or a melodic phrase which has been sung by the other immediately beforehand. The meaning of this, and Haydn expressly intended it, is precisely to emphasise the unity and equality of Adam and Eve in their appreciation and love of each other. The music constantly gives the impression that the first couple are truly "two in one flesh." A good example of this unity can be found in the Duet *Dear Companion* (No.32). In the first section *Adagio* Adam, with tenderly lyrical melody, sings to Eve of his love an appreciation of her, and then Eve, returning his love, sings the same melody, through slightly altered, to Adam. This section ends with Adam and Eve singing in close harmony of their mutual love. This leads into the second section *Allegro* in which Adam and Eve, again together in harmony or singing the same melody or melodic phrase the one after the other, sing with obvious happiness of their mutual joy in their relationship with each other.

Although Haydn is here describing the married love of the first human couple, we must remember that Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis also represent the whole of humanity. Thus the music can be seen as a portrayal of that mutual appreciation, friendship and trust which must exist between individuals, families, communities and nations in order for there to be peace in the world. It is in this wider sense that Haydn's musical representation of Adam and Eve is saying very much the same as Francis' strophe in *The Canticle* written so that peace and reconciliation could take place in Assisi.

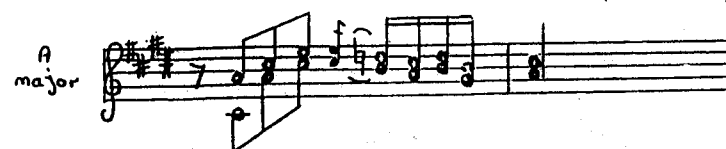
Another expression of the unity and equality of mankind in Part III of *The Creation* is to be found in Haydn's musical portrayal of Adam and Eve in their total appreciation of God and His gifts. As we have seen, one of Francis' main reasons for composing *The Canticle* was that man should at all times appreciate the great blessings God gives us—that is, the whole of creation—by praising God the Creator and Giver of all these gifts. In Part III of *The Creation* Haydn portrays precisely this in music of exquisite beauty. Adam and Eve are portrayed as walking in the Garden of Eden on their first morning together. They are praising the Lord for the wonders of creation, singing together in joy as equals in a loving relationship with each other and with their Creator. In the opening Recitative of Part III "In rosy mantle appears" (No.29) Adam and Eve first appear on the scene: "...hand in hand they go! Their eyes are radiant, filled with the warmth of gratitude..." The music here expresses the unity of Adam and Eve by two horns played together in harmony:

(bars 39-41)



later repeated twice, in a shortened form and with added orchestration. When this motive is repeated, both repetitions are played in a higher key—a perfect fourth higher—than before:

(bars 44-45)



(bars 49-50)

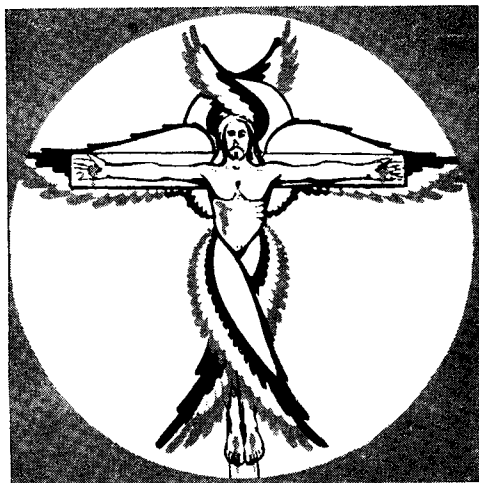


Perhaps Haydn did this to express the ever-increasing joy and thankfulness of Adam and Eve towards God and His creation. The whole passage is reminiscent of the plainsong *Alleluia* sung during the Easter Vigil just before the Gospel of the Resurrection. The *Alleluia* is repeated twice by all present, each time a semitone higher. This expresses in song the joy and thankfulness of the whole community of God's love and power as shown especially in His Son's resurrection, God's greatest creative act of all.

Later in *The Creation*, Adam and Eve, in the first section (*Adagio*) of the Duet and Chorus "By thee with bliss" (No.30), sing the words: "The world so great, so wonderful, does show thy handiwork". The stiffness of

the words is here transformed by Haydn's music to produce an atmosphere of the wonder and joy experienced by the first human couple before the greatness of God as revealed in His creation.

In all this both Francis and Haydn have expressed a fundamental truth about mankind, namely that human dignity and greatness lie not in pride and arrogance but in humility and thankfulness. Man is fully himself when he lives a life of love: love of God, of creation, and of his neighbour. God meant man to love, and it is by *loving* that man reflects God and gives thanks to God. This is man fully himself, created in God's image, who Himself is Love.



I acknowledge with gratitude the permission to reproduce extracts from the vocal score to Haydn's The Creation kindly granted to me by Novello and Company Limited Sevenoaks England

The Contemplative Dimension Of Our Lives

ANTHONY M. CARROZZO, O.F.M.

