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

I. Writings of Saint Francis

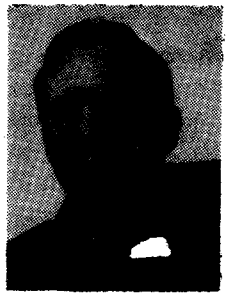
Adm: Admonitions
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler: Letter to Clerics[1]
EpCust: Letter to Superiors[1]
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful[1]
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin: Letter to a Minister
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect: 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
[1]I, 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).



Chapter of Mats — A Personal Perspective

In May, F. Edward Coughlin shared with readers of the **CORD** a historical perspective on the chapter of Mats concept: a fraternal gathering of all the friars to share their life and ministry. This June we in Holy Name Province had our chapter of Mats at Siena College, and about ⅔ of the Province showed up for at least some of the sessions and almost half being there the full 3½ days. Many friars expected little, and not many thought it was important as the regular Chapter which had suggested it — at the Visitator's request, I for one was wondering what could justify the time and money that would go into it, and when the idea was first broached expected perhaps 150 friars to show — folks who kind of go to everything.

I and lots of friars were most pleasantly surprised. We were surprised not just by the numbers who attended but the over-all program — a program the style of which can and should be duplicated by communities who want to help themselves move into the 1990's. We remembered the history of the Province — in a multa-media presentation, we celebrated Golden Jubilee, and Solemn Vows, we shared in small groups what our best and worst feelings were in ministry, we listened as friars gave workshops in their expertise — computers, Ministry to Adult Children of Alcoholics, AIDS Ministry, Marriage Encounter, and what turned out to be our most popular "The Big Bang" Theory of the Origin of the Universe, and its relevance to God. We also played — with an evening of entertainment the likes of which many of us hadn't experienced since our days in formation when self-entertainment was an art form.

It was great to speak to friars you hadn't seen in five or ten or twenty years, and great to experience that so many care about Franciscan life. The afterglow of this Chapter of Mats will last for some years to come, and even if it didn't change anything — it wasn't supposed to — it certainly was a morale booster for most of a Franciscan Province. If your group hasn't had one lately, give it a try.

Fr Julian Davies

THEOLOGIA CRUCIS: Luther and Francis in Convergence

WILLIAM J. CORK

It may appear that no two figures in the history of the Christian church differ from one another as much as Martin Luther and Francis of Assisi. And perhaps it is as difficult to imagine the Poverello arguing the intricacies of the *communicatio idiomatum* over a stein of beer as it is to imagine the hot-tempered Reformer cuddling a newborn lamb. Nevertheless, there is a point where Francis and Luther may indeed be seen to "converge" (to borrow a bit of contemporary ecumenical jargon). That point is the cross of Christ. It may be said with little exaggeration that no two men in history have been as absorbed with and driven by the remembrance of our Lord's humiliation as these two friars. Their conclusions frequently differ, yet each is guided by the conviction that God's fullest self-revelation takes place in the figure of the One who hung dead upon the cross. From this premise, Luther articulated a "theology of the cross," the implications of which he saw to be primarily in the areas of justification, revelation, and ecclesiology. Long before Luther, however, Francis had articulated in his life and ministry a theology of the cross which expressed itself in terms of humble service and poverty. It is the conclusion of this author (a Lutheran), that this fundamental Franciscan insight of ministry as conformity to the crucified Christ may be precisely what is needed to fill the void in contemporary Lutheranism's understanding of ministry. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is presently in the throes of a five-year study of ministry (the outcome of which appears to be "up for

The author, a recently ordained Lutheran minister, wrote this paper for a course in Franciscan Theology/Spirituality taught by Michael Blastic, O.F.M. Conv., at the Washington Theological Union. He is a graduate of Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and also holds an M.A.R. in Church History from Gettysburg Seminary. He now serves the Lutheran Parish in Thompsontown, Pa.

grabs"). We would do well to consider the Franciscan witness, holding up, as it does, a model of ministry which may be seen as a necessary implication of the "theology of the cross" that was so central to the thought of Luther.

It was at the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518 that Luther first referred to a *theologia crucis*, in a series of theses concerning the nature of revelation. "That person," said Luther, "does not deserve to be called a theologian who looks upon the invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things which have actually happened (Rom. 1:20)." Rather, it is the one "who comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross" who alone "deserves to be called a theologian."[1] As explicated by Alister McGrath, Luther here asserts, first, the necessity of revelation. Speculation on the basis of the created order will not bring one to a knowledge of God. Second, what God reveals of Himself is, at the same time, concealed. We perceive only the *posteriora Dei*. Third, this revelation takes place in suffering and the cross, not in common human morality or in creation. Fourth, the revelation demands faith, for only faith recognizes that the One on the cross is, in fact, God.[2]

Luther's emphasis on the cross as the primary locus of God's self-disclosure is not unique to him, but may be traced back to the renewal of devotion to the humanity of Christ at the time of Francis.[3] What is unique to Luther is his sharp distinction between the *theologia crucis* and the *theologia gloriae*. The two, for him, are mutually exclusive.[4]

> Faith has to do with things not seen (Heb. 11:11). Hence in order that there may be room for faith, it is necessary that everything which is believed should be hidden. It cannot, however, be more deeply hidden than under an object, perception, or experience which is contrary to it.[5]

Thus Luther is led to state categorically that "God can be found only in suffering and the cross.[6] The converse is a necessary corollary. Where there is not pain or the cross, but instead pride, wealth and ostentatious display, it is to be doubted that God is, in fact, present.

Luther's *theologia crucis* thereby became a verdict of judgment against the triumphalism of the medieval church, and particularly the papacy.[7] He "was convinced," says Eric Gritsch, "that the church may have to suffer the loss of its status in order to become a better instrument of the gospel."[8]Luther called the church to embrace the humility of Christ. He called it to the cross. There the church sees its true vocation to be that of suffering servant.[9] It is to be called by the world "*Afflicted one*, as well as *storm-tossed, and not comforted*, 'Miss Hopeless.' "[10] Luther's *theologia crucis* demands that the church, like its Lord, be hidden under suffering. This is not, however, the self-chosen discomfort of pious depri-

vation, but that genuine suffering which inevitably folows the faithful proclamation of the Word of God.[11]

This understanding of the church may be looked at from the angle of Luther's understanding of justification by faith alone. Luther argues that one can be reduced to clinging in faith to Christ only through humiliation. It is through a direct, intense encounter with the wrath of God, experienced as suffering and *Anfechtungen*, that the sinner comes to know "that his salvation is uttery beyond his own powers, devices, endeavors, will, and works, and depends entirely on the choice, will, and work of another, namely, of God alone."[12] This point (often neglected by contemporary Lutherans) receives its greatest elaboration in Luther's 1521 commentary on the Magnificat. Humility is here said to be a necessity for justification, not in the sense of a "work," but in the sense of an utter repudiation of trust in works. Thus Luther distinguishes between "true" and "artificial humility." The latter he regards as an affectation which seeks reward through outward appearance. True humility seeks no reward. It is "nothing else than a disregarded, despised, and lowly estate, such as that of men who are poor, sick, hungry, thirsty, in prison, suffering, and dying."[13] Those in such a state know they have nothing. Therefore they cling in faith to the promise of the Crucified One.

