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# The CORD

## A FRANCISCAN SPIRITUAL REVIEW

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## The CORD

### A Monthly Franciscan Spiritual Review

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

#### I. Writings of Saint Francis

Adm: Admonitions	Fragm: Another Fragment, Rule of 1221
BenLeo: Blessing for Brother Leo	LaudDei: Praises of the Most High God
CantSol: Canticle of Brother Sun	LaudHor: Praises at All the Hours
EpAnt: Letter to St. Anthony	OffPass: Office of the Passion
EpCler: Letter to Clerics <sup>1</sup>	OrCruc: Prayer before the Crucifix
EpCust: Letter to Superiors <sup>1</sup>	RegB: Rule of 1223
EpFid: Letter to All the Faithful <sup>1</sup>	RegNB: Rule of 1221
EpLeo: Letter to Brother Leo	RegEr: Rule for Hermits
EpMin: Letter to a Minister	SalBMV: Salutation to our Lady
EpOrd: Letter to the Entire Order	SalVirt: Salutation to the Virtues
EpRect: Letter to the Rulers of People	Test: Testament of St. Francis
ExhLD: Exhortation to the Praise of God	UltVol: Last Will Written for Clare
ExpPat: Exposition on the Our Father	VPLaet: Treatise on True and Perfect Joy
FormViv: Form of Life for St. Clare	<sup>1</sup> I, II refer to First and Second Editions.

#### II. Other Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel: Celano, First Life of Francis	LM: Bonaventure, Major Life of Francis
2Cel: Celano, Second Life of Francis	LMin: Bonaventure, Minor Life of Francis
3Cel: Celano, Treatise on Miracles	LP: Legend of Perugia
CL: Legend of Saint Clare	L3S: Legend of the Three Companions
CP: Process of Saint Clare	SC: Sacrum Commercium
Fior: Little Flowers of St. Francis	SP: Mirror of Perfection

Omnibus: Marion A. Habig, ed., *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).

## A Reflection on Comfort

Dr. DIANE D. GAUTNEY, Ed. D.

Most of us initially experience receiving comfort from our mother and our father. Ideally, that experience was that our father was a wise and understanding person whom we could depend upon to help us formulate a plan of action and to set limits that would keep us safe and protected. Our mother could be depended upon to be patient, receptive, listening, loving and nurturing.

Eventually, we reach that point in our growth where we are able to make choices born more of internal rather than external values and influences of early experiences of comfort become integrated into our self and become a part of ourselves that we can call on when we need comfort. These parts are what I call the Mother and the Father Presence.

As adults we are constantly confronted with change in our lives. Some are major and easily recognized but most are subtle and become part of our daily existence. For example, we lose our dreams of what could be but will never be; we lose the fantasy that we shall one day go somewhere and accomplish something; and there are the additional griefs and losses in our relationships with others. These constitute the mournings of our life that assail us. It is no wonder that we seek special people and places where we can go to for comfort. However, one of our greatest challenges seems to be in the daily comforting of ourselves.

Comfort seems so elusive in our struggle to cope each day. We work long hours; we make responsible adult decisions; yet we frequently find ourselves at the end of the day feeling like a tired and cranky child. Often we seek to pacify this child within who says, "I want what I want now; I want my strength back right now... with perhaps a martini or a dish of ice cream!" Sometimes on top of everything else there are others who are looking to us for the little strength we have left.

If you replace the word comfort with the word strength, you may

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*Dr. Gautney, Ed. D., is staff psychologist at Villa St. John Vianney Hospital in Downingtown, PA. She has drawn from her own professional and personal experiences in composing this reflection.*

begin to have a clearer idea of what the experience of comfort is to our daily struggle. Webster defines comfort as anything that eases grief or sorrow or makes trouble easier to bear. The derivation of the word is from the Latin "comfortare" which means to strengthen. We seek to restore the strength that has gone out of us in facing the multiple responsibilities of each day but we may no longer have a loving mother to fix us a delicious snack or a wise father who would say that drinking isn't good for us.

At times we all long to be cared for by a wise father and a nurturing mother. One such way of providing that care is to reach for the Father Presence within ourselves when we come home after a draining day. We could discipline ourselves to set limits by saying no to excess food, drink or further involvement with others. This enables us to bypass quick fix comfort and to gain long term strength. Additionally, this creates the opportunity to call on our Mother Presence to do something positive, nurturing and loving for ourselves e.g. a hot bath, a walk, some relaxing music, prayer). It is in fact these two presences that we seek when we reach within to care for ourselves or seek that comfort from others.

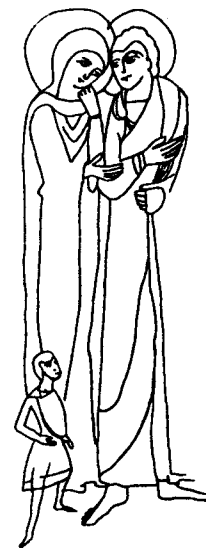
It seems that both the blessing and the promise of the Mother and Father Presences in our life are encapsulated in the Beatitude, "Blessed are they who mourn for they shall be comforted." Blessed are they who are willing to confront in themselves and others the pains, losses, changes, and conflicts of life, for they shall be comforted by a mother/ father presence.

The gospel provides several images that confirm this blessing and promise. In the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:38) Jesus seeks the comfort of His comrades. He says: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death.... please watch with Me." After praying He returns to find them (Matthew 26:40) sleeping... "Why are you sleeping?" In Matthew's account Jesus asked the apostles to watch and pray with Him where He finally finds comfort in the Father's Plan (Matthew 26:42) "... Your will be done."

Not only is the failure of Jesus' comrades redeemed by the presence and comfort of the Father's will but later by the presence and comfort of His mother (John 9:25) ... "Standing by the cross of Jesus was His mother." Mary's presence was silent, steadfast and faithful. The scene of Mary standing beneath the cross encapsulates the image of one who has been willing to enter into the painful losses of both her life and her Son's life. Perhaps she had dreams for herself, for her Son, illusions about how things would turn out. As she stood there she must have reflected on the times when she wondered whether she would have the strength to withstand the criticism and doubt of trying to follow the will of God for her life.

Jesus fulfills the blessing and promise of the Beatitudes by giving His mother to the disciple whom he loved. (John 9:27) "Mother behold your

son. Son, behold your mother." His actions seemed to suggest that if you will mourn with Me and Mine, I will give you comfort by providing people to love and protect you; however, the image seems to call forth an even deeper promise. If you will enter into the process of mourning and confronting, I will make you a comfort to others. The reward of that commitment is twofold. Not only does Mary continue to be personally loved and protected by Jesus on earth through the person of John but she is also comforted by the peace and strength of knowing she is fulfilling her Father's will. Equally, her strength is promised to be two fold. First, she is a person whose example sets a course for others to follow. Secondly, she is Mother to the Church and is the vehicle through whom God our Father may extend His beatitudinal promise to each of us who would have the courage to pick up the cross of the multiple mournings in living each day. He promises that he will provide comfort... the comfort that there is a vision, a plan for your life. He also promises to send Himself through the person of others. It is these two sources of comfort which enable each of us as His sons/ daughters to face our personal mournings each day of our lives. □



## Concerning Nonviolence and the Franciscan Movement

Friar ALAIN RICHARD, O.F.M.

Within the Franciscan spiritual family, there is no lack of persons who are sensitive to social and political injustice and violence. Nevertheless, because of the means employed in struggles, many of these hesitate or are repelled from expressing solidarity along side the victims.

