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The CORD

A 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

VPLast: 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: Marlon 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



If St. Francis Were Here Today

WE IN THE Franciscan tradition have been called to our roots. This is a serious commission and we want to return. But immediately the question arises: Where will our roots lead us?

It is an honest question and there are many honest answers. One honest answer says: We must do what St. Francis would do if he were here today.

The answer has the ring of the real in it. The answer is valid for the First Order, the Second Order and the Secular Franciscans. The response realizes that the texture of society has changed. The reply is conscious of the fact that to do literally many of the things that Francis did would not have the same meaning today. The response purposes rather to do the things that a 20th Century Francis would do in 20th Century times. The reply asks for the conviction of Gospel poverty today. It looks for the desire to be little people. It asks for the warm arm of fraternity today.

In support of the *today* proposition there are solid factors that are well known. First, Francis is a man for all times. Second, there is that in his message which has the compelling ring of truth for any day.

Then there are difficulties. There is difficulty in almost every good answer. Sometimes the difficulties point to the doors that must be opened in order to find the answers.

To the resolve to do what St. Francis would do if he were here today, one honest answer is: I do not know how to do it. That is a door that has to be opened. But the difficulty indicates that the first step is to seek to know, to be bold in trying to know, to put this resolve at the head of each day.

Another difficulty is that we immediately pass over the ordinary and search for something that is startling, because somehow we imagine that is the way to what St. Francis would do if he were here today. But Francis lived ordinary days, and he would live them if he were here today.

Perhaps the greatest requirement is centered about the faith factor. To do what St. Francis would do if he were here today would require a heroic faith commitment. If St. Francis were with us today he would indeed give himself in a huge faith dedication and surrender. That is what we must give if we would do what St. Francis would do if he were here today.

Fr. David Temple, O.M.

Mary's Sister

The clatter of the cups and plates
broke through the reverence of his words.
A parted curtain. A deprecating glance.
A heart that yearned to wear the yoke of freedom.

"Lord, is this fair?"
A cloud of interruption. A shower of complaints.
"I have been left alone to do the serving,"
(while my sister, the bride, sits here at your feet.)

She caught his glance, and saw him look away,
that burning gesture of surprise.
And in a heartbeat she knew:
he had been waiting for her, too.

Sr. Edmund Marie Stets, C.S.B.

Francis and the Three Ladies

CLAUDE JARMAK, O.F.M. CONV.

IN APRIL, 1226, six months before his death, while traveling from Rieti to Siena in search of relief for his ailing eyes, Francis and his companions had an unusual and interesting experience. They met three poor women on the road, exactly alike in height, age and appearance.

They offered Francis the gift of a new salutation, saying, "Welcome, Lady Poverty!" When he heard this, the true lover of poverty was filled with unspeakable joy because there was nothing in him that he would rather have people acknowledge than what these women singled out (LM VII, 6).

The friars who accompanied Francis immediately discerned a mystical significance in this extraordinary experience. The three women, "because of their similarity, their novel greeting, their strange meeting and disappearance," showed the beauty of Gospel perfection in Francis in his poverty, chastity and obedience, although they had singled out poverty for special praise. This was the reason why the greeting, "Welcome, Lady Poverty," pleased Francis so much. Francis was "Lady Poverty," no longer merely poor, but rather the embodiment of poverty: he had become what he practiced. Celano cites a parallel instance when he writes that Francis "not so much prayed as he himself became prayer" (2 Cel 95). Poverty was no longer something Francis did; poverty was something Francis had become.

The three women were exactly alike in height, age and appearance. One did not exceed the others in height, all of them being of equal importance. Nor did any of them excel the others in age, but all were of equal excellence. All three were of the same appearance since they shared the common trait of poverty. They were the personification of the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, which "shone all perfectly in Francis."

For more than three years, Fr. Claude was a member of the community at the Sacro Convento, adjacent to the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi. He now teaches at St. Hyacinth College and Seminary in Granby, MA.

Three allegorical ladies still continue to pay homage to Francis in the lower Basilica in Assisi. Above the altar, beneath which lie the mortal remains of the Saint, there are four curved panels on the vaulted ceiling which in Italian are called "vele," that is, "sails" inasmuch as they look like wind-blown sails. On these four vaults, seventy or eighty years after the body of Francis was buried in the church, Giotto and his companions frescoed the Saint surrounded by three ladies, the allegories of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Francis in Glory

Resplendent as the dawn and as the morning star, or even as the rising sun, setting the world alight, cleansing it, and giving it fertility, Francis was seen as kind of a new light" (L3S Prologue).

In the vaulted panel facing the nave, Giotto portrayed Francis no longer emaciated by fasts and weakened by physical illness, but a resplendent figure sitting on a throne, full of light and glory, his beardless face beaming with a look of ethereal youth. Rays emanate from his whole body, encircling him in light. Dressed in a brocaded gold dalmatic, the official vestment of a deacon, he sits on a cushion covered with tapestry. In his left hand he holds the book of the gospels, in his right hand, a cross. The figure of Francis forms a triangle pointing up to heaven, symbolic of the perfection of the Gospels reflected in Francis through the three vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Visible over the throne are the words "Glorios 'Francisc,' Glorious Francis. A victorious banner hangs over the throne on which is depicted a cross surrounded by seven stars. The banner is surmounted by a seraph, a symbol of Francis' stigmatization, the crowning point of his conformity to Christ. Gregory IX in the sequence, "Caput Draconis" honoring Francis wrote:

A new knight is dispatched
From the side of Christ,
Bearing in his sacred body
The insignia of the cross.

(AF X, 401)

Giotto did not portray the Francis of history, but Francis as the Angel of the Sixth Seal, "ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God" (Rev. 7:2).

Surrounding the triumphant Francis are innumerable angels, arranged into groups according to the office and tasks assigned to them. In front of the throne are two pairs of angels, ladylike in appearance, with a lively

gait, leading the procession. In their hands they carry flowers and palms of victory. Around the throne are angels with a golden harness around their shoulders and breasts, for it is their task to bear the throne of Francis into heaven. Behind the throne are angels holding hands and merrily dancing with each other, while on either side of the throne, angels with puffed cheeks sound a flourish on their trumpets. Arrayed on both sides of the throne are lines of angels who play musical instruments, sing and dance. The musicians play flutes and cymbals. The singers have their hands on their stomachs, pushing up their diaphragms to produce a mellifluous voice. The dancers offer hands to each other in an invitation to dance. There is a solemn, yet lighthearted elation to the entire fresco, reflected in the vivacity of the figures and in their lively and vibrant facial expressions, bringing to mind the responsory from the first Vespers of the feast of St. Francis: "Francis poor and humble enters heaven rich in merit."

On the other three vaults are depicted the allegories of poverty, chastity and obedience. There is a master narrative-plan to each of the allegories. The left hand corner contains an invitation to the practice of the vow; the right corner shows vices impeding its practice. In the center is found the allegorical figure representing the vow, flanked by two other allegorical figures representing the virtues necessary for its fulfillment. Each scene is full of angels looking on, providing a community setting for the keeping of each vow.

Directly opposite the fresco of Francis in glory is the Allegory of Poverty, indicating even visually that Francis' glory is a reflection of his poverty. Whereas the fresco of Francis in glory is readily seen on approaching the main altar of the lower Basilica, the Allegory of Poverty faces the friars gathered for prayer in the choir stalls behind the altar.

