

things lies the salvation of men, that is, Jesus. For he who offers to God can say with the righteous Simeon (Lk. 2, 29): *Now dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace*

Note that in the four versicles of the Canticle of Simeon four beatitudes of the penitent man are signified. The first is the full remission of sin and in tranquility of conscience: *Now dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word in peace*. The second is in the separation of the soul from the body, when he has what he has believed, what he has desired: *Because my eyes have seen thy salvation*. The third is in the trial of the Last Judgment, when it shall be said (Prov. 31, 31): *Give him of the fruits of his harvest and let his works praise him in the gates*. Whence the verse: *Which thou has prepared before the face of all peoples*. The fourth is in the light of eternal glory, in which he shall see face to face: *He shall know even as he is known*. Whence: *A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel*. Therefore it is fittingly said: *As a bright fire, and incense burning in the fire*. Jesus Christ shone like fire to the shepherds at His Nativity, to the Three Kings at His Epiphany, to the prophet Simeon and to Anna at His most Holy Purification. And truly in His passion He burned like incense in the fire; and heaven, earth, and hell were filled with His odor. In heaven the Angels rejoiced at the redemption of the human race; on earth men arose from the dead; in hell the captives were set free.

We pray thee, therefore, Our Lady, chosen Mother of God, purify us from the blood of sinners, to make us carry the burning fire of contrition in the wax of confession and the tow of satisfaction, so that we may merit to attain to the light and glory of the heavenly Jerusalem: through that most excellent One Whom on this day thou didst offer in the temple; to Whom be honor and glory forever. Amen.

*Immaculate Conception Convent*      *Sr. Francis, S.M.I.C. (trans.)*  
*Christ the King Seminary*

# the CORD

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## OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

Saint Francis was not a learned man; according to the standards of the world he was not a man of power or influence—his associates were wealth, a gay disposition and a clean heart. He was still a young man when he turned completely to God and when disciples began to come to him. In view of all this, it is truly astonishing to see how the poor, simple, inexperienced young man could hold in his hands the souls and hearts of the men who came to him. To have his favor was a great privilege; to have merited his displeasure was a profound anguish.

His followers were a medley; they were not of one mold. Brother Ruffinus was cultured, Brother Juniper was almost a simpleton and could get in your hair, Brother Pacificus was a poet, Brother Elias was ambitious. Surely some were prudent, and others had but a little prudence; some had great courtesy, and others were as rude as the fields they had till recently plowed; some were quick-witted, and others were slow to learn. But all had loved Francis well, and all were covetous of his special love, and surely there must have been fringes of jealousy among them, and in their own way they will have asked among themselves, *quis putas major est in regno caelorum*.

Of stones such as these, of every shape and size and quality, could Francis have laid the foundation of an edifice that would outlive the centuries? With what did he cement them together that they should hold so admirably, if not with the binding of love? Saint Paul gives us the ingredients that make up this binding force: *For ye are on therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience. Bear with one another, and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against any other; even as the Lord has forgiven you, so also do you forgive one another. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection* (Col. 3, 12-14). There it is! This was Francis, and by his love he compacted the strange assortment together into a magnificent edifice.

It was this same spirit of mutual love which he bequeathed to his followers. He authenticated his Rule with the seal of charity.

Thus, in Chapter III we read: "Let the brethren be mild, peaceful and modest, gentle and humble." In Chapter VI: "If a mother nourishes and loves her carnal child, how much more should not one love and nourish his spiritual brother. And if any of them should fall into sickness the other brethren must serve him as they would wish to be served themselves." And in Chapter VII: "If any of the brethren . . . should sin mortally . . . let the ministers . . . impose a penance upon them with mercy. . . And let them take care lest they become angry," for this ruins charity. And in Chapter X the ministers are admonished to correct their subjects "in humility and charity," and they must receive those who have recourse to them "with charity and mildness." And then he adds a final confirmation in a new and holy sanction: "And whoever shall have observed these things, let him in heaven be filled with the blessing of the most High celestial Father, and on earth with the blessing of his beloved Son together with the Holy Ghost. . . And I, Brother Francis, your little one and servant, as far as I possibly can, confirm this blessing to you through and through."

You will see, therefore, how Francis cemented us together. We are gathered to his Order from North, South, East and West; the blood of every nation flows in our veins; each has come with his own family traditions; each with his special character: the mild and the wild, the languid, the dynamic, the generous, the selfish, the cultured, the rude, the idealistic and the common. Will not all this seethe and boil over like a witch's caldron? The fur could fly and the casualties could be numerous in a situation such as this. Francis, all these have come to you; how will you keep them in the peace of Christ? The divine directive is there in the words of Saint Paul which have already been quoted: *but above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection*, or as it might quite as well be rendered, "charity, which is the perfect bond." Throw over all of them this perfect bond, and the peace of Christ will rule in the midst of them.

We are the Seraphic Order, and the Franciscan Brotherhood should be something like a sacramental means for conveying to the world the blessings of true Christian love. But first, we ourselves will need good schooling in charity, in mutual love, in unfeigned

kindness toward each other, in patience with one another, not looking to the exterior of our Brother or to his foibles, but to the image of Christ which is in him and the bond of spiritual brotherhood which associates us to him. Our sympathies must be expansive. Of course, there is a correlative to this: those who are aware of annoying habits, of disagreeable traits, must get rid of them, for this is their duty both on the score of their own perfection and on the score of charity.

So then, while practicing the spirit of brotherliness among ourselves, let us also carry it out into the world and share our Christian and Seraphic love with men. We are never too poor to dispense the love of Christ. The more you give for His sake, the more He will pour into your heart *good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over* (Lk. 6, 38); your supply will be inexhaustible. But it is the charity of Christ, not sentimentality. The charity of him who could not withstand the sight of suffering or the signs of weeping. *Woman, weep not! . . . And he gave the young boy back to his sorrowing mother* (Lk. 7, 13). It must be that charity which will impel you to enter with compassion into the sorrows of others. It would be a shocking thing if the heart of a priest or a religious were callous to others' pain. Charity with those who are confused, sympathetic with the just ambitions of men; be proud of their noble pride, as a father would be proud of his son. In a word, have so much of the goodness of Christ and of Francis that you can alternately rejoice and weep with an upright heart.

You will thus exercise a fascination over men, some of that divine and courteous fascination which the Son of God exercised and which drew the crowds to follow Him deep into desert places forgetful of food and drink.

All men yearn to share in God's gladness, and we ought to be the dispensers of that gladness, we the members of an Order that has been reared on divine love and the gay songs of Francis, and has roamed down the centuries as the carefree vagabonds of God, having nothing yet possessing all things, since that we had long ago been committed by Saint Francis to the kind and omnipotent providence of God. Why should not people come to us in their sorrow and distress, presuming justly that, after we have had almost a thou-

and years of experience of being comforted by the goodness of God, we should have learned well how to comfort others (2 Cor. 1, 6)? And if joy has echoed down the hall-ways of Franciscan life for nearly a millenium, men might well presume that we know the secret of its contagion, and that we can turn their tears into happiness.

As one goes to school for learning, and to the doctor for healing, so men should come to us to be relieved of their sorrow. It is our duty to learn this sublime ministry. What a glory it would be if, after making unflinching experience of it, men should want to emblazon on our coat-of-arms and over our doorways—in a very humble sense, of course, yet in a true sense—those tender and compelling words of Christ: *Come to me all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you*. This is an ideal to strive after. Our escutcheon has on it an arm of Christ and an arm of Saint Francis and each hand is pierced with a wound, the emblem of ultimate love. Shall we not embrace men in the love of those two arms? Those arms should be emblazoned on our escutcheon in flaming fire, an emblem of the blazing love. Through our own noble courtesy and our supernatural charity, with these two arms let us embrace men to our hearts with the tenderness of Christ Who is the revelation to us, in flesh and blood, of the eternal Love Who predestined all of us to divine adoption as sons, for *everyone who loves him who begot, loves also the one begotten of him* (1 Jo. 5, 1).

Fr. Silvano Matulich, O.F.M.

## STABAT MATER IUXTA CRUCEM

*A Meditation drawn from Saint Bonaventure*

*Stabat Mater iuxta crucem eius.* All these things on Calvary were done and said while Christ's most sorrowful Mother stood by the Cross. Her compassion for Him increased His suffering, and His love her sorrow. She was, as it were, on the Cross with Him and those rather to die with Him than to survive Him.

in and troubled on all sides, beyond the power of tongue to  
(*Medit. de Passione*, 6)

Now Our Lord, as He hung in agony on the Cross, said  
taught many things most useful to us. These are His seven words  
as you will find them written in the Gospel. Look up, then, O Christian  
soul, into the face of your Christ and listen attentively to what He  
ever word He speaks amid His sufferings, and what you have heard  
hide as a most precious treasure within the depths of your heart.

### The Third Word

The third word was that spoken to His Mother when He said  
*Woman, behold thy son*; and to John: *Behold thy Mother*.

O sweet and tender speech! O word so wondrous, betokening  
the greatness of our Savior's filial love! We do not read indeed  
the Gospels that Jesus, who was so gentle and kind, showed much  
affection for His most dear Mother, especially when He reached  
manhood, or took sup with her more frequently, or spoke more  
gently to her than He did toward others. Yet the greatness of His  
love for her He showed in these few words in His dying hour.

Can you doubt that, despite His own sufferings on the Cross,  
He was filled with the deepest compassion for His Blessed Mother,  
whose gentle heart He full well knew was pierced with a mighty  
sword of sorrow? The pains of His own wounds were increased  
the sorrow of His co-suffering Mother, when He saw her heart  
of grief, her hands clasped together, her eyes shedding torrents  
tears, her face lined with sorrow, as mournfully yet courageously  
she stood by Him crucified.

Think how often she must have sighed as she stood there with  
her head covered out of virginal modesty and exceeding sorrow, that  
while, we may suppose, bewailing her Son and saying: "Jesus, my  
Son! O Jesus! who will give me that I may die with Thee and for  
Thee, my Son, my most beloved Jesus?" How many times, think you,  
did she raise her modest eyes to gaze on His bitter wounds? And  
she did not look at times, it was by reason of her endless flow of tears.  
How did she ever bear up under so excruciating a sorrow of heart?  
Living, she died with Him, and by living bore a sorrow more cruel  
than death itself.

But lest she faint and die her Son strengthened her within and  
hardly consoled her by word and action; for as she stood thus by  
the Cross, He said to her: *Behold thy son*, as though to say: "Thou  
lose the bodily company of Me, thy Son. Therefore I give thee  
most beloved friend to be thy son. In My absence his presence  
comfort thee. And thou, John, wilt lose Me, thy Father; hence  
I give thee My most beloved Mother as thy very own" (*Vitis mystica*,  
c. 9).

### The Death of Jesus

Then at the last He spoke the seventh word with a loud cry  
and tears, saying: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit*. And  
having said this, He bowed His head upon His breast as though  
giving thanks to His Father who had summoned Him back, and  
gave up His spirit.

Oh what must not have passed through the soul of the Mother,  
as she thus sorrowfully beheld her Son grow weak and pale and  
then die midst cries and tears! I believe that she was so caught up in  
the greatness of her anguish as to have become almost unconscious  
of the things of sense or perhaps so afflicted as to seem almost dying  
herself, now much more than when she had met Jesus carrying the  
Cross. And Magdalen, faithful and beloved, John whom Jesus  
loved, and the two holy cousins of Our Lady! what could they do in  
the sea of their grief, but weep with her?

See now! the Lord hangs dead upon the Cross. The multitude  
returns to the city. Only the sorrowful Mother and the holy four  
remain. They sit near the Cross and contemplate their loved One  
while they wait for help from their Lord that they may remove His  
body for burial. . . In vain does Mary plead with the soldiers to leave  
untouched the body of her Son. One of them, Longinus, proud  
then and godless, but later a convert, a martyr and a Saint, contemning  
her prayers, thrusts his lance into the side of the Lord Jesus.  
Then truly was fulfilled in Mary what Simeon had said: *Thy own  
soul a sword shall pierce*, for the sword of this lance went through  
her soul as it pierced the body of her Son.

Then at last came Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus and  
others. . . and as they removed the body of the Lord from the Cross

hold of His right hand and held it to her cheek. As it was laid on the ground, she held His head and shoulders on her lap, while Magdalen clasped His feet at which she had once found such mercy. The others stood by and wept bitterly as for an only son. Midst tears Our Lady gazed at the wounds of His hands and side, now one, now another; she contemplated His face and head, the holes made by the thorns, His beard plucked, His face matted with spittle and blood! (*Medit. de Pass.* 7-10)

Consider then, O sinner, that when you sin you are the cause of these wounds of Christ! Look to the Passion of Christ, and you will overcome the devil. If he tempts you to pride, see Christ on the Cross who became *the reproach of men*, and you will not give in. If he would lead you to ill-will, behold Christ praying for His enemies, and you will hate no one. If lukewarmness threatens, behold Christ pierced by the nails, and you will hang with Him on the cross of penance. If the devil tempts you to avarice, see Christ naked on the Cross, and in nakedness you will follow Him: *nudus nubi sequeris*. If impurity is what the devil proposes, behold the hardness of the Cross. Look at all this, and then do all things according to the pattern that was shown you in Christ. *Optimum est semper cruce meditari!* (*Sermons on Good Friday*)

#### The Burial of Jesus

After a little, as night was drawing near, Joseph besought Our Lady to permit him to wrap the body and bury it. Magdalen prepared the feet and washed them again with her tears, her last service to Him who was her Master and Lord. With even greater abundance of tears, Our Lady bathed the face of her Son and wrapped His head in the winding-cloth and blessed Him. Then adoring Him with bended knees and kissing His feet, they carried Him to the tomb, Our Lady holding the head and shoulders, Magdalen the feet, the others the body.