Many brothers and sisters, like me, have found themselves ill at ease with certain petitions, demonstrations or strategies for combatting injustice and violence. But it is out of the question to condemn those whose conscience has pushed them to concrete solidarity with the victims of injustice, when they use verbal violence and manipulation or even when they have recourse to arms.

Following others' example, I have been led to deepen my practice of gandhian nonviolent methods, imbued with the Gospel of the Beatitudes and the example of Christ. After that, the importance of entering more deeply in a more extensive nonviolence was felt. In quite varied cultural, social and psychological contexts, I have discovered many reactions which are similar to mine. I have had to understand *the connections which exist between nonviolence with religious or humanistic motivation and the Franciscan way of taking the Gospel seriously.*

The following pages are nothing more than a summary sketch of those aspects of gandhian nonviolence which, I believe, ought easily to be recognized by Franciscan men and women *as forming part of that spiritual heritage which lives within them.*

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*A native of France, Alain Richard joined the Order of Friars Minor in 1947 after completing studies at the Institut National Agronomique de Paris. For twenty years he was involved in various non-violent struggles against the sale of arms and the extension of a military camp. Besides helping to create the network of fasters with the International Fast for peacemakers, he was a part of the first team of Peace Brigades International in Guatemala. Fr. Alain is now a member of the Pace e Bene Center in Las Vegas, a franciscan service in non-violence.*

*This article has been translated from the French by D. Pablo Stanfield, S.F.O.*

Together Jesus' example, his precepts and counsel, in relation with nonviolence, constitute an inspiration or a direction often called *evangelical nonviolence*. Thus whole, coming from the Gospels, per se and alone *has not given birth to an instrument of action* for struggling against injustice and violence. Across the centuries, inspired by the Gospel, some christians have given magnificent witness, but more often of the order of "pacifism" or of "resist not evil."

Unfortunately many contemporary Christian authors use the terms "nonviolence" and "evangelical nonviolence" incorrectly, often in a sense of pacifism, even of mealy-mouthed timidity. In fact, the word "nonviolent" appeared in the West following the actions of Gandhi and does not translate his "invention" of the civil reclaiming of truth: satyagraha. One recent author (W. Wink) prefers to utilize the expression "Jesus' third way" in order to avoid the ambiguity of the "NON" in the term "nonviolence."

When I speak of action, of struggle, I often use the terms *Gandhian nonviolence*, because this offers a coherent tool for acting, precise and elaborate in its main lines; at the same time it is inspired by a spirit which the Gospel has helped to form. Some places I use the phrase *nonviolence with a religious or humanistic base*; here gandhian principles are generally respected but the concept is broader.

Some persons have developed a so-called *pragmatic or tactical nonviolence*. Its contours vary according to the leaders and the struggles. This kind of nonviolence makes reference generally to Gandhi, but it does not demand of those who follow it certain religious or humanistic conditions which Gandhi requires.

Yet others sometimes refer only to behaviors which they call nonviolent even when their origin is either prior to Gandhi or when they are the kind of "positive resistance" from which Gandhi separated himself.

In the course of this essay, we will say how we see the pragmatic current of nonviolence in relation to religious or humanistic nonviolence.

### 1. FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENTS OF NONVIOLENCE ATTRACTIVE TO FRANCISCANS

● 1st — *Struggle undertaken with gandhian nonviolence presupposes deep compassion*: compassion for the victims but also for those who, because of their passions or blindness, impose upon others sufferings of violence or injustice.

a. *These two faces of compassion* come from the convictions —that the evil (violence, injustice) we combat dwells also within us.

We offer it our complicity, sometimes in small ways, sometimes in deep involvement.

—that the good which we recognize in ourselves also exists in our adversaries, but in an imprisoned state. This goodness, the divine presence in an adversary, is waiting to be liberated in order to come out.

The most impressive leaders of nonviolence: Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., César Chavez, Danilo Dolci... have lived out these two faces of compassion with such extreme intensity and honesty that it has brought them opposition from within their own ranks.

You can see that living these two dimensions of compassion at the same time avoids all condescension or arrogance during confrontation. The nonviolent combatant is placed in the truth of what s/he is in the deepest parts of the self. One is animated by the divine which renders one capable of loving and searching for society's well-being. However, it also makes you an accomplice — however subtly — of the evil which you are fighting among the agents of violence and injustice. There are neither GOOD nor BAD persons. There are beings who are divided. Some of them at one moment serve an injustice; they are actors of violence. The others are also divided in their being, tending to be servants of Justice and Love.

This double compassion rejects Manicheism, whether philosophical or only strategic. In the latter case anyone who uses a manicheistic framework mobilizes the combatants' energies in his camp to slander the opposition, painting them as evil, perverse, incapable of changing, unworthy of any respect whatever. Naturally, at the same time those who struggle against injustice are the Angels of Goodness, Guardians of Right, Defenders of Liberty...!

This rejection of Manicheism has been and continues to be one of the indispensable bases of all nonviolent struggle which is more than pragmatic. Quite happily a number of the pragmatic nonviolent struggles follow the same lines, at last at the beginning. But without a clear religious or humanistic reference, it is often impossible to maintain such a refusal to divide the world into "the Good" and "the Bad" for the duration of combat.

This respect which nonviolence with a religious or humanistic base has, I believe, ought to appeal to Franciscans. Did not Francis invite his brothers and sisters to recognize how evil is deeply rooted in them as well, and at the same time to recognize that at the root of all good is God. God is the origin of the good which arose in their own lives perhaps against all their expectations, just like that which appears in others' lives, also perhaps against all expectation.

Let's remember that in our times Manicheistic frames of reference are extremely widespread. Every Western movie is an example. Each of the dictatorships which plague the world is built on such a viewpoint: whether

they are based on right-wing or left-wing ideologies, or on religious dogmas or nationalism, it is still the same Manicheism. All totalitarianism, local, national or international, sets forth before its oppressiveness a Manicheistic description of the groups involved. And has there ever been a war or crusade that was conducted without the same effort to denigrate the adversary? The Anti-Communist Crusade and the Anti-Capitalist Struggle are not outside this scheme of things. This fatal attempt at destroying the truth of matters cannot give birth to true Justice: it is the seed of other wars.

b) *The roots of compassion* which extends to the violent as well as the victims, to the oppressor as well as the oppressed, to the torturer as well as the tortured, can vary a lot according to individual religious approaches.

For Gandhi, compassion is intimately rooted in reverence for God present in every being, who is called to liberate the divine within him or herself. Among other readers of nonviolence, it is rooted in the love of Christ for all and in his summons to us to love our enemies.

Contemporary Christians have the new theological approaches to the theme of the "suffering of God" — a consequence of His compassionate love — to help them. After a centuries-long eclipse, this theological current is recovering importance. For a hundred years it has been developing, stimulated by the incalculable, atrocious sufferings of the two World Wars and the Post-Wars. During this latest period, the conflicts and the slaughter, tortures and massacres... and the millions of refugees driven from their lands, have given a hallucinatory face to the contemporary world's Justice(!) and Peace(!).