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, I had a long list of heroes: my grandfather and a young charismatic friar, St. Francis and St. Anthony, to say nothing of Hopalong Cassidy and the Lone Ranger.

I remember one of these heroes, my grandfather, telling long and elaborate stories in broken English of his youthful days in Italy when the friars would emerge from the mountains to preach in the local towns and churches. They were dramatic and romantic stories, at least in the telling.

As time changed and I grew, my heroes also changed and even disappeared for a while in the sixties, when older meant lesser.

But today, like Adso of Melk, I have a hero, who isn't even real: William of Baskerville, the friar of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*. Sherlock Holmes in a friar habit, William has a keen insight and masterful wisdom, which young Adso, his traveling companion and student, deeply desires. From the opening scene as William and Adso climb the mountain to the Benedictine Abbey of Melk, through his quick stroll through the kitchen of the Abbey where William's senses are so keen that he perceives the herbs being used in the cooking meat, to his solution of the mystery, William of Baskerville is, for me, an example of the truly contemplative friar, not hidden in some desert place but traveling through the world; not entering into the world of esoteric truths but coming more and more to gain insight into everyday reality, where the presence and experience of God can truly be found; not a quiet retiring man but, like Francis a lively, dionysian person.

When my grandfather told stories of the friar-preachers coming to Campo Basso, he always began with their "Coming from the Hills." He had a deeper insight into the contemplative dimension of Franciscan life than I ever realized, for Franciscan spirituality is not a spirituality of the desert but rather a spirituality of the mountain. For Francis, the symbol of encounter with God was the mountain, where he could feel closer to the transcendent than he would in the desert, where demons roamed so

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freely. It seems, then, that the motivating account for Francis' contemplation would have been, not the temptations of Jesus in the desert but rather the transfiguration of Jesus on the Mountaintop. The temptations in the desert deal with purgation, certainly a central element of spiritual growth. However, the transfiguration and the mountain deal with the experience of illumination, which St. Bonaventure claims, is the Francis-can experience of contemplation: to go to the mountain to be transfigured and illumined to return to everyday experience full of light and wisdom. Even the stigmata, though physically disfiguring Francis, was an experience of transfiguration, for it filled him with the light of Christ and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

So often contemplation is seen as an escape from the everyday world rather than a deeper entrance into that world, an escape through unusual mystical experiences or even through mind-denying techniques. Rather, for us, as is so obvious from the stories of Francis and the spiritual theology of St. Bonaventure, contemplation is insight into our human experiences gained through grace, prayer and Gospel living. St. Bonaventure makes clear in the final experience of the *Itinerarium* that contemplation is a personal and communal surrendering to the human situation in Faith, Hope, and Love and the commitment to change that which is inhuman in the situation. So he can rightly claim that we are created for contemplation.

As I walk the streets of New York City and ride the subways, I find myself frequently and inadvertently staring at disfigured people; a bag lady, wearing layers of shabby clothing, which match her worn and wrinkled face; a young though seasoned drug addict, looking tough and mean behind his scarred face, moving to the music screaming from his ghetto box; a middle-aged, smartly dressed man whose gait and expression reveal that, behind cleanliness and expensive clothing, is a person disfigured by the hardness of life. These people of the night, as Tina Turner might call them, are symbols of my own experience of disfiguration. Within me, there is the bag lady, protected from life by layers of spiritual and psychological clothing; the young drug addict, carrying within me the scars of Christian and even Franciscan Life lived inhumanly; The middle-aged success hardened by knowing too much about others. This is not simply my experience; it is our experience. Whether Tobit or Bartimaeus or Francis, we have symbols of our own disfiguration and blindness, stumbling through life incapable of truly seeing until entering into the light of Christ. For us, the transfiguration and the stigmata are symbols of entering into the light. The light helps us to see with new eyes and to understand with new wisdom.

The contemplative dimension of our lives calls us to ascend the mountain of the Lord to be enlightened in our ordinary human experiences so that we descend to the ordinary filled with enlightenment and wisdom. *Our Call to Evangelization* makes this process quite clear for in paragraph 18 it states: "Our aim is discernment of reality in a vision of faith, as a basis for subsequent choices." Early in that same document it states; "By a contemplative stance we free ourselves from our distortions and from destructive relationships. Thus we are able to know God's presence even in dehumanized situations(11)." In other words, we are ready to climb the mountain to allow the Lord to heal our disfigurations, converting them into his own transfigured self. And again, in paragraph 22: "The constant spirit of prayer and devotion for which we strive does not remove us from human realities. Rather, it helps us to enter more deeply into our historical situation."