Allegory of Poverty

Looking upon poverty as especially dear to the Son of God, though it was spurned throughout the whole world, Francis sought to espouse it in perpetual charity. Therefore, after he had become a lover of her beauty, he not only left his mother and father, but even put aside all things, that he might cling to her more closely as his spouse and that they might be two in one spirit. Therefore he gathered her to himself with chaste embraces, and not even for an hour did he allow himself not to be her husband. (2 Cel 55).

The Allegory of Poverty depicts the mystical marriage of Francis and Lady Poverty, concerning whom Dante wrote in Canto XI of the Paradiso:

The allegories of the vows over the tomb of St. Francis in the lower Basilica in Assisi are an open book of Franciscan spirituality.

... slighted and obscure
for a thousand and hundred years and more
she remained without a suitor
until he came.

Lady Poverty, thin in appearance, dressed in a patched and mended wedding dress, girded around the waist with a rope, stands prominently in the middle of the fresco, a short bridal veil covering her head. She is standing in briars, a symbol in biblical imagery of desolation and need. These same thorns blossom into a luxuriant bush of roses and lilies behind her head, recalling the words of the Song of Songs: "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley. As a lily among thistles, so is my love among the maidens" (2: 1-2). Lady Poverty is extending her right hand, and Francis, the bridegroom, is slipping a wedding band on her finger. Between the couple stands Christ, joining their hands and blessing this mystical union.

Two bridesmaids stand next to the bride, symbolizing the two virtues essential for the observance of poverty: hope, dressed in green, and charity, clothed in red. Hope is seen extending her hand toward the bride, ready to accept the ring which Francis is slipping on her finger, and as if whispering to her: "Trust in God who provides us richly with all things for our use" (1 Tim 6:17). The other bridesmaid, Charity, offers a gift of a heart to Lady Poverty, as if telling her: "May the Lord rule your hearts in the love of God and the constancy of Christ" (2 Thess. 3:5). Poverty cannot be espoused without hope and without love. What would poverty be without hope and charity?

To portray graphically that the world does not understand this type of renunciation, two little boys are portrayed at the bottom of the fresco. One is throwing stones at Lady Poverty; the other one is pushing brambles against her with a stick. To add insult to injury, a dog is depicted barking threateningly at her.

Celestial choirs of angels who encircle the bride and the groom, are witnesses to this mystical union as guests at the wedding feast.

In the left corner of the fresco there is an angel pointing with one hand to Lady Poverty as an example to a young man who is shown giving his cloak to a poor beggar: "I tell you in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). The same cloak is taken up to heaven by an angel and accepted by the two hands of God depicted at the top of the fresco. The right corner shows an angel with arms extended, barring three men from joining the wedding feast. The first man, elegantly dressed and holding a falcon on his arm, makes an obscene gesture at the angel with his right hand. He symbolizes pride. Next to him stands another man, a sullen frown on his face, who points contemptuously with his thumb at Lady Poverty. He represents envy. The third man with his entire body turned away from the wedding scene as if in rejection, has only his head turned toward the angel. In his hand he clutches a bag of money. He symbolizes greed. Inasmuch as he is depicted with a tonsure, he could symbolize simony. This group of three men brings to mind the words of Jesus: "I tell you most solemnly, it will be hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 19:23). These three vices, pride, envy and greed are the enemies of poverty. It is with just reason that Francis wrote this plea in the Rule of 1223; "With all my heart, I beg the friars in our Lord Jesus Christ to be on their guard against pride, boasting, envy and greed (RegB 10).

Allegory of Obedience

Christ said: "Take my yoke upon your shoulders and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light" (Mt. 11:29-30).

The Allegory of Obedience uses this scripture passage as its theme. A winged, monastic figure, representing Obedience, sits in an open loggia of a cloister, probably a Chapter Hall, symbolic of a place of obedience. On the wall behind her, barely visible, is painted a crucifixion scene. The allegorical figure of obedience is depicted with a yoke around her shoulders, assisting a kneeling friar in putting a yoke on his shoulders. It is noteworthy that the friar imposes the yoke on himself, she merely assists him. The forefinger of her left hand is raised to her lips in the common gesture of asking for silence, making at the same time a cross with the lips and the finger. Flanking Obedience are two allegorical figures of virtues required for obedience. To the left is a most unusual lady with two faces, a young and attractive face in front, and an old wrinkled face

in the back. She represents Holy Prudence, a virtue which prompts a person to remember the past and at the same time to look to the future, keeping watch over the past and the present.

Francis taught them besides to follow prudence as the charioteer of the virtues, not the prudence which the flesh recommends, but the prudence taught by Christ (LM V, 7).

In her hand she holds a compass, an instrument of precise measurement, and a mirror which casts a perfect reflection. Standing in front of her is an astrolabe, an astronomical instrument for determining the position of the sun and stars. These three instruments of precise measurement emphasize the necessity of prudence in the fulfillment of obedience.

Opposite prudence, on the other side of the allegorical figure of Obedience, is Holy Humility, a young lady with eyes cast down and holding a lighted candle. Whereas Prudence is depicted seated, Holy Humility is shown kneeling before obedience.

Francis added: In an office is found an occasion for a fall; in praise, an occasion for complete destruction; in the humility of a subject, an occasion for profit by the soul (2 Cel 145).

Outside the cloister, kneeling on both sides, are angels looking on the scene. The two angels in either corner of the fresco hold cornucopias, reminiscent of the words of Jesus: "Everyone who has left houses, brothers, sisters, father, mother, children or land for the sake of my name will be repaid a hundred times over, and also inherit eternal life" (Mt. 19:29). In the left corner an angel, pointing to Obedience, invites a young man and woman to the practice of that virtue. In the right corner, an angel, with arms extended, prevents entrance into the cloister to a centaur, half horse, half man, a symbol of pride. The centaur has his right hand raised in the air in a gesture of defiant rebellion against the angel. Pride has no place in the cloister of obedience.

Francis abhorred pride, the source of all evil, and disobedience, its worst offspring, but he welcomed the humility of repentance with no less intensity (LM VI, 11).

In the upper part of the fresco, Francis is depicted with the yoke of obedience on his shoulders. The reins from his yoke are held by the two hands of God at the very top of the fresco to show that the truly obedient are guided from heaven by the word of God. Francis stands between two angels, each one holding a scroll: on one are inscribed the words of the Gospel, and on the other, words from the Franciscan Rule, two sources

of obedience. Guided by the yoke of obedience to the Gospel and the Rule, we too are to follow Francis into heaven.

Allegory of Chastity

We must hate our lower nature with its vices and sins; by living a wordly life, it would deprive us of the love of our Lord Jesus Christ and eternal life, dragging us down with it into hell. By our own fault we are corrupt, wretched, strangers to all good, willing and eager only to do evil, as our Lord says in the Gospel: Out of the heart of men, come evil thoughts, adulteries, immorality, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, shamelessness, jealousy, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these things come from within, from the heart of man, and it is these that make a man unclean (Reg NB 22).