In the face of these injustices, this cruel and anti-evangelical structural violence, as well as characteristic brutal violence, how can God not be affected in his passionate love? The idea of an impassive God which has dominated centuries and centuries of theological reflexion is no longer supportable for believers. The victims are above all the little people, the weak and poor! The moral degradation of those who cause injustice is so colossal! Because of his love for the other, "God lets Himself be affected by others' suffering."<sup>1</sup>

As for St. Francis, we know of his delicate compassion for the poor, the despised, the sick. We know his great compassion for those, Brothers or not, who were slaves of evil (or Evil One). His visit to the Crusaders and the Sultan are a characteristic example of it. His compassion is always connected to the suffering of the Christ who marked him with the Stigmata.

Let us not try to force St. Francis into the theopathic current. Nonetheless, his desire to unite deeply with the feelings of Christ and allow himself to be invaded by his suffering, it seems, opened the door so that Franciscan men and women could enter God's suffering more easily. *To let ourselves*

*be inhabited a little by that suffering of the Father and the Spirit, just as we are by the sufferings of Christ Jesus.* Stirred by God's compassion, our own compassion will be formed in his image.

Wounded to the core of our love both by the suffering of so many innocents and at the same time by the slavery in which the authors are the beneficiaries of the structures of injustice or those who commit specific violent acts, how could we put off *working with passion* for our brothers and sisters?

Such compassion can not be limited to a "little" prayer or an intention added to the "Prayer of the Faithful." It is not just a heart's sigh, a less pious thought. It is a wound in the depths of one's being by means of an encounter with the Suffering God. Not just like Jacob's wound, on the hip, but a wound of love which suffers because of the Loved One. For in refusing to respond to Love, the beloved is deprived of Life. To be wounded in the depths of oneself is a precious grace. One must refuse the temptation, perhaps offered by one's friends, to forget, to be content with easy measures, or to apply pious rationalization.

From such a wound, action for evangelization and reconciliation with God arises. But from the same process springs forth also the desire to place oneself beside the victims of violence and injustice *in order to make their sufferings stop and at the same time end God's suffering.*

Let those who seem to be so comfortable with cruelly savage violence as well as with structural violence consider well what that means about their relation to God. And if they interpret the actions of activists as mere running-around or bad breeding, let them ask themselves about the purity of their intentions in judging.

● 2nd—*The power of love, the dynamic core of nonviolence*

Without compassion in both directions, both for the violator and the victim, there is no Gandhian nonviolence, much less evangelical nonviolence. We must understand that compassion will be shown both directly for the oppressor as well as the oppressed.

Gandhi sought also to "unite in one teaching the precepts and counsel of nonviolence, of Buddhism, Jainism, and the Sermon on the Mount, because their agreement on this topic had profoundly moved him."<sup>2</sup> Therefore he employed the Christian vocabulary and spoke of the "power of love." This way he separated his satyāgraha (i.e. the civil claim of Truth, or unwavering grasp on Truth, or Truth Forced) from passive resistance. This latter, however effective, is rather negative, though it was practiced for thousands of years. Gandhian nonviolence often is confused with it unfortunately. That is why Gandhi pointed out, "satyāgrah is as far from passive resistance as the North Pole is from the South."<sup>3</sup> It was obvious!

Nonetheless the confusion persists.

Thus the compassion of which we spoke above must be expressed in an adequate manner by incarnate love, strong and intelligent, not naïve, nor silly.

a) *This love is respectful and uses no tricks.* That includes refusing the use of words or actions which might incite the adversary, the one committing violence/injustice, to develop a more and more aggressive stance. One of the goals is to lead the adversary to "disarm." Action must be open, without trickery — which does not mean without inventiveness.

Don't be fooled! Anyone who organizes a nonviolent action should not be so naïve as to think that one action and the nonviolent activists' power of love will be able totally in a moment to disarm the adversary from within and without. Especially if the adversary is part of a structure of violence or the objective reasons for continuing the violence are dynamic like economic interests or self-love.

We are talking about making it possible for the adversary to make a change in policy since the prevailing forces will have come to the side of the nonviolent camp. It is necessary for the adversary to feel and know that he is respected, even loved, even though he is but the representative of impersonal structures and anonymous interests.

We live in an ever more impersonal world. But as long as the decisions are not *entirely* the work of computers which suppress all human intervention, the psychological reactions of those who make the decisions will still play a considerable role. How much aggressive behavior comes from fear or the feeling, valid or not, of not being respected or esteemed, or even of being tricked? This points up the importance of the Gandhian requirement of respectful and open love. Total love which can go to the elimination of hate. A love which is born of a relationship with the divine.

So active nonviolence aspires to find as close a balance possible between:

—paying attention so that at any moment the adversary and his collaborators can clearly tell that they are respected, even deeply loved, even while their actions are resisted diligently;

—and making evident the evil: what is the injustice or violence which is taking place? Who helps it? For it is a necessary step to point out the evil, *both* to live in the truth *and* to open *as well* the eyes of the undecided bystanders or collaborators of oppression, such as those who simply carry out oppressive orders.

b) *This love perseveres.* Without perseverance can we speak of love? It would be only a momentary sentiment. Brazilians call nonviolence "Permanent firmness."

Solidarity persevering in opposition to evil while loving for the persons involved is both a sign of responsible, compassionate love and at the same time the indispensable prerequisite for establishing a favorable unity of forces in the long run. It is this which demonstrates the pureness of the cause and of the means of struggle. This is what permits one to create a public opinion favorable to the nonviolent, sapping the moral support which the violent usually have at the beginning.

This favors considerably the entry of the undecided in the nonviolent struggle: it helps the conversion of some of the collaborators of violence, and whether in the heart or the mind of the main creators of injustice, it starts to cause cracks—doubts about the justice of their cause, or at least about the possibility of winning if they persevere in their recourse to violence.

There are hundreds of historical examples. Personally I can witness to the positive results of “persevering” actions in which I have been involved.

c) But we cannot forget that “patience defines voluntary suffering.”<sup>4</sup> Voluntary suffering is there, always offered to the nonviolent to test their search for truth and their love. Furthermore, the expression of the love which is most likely to attract a number of sympathizers for the struggle against the injustice/violence, and at the same time to undermine support for the violent live along the supporters of the injustice is *the voluntary acceptance of becoming a victim of the violence*:

—whoever submits to suffering instead of trying to avoid it demonstrates that his or her strength does not reside in brutal and unjust means nor in a merely passive resistance. His strength is in the freedom and love which lead one, freely and without hate, to suffer this violence. By this means one introduces the germ of destruction of the violence. Such behavior will only be fruitful if it is carried out at the right moment in a combined strategy.

—anyone who has not been obliged to submit to violence accepts either to share the fate of those with whom s/he is in solidarity or else to suffer new consequences of this violence.

You certainly remember in the film *Gandhi* those men who go up to the entry of the salt depot and are immediately clubbed by the English soldiers; the next row arrives just as the preceding row falls. A test for satyāgrahis of readiness to accept death if necessary! At the same time the British power’s injustice and cruelty became more evident.

To accept voluntarily to be the victim of violence makes it more necessary to free oneself of all hate. Of course this goes hand in hand with the rejection of whatever vengeance.

“The pursuit of truth does not admit ever to inflict violence, rather that [the adversary] be shown his error through patience and sympathy.”<sup>5</sup>

“To our fiercest adversaries we say: ‘We shall counter your capacity to inflict suffering with our capacity to endure suffering. To your physical force we will respond with the force of our souls. Do to us what you will and we will continue to love you... throw us in prison, and we shall love you still. Send your Klansmen into our communities to perpetrate violence at midnight and leave us half dead; we shall still love you. But be assured that we will lead you to exhaustion by our capacity to suffer.’ ”<sup>6</sup>

To be ready to give one’s life rather than take another’s always has a considerable impact, if love and freedom have been served by a combined strategy, developed intelligently. Has not every human being been moved by the example of Christ who offered himself freely, refusing to let his life be defended by the sword, even refusing to defend himself before the Tribunal?