It is interesting to me that John Vaughn and his newly elected General Definitorium began their service to us in precisely this way. Father John, in his letter to us dated October 25, 1985, writes; "Like St. Bonaventure in 1259, we too climbed The Franciscan Calvary to come into contact with our roots and to drink deeply at the wellsprings of our calling... We went to La Verna to experience better what St. Francis had felt there; in so doing we wished to emphasize the contemplative dimension in our own lives, both as individuals and as a definitorium." Having entered into the presence of God, obtaining enlightenment and wisdom, Father John continues: "After asking of the Spirit of the Lord and His Holy working, we left the sacred mountain to go down into the plain." In doing this, it seem to me, our newly elected General Definitorium has given us a model of the Franciscan approach to contemplation.

Whether John Vaughn with the General Definitorium or Francis with Brother Leo or Jesus with Peter, James, and John, it is obvious that for us contemplation is an act not of isolation but of fraternity as *The Rule for Hermitages* so beautifully yet simply articulates.

Raymond Carver, in his wonderful short story "The Cathedral" tells the tale of a blind man, who has never seen a cathedral. Incapable of seeing, he would like to experience a cathedral, so he asks his host to trace a cathedral while guiding his hand. The man with vision holds the hand and fingers of the blind man as he draws and so the blind man "sees" a cathedral for the first time. We, who have been blind but have become visionaries through contemplation, are called to guide the hands of the blind in our culture to the experience of the cathedrals within our human experience.

Creed, in the Spirit of Saint Francis

We believe in God who is infinitely creative and dynamic,
holy and wise, all good, all love, and all life.

We believe in Jesus, the free one,
the whole one,
who was one with the earth and all its creatures,
and one with God.

We believe in Jesus
who shares with us his power and glory.

We believe in the Spirit,
the breath of life
who stirs within us the pulse of life
and is our desire for life.

We believe in Francis
filled and overflowing with the Gospel,
who saw himself as both brother and mother.

We believe in Francis
who loved creation, especially its people,
its little people,
and recognized in all the dignity of God.

We believe in the church
which is the people of God,
especially those who long to be free,
especially those who dream of ways yet to be.

We believe in the church
found in the unity of all
who love life
and seek its fullness.

Sister Carolyn Law, O.S.F.

Clare and the Ancren Riwe—II

SISTER MARY FRANCIS HONE, O.S.C.

III. Leaving All for the Kingdom

Guarding the the senses was but the beginning of the journey toward purity of heart. The anchoress must leave all attachments so that she might be free to mount upward toward higher realities. She was like *a sparrow alone on a rooftop*, for like the birds of the air she soared heavenward, not storing up many things on earth, and using only necessities:

"Foxes have their holes, and the birds of heaven their nests." The foxes have their holes in the earth, with earthly vices, and draw everything into their holes that they can catch and steal. Thus the anchoresses who gather worldly goods are compared by God in the Gospel to foxes [AR p. 97].

The foxes have dens, he says, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head but bowing His head gave up His Spirit... Contempt of the world has pleased you more than worldly riches, and you have sought to store up greater treasures in heaven rather than on earth [1st. LET 18, 22: p.192].

The anchoress's life situation was compared to a nest for it is hard and thorny on the outside, but inside she gradually becomes gentle and patient; the flesh is crucified so that Christ may live in her. This imagery of the nest was also used by Clare:

Job calleth a religious house a nest; and saith as if he were a recluse: "I shall die in my nest and be as dead therein"; for this relates to anchoresses [AR p.102].

She (Clare) exhorted them to be conformed in their little nest to poverty to the Poor Christ [L IX, 13: p.28].

Sister Mary Francis Hone, O.S.C. writes from the Monastery of St. Clare in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts. The concluding part of this article will be published in our November issue. Part I of this study appeared in our July/August pages.

Like the eagle who places in her nest a precious stone of agate, the anchoress must always keep in her nest the Stone which is Jesus Christ. No deadly thing will venture near the nest while the bright stone is there. Clare mentioned precious stones and pearls, priceless jewels and sparkling gems and always in the context of spiritual treasure obtained by letting go of material things.

This precious stone is Jesus Christ...place him in thy nest; that is, in thine heart [AR p.102].

The most precious pearl of heavenly desire... could not be possessed, she would say, with a gnawing worry over temporal things [L VIII, 13: p.28].

Whoever cannot keep the love of Jesus ever in her thoughts must, at least, contemplate the marks of the Crucified. There are a number of references to Clare's concentration upon the wounds of Christ comparable to passages from the *Ancren Riwe*:

See that she have a crucifix in the nest of her monastery, and contemplate it often, and kiss the places of the wounds, in sweet remembrance of the real wounds he meekly suffered on the real cross [AR p.103].

His holy wounds were for her, at times, a source of sorrowful affections, at others, a reason to flee sweeter joys. The tears of the suffering Christ inebriated her, and her memory often recalled to her Him whom love had impressed so deeply on her heart [L XX, 30: p.40].