The Allegory of Chastity takes place in a setting of chivalry. On the summit of a bare rock stands a fortress surrounded by a wall with small turrets and battlements, and in the center, a strong and majestic tower, from which flies a white banner, the emblem of chastity. The castle is guarded by two knights holding instrument of penance, denoting the vigilance and perpetual warfare of those who wish to guard the treasure of chastity. In an open window of the tower can be seen in profile a young girl, Lady Chastity, clad in white, whose hands are folded in prayer. Two angels fly down from heaven and present her with a crown of glory and a palm of victory: "Come, spouse of Christ, receive the crown the Lord has prepared for you from all eternity" (Evening Prayer: Common of Virgins).

To prepare a young man to enter the castle of Chastity, two angels are seen giving him a ritual bath of purification. From the tower two allegorical figures, Holy Purity and Fortitude, offer a banner and a shield to the young man to protect him from relevant vices while he purifies himself in a basin to be admitted to the castle, that is, the practice of the virtue of chastity.

The left corner, reserved for an invitation to the practice of the virtue, has St. Francis, extending his hand and inviting three people to ascend to the castle of Chastity: a nun, a friar and a lay person, representing the three orders which Francis founded. Popular belief has it that these three figures are St. Clare, Bernard of Quintavalle and Dante. Giotto, it is said, wished to immortalize Dante Alighieri as the source and inspiration of the fresco-allegories.

In the right corner of the fresco are represented vices which militate against chastity. Penance, a winged figure with a hood over its head, with a lash is driving the enemies of chastity into the abyss of hell. She is assisted by three angels: one holds a lance, the other, a container of holy water, and the third, a cross, three means of combatting threats against chastity. The first among the enemies being driven into hell is "Amor," Cupid, a garland of wilting flowers around his head, blindfolded, with a quiver of arrows at his side, and a string of hearts around his shoulder. He is painted a sickly pink color and depicted with the claws of a chicken for feet, to indicate the animal nature of blind sexual desire. Another enemy of chastity, impurity, a black beast with the face of a pig, lies on the ground defeated. Concupiscence, or lust, is seen as a coarse and unkempt man. Behind them is the skeleton of death which holds a scythe in one hand and with the other grasps concupiscence around the neck.

Centered in Christ

The Rule and life of the friars is to live in obedience, in chastity and without property, following the teaching and the footsteps of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Reg NB 1)

The Allegory of Chastity is located in the lower Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, on the vault facing the right transept, where Giotto and his followers had frescoed scenes from the birth and infancy of Christ. Francis' chastity is therefore a reflection of the purity of Christ and of his Blessed Mother. Opposite it is the Allegory of Obedience, facing the left transept, where the Sieneese artist, Pietro Lorenzetti, depicted the passion and death of Jesus. Francis' obedience reflects the obedience of Jesus Christ, who "humbled himself, obediently accepting death, death on a cross" (Phil. 2:8).

In the center of the vaulted ceiling, holding the four panels together, is a fresco of Jesus Christ from the first chapter of the Book of Revelation: his hair white as snow, his eyes blazing like fire, in his mouth a two-edged sword, and his face shining like the sun (Rev. 1: 14-16).

The allegories of the vows over the tomb of St. Francis in the lower Basilica in Assisi are an open book of Franciscan spirituality, a guide to lead us in the footsteps of Jesus Christ which Francis traversed through his poverty, chastity and obedience, reflecting in his life the perfection of the Gospel, and finally meriting to bear in his own flesh the marks of the passion and death of Christ.

From A Sermon of Saint Anthony for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul*

O shepherd and idol
who foresakes my flock!
May the sword fall upon his arm
and his right eye be totally blinded.

(Zech 11:17)

A shepherd who forsakes his flock
is an idol** in the church:

He has eyes for the vanities of the world,
not for seeing the plight of the poor.

He has ears for the adulation of flatterers
not for hearing the cries of the poor.

He has a nose for the fragrance of soft perfume,
not for smelling the scent of heaven
or the stench of hell.

He has hands for the acquisition of money,
not for spreading the word of God.

Of him Jeremiah says:
"What have straw and wheat in common?" (23:28)

**Sermones Dominicales et Festivi* III, 277. Translated from the Latin by Claude Jarmak, O.F.M. Conv.

**Idol: used in the medieval sense of a graven image.

Franciscanism and Spiritual Direction

FRANCIS C. POMPEI, O.F.M.

Introduction

Jesus once compared the Spirit to the wind; that like the wind, we know neither from whence it comes nor whither it goes. As such, we do not possess the Spirit, but it rather captures us. However, because of our freedom, we need to choose and be open to the Spirit; seeking it, desiring to experience it, and being led by it. Just as a sailor knows that it is the wind that fills his sails, he knows too that the wind's direction determines his decisions for setting the sails properly in order to move his ship. When the sails are aligned to the wind's lead, then the sails fill with life and there is unity of movement. This dynamic of alignment between the sails and the wind is similar to the dialogical alignment between God and us. As the Lord's Spirit moves in our lives we are continually directed in order to move toward union with God and carrying out His will. Like the sailor who can easily drift off course, or not have his sails adequately set, we too can move away from God by our choices and sin. Thus, there is a need for continual discernment and spiritual direction.

In the emerging spiritual hunger in the world today, more and more people are seeking spiritual direction, which is taking many forms, some for the better and some for the worse. Our attention here is to consider some of the highlights of the Franciscan charism that demonstrate both rich and integrated elements that speak profoundly to the present search for God and contribute significantly to the understanding and practice of spiritual direction.

Fr. Francis Pompei, O.F.M., a member of Holy Name Province, is engaged in the Ministry of the Word. He studied at Christ the King Seminary, St. Bonaventure University, and holds a Master's degree in Spirituality from Weston School of Theology.

Francis as Director and Directee

Our first consideration is to look at Francis himself as directee and director in the spiritual journey. This will be mediated through his writings and his life.

As directee, Francis does not seem to have had the kind of organized and routine spiritual direction that we speak of today; the one on one model with the same person on a regular basis. It is true that he did seek out direction in one on one situations, but from a variety of people, the Pope, the Bishop, St. Clare, and his fellow friars. Francis' special gift was his being dealt with directly by God in several ways. Damien Isabelle, in his book *Workbook for Franciscan Studies* (285), points out this gifted way of being directed:

His gift was that of being able to read God's action in the events of his life. God's voice was very real to Francis and it seems that he was in touch with his dream life which is a powerful source of growth.

Francis relied greatly on God to reveal Himself and His will directly, and from his writings and life this seems clear. In the *Testament*, written as a direction and exhortation for the brothers near the end of his life, Francis points over and over again to this dynamic of God Himself inspiring and directing him. The following is a section of the *Testament* that reveals the means through which God directed the saint.

This is how God inspired me, Brother Francis, to embark upon a life of penance. When I was in sin, the sight of lepers nauseated my beyond measure; but then God Himself led me into their company, and I had pity on them. (Omnibus, 67).