How can the brothers and sisters of the Stigmatized One of Assisi, those who are engaged in living a kind of gospel life, not be moved by this faith in the power of love expressed by the voluntary acceptance of suffering or death so that others might live or be liberated from suffering? Did not Francis invite his brothers not to “dispute” about truth, but to live according to the truth of the Gospel of Love? Did not he himself cross the lines of the Sultan’s armies, against all prudence, confiding in the power of love and his evident material weakness?

This, it seems, is more than necessary to attract Francis’ brothers and sisters to enter a method of struggle based on the strength of a frank, respectful persevering love, ready to suffer and, if necessary, to offer up its life.

● 3rd — *Nonviolent struggles are best pursued when the nonviolent are poor.*

To live in solidarity with those who are oppressed, ruined, despised, voluntarily to accept to suffer and be ready to offer one’s life presupposes beings who are poor and free.

Free — as much as one may be — of a thousand and one little fears: the body’s fear which does not know how the adversary’s hatchetmen are going to react, and doubts its own capacity to control itself so that it does not respond instinctively to violence with violence; the fear of having to suffer; fear before conflict which seems to last forever and demands the mobilization of energy for a long time; the fears of a spirit assailed by doubt which magnify the danger; fear of double agents who might infiltrate into the nonviolent ranks and be right there at your side; fear of agents

- provocateurs; fear of breaking the law; fear of the consequences of arrest; fear of loss of reputation, etc...

Free also of more important fears: fear when facing threats or more direct possibility of death; fear that the love which gives us strength might vanish and lead us to fall away, and then hate or violence would come back on us in force and triumph.

Some of these fears are vanquished little by little in training. Others are diminished only by going deep within oneself. But many of them are surmounted more easily and evanesce if the nonviolent are poor. Poor, not only poor in spirit — surely a necessity — but materially poor: with *such few belongings and so few privileges that one no longer fears losing them.*

Gandhi formed his activists in the harsh discipline of his ashram where his companions lived a poor life, ready to go wherever the need appeared: mobile and poor, beings free to combat injustice.

This poverty of goods, this refusal to look for Power and Privilege, conditions for nonviolent struggle, should they not make nonviolent struggle attractive to Franciscans?

Many of St. Francis friends, Hindus, Buddhists, nonbelievers, and Christians of other confessions, have often asked of me how it is that the Franciscans have not massed to the ranks of nonviolence; those who follow the example of a man radically poor in goods and power? Those who are believed to be trained by spiritual discipline, released from fear by their poverty and their love, free for the Kingdom's emergencies?

Why *don't* the Franciscan brothers and sisters flock to the ranks of nonviolence? It is also the question of the young, men and women, who join our old Orders. Thank God there are nonviolent Franciscans, from Buenos Aires to Manila, from Santiago, Chile, to São Paulo, from Guatemala to the USA, from France to Sicily, from Germany to the Netherlands... and I've left many out. Nonviolent women and men, lay and religious, appear little by little; but almost all of them have sprouted in the soil of a poor life lived with the poor... which means they are still only a handful!

Even more than merely cerebral or emotional compassion, *is it possible that the fear of being poor with the poor is the greatest obstacle to participation in a nonviolent combat?*

"If we jump into such a combat, we're going to lose the [financial] support of our friends" — "We're going to lose our privileged fiscal status" — "we'll lose our respectability, our good name" — "some of the faithful will leave us, and we must be for everyone" — "and if we go to prison, we won't be able to continue our work, our ministry"... (no more than Christ: He had to stop his preaching and his thanksgivings [Eucharists]...

after the first one... in order to go to prison and to the Cross, voluntarily!)  
"What if... What if...!"

"Hail, Queen Wisdom... Lady Holy Poverty, may the Lord protect you with sister Holy Humility. Lady Holy Charity, may the Lord keep you... All of you, Holy Virtues, may God keep, He from whom you come and proceed. (Sal Virt 1-4)

Once more, in the film *Gandhi*, remember when Gandhi was brutally expelled from a first-class compartment in South Africa. He had counted on his impeccable suit, his starched white collar and his Letters as an English attorney for respect even as a man of color. In fact, you have seen, he was left pitiful, brushing his suit off and adjusting it after having been tossed forcefully onto the platform. Each time he appears with more modest clothing. Upon returning to Bombay, he accepts a certain style. But his dress continues to simplify in direct proportion as his life is lived among the poor. Deciding to travel third class, he cannot maintain a natty first impression. When he has become "that half-naked fakir" that Winston Churchill tried to mock, he offered hardly any exterior threat to the English enemy. One could try to make him appear with only those ridiculous baggy drawers, but Gandhi's determination, his total rejection of violence and his transparent love had become a force, redoubtable in itself, and even more so sustained by thousands of fellow citizens for whom the Mahatma was a Light. It would be sufficient for him to fast only 24 hours to make the whole British force in the Indies tremble.

The Power of voluntary poverty!

The extraordinary Power of absolute rejection of physical Injustice!

How can that fail to make a music, at first sweet but then irresistible in Franciscan hearts? So irresistible that they will join the hard and loving struggle which can topple the Oppressive Powers without destroying what is human and human beings.

## II. PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

● 1st — We live in a time when nonviolence at last has gained the trust of persons who up till now did not believe it. Before long we are probably going to see an incredible development of these fields of activity. From now on, many action projects will be blocked by a lack of qualified non-violent activists.

● 2nd — At the same time, within the Christian churches and in several other religions, there is developing a conscience of demanding a remedy for the great local and world injustices. The prayer meetings at Assisi and



Kyoto demonstrate that religions perceive more and more their leading role in the work for Peace.

A significant example is Armand Veilleux, one of the most remarkable personalities of the monastic world, specialist in St. Pacomius, who on opening the sessions of the American Benedictine Academy with a treatise on the "Stages of Conversion" did not hesitate to say:

"We live our monastic conversion in a concrete world *in which one of the manifestations of the power of evil is the enormous disparity between the rich and the poor* (rich nations and poor as well as rich and poor individuals inside each nation). The principal consequences of this are starvation and war."

And later:

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*Many of St. Francis' friends, Hindus, Buddhists, non-believers, and Christians of other confessions, have often asked of me how it is that the Franciscans have not massed to the ranks of nonviolence.*

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"God's Kingdom preached by Jesus implies a transformation of the whole structure of society, *and the individual conversion of the heart has sense if it is a small constituent part of that grand and profound transformation*. This transformation of the Kingdom, just like individual conversion, requires a radical break. The Kingdom is not the fruit of evolution; it is shattering. It is not simply spiritual, but implies a complete revolution of the structures of the old world. This is why it is presented as good news for the poor, light for the blind, healing for the crippled and deaf, freedom for the captives, liberation for the oppressed, pardon for sinners and life for the dead. (See Luke 4, 18-21; Matthew 11, 3-5). Such a Kingdom is not of the other world, but this world transformed and renewed."<sup>8</sup>

In the Franciscan orders, there has been no lack of calls these last years, both from the men's and the women's branches. The Declaration of Salvador de Bahia for the OFM and that of Garibaldi for the OFM Cap. shine light on the direction to take.