All holy people were set as examples for the anchoresses—Christ above all: no part of His life was considered unapplicable to the nuns. Jesus, who went alone in to the wilderness, stood with them. There He hungered to comfort anchoresses who were in want, and there He was tempted to give them courage. He who neither noise nor multitude could hinder from prayer nor disturb in his meditations fled from others and went up into the hills alone when He wished to pray. This Jesus was Clare's mirror, too, and with Him His mother who had stood beside Him.

The English Rule of Life introduced the sisters to many examples of singleness of heart found in scriptural characters who notably sought God in solitude. There was Esther, a name meaning *hidden*, and Judith, which signifies *one enclosed*. Like Isaac, anchoresses seek out a lonely place, and like Jacob, the Lord will reveal Himself to them. And was not Mary alone when she conceived the Word? Saint John who settled in the wilderness *held in Baptism, under his hands, the Lord of Heaven who upholds the world with his might alone* (AR p.120). Clare employed a similar

comparison in reference to the Mother of God, saying that *by following his footprints (as Mary did), especially those of poverty and humility...you will hold Him by Whom you and all things are held together* (3rd LET 24: p.36). Clare included Rachael as a model for contemplatives in one of her letters.

After the list of characters from scripture who risked losing all things in their search for God, there is another list of reasons why people are drawn to pursue this austere manner of living. The detachment preached in the Middle Ages seems to have been enshrined in the expectancy of reward, even in Clare's philosophy, which finds similarities in the *Ancren Riwe*:

1. In order to be secure against the dangers of being drawn away from God and prayer [AR p.122].

Do not let the false delights of a deceptive world deceive you [LET ERM 5: p.207].

2. This brittle vessel is woman's flesh [AR p.123].

Though we were physically weak and frail we did not shirk deprivation... [T 8:p.228].

3. To obtain heaven [AR p.124]

Because of this you shall share...the glory of the kingdom of heaven in place of earthly and passing things [2nd. LET 23: p.197].

4. It is a proof of nobleness... It does not belong to God's spouse, who is the lady of heaven (to have) earthly wealth and revenue [AR p.125].

This is the summit of highest poverty which has established you, my dearest sisters, as heirs and queens of the kingdom of heaven [RC VIII,2:p.220].

5. In order to follow the Lamb whosoever he goeth...in purity of heart and body [AR p.126].

...that you may sing a new song with the other most holy virgins before the throne of God and of the Lamb wherever He may go (cf. Rev. 15:3-4) [4th LET 3: p.203].

6. That you might be in fellowship with the Lord [AR p.126].

...that you might feel what His friends feel as they taste the hidden sweetness which God Himself has reserved from the beginning for those who love Him [3rd. LET 14: p.200].

7. That you may behold more clearly God's bright countenance in heaven [AR p.126].

8. That your prayers may be fervent...many people would have been lost who are saved through the prayers of anchoresses [AR p.127].

By renouncing all other possibilities for the sake of the Kingdom the apostolic dimensions of a life of prayer are increased:

Recluses dwell under the eaves of the church, that they may understand that they ought to be of so holy a life that the whole Church, that is, all christian people, may lean and be supported upon them, and that they may bear her up with their holiness of life and their pious prayers [AR p.107].

The witness of prayer included nightly vigils for: *this is the duty of the anchoress, to watch much* (AR p.108).

Whoso watcheth well here a little while...will shake off her sleep of vicious sloth in the still of the night, when nothing is to be seen to hinder prayer [AR p.110].

The reward for these unseen deeds of prayer was endless, for with them one buys the Kingdom. For this reason had Esther's prayer been pleasing to the king, the Bishop tells them, because it was hidden:

...until we meet at the throne of the glory of the great God (Tit 2:13) [L, XXIX, 46: p.50].

In any danger the sisters were commanded by their Mother always to resort to the help of prayer [CC 6,11: p.204].
Go now to our Lord and plead with all your hearts for the deliverance of the city [L,XV,23: p.35].

I consider you a co-worker of God Himself and a support of the weak members of His ineffable Body [3rd.LET 8: p.200].

For the Lord Himself not only has set us as an example and mirror for others, but also for our own sisters who our Lord has called to our way of life, so that they in their turn will be mirror and example to those living in the world [T 6: p.228].

And after the others had gone to their hard couches to rest their tired limbs, she would remain watchful and unwearied in prayer that while sleep lay hold of the others she might "by stealth" as it were, "receive the veins of the whisper of God" [L XIII,19: p.32].

Treasure is a good deed, which is compared to heaven, for men buy it therewith; and this treasure, if it be not the better hid and concealed, is soon lost [AR p.114].