Luther's arguments at this point bear a remarkable similarity to the writings of Francis. Both hold up the cross as the example of the suffering servanthood to which the baptized Christian is called. The importance of the crucified Christ to the call and ministry of Francis cannot be overemphasized. It was a vision of the cross, says Bonaventure, which caused Francis to understand "as addressed to himself the Gospel text: If you wish to come after me, deny yourself and take up your cross and follow me (Matt. 16:24)."[14] And this is but one of seven visions of the cross with which Bonaventure brackets Francis' life, a progressive series which culminates in the stigmatization at Alverna.[15] "In all things," says Bonaventure, "he wished to be conformed to Christ crucified, who hung on the cross poor, suffering and naked." This led Francis to lovingly embrace that humble service which Christ had accepted, marked by washing the feet of the brothers, humility among both "servants" and "masters," and joy among those "who are looked down upon."[17]

This is the sort of ministry one might expect to flow from Luther's theology of the cross. Yet Luther never saw the implications in quite this way. This is at least partially due to his polemical circumstances, and the particular abuses revalent in his day.[18] In fact, each time Luther mentions Francis it is in connection with a scathing attack on sixteenth-century Franciscanism. Some of these attacks may be traced to inter-order rivalry (the Augustinians of Luther's day having no great love for the Franciscans), but many have a grounding in genuine abuses and spring from the heart

of one who had both learned from Franciscan theologians (particularly Bonaventure, Occam and Scotus), and who had an overwhelming desire to let nothing detract from the glory of Christ. For example, he accuses the Franciscans of having turned Francis and the Rule into idols.[19] They are willing to bear his cross, but flee their own crosses. "They crawl into monasteries to have peace and happy days, leave other people in trouble and toil, and still claim to be holier in doing that than all others."[20]

Luther contrasts the spirit of Francis and "the other fathers" (i. e., founders of religious orders) with that of their later namesakes. While the "fathers" made mistakes, they were, he believed, "driven under the power of the Holy Spirit and in complete faith and consuming love." Yet "their successors have rushed in and taken over their outward practices, but have abandoned the spirit and faith of the early founders."[21] Francis himself was no doubt "naive or, to state it more truthfully, foolish," in his attitude toward money, Luther felt, but he ought to be commended for begging "for bread and other necessities of life, and then distribut[ing] them among the poor. But look closely at his successors. Did they not look out for themselves and for their kitchen rather well?"[22]

Luther's most penetrating criticisms strike at the very foundations of monasticism and mendicancy. He accuses them of sectarianism. Francis, he says, took the "universal gospel" and made it "into a special rule for the few. What Christ wanted to be universal and catholic, Francis made schismatic." Luther concedes that this was no doubt the result of the efforts to secure papal approval for the order. Yet he repudiates such a motive as an attempt to flee the suffering imposed by the cross. Highly significant for Lutheran spirituality (at least on a theoretical level) is Luther's rejection of the concept of the "evangelical counsels." The whole gospel, for Luther, applies to the whole church. Thus, he says, "When a Franciscan takes his vow he vows nothing more than that which he already vowed at the start in his baptism, and that is the gospel."[23] In sum, the "universal gospel" was restricted to a few spiritual athletes, and trivialized into demands for outward trappings such as cowl, cincture, celibacy and poverty.[24]

Some abuses have been corrected. Others have been recognized, and are being addressed. While Franciscans tend not to wash their habits publicly, occasionally an outsider hears about "refounding," and attempts at "declericalization." Franciscans are increasingly returning to their roots, and asking what it means to be faithful to the vision of Francis. In so doing, they challenge the rest of Christianity as well. Non-Romans have taken special interest in the struggle of Leonardo Boff to articulate his vision of a church renewed through poverty and *minoritas*.[25] All of these efforts address the problem that Luther referred to as Franciscanism's "sectarian" tendencies.

But what of Lutheranism's sectarian tendencies? Though Luther criticized the "theology of glory" which dominated Roman Catholicism in his day, his successors failed to construct an alternative that was convincingly any better. Lutheranism, too, has been dominated in this ecclesiology and ministerial theology by a "theology of glory." This led it to embrace political power in Europe (with disastrous results). And it has led it to withdraw, in varying degrees, from the rest of Christianity through explicit (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and a plethora of smaller groups) and implicit (all the rest of us) claims to theological purity.

Franciscanism, because it shares with us a theology rooted in the cross, is in a position to challenge Lutheranism to be true to that common heritage. It is not only able to challenge, but it provides the resources Lutheranism so desperately needs at the present time. Looking at the Lutheran debacle over ministry through Franciscan eyes, one might suggest that the ELCA's discussions are not really about ministry, *per se* but about ecclesiastical power, and who should wield it. Francis, however, bids us hear the words of our Lord, who has called us not to exercize power (as James and John longed to do), but to serve as washers of feet. The *theologia crucis* is an ecumenical call to renounce ecclesiastical and ministerial triumphalism of one hue, and to embrace poverty, weakness and shame.

This demands hard choices at multiple levels. Bonhoeffer spoke of the "cost of discipleship," and that may fairly state the matter. All the baptized are called to discipleship, and through discipleship, to ministry. As disciples of *Jesus*, we are called to follow His life of self-emptying *(kenosis)*. Is European Luthernism, for example, willing to empty itself of political safety? Is Lutheranism in all lands willing to embrace the humility of Christ in ecumenical dialog (or social activism)? Is it willing to forsake the patronizing role of "advocate," and to embrace joyfully the degrading task of "foot-washer"? Are Lutheran pastors willing to abandon power, authority and prestige (whether as "Herr Pastor" or as "CEO"), in order to become humble servants of their flocks? These are but a few of the questions that await Lutheranism when it risks its very existence to become *ecclesia crucis*. These are the true ecumenical questions, which must be asked of all triumphalistic structures which claim the name of the Crucified One. They are the necessary implications of a truly catholic application of Francis' vision.

The *ecclesia crucis* is a servant church. To speak thus of servanthood is to speak not simply of what the church does, but of why it does it. It is to address the question of the church's being. It is also to address the question of attitude. Narrowing this to the topic of ministry, it may be said that there is ecumenical agreement on the basics of what the "doing"

of ministry involves. Nearly all ecclesial entities will agree that the church, through its ministry, proclaims the Word and administers the Sacraments. For Lutherans, this is stated explicitly in article 5 of the Augsburg Confession. Given this, what might Lutheranism learn from Franciscanism about the implications of the *theologia crucis* for "how" ministry (particularly in this basic sense of proclamation of Word and administration of Sacrament) is to be done? This, we suggest, is not a matter of importing an unknown concept into Lutheran thought, but rather a challenge to uncover what is already present.

Lutherans and Franciscans share a reverence for the proclaimed Word, as well as the conviction that the central content of that Word is the Gospel event of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Lutherans have described this Word as an "external word," a word that is *extra nos*. Yet this way of speaking may give the impression that human life, like the primeval chaos, is devoid of God's activity until the preacher speaks (to coin a phrase) *gratia ex nihilo*. Franciscanism, on the other hand, asserts the givenness of God's ever present gracious activity. Preaching does not inject God into a situation where He was not, but reveals that presence as the presence of the One of the cross. The ability to name grace in this fashion demands not only an acquaintance with the Word, but also an attitude of *minoritas* in relation to the lives and traditions of the people to whom the preacher speaks.