● 3rd — It is not enough that believers notice their vocation to participate in the transformation of the world, they must still have at their disposition *a tool for doing it*, in perfect unity with their beliefs and their

conscience. Gandhian nonviolence seems to me to be that instrument, a profoundly spiritual tool, at the same time efficient for resolving conflicts and injustice. Besides, unlike violent solutions, it eliminates many of the germs of conflicts yet to come.

● 4th — Addressing my words to the Franciscan family, I have made reference to those bases of nonviolence which, in my opinion, ought to entice believers in Jesus Christ involved in an evangelical life style.

Do not deduce from this that the only nonviolence that I believe possible is religious-based, or based mostly on Christianity. I am placing myself at the level of the proper motivation for those to whom I speak. Certainly it is possible to participate in nonviolent struggles and actions which have humanist or other religious bases. It is more frequent in the countries where religious connections are predominant or at least respected. In western countries, with few exceptions, only prophetic or warning nonviolent actions can have such a base. These, therefore, are most necessary since many warning actions are required before a struggle, properly called, can have any chance of success. It is one of the steps in the construction of converging forces. Believers are specially well placed to attempt to warn other believers by means of a language which is familiar to them and for motives which they can espouse.

But to refuse to join united actions because the other participants refer to the pragmatic type of nonviolence would be to affect a purism which might become a flight from responsibility. Some places in coalition actions there are supple structures which let each group (affinity group of 10 to 50 persons who know each other well and have an ideological, psychological or religious affinity. But there can even be broader bases.) have a certain freedom of action within the common struggle. That means that no one should be stopped by actions in which there are developments which might not set one completely at ease...

● 5th — Finally I must say a few words about nonviolent techniques themselves. There is a limitless number of them. To pretend that none of the known techniques is adaptable to a particular case is to refuse the common experience of living in a group, the power of creativity and the power of compassion. Experience proves the opposite: these last few decades have seen new nonviolent techniques develop, especially in dictatorial countries, whether communist (Poland, Hungary, USSR, Czechoslovakia) or capitalist (Latin America, Philippines, South Africa). An immense field is open to the creativity of those who are filled with the spirit of evangelical or gandhian nonviolence.

A discipline which is also a nonviolent technique merits special mention:

fasting. Several years ago we invited the brothers, sisters and friends of St. Francis to pay attention to the political or social power of a true fast, not just hunger strikes, which are a better known technique.

A religious fast can be part of a nonviolent strategy while at the same time being an astonishing tool for spiritual deepening if it is seen from the perspective of union with God and not as a strictly ascetic practice. It means then to enter into the truth of our lack of real power before gigantic evils. It means to open up, by voluntary acceptance of our bodily weakness, to *the Power of God* which is capable of transforming us and of producing the conditions for social change. God can change the adversaries' hearts and make us see how we can collaborate in the requisite transformation by taking the necessary risks.

There is still a lot to do in order to spread more widely this means of struggle so appropriate to the little ones (minores) before God, if they truly want nothing more than to be little ones before Him.

To summarize:

a) One may expect that soon there will be more believers ready to engage in conflicts for Justice and Peace.

b) They have at their disposition gandhian nonviolence, whose essence is resolutely spiritual and in harmony with the Gospel which contributed to its invention.

c) Nonviolence could bring much more constructive solutions to a host of local conflicts (neighborhood problems, workplace disputes, minorities, homeless — the untouchable outcasts of the western world). These small sized conflicts are excellent for first steps in nonviolence.

d) It is urgent to research *how to apply nonviolence to that "enormous disparity between the rich and the poor."* I suppose that Franciscans, following Vinoba Bhave in India, should have, more than many others, an extreme sensitivity to this question: the poor suffer more and more around the world.

e) Pragmatic or tactical nonviolence is going to develop considerable independent of all clear reference to humanism or religion.

f) But for success in united nonviolent struggles, it is indispensable that groups with religious or humanist reference be present and active in them. The problematic of power and love and the religious reference of compassion alone can develop, in my opinion, all the potential of the nonviolent movement which otherwise would lose one of its building blocks, obvious from its birth and throughout Gandhi's life.

It is important only that religious or humanist based groups be attentive not to fall into the snare of totalitarianism or that which is the same as elitism.

In the 13th Century, the prohibition against carrying arms made to the Third Order Franciscans and other similar groups, should have dismantled, one would suspect, some structures in which elegant and glorious killing was a common behavior.

In our century, after the Quakers, several protestant peace Churches (Mennonites, Brethren and later the Church of the Nazarene, etc.) have been resolutely active in direct nonviolence; happily they bring an important number of activists to the organized struggle against injustice and violence. At any rate, in every corner of the world one is short of nonviolent activists filled with the evangelical spirit, experienced in the discipline and techniques of gandhian nonviolence.

*Will the Franciscan Movement and the several orders which form its most important elements know how to meditate on the themes evoked above?* Will they know how to unite solidly with this technique which with its gospel spirit would permit them to avoid both the present bloodbaths and those which threaten on the horizon, as well as the self-destruction of Humanity by superbombs or by lack of respect for the laws of ecology?

We speak of Francis as a man of Peace! And we draw from that some vanity!

"We should be ashamed, we servants of God. For the Saints have acted. But us, we tell what they did, trying to win honor and glory." (Adm. 6,3)

*Will we know how to free up an important number of Franciscan men and women for the ministry of nonviolence?* And so they can attack both the sin of the disparity between rich and poor countries as well as Humanity's runaway suicide with nuclear arms and the ongoing destruction of Mother Earth?

Will we know how to include training in the spirit and techniques of nonviolence in our "cycles of formation"? Will we know how to hold up in front of the Powerful, at the side of the Poor, counting only on the power of God among us?

In a word, will we know how to deliver, living and bearing Life, the Spirit of Francis, our beloved older brother, to save our brothers from spiritual and bodily death?

May the day-workers of Chicago's industry,

May the poor, the oppressed, and the tortured in Guatemala and El Salvador,

who have taught me to listen to the cries of God today, help you also.

And now that some of them are dead, may they intercede for all of us!

May our brothers and sisters, murdered because they were beside the Poor, vigil over us and guide us! □

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Among the best-known in this current are: Jürgen Moltman, C.S.Sing, K. Koyama, F. Verillon, S.J., W. M. Thompson, Monika K. Hellwig. We suggest publication of the brief monograph by Jean-François Beudet, Montreal, on "God's pathos as a foundation for a theology and practice of nonviolence." [Le pathos de Dieu comme fondement d'une théologie et d'une praxis de la non-violence.]

<sup>2</sup>Olivier Lacombe: *Gandhi, ou la force de l'âme*, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>*Report of the Indian Congress, 1920*, Ch. 4.

<sup>4</sup>Gandhi. N.B. The word "patience" comes from the same Latin root *pati*: to suffer.

<sup>5</sup>Gandhi: *Report of the Indian Congress*, chapter 4.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Luther King, Jr.: *The Strength to Love*, p. 72.

<sup>7</sup>Emphasis mine. The original appeared in *The American Benedictine Review*, 37 (1986) 34-45; and in French in *Vie des Communautés religieuses*, Montréal, Jan., 1987.



# A Journey of Faith: The Seven Joys of Mary

FR. THOMAS BOURQUE, T.O.R.

## The Franciscan Crown

The *Franciscan Crown* is a seven-decade rosary which appeared sometime during the fifteenth century. It is believed that Saint Bernardin and other Franciscan Preachers promoted the devotion.