In this we see God directing Francis while he is in sin. He does so by leading him to that which is most repulsive to him, lepers. Through this encounter with his shadow, God is not only able to liberate Francis from sin, but directs him through events which results in a new perception and vision of reality and God. Francis expresses this new perception when he says, "When I had once become acquainted with them, what had previously nauseated me became a source of spiritual and physical consolation for me" (67). Another example of God directing Francis is expressed by the saint when he writes in the *Testament*, "When God gave me some friars, there was no one to tell me what I should do; but the Most High Himself made it clear to me that I must live the life of the Gospel" (67). Here, God Himself directs Francis in his confusion to the proper path he should take. This path is to the scriptures which dominate Francis' life as a place for continued direction. Early in his life Francis has a vision

of the Crucified Christ while deep in prayer and is moved deeply as he reflects on Christ's passion. From this encounter his conversion is moved more dramatically toward God through the scriptures. The Franciscan Order's official biography of Francis by St. Bonaventure, the *Legenda Maior*, describes the result of this vision and God's specific direction through scripture: "Through this vision, the man of God understood as addressed to himself the Gospel text: 'If you wish to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me.'" (Cousins, 189). Having been so directed by God through this scripture, Francis wholeheartedly embraced it as the heart of his call to poverty and identification with the Crucified. In this we see Francis appealing to God seeking direction by placing himself as he is before the Lord through prayer, hoping for the Lord to reveal His will. Francis has thus assumed the position of a true directee, and God directs. This dynamic of spiritual direction involving God, the person, and scripture is described by Barry and Connolly in their book, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (62):

The person praying has the sense that he is not controlling the way the Lord seems to him. Someone else is setting the direction of the relationship, deciding its events. The praying person does not look for helpful thought, work up feelings, or concoct images. He simply looks at the Lord as he appears in Scripture or in experience, puts himself before Him as he is, and lets happen what will happen.

Just as scripture was an important place for direction for Francis, visions, dreams, and images were also key in aligning him to the Lord and His will. This verse given to Francis, of 'taking up the cross,' flows from the vision of the Crucified and Francis' reflection on the image of the passion. St. Bonaventure structures his whole biography of Francis around seven visions of the cross and Crucified in and about Francis. Bonaventure sees these visions as crucial and central to understanding the saint's life and journey toward God. In addition to visions, Bonaventure describes God directing Francis through dreams and images. For example, during Francis' conversion he has a dream in which God shows him a 'large and splendid palace full of military weapons emblazoned with the sign and image of the cross' (Cousins 187). When Francis misinterprets this dream to mean he is to become a military knight, God corrects his understanding in a subsequent dream. This dimension of spiritual direction involving visions and dreams is not only part of Franciscan tradition, but very much part of spiritual direction in general as explained by Gerald May in his book, *Care of Mind, Care of Spirit* (40):

It is important that people in spiritual direction be attentive to their dreams and able to discuss them freely in the direction relationship. As with visio-

nary experiences, there is ample evidence of God sometimes using dreams as both direct and indirect vehicles of communication. Thus, dreams and visions are at least as pertinent to spiritual direction as are all other forms of experience.

That Francis sought direction from others, hoping that God would reveal His will through them, is evident in his life in several places; in his seeking direction from brother Sylvester and St. Clare about whether or not he should decide for a hermitage or preaching life. As a directee, then, Francis received direction from God directly through visions, dreams, images, events of life, creation, and scripture. Included in his experience are one on one, group, and general direction. Though all are operative in his journey there seems to be a predominance of one as Damien Isabelle claims: "We still maintain that Francis put great stock on the individual finding his or her own direction in the light of the revelation of Jesus Christ" (286). Francis was not only directed in this way, but as a spiritual director guided others in the same fashion. This is seen in his encounter with Bernard of Quintavalle who resolved to leave the world and do whatever Francis commanded. Francis rejoices over Bernard's decision and then immediately leads Bernard to the scriptures where three verses are revealed to him from God which they accept as counsels. The dynamics of this incident demonstrate Francis' reliance on the Lord to reveal Himself directly to the person. As director, Francis listens to Bernard with compassion and confirmation as 'he rejoices' over Bernard's experience and decision. Francis then moves him to bring all this before the Lord as He is found in the scriptures. By doing this, Francis shows himself to be a true spiritual director, guiding Bernard to dialogue with God. Barry and Connolly confirm this process when they say, "Spiritual direction proposes to help people relate personally to God, to let God relate personally to them, and to enable them to live the consequences of that relationship". Francis does just that and enables Bernard to live the counsels of the Lord by inviting him to join his company.

Francis' letter to Brother Leo, who seeks guidance from Francis, captures the depth and richness of the saint's wisdom to direct and serves as a model for all in the Franciscan tradition. He writes to Leo:

Brother Leo, wish your Brother Francis health and peace! I speak to you, my son, as a mother. I place all the words which we spoke on the road in this phrase, briefly and as advice. And afterwards, if it is necessary for you to come to me for counsel, I say this to you: In whatever way it seems best to you to please the Lord God and to follow His footprints and his poverty, do this with the blessing of God and my obedience. And if you believe it

necessary for the well-being of your soul, or to find comfort, and you wish to come to me, Leo, come! (AB 47).

In terms of the practice of spiritual direction, this letter indicates the open and warm relationship Francis has with his directee, Leo. The saint uses intimate personal language and describes his own feelings and sense that he is in touch with. He tells Leo that he speaks to him as a mother, Francis, so often referred to as holy father and seraphic father, switches perspectives and presents himself in spiritual direction as coming from a maternal and feminine stance rather than paternal. In doing so he is indicating to Leo his desire to be supportive and nurturing, rather than domineering. This becomes specific in the confidence and hope Francis expresses in Leo's ability to discern the Lord's will when he says, 'In whatever way it seems best for you to serve the Lord God...'. In addition to this, Francis is directing to the Lord Leo's desire to know God's will. In doing so, Francis is moving Leo to freedom rather than rectitude. The goal is to be free before God, to touch, experience, feel, and articulate the self as it truly is. This letter is saying that Francis has created such an atmosphere that dialogue takes place in the context of one's freedom and with a mutual sense of the Spirit's presence. Gerald May confirms this essential element of spiritual direction when he writes:

Spiritual direction is generally surrounded by a characteristic atmosphere that is seldom encountered in any other interpersonal relationship. This atmosphere is one of spaciousness and underlying peace; of openness and receptivity; of a kind of quiet clarity in which it is easier to allow and let be. As one person put it, "Being in spiritual direction is just like being in prayer, only there is someone with me in it" (May, 93).

Not only does Francis move Leo to the Lord and freedom, but reminds Leo of past direction and choices. He says, 'to follow His footprints and His poverty'. Francis merely places this term before him and leaves the specifics to the Lord and Leo. By doing this Francis is demonstrating the importance of our past development and formation. The stages of development from childhood to adulthood are essential to keep in mind for spiritual direction because of the attitudes, images, scars, conscious and unconscious feelings and dynamics that have resulted from them. Remembering our journey is to touch all these dimensions with an awareness and openness to discover the Spirit's transforming presence. Francis, then, is asking Leo to go before the Lord and to be free in his decision making, but with a sense of his past journey with the Lord and the brothers. This whole direction is really an enabling experience which Thomas Mart in his book, *The Art of Christian Listening* (18), explains as the factor which makes direction work. He writes:

"How did it work? They enabled me to believe in myself, to rejoice in my own being and gifts, to accept the mystery of my life in hope, and to make the most of it. Compared to this, analysis, advice, summaries of treatises, and exhortations to the heights come to very little."