When they had closed the tomb and returned to Calvary, Mary knelt there and adored the Cross, for here, she said, has my Son rested and here is His most precious Blood. You may suppose, then, that Mary was the first to adore the Cross. They then left for the

but Mary would often stop on the way to gaze back at Calvary. (*Medit. de Pass.*, 11)

#### A Colloquy

What tongue can tell, what mind can grasp, O Virgin blessed, the full weight of thy desolation! Thou wast in the midst of all these sufferings and sharing in them! Now didst thou see that blessed and holy flesh which thou hadst so chastely conceived, so sweetly fed and nursed, so frequently held in thy bosom and covered with kisses, now with bodily eye didst thou see, I say, that flesh rent by the scourges, pierced by the thorns, struck by the reed, bruised with blows and fists, dug by the nails, mangled horribly as it was fixed to the Cross, subjected to every mockery and quenched with gall and vinegar. But with the eyes of the spirit thou didst likewise behold that most divine soul of thy Son filled with the gall of bitterness, groaning in spirit, fearful, weary, in agony, in anxiety, troubled and cast down with every sadness and sorrow. He suffered thus partly because His body was so conscious of every pain, partly because He burned with most ardent zeal for God's honor lessened and injured by sin, partly because He had such love for us miserable sinners, and lastly because He had such compassion for thee His Mother, whose heart was pierced on Calvary! (*Lignum vitae*, 28)

In conclusion let me pray: My God, my good Jesus! Though I am wholly ashamed and unworthy, unworthy indeed to have merited to be present in body at Thy sufferings and death, grant me the grace to meditate on these in mind, and so experience that deep compassion for Thee, my God, who wast crucified and didst die for me, which Thy innocent Mother and the penitent Magdalen felt in the very hour of Thy Passion. Amen. (*Ibid.*, 32)

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. (transl.)

## SAINT BONAVENTURE'S RULE FOR NOVICES (IID)

### *Rules For Sleeping*

When the time for retiring arrives and not before, first sprinkle yourself with holy water and say a brief prayer before getting in bed, bless yourself and humbly recommend yourself to the Lord and modestly prepare yourself for sleep, lying on your right or left side, but never on your back or in any other unbecoming position. Never sleep with your hands inside your habit nor with your legs drawn up or uncovered, but always keep your tunic between your legs, lest someone find you lying immodestly. Thus lying on your bed, recite the Psalms until you fall asleep, or meditate on something useful, or, what is better, think of Christ hanging on the Cross. If you think well of these matters, the devil will never, or only rarely, be able to tempt you, because devout meditation on the Passion of Christ puts the host of demons to flight.

When you are awakened, recall immediately the thought of the Crucified, that with Saint Paul you may know nothing among men *except only Jesus, and Him crucified*. For Saint Bernard says: "Let Him be wholly fixed in our hearts. Who for us was fixed to the Cross." Signing yourself with the cross, go to choir quickly and bless yourself with holy water. When you enter the church say: *I will enter thy house, O Lord, and adore at thy holy temple in fear of the Lord, lead me in thy justice; because of my enemies, direct my path in thy sight*. But when you arrive at the altar, genuflect humbly and adore God and weep, if you can, and pray as the Lord shall inspire you. Recommend yourself to Him with great humility of heart and be always in church before Office begins that, having recollected yourself before God, you may more fully attend to what you say.

### *Daily Duties*

Let all the duties you perform be always rooted in charity, for otherwise you may expect no reward from God, because, as Saint Augustine says: "So great is the power of charity that without it both prophecy and martyrdom are reckoned as nothing." Willingly

serve Mass, with deep devotion of heart and reverence of body, for no one should approach that most holy Sacrament indevoutly. Do not wait for the priests to ask you, but rather, you ask them. Be careful to perform all the services properly, lest perhaps through your negligence, which God forbid, the devotion of the celebrant be lessened. And take care, when you are serving, never to look at the face of the celebrant.

In regard to other duties, prefer those which, though less outstanding, are necessary and useful, such as washing clothes, dishes, and tunics, caring for the sick, and similar things. When you are with the professed Friars to perform some task, do not speak unless questioned, and then briefly and submissively. Prefer "to be heard in silence" because it is said in the Psalm: *A man full of tongue shall not be established in the earth*. You should frequently and solicitously visit the sick Friars, at least two or three times a day, and do for them what you can, as it is said in the Rule that "the Friars should serve them as they would wish to be served themselves." And this without much talking for, as the Wise Man testifies: *In the multitude of words there shall not want sin*.

### *Of Avoiding Idleness*

Since idleness is an occasion of sin for many, as the Wise Man tells us: *Idleness hath taught much evil*, be ever occupied with divine praise or the works of charity. For the Divine Wisdom took idlers to task when He said: *Why stand you here idle all the day?* Nor should we wonder that the devil frequently leads idlers to sin, when Saint Jerome says: "Be always about some work, that the devil may find you occupied at all times."

Concern yourself mainly with these three things: frequent and fervent prayer, reading, and works of mercy. Let your whole life pass in these three things, so that you are always praying or reading or serving. Give your services preferably to the old, to guests, and to the sick. When you have completed these works, do not stand idly with the Friars, but immediately go to your cell for prayer or reading. Stay there daily until Tierce, and let nothing except urgent necessity or service to your brethren bring you forth. Remember the words of Saint Bernard, that "the holy Angels of God

a cell almost like heaven and are equally delighted in either, for from his cell, one often ascends to heaven."

### *Religious Modesty*

Since control of the exterior senses helps perfect the virtue, your every word and act should show forth self-control, cheerfulness, and discretion. For Saint Paul says: *Let all things be done properly and in order.* If, then, you wish to attain the right harmony of the virtues, and to preserve it easily, strive always to have the following qualities. In the first place, frequent and fervent prayer, of which you can say with the words of the book of Wisdom: *All good things came to me together with her, and innumerable riches through her hands.* Then, always avoid all idle and unbecoming words, neither saying them nor listening to those who do. For Saint Paul says: *Evil companionships corrupt good morals.* Beware of letting your hands wander, especially with young men. Avoid the gatherings of idle gamesters; despise flatterers and the compliments. Abhor the conversation of whisperers and murmurers, the double-tongued and detractors. For Scripture says: *Whisperers and detractors are hateful to God.*

Speak only considered, ordered, useful, and becoming words with anyone. Always avoid duplicity and pretense in conversation because Saint Ambrose says: "Every pretense and every duplicity is a lie." Wherefore also Saint Augustine says: "Let your words first be well-considered, then said." Go to wash the dishes daily. Moreover, be not a murmurer nor judge others, nor reprehend anyone unless he manifestly acts contrary to God. Rather, when you are blamed, immediately say the culpa on your knees, whether you are guilty or not. For Saint Gregory tells us: "It is a mark of person of good will to acknowledge their fault, even if they have not done wrong." And whenever someone offends you, do not reply, but take recourse to patience, saying within yourself: "It is indeed right that all creatures should offend me, because in my pride I have always offended the Creator of all, and still do offend Him unjustly and frequently."

And always, when you enter or leave a church, genuflect before the altar if it can be easily done, for it is written: *At the name*

*Jesus, every knee should bend.* Likewise, when you walk through the house or outside, be modest in your step, with hands in sleeves, eyes cast down and not wandering, for Saint Augustine says: "A roving eye betrays an unchaste heart."

And when you see the Friars speaking of someone, and not of God or Sacred Scripture, leave immediately, especially if they are mumuring against someone or speaking of wars. For Scripture says: *Their tongue is a sharp sword.* And that you may the better preserve yourself, strive always to have humility in your heart and your conduct, because Saint Gregory says: "Whoever practices the other virtues without humility, merely carries dust into the wind."

### *On Temptations and How to Resist Them*

The enemy of the human race strives without cease secretly to ensnare the faithful through the onslaughts of temptation, as Saint Peter says: *Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, goes about seeking someone to devour. Resist him steadfast in the faith.* Therefore, *always keep thy soul carefully,* as the Wise Man counsels. As soon as you become conscious of temptation, have recourse to Christ, for He is faithful, that He should make issue with temptation, and say immediately: *Help me, O Lord, my God; depart not from me. Hasten to my aid, O Lord God of my salvation. Free me from my strong enemies and from these men who hate me, for they are greatly strengthened above me. Place me near thee, O Lord, and then let any man's hand be raised against me, for even if whole armies stand against me, my heart will not fear.* And think immediately that by sin one loses the inestimable glory of the Blessed and is condemned to the horrible and unending torments of the damned.

For these two thoughts, if carefully kept in mind, will overcome all temptation; but if temptation still persists, meditate on the most bitter Passion of Jesus Christ. For Scripture tells us: *To think upon it is perfect understanding; and he that watcheth for it shall quickly be secure.* And for this reason, if you keep the Passion of the Redeemer before your mind, the temptations of the deceiver will have no place in your flesh. For this is the armor against enemies of which Saint Paul spoke: *Put on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.* For true

no more efficacious medicine by which the hosts of our enemies are repelled. Therefore also Saint Peter said: *Since Christ has suffered in the flesh, do you also arm yourselves with the same intent.*

And Saint Bernard says this even more expressly: "As often as you feel yourself attacked by base thoughts and feel drawn to wrong desires, place before the eyes of your mind Christ crucified for you. See how He is betrayed to the Jews by Judas, how roughly handled, blasphemed and beaten, judged and condemned, stripped and scourged. And finally, covered with outrages and insults, He is suspended between two thieves, pierced by nails, spit upon, crowned with thorns, given gall to drink, and pierced with a lance. Then with blood flowing from every part of His body, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. Thus did your Redeemer die for you and can you defile your mind with any evil thoughts?"

(to be continued)

Joseph F. Mahoney, T.O.S.

### FRANCISCAN EDUCATION (III)

Having duly considered the "as-if" attitude of current Franciscan education in regard to community life, we now have to consider it in regard to authority. We still jog along in our present manner of educating "as if" our young people looked upon authority as wholly self-evident and acceptable. This is dangerous.

In our introductory examination of conscience, we tried to point out the actual problem involved between the notion and the fact of authority. For the sake of clarity we shall summarize it: Office of itself no longer implies authority. Here again we face another disastrous consequence of the humanistic, anthropocentric *Weltbild*. To the extent that the office holder no longer embodies in himself the authority of God in which *paternitas* used to be perceived, to that same extent he has been thrown back upon himself and can

possess authority only in view of his human qualifications. When we read in our Rule (Chapter X) that "the Brothers who are subject should recall that for God's sake they have renounced their own will," it is no longer self-evident to us that we should therefore obey our superiors as representatives of God in all things because in them the paternal authority of God can be seen and grasped. We may readily obey a "good" superior, one whose human qualities we appreciate, but we as readily dispense ourselves from the duty of obeying a superior whose bad qualities repel us.

Now it would be very wrong if we—knowing that here we are facing a faultily developed attitude—were to adopt a narrow-minded authoritarian standpoint. That definitely would not meet the needs of this morbid condition. It can be treated properly only from two angles.

First, the educator must look upon himself as a carrier of authority, always in demand and always called upon; and he must make himself worthy of authority by the full effort of his whole strength. To be an educator today means more than ever before to be a model. The young must be able to look up to their educator; they must be able to esteem him as a man and as a Christian. The educator must always bear in mind that to hold authority today is more than ever a personal matter. He has to accommodate himself to this fact in every phase of his life, realizing that it is not so much his teaching that is demanded, but his *living*.

Second, the educator must also try to solve the problem by guiding the young people back to the Christian view of authority. The *propter ordinem ipsorum* of the Testament of Saint Francis still remains our directive in this matter. The young must learn to see in the humanly restricted superior not merely the creature subject to countless failings, but the representative of God, the man who by *virtue of his office* takes part and shares in the *paternitas* of God. It is not only the young who must learn to bow to authority in faith, *propter Deum*, but also most of the older religious of today. Of course, this will be possible only for him who really believes. Here we may note in passing the importance of prayer and sacrifice for our educators.

In this connection there is one particular danger—and just in



our Order—that we should mention: In our *fraternitas* and in the form of our community life, the holder of authority must find and keep to the right line between being a brother and being a father to his charges. Whatever smacks of the “good fellow” or the “just one of the boys” attitude, too much compliance, or anything else that tends toward blurring or blotting out that boundary line, always in the long run, proves dangerous. This is unquestionably a difficult task for all of us, but one that must not be sidestepped.

3. And now we come to the third point of our examination of conscience: that the present helplessness and desultoriness in the matter of Franciscan spirituality is fatal for community spirit in our Order. Genuine community life requires the unifying force of a leading motif, of a common ideal and pattern—in other words, requires unity of mind. I presume it to be an open secret that the helplessness and desultoriness really exists among us. Its external indication can be seen in the fact that within the last thirty years volumes have been written about it at home and abroad. As a result of the work accomplished during these decades, the specific character peculiar to our spirituality is becoming more distinct.<sup>1</sup>

Educators in our Order now have abundant material at hand through which—with a modicum of good will—they can accustom themselves to the Franciscan spiritual world. This good will can lead to a rich reward if each and every one of us works himself first of all into the writings of Saint Francis and of Saint Clare in such a way that, with the aid of the commentaries in the new editions, we all find ourselves more and more at home therein.

At this point, perhaps, some will say what we have already established in the first part of our reflection: that it is important for us not only to *know* the spirituality of our Order but to *live* it. Surely this is one of the most important tasks for all of us, but I must refrain from discussing it here. It has already been discussed so often and in so many places that anyone can look it up for himself. However,

<sup>1</sup> Here Fr. Cajetan lists some of the German material published in recent years. Since most of the titles are inaccessible to the average reader of THE CORD, we have omitted this paragraph from our translation.

<sup>2</sup> In English we have Fr. James Meyer's *The Words of Saint Francis* and Fr. Ignatius Brady's *The Legend and Writing of Saint Clare of Assisi*, somewhat parallel to the German editions Fr. Cajetan refers to.

should like to point out some of the more practical aspects of the matter.

First: Since education without an ideal is like a road without a destination, the educator has to keep the ideal of Franciscan life clearly before his mind, and must refer all the ins and outs of his daily life to the judgment of this ideal. Only when we daily confront all our actions with the spirit of our Order will we grow into the proper attitude, into the Franciscan conviction; and conversely, the stronger this attitude and conviction becomes in us, so much the more will all our actions be formed by it and bear its stamp.

Second: All Christian life begins with that which God has given us through Christ in the Church. The essential beginning of Christian life lies with God Who created man and the universe in and with the Word, Who redeemed sinful man by the Incarnate Word, and Who passes on to us and completes in us this redemption through the Incarnate Word Who lives on in the Church. Christian life, as well as all asceticism, is nothing else but the response of man to the *magnalia Dei*. Christian penance as man's *metanoia* is nothing else but joining the work of salvation which God, through Christ, accomplishes in His Church. There can be only one point of departure for Christian life—the foundation which God laid in the Incarnation of His Son. Every point of departure that proceeds from the *humanum* usually fails to lead to full *metanoia* because it so easily becomes a cult of the ego—a piously behaving cult of the religious ego. This is just the contrary of the *vita secundum formam sancti Evangelii* which Saint Francis has made obligatory upon us—obligatory from the standpoint of God's work of salvation. Christian education in our Order, therefore, has to be realized through the mysteries of the Incarnation and Passion, and the sacramental life—the Eucharist in particular. Whether or not we want to call it “Crib, Cross, and Altar” does not matter here; we are interested only in emphasizing the proper starting-point.