In this understanding of the preacher's responsibility, Franciscanism articulates a concept that is present in Luther's thought, but in a slightly different context. In arguing with the "sacramentarians" over the manner of Christ's eucharistic presence, Luther made a distinction between Christ's presence and our apprehension of it. Thus,

> ... although he is everywhere, he does not permit himself to be so caught and grasped; he can easily shell himself, so that you get the shell but not the kernel. Why? Because it is one thing if God is present, and another if he is present for you. He is there for you when he adds his Word and binds himself, saying, "Here you are to find me." Now when you have the word, you can grasp and have him with certainty and say, "here I have thee, according to thy Word."... [O]therwise you will run back and forth throughout all creation, groping here and groping there yet never finding, even though it is actually there; for it is not there for you.[26]

In an attempt to synthesize the insights of Luther and the Franciscan tradition on this point, one might venture to define "sin" not as a "privation of the good," in Augustinian fashion, but as an "obfuscation of the good" — a "muddying of the waters." The preacher's task, then, is to confront the ambiguity of the world with the Word, thereby speaking sense into a seemingly senseless situation. It is to point out — to name — the beauty

and joy of grace hidden in the gray murkiness of life. It is to name bread and wine as Body and Blood, the darkness of the cross as the glory of God, and the apparent absence of God in suffering as His sweetest presence. The preacher is thus charged with the mission of bringing the paradoxes of life to light — and naming the sheer fact of that paradox "grace."

The Eucharist shall provide an example of how this same line of thought might apply to the Sacraments. The *theologia crucis,* as presented by both Luther and Francis, invites us to join in humble adoration of the One who has humbled Himself for our salvation. And it is in the Eucharist that we are especially confronted by that humiliation of Christ. Bonaventure relates how Francis was "overcome by wonder at such loving condescension and such condescending love" revealed in the Sacrament.[27] And in his own writings as well, we often see Francis standing in awe of the sacramental mystery, as when he exclaims, "O admirable heights and sublime lowliness! O sublime humility! O humble sublimity! That the Lord of the universe, God and the Son of God, so humbles Himself that for our salvation He hides Himself under the little form of bread!"[28] We encounter the same wonder and awe in Luther, beginning with his first mass in 1507 (Granted, few Lutherans see that experience as a good thing!). Yet Luther's reverence for the Sacrament is perhaps most clearly seen in the later controversies with those, such as Huldreich Zwingli, who would deny the Lord's Eucharistic presence. Rather than surrender his confession of the union of the human and divine in the Risen Lord, Luther surrendered the unity of the reformation.[29]

The challenge to contemporary Lutheranism is that its liturgical life, too, be reformed by the *theologia crucis*. This would necessitate a return both to the primacy of the Eucharist in Christian worship and, with this, to the attitude of reverence and awe shown by Francis and Luther toward the Body and Blood of Christ. Our ever-expanding bibliography of ecumenical agreements and theological declarations (not to mention our incomparable collection of confessions, *The Book of Concord)* will remain meaningless as long as the Eucharist retains its status as *adiaphoron* in the lives and worship of the faithful. This means that we must return to (at least) weekly celebrations of the Eucharist. It means intensive education of laity and clergy. And it means an example of reverence on the part of all Euchaharistic ministers, both during and after the service proper. It does *not* mean a multiplication of medieval ceremonial. Instead, the "trappings" of liturgy ought, with our actions and words, give simple witness to the presence of our God.

The pressing question for Lutherans is how to do this. Lutheran churches, as a whole, have not had weekly Eucharists for centuries. Many parishes, influenced by the temperance movements of the last century

(or by the concerns of recovering alcoholics today), use grape juice. Still others, wanting a more tangible "symbol," have adopted the use of giant loaves of crumbly whole grain bread. Each of these practices reveals a practical Zwinglianism. How shall pastors lead their parishes to practices more in line with Lutheran theology? Shall they (or the bishops) simply exercise their power and demand a change? This seems not to be in keeping with the stance of *minoritas* presented in this paper. Shall we try to effect a gradual change? This would seem to reinforce the contention that it doesn't matter. (And the Catholic reader of this paper will note that we have said nothing of the specific Roman objections to Lutheran sacramental theology.)

The pastor might begin by articulating clearly and precisely both the church's confession and the pastor's own conviction. The importance of the latter is that the Word is now "embodied" in the pastor, as an expression of a human being's longings and comforts, and is not simply a directive from "on high." The pastor also needs to be an example of reverence, handling the Eucharistic elements in a fashion that conveys to the assembly the pastor's recognition that they are indeed the Body and Blood of our Lord. In working toward weekly Eucharist, the pastor may need to add a service to the weekly schedule that is specifically designated as Eucharist. Here, however, the pastor must exercize extreme caution. If the weekly Eucharist is at a secondary service on Sunday (either before or after the "main" service), it may simply reinforce the view that the Eucharist is an unnecessary "extra." Perhaps it would be better to have such a service in the middle of the week, which might bring out many of the same people who attend the Sunday service. Thus, by frequent reception, the parish members may come to appreciate the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian life and worship. (Also, the addition of a second service might underscore the pastor's personal conviction, in that the pastor would be seen as volunteering to do more work than was necessary — particularly if the pastor took the responsibility for preparation and clean-up.)

These suggestions will not make everyone happy. They do not pretend to be ultimate answers, but simply illustrate the magnitude of the problem Lutherans face. There seems to be no easy way to hold together *minoritas* and Eucharistic centrality in the current Lutheran context. The worst situation would be one in which, through pastoral rigidity, weekly Eucharist became associated with an authoritarian form of ministry, rather than being, as Francis saw it, a reminder of the humility and condescension of Christ.

Is it possible for Lutheranism to learn from Franciscanism? There are hints of such openness. In the Church of the abiding Presence (the chapel of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg), the stained glass windows depict scenes from the Bible and church history. The window

closest to the pulpit depicts the cross. Just below the foot of the cross, and a little to the right, the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen, kneels in adoration. A little further down, to Stephen's left, is St. Francis, receiving in his own body the marks of the crucifixion. This window is symbolic of the fact that Lutherans rercognize in St. Francis of Assisi one who truly surrendered himself in humble submission to the shame of the cross. We recognize that, as St. Bonaventure said so well, "In all things he wished to be conformed to Christ crucified, who hung on the cross poor, suffering and naked." This was what Luther's reform sought to extend to the entire church. In a sense, it succeeded. The Body of Christ is broken and unrecognizable. Our task today — Lutherans, Franciscans, and all others who hear the voice of the Crucified One — is that with which Francis was commissioned. "Rebuild My church, which, as you see, is in ruins."

Endnotes

[1]*Luther's Works*, American edition [hereafter, LW] (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1955 -; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955 -.), 31:40.

[2]Alister E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 149-50.