The Franciscan Charism is such that it engages the person with life in the personal, communal, and universal dimensions, and in such a way that all are opportunities for giving and receiving spiritual direction...

Lastly, all that Francis says is done with assurance that he is with Leo in all of it and is available for him not only for more direction, but for consolation and companionship. It is this consolation of companionship that is the hallmark of Franciscan life and direction. This 'being with' is the 'life' of a friar minor: a being with the Lord in fraternity and poverty. It is this 'being with' the Lord and each other that is at the heart of good spiritual direction, and it is this that is essential to the Franciscan charism. The Rule of the Order is filled with exhortations to this kind of relationship with one another in the brotherhood.

This brief look at Francis and one on one spiritual direction, whether with God directly or with another, demonstrates the fundamental approach to direction from a Franciscan vantage point. What is unique here is that the friars, by the very nature of their charism, had ongoing direction because they were itinerant preachers and Francis always sent them out two-by-two. Encouraged and taught to minister to one another, they were thus guaranteed companionship and a source of direction.

Besides one on one direction, two other sources of direction that are characteristic of the Franciscan life are *general* direction and *group* direction. An explanation of what these involve speaks of the profound and yet very practical elements of the Franciscan tradition of spiritual direction.

General Direction

Damien Isabelle defines general direction as "concerned with the basics on which all other forms of direction must refer" (*Workbook*), 290). He further quotes Adrian Van Kaam's elaboration on the subject:

"The objective universal directives of the christian spiritual life include reception of sacraments, following the commandments, obedience to the Church, general conditions for a life of prayer and the accumulated essential insights of acknowledged masters through the centuries."

Put simply, general direction is what the Church offers for all of its members through her office to teach, preach, govern, and celebrate. Because the friars were itinerant, they drew a great deal of their direction from the general faith of the local Churches wherever they were, praying, preaching, and participating in the liturgical and sacramental life. The diversity of their experience due to the many places they travelled added to the depth and universality of their direction.

This general direction comes not only from persons and the hierarchy, but from objects as well. Francis developed in his brothers a deep sense and appreciation of God's presence and communication in all of creation. Symbol and imagination were important to Francis and are still essential to Franciscan spirituality. He was able to build a ladder to God through his contact and contemplation of creation. The Tau, or cross, became his special sign which he marked people, objects, and his signature. He teaches and instructs his brothers to venerate certain objects, especially the cross. He gives them this prayer to be said whenever they encounter a cross while on their journeys, "We adore you most holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all Your churches throughout the world" (AB 154). The point here is that all this is not some schema for pietistic practices. For Francis, as well as the friars (who still say this today), this use of persons, objects, and symbols in prayer was a great source of aligning the brothers to God in and through all things, places, and events. This was both enriching and practical, because they were often away from the security of the larger community. This gift of being able to find strength and direction from the Church and all of creation is a great contribution to the field of spiritual direction, especially for those who are unable to find the one on one model. For the Franciscan, it was and still is an integral part of the life of a friar minor and of the essence of the charism. The outflow of this is that just as the friars were directed in this way, they were able to direct others wherever they were, which till this day has made them troubadours of renewal for the Church and the people.

Isabelle makes this statement concerning the friars' gift to direct others by their very lifestyle:

"From the other point of view, the brothers participated in keeping alive the general direction of the Church, restoring its freshness, immediacy and vitality. What convinced the people was the coherence between what the brothers said and how they lived. Their presence seemed to speak the Word afresh in the midst of a church that was already too formal and distant from the people's ways and language. For some reason the brothers' way of living together in love and poverty opened up the Gospel to thousands of people who sincerely sought guidance from the Church. They found it in the approved life of the friars" (289).

The coherence between what the brothers said and how they lived is important. There is the suggestion here of the necessity for continual discernment in order to live in reality the life that is professed. For the Franciscan then and today, the Rule is not a compilation of legislation, but is considered 'life' and, as such, gives life and involves a lifestyle. The vowed life is also a life lived in fraternity (community). This fraternal dimension is central not only to what Franciscanism is all about, but also is a fundamental place for *group* spiritual direction. The next section treats this extremely unique and significant aspect of Franciscan spiritual direction.

Group Direction

This model of direction can take many forms, but in general, it means those gatherings of christians who seek to share their stories and journey with the Lord in an atmosphere of prayer, support, discernment, and openness to the Spirit. It is a time for listening together, a being with one another and the Lord as family. There is a certain peace and security about it that liberates and gives strength. If the group functions well, it is the place for direction and rejuvenation. Jacques de Vitry wrote this in 1216 about the brothers, attesting to the presence of group direction and its effect:

"In the midst of this corruption I nonetheless found consolation in seeing a great number of men and women who renounced all their possessions and left the world for the love of Christ... Those who have heard them say to their friends: 'Come along' and so one group brings another". (*Omnibus*, 1608).

For Franciscans, group direction has a special rhythm to it and each movement possess its own dynamics. Our intent here is to look at each movement and list the potential for spiritual direction in each, citing the *brotherhood* itself as spiritual director.

The first movement is a *Coming Together*. The friars gathered together when in chapter or for their common life. If we recall the story spoken of earlier about Bernard joining Francis' company, we see the response of Francis as one of invitation to 'coming together'. He says: "The Lord has sent us a good brother, and so they ate together, rejoicing in the Lord" (*Omnibus*, 'Life of Giles', 242). Isabelle gives this insight into the specifics of what can occur in this coming together:

This coming together is not contrived; it is the work of the Lord... In coming together, the call from/by God was discerned, the way of life was explained and shared, and the joy of living the faith was explained (292).

The initial place for group direction is basically learning the life and the shared experience of faith and the common call.

The second movement is a *Sending Out*. Francis, like Christ, sent the friars out two-by-two: "Go, my dearest brothers, two-by-two into the various parts of the world, announcing to men peace and repentance unto forgiveness of sins..." (292). Francis wasn't pietistically naive and realized the difficult struggles of living such a radical life. Only by continued support and direction from the Lord could the friars remain faithful. Therefore, in this 'sending out' movement (they were itinerant preachers) the traveling with a companion provided each friar not only with fraternal life and support, but with a spiritual director. On the road then, the Franciscan is directed by (1) God, directly or in and through creation and events (2) the general direction of the Church (3) one on one direction with his fellow brother referred to earlier.

The third movement is a *Coming Back*. Thomas of Celano, the earliest commissioned biographer of Francis, places before us the wholesome atmosphere that was so conducive for direction and 'new life' among Francis and his followers.

When they had gathered, they rejoiced greatly at seeing their kind shepherd; and they wondered that they had thus come together by a common desire. They then gave an account of the good things the merciful Lord had done for them; and, if they had been negligent and ungrateful in any way, they humbly begged and willingly received correction and punishment from their holy father. For thus they had always been accustomed to act when they came to him, and they did not hide from him the least thought or the first impulses of their hearts... (*Omnibus*, 30).

Needless to say, this aspect of Franciscan life is one of its greatest strengths. The diversity and uniqueness of each friar is brought together, shared, directed, and celebrated. It is a coming 'Home' in every sense of the word and this in itself gives meaning, direction, and security to the friars. There is a real sense of belonging and acceptance, of being able to experi-

ence the Lord in the gathering of 2 or 3 in his name. Isabelle sees this kind of group direction as an enrichment process by 'recounting their wonders, their accomplishments and their sins'. Direction here occurs on many levels as the 'life' is not only shared and experienced, but also discussed with a sense and knowledge that the Lord speaks through the gathering of friars.