Third: Religious life, therefore, and especially Franciscan religious life, dwells and flourishes in the Church. We are religious *in* the Church and *for* the Church; our religious life is the most important thing we can give to her. She needs us for her own interior life—but she needs our Franciscan *being*, not just some kind of activity.

This organic union of our Franciscan religious life with the life of the Church must appear before us most vividly as the task that confronts us daily. Our vows, for instance, are not only a means for the perfecting of the individual religious, but have an eminent social importance reaching deep into the interior life of the Church. That we receive the Sacraments and how we receive them is of importance and significance not only for our own private religious life, but since as Christians we are members of the Body of Christ, the Church, and since as religious we are called to an ever more perfect Christian life, it is of importance and of significance for the interior life of the entire Church. The cult of the liturgy is not a private sport, nor is it an opportunity for the private glorification of God. It must be carried out in the name of and in behalf of the *whole* Church, each individual representing all members of the Church. We must be ever solicitous for the realization of God's kingdom on earth, and this in imitation of our Seraphic Father Francis who served it with passionate love and unwearying ardor. In other words, let us again place Franciscan religious life where it was right from the beginning: let us make it again the *vita secundum formam sancti Evangelii*.

Fourth: Let us free the interior and exterior life of the Order from all the alien influences that have been adopted in the course of time, and let us try to arrive at forms that are appropriate to our own Franciscan spirituality. One cannot adhere to alien forms if one wishes to live according to his own spirit. Take, for example, the form of examination of conscience. To dwell upon our sins in sorrowful repentance is both solidly Christian and very strongly Franciscan. But it certainly never occurred to our Seraphic Father to note down whether or not he had observed this or that point well or badly (C. Admonition 28). It was not so much self-control that he strove for; his efforts were directed more toward repeatedly confronting his frail and faulty humanity with the sanctity of God which appeared in Christ. "Who art Thou, O Lord, and who am I?" In the light of the sun-like sanctity of God, Francis clearly perceived each mote and speck, each tiniest blemish on his soul, as so much besmirching dirt, and because of this experience of God's holiness he could call himself in all truthfulness the greatest of sinners. Let us take another example, meditation. Francis immersed himself, out of intense personal interest, in the words and actions of the Incarnate Son of God

in the splendors of the Father's creation. Consequently, his heart overflowed with joy and gratitude, admiration and wonder, humility and love. For him meditation was never a matter of intellectual exercise aimed at gaining new knowledge of spiritual things, but rather a prayer of the heart. *Draw near to God and he will draw near to thee* (Jas. 4, 6). Francis could never consider meditation as a process of repeating to the Lord, according to a fixed method, some previously heard matter, thus giving to God, as it were, a kind of academic lecture strewn at certain points with affections prepared the night before. For Francis, meditation was immersion in the *magnalia Dei* leading the heart to conversation with God. Take again the matter of asceticism. Many of us indulge in it as if it were some kind of spiritual cosmetic. We work away at our soul, perfecting it more and more—with the help of God, of course, for after all we *are* Christians—but it is all done according to a well-considered plan of our own or another's design. Francis, however, practised it as a means of setting himself free from self to allow the grace of God, which accomplishes everything, to effect or co-effect the *kinosis* of Christ, the poverty of utter self-despoliation. These few examples show us how humanistic, how anthropocentric, our methods and forms of piety have become. Here again, the most important task for all of us is to find once more the fundamental attitudes that are ours by rightful heritage and their corresponding external forms.

Fifth: It follows then, that our education must once again be based wholly on the Rule of our Order in which these fundamental attitudes are clearly set forth. The spirit of our Rule must permeate every part of the life of every Friar Minor—his piety, his work and his ministry, his communication with others, and his life within and without the friary. Nowadays all these elements stand more or less incoherently isolated together, so to speak, each one presenting its own special problems to be solved according to its own legal code. Our living in all its details must again be borne, moulded, and developed by the spirit of the Rule. . . We must all of us make this point our own personal study and endeavor, and then, by fraternal cooperation, we can make regular observance the interior and exterior pattern of our religious life. Only in this way can we become again what God called us to be: Friars Minor.

4. The fourth point in our examination of conscience

with the contradiction existing between life in the novitiate and life in the province. One of the most important reasons of this discrepancy is the undeniable fact that life in the province is determined exclusively by the pattern of the *cura animarum*. The exteriorly active apostolate, the exterior cure of souls, is the ideal to which everything else is subordinated, if not actually subjected. Therefore life in the novitiate for the Brothers and the clericate for the Fratres has the provisional character we mentioned in our critical preface to this discussion. Therefore it is felt to be merely a transitory stage during which one has to button the lips and stiffen the ears. And therefore the form of life we live in the novitiate and clericate never becomes the form of our entire life. In view of this incongruity. . . I would propose that we again make the *salus animarum*, rather than the *cura animarum*, the pattern of our religious life. This is in complete harmony with the life and teaching of our Seraphic Father, and it is precisely as Friars Minor that life in the regular observance, of which the *cura animarum* is but a part, can best serve the *salus animarum*. But all of us are bound to serve the *salus animarum*, according to the doctrine and example of Francis, by our prayers and sacrifices, by the example of our life and by our preaching. Our life as Friars Minor must therefore be apostolically determined from the very start. At each and every level of our life, always and everywhere, we must serve the *salus animarum* in this truly evangelical spirit.

If this would again become the pattern of our conventual life, then the pattern of life during the years of preparation and education would naturally find its full meaning and purpose. Furthermore, our monastic life would again be an essential part of the Church's interior organic principle of life. Judgments are beginning to ripen in these days of ours. When we hear such remarks as: "Today the monk saves marriage," we then realize that if such judgments are ripening in the world, they should ripen much more quickly in our own communities. We could indeed add to that remark and say: "The stability of the Christian family is most effectively influenced by our religious *familiaritas*. The wanton sexuality of our age, especially as a danger for the young, is decisively banned by Christ in the Church through our *castitas*. The avarice that is poison-

Christendom today has an antidote in our *paupertas*. The desire for power and the will to rule which so much threatens our people and even our clergy can be annulled by the humility of our *minoritas*." This will be brought about not because others see our example and are moved to adjust themselves accordingly, but because in the interior life of the Church there is no loss of vitality, because in the kingdom of God there is no dissipation of energy. For, as Saint Paul says (I Cor. 12, 26): *if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it, or if one member glories, all the members rejoice with it*. Therefore our conventual life is an eminent and decisive contribution to the life of the Mystical Body of Christ; in itself and as such it is an *aedificatio Corporis Christi, id est, ecclesiae*. It is not only by praying and sacrificing for the Church and her intentions, not only by consuming ourselves for her in the *cura animarum*, but also and above all by living in her as true Friars Minor that we shall fulfill our vocation and mission. In fact, it is only by taking this point of view of our organic life in the Church that we can hope to overcome that great danger that overhangs our education—the danger of allowing life in our novitiates and clericates to go on being a transitory stage without permanent meaning or value.

5. And now we come to the last point in our examination of conscience. In the course of this consideration—which is by no means exhaustive—it should have become quite clear that modern Franciscan education is highly problematic; and some of the problems should have become quite clear in important details. Now perhaps it will be understood how futile it is to try to meet these difficulties solely by ascetical and disciplinary measures. Such measures too easily lead to a state of pietistic externalism, and from that state to out-and-out Pharisaism is a very short journey. The overstressing of external modes of piety and the predominance of discipline inevitably lead to a violation of charity and outrage to the spirit of Franciscan freedom—the freedom of the children of God. During a recent conference a priest quoted the remark of a young Catholic: "The clergy have served for themselves a strange god whom they call Religion." I would like to repeat that remark, formulating it as a question and applying it to our present problem: "Have we religious ourselves a strange god whom we call Asceticism?"

the question to the problem of education: Education is a spiritual problem (and remember that spiritual is not to be equated with intellectual), and as a spiritual problem it must be solved by means other than the raising of ascetical achievement or the tightening of discipline only. He who would substitute the spirit of piety, as our Rule says (Chapter V), by ascetical exercises, he who would save the spirit of our religious life by discipline alone, dissolves the spirit and perishes because he does not begin from God's work of salvation but from man's. Following such a course, the *simplicitas* of the Friar Minor would disappear—*simplicitas*, that is, as Francis understood it the straightest, purest truthfulness and honesty of life, the most limpid truthfulness in all thought and striving, the undeviating direction toward God and Jesus Christ Whom He sent, Who lives on in us and among us in His Church.

Let us therefore, in view of all that has been said, strive to awaken the spirit, the spirit of minor-fraternal life which is spirit from the Spirit of God and which also—if we pray for it and open ourselves unreservedly to it—still has power to renew all in us, in our communities, and through us in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Fr. Cajetan Esser, O.F.M.

(Conclusion)

## AN EXPLANATION OF THE RULE OF THE THIRD ORDER REGULAR (XX)

### Chapter VIII: *Obligation of the Rule*

Wise legislator that she is, Holy Mother Church in the closing chapter of the Rule indicates the precise nature of the obligations Tertiary religious take upon themselves by professing this Rule of the Third Order Regular. All religious, we know, by reason of their state, have the obligation to strive for perfection. The common means

of fulfilling this duty are to be found in the three essential vows, while the Rule and Constitutions map out in further detail the road each religious should follow to attain perfection. The three articles that comprise the present chapter deal with these three points in inverse order. Article twenty-three delineates the obligation arising from the Rule as such, article twenty-four takes up the three religious vows, while the final article is concerned with the religious state as such.

### *The Twenty-third Article*

TEXT: *Each and all the articles contained in the present Rule are counsels to help the wayfarers save their soul the more easily; none of them oblige under sin, either mortal or venial, except where one were otherwise obliged to them by human or divine law (cit. Rule ch. X).*

Moralists commonly distinguish three ways in which a legislator may issue directives to those under his authority. The first is by law that directly obliges a person in conscience to perform or omit some action. Such, for instance, would be the Church's laws of fast and abstinence, attendance at Sunday Mass, and the like. These are called "moral laws" inasmuch as a deliberate breach or violation thereof entails moral guilt or sin. The second type of directive is the purely "penal law," which does not directly oblige a person under pain of sin to perform or omit some action but merely imposes an obligation in conscience to accept the penalties incurred for the violation of the law. Many state laws, for instance, regarding taxation, zoning and housing regulations, would come under this head. Finally, a legislator may use simple guiding norms which are offered by way of counsel rather than precept and of themselves neither directly nor indirectly impose an obligation in conscience. The Holy Father, who is not only the highest legislator in the Church but also the final interpreter of its law, has indicated that the articles of the present Tertiary Rule, like that of Leo X, belong in this last category which represents the mildest form of directives.

In requesting admittance to the religious state, the candidate customarily declares that his purpose in entering is "to do penance, to amend my life and to serve God faithfully unto death." The

Church on her part, through the Rule of the Third Order Regular, intends to show the Tertiary religious a practical way of fulfilling this purpose. *Each and all of the articles are counsels to help the wayfarers save their souls more easily.*

The intention of the legislator, then, is not so much to oblige under sin, *either mortal or venial*, as to reveal to the religious how they can carry out what is in itself a serious obligation, striving for the perfection proper to their state. The religious who is faithful to the Rule of his institute can rest assured that he is fulfilling this obligation. Furthermore, he has the guarantee that a life patterned on these norms has the merit of obedience and the blessing of God. But while the Rule represents a manifestation of the will of God in his regard, it is the divine will presented by way of counsel, not of strict command or precept; so that the violation of the individual articles of the Rule as such is not of itself a sin.

We say, the Rule *as such*, because it may well be that an obligation in conscience arises on some other score. For that reason, the restrictive clause is added *except where one were otherwise obliged to them by human or divine law*.

Under the heading of *human law*, for instance, would fall obligations imposed by the Church that coincide with the requirements of the Rule. While the ninth article of the Rule prescribing the divine office, for example, does not of itself oblige under sin, nevertheless those Tertiary Institutes having solemn vows fall under the prescriptions of Canon law which oblige the community to choir recitation and the individual religious in solemn vows to the private recitation of the office if absent from choir (Can. 610). In such cases, the omission of a notable part of the office, such as a canonical hour or a nocturn of Matins for a cleric, or for a lay brother in solemn vows, the number of Our Fathers that can be recited in an equivalent period of time (about twenty), would constitute a serious sin. Similarly, while the observance of the enclosure prescribed in article fifteen does not bind under pain of sin in itself, a serious obligation can arise in virtue of the Sacred Canons as we have explained above—for instance, in regard to the papal enclosure, or in the case of flight or apostasy. Also, we could list under the heading of human law obligation that arises when the content of one of the articles of

the Rule corresponds to some prescription of the Holy See equivalent to a command or precept, or where the diocesan bishop commands something of religious communities under his jurisdiction, for instance, in regard to the episcopal enclosure, or where the proper superior commands some point of Rule in virtue of holy obedience, for example, that a certain religious take care of the sick, and so on.

Under the heading of *divine law* fall all obligations of the natural law or positive divine law. Thus a religious can sin seriously if the violation or disregard of the Tertiary Rule is prompted by formal contempt (Cf. Art. 2, above), constitutes grave scandal or leads to the breakdown of religious observance in the community. Even in lesser matters, if the disregard of the Rule proceeds from some unworthy or sinful motive such as pride, sloth, and the like, sin would be involved not indeed by reason of the rule violated but rather because of the blameworthy motive that inspired the transgression. In practice then, a religious who deliberately and with no extenuating circumstances ignores or violates the Rule, could hardly be expected to avoid all sin. Where the transgression is frequent and flagrant, scandal would inevitably ensue. Such a religious would do well to bear in mind the words of Francis: "By Thee, Most Holy Father, and by the whole heavenly court, and by me, poor little one, may those be cursed who by their bad example tear down and bring to ruin what Thou hast built up and dost not cease to build up through holy brethren of this Order" (Celano, *Legenda Secunda*, n. 156).