[3]Hermann Sasse, *We Confess Jesus Christ*, trans. Norman Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), p. 45. See also Ewert Cousins, "Francis of Assisi: Christian Mysticism at the Crossroads," in *Mysticism and the Religious Traditions*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 163-90; Cousins, "The Humanity and the Passion of Christ," in *Christian Spirituality: High Middle Ages and Reformation*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York: Crossroad, 1987), pp. 375-91.

[4]Sasse, *We Confess Jesus Christ*, pp. 46-47; Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 26.

[5]LW 33:62.

[6]LW 31:53.

[7]McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, p. 181.

[8]Eric W. Gritsch, *Martin — God's Court Jester: Luther in Retrospect* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), p.. 185.

[9]Ibid., p. 184.

[10]LW 17:242.

[11]Walther von Loewenich, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, trans. Herbert J. A. Bouman (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1976), pp. 118-19, 126-27; Gritsch, *Martin — God's Court Jester*, p. 184; LW 41:164-65.

[12]LW 33:723; McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross*, p. 154.

[13]LW 21:313-15.

[14]*Legenda Maior* I:6. All citations are from *Bonaventure*, ed. Ewert Cousins, Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1978).

[15]*Legenda Maior* XIII:10.

[16]*Legenda Maior* XIV:4.

[17]Admonitions IV:23; Earlier Rule VI:3-4, IX:2; Letter to the Entire Order 26-29. Citations are from *Francis and Clare: The Complete Works*, ed. Regis J. Armstrong and Ignatius C. Brady, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1982).

[18]A good overview of Luther's doctrine of the ministry is to be found in Werner Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, trans. Walter A. Hansen (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 339-67.

[19]See, for example, LW 6:230; 9:54; 12:284; 14:99; 16:245; 17:70, 259.

[20]LW 20:330.

[21]LW 44:268.

[22]LW 2:327.

[23]LW 44:255.

[24]LW 22:274.

[25]On Boff's ecclesiology, see especially his *Church: Charism and Power*, trans. John W. Diercksmeier (New York: Crossroad, 1985) and *Ecclesiogenesis: The Base Communities Reinvent the Church*, trans. Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1986) esp. pages 23-33. Harvey Cox provides an example of an outsider looking in at this point. Especially noteworthy is his attempt to see the uniquely Franciscan aspects of Boff's thought in *The Silencing of Leonardo Boff: The Vatican and the Future of World Christianity* (Oak Park, IL: Meyer-Stone Books, 1988).

[26]LW 37:68-69.

[27]*Legenda Maior* IX:2.

[28]Letter to the Entire Order, 27.

[29]See, for example, Basil Hall, *"Hoc est Corpus Meum:* The Centrality of the Real Presence for Luther," in *Luther: Theologian for Catholics and Protestants*, ed. George Yule (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985), pp. 113-44.

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Francis Neath the Bitter Tree

Francis,
I first saw you
in my little
Book of Saints
pictured beneath the
cross of your dying Lord.
Oh, this was long
before I knew you
graced the bird baths
and fountains
of every yard and
public place
as the Holy Fool.
And this was long
before I saw you
cradle the tiny Child
in your arms,
or tame the
snarling grey wolf —
long before I knew you
as the veritable tree
for your precious
winged sisters
and animals of every
pattern and stripe.

I first saw you
neath the bitter tree
locked in embrace
with the crucified God
who bent down
for your tender comfort
and most gentle
love.
Later I was told
you stretched our
scarcely visible frame
to cover even the hopeless
and the lepers
of your day.
And now I see,
now I know why
He flew to La Verna
wrapt in resurrected wings
to transfigure,
to share the glory,
with the one
who had spared himself
none of the
suffering.

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

Reflection on Franciscan Life as Evangelical

SR. JANE KOPAS, O.S.F.

Since the publication of "The Essential Elements of Religious Life" there has been considerable discussion among Franciscans as to the character of religous life that exemplifies the Franciscan charism. The expression that has come to be used most widely to describe Franciscan religious life is "evangelical." The purpose of this article is to explore some of the limitations of using that expression and to redirect some of the questions that have been raised by the "Essential Elements."

Evangelical Life as Description

The term "evangelical" is being used lately to distinguish Franciscan religious life from the monastic life and the apostolic form described in the document "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to Works of the Apostolate" (Letter of John Paul II to the Bishops of the United States, May 31, 1983). This contrast suggests that monastic and apostolic religious congregations do not embody the gospel values as Franciscan life does. Such a distinction does not promote understanding among various major forms of religious life nor does it accurately reflect the contribution of the Franciscan vision to the Church's understanding of the religious life.

There can be no doubt that Francis of Assisi initiated a new form of religious life and that it was rooted in the example of Jesus in the gospels. The dominant form of religious life at that time was monastic. Francis, called to a new expression of commitment to God, turned from the existing form of religious life to one inspired by a new reading of the gospel. That

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the life he created was evangelical or based on the gospel is unquestionable. To suggest that the monastic life was not a gospel life, however, is another issue. There are grounds, therefore, to consider more carefully the use of the word evangelical as a contrast.

Francis of Assisi was inspired to live a life of commitment to and imitation of the human Jesus. He was not given to analysis or comparisons. He did not set himself against the monastic form of life but instead he simply followed what he perceived to be his call. The life of the Lesser Brothers differed radically from the monastic life, but this new form of religious life should not be contrasted with the monastic life primarily in terms of its gospel values.

All religious orders, insofar as they profess to live a committed Christian life, are rooted in the gospel. No one group can claim to live the gospel in its fullness, but each reflects certain values that are based on the life of Jesus. With varying emphases each reflects the so-called evangelical counsels. Therefore, the gospel life is not something to which the Franciscans have a special claim that distinguishes their model of religious life from other religious groups.

The earliest form of Christian religious life took its inspiration from the Jesus who retreated to the desert to face temptation. The more communitarian forms of religious life under an abbot that followed took their inspiration from the obedient Christ who submitted himself to the will of God. Francis took poverty and the suffering Christ as his model. What gave his expression of the imitation of Christ a new focus was the way he attempted to follow the itinerancy of Christ and the disciples more literally. Thus, it was most commonly described as a mendicant life.

Francis of Assisi exemplifies for many an outstanding imitation of Christ. His special mirroring of the poor and suffering Christ flows from his unique vision of the humanity of the savior. The vision, in turn, inspired a life style among his followers which was oriented toward reflecting the manner of life Francis perceived among the early disciples of Christ as it pertained to the age in which he lived. It may be useful, therefore, to distinguish the charism of Francis from the lifestyle of Franciscans. His charism was shaped by a particular reading of the gospel. The charism in turn shaped a model of religious life which was also influenced by the signs of the time in which he lived.

Francis' charism was inspired by the gospel and the vision of that life is rightly called evangelical. The model of religious life that takes expression from the charism, however, bears the marks of its historical context too strongly to be described adequately by the term evangelical alone. Though the Franciscan model of religious life reflects the early Christian community's simple dependence on God, mobility, and awareness of the

reign of God, it is marked by a selectivity that calls for further clarification of the model of religious life.

Any interpretation of the gospel involves a certain amount of selectivity. In examining the way Jesus lived, Francis pays little attention to the friendships of Jesus with people like Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Nor does he make much of Jesus' apparently frequent appearance at dinners and celebrations. Some of these relationships suggest that the life of the early Christian community may not have been as austere as Francis perceived it. In other words, Jesus appeared to have a more social life than Francis recognized.