The deeds of their austerities must be hidden also, but they should also be prudent:

The anchoress shall tame right well her flesh... with fasting, with watching, with haircloth, with hard toil, and severe discipline, wisely, however, and cautiously: "In every sacrifice" saith our Lord, "thou shalt offer me always salt"...All our works and all that we do without salt, that is, wisdom, seemeth to God tasteless [AR p.104].

This regard for the body may have been prompted by a new dignity it gradually enjoyed by the late Middle Ages. It caught up with Clare by the latter period of her life but still maintained the sharp division between body and spirit:

And this is one of the greatest wonders on earth, that the highest thing under God, which is the soul of man, should be so firmly joined to the flesh...and to please the flesh, displeaseth the Creator...This is a wonder above all wonders...that a thing so utterly mean, almost nothing should seduce into sin a thing so very noble as the soul is; which St.Austin calleth nearly the highest thing, God alone excepted [AR p.105].

The anchoress was moved by the Spirit to carry Its message through

I see, too, that by humility, the virtue of faith, and the strong arms of poverty, you have taken hold of that incomparable treasure hidden in the field of the world and in the hearts of men with which you have purchased that field of Him by Whom all things have been made from nothing [3rd LET 7:p.200].

But our flesh is not of bronze nor is our strength that of stone. No, we are frail and inclined to every bodily weakness! I beg you therefore, dearly beloved, to refrain wisely and prudently from an indiscreet and impossible austerity in the fasting that I know you have undertaken. And I beg you in the Lord to praise the Lord by your very life, to offer to the Lord your reasonable service, and your sacrifice always seasoned with salt [3rd LET 38-41: p.202].

Who would not dread the treacheries of the enemy of mankind, who, through the arrogance of momentary and deceptive glories, attempts to reduce to nothing that which is greater than heaven itself? Indeed, is it not clear that the soul of the faithful person, the most worthy of all God's creatures because of the grace of God, is greater than heaven itself? [3rd. LET 20: p.201].

prayer and detachment from all things and in this way be a sign of the Kingdom. She was a Church anchoress with a task to perform and could not become involved with other works. The *Riwele* examined other beneficial occupations and stated reasons why these were closed to her.

Immured anchorites were the exception and attracted the attention of historians. Normally, like the three nuns at the river Stour, they had sufficient rooms for their needs and at least a small garden as Grimlaic had long before recommended. But even if they had some land they were not to raise animals like other groups because of the business entailed in marketing, not to mention the claim of helpless animals upon feminine affection. *Ye shall not possess any beast, my dear sisters, except a cat* [AR p.316]. San Damiano had its cat, very likely as a common means of sanitation in those days. There were further remarks dealing with external apostolates:

Do not take charge of other men's property in your house...for oftentimes much harm has come from such caretaking [AR p.317].

The Abbess and her sisters, however, should be careful that nothing is deposited in the monastery for safe-keeping; often such practices give rise to troubles and scandals [RC IV, 15: p. 216].

Let no man sleep within your walls (unless) great necessity should cause your house to be used... [AR p. 317].

The sisters shall not allow anyone to enter the monastery before sunrise or to remain within after sunset, unless an evident, reasonable, and unavoidable cause demands otherwise [RC XI, 8: p. 223].

They were not to keep an inn for pilgrims nor would they be *rich anchoresses that are tillers of the ground; desire not to have the reputation of bountiful anchoresses* [AR p. 315]. Instead, he advised that whatever could be spared should be given to the poor quietly. Clare's injunction: *this land is not to be cultivated except as a garden for the needs of the sisters* [RC VI, 6: p. 219], is endowed with clearer meaning when seen in the light of past situations where anchoresses became well provided for with an abundance to give away. This was not to be. There were many others to provide what is needed; they must attend to their own task.

The renewal of a spirit of poverty and simplicity in religious life was like a clean spring air refreshing the Church and the world. There was a popular idiomatic derogation hurled at those who still gloried in their riches: *The cock is brave on his own dunghill!* [AR p. 106]. Clare surely knew of it for she wrote: *How many kings and queens of this world let themselves be deceived! For, even though their pride may reach the skies*

and their heads through the clouds, in the end they are as forgotten as a dung-heap! [3rd. LET 27: p. 201]

The nuns of Tarrent were fervent in their fidelity to the poverty of Christ and His Mother whom the Bishop fittingly names *the Poor Lady of Heaven*, but they were assured of their necessities by the family that built their monastery. This was where Clare stood boldly alone for she rejected sponsorship, a security of obligation for recluses which became law after the Lateran Council of 1215. Clare was determined to uphold the Gospel message of a loving Father's Providence.

With Clare, as with the English sisters, flight from the world became a different kind immersion in that same world. Hiddenness for the sake of the Kingdom was balanced by care for the establishment of that same Kingdom. The Clare who wrote: *You have fled in joy the corruption of the world. I rejoice and congratulate you because of this* [LET ERM 2: p. 207], was the same woman who saved her city from siege and instigated the reunion of a divorced couple, besides curing and guiding all who sought her help.