#### *The Twenty-fourth Article*

TEXT: *The Brothers and Sisters are, however, obliged to perform the penances imposed on them by their Superiors when required to do so. They are also obliged to keep the three essential vows: Poverty, within the limits of their respective Constitutions; Chastity, binding themselves to observe celibacy and to refrain under an additional title, namely, that of the vow itself, from every act whatsoever, be it external or internal, that is opposed to chastity; and Obedience, assuming the obligation to obey the command of their lawful Superior according to the tenor of their respective Constitutions (cit. Rule ch. X).*

No law or regulation can be effective without some sanction or some means of enforcement. Now even though the articles of the Rule are not penal laws or precepts to the violation of which some fixed punishment is attached, still the Church gives superior means to insure their observance, the power to impose penances for the transgression of the Rule or other regulations. The religious, in turn, like persons who have violated a penal law, can have an obligation in conscience to accept and *perform the penances imposed by their superiors*. For this obligation to arise, however, the superior must *require* them to perform it, that is to say, impose it by way of moral precept. Even in such a case, unless the superior indicates otherwise and the penance imposed for a notable transgression is itself a serious matter, the presumption is that its performance is not enjoined under pain of mortal sin. In administering penances, the superior might note the prudent procedure outlined by the Code of Canon Law. Public penances, Canon 2312 points out, ought not to be imposed for occult crimes or transgressions. Nor should the gravity of the offense alone determine the gravity of the penance, but the latter should be tempered according to the measure of contrition in the offender or other mitigating circumstances. The principal penances mentioned by the Code are recital of specified prayers, some work of piety, special fasts, retreats or spiritual exercises (Can. 2313). To these might be added such others as prudence and custom dictate.

*They are also obliged under pain of sin to keep the three vows* which are *essential* to the religious state as defined by the Code of Canon Law. For by the religious state, Canon 487 informs us, the Church understands "a stable mode of community life in which the faithful, in addition to obeying the commandments, bind themselves to the observance of the evangelical counsels by the vows of obedience, chastity, and poverty."

Inasmuch as a vow is "a free and deliberate promise to God to perform some possible and higher good which promise binds by reason of the virtue of religion" (Can. 1307), in the last analysis, of course, it is the intention of the individual that determines the extent of the obligation. However, in so far as the vows essential to the religious state are not private, but public (Can. 488), that is,

promises "accepted in the name of the Church by a legitimate ecclesiastical superior" (Can. 1308), it pertains to the Church alone to specify the conditions under which she will accept them and it is in this sense that she determines the obligation of these vows of obedience, chastity and poverty.

We have already discussed the obligation of the *vow of obedience* (Cf. Art. 2), and to some extent, the positive significance of the *vow of chastity* (Cf. Art. 6), which imposes *celibacy* as a matter of obligation by making marriage either invalid, if the religious is in solemn vows, or gravely illicit, if the religious is in simple vows (Can. 579). For the sake of completeness then, we need only add that this second vow binds one to *refrain under an additional title, namely, that of the vow itself, from every act whatsoever, be it external or internal, that is opposed to chastity*. Thus every sin of a religious against the sixth or ninth commandments involves a double malice or guilt, one against the virtue of chastity made obligatory by the decalogue, the other against the virtue of religion, the *additional title* of obligation arising from the vow. Where the sin of impurity is grave, the violation of the vow is also serious; where sin is venial, for instance, through inadvertence or lack of deliberation, the vow also is not grievously violated. On the other hand, religious should remember that any breach of modesty on their part is most likely to give greater offense than glaring faults in other Christians. For that reason, religious can be guilty of serious scandal by imprudent conduct, especially in regard to the opposite sex, even though they do not directly violate the vow by behavior which is unchaste in itself or which constitutes the near occasion of sins against purity. Francis was particularly sensitive on this point and strictly forbade his friars to have any "suspicious association or conversation with women" (*Regula Bullata O.F.M.*, c. 11). And in commenting on these words of Francis, Saint Bonaventure points out that in regard to the opposite sex such suspicion can arise by reason of circumstances (1) *of place*, supposing it to be lonely or dark; (2) *of time*, if such meetings take place at night or a time when others are not around; (3) *of the manner of conversation*, for instance, if such private conferences occur frequently with the same person, or are unduly prolonged without any justifying reason; (4)

of gesture or action, such as the holding of hands, unrestrained look or other unbecoming behavior, or (5) where the parties concerned lack maturity of age, or even more, maturity of character (Cf. *Expositio super regulam Fratrum Minorum*, c. 11, n. 2).

Perhaps the most potent antidote to such imprudent conduct towards the opposite sex and the best safeguard against violation of the vow is a mature understanding of the divine purpose of sex for man, and the sublimity of chastity for the religious.

Fr. Allan B. Wolter, O.F.M.

## DILEMMA

Franciscanism has ever had the certainty that the holy Rule of Saint Francis and Saint Clare have the essence of perfection in them. As well as incorporating in legal terms the prohibition for him professed to seek another way of life, Saint Francis left the tremendous moral force of his own experience. The reason underlying his action is more than that of counteracting an evil of the day in religious life. There is too much of the absolute in his attitude for him not to have been aware of the dangers and evils that can inspire the seemingly best of intentions. He is not unique among the Saints in this point of view. A century before him, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux had arrived at the same conviction. While there is no thought of paralleling the two great Founders, everyone is aware of how much Franciscanism owes to the traditions and spirit of Saint Bernard. On a problem as intimate and soul-searching as that of the pursuit of perfection in a state of life other than that in which the religious finds himself at any given moment, it is indeed enlightening and comforting to find these two great Saints so emphatic in their judgment. The following letter of Saint Bernard confirms this observation. It is addressed to a nun entertaining intentions of taking up the life of a solitary. The warning speaks for itself.

"I have been informed that you have in mind leaving your Institute in search of a stricter life, so-called. Since you do not wish to abide by the recommendation of those dissuading you, and are resisting in every possible way your spiritual mother as well as your Sisters, you have chosen to seek our counsel on the matter and to the extent that whatever I shall deem proper you will trust as a solution in your regard. Indeed, you did have need of seeking counsel on the matter; even though you arrived at this conclusion, I cannot conceal the fact that in my personal opinion this procedure was the correct one for you. After reflecting over and over again about the spirit in which you may have made your decision, I dare not judge this desire of yours of which I now have knowledge. Actually you could be acting with zeal for God in this affair and that would render your intention tolerable; yet theoretically how you are going to realize as to which of this kind I just cannot see. You ask me, why? And you will add, is it not wise that I get away from a good table and recreation, from comfort, from city life. Will not my conduct be more sheltered in a hermitage where I shall be living in peace with others or enjoying solitude and engaged in fulfilling that will alone to which I am subject? By no means. For one with the wrong intention, even the desert has abundance, and the forest has its shade, and solitude its silence. As a matter of fact, no one will gainsay the evil thereof, no one will contradict it. Moreover, where there is no fear of a critic being at hand, the tempter is on more secure ground and sin readily enters. In a Institute, however, no one will hinder any good you are doing; anything bad you might attempt will not be allowed. As soon as the latter is discovered, it is checked and remedied; on the contrary, when anything good is in evidence, all admire it, respect it, and try to imitate it. You see, therefore, my daughter, that as long as you persevere, your merits are of extraordinary consequence for you in the Institute due to the opportunities there are for giving good example, and all the easier is there the chance of correcting failings when you may have given offense.

"By way of conclusion and to remove any occasion for error on your part, let me bring to your attention that part of the parable which would make you either one of the foolish virgins (Mt. 25, 1-12). If you are) or one of the wise virgins (Mt. 25, 1-12). If



yourself amongst the foolish, then you have need of your Institute; if you can be numbered amongst the wise virgins, then the Institute has need of you. If indeed you are intelligent and honest, the Institute—but recently established there and now universally esteemed—will be subject to loss of reputation upon your withdrawal, and, in fear, weakened. No matter how good you may be, let it be emphatically stressed that you should never abandon a place where good discipline already prevails. If you deem yourself one of the foolish virgins and leave, the thought occurs that, inasmuch as a bad life is not tolerated amongst those who are good, you, as one not so good, are attempting to find a place where you will be tolerated. And this is reason for such deduction. It is reported that before the reform happened in your Institute, there never was a word from you about a step of this kind; yet, when the Institute began to flourish and immediate evidence of a more cloistered environment began to appear, you commenced to have a sudden fervor for entering a hermitage. My daughter, I recognize, and recognize all too well, would that you would recognize with me—the viper's poison, the liar's deceit, the turn-coat's guile. The wolf prowls the forest; you venture into that forest shade, like a stupid little sheep, you are willing to be the wolf's prey. Listen to me, my daughter, and follow this advice faithfully. Be you sinner or saint, do not separate yourself from the flock, *lest he snatch you away, and there be none to deliver you* (Ps. 49, 22). Are you holy? Strive by your example to embrace your associates in your sanctity. Are you a sinner? Do not add sin to sin, but do penance right where you are, lest you fall with peril to yourself, as I have already explained, give scandal to your Sisters, and provoke the tongues of innumerable detractors against you" (M. P. L., 182, 261-2).

Fr. Eustace Smith, O.F.M.

## FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

A RICH YOUNG MAN: SAINT ANTHONY OF PADUA. John E. Beahn. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1953. Pp. 250. \$3.25

Here is a story of Saint Anthony related as fictional biography. Against the colorful background of feudal Europe, when Saracens were a constant threat, when the Church was torn within by heresy and without by unruly monarchs, Saint Anthony stands out as a powerful and attractive personality. The author has indeed used his imagination in presenting the story, but he has kept surprisingly close to historical facts. The stress is on Anthony himself—the proud young nobleman who fought tooth and nail for sanctity—rather than on the miracles that legend has so lavishly attributed to him. In fact, only a few miracles are recorded—the one of the kneeling donkey at Rimini, his preaching to the fishes, the restoration of the trodden wheat field—and they are so skillfully woven into the story that they seem quite ordinary and natural.

The account begins with the Saint's childhood. As Fernando de Bulhom, only son of one of Portugal's most powerful nobles, he had to combat an impulsive temperament and a loquacious tongue. As a young man his desire to become an Augustinian Canon forced him to combat his love for his parents, for his heritage of wealth and power, and for the little Princess Sancha who was to have been his bride. Then as an Augustinian priest he again had to break his natural ties when God called him to the newly-founded Order of Friars Minor. From then on Anthony's combats were waged more exteriorly, against heretics, suspicious and recalcitrant confreres, and plain difficult people. Throughout the book the struggling human nature of the Saint is effectively brought out, and the ideal of the religious life, especially of the early Franciscans, is quite accurately and attractively depicted.

Of sustained interest and high inspirational value, this is a book that can be wholly recommended, especially to young people of high school age.

FRANCISCAN EDUCATION: Report of the First National Meeting of Franciscan Teaching Sisterhoods. Chicago: The Franciscan Herald Press, 1953. Pp. 218. Paper. \$1.00

Those who did not attend the Sisters' Division of the Franciscan Educational Conference held in Joliet, Illinois, November 28-29, 1952, will now be able to find out for themselves what went on at that meeting and how much they missed. The Program shows what fields of activity were covered at the meeting: education (at elementary, secondary, and higher levels), music, methods of teaching, libraries, and nursing. The papers read and the discussions that followed were all of good quality, and not a few were definitely challenging. We recommend that all Franciscan communities, or at least their libraries, obtain copies of the report. The price is nominal (\$1.00), and the material is important. It is hoped that these meetings will be more widely attended in the future, and that the conclusions reached will be actually put into practice.

FRANCISCAN LIFE IN CHRIST. Mark Stier, O.F.M. Cap. Paterson, New Jersey: Saint Anthony Guild Press, 1953. Pp. 290 + xx. \$3.00

Father Mark has given us a good practical guide for the development of our spiritual life according to the Franciscan pattern. As such—that is, as a guide—it is



by no means an exhaustive treatise on Franciscan spirituality; but it points the way. The author first discusses such matters as the personality of Francis, Assisi and environs, sources for the life and spiritual doctrine of Francis, and similar matters. Then he devotes a chapter each to Franciscan spirituality in general and in particular, and follows up with a long and informative section on the doctrinal basis of the Franciscan ideal. With the goal established, the author then discusses the ways and means for attaining it, and concludes with a good treatment of the high-point of Francis' life in Christ—the apostolate flowing from the abundant riches of the mystical life. The work is fully annotated and is supplied with a good index.

This is a book that should be warmly received especially by those in charge of educating young religious to the Franciscan way of life. It offers the solid groundwork for building a systematic course of spiritual training.

MATT TALBOT. Eddie Doherty. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company. 1952. Pp. 200. \$2.75

For those who like Eddie Doherty's journalistic style applied to hagiography, this study of Matt Talbot's heroic battle for sobriety and sanctity will have much appeal. Although Matt's connection with the Franciscan Order is tenuous enough (he was a Tertiary, but neither his Director nor his fellow Tertiaries knew anything about him), his life was certainly Franciscan in its poverty and total self-effacement. It is doubtful if any other Saint, with the exception of Benedict Joseph Labre, his fellow Tertiary, managed to hide himself more completely from the world of men. He strove for anonymity with all the ardor of a worldlyling striving for fame. It is this, not his heroic conquest of alcohol and his model life as a common laborer, that make Matt Talbot the "Saint for today." This humble, "unimportant" little man, who made himself a slave of Mary and bound his frail body with ropes and chains, has an important message for all Christians: "The Kingdom of Heaven," he wrote, "is promised not to the sensible and the educated, but to such as have the spirit of little children." Eddie Doherty, in his own way, has interpreted this message very well.

THE SECRET OF HOLINESS. James O'Mahony, O.F.M. Cap. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1952. Pp. 178. \$2.50

This is a pleasantly solid little book treating of the elements of Christian perfection. Franciscan in approach and in spirit, it is based on the direct study of Christ and the Gospel. Appealing, sound, and profitable for meditative reading, but hard on the soul-shaking.

THE LITTLE FLOWERS OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI. The First English Translation, revised and emended by Dom Roger Hudleston, O.S.B., with Introduction by Paulinus Lavery, O.F.M. Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1953. Pp. 245 + xxii. \$3.50

This edition of the first English translation of the *Fioretti* is one of the latest of the recently revived Orchard Series publications, and is typical of their excellent work. It is not a scholarly production in the strict sense, but it has been competently and unobtrusively edited by Dom Hudleston and fortified with a well-balanced Introduction by Fr. Paulinus Lavery. Besides the text of the *Fioretti*, the volume includes the "Life of Brother Juniper", the "Life of Brother Giles", and the "Golden Sayings of Brother Giles." The format and typography are both pleasing; a really attractive edition of "the most beloved book in Franciscan literature."