Another neglected element in the Franciscan interpretation of the evangelical life may be found in the way that Jesus dealt with women. Among the disciples, women participated in various ways from providing for the entourage out of their means to listening to and discussing with Jesus. Francis' attitude toward women, unavoidably shaped by the religious values of his day, fails to do justice to certain prophetic and liberating aspects of Jesus' relations with women and its place in his way of life.

This is not to say that Francis did not have a gospel vision or did not live in a way that embodied gospel values. But it is to say that there are limitations to the extent that anyone lives the good news of Jesus. Therefore, there are limitations to naming one form of religious life as evangelical. The challenge facing contemporary Franciscans is to discern the abiding aspects of Francis' charism and interpretation of the gospel life so as to most effectively bring his insights to life today.

The image of a divine and triumphant Christ had dominated the middle ages before the time of Francis. His insight into the poor, suffering, and tender Christ captured the imagination of his contemporaries. One has only to look at the changes in the way Christ is depicted in art after the time of Francis to see the importance of the human in Franciscan life. Not only the human Christ but also the humanness of Francis and his followers became one of the key hallmarks of Franciscan religious life.

Before examining the human element in Franciscan life more closely and relating it to other aspects of the charism, it is well to consider in greater detail Franciscan responses to the "Essential Elements" so as to put the present discussion in clearer focus.

Responses to "Essential Elements"

In his reflections on Franciscan life in connection with the Vatican document, "Essential Elements in the Church's Teaching on Religious Life as Applied to Institutes Dedicated to works of the Apostolate" (Franciscan Federation Newsletter, July - August 1985), Jean-Francois Godet makes several obsrvations. The thrust of the CRIS statement on religious

life is geared toward apostolic religious life rather than other forms. Godet says this makes its application to Franciscan life impossible because Franciscan life does not fit the characteristics of apostolic life.

To this Godet adds two other significant criticisms. First, the document presupposes a separation between action and contemplation which caused problems in the history of the Church and is not applicable to the "evangelical" life Franciscans profess anyway. Second, the way the document deals with the consecrated life suggests a separation of religious life from the world which does not characterize the Franciscan approach.

I concur with Godet's observations about the limitations of the document on each of the points he has made. At the same time I would add the caution that Franciscans should take care not to let their examination of their charism and life be guided primarily by a reaction to the Vatican document. To let the "Essential Elements" be the primary determinant of reflections on the Franciscan charism or manner of living would be to let it dictate the issues and questions that are of primary concern. In particular such an approach would promote an attitude of comparison which may not be productive.

The "Essential Elements" needs to be evaluated for its own strengths and weaknesses for religious life in general, not just Franciscans. It is a document which speaks of canon law, conciliar and post conciliar documents of Vatican II, and the pronouncements of popes as the basis for current Church praxis regarding religious life. Franciscans, and others too, would find this description somewhat inadequate since it does not deal with the special charism of founders or with the movement of the Spirit. Even as regards its treatment of apostolic religious life it lacks an appreciation for the diversity of ministry and community. In short, the "Essential Elements" needs much closer examination, and it needs to be complemented by a larger vision of the forms of religious life in history. Such a project lies beyond the scope of this article.

While considering the way that "Essential Elements" has been a stimulus for discussion, however, it will be useful to give some attention to another response to the document. As already noted, the "Essential Elements" has forced a clarification on its own terms which may not be the most fruitful way for Franciscans to approach their charism. The other response I want to note illustrates this further.

The schema of contrast between monastic, apostolic, and evangelical forms of religious life developed by Thaddeus Horgan, SA, and Jeanine Morozowich, CSSF, (Franciscan Federation Newsletter, August - September - October 1987) sets up the classification of "Evangelical Life" as a distinctive and unique form of living out the vision. They identify the focus, prayer, ministry, community, leadership. structural model, and distinguishing characteristics of each of these forms.

There are two apparent difficulties related to this schema. First, while there are various groups that would fit under the monastic and apostolic forms of religious life, it appears that only the Franciscans belong to the category of "evangelical life." Perhaps it is unique enough to be the only exemplar under this form, but it seems a broader category is necessary if one wants to establish a classification that would include a group like the Dominicans who originated at the same time as the Franciscans.

Second, a number of the descriptions under the categories appear to be straining to establish the uniqueness of Franciscan life. The focus or purpose for which Francis began his order as they put it, "to live as Christ did as portrayed in the gospels," clearly depicts the non-pragmatic origins of Franciscan beginnings in contrast to groups that began with a more task oriented goal. However, some aspects of the description seem to fit other forms as well. Among the other categories such as prayer, ministry, and structural model, the differences between the forms do not appear to be significant.

I would suggest that it is important not to stress too greatly the differences in life style which come from differences in charism. Even among communities with the same charism there may be differences in the way it is lived out. Focusing on differrences at this level may obscure the quest to become clearer about the values that underlie behavior.

It is easy to become engaged in a discussion in which one tries to prove the uniqueness of Franciscan life, rather than beginning with the vision of Francis and its relevance for *today*. I seems to me that the question is not so much how does Franciscan life fit with the two models of apostolic and monastic life. There may, in fact, be more than two models, and whatever models there are develop and change in the course of history. Rather, the question appears to be how are we to relate to the insight and inspiration of Francis so that it gives insight and inspiration to us today.

In summary, then, "The Essential Elements" should not lead Franciscans into a defense of the distinctiveness of the Franciscan charism that creates misleading comparisons with other groups. Nor should the document be a starting point to discuss the form of religious life that emerges from the Franciscan charism before the charism itself can be more thoroughly explored in light of its revelation for the present day.

What, then, are we to call the charism and lifestyle that Franciscans live under the influence of their founder? What are the characteristics of that charism and life style that had relevance then but not now? What are the values and insights that are to shape renewed Franciscan life as it is emerging in response to the needs of this time in history?

I would suggest that the Franciscan way of living religious life simply be called Franciscan for the present. Until the term mendicant can be justified or another term can be found to include Dominicans as well, the term "evangelical" may be too restrictive to function as a category in the same sense that monastic and apostolic do.

In exploring the charism of Francis of Assisi and the way of living that embodied that charism for him, it is important to remember its embodiment in the 13th century. Not only did Francis exercise a certain kind of selectivity in appropriating the message and person of Jesus, but Franciscans today will also inevitably exercise a certain degree of selectivity in appropriating the message and person of Francis. Selectivity involves not only the choice of what will be emphasized but also the choice of what will not be emphasized or what needs to be reinterpreted.

I would first like to suggest some areas where it is important to acknowledge that the example of Francis ought not be used. The followers of a particular religious founder are often inclined to emphasize the positive points of his or her vision and to fail to mention its limitations. Mentioning these limitations can help to bring the positive elements into sharper focus.

First, the particular way that Francis lived out the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience are very much constricted by the assumptions of his age. This is not to say that his exemplification did not have a compelling and effective influence. This is not to deny that his life showed how they can be liberating. But to attempt to rely too much on his idea of obedience or poverty or chastity will imply a certain negativity toward the body and a somewhat static view of human development.