The fourth movement of group direction is the *Living Together*. Pure and simple this is just what it says. It is the living out together of daily life with all its struggles, its pettiness, its personality conflicts, and the nuts and bolts of practicality. For the friars, even living together in poor physical environments was directive and provided them with the opportunity to be continually put at the mercy of God's providence. The poverty or powerlessness was a means of directing or aligning themselves with God. It also put them in touch with their need for one another and their responsibility to create an atmosphere of support and direction. This living together must be seen as distinct from ministering together. For the friar, this distinction is essential to his life. The friar's identity comes from his life with the Lord in fraternity; in the living together in community. It is out from this quality of life together that he moves into the world and ministry. One needs only to read the Rule and Francis' life to see that the attitude characteristic of life together for friars is motherly. All the brothers were specifically counseled to develop this attitude in order to create an environment of freedom, care, security, and peace. Though this is not spiritual direction in itself, it is very much the atmosphere in which it can and should take place. Once again, this is not just some optional practice for the friars. It is what they are about. As such, the brotherhood as *living together* is directive and directed by its very nature.

These four movements of group direction are cyclic and are repeated continually as the rhythm of Franciscan life. The striking contribution here is that in every movement of its life, the brotherhood provides and presents each friar with a profound source of spiritual direction, either one on one, general, or group.

Like anything that gives 'life', people are attracted to it and want to share in it. The comprehensive and universal appeal of Franciscanism is found in its not being exclusive, but rather inclusive. It is not a retreat or spiritual exercises, but a way of life which, for our concern here, provides direction in every moment of that life. The Franciscan charism, as a way of life, is truly a gift for all seeking direction and community life. Its appeal is both spiritual and practical. It is no surprise that Francis' lifestyle with the brothers developed quickly into the second and third orders, as women religious and lay people wanted to partake of the deep

and continual support and direction it offered then, as it still does today.

All that has been presented may appear to be idealistic and unreal. Without a doubt, over the centuries and even today, Franciscans distort, misinterpret, and both choose and give 'death' to one another rather than 'life'. However, where the charism is practiced and struggled with in sincerity, there is found the directing and directed movements of the Spirit.

There is in the world today an emerging spiritual hunger for God. As people search for experiences of God, they will discover quickly that there is an essential need for ongoing direction, because experiences of God are not ends in themselves, but are means to freedom in choosing and discerning God's will continually as a 'way of life.' Gerald May offers this insight on the subject (38):

"Although spiritual journeys often begin in the context of experience, and although experiences constitute major vehicles of insight, growth, support, and service along the way, the goal of the journey can never legitimately be experience itself. The goal is beyond experience, and has to do with our actually becoming who God means us to be and doing what God means us to do.."

Francis himself assumes this attitude when, on his death bed, he offers this final direction to the brothers: "I have done what was mine to do; may Christ teach you what you are to do" (*Omnibus*, II Celano 214). In saying this he directs his brothers to the Lord for their own discernment and so raises their consciousness of personal freedom and responsibility. The important point here is that this direction and discernment is nurtured and provided by the very nature of the brotherhood or charism.

The model of one on one, general, and group direction contained in Franciscanism offer people today a very real and concrete vision and approach to God, creation, community, and Church. The Franciscan charism is such that it engages the person with life in the personal, communal, and universal dimensions, and in such a way that all are opportunities for giving and receiving spiritual direction as we have seen.

An Integral View

Certainly this presentation is limited in its attempt to treat the subject of Franciscanism and spiritual direction, but it nonetheless demonstrates the unique contribution of the Franciscan charism; that being its ability to incorporate the diverse models for direction. In addition to this it also illustrates that the Franciscan approach contains many of the proper no-

tions and criteria that appear to be at the heart of good and fruitful spiritual direction.

The following are a list of those elements which seem to be crucial to an integrated and healthy view of spiritual direction. These same ingredients have been cited as essential to Francis' and the order's understanding and practice of spiritual direction. A brief description of these elements and how they are incorporated into the Franciscan understanding will serve to reveal the depth and quality of Franciscan spiritual direction. The Franciscan examples of the different elements are taken from those already mentioned in this presentation.

Freedom: A freedom to touch, experience, share, and identify the realities of ones' self; a freedom to discern and choose with a sense of responsibility. (Ex. Brother Leo is given the freedom to choose what will please the Lord.)

Listening: To provide the experience of understanding, compassion, and support; a listening to the movements of the Spirit in the person's story as well as in the director/directee exchange. (Ex. The whole episode with brother Bernard's conversion, in which all the above are displayed by Francis.)

A 'Witness': The ability to convey or experience that we are together with God, another, or a group in our sharing; a sense of openness, receptivity, and in an atmosphere of nurturing. (Ex. Francis as 'mother' to Leo).

Prayer: All that makes up our uniqueness and journey, good or bad, is brought before the Lord in *prayer*, a prayer which is dialogical. (Ex. Francis' experience of being directed by God while in sin).

Uniqueness of the individual: That there is no teaching, preaching, or assumptions made on the directee. All are unique meaning makers and we need to check our filters continually in order to be free to allow the other to make their own meaning in their own way with God. (Ex. in Francis' saying "I have done what it was mine to do, may Christ teach you what is yours to do").

Hope and Confidence: An encounter in direction of being affirmed in the midst of whatever the experience is; that there is a very real confidence and hope for the person because of the Lord's presence and love; a knowledge that one's mature needs will be met (Ex. Seen in Francis' rejoicing over Bernard and confident that the Lord would speak to his needs through scripture.)

Openness to Experience: Dreams, images, visions, events, and relationships are all valid sources for God's communication and direction; each needing to be looked at carefully to discern the true Spirit (Ex. Francis' own journey was very much in touch with visions, dreams, images, relationships, and life.)

Identification: A need to look at real needs, feelings, and obstacles in order to be set free by the Lord; to feel what we are feeling! (Ex. When the brothers returned in the *coming back* movement of group direction, they prayed, shared their stories, hearts, and even their sins with Francis and each other in order to be freed, directed, and renewed by the richness of their life together in the Lord.)

A Holy Indifference: A profound sense that we are *more* than what we want and what we do: a warm detachment enabling us to be engaged in life and relationships, yet an apartness which allows us freedom to 'be' with God and one another (Ex. The *living together* and enjoyment of one another in companionship and fraternity; the warm apartness and freedom found in the one on one with God moments of Francis' life; this is found also in the saint's many trips into solitude. Poverty and powerlessness continually placed the friars in an experience of detachment.)

A Sense of the Past: What we are, in terms of our images of God, manhood, womanhood, and how we make meaning are the result of our past. How we make meaning and what influences our past has on us are integral parts of spiritual direction. (Ex. This is seen in Francis' recounting how the Lord spoke to him when he was in sin. His whole *Testament* illustrates his being in touch with the past and how the Lord directed him.)

Trust in God through Relationships: An experience in spiritual direction of being involved in personal relationship through which we mature and grow in our trust relationship with God. (Ex. Francis, as mother, puts confidence and trust in Leo through his use of intimate and personal language, assuring him of his support. Just as Leo trusts and is trusted by Francis, he can now go before the Lord, as Francis suggests, in the same trusting spirit.)