# the CORD

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## INTROIT FOR THE MASS OF SAINT FRANCIS

I am my soul's prisoner  
 And only Your mysterious pain,  
 Disguising love, can set it free,  
 My Sweet Lord God.  
 May this hard knowledge  
 Be my one possession, my ceaseless contemplation  
 Till my heart owns no other seeking  
 Save to be laid bare  
 To the sword of Your inconceivable cutting.  
 Hear the voice with which I cry out to You,  
 My Maker, my Sanctifier, and my Salvation:  
 If You are searching the world  
 For something to shape anew,  
 Some vessel to receive the overflow of Your mercy,  
 A darkened room to fill with Your light,  
 A soul to empty and unfold therein, to melt with love,  
 A life to mirror Your Own, to declare You Infinite—  
 O Plenitude of Peace,  
 O Inexhaustible Source of all transforming desires,  
 I urge Your merciful coming.  
 O Delectable Fire of God, I will to draw You into my breast  
 Burn out of my heart all the sweetnesses  
 That creatures can produce.  
 One drop of Your Divine Delights I would bear  
 As Flame upon my lips  
 That, henceforth, with You, in the Father,  
 I might speak  
 But one compassionate sound: The Eternal, Everlasting Word  
 Christ Jesus.

Sr. M. Charlita,

## OUR MONTHLY CONFERENCE

*You have been called to liberty (Gal. 5, 13)*

The perfect man, the man who honestly and strenuously labors for his personal perfection, is the free man, he who strives to deliver himself from all trammels, from bondage to hampering conventions, from human respect, to the tyranny of the flesh, and thereby declares open revolt against every enemy that would tempt him in the pursuit of his purpose, which for the Franciscan should be the perfect achievement—as far as it will please God to grant it—of the Christ-life. In this generous, heroic effort his unfailing support is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and communion with the Holy Spirit (II Cor. 13, 13).

Let us see how Saint Francis did this. He received his great grace and the vision of what he was to be—that was enough. From then onward he marched with his face to the sun and not a thing in the world could stop him. Ridicule, persecution, his own feelings of revulsion—he mastered all, *sub nullius redigar potestate: I will not be brought under the power of any* (I Cor. 6, 12). He set out on the way of poverty; his father attempted to intercept him, and Francis, because it came to such a pass, was willing rather to forego his own father than forsake the Lady he had come to love. Later God enlightened his mind on the nature of the Order he was to establish, and Francis would establish it *according to the pattern, that was shown (him) on the mount* (Ex. 25, 40).

He was jealous as well of the freedom of others. He knew that the young lady Clare had a call to follow Christ; he realized that her plans too would be interfered with, so he advised her to “elope” with Christ, for every man and woman must be free to fall in love with God. Clare’s daring experiment fired the imagination and the heart of her younger sister, and soon we see Agnes fly the coop and settle at San Damiano. Here we have, in fact, three rebels; but rebels against a tyranny which sought to fetter them to the world whereas they longed to be clasped in the arms of God. This was nothing new; it had all been said before with the sanction of the Holy Ghost: *Who will all separate us from the love of Christ? . . . I am sure that neither*

death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8, 35; 38-39). Who, then, was Pier Bernardone? Who were the Scifi family? For *the Lord is the spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom* (II Cor. 3, 16).

So too with his early brethren. Francis asked but a few things that they live the life of the Gospel thoroughly, in poverty and obedience—as to the rest, the world was open before them. He did not even fix them to any abode. They could roam like gypsies and pitch their tent wherever they would, so only they were following a great quest: the love of Christ which surpasses all comprehension and if they always had the Lady Poverty with them to minister to their needs. Francis would not fetter the spirit of any man. Each has his grace from God, and as Francis would let no one impede him, so neither would he impede another. And if one had the grace to roam, as it were, in search of perfect love, let him roam; and if one had the grace to dwell in the company of Divine Wisdom in a cell, let him be a hermit, but it must always be in the quest of love. Francis, then, it meant nothing whether his brethren lived on the highways of the world, or in inaccessible mountain caves, provided that in either case they could say in honesty: *I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me* (Gal. 2, 20).

No wonder we have saints from every walk of life, no wonder the startling variety. Saint John Capistran led the Christian army to the battle of Belgrade, but Blessed Veridiana immured herself within four walls with the blessing of the Seraphic Father. Saint Leonore roamed the length and breadth of Italy preaching incessantly, while as Blessed Peter would only unwillingly utter an extra word. Saint Paul puts down the same principle of liberty in this way: *each of us has his own gift from God, one in this way, and another in that way* (I Cor. 7, 7).

Thus too when it was a question of determining the nature of his brotherhood. Why not follow Saint Benedict, or Saint Bernard, or Saint Augustine? They had been tried and were found to be good. But Francis would have none of them. Christ had inspired him to

a new and independent way, and he would have no other. In fact, how could a spirit such as his be forced into some conventional mold? So he broke with precedent; a troubadour must roam, the rule of stability would crush him; his friars, therefore, will take to the road and preach to all men of peace and love *in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody in (their) hearts to the Lord* (Eph. 5, 19). The Cardinals were at first opposed to his ideas; but Francis overcame that too. Such a mild man, yet he bent everything to his will; conventions yielded, the Pope blessed his Rule, the Wolf of Gubbio obeyed, leprosy vanished at his kiss, fire refused to burn him, death changed her visage and became to him a sister. Even the Almighty God could not withstand him: Francis wanted his crucifixion, so Christ came to him and pierced him with His stigmata. What power in this liberty! what overwhelming force in this love! In eighteen short years he bent nature and man and the Creator to his will because he loved as few men have ever loved, and no man could bid him do otherwise.

For us too there is the vision of Christ, there is holiness beckoning to us; have we the will? Besides the grace of God we need but one thing—have we the will? Have we the will to throw everything overboard as Francis did? *Let us also . . . put away every encumbrance and the sin entangling us, and run with patience to the fight* (Hebr. 12, 1). The great love will give us strength; the cost we shall have to pay will be reputed as nothing, for *the things that were gain to me, these, for the sake of Christ, I have counted loss. . . For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things. . . that I may gain Christ* (Phil. 3, 7-8). *Jesus Christus et hic crucifixus*—for his sake you will be glad of the contest, the self-sacrifice; *I am pleased, for Christ's sake, with infirmities, with insults, with hardships, with persecutions, with distress* (II Cor. 12, 19-10).

On the contrary, what a disaster it would be to forget Christ! What a disaster to set one's heart on self, on popularity, on making a name for oneself; what a loss in becoming sluggish in love, in making friends with the world, in forgetting the glory with which Christ has surrounded us, in malingering in his service, in giving up prayer to Him that one might prattle with the world, in letting the spirit die that one might pamper self, in loving futile and transient

things of every sort and neglecting the Eternal Love Who created you for Himself and Who died to redeem you. *O foolish Galatians who has bewitched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been depicted crucified?* (Gal. 3, 1). *You have been called to liberty* (Ib. 13); *do not become the slaves of men* (I Cor. 7, 23).

This is not the fierce and proud liberty we should have learned in the school of Saint Francis; this is not jealousy over our liberty which left us supremely free to strive after Him Whom we should love more than father and mother, with our whole heart, our whole strength, and with all our strength. Saint Francis had to struggle to keep himself free, free from himself and free from all outside influence. We, too, as children of Saint Francis, must be free: free from our passions, from our self-will, free from human respect, free from fear of humiliation; we must have his great liberty of spirit and be true to whatever grace God might give us; we must cherish the liberty of living our Rule conscientiously. If we have the Franciscan liberty of spirit, we will not permit ourselves to be entangled in our own selfishness or in the enticements of the world; we will defend our liberty to death, the liberty of serving God faithfully in spite of the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is the freedom that reigns in the kingdom of God and of the Spirit (Rom. 8, 21; II Cor. 3, 17) while we are eager slaves of justice (Rom. 6, 16), slaves of Christ *cui servire regnare est*. We must fix our gaze on Him Whom the Father has pierced; He will give the courage and the strength: *And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself* (Jn. 12, 32).

Fr. Silvano Matulich, O.F.M.

## SEEKING JESUS WITH MARY

The name of the Virgin Mother Mary springs forth so often from the writings of Saint Bonaventure that it appears well-nigh as a motif for his luminous exposition of Sacred Doctrine. The Seraphic Doctor knew well that her name was shadowed with profound m

ystery;<sup>1</sup> hence we can assume that what he has written of it is the fruit of his most intimate and prayerful contemplation.

Saint Bonaventure frequently sustains his praise of the Blessed Virgin on the ancient interpretations of her simple and lovely name. Thus Mary is for him *Mare Amarum*, *Stella Maris*, *Domina*: *Sea of Bitterness*, *Star of the Sea*, and finally and pre-eminently *Queen*.<sup>2</sup> Saint Bonaventure's considerations of our Mother propose three meditations for this Marian Year. We will consider her in three of her most exquisite roles in the drama of our Redemption. First, we meet her at Calvary; then we will await with her the great Feast of Pentecost; finally we will reflect on the significance and wonder of her glorious Assumption into heaven where the Godhead wills that she reign as Queen.

### SEA OF BITTERNESS

*Call me not Noemi (that is, beautiful), but call me Mara (that is, bitter), for the Almighty hath quite filled me with bitterness* (Ruth 1:20).

Of Our Lady's first title—*Sea of Bitterness*—Saint Bonaventure counsels: Be you also a sea of bitterness in your tears of contrition, that you may pour forth a flood of bitter sorrow for the sins you have committed; be a sea of bitterness that you may mourn from the depths of your being the good that you might have done but failed to realize; lastly, be a sea of bitterness that you may be pierced by the incessant recollection of the days you have neglected and lost.<sup>3</sup>

With Passiontide all the lovely depictions of Our Lady are veiled in our churches. Yet Mother Church does not thereby imply that we are to forget Mary; rather these veils are her invitation to turn within ourselves and with the eye of the soul to consider well the great mystery of Christ's Passion and Death. It is Mary who leads us to a deeper appreciation of her Son's tragic end. Well then can we ponder the Sea of Bitterness and beg of her a participation in her sorrow, that we may be purged of our past faults and washed of all our evil propensities. With great courage and devotion we will

<sup>1</sup>Bonav., *Comm. Evgl. Lc.*, c. 1, n. 45 (VII 22a).

<sup>2</sup>Bonav., *ibid.*, et Cf. *De Purif. B. M. V.*, sermo 2 (IX 640b-641a).

<sup>3</sup>Bonav., *De V. Festiv.*, Festiv. 2 (VIII 91b).

attend and hear the lament of Jerusalem's daughter, through whose heart there passed the sword of Christ's Passion. She will lead us embrace the Cross in penance and tears, lest we affect to compassionate her naked Son while yet clothed in the luxury of our own worldliness while pitying the death-white pallor of the Crucified we be deluged with worldly satisfaction, pleasure, and comfort.<sup>4</sup>

The immediate prelude to Golgatha is the *Via Dolorosa*. On this narrow way that we first behold the sorrow-filled but smiling Mother of God silently weeping for her torn and bleeding Christ. He, *who knew nothing of sin*, is on the way to pay the price of our sins as it could never be given to another to pay; and it is she—the Sorrowful Mother—whose Bitterness—who so compassionates him in his suffering that it can be said that while he journeys up to Calvary, there to redeem us by the flow of his Precious Blood, she attends him on the way, there to co-redeem us by the flow of her bitter tears.

O Sorrowful Mother of Christ, *give water to our heads, and a fountain of tears to our eyes, and we will weep day and night for our sins*. O Lamb that goes to be sacrificed, and for you who met him on the way. We, too, have met him on the way, only to cower behind the jostling jeering crowd. Yet you are there, the *Valiant Woman*, the shadow of the Cross resting heavily on your heart. You alone, with your knowledge, know the secret part that we have played in his Passion; for how often we have fallen and how often we have arisen to show ourselves hypocrites of sin. We have assiduously sought the way of virtue, only in so far as to appear virtuous in the eyes of men. Well then, O Saint Bonaventure remind us, grief-stricken Virgin, that we have only feigned to follow you, so deep within do we fear to wrench ourselves from ourselves. We pretend your humility—yet how smug we are; we pretend your kindness—how merciless we are; we pretend your meekness—how rebellious we are; we pretend your devotion—how sanctimonious we are; we pretend your generosity—how niggardly we are; we pretend your temperance—how avaricious we are; we pretend your chasteness—how wanton we are.<sup>5</sup> These are our failings, O Sorrowful Virgin, and they must be purged in the flow of your bitter tears; that sea of sweet bitterness which sustains

<sup>4</sup>Bonav., *De Dom. infra Oct. Epiph.*, sermo 1 (IX 172b).

<sup>5</sup>Bonav., *De Epiph.*, sermo 1 (IX 150b-151a).

the slightest stain of sin to survive its waters,<sup>6</sup> wherein is mirrored the Passion of your Son by which we are redeemed. Take the hands of your children now, O Mary of the Sorrowful Way, and touch them to his Cross, that that same Cross may free us of all our evil inclinations. Let our tears mingle with the Precious Blood that already trickles down the furrows of that Holy Wood.

We do not hear the shouting rabble, for we have *grown dull of hearing*; we do not see the milling mocking mob, for our *eyes have failed with weeping*. What have they for us, O woman, who see only Jesus and you! We cannot speak, but only weep and beg you to understand that we would thus compassionate with you your Son's derision. Grant that we may hate our sins, not so much for their iniquity, as for the part they have taken in bringing about these terrible torments of your Son. May this picture of your meeting along the way encourage us forever to *embrace discipline*, lest we *crucify again for ourselves the Son of God and make him a mockery with this cruel crowd*.

We have seen enough, O Virgin, and *therefore is our heart sorrowful, therefore are our eyes become dim*. The way is now made known to us wherein we should walk, and we will no more make *excuses in our sins*. Mary, we love you, for you have poured out your heart like water before the face of the Lord, in the beginning of the watches for us: now *lift up your hands to him for us, for your little children, that have fainted for hunger at the top of the Via Dolorosa*. Pray that this Blessed Tree may be *cast into the waters made bitter by our penances, so that henceforth from within us there shall flow rivers of living water*.

Secondly, Saint Bonaventure would have us become a sea of bitterness in our tears of contrition that we may mourn from the very depths of our being the good that we might have done but failed to realize. For by neglecting opportunities to increase in virtue we have again increased the sufferings of Christ's Passion, and laid *the chastisement of our peace upon him*. Well then are we disturbed in contrasting our neglect to the attentions of the Sorrowful Mother, who, weeping, *hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her*.

<sup>6</sup>Bonav., *De Purif. B. M. V.*, sermo 1 (IX 641a).

Her eyes shed streams of tears because his law has not been kept because he who hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows has become despised, a leper; while we, settled in comfort, lose the necessity of mortification and discipline. What price our neglect of our comfort, that it should be requited in him, who was wounded for our iniquities, and bruised for our sins.