Secondly, Francis' attitude toward women, while reverent and elevating, was at the same time full of the contradictions that made mutuality impossible. His relationship to Clare, especially, needs to be recognized as having suffered from this attitude as well as benefitting from it.

Thirdly, his understanding of and response to the church did not require him to see it collegially as the People of God. His response was one of unquestioning obedience to the church except in cases where it bore upon his vision of God's will for himself and the brothers. This attitude was one that cemented his influence as a trustworthy example, but his view of the Church that supported it, though adequate for his time, is not adequate for ours.

Selectivity is risky; there is always the danger that something important will be omitted or that something less important will be emphasized. Yet

there is little alternative to selectivity. No one individual or group can be free enough from their own bias or perspective to capture the whole of the gospel. One can only hope that she or he will catch the spirit of Francis and embrace as much of Jesus' challenge as is required in this time.

Some Vital Elements of a Franciscan Life

As a way of promoting discussion of abiding elements of the Franciscan charism and lifestyle, I would propose several key areas. These include the integration of contemplation and action, expansive justice, the holiness of humanness, and kinship with creation. The first element, the integration of contemplation and action has been more fully discussed than the others as a distinctive aspect of Francis' vision, and it bears on each of the other areas.

In singling out these aspects of Franciscan life, it might appear that a number of very important aspects have been omitted. For example, the centrality of Jesus, the role of fraternity and the need for conversion. I would not deny that these are extremely important to the Franciscan charism, but I believe that they yield their clearest Franciscan meaning in relation to the qualities mentioned above. Otherwise, they may become abstract and applied without integration. Also, the distinctiveness of Francis' compelling influence over the last seven and a half centuries resides not so much in his views of Christ, the Church, or his own community as in the way that he dealt with his world and the human beings he encountered in it. It is through their relations with the world and other human beings that present day Franciscans will most effectively bring his charism and vision alive.

Contemplative Action

Francis' struggle to discern whether he was being called by God to solitary contemplation or active presence in community is well known. His integration of the two elements has been the inspiration for generations of Franciscans. More recently, it has received explicit attention as Franciscans try to clarify the distinctive lifestyle that characterizes their attitude toward prayer and toward apostolic activity.

Contemplative action and presence has been and needs to remain a special concern for Franciscans. It is not so much what they do as how they do it that marks their charism. To be a witness to Christ in the spirit of Francis means to devote oneself to a quality of presence. Franciscans over the centuries, whether they have been missionaries to the new world, university professors, manual laborers, or pastoral workers in a variety of

ways have been recognized as Franciscan in their appreciative, reflective presence to the people to whom they minister.

The attitude that makes his action contemplative draws its inspiration from Christ as a revelation of God and human beings as revelations of Christ. For Francis it was the incarnation of God, pre-eminently in the humanness of Jesus Christ, that radiated God's presence. His goal to see and revere that presence in every space of his world enabled him to make it visible in the simplest as well as the noblest actions.

Franciscans did not need to devote themselves to specific preaching about Jesus. Rather, the effectiveness of the Christ-center of Franciscan life demonstrated itself primarily by contemplative action. If the action was born of an attitude of reverent presence to God, then the fruits of the action were secondary. Competence, efficiency, and practical results cannot be the primary objective. God is glorified not by pragmatic success but by seeing Christ and by making Christ present through a reverent human presence.

Expansive Justice

While Francis did not have a global spirituality as we understand it today, he did approach everything he encountered in his world with an inclusive love and creative justice. He did not measure what a person deserved, but responded to what they needed. He envisioned this attitude, he created a climate for expansive justice.

The demands for justice and a peacemaking attitude today cannot flow only from the need to correct oppression or from the desire for a just distribution of goods. The Franciscan responsibility for promoting justice roots itself in the expansive kinds of approach that sees the oppressed and the oppressor as God's creation in need of redemption. Just as creative or expansive justice goes beyond the distributive justice which strives to provide what a person has a right to, so also conversion has a broader Franciscan vision.

Whenever Franciscans speak of conversion they should do so in light of a cosmic and not merely personal view. Sometimes conversion appears to refer mainly to an individual's growth in closeness to God. To constantly be turning back to God does not confine itself to the movement of forming a closed circle. The circle of conversion is a spiral with an increasingly expansive conversion to a love of justice for others. Francis embraced the leper, the real leper and not only the leper within himself.

For this reason, discussions of conversion in the Franciscan charism cannot be rooted narrowly in the religious conversion of the individual. Not all Franciscan groups have a penitential attitude of conversion in their heritage. Those who do will resist the temptation to deal with it too

much as a merely personal phenomenon. The notion of conversion, however it occurs, needs to situate itself in a social and relational world where transformation affects structure. Francis may not have thought in terms of a relational philosophy, but his perception of the world as permeated by Christ in all human beings lent itself to expansive justice.

The Holiness of Humanness

Perhaps the most effective element of Franciscan presence comes from the ability to see the holy in the humblest of beings and the simplest encounters. Just as Francis let the humanness of his savior touch and transform him, so also he let his own humanness show through to touch others. It was not merely the common touch that allowed him to reach others. It was the way that his own humanity let itself be grace.

Because he was so accepting of his own humanness, (though not necessarily his own body), Francis could make the simplest encounter an opportunity to become a sacrament. A simple meal with a fasting brother, a walk down the street to preach a sermon, a conversation with the birds, a confrontation with his own fears of touching a leper were all ways for him that let the ordinariness of human experience be the bearer of the holy.

Even Francis' mistreatment of his own body which he came to recognize late in his life provides a potential source of recognizing the holiness of the human. Since Francis was heir to the medieval suspicion of things bodily, one can only guess that he might have corrected his prejudice had he lived longer. There is evidence that Franciscans since then have found a greater appreciation for the body and its needs. But here is another example of the way that a central insight of Francis about the holiness of the human can be carried further.

The sophistication of our world, not to mention its hectic pace, makes it difficult to maintain a sense of the holiness of the ordinary. Yet when the Franciscan charism has been recognized more often than not people note the Franciscan's ability to communicate God's grace present in humanness even in the midst of busy activity. To be at home in the sacredness of the ordinary is to find a Franciscan place.

Kinship with Creation

Sacralizing the ordinary flows naturally into kinship with creation. Francis' ability to see God's presence in everything inevitably affected his self-perception. As his canticle so beautifully states, he was all of creation as brother and sister to him. As Gerard Manley Hopkins put it, the world was "charged with the grandeur of God." Francis by being related to everything was part of that grandeur.

When Franciscans discuss the centrality of fraternity as a Franciscan value, the focus often falls on the brotherhood or sisterhood living together in community. This is, without a doubt, the proving ground of community. But it may so easily lead to parochialism. The standard of community becomes the amount of time a person gives to the small group with which he or she lives or the quality of persence one brings only to that group. Francis' may have spoken a great deal about the brotherhood of the friars, but his idea of community was so much larger.

Kinship with creation implies a universal community, both of human beings and nature. There is unquestionably a special importance to the group with which one makes a home. No one can honestly speak of fraternity or community if this does not assume a prominent place. But the itinerancy of Franciscan life and his cosmic vision of Francis point to primary membership in the community of all creation. To speak of community as kinship makes global community familial.