The Need for Direction: Our journey with God should never become freeze-dried, rather we must be receptive to new movements and stirrings of the Spirit. There is need for continual direction for those areas of ambiguity. Spiritual direction is not just experiences, but a way of life for those engaged in life. (Ex. The Franciscan charism,

by its rhythms of coming together, engage the person in life. Through the friars' being detached and itinerant, they are given the continual challenge of 'newness' rather than freeze-dried complacency. The one on one with God, the sending out in twos, the general and group direction, which are all of the essence of the order, provide a comprehensive opportunity for spiritual direction.)

Conclusion

The prayer spoken by Francis before the Crucifix of San Damiano in Assisi at the time of his conversion is a sincere and humble plea for direction. I remember saying it in Assisi before the very same Crucifix, asking for discernment and direction after 8 years of Diocesan priesthood. Through most of the models of direction described, and because of the enabling and nurturing experience of the friars along the way, I too am a Franciscan today. My experience has been realistic, in terms of the positive and negative ways the charism is lived out, but I want to conclude with my own witness that Franciscanism has truly transformed and continues to transform my vision and life. Those dimensions of spiritual direction contained in this presentation are very much available in the charism for those willing to embrace it sincerely.

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St. Anthony and the Child

In the beginning
Anthony held only
the Bible,
and taught with
the other hand
uplifted.
Artists simply assumed
his proclamation
of the Gospels
was best shown
literally
with book in hand.
But somehow
the Child
envisioned another
revelation
that night
He crept into
Anthony's arms.

William Hart McNichols, S.J., S.F.O.



Book Reviews

The People Called. The Growth of Community in the Bible. By Paul D. Hanson, San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, publishers, 1986. Pp. x-564. Cloth, \$31.95.

Reviewed by Robert Donovan, Ph.D. (Fordham University), Associate Professor of Theology at St. Bonaventure University.

In my youth I learned that the marks of the Church were one, holy, catholic and apostolic. Of course, at first I thought that catholic meant Catholic. After all that's what I was, "a Catholic," and the marks of being that in my neighborhood were obvious. I've grown older and so has my view of the Church or Community of Faith. But in many ways, even though one's interpretation may differ, those original marks still pretty much define the Christian Church. Some, of course, may disagree.

Paul Hanson, Bussey Professor of Divinity and Old Testament at Harvard, offers a slightly different set of marks and insists that these come from the Old Testament vision refined during the history of the Jews and carry over even up to the time of Jesus and beyond. For Hanson the marks of the faith community from the Yahwist to Paul are worship, compassion, and righteousness. In this exhaustive and well researched work Hanson traces in all of its variegated manifestations this notion of community which he sees as

an ongoing response of a people to an ongoing divine initiative. In so doing he shows the depth of his knowledge of the Testaments and adds to ours. He permits us to see old texts in some new and interesting ways.

Simply put Hanson invites the reader to see that "biblical faith looks to the God who invites a responding community to recognize the presence of God (worship) in the events it encounters, and to infer from that presence what is the just (righteousness) and loving (compassion) way to live." (p. 488) He painstakingly traces this development through to the Christian era. And he does so in order to call the Christian Church of today to be grasped by this biblical paradigm and struggle to embody it in its present struggle to be a community of faith. Ever responding to the ongoing divine initiative taking place in the real world of changing customs and political activity, the community of faith (Church) must change or die, but it must do so in continuity with what went before. Hanson even goes so far as to suggest that the Christians and the Jews together "seek a fuller understanding of the vocations of communities of faith dedicated to hastening the day when the blessing that the true God alone can bring will be known to everyone." (p. 412)

In the ongoing ecumenical dialogue as well as the discussion about the viable communal structures for those in the western, eastern, or third worlds, this

work represents a distillation of the present state of biblical scholarship gathered around the theme of community. Some may not agree with all of Hanson's conclusion or with his methodology, but one cannot but admire and use his scholarship.

Faith's Answer: The Mystery of Jesus. By Vittorio Messori, New Rochelle, NY: Don Bosco Publications, 1986. 298 pages. Hard Cover, \$16.95. Paper \$12.95. (Translated by Kenneth D. Whitehead; edited by Reverend Eugene M. Brown).

Reviewed by Francis Berna, O.F.M., Ph. D. (Fordham University), Assistant Professor of Theology, St. Bonaventure University.

Karl Rahner remarks on the need for an "apologetics of a less anxious and worried kind in this history of dogma." (*A Rahner Reader*, ed. G. McCool, p. 289). Unfortunately, that is not the sort of apologetics one finds in Messori's text. Mr. Messori is quite anxious and worried. One gets the impression that the author is clearly on the defense. But, his enemy remains unclear.

Msgr. George Kelly (St. John's University, New York) praises the text for clarity, conviction and commitment. Indeed these are the author's strong points. The introduction tells how he came to write the text and that he approaches the topic of Jesus not from the viewpoint of the theologian but from the viewpoint of a journalist. He intends to offer a picture of Jesus easily understood by the average lay person.

Such a task is admirable and the text does have a way of getting the reader's attention. For the most part the lan-

guage is clear and direct. And, the author is able to raise some fascinating questions which are answered with fascinating information. But it is precisely Messori's attitude towards scholarship which presents his downfall.

Repeatedly the author quotes Blaise Pascal, sometimes at great length. One must wonder if the average reader better understands Pascal than the scholars Messori attacks for making the question of Jesus their jealously guarded preserve. Throughout the text Mr. Messori seems to be at war with most every biblical scholar and theologian. Yet, he fails to mention the name of the attacked or their work! All too frequently the text simply employs such phrases as "a commentary: a recent Jewish scholar; a contemporary archaeologist." It is all too difficult to evaluate the author's ideas without specific references to those whom he would find inadequate. Several examples illustrate this point.

In the length of one page the author discusses the notion of a corporate messiah — the faithful of Israel would fulfill the messianic function in the world. He suggests that this notion is developed only as a consequence of Israel's rejection of Jesus as the messiah. A quick glance through Mc Kenzie's *Dictionary of the Bible* illustrates the complexity of the issue and establishes quite credibly that the concept of the messiah undergoes radical change throughout Israel's history. Furthermore, Mc Kenzie offers some clear indications that the messianic character of the people pre-dates the Christian experience.

Pascal serves as the author's main source for interpreting the Jewish people's declaration in John's Gospel,

"We have no king but Caesar." Paschal contends that in this acclamation the people "disavowed all desire to have a king of their own." The text accepts Paschal's words as the "typical Christian interpretation" and one that reflects the historical condition of Israel at the time of Jesus (p. 80). A careful reading of the gospel text can disclose a theological interpretation of greater significance. For John it would seem that this declaration on the part of the people is understood as a rejection of their own identity as the chosen people. It amounts to a rejection of God since ultimately only God is the true king of Israel. The issue is ultimately the issue of faith in God particularly as he has revealed himself in Jesus. That is what concerns John. It seems dubious at best to suggest that John was primarily concerned with future political realities and vague references to Old Testament prophecies, as Messori suggests.