The *Franciscan Crown* consists of seven decades of Hail Mary's, each preceded by an Our Father and followed by a Glory Be. The *Crown* recalls the seven joys of Mary and how she responded to the grace of God in her life. It begins with the sign of the cross which is then followed by the seven decades, each consisting of one Our Father, ten Hail Mary's and one Glory Be. At the end of the seven decades, there are two additional Hail Mary's, bringing the total of Hail Mary's to seventy-two, in keeping with an old tradition that Mary lived seventy-two years. The *Crown* is concluded by praying one Our Father and one Hail Mary for the intentions of the Pope.

The seven joys of the *Franciscan Crown* are:

First Joy	The Annunciation
Second Joy	The Visitation
Third Joy	The Nativity and Adoration of the Magi
Fourth Joy	The Presentation
Fifth Joy	The Finding in the Temple
Sixth Joy	The Resurrection and Appearance to Mary
Seventh Joy	The Assumption and Glorification of Mary

The confused history of the *Franciscan Crown* often makes it difficult for one to understand how such a devotion began. Although there are many different legends and stories told about its origin, it is the beauty and power of this devotion which continues to challenge many individuals

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to deepen their faith in Jesus and his Church. The *Franciscan Crown* truly captures Mary as a faithful disciple of Jesus and invites each individual to deepen his/her faith and hope in Jesus.

A reflection on the *Franciscan Crown*, entitled, A JOURNEY OF FAITH: THE SEVEN JOYS OF MARY, is presented for your prayerful reflection and meditation. The reflection studies each of the joys of Mary by beginning with one's openness to Scripture. As the joys of the *Franciscan Crown* are pondered, one is invited to listen to the Word of God and to be open to the gift of the Holy Spirit. For each joy, a gift of the Holy Spirit has been given for study and reflection. These seven gifts challenge each individual to live a grace-filled and moral life. They allow one to reflect on the grace and strength Mary had in responding to her call and relationship with God. The reflection offers questions for meditation and ends with a prayer taken from the prayer of the Church.

### A JOURNEY OF FAITH: THE SEVEN JOYS OF MARY

#### THE FIRST JOY: THE ANNUNCIATION

#### FORTITUDE

Isaiah 7:10-14

Luke 1:26-38

**Reflection:** At baptism we are all called by name to give flesh to Christian values and beliefs. In responding to the gift of baptism, how have we dealt with becoming a disciple of the Lord? What is our relationship to God, Church and others? How do we respond to the invitation to build up the Body of Christ?

Why can living according to Christian values be a lonely and frightening thing?

Name people and events in your life which have helped you live out your faith commitment.

**Prayer:** God our Father, your Word became flesh and was born of the Virgin Mary. May we become more like Jesus Christ, whom we acknowledge as our redeemer, God and man. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE SECOND JOY: THE VISITATION

#### COUNSEL

Luke: 39-56

**Reflection:** Mary's response to God was the powerful prayer of the Magnificat, the joyous acknowledgement of God's goodness within her. What is our response to God?

What are three positive qualities with which the Lord has blessed you?

Whom do you turn to for counsel and friendship in your life?

**Prayer:** Eternal Father, you inspired the Virgin Mary, mother of your Son, to visit Elizabeth and assist her in her need. Keep us open to the working of your Spirit, and with Mary may we praise you for ever. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE THIRD JOY: THE NATIVITY AND ADORATION

#### OF THE MAGI

#### FEAR OF THE LORD

Luke 2:1-20

Mathew 2:1-12

**Reflection:** In reflecting upon the role of Mary as a woman of faith, we learn that she accepted the will of the Father and all that went with that responsibility.

How do you respond to the will of God in your life?

Imagine the emotional turmoil Mary experienced at the time of Jesus' birth. She turned to God for strength. Where do you turn during those periods of emotional turmoil in your life?

**Prayer:** God of love, Father of all, the darkness that covered the earth has given way to the bright dawn of your Word made flesh. Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word that we may bring your life to the waiting world. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>3</sup>

#### THE FOURTH JOY: THE PRESENTATION

#### WISDOM

Luke 22:22-35

**Reflection:** As Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to the elders of the Temple, they once again displayed their love and faithfulness towards God.

As you were presented by your parents to the Lord in the Sacrament of Baptism, your parents also displayed their love and faithfulness towards God. How do you express your love and faithfulness towards God?

How do you share wisdom with others?

**Prayer:** All-powerful Father, Christ your Son became man for us and was presented in the temple. May he free our hearts from sin and bring us into your presence. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever Amen.<sup>4</sup>

#### **FIFTH JOY: THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE      UNDERSTANDING**

Luke 2:41-52

**Reflection:** This event was probably a frustrating and stressful experience for both Mary and Joseph. The happiness of finding Jesus was lost when Mary and Joseph could not comprehend his explanation.

When do you most often lose sight of Christ within your life? How do you seek to understand the wisdom of God and the will of God?

What are the five qualities you appreciate about your parents and their love for you?

**Prayer:** Father, help us to live as the holy family, united in respect and love. Bring us to the joy and peace of your eternal home. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>5</sup>

#### **SIXTH JOY: THE RESURRECTION      PIETY AND LOVE**

Luke 24:1-11

Mark 16:1-8

**Reflection:** The ordeal of seeing her only Son die a criminal's death was undoubtedly a traumatic experience for Mary. She drew strength from the Father's love and realized that Jesus would conquer death through the power of God. Mary received grace and love from God who gave her a reason to hope and a reason to live.

From where do you draw your strength?

Does the gift of the resurrection truly give you a reason to hope and a reason to live?

**Prayer:** God our Father, by raising Christ your Son you conquered the power of death and opened for us the way to eternal life. Let our celebration today raise us up and renew our lives by the Spirit that is within us. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>6</sup>

#### **SEVENTH JOY: THE ASSUMPTION**

#### **KNOWLEDGE**

Revelation 21:1-6

John 11:17-27

As Mary experienced the call from God, we also need a deepening conviction and eagerness to hear God's call in our lives and respond to the call. It is important to trust God enough to allow ourselves to respond freely and generously as Mary did.

Are you as eager to hear God's call as Mary was?

How are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, serenity) growing and effecting your relationship with God and others?

Father, you have given us the mother of your Son to be our queen and mother. With the support of her prayers may we come to share the glory of your children in the kingdom of heaven. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>7</sup>

#### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup>Opening Prayer Annunciation. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing, 1974. ICEL.

<sup>2</sup>Opening Prayer. Visitation. *the Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974, ICEL.

<sup>3</sup>Alternative Opening Prayer. Christmas-Mass During the Day. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974, ICEL.

<sup>4</sup>Opening Prayer. Presentation of the Lord. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974, ICEL.

<sup>5</sup>Opening Prayer. Holy Family. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974, ICEL.

<sup>6</sup>Opening Prayer. Easter Sundays. *The Roman Missal*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974, ICEL.

<sup>7</sup>Opening Prayer. The Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of All Creation. *Collection of Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*. New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co, 1988, ICEL.

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## The Portiuncula Stone

When he came to this place — an ancient chapel in ruins, the place he would come to call "Little Portion" — it seemed that the weed-choked ground issued light and all the forest became still. It seemed that this portion would be multiplied, would become the ample portion of many.

Yet it was dreary at first when the companions arrived — there is no emptier place than a forgotten church. For with the stones and crumbs of mortar, its prayers and blessings lie scattered about. Like stringless harp, this place awaited its David to give it a new voice of praise.