Were we to stand on Calvary and see the grossness of the scene as it actually took place, there is no doubt but that we should fall away with the first blow that battered the fair face of Christ as he was measured to the Cross; with the first clang of the mallet's requiem toll as it drove the nails through his hands and feet and fixed them on His bloody Throne; with the first creak of the wood as the Tree of the world's redemption was planted in the ground, in order that the *Root of Jesse* become an *ensign* of the people. O God! what men would we to fear to meditate each tragic happening on that Hill—would we that our sins froze us so icily! Mary stands there, weeping but not wailing; her heart turned within her, full of bitterness; standing for all of us who, in the person of one or other of the intimates of the Master, have failed with trembling to follow him to the end. Have we not often, like them, tasted his goodness and sweetness: the nets filled with fish, the thousands fed bread, the guests at Cana, the lame, the blind and the deaf? But more than these; and sorrow of sorrows, only he who sat at the Supper and ate the Bread is at the Cross. Where are they? where are we?

We cry to her: *O daughter of Jerusalem, to what shall I expect thee, that I may comfort thee*, in this sad hour? She answers not, but the irony of our words is that she is to comfort us. The first and only word spoken by her Son to the Mother of Jesus through the Passion makes her our *Mother*. Her heart so close to breaking would not bear that loving word, and for this reason Jesus said to her: "*Woman behold thy Son.*" But to the disciple: "*Behold thy Mother.*" This word completes her sorrows. Who is this John, and who is he whom he represents, in exchange for her Son, Jesus? Mary is emptied, and now becomes so poor that she is nothing—absolutely nothing! This is how she becomes *everything* to us. How can it be otherwise? Her Son gave all, even to the last drop of His Precious

Blood; can Mary then reserve anything of herself? This is poverty of spirit, preciously complete, completely precious. Although not able to approach the sufferings and emptiness of her Son, nevertheless the Mother has given all that she could give for him. No other mother, regardless her love, ever gave, gives, or will give as Mary gave for her Son; no other mother, regardless her anguish, ever knew, knows, or will know sufferings to compare with these. This love—this suffering? A mystery beyond our most profound comprehension.

Saint Bonaventure somehow found the secret of imitating Mary on Calvary, and with characteristic brevity and loftiness of phrase he gives it to us as: *Cor in cruce—crux in corde!*<sup>1</sup> This is to say that Mary's heart throughout all the Passion, through every moment on Calvary's hill, pulsated in constant unison with the throb of her Son's. God knows, by that very fact, that the Cross has pierced no heart, nor will it ever, as it pierced Mary's. Because Mary's heart was on the Cross, and because the Cross was in her heart, the last of Simeon's sorrows becomes the crown of the martyrdom of the Queen of Martyrs.

*Into thy hands I commend my Spirit!* Jesus is dead! The earth is dark for the *Orient* has burned out for man. The soldiers have had their sport, and are too sated now to taunt the little group that remains by the Cross. The two Marys and the beloved disciple are dazed and deadened, so blunted their senses by the torn and battered Body hanging from the crimsoned Wood above them. We have failed so often in our small participation of bringing the fruits of the Redemption to souls, but Mary does not fail. Now that it is over she does not quiver, nor retire, nor moan; for the sun will soon set. Joseph and Nicodemus appear over the crest of the little hill bearing their linens and ladder and with soft-spoken words of deference seek Mary's approval of the burial plans. From the arms of the Cross the sacred and lifeless form of her Son is lowered into her loving outstretched arms. She washes each wound with her tears, embracing and kissing her Child times unnumbered before surrendering him to the disciples.

The tragic day is spent and the little group must move down

<sup>1</sup>Bonav., *Laudis. de S. Cruce, Opus. VII, Rhyth. V. 4* (VIII 667a).

to Jerusalem. One artist has touchingly captured the Return of the Woman of Sorrows supported by the arms of the beloved disciples and the holy women. Affecting as the picture is, there does not seem to be any tradition demanding our assent to the artist's impression. Perchance that is how they did return; perchance, too, and more probably, it was Mary who gathered the pathetic little group together. It was she who guided their faltering steps back to the Holy City. Such does not seem incongruous, for when her Jesus died on the Cross the last dregs of bitterness welled forth from Mary's Immaculate Heart. She was filled now with joy and love. Mary knew all that *all things*. . . *written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man* had been accomplished. She knew that this sacred and precious Death had conquered sin; she knew that this merciful and saving Death had opened heaven to all.<sup>8</sup> Knowing this it was for her to come the Mother of all the sorrowing, the sweet *Consolatrix afflictorum*, and the return from Calvary already necessitated that she should know her comfort.

So she sends us forth with *mourning and weeping*, to learn the horror of our ways in her Son's Passion; yet she knows all the while that the Lord will bring us back to her *with joy and gladness forever*; for *the bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not quench*. God alone knows the uncounted souls that he has resolutely turned to him from sin, and begun to do good because of one last glance, one last hope in the *Sea of Bitterness*.

Our tears are truly bitter, and well may we be pierced by the incessant recollection of the days we have neglected and lost. Saint Bonaventure hopefully assures us that our meditation is fruitful without fruit. We have learned from the Sea of Bitterness that the Cross must wound and break our hard hearts, in order that they may send forth their torrent of tears. But when we are emptied of ourselves we learn the meaning of the hymn with which we salute the same Cross on Good Friday, and it truly becomes for us *Dulce nuncium*—the Sweet Wood, by which our wounds are healed. As for the well left emptied by our tears, that, says Saint Bonaventure,

<sup>8</sup>Bonav., *Rythmica de 7 Verbis Dom. in Cruce*, Opus. Dubia 7 (VIII 676b).

<sup>9</sup>Bonav., *De Nativ. B. M. V.*, sermo 3 (IX 713a).

be filled to overflowing by the rain of graces which Jesus pours on us through Mary.<sup>9</sup> Proving ourselves now with these tears of repentance we look more confidently to that day of blessed expectation when *God will wipe away every tear from our eyes. And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.*

William J. Manning

## THE SIXTH JOY

"If what the Apostle says is true: *As you are partakers of the sufferings, so will you also be of the comfort*, think how wonderfully the Virgin Mother was partaker of the Resurrection of her Son." Thus Saint Bernardin (after Ubertino da Casale) speaks of the Sixth Joy of the Franciscan Crown. But what he has here in mind is missed in many English instructions on that Crown, since they do not indicate that Mary was *the first* to see the Risen Savior. While the official version of the *Rituale Romano-Seraphicum* reads: *Virgo Immaculata Jesum prima a mortuis resuscitatum cum gaudio vidit*, our English translations (preceded by the German in the *Via franciscana*) announce the Joy simply as the Resurrection, or more fittingly though inadequately say: "The Immaculate Virgin Mary joyfully beheld Jesus after His Resurrection." The slip is hardly intentional, and one may doubt if a past and somewhat current controversy has influenced such a rendition. Nevertheless, the Franciscan tradition which coincides with a very old tradition in the Church (despite some exceptions) bids us here meditate that "The Immaculate Virgin Mary was the first joyfully to behold Jesus after His Resurrection."

### *Was She the First?*

As Easter joys unfold themselves in the next few weeks, some may suddenly realize that there is no Scriptural basis for such an apparition. Indeed, Saint Mark would seem to preclude it by saying that Our Lord *appeared first to Mary Magdalen* (16; 9).

This silence of Sacred Writ has caused a few theologians to deny the appearance of Christ to Our Lady in either a first or special apparition. Even within recent years one writer has condemned the belief as arbitrary and without foundation, as showing slight reverence to the sacred text since it tends to supply and correct a deficiency in the Evangelists—therefore as dangerous because it adds to the word of God and thus runs the risk of compromising the truth and lastly, as lacking in the reverence due to Mary, since it puts her on a par with those who had to behold Christ bodily whereas she had no need of external visions. But there is a sufficient answer to such charges, as we shall see.

Surprisingly enough, this negative position can call upon a Seraphic Doctor for support. Not that he enters into or even mentions any controversy; he simply states that according to the Gospels there was no first or special apparition *because Mary did not need it*. Of her glorious prerogatives, he writes, was the perfect contemplation of God and the knowledge of the mystery of the Incarnation which she possessed in this life. For this reason she was not present at the Transfiguration, nor was any apparition (first or special) given to her after the Resurrection because she who was always conscious of the secrets of God did not need to be strengthened in faith. This is shown, Bonaventure continues, at the marriage-feast of Cana, where she knew beforehand what her Son wished to do, and so instructed the attendants: *Do whatever He tells you* (Jn. 2, 5). Another reason becomes manifest in Mary's unshaken faith. She alone, the Saint says in several passages, remained strong and solid and unshaken in faith after the death of Christ. All the others doubted or at least wavered; therefore Christ appeared to them to strengthen their faith. Because Mary Magdalen was the most perfect and persevering among the women, Christ appeared to her first.

That Saint Bonaventure should not consider the possibility of such an apparition to Our Lady as a reward of her faith and her participation in the Passion, is rather remarkable, especially since he states that Christ appeared to the fearful women. Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph (Mtt. 28; 9), "because of the intensity of their love and devotion merited this." The *Meditations on the Life of Christ* (in which are incorporated Bonaventure's

*Meditations on the Passion*), on the other hand, picture the vision to Our Lady, as does Saint Bonaventure's contemporary, Saint Albert the Great. Later tradition was to agree with this positive teaching.

#### A Solid Tradition

The oldest authority in tradition to hold that Christ appeared first to His Mother is the famous Christian poet Sedulius, in the first part of the Fifth Century. Both in his *Carmen Paschale* and his prose-work, the *Opus Paschale*, he speaks of the Risen Savior as manifesting Himself *prius* or *illico*, first or immediately, to His holy Mother. Saint Paulinus of Nola implies the same when he says that though Mary saw her Son die she was soon to see Him alive once more. From the Twelfth Century onward the list of those who speak thus far outweighs the few who deny it; a tradition so strong therefore that Pope Benedict XIV, speaking as a private theologian only, finds ample basis for this pious belief. Interestingly, without giving it more importance than is its due, he cites the revelation received by Saint Teresa of Avila (*Life*, app. IV, n. 4).

If then the deep faith of the Mother of God had led Saint Bonaventure to say that she had no need of the vision of her glorified Son, the opposite tradition would claim, as expressed by Ubertino da Casale (d. 1305), that we should not doubt that He appeared precisely to reward her faith and especially her participation in the Passion. Could we suppose that on the first Easter, when Christ showed Himself the fount of consolation and grace to so many, He would fail to console her whom He knew alone had tasted to the full the bitterness of His death?

But how does such a tradition explain the silence of Sacred Scripture? Some claim to find implicit allusions; e.g., in the angel's command: *Go, tell His disciples and Peter* (Mk. 16, 7): the angel would not speak of Our Lady because she had already seen Christ. Ubertino and Saint Bernardin suggest that perhaps the solution lies in a twofold vision: to Mary Magdalen Christ did appear first *in body*, but to His Mother He showed Himself earlier in a *mental or spiritual vision*, which would be stronger and clearer. While such suppositions may have some value, the answer usually given in tradition, e.g., by Abbot Rupert of Deutz (d. 1130), Saint Albert, Saint Bernardin and Benedict XIV, is that the Evangelists wish to speak only of the appearances



of Christ to those He had made *witnesses of His resurrection* (Lk 24, 28; Acts 7, 8 and 22). They had all doubted or hesitated; not convinced, they could and would give strong testimony of what they had seen. Another reason, suggested by Saint Bernardin, is an accepted principle of Mariology: in the divine economy Our Lady holds a place apart, transcending the other children of Adam; therefore the Gospels in view of her position say very little of her and nothing of her vision on Easter.

The positive answer thus has a solid basis in tradition and theological reasoning, if not directly in Sacred Scripture. It does not have such force, of course, as to demand assent; nor is this a matter of immediate import for the faith. The opposite opinion remains open to acceptance, though it seems to have less in its favor.

### *The Sixth Joy*

When this special apparition of Christ to Mary Immaculate came to be the special subject of the Sixth Joy of the Crown is a debatable question intertwined with the complicated but interesting history of the Franciscan rosary.

Usually the origin of the latter is explained according to the account Luke Wadding (d. 1567) gives in the *Annales Minorum* of the story of the novice who was taught by Our Lady to satisfy her devotion through a crown of Aves. The Sixth joy, he was told, was that which Mary experienced when her Son visited her after the Resurrection. Wadding drew this story from an unedited tract of the older chronicler, Mariano of Florence, written in 1503. This legend of the roses, however, has many variants; even Mariano admits that it is also told of a Cistercian (in whose Order indeed devotion to the Joys of Mary antedated Saint Francis). Moreover, there are older forms of the Crown. In 1452 Saint John Capistran proposed to novices the daily recitation of a crown that combined both joys and sorrows and in which the *seventh* meditation considered that Christ rose from the dead and appeared to His Mother, as the doctors believe (*ut credunt doctores*). Again, a very rare tract published about 1500 counts the seven joys as follows: the Annunciation, the Visitation and Nativity, the Presentation and the Visit of the Magi, the Resurrection ("but first of the sorrows on Calvary and then of the joy

when Christ appeared to the Apostles and Mary"), the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption. Other crowns embraced twelve or merely five joys. Gradually, however, the form given by Mariano became the most prevalent, so that by the mid-sixteenth century Wadding could speak of it as customary in the Franciscan family. Even then the sixth Joy was not always interpreted explicitly as the apparition of Christ to Mary *before all others*. Such, however, is now the proper subject of that decade, as suggested by Saint John Capistran and Mariano.

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Fr. Ignatius Brady, O.F.M.

## A LAWYER AND HIS CONSCIENCE

Mark Rey was a good lawyer when he placed his conscience before money. He was a good Capuchin when he preferred his conscience to soup. He was a good missionary when he followed his conscience even to the sacrifice of his life. He was able to make these wise but difficult choices because throughout his life, even in the smallest matters, he had always placed conscience first.

Mark Rey or Roy, was born in 1577 in Sigmaringen, a pretty little town in the Duchy of Swabia. His grandfather was Belgian, a native of Antwerp, and a man of deep faith. It was probably from him that John Rey, Mark's father, inherited the strong and loyal character that endeared him to his fellow townsmen and won him the esteem of Prince Charles. Through the favor of the Prince, John Rey was appointed Counsellor to the Court and Burgomaster of Sigmaringen. He married Genevieve of Rosemberger, an excellent woman who was

fully his equal in piety and nobility of character. She gave her home the atmosphere of a chapel and raised her children in the love of the true Faith. Her second daughter, Mary, became the wife of the Count of Helfenstein, of the Hohenzollern line.