Finally, when focusing on the prophecies of Daniel — an apocalyptic and not primarily a prophetic text — the author contends that it makes no difference "for our purposes" when the text was completed except to say that it was completed two centuries before Jesus (p. 81). Mr. Messori completely ignores the historical - critical contention that the date of origin has something to do with the author's intention. Since he uses this text to argue for the prediction of the exact date of the messiah (p. 85), one would think that the historical-critical questions would at least be addressed. Mr. Messori's rush to claim "precise and unquestionable evidence" should make even the most anxious apologist cringe! His style certainly becomes tedious for anyone with the least bit of scholarly concern.

If one could lay aside a concern for sound scholarship, the text could offer a different perspective than that of much contemporary Christology. His attention to the "Star of Bethlehem" presents some fascinating though undocumented "evidence." However, if one is seriously interested in understanding Jesus and is searching for a reason to account for our hope in him, there are certainly better texts.

Life and Death in the Testament: The Teachings of Jesus and Paul. By Xavier Leon-Dufour. Translated from the French by Terrence Prendergast. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986. Pp. xxi-316. Cloth, \$20.95.

Reviewed by Father Charles J. O'Connor, O.F.M., S.T.D., Assistant Professor of Scripture at Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, N.Y.

It is of the nature of man and woman to question, and to seek out answers. To some of life's questions, however, the answers remain elusive. One such question whose answer evades us is, "What happens to us at death?"

Xavier Leon-Dufour meets this question head on in his recently translated book, entitled in English, *Life and Death in the New Testament: The Teaching of Jesus and Paul*. In it he seeks to unravel to some degree the mystery of human death by recourse to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul about it in the New Testament.

The book consists of two parts: *Part One — Jesus Faces Death*: Jesus Faces Death in Others; Jesus Before Death; Jesus Faces Imminent Death; Jesus on the Cross; *Part Two — Paul Faces*

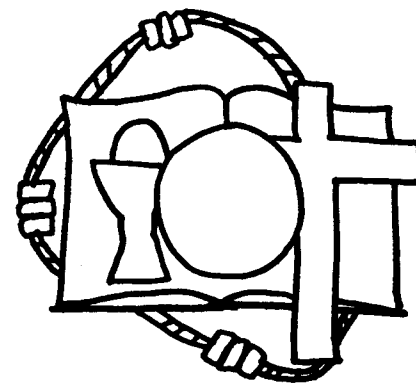
Death: Paul Faces Jesus on the Cross; Death, Where's Your Victory; Suffering and Hope; Paul Faces Death. In both parts L-D addresses the topic of our death as an aspect of the death of Jesus. As exegete he strives to understand the texts of the evangelists and those of Paul which deal with this topic. In so doing the author wishes to correct what are in his opinion the distorted and even deformed notions about the death of Jesus and our own.

With regard to this attempt at correction, L-D writes, "... the terminology in use to describe the effectiveness of Jesus Christ's life and death often is conditioned by erroneous understandings of the Scriptural text, and this begets further defective descriptions of the mystery. There is then a felt need to re-discover the meaning of the words and figures [like "sacrifice", "exploitation," "shedding of blood," "merit," "satisfaction," "substitution," "justification," "reconciliation," "transformation," etc.] employed in the New Testament, a task entrusted to the exegete first of all" (p. xxvi).

Both scholars and non-scholars alike can find something worthwhile in this book. Scholars will be challenged to assess for themselves this exegete's critical examination of the Synoptic and Johannine texts concerning the death of Jesus in which he distinguishes between Jesus' understanding of death in others and His own death from that of the evangelists' tradition or the evangelists' own understanding of it. Non-scholars will be exposed to the writing of a pastor who witnesses to the belief that life is not reducible to material existence, but has its origin and goal in God Himself. In the light of this the author avers that a Christian should be

unafraid of death since the ultimate power of death has been vanquished in and through Jesus' own death and resurrection.

At the conclusion of his introduction L-O writes, "... Whoever admits that God is present and alive will surely be able to grasp with greater serenity the mystery of that death to which we are all invited, a mystery that perdures, but nevertheless enlightens our present life" (p. xxxiii). This book is certainly worth picking up. Death faces us all sooner or later. To understand it more clearly from a biblical perspective is worth the time one spends carefully reading this book.



Shorter Notices

FR. JULIAN A. DAVIES, O.F.M.

The Healers. By Robert Baldwin. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1986. Pp. 156. Paper, \$4.95.

This easy-to-read book is divided into three parts. Part One covers the period to 400, beginning with an account of the healing ministry of Jesus, and that of the apostles, up to Martin of Tours. Part Two treats of healing through relics, Sacraments, and Shrines from the 5th century to the recent past. Part three treats of Catholic Healers of the Recent Past — Brother Andre, Father Solanus Casey, Capuchin, and Padre Pio. A concluding chapter mentions the current healers like Fathers DiOrio and McDonough. I learned most from the book in the chapters on St. Francis, whose healing ministry tends to get obscured among his own, and St. Catherine of Siena. It was interesting to me to read too that Augustine of Hippo came to appreciate this ministry later in life, after originally downplaying it. I recommend the book to anyone seeking a background to healing as it has occurred in the Catholic tradition.

The Catholic Classics. By Dinesh D'Souza. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 1986.

This book comes with an impressive array of recommendations, and most of them are deserved. The author introduces and summarizes ten pieces of writing in the Catholic tradition that have become "classic". The ten writers are: Augustine, Boethius, Bede, Aquinas, Dante, Thomas A Kempis, Pascal, Newman, Chesterton, and Merton. I found the summaries of *The Inferno*, *Consolations of Philosophy*, and the *Summa Theologica* most enlightening — though I regret that the author repeats the old calumny that Franciscans despised reason, and overdramatizes the split between Bonaventure and Aquinas. I found the presentations of Bede, Pascal, and Newman least interesting. My suggestion is to pick and choose which pieces you want to read, and read the essays one at a time.

Books Received

- Angelica**, Mother M. with Christine Allison. *Mother Angelica's Answers Not Promises*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. x-275. Cloth, \$13.95
- Bergant**, Dianne, CSA. *The World is a Prayerful Place*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987. Pp. 132. Paper, \$8.95.
- Byrnes**, Thomas. *My Angel's Name is Fred. Tales of Growing Up Catholic*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. x-257. Cloth, \$13.95

- Davis, Charles. *What is Living, What is Dead in Christianity Today?* San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987. Pp. 131, including Index. Cloth, \$16.95.
- Doohan, Leonard. *The Laity. A Bibliography. Theological and Biblical Resources*, Vol. 3. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987. Pp. 169, including Index of Names. Paper, \$8.95.
- Droel, William L. and Pierce, Gregory F. Augustine. *Confident and Competent. A Challenge for the Lay Church*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987. Pp. 110 with Selected Bibliography. Paper, \$3.95
- Falardeau, Ernest, S.S.S. *One Bread and Cup. Source of Communication. Theology and Life Series* 19. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1987. Pp. 134, including Index and Bibliography. Paper, \$8.95.
- Ghezzi, Bert. *Becoming More Like Jesus. Growth in the Spirit*. Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., 1987. Pp. 156. Paper, \$5.95.
- Gust, Dodie. *As I Take Christ. Daily Prayer and Reflection with Paul*. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987. Pp. 135, including Bibliography. Paper, \$4.95.

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