And so it happened — a brown and wiry hand, his hand, stretched out and wrapped about me. Rock-hard and earthy, I became in his grasp a noble thing, lighter than air, an Ave — an exultation of praise for the Virgin. He slammed me into place and my heart rang out as I crashed against the other stones. A paean of angels answered in chorus, a new song to God in his glory and to the Handmaid of the Lord in all her virtues.

In time, countless pilgrims would crowd this small church. Their basilica would reach up around it, enfold it as the forest had as though it were a fragile thing and inglorious. Such is the impertinence of time and good intentions. I still sit in the wall where he put me, tiny but tough, a creature of that day when the ragtag band rebuilt the church, and then the world, with the architecture of simple faith.

And remember, he loved me too, though cold and lowly. Once, coming into a clearing his followers saw him preaching in an empty rock-strewn field. "Who are you speaking to?" they asked, "For no one is here." And he said, "Even the rocks are in need of salvation!" My brothers and sisters, listen to my voice beyond the centuries: Who could not love such a man? Who could not love the Savior he loved?

*Justin Carisio, S.F.O.*

## Chapter of Mats: Historical Perspective

F. EDWARD COUGHLIN, O.F.M.

Contemporary interest in gathering of all the brothers in a province of the Order centers on retrieving the primitive ideal of revitalizing the common vision of Gospel life in fraternity and minority and maintaining the internal unity of the itinerant brotherhood through personal contact and the sharing of experiences in mission.

In the year 1216, James of Vitry wrote:

“Once a year, to their great benefit, the members of this order came together in a determined place, to sup together and to rejoice in the Lord.”

Cajetan Esser, commenting on the words of James, writes:

“Such yearly chapters provided a happy reunion for the friars who were otherwise scattered throughout the whole of Italy. During these reunions they experienced in joy a sense of their oneness and community, and, through the meal they all shared in, a sense of belonging together. The days of chapter became a happy means of manifesting outwardly the bond of brotherhood which inwardly welded them into a community.”

Esser's comments accurately reflect Thomas of Celano's description of the early rhythm of life among the first followers of Francis (1 Celano: 29-30). Celano tells us that when their number had risen to eight, Francis called them together and told them many things concerning the Kingdom of God, contempt for the world and the dangers of self will. Francis then sent the friars into various parts of the world. After a short time, Celano indicates that they would come together and give

“an account of the good things the Lord had done for them; and, if they

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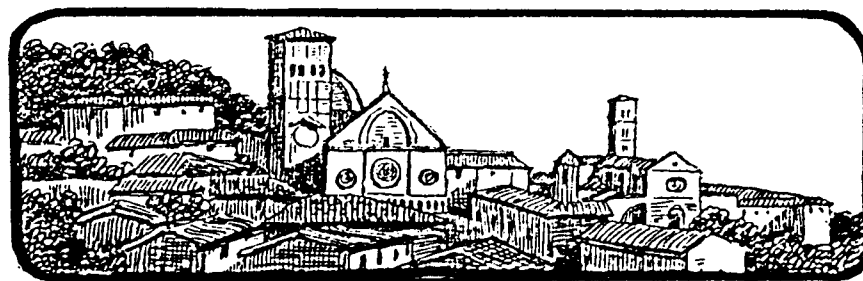
*This document is based upon a discussion entitled “Chapter of Mats, Historical Perspectives,” requested by the Holy Name Province Chapter of Mats Publicity Committee. Participants in the discussion included C. Harkins, O.F.M., D. Monti, O.F.M., R. Armstrong, O.F.M. Cap., and E. Coughlin, O.F.M. A videotape of the full discussions is available from the Committee. Holy Name Province will convene a Chapter of Mats in June of this year at Siena College, Loudonville, New York.*

had been negligent and ungrateful in anyway, they humbly begged and willingly received corrections and punishment from their holy father. For thus they had become accustomed to act when they came to him...”

There are only sketchy accounts of the regular gatherings of all of the friars between 1208 and 1221,<sup>1</sup> the chapter traditionally referred to as the Chapter of Mats. Despite the lack of much detailed information, the sources clearly indicate that the early gatherings of all the friars served the important functions of affording the brotherhood an opportunity to celebrate who they were, share their experiences of life and faith with one another, pray with one another, and as the unique circumstances of their individual lives might demand, seek encouragement, advice or correction. These gatherings of all the brothers served the important function of renewing and revitalizing the friars' vocation so that, as Holzapfel put it (147), “each friar with the blessing of his beloved father [Francis], went his way along the road pointed out to him.”

Iriarte reports that the Pentecost Chapter of 1221 was the last to be attended by the whole fraternity. The number of friars and the distances to which they had been sent made the gathering of the whole fraternity an impossible ideal. The Rule of 1223 (Chapter 8) mandated a Chapter of ministers. The Minister Provincial was then to decide, if he wished or deemed it expedient, to convoke a Provincial Chapter. The circumstances and necessity of the historical development of a different kind of chapter gathering for the friars can easily be understood. The development was, however, not without its consequences. The limitations and implications of this development become increasingly clearer. For example, Chapters after 1240 become increasingly legislative in focus and limited in terms of who could participate. □

<sup>1</sup>For example: R. Brooks, *Early Franciscan Governance*, Cambridge U. Press, Appendix 1; C Esser, *Origins of the Franciscan Order*, 1970, Franciscan Herald, p. 71ff, H. Holzapfel, *The History of the Franciscan Order*, 1948, #36, p. 147ff, L. Iriarte, *Franciscan History*, Ch II, Franciscan Herald,, 1982, p. 15ff.



## Franciscan Praises to Mary

Fr. JUDE M. ROCHFORD, O.F.M.Conv.

My dearest Mother, Mary, spouse of the Holy Spirit and bearer of Christ to his people on earth, help me to understand and believe this "good news".

Through my Franciscan vocation I am like you, Mary, but through my own fault I am only a sinner.

As a follower of Francis of Assisi, every day I wear my Franciscan garments bound with a knotted cord. They remind me of my vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience not with fear or shame but in a blessed hope and joy.

Virgin Mary, Holy Temple of God, you gave birth to the Holy of Holies. Light a glowing candle of piety in the sanctuary of my soul. May I pray with a burning faith. Illumine my soul from the shining candelabra of eternal light. With the incense of the altar make my soul fragrant. Enrich it with the Bread of Propitiation. Remind me daily that the priestly Word and Eucharist is your Son's gift to me.

In my Franciscan labours, mirrored in the Gospels and sanctified by my Rule and Constitutions, give me a will that no routine can dim; quiet determination in disappointments; a humility that no fame can confound; a smile as radiant as you are, the Morning Star; the simplicity of a Brother Juniper; and in my service to others the charism to be myself. Inspire me to bring peace and joy to the ambitious, the blind and retarded, the leprous and selfish, and those knowing only brazen gods, because I myself am all these. Encourage me in Bethlehem's poverty, in Egypt's silence, in Nazareth's labours, and in Calvary's redemption.

My dearest mother, Mary, you are our Lady of Consolation. Direct me to be a comforter and consoler of the afflicted. You are the Olive of Mercy. Lift up my arms and hands to pour healing oils of your Son's mercy upon the open wounds of sinners. You are the Ivory Throne of Solomon. On the dais of your immaculate fortress I place my innocence and purity. You are our Lady of Angels. As Francis, my father, restored San Damiano, guide my living faith to rebuild your Son's Church.