In today's mobile society little enough has been said about Franciscans who for a time live alone or in twos. There is a Franciscan dimension of community as leaven. Analyses of Franciscan life today could do great justice to the variant forms of community and to the reality that religious women and men today participate in a variety of communities simultaneously. Such participation provides a new opportunity to clarify community as a form of kinship with creation in its manifold human expressions.

The aspects of Franciscan life discussed above bear the marks of present day concern and selectivity, but they are reflective of genuine gospel values that motivated Francis. The characteristics identified center particularly on the world as graced by God. It is this writer's bias that Franciscans have been and will be most clearly inspired by the example of their founder when they love the holiness of the human as graced by God and own their own distinctiveness as somehow being like everyone else.

The Most High Himself
revealed to me
that I should live
according to the form
of the **Holy Gospel.**

THE TESTAMENT OF ST. FRANCIS

Francis' Unique Experience of Church

M. PRASAD REDDY, O.F.M.

The life of Francis of Assisi has been written and rewritten by numerous authors. Beginning from the mythical biography of Thomas of Celano to the radical interpretation of Adolf Holl, there have been an array of images of Francis. Yet, down through the ages there is definitely a shift in approaching the life of Francis. And this shift is both welcome and necessary. St. Francis is seen no more as a "romantic" saint but as a person who has been moulded by very much earthly forces, namely, the historical situations of his times. This shift from a heavenly to an earthly Francis has not in any way tarnished or diminished his image and charisma. Whatever the age and interpretation, the charm and charisma of Francis of Assisi always remain.

What follows below is a critical look at the life of Francis of Assisi: his life looked at from a purely historical point of view. There are enough sources to see the life of Francis in the light of the Medieval times.

The birth of Francis took place in circumstances of upheaval and enormous change in the society and the Church of twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It was a period of rapid economic growth. The economy changed due to the business expansion and the rapid increase in European population. That was the time of the emergence of Burgoisie. The effects of this changing society did have a profound impact on the Church set-up. During the twelfth century, under the leadership of Pope Innocent III, the church achieved complete world domination. Clergy monopolized the religion. They were the exclusive holders of the sacred. The laity were thus isolatd. And in the thirteenth century, the Church reached the

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peak of its power. The Church as society was divided into three orders — the top-most being the prayers (*oratores*), the next being the warriors (*bellatores*) and the least were the workers (*laboratores*). There was a definite hierarchy of powers and positions.

In this given situation, Francis' life becomes concretized. While the Church in his time was yearning to build its power structure and was even dominating the civil authorities, Francis of Assisi throughout his life yearned to take a different path. While the Church was becoming extremely hierarchical, Francis worked towards building a way of life based on equality. And this way of life which Francis initiated ultimately worked out into the Franciscan order itself and in a way resulted in a parallel Church — not a hierarchical church, but a church based on equality amongst its members.

Certain events in Francis' life make evident in a glaring manner his attempt to break away from a system of hierarchy to build a new order and a new way of equality and a more egalitarian way of life. The first of such evident "break-away" came during his youth: the break with his father Peter Bernardone. His father was definitely aspiring for a powerful place in the communal society of Assisi. He was one of the most famous cloth merchants in Assisi and abroad. Yet Francis, true to his desire to be the initiator of a more simple way of life, went to all extremes and ultimately broke away from the system of power and wealth. In a way, every "break" that Francis made was followed by a union. But it resulted in a union which was quite contrary to the "break-up". He broke away from power and made himself weak and united with the powerless. In this particular break from the power-image of his father, Francis united himself with the poor and the abandoned of his society. He was one with the lepers, the outcasts, the poor of his native city.

The initial break-away lead him into a series of other breaks and unities, which contributed to a fine build up of a movement. After breaking himself free from his family ties, Francis began to explore his own identity. In this state of affairs, he was in for the next of his breaks. This time it is the break with the state of the Religious life in the Church of the middle ages. The Church at this time was too set in the hierarchical ways to be able to meet the demands of large populations and economic stresses, especially in urban conditions. This kind of an elitist way of life in the church lead to the formation of a number of reform movements. Some of these movements were heretical.

There was a lot of similarity between Francis' (and his brothers') way of life and the heretical movements of his days. To name some of the similarities: these movements were oriented towards the primitive Church, they had an appeal to direct divine inspiration, emphasis on poverty as the justification of their itinerant preaching, strong convictions

about the principles of brotherliness, rejection of all leadership roles, high estimation of manual labour and care for the sick. In emphasizing the above aspects and in particular, poverty, Francis created for himself a distinctly christian identity. This identity was in clear contrast to the Church of his day which was glittering with pomp and power.

As years went by Francis' ideals of poverty, simplicity and freedom came into loggerheads with the Institutional Church. Thus he felt the necessity to write down a kind of way of life, a *forma vitae,* for himself and his brothers. These efforts lead him to the formulation of three Rules out of which the final came to be recognized by the Pope. That is the Rule of 1223. In this Rule there are many aspects which reflect the ideals sought by Francis and his efforts to bring about an equality among the existing hierarchical structures of the Church and the religious life of his day.

In a way his life and inspiration have initiated a new era in the history of the Catholic Church.

The situation in the Church was such that clericalism emerged. There was a total concentration of sacred power in the hands of the clergy and a growing disproportion of the laity, until they were reduced to the mere mass of the faithful, attenting rites, lacking the means to produce their own religious goods. Cleric meant learned and intellectual and lay meant uneducated and ignorant. In his Rule Francis differed. For in his way of life no differentiation was made between the rich and the poor or learned or unlearned. In an effort towards equality Francis welcomed everyone to follow his way of life. The brothers came from all walks of life, and were united into one family.

In further steps to ensure that disparity would not crop up among his brothers, Francis also included in his Rule the non-acceptance of landed property or appropriation of money in any form. Also, itinerant preaching, common superior, common Rule were all efforts to maintain the spirit of equality in their manner of life. Cajetan Esser calls the above aspects, the "novelty of the Order of Friars Minor."

By the time of the formulation and approval of their way of life in the year 1223, Francis and his brothers acquired a complete "Christian identity." Especially by this time Francis had come almost to the end of his life and we would do well to see the amount of change that he underwent

since his first break in his youth. The Rule of 1223 and his Testament given in the last days of his life, are a perfect reflection of Francis, wherein his life experiences of the various breaks and unities are formulated into writing. The Rule and the Testament serve as a kind of mini autobiography of Francis. They are a reflection of his emotional and spiritual growth down through the years of his life.

Though Francis throughout his life was obedient to the Church, yet he was not conformed to its structures and institutions. In a way his life and inspiration have initiated a new era in the history of the Catholic Church. His efforts to remain a lay man, a Christian man who is not absorbed by the structures of the institutional Church are still evident in the present day Franciscans' desire to call the order a lay order, while the Church continues to hold it up as a clerical order. That exactly was the thrust of Francis' life and that of his brothers: To tell the institutional Church, that what is closer to the hearts and lives of the people is not the hierarchical Church but Church of the base, of the grass-roots, a Church of the people. In this respect the life of Francis of Assisi truly initiated a new experience of Church — a Church of the people, based not on power but on service, equality not on hierarchy.