At an early age young Mark gave evidence of remarkable intellectual gifts. His memory was prodigious. He could recite word for word everything he was taught, and the most difficult problems seemed like games to his agile young mind. When he was nineteen, however, he suffered a severe blow in the death of his beloved father, and it seemed for a time that his studies would have to yield to the task of managing the family estate. His mother recognized the difficulty facing her son, and realizing her inability to manage alone, contracted a second marriage. This she was able to relieve Mark of all anxiety for her and to provide him with a step-father whose wisdom and love guided him through the uncertain years of young manhood.

Reassured for the future, Mark resumed the studies he had so brilliantly begun. Nothing seemed too difficult for him. Problems that overwhelmed the minds of others seemed to relax him. Yet the question of a career caused him some trouble. From his earliest years he had determined to devote his life to the relief of the poor and the outcasts of society. But how could he best do that? In what career could he be of most service to others?

In those days justice was being most shamefully trampled under foot, and the weak and the poor were the ones to suffer. Seeing the cruel exploitation of the helpless, young Mark determined his course. "I shall become the defender of the oppressed," he announced to his family, and thereupon entered the University of Freiburg-in-Breisgau, where he first studied philosophy, then law. He gave such evidence of proofs of a keen mind, sound judgment, and iron perseverance that the professors and students alike, stirred to admiration, called him "The Christian Philosopher." The title suited him in every sense. So great was his ability that he was given a professorship at the University—a quite uncommon favor to one so young. During the years at the University he also made himself familiar with foreign tongues, especially Italian, Spanish, and French. He earned the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in 1601. In 1611, on May 7, he was made

Doctor of Civil and Canon Law, *Summa cum laude*. As his professor, Andrew Zimmermann, acknowledged: "There was no one in the whole University town who was better in law than Mark Rey."

After receiving his degrees, Mark began to practise law in Ensisheim, Alsace, a city which was then the capital of the Austrian States and the seat of the government. Within a few months he was named Assessor to the High Court of Justice. His reputation grew apace. The extraordinary breadth and depth of his knowledge together with his personal integrity won him wide recognition. His office was crowded with clients. There was one rare quality in the young lawyer that especially endeared him to litigants—his ability to settle disputes privately outside of court. Before long his absolute honesty and disinterestedness won him the name he had always desired: "The Lawyer of the Poor and the Defender of the Oppressed."

But there were difficulties ahead. An honest man in the midst of corruption and injustice was certain to be unpopular with his colleagues. Their flagrant dishonesty aroused his indignation, and his flawless integrity provoked them to annoy him with malicious and unceasing vexations. At first they considered him merely eccentric and singular; as time went on they began to regard him as inopportune and troublesome. "Do as the rest of us do!" they would tell him angrily. But that was precisely what Mark Rey would never do, nor did he hesitate to say so.

One day, while defending an innocent client, Mark advanced arguments so strong and convincing that the prosecutor was left without a word of reply. After the hearing the irritated counsellor gave free rein to his anger. "What in the world are you thinking of, Rey? You'll never build up a fortune this way. You should have tried to prolong the trial, not shorten it. You'll have to learn to sell your clients their rights at a little higher price!"

Shocked and disgusted by the whole atmosphere of the courts, the young lawyer began to think of another mode of life more beneficial to his soul. He wanted no more of a profession so dangerous to a man's conscience and so apt to make one wealthy through the exploitation of others. Besides, the thousand and one details of his professional life engrossed him so much that he was often kept from

the exercises of devotion which his soul so ardently craved. He decided to embrace the religious life.

Without further delay, Mark Rey presented himself at the Capuchin friary in Freiburg-in-Breisgau. The provincial, however, refused to accept him. Upon his insistence, the provincial countered making ordination to the priesthood the condition for his acceptance.

Because of his degree in Canon Law, Mark was soon able to be ordained. In September, 1612, Bishop John James Murgel ordained him to the priesthood, and within the same month the Capuchins received him as a candidate. Significantly, he chose the name Fidelis. A Doctor of Philosophy, of Civil and Canon Law, Father Fidelis seemed also to be a Doctor of Asceticism. His mortifications kept pace with his humility, and his humility was extraordinary. On October 4, 1613, at the age of thirty-five, Father Fidelis pronounced his vows as a Capuchin.

Formerly an excellent lawyer, Father Fidelis became an excellent preacher. According to the testimony of a witness, "He explained the most difficult passages of Scripture with such facility and prudence that the learned as well as the unlearned were satisfied." His apostolic eloquence drew huge crowds to his pulpit, and the people confessed that it was not only the power of his words that moved them, but the supernatural radiance and charm of his personality as well. There were some, however, who found the incisive logic of his reasoning somewhat disconcerting. These were the men of half-measure and compromise. But the burning zeal of Father Fidelis would brook no half-measures; he preached the Gospel of Christ without compromise. One of the noblemen who found his unglossed preaching unpalatable reproached him, after a particularly devastating sermon, for being offensive. "If you want to eat good soup here, Father," remarked the gentleman, "you'll have to preach differently." "What do I care for your soup?" retorted Fidelis. "I would have you know that I preach only according to the dictates of my conscience."

In those days the Reformation was rapidly gaining ground. Political and religious upheavals were disturbing the peace of Europe, and Leopold of Austria had to reinforce his garrisons. Father Fidelis was appointed chaplain to Feldkirch. No one was better fitted for

the position. With his knowledge of foreign languages, his power over the hearts of men, and his own serene virtue, he immediately gained the confidence of the soldiers. Hard-bitten mercenaries they were, from every corner of the world; yet they admired their chaplain as a man and as a priest. They knew his kindness and sympathy, and they knew his fine sense of justice. He was no respecter of persons, that they also knew; nor did he hesitate to express himself in virile and pungent language when the occasion required.

Father Fidelis was not content merely to minister to fighting men. He joined battle with the enemy himself—but his battlefield was the pulpit. With perfect lucidity he exposed the errors of the Reformers, the cogency of his arguments forcing the heretics themselves to admit the soundness of the Catholic doctrine. To his eloquence and erudition the obvious sanctity of his life added such strength that many loyal Protestants began to recognize the preachers of the so-called Reform as dangerous heretics and political opportunists and revolutionaries.

It was principally among the Grisons that Father Fidelis labored. Their Canton is one of the most important in the Swiss Confederation. The numerous conversions that followed his preaching and the distribution of his apologetical tracts aroused the hatred of the Calvinist leaders. Unable to withstand him in debate, still less able to destroy his reputation for holiness, they determined to kill him.

Meanwhile, through the initiative of the Capuchin Father Jerome of Narni, Pope Gregory XV founded the Propaganda Fide in 1622, to coordinate the missionary labors of the Church. Father Fidelis was named Prefect of the Mission among the Grisons. This new office urged him on to still greater efforts, and as he poured the full power of his zeal and genius into the task before him, the fury of his opponents was inflamed to fanatical hatred. Father Fidelis was warned to flee if he wished to escape death, but the warning only served to increase his activity. The end was soon to come.

On April 24, 1622, Father Fidelis said Mass and preached as usual. As he stepped forth from the church, twenty-five rioters, armed with pitchforks, clubs, and swords, surrounded him. "Answer us, yes or no!" demanded the spokesman. "Will you or will you not accept our faith?" "I did not come here to become a heretic," replied Father

Fidelis calmly. "I came to root out heresy and to bring you back to the true faith of the Catholic Church." A sword flashed in the sunlight and struck the missionary on the head. That was the signal. The rioters fell upon him, beating him with their clubs and stabbing him with their swords and pitchforks until his mangled body lay dead at their feet.

Thus Father Fidelis became the Protomartyr of the Propaganda Fide. He was canonized by Pope Benedict XIV on June 29, 1746.

*Adapted from Fr. Dominic of Saint-Denis, O.F.M. C.*

## SAINT BONAVENTURE'S RULE FOR NOVICES (IV)

### *On The Manner Of Conversing With Seculars*

Throughout your life strive to avoid familiarity with seculars, so far as you can do it with good grace: *for it is a perverse generation of unfaithful children*. But if you are forced to be with them because of some necessity or benefit, speak only useful and upright words. If they begin to speak of the world or of wars or other useless things, change the topic of conversation, even if you know what is happening, but follow with the prophet: *Let not my mouth speak the works of men*. And when among them, be fearful, not secure, humble, speaking but briefly, and upright, that the word of the Gospel may be fulfilled in you: *Let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven*.

Flee women as you would serpents. Never speak with one unless urgent necessity compels you to, and never look upon the face of a woman. If a woman speaks to you cut her off as quickly as possible, *their words are softer than oil, but they are darts*. Therefore Saint Augustine says: "Conversation with women should be severe, brief, and formal. And they are not less to be feared because they are holy; for the more holy they are, the more attractive they become, and under the flattering guise of holy conversation, the vilest desires enter. Believe me, I am a bishop, I speak the truth in Christ; I do not lie. I have seen the cedars of Lebanon and the rams of the flocks collapse under the pretense. And I did not view this fall as any more possible than that

Jerome or Ambrose." Flee, therefore, the snares of women, *for you are not holier than David, nor stronger than Samson, nor wiser than Solomon*.

### *On Not Judging Others*

No man has been appointed to judge the secrets of the heart, as the Apostle says: *Pass no judgment before the time, until the Lord comes, Who will both bring to light things hidden and make manifest the counsels of hearts*. Therefore never take it upon yourself to judge or despise others, but whenever you see something done which displeases you, before you judge the doer, look to yourself and see if in you there is anything worthy of contempt. If so, then condemn yourself in him whom you judge and say: *It is I who have sinned; it is I who have done wrong*. Be not like the hypocrites who never see their own defects but, feeling confident of their own righteousness, judge all others, detract and condemn, and wish to see the mote in another's eye, but do not see the beam in their own. Truth Itself condemns them, saying: *Hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thy own eye, and then thou wilt be able to see the speck in thy brother's eye*. Whence the verse: "O you who worry about the mote in your brother's eye, remove the beam that blinds your own."

Saint Bernard says: "Avoid being a curious explorer of another's life, or a hasty judge. Even if your neighbor performs some act that you condemn, judge him not, but rather excuse him. Excuse the intention, at least, if you must condemn the deed, on the grounds of ignorance, or accident, or inadvertence. But if the certainty of the thing is not susceptible of excuse, say to yourself: "How strong a temptation this must have been! What would I have done if it had happened to me?" Therefore, be not given to judging or murmuring, but rather judge and scrutinize yourself and say with the Prophet: *I will speak my own iniquity, and will meditate on my sin*.

### *On Humble Obedience*

Because there is no safer way to salvation than self-denial through humble obedience, Our Lord said to His disciples: *Let him who wishes to come after me, i. e., to eternal life, deny himself (through humble obedience) and take up his cross (by mortification of the flesh) and follow me (through complete surrender)*. And rightly does He invite them to the subjection of obedience because through it one obtains a marvelous victory over his enemies. *The obedient man shall speak of victory*. What even more, God Himself can be conquered by obedience, for Saint Gregory says: "If we are obedient to our superiors, God will obey our

prayers." And Saint Augustine adds: "One prayer of an obedient man is heard more quickly than ten thousand of a haughty man."

Likewise, throughout your life strive to be subject to all for God's sake, and to obey humbly not only superiors, but also subjects. Do not worry who it is that commands you, but rejoice because he commands you. For Saint Gregory says: "It is not lawful for subjects to judge, but simply to obey immediately." And Saint Jerome tells us: "A monk must not say 'Yes' or 'No', except to sin." Take care not to extort a permission publicly or in secret, either yourself, or through others, for whoever does this does not obey humbly; rather, he follows his own wilful pride. "If anyone openly or in secret implies that his spiritual father has commanded what he himself wills, he seduces himself, if he flatters himself that this is obedience, for in this matter it is rather his superior who obeys him, not he his superior." Let such a one beware, then, for Saint Bernard again says: "Nothing burns in Hell except one's own will. To move self-will and there will be no Hell." Even in good deeds, then, not your own will, especially if it does not accord with the will of your superiors. "The great evil is self-will, by which it happens that even your good deeds are not good."

### On Silence

Since divine consolation is often lost by excessive talking, observe silence always at the places and times where this is commanded or useful. For Sacred Scripture says: *In silence and in hope shall our strength be built up.* And observe silence wherever you are: in the celebration of divine office, in eating, in performing any service, and wherever there are more than three Friars. From Compline to Tierce you should not speak unless spoken to, or unless some necessity or helpfulness demands it. For "the soul which does not have the wall of silence is easily pierced by the darts of the enemy." And Saint Augustine says: "Man's mouth should be dumb except for three things: to praise God, to accuse himself, and to help his neighbor."

Be silent, therefore, so that you never yield to detraction, murmuring, dissipation or impropriety, knowing that, as our Savior says, you must render an account not only of idle, harmful, and dangerous words, but even of the least thought. Therefore does the Prophet say: *They rejoiced because they were silent.* To flee such sins of speech, you must first train yourself to avoid idle words. "Whoever does not suppress idle words quickly gives way to those which are harmful." And therefore the Wise Man says: *Son, scarcely speak in thy own cause, and if thou be asked*

*twice, let your answer be short.* Most especially, keep quiet about the world and wars, and do not listen to those who speak of them, for these things are the deadly poison of the soul. Of such men the Psalmist says: *They have spoken evilly with their tongues; the poison of asps is under their lips.*

And whenever any heavy obedience disturbs you, think quickly of Jesus, Who, although He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords, humbled Himself, becoming obedient even to death. For He said: *I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but his who sent me, the Father.* You, too, must say this, if you wish to imitate Jesus: "I have left the world not to do my own will but that of others." Saint Bernard describes the perfectly obedient man when he says: "A man who truly obeys does not know hesitation, does not delay the execution of a command, but immediately prepares his eyes to see, his ears to hear, his tongue to speak, his hands to work, his feet to walk. He is wholly recollected interiorly, that exteriorly he may do the will of his superior."

Since voluntary poverty is the primary foundation of the whole spiritual life, observe the strictest poverty in regard to transitory things throughout your life, so that you have nothing under Heaven except what the Rule concedes for your necessity. For the Rule says: "Let the Friars appropriate nothing to themselves, neither a house nor a place, nor anything." And this is rightly said, for *all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes and the pride of life.* For transitory things are opposed to eternal. Therefore, if you do not wish to be repulsed from Heaven, be always a pauper on earth. Saint Gregory tells us: "Everyone is separated from heavenly love in so far as he is pleased with a lesser love." And, on the contrary, the more one despises earthly things, the closer he is to God. And therefore the Apostle says: "I have counted all things as dung, that I might gain Christ."