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O holy poverty, our Lady of the Poor, espoused by Francis and beloved by Clare, the advocate of the Poor, help me to disengage from this world. May I love more fully evangelical lowliness to caress and touch the crucified Christ, your Son, in the poor, in the marginal of my horizon, and in all creation. May I, a minorite, always sing your praises.

Mary, my special Rose and Fragrance of Lebanon, through you I offer myself to your Son, Jesus. May you, Mary, the Immaculate One, always intercede for me, a Franciscan pilgrim, journeying to the new Jerusalem.

My dearest mother, Mary, lead me to your Son, Jesus, the divine mystery of life, light and love. Amen. □





## Book Reviews

**The Maternal Face of God.** By Leonardo Boff, O.F.M. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987. Pp. 278. Cloth, \$16.95.

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

Word has it that this book is hot in theological circles. Graduate students at various schools of theology find that it sparks lively discussion and provides support for certain feminist perspectives. Readers attracted to a Jungian outlook on reality also find rich material in the text. For all these reasons Boff's work deserves a careful study. It also deserves a careful study because it generates some questionable theological propositions.

Faithful in his own commitment to scholarship Boff moves with painstaking precision through an outline of his method. This section will not be attractive to the reader who seeks quick spiritual insight. It is impressive to the scholar. The first two major sections of the text concentrate on a philosophical and theological analysis of the feminine. In this section Boff also provides a thorough investigation of epistemological obstacles to an analysis of the feminine and phenomenological analysis of the present situation.

This analysis is critical for Boff as he proposes that "the fundamental mariological principle must reside in the feminine" (p. 11). That is, the feminine constitutes the basic anthropological category for the systematization of "the Marian facts and events that theological reason can de-

tect, all about Mary that our faith confesses" (p. 11). The Brazilian theologian develops this method to arrive at the most radical question, the "rock-bottom premise" of the feminine which alone allows one to do justice to the Marian truths of faith. The deficiencies of previous approaches and the demands of the contemporary historical context require the use of the feminine as "sufficiently rich and entirely new" (p. 18).

While one might argue about some of the particular points in Boff's consideration of the feminine from the phenomenological and philosophical categories, one cannot argue about his overall insight. One can only be impressed with the depth of his knowledge covering a wide expanse of literature. And to a certain point the same may be said of his theological meditation on the feminine.

However, it is precisely at this point that this reviewer finds Boff falling short of the careful scholarship which marked the earlier portions of the study. And, it is this same lack of precision which marks the second half of the text.

In order to uncover how the feminine constitutes a path to God and how God employs the feminine as a path to humanity Boff offers this preliminary hypothesis. (Preliminary in the sense that he admits it is an initial consideration in need of further reflection and refinement.)

The Virgin Mary, Mother of God and of all men and women, realizes the feminine absolutely and eschatologically, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit has made her his temple, sanctuary, and tabernacle in so real and genuine a way that she is to be regarded as hypostatically united to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity (p. 93).

As one finds the masculine immediately divinized in Jesus with the feminine indirectly divinized, so one finds in Mary the immediate divinization of the feminine while the Spirit divinizes the masculine with the masculine indirectly divinized. The Word divinizes the masculine while the Spirit divinizes the feminine. Citing Luke 1:35, the Annunciation, Boff argues that in the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, "Mary is assumed by the Holy Spirit, and thus elevated to the level of God (p. 101)."

Employing this same basic premise Boff moves through the remainder of the book offering a reinterpretation of many traditional Marian beliefs. The chapters on Virginité and Liberation are the best and well worth reading even without plowing through the details of methodology. Remaining sections, at least at first glance, may well seem to be little more than other contemporary expressions of the tradition.

Boff claims that his premise has an initial foundation in the traditional beliefs of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. These dogmas stand as the concrete expression of the "collective unconscious of the Church" (p. 101). Boff believes that a reinterpretation of these dogmas, in line with the category of the feminine, can "deliver Mariology from exacerbated Christocentrism" (p. 103).

Should any dogma of Christianity not be Christocentric? That is the root question which Boff fails to address adequately. The failure to raise that question constitutes the most serious flaw in his work.

In developing a reinterpretation of Mariology Boff portrays Mary as the "new human being par excellence" (p. 109). What then can the Christian believe about the fullness of humanity in

Jesus? Is Jesus not the paradigm of human existence? What is the relationship between Jesus and the Spirit? What is the nature of the inner Trinitarian dynamic?

One can see that Boff appears to be aware of such questions. The awareness can be detected in his claim, "The Spirit in spiritualizing Mary is mediator together with the Son, who 'verbalizes' Jesus of Nazareth" (p. 181). Boff contends that "The reduction of salvific mediation solely and exclusively to Christ's mediation curtails our understanding of the mystery of God and of the human being" (p. 181-182). To claim that insistence on the sole mediation of Christ arises from culture with a profoundly masculinizing tendency does not suffice as a reason for this conviction. Can faith conviction, while admittedly influenced by culture, be reduced to culture?

In this theological meditation on the feminine Boff proposes, "it is not theoretical argumentation that results in the marginalization of women. It is women's concrete, historical marginalization that results in the argumentation" (p. 73). Unfortunately Boff participates in a similar scheme, only it is the underlying truth of the tradition which is marginalized. Wanting to make a profoundly liberating statement about God and about women Boff constructs a theoretical argument to support his preordained conclusion. It is similar to the way in which Jung values the Catholic dogma of the Assumption because God can now be complete as quaternity rather than imperfect trinity. While the articulation of truth must be made in relationship to the demands of culture, the truth of Holy Being also stands outside of culture, fully immanent and fully transcendent. □

## Books Received

- May, Gerald G., M.D. *Addiction & Grace*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. viii-200, including Index. Cloth, \$16.95.
- Mays, James L. *Harper's Biblical Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. 1325 plus color maps. Cloth, \$32.50.
- Nissenson, Hugh. *The Elephant and My Jewish Problem*. Selected Stories and Journals 1957-1987. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. 211. cloth, \$16.95.
- Osman, Ahmed. *Stranger in the Valley of the Kings*. Solving the Mystery of an Ancient Egyptian Mummy. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. 171 inc. Bibliography and Index. Cloth: \$17.95.
- Robinson, James M., Ed. *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. xiv-549. Cloth, \$24.95.
- Sheldrake, Philip. S.J. *Images of Holiness*. Explorations in Contemporary Spirituality. Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1988. Pp. 118. Paper, \$4.95.
- Thomas of Celano. *St. Francis of Assisi*. Trans. and introd. Placid Hermann, O.F.M. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press. Pp. ix-405, inc. Index. Paper, \$15.00
- Webber, Robert E. and Clapp, Rodney. *People of the Truth*. The Power of the Worshipping Community in the Modern World. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. 136, inc. Index. Cloth, \$14.95.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. Understanding How God Changes Lives. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988. Pp. xii-276, including Bibliography & Indices. Cloth, \$15.95.

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Oct 6-8	Theology of Secularity
Oct 13-15	Directed Prayer
Oct 20-22	ACOA
Oct. 27-29	Creations in Clay
Nov. 17-19	Dreams
Dec. 1-3	Prayer
Dec. 15-17	Solitude

### 1990

Jan. 5-7	Retreat/Storytelling
Jan. 12-14	SFO Ongoing Formation
Jan. 19-21	Retreat/Artist
Feb. 16-19	Enneagram
Mar. 2-4	Gospel of Mark
Mar. 9-11	NT Letters/Journaling
Mar. 30-Apr. 1	Call to Wholeness
May 4-6	Focusing and Spirituality

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