Having outlined the role of anchoresses in the Church and the reasons why a life of seclusion is beneficial to it, the wise Bishop warns them that because of the esteem in which their life is held it was necessary that they suffer physical illness and endless trials lest they become filled with conceit. Clare knew those trials and strengthened her sisters for all that lay ahead of them: *Look up to heaven, which calls us on, and take up the Cross and follow Christ Who has gone before us: for through Him we shall enter into His glory after many and diverse tribulations.*

IV. External and Internal Temptations

Solitary life was never considered the safest path to the vision of God. The director of the three nuns of Tarrent was careful to guard them against the error of thinking they were beyond temptations and weaknesses of every sort. In fact, he finds that they are so much the more frequent and stronger in the cloister. With Jesus they have been led into solitude to be tempted and tried, he tells them, that they might be equal to the martyrs through their sufferings. Clare's desire to be martyred was not left unfulfilled. She and the Bishop warned of the hardship ahead:

Go ye now, then, along the hard and toilsome way toward the great feast of heaven... foolish men go by the green way... [AR p. 142].

And because the way and the path is straight and the gate through which one passes and enters into life is narrow there are few who walk on it and enter through it [T 21; p. 232].

The contrived mortifications expected of monks and nuns were being gradually replaced by the Gospel lessons of patience and acceptance of life's trials, yet still the reward is uppermost in mind:

If one were to offer to buy from you the reward that ariseth from it (patient endurance), ye would not sell it for all the gold in the world [AR p. 142].

Bear all this bravely. With a firm heart set yourself to hold to your course even in the midst of spare means. It will bring you eternal life; it will win eternal riches. [N p. 59]

Both founders concentrated more upon the commands of God in the Gospels than upon man-made rules and the customary self-inflicted practices. Clare had gone to extremes in the early years at San Damiano but actually discouraged such things among her sisters and inculcated instead the patient endurance of suffering and growth in inner virtue:

Love, humility, patience, fidelity and the keeping of the commandments, confession and penance,, and other such matters... these are not the invention of man nor a rule laid down by man. They are the commandments of God; and for that reason everyone is obliged to keep them, and you most especially. May you continue to do so, growing better and better in them [AR p.3].

With what solicitude and fervor of mind and body, therefore, must we keep the commandments of our God and Father [T 6: p.227].

(I beg you) to be strengthened in His holy service, and to progress from good to better, from virtue to virtue [1st.LET 31: p.193].

Bearing up under trials in union with Christ was a theme attractive to women in general and to feminine Medieval mystics in particular with slight variations as to centers of attention. Possibly this was indicative of the inferior position of women drawn to identify with someone reduced to degradation, for their lot was, in the opinion of historians, not much better. Clare quoted to Agnes: *All ye who pass by the way, attend, see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow* (Lam 1,12). Both authors urge their sisters to compare their pain with Christ's:

Above all other thoughts, in all your sufferings, reflect always deeply upon the suffering of Christ—that the Ruler of the world was content for its bondservants, to endure such ignominy and contempt [AR p.141].

Contemplate the ineffable charity which led Him to suffer on the wood of the Cross and die thereon the most shameful kind of death [4th.LET 23: p..205]. For the sake of us all (He) took upon Himself the passion of the Cross and delivered us from the power of the Prince of Darkness to whom we were enslaved [1st.LET 14: p.191].

The afflictions the nuns could expect as inherent in their form of life would stem mainly from temptations which the Bishop described as of two kinds: outward and inward. Outward temptations were enumerated as: displeasure in adversity, and pleasure in prosperity. In the category of the former we might place Clare's efforts to draw Agnes out from under the pressure of maintaining a life of poverty amid overwhelming opposition, as if sensing some danger: *And may neither bitterness nor a cloud of sadness overwhelm you,, O dearly beloved Lady of Christ* [3rd. LET 11: p.200]. The Damianites' attitude toward the awe in which they were held by the people and clergy was reported by Jacques di Vitry in his journal and serves to relate the suspicion held against praise; the second aspect of outward temptation: *The women live near the cities in various hospices...The veneration that the clergy and laity show toward them is a burden to them, and it chagrins and annoys them* [O .o.1608]. This response on the part of the sisters would certainly have pleased the Bishop for the anchoresses of England, too, were the objects of praise and he made it clear to them that they should not become too satisfied: *There is much talk of you, how gentle women you are; and for your goodness and nobleness of mind beloved of many...having, in the bloom of youth, forsaken all the pleasures of the world and become anchoresses. All this is a strong temptation and might soon deprive you of much of your reward* [AR p.145].