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The Sword of Francesco Bernardone

Yes, he was once a warrior, and I, a stalwart,
redolent of violence, hung at his side.
Yet from the time his father beaming pride
and ambition bestowed me on him I knew
that I would come to no glory by his arm.
His was the grip of a romantic, his
clasp about my hilt sent no malice from sinew
into steel; rather the caress of artistry
as though holding the neck of a lute.
I marked him for an early death.

In the field he was inept, there was no lust
for killing in his heart. I rarely tasted blood
and never the ecstasy of swords: that certain
lunge that cuts flesh and life at once.
Such usage changed me. As if a rust or tarnish,
his manner imprinted my form. When captured,
the Perugian captain held me aloft in the spoils
room and sneered, "No balance, no heft, a pretty
thing." These were remarks about *me.*

Meanwhile,
he grew wan and cheerful in jail. His heart became
an incendiary, a forge, his words hammer blows,
his body God's anvil upon which an astonished
world would be retempered. "Unbalanced, bereft,
a pity" — these were remarks about him the day
he died in the public square, put on Christ
and knotted cord, and thought of war no more.

Justin Carisio, S.F.O.

Book Reviews

Unveiling the Feminine Face of the Church. By Helen Cecelia Swift and Margaret N. Telscher, Cincinnati, Ohio: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1989. 113 pages, paper, $6.95.

In Search of God. By Waltraud Herbstrith, New York: New City Press, 1989. 126 pages. Paper, $7.95.

Gathering the Fragments: A Gospel Mosaic. By Edward J. Farrell. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1987. 101 pages. Paper, $4.95.

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

Here we have a book written by two Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur on the subject of femininity in the Catholic Church. Recogizing that much has been said and written about the place and the role of women in today's society and today's Church, the authors have for their purpose the presentation of "a balanced view of the need for women (and feminine qualities) in the Church's ministry" (page 1). In eleven chapters, the authors explain the nature of feminine and masculine qualities in the human person and then show how an imbalance between these qualities has affected the history and the ministry of the Church.

An explanatory subtitle explains the authors' intention of offering "An Explanation for Groups or Individuals." The structure of each chapter is such that the subject matter is explained by illustration both from the Gospels and from the life of a person of the Nineteenth or Twentieth Century. Appropriate questions in each chapter are aimed at promoting and provoking discussion of the subject.

After defining femininity as consisting of nurturing psychological factors (page 7), the writers show how such qualities are found in the God of the Old Testament and in the Jesus of the Gospels. They then cite Scripture passages that demonstrate such feminine qualities in the Apostolic Church. In the fifth chapter, the authors give examples to show that there was a decline in feminine influence in the church in succeeding centuries.

Sisters Swift and Telscher then cite the Second Vatican council as a changing point in the Church's attitude toward femininity. They show that the council document, *Dogmatic Constitution of the Church,* presents a whole new image of the Church when it refers to the Church as the "People of God." No longer need the laity feel "second class" to the hierarchy and the clergy. The People of God are both clergy and religious and laity, women and men. Since the Second Vatican Council, there can be and there will be a renewal of feminine influence in the Church. The final four chapters of the book cite ways in which this feminine influence can take place: namely, in the Ministry of the Word of God, in the Ministry of Service, in the Ministry of Justice, and in the Sacramental Ministry.

This reviewer found *Unveiling the Feminine Face of the Church* very interesting. In some areas, he thinks the authors seem to strain the facts to make a point, but the examples used are most appropriate to the subject of each chapter. An example of straining the facts is the tracing of the rule for priestly celibacy in the Western Church to political and economic reasons (page 109) rather than to ascetic or spiritual reasons. All in all, it seems that this book could be a source of lively discussions in adult religious education sessions. The questions in each chapter are most challenging and there about seventeen questions per chapter.

The author of the book, *In Search of God,* is a cloistered Carmelite nun of Cologne, Germany. Her name in religion is Sister Teresia a Matre Dei, O.C.D. She writes on Carmelite spirituality as found in the life and writings of St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross, St. Therese of Lisieux and Edith Stein, all Carmelites. The work first appeared in German in 1977 and has been translated into English by Edward Flood and Gary Brandl.

In Search of God is divided into two parts. Part I introduces the reader into the meaning of meditation and contemplation. The writer states, "For the Christian, to live in a contemplative fashion... (means) establishing a personal relationship with someone called Jesus Christ" (page 11). She explains the necessity of finding a way to live a contemplative life in the midst of a life of activity. "The goal of unifying work and prayer... can only be reached if we learn to make our actions spring forth from a personal center" (page 14). This center is defined in her statement, "In everything we do, we should be interiorly touched and transformed by the Spirit of Jesus" (page 15).

In response to the question, "What is meditation?" the author states that three elements are necessary: a space of time, silence, and turning to God as another person (page 23). She concludes the first part of her book emphasizing the importance of making Jesus Christ the center of our prayer life. "For the Christian, every practice of meditation is related to Christ" (page 38).

Sister Herbstrith entitles Part II of her book "Discovering the lives of religious people." This section shows how the principles of meditation explained in part I are exemplified in the lives of Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Therese of Lisieux and Edith Stein. She writes: "Both Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross agree that our relationship with God, whose presence we become aware of through meditation, can only be conceived in utmost stillness, that is, in profound silence" (page 53). The author states "Therese of Lisieux was a meditative person" (page 95). "With the help of grace and her personal search, she found what was so right for her and for others" (page 101). The author writes, "Edith Stein's life offers a model of how even we who live in the twentieth century... are capable of experiencing the one who made our hearts restless so that we would find rest in him (St. Augustine)" (page 102).

In Search of God is a book that reads easily and explains simply the Carmelite way of meditation. It is a good book for a person who wants to find encouragement in becoming a prayerful, reflective person. For a person who is afraid to try reading such mystics as Teresa of Avila or John of the Cross, *In Search of God* may break down such a barrier of fear.

After several years' absence from the publication world, Father Edward J. Farrell, a priest of the Archdiocese of Detroit, has written another book of spiritual reflections. The occasion for this writing is the author's observance of his thirtieth year of ordination to the priesthood. This small book of just over one hundred pages embraces twenty-five reflections of the author on the common experiences of a priest living in an inner-city parish. The "fragments" that the author refers to in the title of his book are "Reflections on God's presence as experienced by a city parish priest" (page 14). These reflections cover all different subjects as exemplified by some of the titles of the different chapters: The Gift of Reverence, Relationship with God, The Prayer of Reconciliation, How to live the Eucharist, Becoming a Disciple, and others.

With an awareness of God's presence accompanying him in his daily ministry to his people, Father Farrell presents a source of reflection for anyone desiring to discover how God is present to us all whatever our place may be in the scheme of daily living. The author writes simply and sincerely about his daily life in a way that can encourage each of us in our living of a Christian life in the 1980's and the 1990's. In ordinary, everyday language, Father Farrell offers the reader opportunities to reflect with him on our faith and on our life as daughters and sons of a loving God. This reviewer recommends *Gathering the Fragments: A Gospel Mosaic* to all reflecting people to be read a little at a time. A chapter or two read slowly and prayerfully will help put a person in the presence of God, thankful for being alive.