If you wish to despise the things of earth, meditate always on those of heaven. "If we consider what things and how great are promised us in heaven, those which are on earth become cheap in our estimation." Therefore: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* If, then, we attain the glory of the Blessed through our lack of things on this earth, strive always to observe the strictest poverty, especially in books and furniture and clothing, so that you have no more than strict necessity demands. And do not call superfluities necessities, but rather fear that what seems necessary is really superfluous.

For Saint Gregory says: "If we use only what is necessary, we will soon see that we have many superfluities." Therefore, have nothing, either

yourself or through an interposed person. See to it that you have nothing in your cell except what is necessary. This I say even of the least thing lest perhaps by neglecting the little things, you soon fall in what is more important. "You have avoided the great; beware lest you are ruined by the insignificant."

Embrace poverty, then, with all your strength, for *this is a test of life to them that lay hold on it: and he that shall retain it is blessed*.

Thus, if you observe holy poverty to the end, you will come to the kingdom of heaven. Truth Itself has promised this: *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven*. In this kingdom we find our joy in its fruitfulness; our security in its sublimity; our delights in its beauty; our dignity in its noble society. To this may He lead us Who lives and reigns for all eternity. Amen.

## OUR FRANCISCAN NATIONAL MARIAN CONGRESS

Whoever read the inspiring words of *Fulgens Corona*, the Encyclical of our Holy Father Pius XII, in which he proclaimed a Marian Centennial Year in honor of the proclamation of the Immaculate Conception to be held the world over from December 1953 to December 1963, learned therefrom the sentiments which this noble privilege of Mary should arouse in Christian hearts. The Sovereign Pontiff said: "The centennial celebration should not only serve to revive Christian faith and earnest devotion to the Mother of God in the souls of all, but Christians should also, in so far as possible, conform their lives to the image of the same Virgin."

The Order of Saint Francis, under the leadership of John Duns Scotus, has played an important role in advancing this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception to its ultimate triumph of dogmatic declaration. This same abiding Franciscan love of Mary and zeal for her honor characterizes the Order of Friars Minor today. Some years ago the Most Reverend Father General in Rome instituted an International Franciscan Marian Commission, with branch National Marian Commissions in all larger countries where Franciscan scholars exist in sufficient number for the purpose of promoting the knowledge and honor of Mary, the Patroness of the Order.

The American Franciscan National Marian Commission consists of six members, one from each of the six Provinces in the United States.

Its desire to make a distinct American contribution towards putting the above wishes of the Encyclical into practice, the American Marian Commission decided to arrange for a Franciscan National Marian Congress, to be held in California, May 2-9. This will provide an opportunity for a national tribute to Mary during the centennial year of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and it is hoped that it may also prove a potent means of bringing to our country and to the world an abundance of God's blessings and lasting peace.

The Congress is in three parts: a) Marian Days; b) The Franciscan Day; c) General National Congress Sessions. The Marian Days are locally sponsored observances in San Diego, Los Angeles and Sacramento, on Sunday, May 2, each of which communities treasures an heroic Franciscan tradition. Solemn Pontifical Masses, processions, and public acts of consecration will characterize each day. In Los Angeles the Franciscan Pilgrims to the Congress will join in "Mary's Hour" in the Coliseum. In Sacramento a "Living Rosary" will be exemplified.

In Santa Barbara the Friars will assemble on the evening of May 4, for the official opening of theological sessions with papers by Franciscan scholars on the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and the history of the cult of Mary in the United States. His Paternity, the Most Reverend Augustine Sepinski, O.F.M., Minister General of the Order, will preside, and Father Ralph Ohlman, O.F.M., of Cincinnati, President of the Franciscan Marian Commission, and Father Marion Habig, O.F.M., St. Louis member of the Commission, will read papers. Franciscan Day proper, Wednesday, May 5, will open with Solemn High Mass, celebrated by the Most Reverend Minister General, assisted by the American Provincials. The Sermon will be preached by the Most Reverend Timothy Manning, J.C.D., Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles. The activities of the day include a solemn procession with the statue of Mary Immaculate from the Mission to the Seminary, Crowning of Mary, Profession of Faith in the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and Dedication to our Blessed Mother. In an academic session during the afternoon there will be discussions of Mariological doctrine, to be led by Father Ignatius Brady, O.F.M. and Father Allan Wolter, O.F.M., members of the Franciscan Institute at Saint Bonaventure University, Saint Bonaventure, New York.

The General Session in San Francisco, to which the local clergy, Institutions, and the Franciscan Pilgrims are invited, will open with a Solemn High Mass in Saint Boniface Church on Friday morning. The Very Reverend Joseph Fulton, O.P., Provincial Prior of the Dominican Order, will preach. During the doctrinal sessions in the afternoon, papers will be read by the Reverend Fathers Maurice Grajewski, O.F.M., of

the Catholic University of America, and Fidelis Chauvez, O.F.M., the Mexican Province. In the evening the San Francisco Opera House will be the setting for a peace program—"The Madonna of the Ages." The Conference will reach its climax during the official Solemn Pontifical Mass in Saint Mary's Cathedral, celebrated by the Most Reverend John Mitty, D.D., Archbishop of San Francisco.

During the morning session Mariological papers will be read by Fathers Eustace Smith, O.F.M., of the Franciscan Theological House of Studies in Washington, D.C., and Berard Vogt, O.F.M., of Christ the King Seminary in Saint Bonaventure. In the afternoon session papers will be given by the Very Reverend Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., Rector of Christ the King Seminary, Saint Bonaventure, and the Most Reverend Merlin J. Guilfoyle, D.D., Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco. A banquet will be held at the Palace Hotel in the evening.

The triumphal close of the Franciscan National Marian Congress will take place on Mother's Day, May 9, at a magnificent outdoor altar on the grounds of the San Carlos Mission at Carmel on Monterey Peninsula. Buses will convey National Pilgrims from San Francisco. The Most Reverend Aloysius Willinger, C.S.S.R., Bishop of Monterey-Fresno, will preach the sermon. Mission San Carlos is where Father Junipero Serra, O.F.M., made his headquarters as Father President of the California Missions and where his body lies buried. The afternoon will see a veritable drama of faith unfold itself, as representatives of all the races which have come to dwell on the lovely Peninsula, march to the feet of Carmel's cherished *Madonna of the Seas*. The setting sun over Carmel Bay will lend its red rays as a glory to the Eucharistic Christ raised in Benediction. Afterwards, there will be a candle-light ceremony, during which the Bishop will preside over the coronation of Mary, when a silver crown presented to the same *Nuestra Senora de Carmel* by Juan de Maiztegui, captain of the Spanish Frigate *La Poisima* in 1798, will again be placed on her brow.

The Franciscan National Marian Commission is also sponsoring a preparatory crusade program to "re-Christianize the Christians and Marianize everyone" during this year of grace. It has prepared to extend a comprehensive program, replete with challenging suggestions to school children, artists, lawyers, scholars, the sick and abandoned—in short, for every walk of life—a crusade of prayer, penance and real charity to return the world to Christ through Mary.

The Congress is under the able executive chairmanship of Father Alfred Boeddeker, O.F.M., pastor of Saint Boniface Church in San Francisco, and California Member of the National Commission.

Joseph F. Mahoney, T.O.R.

## STORY WITH A MORAL

A very good friar of the Province of Cologne told this story to Friar John, who in turn told it to us. Once, he said, while I was laboring under a serious illness, even the doctors despaired of my life. When I thought I was about to die I began to pray to God most attentively, saying: "Lord spare me! For I hope that I shall escape eternal damnation, but I am very much afraid of Purgatory. Would that I understood, O Lord, which were the offences for which I deserve to suffer the most." While I was engrossed in this thought, I looked up and saw staring me in the eyes a large mirror which seemed to hang in mid-air. In it I clearly saw the image of my body, and while I was in great wonderment I saw on the forehead of this image many written words all running together, like *donus* for *dominus*, *misere* for *miserere*, and the like. Much astonished, I saw in the mirror that my tongue was pierced through. Suddenly a spirit told me that I was to be greatly punished in the tongue, because I had not said my canonical hours distinctly before God, but had offered them with many clipped words. But by the mercy of God, I was freed from my sickness, and from that time on I began to say my Hours more diligently and to sing the Psalms more distinctly and devoutly!

*Liber exemplorum Fratrum Minorum*, n. 59





## FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

The first six Franciscans to reach Japan, led by St. Peter Baptist, arrived in 1593, not quite a half century after the arrival of St. Francis Xavier and his companions. Four years later, on February 5, 1597, St. Peter Baptist and his companions, together with fifteen native Japanese Tertiaries, members of the Third Order of St. Francis, were among the twenty-six proto-martyrs of Japan. They were crucified and then transfixed with spears in Japanese fashion on the Martyrs' Mount at Nagasaki. In the half century following, many other Friars followed in their footsteps, sowing the Faith widespread on the good ground during times of peace and making the supreme sacrifice with their flocks during the numerous and violent persecutions. In 1605 they were active in Kyoto, Fushimi, Osaka, Okayama, Uraga and in Yedo, the present Tokyo, where they also established a Chapel for the Lepers in the Asakusa district. About 1640 there were hardly any priests left alive in Japan, and the country was closed to foreign intercourse. A prohibition against Japanese leaving the country prevented any Japanese from being ordained abroad.

But the blood of the martyrs proved a very hardy seed. Secret communities of Christians, without any priests to guide or care for them, faithfully preserved and handed down the faith for the next two hundred years. Just one century ago, in 1853, Commodore Perry concluded the treaty that reopened Japan to the outside world. Twelve years later the long-hidden Christians at Nagasaki warily revealed themselves to the chaplain of the French Officers stationed there. After news of their discovery spread throughout the world, finally, in 1873 the centuries-old persecution in Japan came to an end with the official proclamation of the freedom of religion.

The first Franciscans in modern times

to return to Japan were the German Friars of the Fulda Province, who in 1900 began missionary work in the virgin territory of the Island of Hokkaido. One of their number, Msgr. Wenceslaus Kindler, O.F.M., became the first Bishop of Sapporo in Hokkaido. Besides their missions, a preparatory seminary in Hokkaido, the Fulda Friars have chaplaincies in Osaka and Kumamoto in Kyushu (Leper Mission), another preparatory seminary in Fukuoka, a new parish (1953) in Tokyo, and one of their number in Tokyo is in charge of editing the nearly-completed volume Japanese Catholic Encyclopedia.

The next group of Franciscans to arrive in Japan were the Canadian Friars in 1910. Their motherhouse in Japan is Den-en-chofu in Tokyo, for many years also the Franciscan Novitiate in Japan, which has recently been transferred to Kiyomizu Urawa just outside Tokyo. Their preparatory seminary in Nagasaki was destroyed by the atom bomb. The site for a new one has been acquired in Yokohama. In addition to these places they are entrusted with the missions in the government Prefecture of Tochigi, a parish in Nagano and various chaplaincies.

The International Franciscan Mission in Nagano, consisting of the northern part of the Diocese of Yokohama, was formally entrusted to the Friars in 1949, though the church in Nagano was founded as early in 1935 by a German Friar of the Silesian Province. The personnel of the international mission comprises Friars from Columbia, S.A., Belgium, Spain, Poland and Silesia in East Germany.

The Friars of the New York Province arrived in Japan in 1950. In 1952 the Prefecture of Gumma, with Maebashi as its capital, about one hundred miles northwest of Tokyo, was given into their charge.

The first Italian Friars of the Roman

## FRANCISCAN BRIEFS

Province arrived in 1949 and now have a parish in Tokyo. Franciscans from other provinces in Italy are working with the German Friars in Hokkaido, part of that territory having been recently committed to the Province of Venice.

Similarly assisting the Friars in Hokkaido are several Franciscans from the Netherlands.

Very recently the organization of a new parish in Osaka has been undertaken by the Friars in Japan.

Directly under Very Rev. Alphonse Schnusenberg, O.F.M., Delegate General of all the Friars Minor in the Far East, are the Language School, the new Regional Franciscan Major Seminary now (1953) under construction, and the adjoining Biblical Institute, all located in Tokyo.

The Language School, at present the residence of Father Delegate, was organized by him in 1950. It offers one, two, or three-year courses in spoken and written Japanese in line with the special needs of newly-arrived missionaries, along with other auxiliary branches such as mission law and history. The seventy-five students who attended the school in 1952-53 represented fourteen different nationalities and twenty-four different religious congregations. The enrollment for the coming year (1953-54) is already ninety-six.

This rapid growth is taxing the present limited classroom space. An additional building will soon be a necessity.

Another general work of the Franciscans in Japan of basic importance, the need of which has been repeatedly stressed by Pius XI and the present Holy Father, is that of fostering native vocations. The new Regional Seminary now being built is a direct answer to this need. On September 1, 1952, seven native Franciscans were raised to the priesthood the largest group of Franciscans ordained at one time in the history of Japan. Though funds necessary to complete the new seminary are still far from realization, the work has

been begun with firm trust in God's Providence.

The projected Biblical Institute, now in the process of preparation and organization, will have as its first and chief task the rendering of the Scriptures from the original text into modern Japanese,—dignified yet understandable to the ordinary Christian. As yet there is no complete Catholic Japanese version of the Sacred Scriptures. The first requirements of such an undertaking are the training of Japanese and foreign Friars for this specialized labor and the building up of an adequate library. Both these requirements are being met, but much yet remains to be done. The building that will house the institute and its personnel is already standing on the site of the new seminary.

The Friars Minor in the whole of Japan now number over 150. Of this number more than one hundred are priests, including eleven native Japanese and one Korean; over twenty are professed lay brothers, the majority of whom are Japanese with two Koreans; the remainder are all native clerics, novices, and postulants.

To provide for the years of training and education of these native postulants and novices and clerics requires outside help. To establish them later in missions and to keep them going requires more help. Moreover, the sizeable number of foreign Friars in Japan whose native lands have been depleted by the war, or whose home lands have come under Communist control, have been cut off from all support from their mother provinces. Many of them too, have recently come to Japan as expellees from missions in Red China, where the few belongings they had were stripped from them. They too depend trustfully on outside help. But besides these general needs, there is the daily pressing one now of meeting the obligations building up with the new seminary, not to mention the Biblical Institute.



But God, and through Him those who can help, be it in ever so small a way, will not fail their needs. Financial support is necessary, but even more important is support by prayer and sacrifice. The Franciscans in Japan, in their unselfish work for souls, depend on your support. They know you will not fail them. In return their Father St. Francis will say:

"The Lord bless thee, and give thee peace."

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