Inward temptations were called: carnal and spiritual. Clare never alluded to carnal temptation nor even mentioned chastity apart from naming it in the first paragraph of her Rule. Once again, the spirituality of the English rule offers some explanation. It taught that carnal temptations were like *foot wounds*; they may slow you down or make your path cumbersome but do no mortal harm to the spirit. The remedy for these was presented by a metaphor, and, strangely enough, it prefigured a famous event in Clare's life: the attack of Vitalis' men. Unchaste desires were like the attack of an army and should be repelled by the same Body and Blood that resisted unto blood His own temptations:

Ye have with ye night and day,, the same Blood and the same blessed Body that came of the maiden and died on the cross...and every day he commeth forth and sheweth himself to you fleshily and bodily in the mass... as if he said: Behold, I am here: what would ye?... Complain to me of your distress: and if the army of the fiend strongly assail you, answer him and say: We are encamped here beside thee, who art the stone of help, and tower of safety, and castle of strength...[AR p.197]..

Passages from the *Rule* and the comparative episode in the *Legend of St. Clare* tell the same story. Her first move had also been to Christ in

the Eucharist for help:

The devil's army is more enraged against us than against any other... Do thou put our foes to flight; for to thee we thus look [AR P.197].

Does it please Thee, my Lord, to deliver into the hands of pagans Thy defenseless handmaids whom I have nourished with Thy love? Defend, O Lord, I beseech Thee, these Thy servants whom I in this hour am unable to defend! [L XIV, 22: p.34].

These prayers are answered by Christ:

"Be not afraid, fear ye them not, though they be strong and many. The battle is mine and not yours" [AR p.199].

"I will always defend you" [L XIV, 22, 34].

The conclusion is the same in both accounts:

All our strength, then, is according to our confidence in God's help [AR p.205].

In truth, I assure you, my daughters, you shall suffer no harm; only trust in Christ [L XIV, 22: p.34].

Not many years after this attack on San Damiano a neighboring monastery of Clares was plundered and the nuns murdered leaving the assurance that Clare's powerful faith and trust had, indeed, worked a miracle. That was an authentically historical situation but its similarity to the Bishop's metaphor is interesting.

Spiritual temptations were demanding of more vigilance and were more serious, being likened to *heart wounds* because *that which emanates from them causes an immediate death blow, unless it is remedied. When the enemy smiteth in this direction, then he is truly to be feared, and not for foot wounds* [AR p.206]. Although carnal temptations seemed more devastating, it was pride and vanity that could distort the human heart by disguising evil as a real good. Greed, worldly cares and anxieties are subtleties to which enclosed nuns were especially prone. It was precisely these that Clare warns about in her rule also:

Pride, envy, wrath, anxiety about worldly things, and covetousness of wealth—these are the wounds of the heart [AR p.206].

I admonish, and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ that the sisters be on their guard against all pride, vainglory, envy, greed, worldly care and anxiety, detraction and murmuring, dissension and division [RC X, 4: p.222].

Living in confinement posed a particular need, it seemed, to never be without some occupation, according to Medieval mentality. In the following phrases the advice appears quite the same. We know that Clare's community engaged in sewing liturgical supplies and made habits for the Friars—work suggested by Bishop Poore:

Shape and sew, and mend Church vestments and poor peoples' clothes...Be never idle; for the fiend immediately offers his work to her who is not diligent in God's work...From idleness ariseth much temptation of the flesh...an anchoress ought to give her thoughts to God only [AR p.318].

The sisters to whom God has given the grace of working are to work faithfully and devotedly after the hour of Terce, at work which pertains to a virtuous life and the common good. They must do this in such a way that, while they banish idleness, the enemy of the soul, they do not extinguish the Spirit of holy prayer and devotion to which all other things of our earthly existence must contribute [RC VII, 1-2: p.219].

The struggle to overcome continual harassment from our weakness was compared by both authors to a wrestling match:

The wary wrestler observes what strategem his mate, with whom he wrestles, is ignorant of; for with that particular strategem he may overthrow him unawares [AR p.210].

One who is clothed cannot fight with one who is naked, because he is more quickly overthrown who gives his adversary a chance to get hold of him...cast aside your garments, that is, earthly riches, so that you might not be overcome by the one fighting against you [1st. LET 28: p.193].

But the greatest help for overcoming temptations was unity—sisterly love. Love is the rule of the Gospel, and the Bishop stated that strongly, for, *when all are united, none will fall* [AR p.190]. And he added that *all the effort of the evil one is to disunite hearts and take love away*. How these words reflect Clare's never-ending stress upon mutual love! her admonitions are so equal to those of the *Ritule*:

Fear not while ye are so truly and firmly cemented all of you to one another with the lime of sisterly charity [AR p.171].

Let them be ever solicitous to preserve among themselves the unity of mutual love, which is the bond of perfection [RC X, 4: p.222].

Far from the isolation suspected of recluses or anchorites, a high level of personal relationship existed among their various forms. This is a point

of solitary life that has been overlooked in many cases. Human companionship was encouraged; the solitary must ordinarily have had at least one person with them. Most often, they gathered into some form of community. Thus, the anchoresses had their maids, and soon others joined them so that they increased to thirty or more and legally made profession of the Cistercian Rule. The urgency of Christian love resounds in the writings of both Clare and Bishop Poore:

See that your faces be always turned to each other with kind affection, a cheerful countenance, and gentle courtesy; that ye be always with unity of heart, and of one will, united together...[AR p.191].

And if the fiend blow up any anger or resentment between you—which may Jesus Christ forbid—until it is appeased none ought to receive God's flesh and his blood... let each of them send word to the other, that she hath humbly asked her forgiveness... [AR P.192].

...seeing the charity, humility, and unity they have toward one another...[T 20: p.231].

If it should happen—God forbid—that through some word or gesture an occasion of trouble or scandal should ever arise between sister and sister, let she who was the cause of the trouble, at once, before offering the gift of her prayer to the Lord, not only prostrate herself humbly at the feet of the other and ask pardon, but also beg her earnestly to intercede for her to the Lord that He might forgive her [RC IX,4:p.221].

In all these things the reason for loving is the love of Jesus:

For Jesus Christ is all love [AR p.188].

Love one another with the charity of Jesus Christ [T, 18: p.231].

After mutual love, there are other sources of strength against yielding to temptations:

The remedies are... humility, patience, and openness of heart, and all virtues...and singleness of heart above all others [AR p.181].

Let them devote themselves to what they must desire to have above all else: the Spirit of the Lord and His holy manner of working, to pray always to Him with a pure heart, and to have humility and patience in difficulty...[RC X,6: p.222].

The *Ancren Rhole* mentions a few others like fasting, faith, reading, and comfort from others in the time of temptation. The one difference

with Clare would be reading, for she stated that *those who do not know how to read should not be solicitous to learn*. She was more taken up with hearing the Word, as a glance at her efforts to procure preaching Friars will prove.

The importance of receiving comfort from others at distressing times directs us to Clare's guidelines for superiors: *She should console those who are afflicted, and be, likewise, the last refuge for those who are disturbed*...Whenever Clare perceived that a sister was under stress she would secretly call for her and, in tears, try to bring her consolation and strength [L XXV, 38: p.45].

As for the greatest basic factor in overcoming the trials of life, it was continual growth in all the virtues. Clare outwardly displayed her *marvelous joy* when she learned that sisters were advancing in holiness. She wrote to Ermentrude, a hermitess seeking to adopt her form of life: *I rejoice that you are walking courageously the path of virtue with your daughters* [LET ERM 2: p.207], and to Agnes of Prague: *I am felled with such joys at your...marvelous progress* [3rd. LET, 3: p.199], to mention a few of the many references to growth in virtue.

In the new groups springing up with lifestyles recognizable in the little convent of San Damiano, the one with deeper wisdom and virtue was looked upon as leader of the group. It would seem that Clare shared the opinion that the person manifesting signs of advancement in union with God should be the one to preside over the others, rather than the one appointed by law. Recall that she did not wish to accept the title of Abbess which is a totally Benedictine term, and did so solely at the command of Francis in his efforts to prevent the suppression of her monastery. Clare conceded her desire, and her Order lives on where others gradually faded away, but she kept its substance alive in her rule by stating that the one elected as Abbess was to rule more *by her virtues and holy behavior than by the authority of her office* [RC IV, 7: p.215].

The gift of tears, love for the Cross and reverence for the Name of Jesus, all are further sources of strength found in the spirituality of both writers. There are other helps which Bishop Poore refers to as *comforts* in times of temptation. The Our Father was a special *comfort* because it was given to us by Christ Himself and is a prayer for overcoming temptation. Clare used this prayer for delivering people from suffering and trials. The embracing of God's will was another, and it proved to be just such a *comfort* for Clare in her own time of helplessness and gave her the strength to reply with confidence that: *He suffers no injury who serves the Lord* [L XIII, 19: p.33]. Her last act on earth was to embrace death as her final trial saying: *It is God's good pleasure that I go hence* [L XXVIII,43: p.48]. Bishop Poore had set before the sisters the principle

that every temptation, trial or distress should be broken against the stone which is Christ—the precious Stone the soaring eagle must keep always in her nest.

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Abbreviations

AR	Ancient Riwle, Morton
CC	Cause of Canonization, De Robeck
CE	Canticle of Exhortation, AB
L	Legend of Saint Clare, Brady
LB	Bonaventure's Letter to the Poor Ladies of San Damiano, tr. Gregory Shanahan, O.F.M. (The Cord 33:7 July-August, 1983)
Let	Clare's Letters to Agnes of Prague, AB
Erm	Clare's Letter to Ermentrude, AB
RC	Rule of Saint Clare, AB
T	Testament of Saint Clare, AB



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